

T.C.
BEYKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

**A HEROINE IN-BETWEEN: FORGING FLUID
GENDER ROLES**
Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Tezi Hazırlayan:
Taşkın Bora KOÇ

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Öğrenci No:
140769003

Danışman:
Doç. Dr. Lucia Barbara ÇELEBİ

İstanbul, 2018

YEMİN METNİ

Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak sunduğum “A Heroine In-Between: Forging Fluid Gender Roles” başlıklı bu çalışmanın, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere uygun şekilde tarafımdan yazıldığını, yararlandığım eserlerin tamamının kaynaklarda gösterildiğini ve çalışmamın içinde kullanıldıkları her yerde bunlara atıf yapıldığını belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım. 27/06/2018

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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
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08/06/2018

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DANIŞMAN

Doç. Dr. Lucia BARBARA ÇELEBİ
(Beykent Üniversitesi)

ÜYE

Prof. Dr. Visam MANSUR
(Beykent Üniversitesi)

ÜYE

Doç. Dr. Meltem ERİNÇMEN KANOĞLU
(Yeditepe Üniversitesi)

Adı Soyadı: Taşkın Bora KOÇ
Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Lucia Barbara ÇELEBİ
Türü ve Tarihi: Yüksek Lisans / 2018
Alanı: İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Anahtar Kelimeler: Cinsiyet, cinsiyet performansı, akışkanlık, androjenlik, kimlik, distopya, *Açlık Oyunları*, feminizm, kadın kahraman

ÖZ

ARALIKTA BİR KADIN KAHRAMAN: AKIŞKAN CİNSİYET ROLLERİ İNŞA ETMEK

Bu çalışma genel olarak Suzanne Collins'in üçlemesi olan *Açlık Oyunları* (2008), *Ateşi Yakalamak* (2009) ve *Alaycıkış* (2010) romanlarının baskıcı ve ataerkil toplumunda yaşayan ergen bir kızın cinsiyet performansı ve akışkan cinsiyet rollerinin temsilini ele almıştır. Teorik çerçeve olarak feminizmi kullanan bu çalışma, hayatta kalış hikayesinin sonunda, içinde bulunduğu toplumla beraber kendini de güçlü kılıp özgürleştirmeyi başarmış romanın genç kadın kahramanını analiz edebilmek için Kate Millett, Simone de Beauvoir, Adrienne Rich, Judith Butler ve R.W. Connell gibi ikinci ve üçüncü dalga seçkin feministlerine atıflar içermiştir. Romanın ana karakteri, geleneksel cinsiyet rollerini tanımlayıp denetleyerek ataerkil değerleri teşvik eden ideolojinin kontrolü altında, kendisine biçilmiş toplumsal ve cinsiyet rollerini reddeden özerk ve güçlü bir feminist kahramana dönüşerek sosyal değişimin öncüsü olmuştur. Androjen bir figür olan ana karakter, cüretkar bir şekilde kadın ve erkek performansları arasında geçiş yaparak cinsiyet sınırlarına meydan okumuş ve özgür bir şekilde kendi rol ve kimliğini inşa etmiştir.

Name Surname: Taşkın Bora KOÇ
Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Lucia Barbara ÇELEBİ
Degree and Date: MA / 2018
Major: English Language and Literature
Keywords: Gender, performativity, fluidity, androgyny, identity, dystopia, *The Hunger Games*, feminism, heroine

ABSTRACT

A HEROINE IN-BETWEEN: FORGING FLUID GENDER ROLES

This study broadly examined the representation of gender performativity and fluid gender roles of a young female adolescent in the oppressive and patriarchal mindset of a dystopian society in Suzanne Collins's trilogy: *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010). Using feminism as a critical framework, it referred to several influential figures of the second and the third wave feminist movements such as Kate Millett, Simone de Beauvoir, Adrienne Rich, Judith Butler and R.W. Connell in order to analyze the young protagonist of the trilogy as a powerful female figure who manages to empower and liberate herself, along with her society, in the end of her story of survival. Under the monitor of the ideology which encourages patriarchal values by defining and policing traditional gender roles, she metamorphoses into an autonomous, powerful feminist heroine who rejects the social and traditional gender roles tailored for her, and liberates herself as an empowered woman, thus becoming a figurehead of social change. As an androgynous figure, she continually challenges and transgresses gender boundaries defiantly navigating between male and female performances, which enable her to construct her own role and identity as a free agent.

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INTRODUCTION

There are several components of a novel that excitingly appeal to its readers such as plot, themes or characters, yet it is the genre that builds a connection between the readers' real life and the novel itself, so that readers are drawn to the world of the novel when they find it relevant to their own real life.

It is also the authors who might be inspired by the world around them and are driven to critique and write about the political, economical and social issues of their time picturing a high probability of a dark and bleak future of oppression, violence and tyranny. In the shadows of the World Wars, fascist rulers, terror and the inadequacies in the systems of 20th century society, prominent authors like George Orwell, Ray Bradbury and Aldous Huxley strikingly reflected the darkness of their time and urged millions of readers to reflect on their society by predicting a similarly horrible future if the terrible conditions of their society would not change. Such portrayal of society revealed itself in dystopian fiction, which is often the complete opposite of the goals of a utopian society. Dystopia refers to an imaginary world in which a so-called 'perfect' society is controlled and perpetuated by an oppressive regime. The control mechanisms work by, in Louis Althusser's terms, "ideological and repressive state apparatuses" such as regulated propaganda tools and force. In addition, the citizens are under constant surveillance; freedom and individuality are restricted as well as the access to the natural world.

Recent decades have witnessed the rise of a dystopian mood in literature because the world has continued to be a dark arena in which violence, conflict, war and oppression are permeating. Not only adults, but also millennial adolescents have grown sensitive to the dark issues of their society as the ones in a position to be able to lead changes in their society. In this respect, Young Adult (YA) dystopian fiction portrays young adults as the liberators and the spearheads of society who must achieve what their elders cannot or will not achieve to ensure a better world.

Suzanne Collins is one of many YA fiction authors who aims to display the probability of a dark future caused by war, violence and oppression. Her trilogy, *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010), has earned

enormous popularity among young adults thanks to its worldwide sales record, screen adaptations and marketing success, so it has become a cultural phenomenon. It is a novel about a sixteen-year-old girl, Katniss Everdeen, who lives in a poor district of a post-apocalyptic society called Panem that is strictly ruled by a totalitarian regime. The Hunger Games is the name of the ultimate form of entertainment for the privileged citizens of Panem and it is organised as a punishment and a control mechanism of the Districts, each of which has to sacrifice one boy and one girl for the show to be able to win. Katniss goes through several challenges and phases to survive stronger in the end as a young, female adolescent.

Along with its moving plot and global fame, the trilogy's immense popularity stems from the fact that it offers a wide range of themes from the point of view of several literary and cultural perspectives. The trilogy encourages readers and scholars to follow an interdisciplinary approach from history to psychology, media studies, cultural studies and gender studies. In an attempt to address issues that might fail to be noticed by young readers, this thesis consists of an analysis of the protagonist of the novel, Katniss Everdeen, through a gender studies perspective. Gender studies have always been one of the deeply-rooted, controversial approaches that contribute to a better and deeper understanding of the explicit and implicit roles of genders, how they are constructed and exploited as a power tool. For this reason, it is especially significant for young adolescents to be aware of how the characters they identify with are portrayed and how they can reflect on their own life and society accordingly.

i. Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

Adopting a critical approach to gender issues in Collins's trilogy, this thesis explores how Katniss Everdeen is portrayed in relation to feminist theory. Under this framework, the thesis tries to investigate how gender functions as a social construct, how gender relations work and are represented, and how binary and traditionally-defined gender roles are challenged. By doing that, this study questions the representation of gender performativity and the fluid gender roles of Katniss Everdeen. In her demanding quest of survival and freedom, Katniss, after all the sacrifices she makes by performing and complying, gradually transgresses gender boundaries and

ends up transforming into a strong, feminist heroine within the society she manages to change.

ii. Methodology

While approaching the thesis within the feminist framework, my research draws upon critical ideas from several feminists of the second wave and the third wave feminist movements. Second-wave feminist Kate Millett, the author of *Sexual Politics* (1970), based her work on patriarchal power arguing that men have institutionalised power over women and this power is socially constructed through social and political forms of oppression. Katniss is socialized into accepting patriarchal values and dominance that fix her into an objectified and traditional feminine role. Similarly, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) became a catalyst for challenging women's subjugation by rejecting innately pre-determined sexual characteristics along with the power and powerlessness that are attributed to them. Challenging sexual binary roles, Katniss's gender roles will also be analyzed from the perspective of Sandra Bem's concept of androgyny which challenges gender polarization. She challenged the assumption that sex roles are bipolar and opposite arguing that the traditional gender roles attributed to sexes are restrictive and weakening. Thus, demonstrating androgynous characteristics, Katniss is in a positive, desirable and powerful condition. In addition, known for her studies on feminism and lesbianism, Adrienne Rich argues in her 1980 essay titled *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* that women are forced in a compulsory manner to be heterosexual under the assumption that they should be innately sexually oriented toward men. This work is also drawing a parallel between Rich's argument and Panem's heterosexual assumptions in the sense of Katniss's relationship with Gale and Peeta, the two main male characters of the novel. Whereas the second wave feminists argued for differentiation between sex and gender, the third wave's ambition is to deconstruct binary oppositions and embrace an ambiguous, multi-layered and diverse identity that goes beyond society's gender expectations. Gender theorist and philosopher, Judith Butler fueled this movement. "In Butler's treatment, gender radicalism consists not of mobilization around an identity (such as 'women'), but of actions that subvert identity, disrupt gender dichotomy and displace gender norms" (Connell 2009, 42).

Accordingly, this thesis will explore the portrayal of Katniss as a feminist heroine that challenges her culture's gender norms and promises empowerment and liberation against oppression thanks to the fluidity of her gender roles.

iii. Structural Overview

This thesis is comprised of three chapters. The first chapter aims to provide a chronological overview of dystopia starting from the origins of utopia and early examples. It continues with the parts that mention the increasing number of utopian works between the seventeenth and nineteenth century. History-altering events such as the discovery of the New World, the American and French revolutions, and the Enlightenment gave rise to utopian writings; however, the late nineteenth century witnessed a turn from utopia due to economic and sociological conditions led by the industrial revolution and technology. The number of utopian works gradually diminished in the twentieth century and left its place to dystopias. The second part of the first chapter starts with the definition of this genre and explores how the emergence of the dystopian era started, and it briefly mentions the early works. It is followed by major twentieth century key dystopian works such as Orwell's *1984* (1949), Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) and Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), all of which epitomized the characteristics of the genre. This part also includes a short mention of major science fiction dystopian works and women's contributions to the genre. The next part of the first chapter introduces young adult dystopian fiction by highlighting the social conditions that helped it to emerge and the characteristics of the genre which unite several elements of other genres in one phenomena. Therefore, young adult dystopian fiction has become a prolific genre and the interest shown in it by the growing number of young and adult readers continues to rise in this century, as well. The final part talks about a short review of feminism in an attempt to shed light on the evolution and progression of feminism in three different waves.

The second chapter provides a short glance at *The Hunger Games* trilogy. It first mentions how it occurred to Suzanne Collins to write a book about war and violence for young adolescents. Attempting to shed light on the background of the writing of the trilogy, this part also talks about the inspirations and the personal connection of the author with her work. The next part presents a brief summary of the

plot of the novel starting from the first book. The plot is followed by the explanation of some major dystopian themes the author includes in her work. These themes are about the roles of media, surveillance and oppression, and how they work as the aspects of social criticism. Finally, the chapter ends with an overview of several genres that are strongly associated with the book.

The last chapter constitutes the most analytical part of the study providing a detailed theoretical critique of Katniss's multiple gender roles with respect to the feminist framework. The organization of the roles in this chapter follows the same order as the plot of the trilogy and depicts the metamorphosis of the main character into becoming a powerful feminist figure and heroine. First of all, Katniss becomes the provider and the protector of her family after her father's death. For this reason, she adopts a masculine role contrary to her mother and sister, both of whom show traditional female characteristics. She manages to survive in the games because of the skills she acquired in nature. Following her and Peeta's success at the games, Katniss is obliged to adopt a feminine role in front of the people in Panem and President Snow, the ruler of the Capitol. In relation with Peeta, she has to perform a heterosexual, love-struck female in her acts and looks to gain the support of the privileged people of Panem. As she gradually understands the game of pretense, she starts to take advantage of it by showing signals of defiance. In her role as the Mockingjay, she takes the heroine role that necessitates her to perform in front of cameras as a propaganda tool. As she and others realize that it is her authentic behaviours that benefit the rebellion, she gains power and autonomy in the decisions she can make, ultimately earning her free agency. She leaves the involuntary roles she is obliged to take, and freely makes her own decisions as a new Katniss. Disillusioned, depressed and exhausted, she finally proves herself to be a sexually, economically and educationally independent young woman in the closing parts of the trilogy. In the last part, Katniss is argued to be a feminist figurehead of her time as it is evidenced by her actions throughout the book. The chapter finishes with an analysis that ties Katniss with the third wave feminism.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. UTOPIA

1.1. Origins & Early Utopias

In the long prehistory of humankind, the sense of curiosity mixed with awe, astonishment and subtle fear drove humans to imagine and discover the unknown. Imagination and mystery opened up a world of marvel and speculation where they eagerly and naturally created an alternative time and reality of supernatural and fiction. Imaginative descriptions of places and people that are very different from the time they were made can be traced back to religious context. We can say that the Garden of Eden, The Promised Land or the afterworld following the coming of the Messiah promise a perfect life of paradisiacal places. The framework of these ideal worlds and societies embodies a special kind of narrative, which in time became known as utopian literature. This new literary form was defined by Darko Suvin:

Utopia is the verbal construction of a quasi-human community where socio-political institutions, norms and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on the estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis. (Uhlenbruch 2015, 44)

Etymologically, the word 'utopia' is a neologism coined by Thomas More in 1516 to baptize the island in his book *Utopia*, and it means 'no-place'. "More's *Utopia*, as a 'no place', does not represent his idea of the ultimately ideal, attainable place, but serves as a blank slate upon which he inscribes a world that is intended to estrange the contemporary reader from their conditions of existence, thus allowing them to see their own world in a new light" (Madeline and Rogan 2009, 309). The word came into being with a strong association with imaginary paradisiacal places, and considering the time it was written, the book traces the new currents of thought and inspiration of a period of logic and reason that was taken as a model by Europeans on the grounds that it reflected the ancient world of Greece and Rome, which was believed to be the time

humankind was at its intellectual zenith: the Renaissance. After all, utopian thinking dates back to ancient Greece. Plato's *Republic*, for example, is considered one of the earliest examples of utopian works that "proclaims the value of the development of specialized skills and divisions of labor in ways that are clearly forerunners of modern technology" (Booker 1994, 5). Other principal early utopias are Sir Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1627), James Harrington's political essay *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (1656), Margaret Cavendish's *The Description of a New World Called the Blazing-World* (1666). They all demonstrated "elaborations of worlds that refer to their contemporary historical moments by positing corrective versions of existing religious, property, gender, and/or political relations" (Madeline and Rogan 2009, 309). What is also common to these works is that they describe 'good places', so they can be called 'eutopia', a category of utopia. Bacon's work is particularly important among these works because he was one of the founding fathers and practitioners of the new science during the scientific revolution, and his work "remains one of the most optimistic imaginative projections of the beneficial impacts that science and technology might have on human society" (Booker 1994, 5). The book portrays a mythical island called Bensalem that continuously monitors technological and social progresses of other societies thanks to its scientists class that has no direct influence on the governance. Bacon was clearly smart enough to see the revolutionary effect of science on utopian thinking.

1.2. Seventeenth and Eighteenth-century Utopias

The discovery of the New World and the fast-expanding geographical knowledge of it, along with increasing amazement also affected utopian writing in the form of ethnological utopias. "They idealized the 'state of nature' and defined society and civilization as progressive alienation from an original good" and "promised the regeneration of society to its original state of innocence and peace" (Pohl 2010, 63). Denis Vairasse's *History of the Sevarites* (1675), for example, tells an account of a simple nation that has an admirable and self-sufficient community as well as virtuous government, religion and traditions. According to Pohl, in the 18th century, "utopias promoted domestic, self-sufficient economies of production, based on Native American economies, accompanied by the abolition of private property and money

within the utopian society” (Pohl 2010, 64). Right after her analysis, as an example, she mentions Frances Brooke’s *The History of Emily Montagu* (1769) as a micro-utopia on the American continent where Canadian Indians combine primitivist anthropology with an explicit social critique of European gender inequality. It is possible that Brooke was influenced by Rousseau and one of his major works *Discourses* (1997) that explores primitive social existence and a critique of civil society where the natural and primitive state of individual independence and freedom decays in search of desires.

In the works of feminist writers, utopian fiction was richly thematized. One of the principal works of this sort is Margaret Cavendish’s *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World* (1666). It is a fine depiction of women who prove that they have the same ability as men to think rationally, teach and rule. The Empress, the protagonist, designs, rules and educates her society as she likes and gets inspired by the nature of science, religion, and government only to inspire the author of the book, as well. Moreover, in works like Sarah Scott’s *A Description of Millenium Hall and the Country Adjacent* (1778) and Lady Mary Hamilton’s *Munster Village* (1778) “intricate social structures are described wherein women, in a semi-sequestered state, are allowed the opportunity to develop as intellectuals and workers: they also enjoy sensual pleasures such as good food and drink” (Madeline and Rogan 2009, 310).

As a philosophical movement which dominated the world of ideas in Europe in the 18th century, the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason, promoted advanced ideals such as reason, liberty and progress reorienting politics, philosophy, science and communications for the betterment and health of social governance (Pohl 2010). “Plato’s *Republic* (c. 360 BC), with its focus on good governance as a means of producing and maintaining ‘just’ subjects and social conditions, became an important text for the genre during an era marked by literary and politico-philosophical neoclassicism” (Madeline and Rogan 2009, 310). Because of this way of thinking, ‘critical utopia’ or ‘poly-utopia’ was born as a criticism of society’s imperfections. Nicola Pohl argues that critical utopias “are aware of the limitations of the classical utopian model and at the same time strive for a dynamic utopia. Their structure is episodic and moves from philosophical exemplum to exemplum to juxtapose and

debate contrasting arguments about visions of utopia and human happiness” (Pohl 2010, 66). One major example to give for this would be Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). To Pohl, it poses a sophisticated paradox between Gulliver, the reader and eighteenth-century Europe by its careful and sustained parody of Enlightenment philosophy and religion. She adds that it “raises questions about the fault lines that developed during the eighteenth century on ideas of language, history, perfectibility and, indeed, utopianism itself” and Swift “concluded that human nature itself (including Gulliver’s) thwarts the realization of any utopian society” (Pohl 2010, 67).

1.3. Nineteenth-century Utopia

History-altering events such as the American and French revolutions resulted in liberal and humanitarian thinking about individual rights. The Industrial Revolution brought efficiency, opportunities and overall improvement in every sense. The positive results of the revolutions naturally proved to many that values and beliefs of the Enlightenment could ensure an egalitarian society in which equality and democracy survived. Therefore, the progress was self-evident in history and it “seemed to demonstrate that it was reasonable, ethical, possible, even natural to create the ‘good time’ of democracy and an equality of abundance in ‘real places’ ” (Roemer 2010, 82).

The Utopian tradition witnessed several practices of utopian socialism and communitarianism in this century under political and economical purposes associated with utopian social theorists like Saint-Simon, Owen and Fourier. “They agreed that the current social system oppressed the natural and good tendencies in human nature and they even indulged in a bit of imaginary picture making when they envisioned the ultimate goal of a communist reality – the withering away of the state in a classless society” (Roemer 2010, 85). Marx and Engels also shared the ideals of a classless utopian society that would come after a triumph over capitalism and private property paving the way for using technology and science for the good of the people. They contributed to the shaping of the industrial world of the century and influenced the diversity of literary utopias (and ultimately dystopias) in time.

19th century literary utopias can be characterized “as didactic guide-visitor narratives that are heavy on long socio-economic dialogues, lightened by touches of

romance and travel-adventure episodes and firmly grounded in cooperative or socialistic ideologies” (Roemer 2010, 80), and we see that the major works of the genre appeared in the late period of the century. Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888) is one of the major utopian science fiction works of the time. The main character of the story wakes up one hundred and thirteen years later in a radically transformed utopian socialist world. He observes an ideal socialist society: rational working hours, nationalized productivity, equal distribution of the goods among citizens. William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1890) is also a work of utopian socialism, but what distinguishes it from Bellamy’s is that no class system, property and monetary system exists in his agrarian society. Nature replaces the technological benefits of the industrial revolution and people perform better because they enjoy it for this reason. Women writers also contributed to the utopian literature of the time by their works of speculative fantasies that envisage women-only futures ruled and prospered by powerful women. Among these works are Mary E. Bradley’s *Mizora: A World of Women* (1880), Elizabeth Corbett’s *New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future* (1889).

1.4. Turn from Utopia

The Industrial revolution was a socio-economic breakthrough that seemed to promise that science, technology and mass-production would be of great benefit to humanity in terms of providing essential needs and ultimately great wealth. It did, but it also created great poverty. Therefore, it should not be surprising to figure out that why many modern thinkers grew suspicious of utopian thought fearing that it could eventually work to the advantage of the conservative privileged who defended the status quo. They also contemplated how science, technology and industry could harm human life and society, thus weakening the very belief in the sustainability of progress. Keith Booker argues that many of the technological achievements already hinted that science would not have liberating effect on societies; but rather, it would make worldwide imperialism a reality that exploited and controlled the masses of European workers and chained them to machines in the service of industry. He also argues that some scientific discoveries such as the Second Law of Thermodynamics and Darwin’s theory of evolution were strictly limiting and undermining the notion of unlimited

progress and the strong belief in the powerful capacity of the human mind, all of which were promoted by the Enlightenment over the years. (Booker 1994, 6).

Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872) is a good example of 19th century utopian satire comparable to *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). In Butler's fictional country, the society has a strict and binary system of law which rewards the noble, the rich and the healthy whereas the ill, the oppressed is punished. The society also dislikes technological progress due to a prophecy that there will be a time when machines evolve intelligently and enslave humankind to them. Therefore, "Butler's satire of anti- and pro-technological development represents one of the most sophisticated and perceptive foreshadowings of the twenty- first-century 'post-human' dilemma" (Roemer 2010, 90).

Since science now has a major role in the evolution of utopian thinking, it is well worth investigating the critical relationship between science fiction and utopia; therefore, it is safe to say that many utopian works were written in science-fictional context in the late 19th and 20th century. According to Freedman "the great vitalization of the literary utopia made possible by the advent of science fiction and the synthesis of science fiction with the older form amounts to the transformation of utopia into the utopian novel, which might also be designated... the critical utopia" (Freedman 2000, 81). H.G. Wells, one of the forerunners of the science fiction genre, established the foundations of science-fictional utopia by his prominent work *Time Machine* (1895), a futuristic story of a time traveler who pays a visit to a quasi-communistic society that later turns out to be a rigid hierarchical society. He was one of the principal figures who influenced the later development of the genre in the following century.

Main works of critical utopias emerged during the 1970s and 1980s to "reflect the sociopolitical concerns of an era characterized by demand for change in the areas of global exploitation, [...] gender inequality, race inequality, and class antagonism" (Madeline and Rogan 2009, 313). After the World Wars, the number of utopian literature works gradually diminished but several social reforms and struggles in the United States set a stage for science-fictional utopias to flourish with various works. Among the critical works of this era are *The Female Man* (1975), an ur-text of feminist science fiction by Joanna Russ, that recounts the story of how four alternative selves

living in parallel worlds and time meet and reflect on their lives by gaining different perspectives. Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* (1974), another important utopian science-fiction novel, deals with how an anarchist society would function in reality.

Intellectual and social events not only inspired the authors but also disappointed them and by mid-twentieth century, science as a whole had become a symbol of advancement and suspicion and was diversely reflected in literature. Narrative descriptions of alternative realities encouraged readers to perceive their world and society in both a positive and negative sense. However, the second half of the 20th century would change the balance completely.



2. DYSTOPIA

2.1. Definition & Overview

Skepticism and criticism toward the utopian promise of Enlightenment reason, science and technology gradually rose toward the end of the 19th century and matured in the 20th century. Gregory Claeys uses the analogy of vision of heaven and anticipation of hell, and summarizes the age:

“In many accounts we emerge from the hopeful, dream-like state of Victorian optimism to pass through what H. G. Wells called the age of confusion into a nightmarish twentieth century, soon powerfully symbolized by the grotesque slaughter of the First World War. Enlightenment optimism respecting the progress of reason and science was now displaced by a sense of the incapacity of humanity to restrain its newly created destructive powers. From that time ideal societies have accordingly been more commonly portrayed negatively in dystopian rather than utopian form” (Claeys 2010, 107).

Dystopia, or the negative utopia, is described as “a non-existing society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which the reader lived” (Uhlenbruch 2015, 45). It does not attack or refuse Utopia; rather, it elaborately deals with utopian thoughts in great pessimism over the terrors of the future and history by inverting the narrative. Simply speaking, it functions as a warning against the dangers societies are likely to face in the future. Acutely critical of the societies they reflect, dystopias “describe a fictional portrayal of a society in which evil, or negative social and political developments, have the upper hand, or as a satire of utopian aspirations which attempts to show up their fallacies” (Claeys 2010, 107).

However, it is worth bearing in mind that labelling a text utopian or dystopian could depend on the reader’s perspective. In retrospect, one can say that we live in a society reflected in the utopias of the past. What our ancestors dreamed of years ago in the name of ideals and progression through science became a reality today, yet to the present generation, the very same ideals and fundamentals of society are highly likely prone to dystopian failures, so one’s utopia could be another’s dystopia. We can

also go further and question the necessity of utopias in the first place. Based on this question, one can speculate that a dystopian world had already existed before utopias came out because it was the very reason utopian ideals were imagined and depicted as a result of a discontent with the dynamics of society.

2.2. Dystopian Turn

Socio-political and literary movements foreshadowed the turn from utopia towards dystopia. It was strongly connected with an increasing negative trend in criticism of socialist ideals of social and individual improvement brought forward by some pioneering social reformers and theorists such as Robert Owen, Henri de Saint-Simon and Charles Fourier. These socialists did not believe in any class struggle or revolution for the emergence of socialism, instead all classes have free will and can be organized cooperatively for a productive and balanced society in scientific and rational ways. However, Marx and Engels, who are the first to refer to these socialists reformers as utopian, criticized them because they were unrealistic and impractical. According to them, “they reject all political and especially all revolutionary action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavor, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social gospel” (Marx and Engels 2007, 40). Although Marx held technology in high regard for human liberation, it was also the means for mass enslavement under control of oppressive powers, mainly Capitalist institutions, for exploitative purposes. That’s why, “Marx’s description of the alienated worker under capitalism is one familiar to readers of dystopian literature, the protagonists of which are typically alienated individuals who attempt to assert their individuality against the oppressive power of a dehumanizing social system” (Booker 1994, 33). In addition, Nietzsche had a deep impact on dystopian thinking in modern imaginative literature. Just like he rejected Christianity, he rejected classical science as they were both enslaving. He opposed the growing mechanization of life and he saw science as a new form of religion that undermines free will and individual freedom because it means “the god of machines and crucibles, that is, the powers of the spirits of nature recognized and employed in the service of a higher egotism; it believes that it can correct the world by knowledge, guide life by science, and actually confine the individual within a limited

sphere of solvable problems” (Nietzsche 1999, 109). Modern skepticism about ideal societies that was put into words by these modern social and cultural critics who shed light on the understanding and shaping of real and idealized societies thus contributed to the forming of a convention of dystopian writing.

2.3. Early Works

According to Claeys, the earliest text of science fiction to many scholars, *Frankenstein* (1818), could also be regarded as a satire on the failed aspirations of the Revolution, and thus one of the heralding works of dystopian literature. Subtitled ‘the Modern Prometheus’, “the work explores the perils of usurping the divine monopoly on creation, the creature standing in part for the ‘new man’ of the revolutionary ideal, and also centrally focuses on the Godwinian (or Rousseauesque) theme of naturally virtuous individuals being corrupted by society” (Claeys 2010, 110).

One good example of early dystopian works is *Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) by H. G. Wells, a central visionary and genius figure that brought speculative and fantastic maturity to science fiction. This dystopian work draws parallels with *Frankenstein* with its focus on genetic control that allows the creation of ‘beast men’ and ‘quasi-human monsters. E.M. Forster’s *The Machine Stops* (1909) could be regarded as one of the original key texts of dystopia. Humanity is set in a post-apocalyptic world and people live underground relying on The Machine that provides their needs. “The real hope in this dystopian nightmare about technological dependency, dehumanization, and the sacrifice of ideas, resides not in those humans living on the surface but with the reader. It compels the reader to prevent its realization” (Murphy 2009, 474). One of the central figures of science fiction, H. G. Wells recounts in *War of the Worlds* (1897) a monstrous and horrific Martian attack on humans causing great damage and horror before failing to resist an earthly bacteria to which they are not immune. Written as a genuine anti-imperialist science-fiction novel, it can easily be read as a social and political criticism in which Martians symbolize Imperialists who use their superior technology brutally to invade a nation which had already been exerting power and dominance on the imperial peoples who also suffered from a fundamentally xenophobic fear of foreignness.

2.4. Major 20th Century Works

Major events of the 20th century like World Wars, the Holocaust, the development of the atomic bomb, the revolutions and epochs of autocratic regimes and the far-reaching catastrophic consequences of them had an influence on the writers of dystopian literature. Therefore, the common theme of the principal dystopian works that set the boundaries of the genre was “the quasi-omnipotence of a monolithic, totalitarian state demanding and normally exacting complete obedience from its citizens, challenged occasionally but usually ineffectually by vestigial individualism or systemic flaws, and relying upon scientific and technological advances to ensure social control” (Claeys 2010, 109). Several key texts epitomize the characteristics of dystopian literature in this century, and we can observe that many texts of science fiction and dystopian literature intersect and overlap.

One of the pivotal dystopian works of the century is Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1920), a critique of a totalitarian regime that forces its citizens to live strictly regimented lives under the ruling figure 'Benefactor' and his 'guardians'. There is only One State that reduces citizens to numbers with no unique identity and separates the citizens from primitive untamed nature by a giant Green Wall. Everything is run by mechanization, even reproduction, with total surveillance. Citizens are alienated from emotions and imagination. By these themes Zamyatin shows “how the rigorous application of static regimes governed by one overarching principle... builds a totalitarian dictatorial dystopia in which defiance of categories, individual difference, or critique of the status quo is punishable” (Uhlenbruch 2015, 49).

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) is a strictly-governed world of institutionalized eugenic engineering that strictly maintains social stability by eugenics, elimination of freedom and autonomy, and systematic consumption of a drug called soma to ensure pacifist and loyal behavior. Therefore, people are distracted from anything important to them or to their society by a perpetual and deliberate flood of irrelevancy. In the end, people are reduced to robots with no ability or care to know and question. Also “the satire [...] is as much upon contemporary materialism and consumerism as upon the eugenic super-state; it is upon the threads which connect America with the Germany of Hitler and the Russia of Stalin, the human willingness

to renounce a more diverse life in favour of certainty and stability” (Claeys 2010, 116). Besides, it is obviously a critique of Fordism, “a term widely used to describe the system of mass production that was pioneered in the early 20th century by the Ford Motor Company or the typical post-war mode of economic growth and its associated political and social order in advanced capitalism” (Jessop 2016).

Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) depicts a more pessimistic, strict and merciless dystopian world-state in which individuals have to pay a much higher price to stand against the brutal totalitarian regime of Big Brother. Orwell feared that “intellectuals in the socialist movement had been corrupted by power-worship, and hence would not function as capable or morally honest leaders in any new socialist society [...] Orwell thus recognized the problem of leadership to be central to the design of any viable future society” (Claeys 2010, 119). Therefore, in his highly satirical caricature of totalitarianism, communication would be limited to prevent conspiring against the government; restriction in media would limit knowledge and the truth would be concealed through repressive control.

Similarly, Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) and Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) are obviously dystopian novels that deal with the same themes of the government’s strict control over its citizens, loss of freedom, alienation and mechanization. As depicted in these major dystopian texts, alienation, the struggle between the individual and the collective totalitarian system, surveillance, mechanization and evil use of science were prevailing themes of the key dystopian texts of the 20th century and continued to exist in variety in the coalescence of science fiction and dystopia.

2.4.1. Dystopian Science Fiction Works

Thanks to the culture of pulp magazines and comics exploring many science fiction themes like post-apocalyptic worlds, time travel, space voyages, extraterrestrial lives, post-human beings and high-tech wars, the growth of science fiction flourished and was admiringly welcomed by a great number of increasing readers. With the catastrophic consequences of WW2, science fiction lost its optimistic angle due to the

evil use of technology and science, and in the 1960s, the dystopian spirit began to rise hand in hand with the pessimistic science fiction.

Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) has fantastic elements. It is set in a post-apocalyptic world where Earth's life has been greatly damaged by nuclear war and people coexist with endangered animals and androids. The book explores the meaning of being a human, real and unreal, mind control through media and individual struggle against the collective. In his other best-seller book, *Martian Time-Slip* (1995), Dick not only deals with extraterrestrial colonization, he also explores the theme of the dangers of centralized authority that labels "anomalous" children for deportation and destruction.

Asimov, another important famous science fiction writer of the century, contributed to the genre with his robot novels, as in *The Caves of Steel* (1954). "Where robots had previously been, almost exclusively, insensate or dangerous embodiments of the threat of technology, Asimov imagined artificially constructed and intelligent robots as not only humane, but in many ways as more humane than humanity" (Roberts 2005, 198). With the discovery of hyperspace travel, some planets have been colonized and the Earth is over-populated with agoraphobic people who coexist with robots with hatred.

A new science fiction sub-genre changed the field in a much more imaginative and distinctive way. Pioneered by William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), cyberpunk became the standard product of the genre with its post-industrial dystopian settings where the complex and dominating corporation of technology and cybernetics are in the center of the conflict among body and soul, artificial intelligences and mega corporations. "Just as characters have been 'invaded' by prosthetics, drugs, or electronic data, so they act within a world where every aspect of the environment seems to have suffered imaging through the matrix, holograms, or genetic engineering" (Seed 2011, 69). The dystopian tones of the novel lie in the fact that it portrays a troubled and late capitalist future where the accumulation of power is in the hands of corporate elites instead of governments, creating anti-heroes like hackers and criminals who are struggling in-between reality and virtual reality with manipulation

and no freedom of choice. Gibson questions to what end computer systems and the human brain will possibly unite; and to what cost.

2.4.2. Women's Contribution to Dystopia in 20th century

Women writers also contributed to the writing of utopian and dystopian fiction within science fiction. After all, women have always fought against the mindset that considers them as 'others' of men. Representatives of patriarchal order, men also had hegemony even in literature. Masculine protagonist and gender construction on men's power received criticism, so it was reacted by several woman writers in the context of fiction and science fiction. For example, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) reflects a "vivid portrayal of a dystopian future US in which Christian fundamentalism has established a repressive and misogynist society based ostensibly on biblical principles" (Roberts 2005, 316). In the novel, the Republic of Gilead, the new regime established upon the military terrorist attack on the US government, consolidates its power by reshaping the society in every sense based on the Christian regime of the Old-Testament, thus abolishing women's rights. For this reason, they are subjugated and segregated by clothing, marital status, class and race. Atwood paints an imagined world and society which is terrifying and regimented, and reflects 1980s social concerns such as nuclear threat, declining birth rates, and conservative and controversial policies of the government.

On the other hand, P.D. James, in *The Children of Men* (1992), depicts a thought-provoking dystopian world not only dominated by a totalitarian regime, but also, a society where the human race is on the brink of extinction due to the fact that no child was born for 25 years. In 2021, men are infertile and society is doomed with depression, anger and fear. The revolutionaries are led by a woman called Julian, who later turns out to be pregnant, and acts against the repression and despotism with the company of Theo who has strong feelings for Julian. P.D. James obviously encourages the reader to think about a variety of themes ranging from maternity, gender roles, immigration and power by making us think about our dependence on futurity with little difference to a possible world we will eventually leave to our next generations; and this world is a no good place.

Engaging with the most significant political and social issues of its time, science fiction and dystopia succeeded in becoming one of the dominant literary forms of the 20th century with its multiplicity of themes that provide seductive, but pessimistic, troubled vision of the future. They have also proven themselves in the movie industry, comic books, magazines and television series in an increasingly growing fashion that helped them inspire, awe and amaze millions of followers and fans all over the world. It would be immature to predict that works of science fiction and dystopia will continue the legacy of their precursors of the last century, but it seems very likely that the genre will continue to thrive in the 21st century with new sub-genres and forms.

2.5. Young Adult Dystopian Fiction

2.5.1. Emergence of the Genre

It would be unfair to reduce the triumph of the genre to its growing and widespread popularity among adults. Characteristics of the genre have also illuminated young adults by its uniqueness; it shows alternative possibilities of other societies and worlds. After all, just like their elders, children and young adults also endured difficult experiences of hard times such as World Wars. Hilton and Nikolajeva argue that teenage subjectivity in literature remained an ambiguous figure until WW2 partially because of the escapist need and negative public mood during the troubled decades. “New understandings of the ways the shattering of many families by grief, and the death and disability of so many young men, led to an extended period of shock and trauma throughout the twenties and thirties” (Hilton and Nikolajeva 2012, 5). It was WW2 that changed everything. “Writers who had survived the war as children and young adults themselves began to reject the sentimental tradition and the invisibility of teenage interiority in twentieth-century literature for the young” (Hilton and Nikolajeva 2012, 6). Adult writers who survived the world wars sympathetically depicted the alienated suffering of adolescence and presented them as “awkward, rebellious, unhappy, presenting loci of suffering, injustice, of unfulfilled longings and deviant sexualities” (Hilton and Nikolajeva 2012, 6).

2.5.2. Characteristics

The more frequent use of dystopian themes like post-apocalyptic worlds, alien invasions and evil uses of technology surely parallels with some major events of the 21st century like 9/11. According to Pharr and Clark, whereas earlier young adult dystopian novels are inclined to be about the stories of survival against oppression, aliens or the environment, post 9/11 novels focused more on personal and social change, and are concerned with the roles of young adults in fight with totalitarian governments, which are not recognized by adults in the same way.

“Adults are often portrayed as either ineffectual or indoctrinated. The former group may recognize the evils within their society, but having lived through those evils and seen what happened to those who did not survive them, these ineffectual adults are too afraid to dissent. The indoctrinated, on the other hand, are so embedded with the ideologies of the dystopian regime that they have become ‘true believers’ in its action and dogma” (Pharr and Clark 2012, 8).

For this reason, it is now the young adults’ duty to achieve what their elders cannot or will not achieve as the spearheads of society. Young summarizes the profile of young adults in dystopian fiction:

“The hero, reluctant or willing, [...] is catapulted out of their normal existence into the unknown. They cross the threshold into a world of darkness and danger, of allies and enemies, and begin a journey towards their own destiny that will change their world. They will be tested, often to the very edge of death. The stakes are high. The adults are the oppressors. The children are the liberators” (Young 2011).

Moreover, it is not only the external journey the characters must set out on, they also experience an inner struggle. “They, like their teen readers, have to deal with recognizable concerns and problems, including friendship, family, betrayal, loss, love, death and sexual awakening” (Young 2011). Because of this metaphorical representation of their own world, the sensitiveness they develop to the issues of their society and the intriguing and action-filled stories, the young adult reader is captivated by dystopian fiction much more than ever now. Thus, society’s need to improve itself is perpetuated through the hope placed on young adults not only as actors but also as readers.

2.5.3. Major Works

J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) is one of the prototypes of the young adult canon. Though it is not listed under the dystopian category, it is a principal work that explores the complicated themes of identity, innocence, adaptation and alienation of a sixteen-year-old boy who undergoes a social and psychological struggle. "Hence *The Catcher in the Rye* established in literature for and about the young adult the powerful metaphorical connection between a troubled inner life of the adolescent and the injustices and cruelties of wider society" (Hilton and Nikolajeva 2012, 7-8). In addition, representations of adolescence in dystopian fiction obviously have a strong connection with the adult writers' intention to orient young people towards adaptation of taking control of their potentially threatening and challenging lives. "The relationship between the 'natural' and the 'socially constructed' moves to a central position where often the adolescent protagonists carry the burden of renewal and hope from a position of subordination and powerlessness" (Hilton and Nikolajeva 2012, 10).

Young adult fiction also mirrored the tension, anxiety, alienation and paranoia of the phenomena of the aftermath of World War 2 such as the Cold War, McCarthyism and the Great Depression. "An 'us versus them' mentality took hold of Americans of all ages and informed a genre that had previously concentrated on industrial anxieties, uncontrolled science, and historical paradoxes" (Pharr and Clark 2012, 6).

In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), the children who are evacuated on an island after a nuclear war have to go through a brutal and evil process trying to rebuild a small society from scratch. In portraying the struggle of the children with each other, the writer also paints an allegorical portrait of civilization and savagery with dystopian elements. The theme of 'us versus them' is apparent in the very struggle of the children divided in factions.

Similar elements and themes are also depicted in science fiction. 1985 military science fiction novel by Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game* narrates a story of a compassionate, smart but also ruthless boy who is trained by adults to control a long-

lasting war with aliens on a game platform, and to protect the world from these extraterrestrial beings. The adults try to control and manipulate the children in an effort to place the fate of humanity in the hands of them in a deceiving way.

In Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (1993), an eleven-year-old boy, Jonas, of a quasi-utopian, strictly regimented future society where all pain, fear, war, hatred and choice are eliminated is responsible for storing all the past memories including a great variety of emotions that lead him to try to illuminate and awake his society. Similar to his peers, he is another boy who must stand against the flaws of his society.

Elements of horror, cyberpunk and dystopian misuse of science are also prevalent in young adult dystopian fiction as they were used in their major predecessors such as Huxley's *Brave New World*. Similar to the genetic and body manipulation in the book, Neal Shusterman's *Unwind* (2007) tells the story of a post-war American society where abortion is banished and parents could sign an order for their unwanted young adult children to be taken to harvest camps so that their body parts can be reused. The rebellious teen characters of the book get into a long fight to overthrow the harvest system and save others. Another young adult dystopian science fiction, *Skinned* (2008), by Robin Wasserman, approaches the issue in a different way by drawing a ruined world where the government is ruled by corporations and society is divided between the elite and the slave. After an accident, Lia's mind is transferred into an organic-looking android body that offers immortality and she fights for her identity.

What evil technology might cause, and how deliberate misuse of science harms society, have always been central in the increasingly popular narrative of the genre and enabled readers, and characters, to be aware of the potential catastrophes that might become true one day. Modern young adult dystopian fiction has become a distinct and prolific genre thanks to its growing number of readers who gradually gain appeal to the genre's ability to challenge the boundaries.

3. REVIEW OF FEMINISM

Since the first time it was coined as a word in 1837, feminism has had numerous causes and ambitions that unite it under a common goal: to define and ensure social, economical, political and personal equality of sexes. Feminist movements are divided into three waves, each of which represents a different aspect of feminist ideals.

First wave feminism dates back to a period during the 19th century and early 20th century mainly in the USA and UK. First wave feminists advocated for *de jure* (officially mandated) equalities, that is, equal voting (suffrage), owning and inheriting property, marriage and parenting rights. Women gradually got what they fought for and finally, first-wave feminism ended in the USA with a new constitutional law in 1919, granting women the right to vote in all states.

Although it contained several aspects of first wave feminism, second wave feminism dealt with issues like reproductive rights, sexuality and objectification of female body. Began in 1960s, the movement was first named Women's Liberation Movement and lasted through the early 1980s. Betty Friedan's 1963 bestselling book *The Feminine Mystique* is considered to be a landmark book for the second wave ideals. She coined the name of the book to clarify the misassumption that women can achieve fulfillment through domestic work, marriage and sexual passivity. She objected to the way media reflected women claiming that confining women to the limits of domestic sphere wastes women's potentials and talents. The second wave was also the time when the terms sex and gender began to be differentiated. Unlike the perception that sex and gender are innately related, sex was seen as a biological term, whereas gender was considered to be a social construction that depends on certain social practices like culture, education and upbringing. This gender perspective is still valid and credited in today's society.

The third wave of feminism emerged in the mid-1990s. Encyclopedia Britannica summarizes the characteristics of the movement:

“Influenced by the postmodernist movement in the academy, third-wave feminists sought to question, reclaim, and redefine the ideas, words, and media that have transmitted ideas about womanhood, gender, beauty, sexuality,

femininity, and masculinity, among other things. There was a decided shift in perceptions of gender, with the notion that there are some characteristics that are strictly male and others that are strictly female giving way to the concept of a gender continuum. From this perspective each person is seen as possessing, expressing, and suppressing the full range of traits that had previously been associated with one gender or the other” (Brunell 2016).

Standing as a contrast to the second wave, third wave feminists were criticised for not being involved with politics and forgetting the endeavour second wave feminists demonstrated to achieve gender equality in political areas.



CHAPTER TWO

THE HUNGER GAMES

1. OVERVIEW

The Hunger Games, written by Suzanne Collins, is a wildly popular trilogy of young-adult, dystopian trilogy. It is set in post-apocalyptic North America, named Panem, ruled by an oppressive regime that forces the teenagers of its poor Districts to fight for survival while they are watched on television as entertainment by the privileged people of Panem. *The Hunger Games* (2008), the first book of the series, was followed by *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010). Each of the books has added to the global success and popularity of the trilogy selling millions of copies. A product of its era, the Hunger Games series has therefore become a literary and cultural phenomenon appealing not only to core young adult readers, but also to adult readers. The series has attracted millions of readers with record-breaking selling numbers, been nominated for various titles in publishing history, translated into many languages, adapted to films, referenced in main-stream media and been the subject of academic contexts as well as fan forums. It skillfully projects a postmodern world of fear, anger and violence as well as hope and heroism in its profound and multi-thematic presentation of society.

2. BACKGROUND

Suzanne Collins's inspiration to write a book about war and violence for teenagers is based on a personal story and inspirations. In an interview with Time magazine in 2013, she claims that The Hunger Games is part of a larger goal, which is to tell every age of children about war and to educate them about it. Having been tutored about war at an early age from her father who experienced war, its cost and consequences, she believes that our children are not frightened, but intrigued by these consequences, so there would be no harm in at least reading fictional stories about war and discussing them. Initial influence came from Greek mythology. Collins explains:

“I was a Greek mythology fanatic as a child, so you’ll definitely see elements of that, from Theseus and the minotaur and the oppression of Crete by Athens,

the lottery and the calling of the youths and the maidens to be thrown into the labyrinth in Crete. Also Spartacus – when I was a child I was fascinated with the gladiator movies, so there was Spartacus and Demetrius and the Gladiators, but Spartacus is the top of the line, so that would have to be an influence” (Grossman 2013).

In the same interview, Collins goes on to say that she was also influenced by several dystopic novels giving *Lord of the Flies*, *Brave New World* and *1984* as major examples. The books share several similarities. For example, as in *Panem*, the government of Oceania in *1984* tortures citizens. In both novels, there is brutal violence, nuclear threat, impersonalized place names and a panoptic presence of surveillance. On the other hand, there is one other dystopic work that shares a lot of similarities with *The Hunger Games* in terms of plot and characters: *Battle Royale* (1997), a novel by Japanese writer Koushun Takami. It was alleged that Collins copied heavily from this book although she denied having read it. Nevertheless, it is obvious to spot common features manifested in all these dystopic works. Teenagers are held responsible for fixing or rebuilding an establishment and order corrupted and manipulated by their elders. They are somehow involved in a war they are not willing, but obliged to fight.

3. PLOT

In an unspecified time in the future, the story is set in post-apocalyptic *Panem* which is divided into twelve poor districts all ruled with an iron grip by the wealthy and technologically-advanced Capitol and the leader President Snow. Because of a rebellion against the Capitol in the past, the twelve districts are obliged as punishment to send one boy and one girl aged 12-18 to fight to death in the annual Hunger Games that rewards the participants, or the tributes, and their districts with food and supplies. The fight takes place in an enclosed and artificial arena controlled, manipulated and transmitted live as entertainment and show for the citizens of the Capitol.

In the first novel of the trilogy, *The Hunger Games* (2008), Katniss Everdeen, the story's 16-year-old main character from District 12, volunteers in place of her sister Prim to take part in the Hunger Games. We are also introduced to the male tribute of

the games, Peeta, who is later seen in a flashback giving bread to Katniss to save her family from starving. Katniss and Peeta travel to the Capitol and are served luxuriously, on the way they are introduced to their mentor, Haymitch. He advises them to gain publicity so that sponsors will help them to survive. They start to build partnership and friendship in trainings and on screen, and collect alliances and fans in and out of the arena. After a dangerous struggle and fight of survival, the two of them manage to be lone survivors defying the Capitol to commit suicide, thus they are both entitled to be winners. This act is considered the first public defiance against the Capitol resulting in sparks of rebellion in the Districts.

The second book of the series, *Catching Fire* (2009), starts with Katniss and Peeta's setting out for a victory tour across the country to start with District 11 where the first signal of a future uprising is hinted. Katniss is threatened by President Snow to kill her family and destroy her District if she does not convince the country and himself that it is their love affair behind their rebellious actions. Therefore, Katniss is engaged with Peeta to openly display their relationship. Together with Heavensbee, the new game-maker, President Snow holds another game to destroy Katniss' rising image. In the meantime, district by district, the rebels begin to stage uprisings and the reader sees them officially start with Katniss' destruction of the arena and being rescued along with some other tributes by the rebel forces of District 13, allegedly destroyed before according to Panem propaganda. Eventually, Katniss is told by Gale, her lifelong friend, that Peeta was captured and the Capitol destroyed District 12. The biggest realization for her was that she had unintentionally been an important part of the rebellion all along orchestrated mainly by Haymitch, Plutarch and Heavensbee.

In *Mockingjay* (2010), the third book of the series, we see that Katniss is reunited with her family and her new allies in an underground facility of District 13, a secret counter power against the Capitol that functions as the headquarter of the rebel forces. Expressing her admiration for Katniss's bravery and her doings, President Coin stresses the importance of unity and communication among the districts while trying to convince Katniss to become the official symbol of the rebellion by shooting propaganda films. A short trip to her destroyed hometown and Peeta's torture in the Capitol convince her to accept the role on condition that Peeta is rescued and pardoned.

Shootings of propaganda films start and continue in several locations with a gradually increasing effect on rebels, who are growing in numbers and causing more damage. Snow counter attacks District 13 but cannot stop rebel forces to save Peeta, who turns out to be brainwashed and manipulated to kill Katniss. Civilian casualties, Peeta's condition and her near-death experience in the war zone gradually wears Katniss out and she finally decides to assassinate President Snow. In the mean time, Peeta is involved in the prop videos by Coin because it is implied that she might secretly be hoping that Peeta can kill Katniss out of rage. Except a few times, Peeta's condition seems to get better, and as a part of rebel forces, he also tries to infiltrate the Capitol and escape from mutant-like killers. The fight nears to the end when the Capitol is surrounded by the rebels and evacuation starts with children who unexpectedly and tragically get killed by pods dropped by a plane carrying the Capitol logo. Burdened by the loss of her sister, Katniss confronts Snow who claims he has nothing to do with the bombings although he knows he is soon to be executed by the new ruler, Coin. As it is too early for elections, Coin decides to organize another Hunger Games, this time with Capitol children. Katniss is already aware of Coin's motive and intentions, so she realizes Snow has told her the truth about the Coin and the bombing and kills Coin instead of Snow. As a result, she is exiled to her home in District 12 and lives a solitary life. In the end, we see that Katniss and Peeta are married with two children and spending time with them.

4. MAJOR THEMES

The trilogy earned an epic status in young adult literature and modern culture with its compelling story, in-depth analysis of its main characters and successful visual representation of both on screen. However, one of the biggest factors that have gripped millions of readers and viewers of all ages is the fact that the "*Hunger Games* trilogy can be read as a cautionary political tale as well as an epic – a glimpse into an alternate but ever possible reality" (Pharr and Clark 2012, 13). In this sense, the trilogy, like many other major dystopian fiction works, serves as a powerful medium for social criticism. According to Booker,

“the principal technique of dystopian fiction is defamiliarization: by focusing their critiques of society on spatially and temporally distant settings,

dystopian fictions provide fresh perspectives on problematic social and political practices that might otherwise be taken for granted or considered natural and inevitable” (Booker 1994, 19).

Collins skillfully uses this technique in the trilogy by offering a critique of present day society in the U.S., and most importantly in the world. The aspects of social criticism in the book are highlighted mainly by the political elements that focus on control over media and surveillance and oppression.

4.1. The Media’s Role

In the book, the media functions in several ways in the hand of the Capitol. The most important aspect of the media is that it is used as a control mechanism. It essentially aims to keep society in control by entertaining the rich, promoting the Capitol and intimidating the poor so they do not attempt a rebellion. There is one type of medium used as a tool of communication, the television. It is used to control the Districts and the public has no way of conveying their ideas because it is one-way, censored and mandatory to watch. Children are brought up by the reality of the Games and shown the consequences of a riot against the government. Screens and televisions are omnipresent whereas Districts hardly have enough food. The monopolistic use of media in the hands of the Capitol enables it to reinforce its power and remind the people in the Districts its relentless control over communication. Therefore, the Capitol organizes Hunger Games to make the Capitol look strong and legit while pacifying the poor and the rich through indulgence and violence. It is a great spectacle that is made of amazing in-game environments and a post-game spectacle. It is very similar to our reality shows like *Survivor* on TV today in which the audience watches a group of contestants who have to use their skills and powers to survive each week. In order to keep the audience’s attention, these shows promote spectacle, scarcity of supplements and needs as well as the risks the contestants have to take. The availability of everything in the arena is being managed and monitored by the Capitol and it mirrors the Capitol’s absolute power over the resources of Panem. By these means, the Capitol hints to the public that possible attempts of uprisings would result only in suffering and nothing more. Also, in Panem, the Games have to be compelling and varied enough to convey their message to the masses. Multitudes of weaponry, the setting and mediums of violence that await the tributes ensure the fact that the Capitol

is the only force that is in charge and control. As there can be only one victor that survives in the Games, there is only one force that always wins, and it is the Capitol. The Capitol also uses media to manipulate the truth and spread misinformation about District 13, widely considered to have been destroyed by the Capitol during the rebellion. In the fake television broadcasts, it is shown that the district is a doomed place that disappeared off the face of earth due to nuclear bombs. Media and TV have a different effect on the people of the Capitol. They grow indifferent to the living conditions and casualties of the Districts because the TV provides them with violence that they can only see by watching it. For that reason, it does not seem to be real to them and it is nothing but a television show, so they are more concerned with their appearance, entertainment and status. In comparison with our real world, reality shows like *Survivor* do not function in a much different way. They play a key role in making us desensitized to violence and conflict around us. The narratives and the characters of these reality shows become our new reality.

Media is not only used by the Capitol to assert its ideology and power. The rebellion also uses media as a means of propaganda. Airtime assaults are launched by making a series of propaganda spots, which are significant to the rebellion in the sense that they are meant to be emotionally effective and persuasive to unite the rebels against the Capitol. The footages of these shots are orchestrated and edited in such a way that images become more important than the people. In this respect, Katniss's image on screen is wisely used for the sake of rebellion. All in all, "television becomes the ultimate war-making machine" (Day 2012, 175). What is common between the two sides is that both sides are well aware of the fact that control over media means control over reality.

4.2. Surveillance

Another control mechanism that plays an important role in the trilogy is the omnipresence of surveillance. Similar to Orwell's characters who are constantly watched by 'Big Brother', almost every citizen of Panem is being monitored by the cameras to make citizens censor their own acts, behave cautiously and avoid performing anti-government acts. The Capitol, which is located in a central position, surrounded and protected by rocks, symbolically reflects its power and poses a threat of continuous surveillance that establishes repression and subordination. The Capitol's position can be compared to Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, an ideal prison in which unseen guards monitor the cells whereas prisoners are unaware or uncertain if they are being watched or not. Because they cannot ascertain the presence of the gaze, they act as if they are actually being watched at all times. In time, citizens regulate and control their own behaviours. Panoptic devices are widely used in the book and the impact of them are felt through the feeling of the characters. Katniss, for example, becomes paranoid and suspicious of constant surveillance while hunting in the woods with Gale. Besides, it makes Katniss distrust Peeta at first, so she sees him as an enemy. Another example is that Haymitch advises against the display of their powers and skills in front of other tributes as it might weaken them in the gaze of other tributes and the Gamemakers. Also, there are listening devices in the Training Center, tributes are implanted with tracking devices which allow the Gamemakers to locate them anywhere in the arena. The arenas are also panoptic structures. The arena is an enclosed and controlled space that is surrounded by a force field and various threats such as jabberjays, bioengineered monkeys, poisonous fog and so forth. "The panoptic system privileges appearance over reality when more than one person needs to be controlled. Accordingly, much of the Capitol's punishment occurs publicly in the form of whippings, mutilations, and executions" (Wezner 2012, 151). The presence of a constant gaze along with punishments result in the fact that Katniss grows aware of the panoptic devices and establishes control over them in time. As appearance is more important than reality, Katniss performs for the cameras to survive because she knows that her success or punishment is based on how she appears to be.

It is not surprising to see the similar reflections of the panoptic devices today. With the increasing use of social media, companies like Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Apple collect data of our personal information, track our locations and keep them all for the governments and security services. Many people are unaware of the fact that they have become the subjects of global surveillance by integrating technology in every part of their lives. Then there are 'Big-Brother like' surveillance cameras positioned in almost every corner constantly spying on people causing a loss of privacy in public areas and undermining civil liberties. It is worrying that today's panoptic devices and structures are internalized by people thanks to governments' increasing grip on people's lives, thoughts and behaviours.

4.3. Ultimate Power and Oppression

The trilogy is centred around political elements, mainly the presentation of power and oppressive machinations under the rule of one supreme power. Panem is ruled by a single-party government that adopts totalitarian and fascist methods to assert and maintain its position. Violence is the most important political tool of the government. The Capitol organizes the games on the pretext of the failed riot of the Districts against it, so to punish the uprising, the games symbolize the annual reminder and a warning that any other rebellion against it will result in catastrophe. The punishment the Capitol uses is so cruel because the lives of innocent people are at stake. The message given to the Districts is that the Capitol is the only power. The Capitol's other tool of violence is the police force. "Repressive state apparatuses", in Althusser's term, are at work as oppressive and control mechanisms. The Peacekeepers, a similar version of Nazi armed forces like Gestapo and Stormtroopers, have full authority to use terror tactics and violence against the people of the Districts. Any act or thought against the Capitol is strictly and openly punished to show people the results of their actions. Force is also used to eliminate political opponents. President Snow achieves his power by poisoning his rivals to guarantee his position as the supreme leader.

The Capitol ascertains its power also by its strict control mechanisms. For example, arms and weapons are strictly forbidden in the Districts because their production and distribution of it is a sign of rebellion. Those who attempt to touch a

hand on weapons are killed. In order to eliminate communication and any other engagement among the Districts, the Capitol physically and strategically divides the Districts by electric fences so that they are shepherded and controlled easily. Besides, the Capitol regulates food and other production. Hunting for food is forbidden and resources from different Districts are controlled and collected by force. Men are forced to work in mine coals under cruel conditions. Every District must work hard only to give everything to the Capitol.

District 13 shows similar characteristics of ultimate power and control. It is militaristic, and overly regulated in terms of training, production and consumption. The ruler Alma Coin is a strong power figure. She does not show mercy to the ones who fail to follow the strict regulations and who could pose a threat to her own reign and cause. Even Katniss, the symbol of the rebellion, can be disposable if it is necessary. Rebels fire on civilians no matter who they are, which shows that it is the cause and the outcome that matter. Consequently, “the rebel victory and Coin’s death might suggest that one form of absolute power cannot be used to replace another” (Pavlik 2012, 35).

5. GENRE CONSIDERATIONS

It would not be fair to assess the value of Collins’s work solely on its multi-thematic approach to a moving plot. Its literary status should also be determined on the fact that it does not adhere to conventional genre definitions. The trilogy’s connection with various genres makes it more compelling, surprising and successful.

First and foremost, the trilogy fits into the category of dystopia. It is set in an alternative world that critically reflects potential negative and ultimate consequences of present-day actions of humanity. In Collins’s world, characters fight against an oppressive power that alienates, dehumanizes and exploits them by various practices such as force, media, surveillance and even entertainment. In this war of freedom and survival, there is a focus on individual and social change which can be ensured by the efforts and sacrifices of the young generation as liberators. What makes *The Hunger Games* trilogy different from several major adult dystopian works like *A Brave New World*, 1982 and *Fahrenheit 451* is that it does not end darkly or happily. One could

argue that Katniss is nevertheless broken and defeated in a world in which she is confined to a limited and domestic sphere whereas others could assert that her condition with her happy kids may herald a brighter future. In this respect, the ending is deliberately left open to interpretation in such a way that it encourages readers to think about their own.

The trilogy can also be read as a *Bildungsroman*, that is, the novel tells about the psychological and moral growth of a young adult who experiences several hardships, conflicts, disappointments but also achievements. An ordinary girl is forced to leave her family and community and she becomes part of a dangerous and alien world that eventually transforms her. She takes her father's role as the provider, becomes a seasoned fighter in the arena, 'the girl on fire' in front of the audience and ultimately a symbol of resistance that leads to the collapse of the Capitol. She is transformed from someone who obeys and learns into a free agent that takes her own initiatives for a greater good, that is, social change.

Finally, it can be argued that *The Hunger Games* trilogy fits into the science fiction category. The story is set in a dark, high-tech alternative future. The technology used in the book is not available today; although Collins does not show science as the source of society's problems, the mutations, tracking devices, force fields, and weapons serve as menacing technological tools that make us think about the evil use of technology in the context of war. Both sides invest in the development of new technologies to test and use against their enemy and it is evident today that war is a legitimate excuse to invest in new, evil technologies.

CHAPTER THREE

KATNISS'S MULTIPLE GENDER ROLES

1. KATNISS'S MASCULINE ROLE

Panem is ruled not only through divisions, a system of dividing its people into Districts by electric fences, armed forces and limited communications, but also through hunger, dependency and poor working conditions that ultimately bring exploitation, misery and death. Katniss's family life in District 12, the smallest and poorest District, represents the life in Panem dramatically because the provider of the family, Katniss's father, was killed in a mining accident. Under these circumstances, Katniss, as the young woman of the family, takes control and becomes the provider and protector of the family instead of surrendering to dependency on others: "At eleven years old, with Prim just seven, I took over as head of the family. There was no choice" (Collins 2008, 31). In the scene in which Katniss is visited by her mother and sister after she volunteers to take the place of her sister, she dictates what they have to do in order to survive in her absence holding her mother's arm and telling her strictly not to put herself in a position where she cannot take care of Prim again: "You can't clock out and leave Prim on her own. There's no me now to keep you both alive" (Collins 2008, 41). It is obvious that Katniss functions as the father figure in the family and shows it in her actions and speech.

Although hunting, gathering plants and fishing in the woods are prohibited, Katniss seems to be well-equipped with these skills along with trading on the black market. Having been taught by her father, Katniss is clearly not happy with her mother's incapability of getting over depression, so she uses these skills to take care of and provide for her mother and her sister, Prim. Katniss's female role is contrary to the typical domestic roles women are traditionally assigned in a patriarchal mindset. Women are confined to the domestic sphere to take care of the kids, household duties and develop skills, like Katniss's mother's healing skill, remaining as wives and mothers. Talking about the sex roles in an ideological sense, Millett maintains that "sex role assigns domestic service and attendance upon infants to the female, the rest of human achievement, interest and ambition to the male. The limited role allotted the

female tends to arrest her at the level of biological experience” (Millet 2000, 26). In this sense, Katniss does not fit in these roles and she does not accept the role of a domestic woman. Instead, she becomes ‘the man of the family’, taking initiative for a role that requires her to carry out manly duties and demonstrate masculine behaviors traditionally assigned to men by the patriarchal system she is living in.

First of all, masculine characteristics are also shown in Katniss’s preferences. Like an action heroine does, she uses and owns men weapons. She is attached to her bows, her father’s old bow and the one designed for her to be used in the games and the war. She is excited by weapons, by their design, functionality and advanced technology like the ones in the Training Center. She weighs and tests them to figure out how they can work out in her best interest to survive. She also wears his jacket while trading and hunting, which obviously gives her toughness and a manly look.

The masculine characteristics of Collins’s heroine’s are more than that. When arguing that sex is a status category with political implications, Millet talks about the place of ideology in defining the roles of sexes in a patriarchal society. She says that the government sustains its power through “the ‘socialization’ of both sexes to basic patriarchal politics with regard to temperament, role and status”. To her, these politics ensure male superiority and female inferiority based on “the formation of human personality along stereotyped lines of sex category: [...] aggression, intelligence, force, and efficacy in the male; passivity, ignorance, docility, ‘virtue’, and ineffectuality in the female” (Millet 2000, 24). Moreover, referring to sociologist Allan Johnson’s argument about the characteristics of male identification and how they become gendered masculine or feminine, Lem and Hassel mention that Johnson’s male-identified qualities such as control, strength, competitiveness, toughness, coolness under pressure, logic, forcefulness, decisiveness, rationality, autonomy, self-sufficiency, and control over emotions seem to fit the norms of masculinity are valued and rewarded in a patriarchal society. As an example, Lem and Hassel go on to say that Katniss must avoid emotional vulnerability so “she is unemotional [...] and she remains emotionally detached throughout much of the narrative, sometimes exerting emotional control at critical junctures in the plot” (Lem and Hassel 2012, 122). She is well aware of the audience in important moments and she intentionally performs

masculinity-related gender roles. She evades any sign of pain, sadness and pity. For example, afraid of looking weak as an easy target, she avoids crying with Prim on screen. In the arena, she demonstrates self-sufficiency and toughness by strategizing her moves to be able to defeat her opponents and ultimately to survive. Also, she is physically strong. She has an athletic body, she can run fast. Although many other male tributes are bigger than her, she is aware of her own strength:

“I may be smaller naturally, but overall my family’s resourcefulness has given me an edge in that arena. I stand straight, and while I’m thin, I’m strong. The meat and plants from the woods combined with the exertion it took to get them have given me a healthier body than most of those I see around me” (Collins 2008, 108).

She looks bold and controlled under pressure, even in the end of the first Hunger Games when she dares to defy the Capitol by considering the option of killing herself and Peeta.

Resilience in the face of adversity is not the only drive and skill behind Katniss’s masculine acts. Self-preservation is her strongest suit. In the end of the first Hunger Games, when the Game’s new rule has been revoked to champion only one survivor, Katniss’s survival instincts kick in and she does not hesitate to point her arrow at Peeta’s heart. Additionally, Lem and Hassel argue that the “use of feminine foils gives Collins an opportunity to stress Katniss’s survival instinct, which fulfills traditional narrative expectations for a heroic protagonist” (Lem and Hassel 2012, 123). They add that the stereotypical femininity of the other female characters stresses Katniss’s male-identified strength against their feminine weaknesses. Displeased with her mother’s emotional and pragmatic incompetence, Katniss rejects her mother’s passive role in providing for her family. She adopts the traditionally masculine role by continuing her father’s task in the woods where she develops and practices predatory habits, thus defying the Capitol’s monitored subjection. Taking her father’s protective role also proves itself in the form of protecting others, especially her innocent, naïve and compassionate younger sister, Prim, to whom Katniss is powerfully devoted. Prim is the opposite of Katniss in character and in role, that is, she seems to be a copy of her mother. She imitates her healing skills and emotional treats, thus demonstrating

traditional feminine characteristics. Katniss fearlessly and decisively sacrifices herself taking Prim's place in the first reaping of the Games. Instead of staying at home and cooking food for her, she hunts in the woods and trades in the black market especially for her at the risk of getting caught and punished. Moreover, Katniss takes a similar protective role for Rue, a tribute reminding Katniss of Prim because she is small, quick, intelligent and physically alike: "She views Rue and Prim as virtually interchangeable, projecting what Katniss and readers alike recognize as Prim's inability to survive the Games onto Rue" (Mitchell 2012, 131). When they form an alliance and a bond of intimacy, Katniss assumes a familial role toward Rue believing that she might need protection like Prim. It is apparent that "justifying her all-encompassing position relative to Prim with her mother's parental incompetence, Katniss feels compelled to actively distance herself from all things overtly female" (Mitchell 2012, 131). Similarly, she throws herself in front of Gale to protect Gale from the whips of a Peacekeeper, which indicates a strong and forceful trait we can identify with masculinity in terms of physical power and resilience. Instead of being caring, kind and warm, this mentally and physically tough teenager can do everything to keep the ones she loves alive including fighting and killing. After all, considering the fact that Collins was inspired by two heroic male figures, Theseus and Spartacus, it is not surprising to see that Katniss exhibits masculinity in her acts and behaviors as they show strong resemblance to what these mythological characters both possess: power, defiance and rebelliousness, all of which are commonly related with masculinity. Refusing to obey authority with dignity, Katniss leads a rebellion with fury and a desire for vengeance.

On the other hand, Katniss's endeavor to save Prim during the reaping and Peeta in the arena fits with the fact that she also is the mother archetype. Katniss is very affectionate, devoted, soft-hearted and nurturing towards Prim, just like a mother is towards her child. She wonders that "Is my mother holding up, being strong for Prim? Or has she already started to slip away, leaving the weight of the world on my sister's fragile shoulders?" (Collins 2008, 61). Katniss sees herself as the replacement of her mother whose care she is unsure about. Moreover, we see Katniss in a motherly role when we witness that her motivation to be strong and stay alive in the arena is also for Peeta's survival. She says "I don't want Peeta singling himself out as a target

for the Gamemakers' anger. That's part of my job. To draw fire away from Peeta" (Collins 2009, 266). This time, her actions reveal her wish to save her friend. She never has a motherly relationship with Peeta, but behind her protective instinct lies a mother archetype. All these roles of Katniss considered, it can be argued that Katniss possesses a blend of both her mother's and father's gender heritage.

Considering Katniss's multiple gender roles in several scenes with her mother, sister, Rue and Peeta in the household and arena, it is apparent that Katniss can adapt to female and male roles fluidly because she is well aware of what her options of survival and protection necessitate, even if it means performing gender roles. She is conscious of her power and capabilities, and her performance empowers her to survive and defy not only impositions of her rulers, but also the gender scripts she culturally and sexually inherits. In this sense, it would not be false to argue that Katniss constructs a fluid identity in her gender roles.

Katniss's identity construction can be related to American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler's theories about traditional notions of gender and the role of society in forging gender identities. Butler argues that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (1999, 33). In other words, gender is not something we are, but what we do as a performance. Certain gender traits are expected by society to be performed in some ways as one's sex necessitates. If a boy's power and aggressiveness is attributed to his maleness, gender can be seen as an imposed cloth suited to one's sex. However, in Katniss's case "we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance which avows their distinctness and dramatizes the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity" (Butler 1999, 137). Katniss's transition between unstable gender roles therefore blurs the binary characteristics of genders, empowering her to determine the course of her life in the reality of survival. Appealing to both male and female readers, Collins, earlier in the trilogy, signals that Katniss will become "the prime site of constantly shifting gender variance throughout the series. Indeed, the hermaphroditic nature of the plant itself speaks directly to the configuration of Katniss as a character who blurs, erases,

transcends, and challenges traditional representations of gender in the series” (Mitchell 2012, 129).

2. KATNISS’S FEMININE ROLE

We see that Katniss’s performance of masculine traits is naturally expressed in her fight for survival and protection in District 12. Beauty, attractiveness, and seductiveness is of no significance to Katniss as they do not matter at all when it comes to taking the role of provider and protector. Katniss quickly tends to become compliant with her own gendered performance during the introduction of the tributes at the opening ceremony, which results in the fact that Katniss is fit into a set of gendered acts expected of her in the Capitol. Her constant fight to survive tells her that what she has to endure is only ensured by a role play that will keep her in the norms of female gender performances. She begins to realize the necessity of performing traditional forms of femininity regarding her survival when she becomes a tribute with Peeta.

In contrast to her earlier masculine actions, Katniss has to perform feminine acts especially after Peeta’s public expression of love interest. Although Katniss gives unfavorable reactions to it at first, “the realization that, like gender, sexuality can be performed in different sorts of ways depending on the desired outcome, serves her well in the arena when she decides that feigning a romance with Peeta will greatly increase her chances of survival” (Henthorne 2012, 53). Their mentor Haymitch summarizes the underlying reality behind the games: “It’s all a big show, it’s all how you are perceived” (Collins 2008, 135). Mitchell claims that because of Peeta’s expression of his feelings for her during an interview with Caesar, the host for the Hunger Games, Katniss and the audience become hyperaware of her status as a ‘desirable girl’. Along with “Peeta’s own presentation of himself as identifiable male, this moments suggest that District 12 has, indeed, sent in a now easily identifiable and distinctive male tribute and female tribute” (Mitchell 2012, 133). After all, they are now District Twelve’s star-crossed lovers, which advantageously distinguishes them from other tributes. At the opening ceremonies, hand in hand with Peeta, Katniss notices the jubilant reaction of the audience of the Capitol to her girly gestures and mimics such as blushing, giggling, giving a timid look and smile, therefore gradually becoming aware of her gender identity she is expected to perform in order to make herself more

likeable to both audience and sponsors. Additionally, the fact that only one lover will have to survive in the next Hunger Games makes their charade more tragic and at the same time entertaining. Basically, she embraces femininity as a performance. Her world can now be compared to a stage and her life to a play, like in Jacque's monologue in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, where "all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts" (Dusinberre 2006, 227). She is the one who now has to play many parts. "In Butler's postmodern view, it's only by repeatedly engaging in gendering acts that gender is constituted. All of these things Katniss does to convince the world she's in love with Peeta don't just express her femininity, they also constitute it" (Miller 2012, 156).

The Capitol's expectation of Katniss to play a feminine role can obviously be attributed to its prioritization of sexual identity and therefore heterosexuality. Because Katniss is a woman, the Capitol takes it for granted that she has to be naturally heterosexual and feminine. Heterosexist cultures like Panem seem to take compulsory heterosexuality for granted, a term used by Adrienne Rich, which assumes that women and men, as binary sexes, are innately attracted to each other emotionally and physically, so heterosexuality is the norm. Arguing against this innateness, Rich questions the assumption that most women are naturally heterosexual and claims that heterosexuality is an institution, "something that has to be imposed, managed, organized, propagandized, and maintained by force" (Rich 1996, 135). President Snow refuses to believe that Katniss and Gale are just best friends and threatens to kill the people she loves if she does not prove to him and to the public that she and Peeta are lovers not rebels. As in Rich's remark, President Snow imposes compulsory heterosexuality in an attempt to put an end to starting disturbance among the Districts and maintain order. One reason why Peeta and Katniss's romance works in front of the cameras is because heterosexual and feminine norms are encouraged, accepted and acclaimed. Katniss becomes more aware of the fact that their performed romance is increasing her chances of survival and popularity among audience and Gamemakers, so she does what Snow and Panem expect her to do and takes her act of heterosexuality to the next level seemingly getting engaged to Peeta and even pretending to be pregnant. Peeta's announcement of pregnancy raises the citizen's sympathies "thereby

reinforcing the concept that she is a desirable, but vulnerable, woman who requires protection” (Woloshyn, Taber and Lane 2013, 155). As mother and wife-to-be, Katniss now takes on a more dramatic persona making herself more submissive to conform to feminine traits by a better performance than her earlier situation. She furthers her performance by pretending to have lost her child to cause drama and get sympathy from the audience as a suffering woman and mother. It is ironical that her artificial drama leads to genuine reactions as she develops her gender performance.

Katniss’s female performance can also be credited to Peeta who stands as a reinforcing masculine counterpoint to her femininity by declaring his love, “thus normalizing her character within the context of a heterosexual romance and compulsory heterosexuality” (Woloshyn, Taber and Lane 2013, 154). Katniss expresses that she was just “silly and sparkly and forgettable” (Collins 2008, 136) without Peeta. Katniss’s feminine performance only matters to the audience and the Gamemakers as long as its counterpart, a masculine figure, is involved and even reinforced. The masculine figure represents patriarchy in Panem and Peeta is naturally entitled to be the head of the family they are expected to have. “Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads” (Millett 2000, 33). Katniss’s role and choices as a woman are undermined and designated by a male figure although he is not socio-economically more privileged than Katniss. Peeta’s biological entity, that is, his sex, makes him superior in his relationship with Katniss. Katniss has to encourage Peeta to talk about the first time he felt something for her in order to extend the attraction of their love affair and feed the audience what they expect from their soap opera-like story. By kissing, these masculine and feminine figures together make their star-crossed love stronger by satisfying agents that expect heteronormative necessities, thus conforming to compulsory heterosexuality. From this perspective, it would not be wrong to say that the society of Panem and our own share similarities. According to Connell,

“All forms of femininity in this society are constructed in the context of the overall subordination of women to men. [...] The dominant structure which the construction of femininity cannot avoid is the global dominance of

heterosexual men. The process is likely to polarize around compliance and resistance to this dominance” (R. Connell 1987, 186-187).

Connell puts the option of compliance in the center of the pattern of femininity and calls this pattern culturally and ideologically supported; “emphasized femininity”. Innocent, fragile, motherly and heterosexual lovebird, Katniss performs the emphasized femininity in direct binary opposition to Connell’s other gender pattern: “hegemonic masculinity”. Hegemonic masculinity can contain “openings towards domesticity and openings towards violence, towards misogyny and towards heterosexual attraction” and it is “constructed in relation to women and to subordinated masculinities” (R. Connell 1987, 186). Gale fits this position well enough as a tough, strong, decisive, autonomous and heterosexual provider. He benefits from patriarchal norms as Katniss puts that early in the first book: “if he wants kids, Gale won't have any trouble finding a wife. He's good-looking, he's strong enough to handle the work in the mines, and he can hunt” (Collins 2008, 10). Remaining as a stereotypical type, he demonstrates his masculinity in every way he can. Peeta, on the other hand, portrays a marginal and alternative form of masculinity that could challenge the traditional gender roles. He does not hesitate to openly show his emotions; he’s kind, sensitive, cooperative, and attracted to domestic talents such as painting and baking. “While it could be argued that Peeta's character is a positive example of marginalized masculinity (or one that is not hegemonic as represented by Gale), Peeta’s feminine characteristics in a male body establish him as weak and in need of protection” (Woloshyn, Taber and Lane 2013, 154). However, he serves to heterosexual patriarchy in a sense that he objectifies Katniss before the audience and somehow benefits from the duo performance by the possibility of getting her eventually as a spouse and true lover. What is more, Peeta is automatically assigned to the hegemonic masculine role, not Gale, by the Panem audience once he publicly ‘claimed’ Katniss as a crush, a lover, then a wife-to-be with a child. We see that it is a male who designates the heteronormative roles, as masculine and feminine, in front of the audience. “Like hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity as a cultural construction is very public” and its promotion is “organized, financed and supervised for men” because “this kind of femininity is performed, and performed especially for men.” (Connell 1987, 187-188). The possibility of Katniss’s rejecting a man like Peeta would mean

defying the expectations of Panem's heteronormative and patriarchal society, therefore losing the support she needs to survive. After all, "the category of sex and the naturalized institution of heterosexuality are constructs, socially instituted and socially regulated fantasies or "fetishes," not natural categories, but political ones" (Butler 1999, 161).

Katniss's chance of survival and success in winning the support of sponsors and the Gamemakers is also heavily dependent on her pre-Game physical attractiveness as a female tribute and a beautiful partner. While talking about the aspects of patriarchy and the psychology of both sexes, Millett claims that "the female is continually obliged to seek survival or advancement through the approval of males as those who hold power. She may do this either through appeasement or through the exchange of her sexuality for support and status" (Millett 2000, 54). As Katniss knows "The Hunger Games aren't a beauty contest, but the best-looking tributes always seem to pull more sponsors" (Collins 2009, 58). "Katniss's personal affinity for switching gender roles is distinctly parallel to the Capitol's prioritization of gender malleability" (Mitchell 2012, 134) through the process of feminization. Though it also works for men as well, women undergo a much longer beautifying process compared to the minimal work applied to men's faces, like Peeta's. With her father's jacket, long braid and boots, Katniss' plain, masculine look that is far from the need for beautification in District 12 compulsorily undergoes physical transformation. She steps into a world of glamor and spectacle in the backstage of the Hunger Games, because the Capitol's consumer culture expects normative gender performances from its tributes, who are presented as merchandisable commodities. The Capitol is obsessed with the stylized presentation of genders, especially feminine. "The sponsors require more of a female tribute than mere endurance; they demand a hybrid of survivor and show-woman, who can slit a man's throat one moment and giggle and blush like a decorous female the next" (DeaVault 2012, 194). It is clear that what principally matters for the audience is not the identities of the tributes, but the appearances and performances of them in accordance with their sexes and genders accordingly. Katniss's femininity and body are sexualized according to the stereotypical gender norms. However, in theoretical perspective, Butler questions the body as a social construction:

“the notion that gender is constructed suggests a certain determinism of gender meanings inscribed on anatomically differentiated bodies, where those bodies are understood as passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law. When the relevant “culture” that “constructs” gender is understood in terms of such a law or set of laws, then it seems that gender is as determined and fixed as it was under the biology-is-destiny formulation. In such a case, not biology, but culture, becomes destiny” (Butler 1999, 12).

According to Butler, the body is a medium by which particular gender characteristics and identities are projected and recognized by culture. The body does not necessarily require gender as a precondition of existence, instead, they are embodied thanks to cultural practices, socialized gender roles and rules. In the Capitol, traditional markers of gender expected from Katniss’s feminine role reveal that the Capitol’s approach to gender is based on aesthetic prioritization of bodily transformation and performance. As the Capitol is preoccupied with excessive fashions and physical display, the process of Katniss’s superficial bodily transformation is mainly carried out by her Prep Team in the Remake Center as the embodiment of the Capitol’s obsession with entertainment, fashion and social status. Having already undergone physical changes, each of the experts of the Prep Team is responsible for one task of the beautification process. Wearing purple lipstick and always dressed lavishly, Flavius does the hair. “Excellent! You almost look like a human being now!” (Collins 2008, 62) he utters implying that her unadorned look is worthless and her new feminine look makes her look human like others including himself. Having aqua spiked hair and a golden tattoo above her eyebrows, Venia is in charge of waxing and eyebrows, and also disgusted by Katniss’s initial look. A fan of high-class fashion and the Games, Octavia wears extravagantly bright clothes and heavy make-up that match well with her dyed body. Like others, she is also not happy with Katniss’s physical imperfections that do not fit the beauty and gendered norms of the Capitol, so she actively takes part in refashioning Katniss as a testament to the Capitol’s prioritization of vanity and gendered self-representation, which also applies to men. Under his vibrant and colorful costumes, Caesar Flickerman does not look he is aging because of the surgical operations as Katniss notes. We see that the Capitol’s ideal style and popularity do not differentiate men and women and “the artifice inherent in their treatment and presentation of their bodies is suggestive of an approach to gender that equates bodily reality only with surface appearance” (Mitchell 2012, 135).

The stylists' adamant efforts to fit Katniss into gendered norms set by the Capitol by making her appear more distinctively female distresses Katniss at first. Apparently, the men in her life, Haymitch, Peeta and Cinna, "craft a feminine persona and place it on Katniss without her initial consent" (DeaVault 2012, 194). Never considered as an object of desire before, Katniss thus resists being gendered as female and fails to see herself as attractive, sexy and beautiful, all attributed to traditional feminine traits, saying "I just can't be one of those people he [Haymitch] wants me to be" (Collins 2008, 121). She rejects and becomes critical of her new feminine look in the objectification of the public gaze, that is, the male gaze, which shows the patriarchal power is at work. "The man looks; the woman is looked at. And it is the one who looks who is in control, who holds the power to name things, the power to explain the world and so to rule the world" (Tyson 2006, 102). Katniss comments in surprise and suspicion on the dress Cinna designed for her final interview: "I look, very simply, like a girl. A young one. Fourteen at the most. Innocent. Harmless. Yet, it is shocking that Cinna has pulled this off when you remember I've just won the Games. This is a very calculated look. Nothing Cinna designs is arbitrary" (Collins 2008, 355). As consciously intended by Cinna, just like specific staged actions, costuming must also add to the believability of Katniss' role as a compliant feminine who bears feminine features like innocence, passivity and harmlessness. According to DeaVault, "femininity and gender can be either a code of conduct or a performative construct, with costumes and masks to be donned and discarded as necessary" (2012, 194).

However, Katniss raises her awareness on how to perform these traditional roles of femininity and to work with her prep team in an effort to maintain public support and keep herself and her loved ones safe. She quickly learns that her survival is based on her ability to act out femininity. After all, "it is not her 'real self' that is being molded to be presented to audiences; it is an entirely different artificial self in question" (Mitchell 2012, 136). This artificial self is forged through Katniss's increasing sophistication and adaptation that empower her to perform skillfully in the way of manipulating her assigned feminine role under the disguise of body modification. Despite being predominantly obsessed with vanity like the majority of people in Panem, Cinna intelligently proves that body transformation can cunningly

be capitalized on the Capitol's dominant power structures. Katniss finds guidance and alliance in the Capitol's voyeuristic society with the help of Cinna's designs that deliberately transform her to certain roles she must take on. Not only making her the love-struck female, but also a mocking jay out of a wedding dress on live television, Cinna encouragingly dresses Katniss with the hope to help her accept and manipulate her roles. First amazed by how her glorious look will be carved into the minds of the viewers' memories, then struck by the fact that she and Peeta get a broader coverage in the ceremonies, Katniss starts to internalize the spectacle of vanity by not being, but seeming. With a greater awareness and control of her imposed role, she ironically strives to look "normal" according to the norms of her dystopian society.

The Capitol's expectation from Katniss to adapt herself to feminine roles in terms of attitudes and looks means more. In a broader sense, its social norms, which are based on vanity and spectacle, play an importantly forcing role in the Capitol's exercise of power. "The Capitol citizens are motivated primarily by an externally generated sense of self-worth and importance; their energies are directed toward subjecting themselves to the dictates of a fashionable society and transforming themselves accordingly" (Van Dyke 2012, 256). Referring to Adorno and Horkheimer, two important figures in Neo-Marxist criticism, Booker writes that they suggest that "art and culture can function as tools of oppression". He adds that "popular culture entertains and enthralls, subtly imposing mass conformity at the expense of any real aesthetic content" (Booker 1994, 13). A typical oppressive regime of dystopian literature, the Capitol uses its popular culture, the Hunger Games and the pre-games televised show, as a tool to reinforce and strengthen its power over its citizens by placing a powerful emphasis on vanity and spectacle as well as omniscient surveillance in order to distract them from the political, economic and social concerns, and desensitize them to the horrors and agonies of the people living in Districts. By this way, Capitol citizens are made obedient, superficial and self-centered bodies, and allowed to live an extravagant, superficial life without questioning and acting against the status quo. As the Capitol disciplines its citizens, the citizens discipline their bodies to conform to social standards attaching too much importance, time and energy to the looks and certain types of gender behaviors. In his chapter called 'Docile Bodies', Foucault specifically focuses on the body, the "object and target of power" as the sight

of constant regulation. His notion of “docility” explains that “a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved”, so it is subjected to institutional regulation (1995, 136). Katniss’s role and performance as a heterosexual and feminine love-struck girl are constructed and regulated by the Capitol for public consumption as a means of consolidating and enforcing its power via televised broadcast.

However, Katniss manages to capitalize on her fake public appearance and role initially by proving it to the sponsors that she is able to conform to her roles. She wins, she entertains, she performs drama and eventually wins the sponsors’ hearts, but most importantly, she achieves the necessary popularity to lead the rebels of the Districts into a rebellion. While she still must continue to keep the audience convinced of her “authentic” feelings for Peeta and feminized spectacle, the socio-political tensions she is involved in assign Katniss a new identity which demands her to perform as the symbol of hope among the Districts. Unaware of the fact that her appearance and acts ignited hope and solidarity in the rebels, Katniss now has to demonstrate a dual performance by both pleasing the Capitol and taking an active stand in alliance with the rebels. It is time to take on a new role: the Mockingjay.

3. KATNISS'S ROLE AS THE MOCKINGJAY

In *Mockingjay*, the final sequel of the trilogy, Katniss takes on an entirely new role and identity which no longer require her to perform as the female counterpart to Peeta with the purpose to satisfy the audience and President Snow, nor to be identified as masculine provider and protector. Katniss's performative role has much to do with her symbolic image as the Mockingjay of the rebellion, the symbol of hope and action for the districts. Her performance now has the purpose to collect political and military support from the districts; therefore, her presence, image and performance are of paramount importance not only to herself and the people she loves, but also to the community she is fighting with. Katniss's reluctantly adopting the role of Mockingjay and eventually becoming the embodiment of the rebellion and revolution is gradually observed throughout the trilogy, even before she officially becomes the face of the rebellion. Her role is seen through her rebellious acts in defiance of the Capitol and ultimately the so-called new system she is fighting for. However, it is clear that these rebellious acts go beyond her performances and contributions in the rebellion, they also reveal how she gradually rejects the gender roles she is assigned and ultimately turns into a feminist heroine empowering and liberating herself as a young adult.

It is clear that men in Panem are physically superior to women. Conditioned to be strong and aggressive, men outnumber women in the Quarter Quell and they can receive training at school, just like Peeta did in wrestling. One of the things that the physical superiority of men leaves to women is to bond alliances in the face of oppression, which is a feminist archetype. Katniss and Rue, for example, work together in the arena to stay alive and fight against their strong enemies. Their relationship in the arena goes beyond a simple alliance in time. These two girls establish a warm bond; to help, nurture, and protect each other. Rue's resemblance to Prim makes Katniss more sensitive and responsible, so she covers Rue in flowers and sings to her until she dies, and finally makes District 12's gesture of farewell to Rue help a rebellion start in District 11. In the speech she makes in District 11 as the victor, she goes unscripted and shares her genuine sorrow with the people of the district unlike a cold speech that is supposed to be indifferent. Lorde says "for women, the need and

desire to nurture each other is not pathological but redemptive, and it is within that knowledge that our real power is rediscovered” (Lorde 1993, 111). Katniss begins to discover her power as a female fighter who can spark disturbance by her rebellious acts and alliances she can form.

Similarly, motivated by her anger, she shoots an arrow to the space in which the Gamemakers are having a feast before the first game. Also, threatening a double suicide in the arena, she realizes “a double suicide would subvert the ideological purpose of the Games, [...] something that is entirely unacceptable. [...] Katniss in effect defeating the Capitol at its own game.” (Henthorne 2012, 102-103). This act can also be interpreted in such a way that a heroic symbol of both men and women triumph over one common oppression. The fight sparked by both sexes drives a variety of individuals and social classes to unite for a greater good. Perfectly aware of the presence of cameras, Katniss gradually realizes her potential effect and influence on the districts.

Also, Collins makes use of powerful imagery to visually reflect how these images defiantly add to the rise of the rebellion that Katniss fights for. For example, the wedding dress Cinna designs for Katniss bursts into flames, emits feathers and smokes until it transforms into the plumage of a mockingjay when she spins during the interview. It wins great acclaim from the audience thanks to its glory, yet it causes Cinna to be exposed and killed afterwards. Obviously, Katniss does not wear a typical wedding dress of a marriage that is made and formalized by a male’s, in this case Peeta’s, claim and public announcement. Instead, she wears a wedding dress which is designed so defiantly that it is found unorthodox and provocative by the Capitol. A wedding dress that burns is important as it suggests challenge and defiance against the patriarchal system of the Capitol.

Katniss discovers more about the significance of her symbolic presence for those who stand up against the Capitol, she also realizes that “she has become a larger-than-life figure who has the power to influence others [...] – the living incarnation of the Mockingjay” (Henthorne 2012, 105). Following the destruction of the arena and her meeting the brain team of the rebellion, she realizes that she has been a key player within a bigger scheme, all along orchestrated by the rebel alliance including her own

mentor and a Gamemaker. Plutarch summarizes the point in one line: “While you live, the revolution lives” (Collins 2009, 386). The hidden truth strikes Katniss like a revelation: “The bird, the pin, the song, the berries, the watch, the cracker, the dress that burst into flames. I am the mockingjay. The one that survived despite the Capitol’s plans. The symbol of rebellion” (Collins 2009, 386-387). The socio-political tensions she has been involved in and the people who have not been honest with her are forging another, new identity, a constructed persona, for Katniss without her consent. As in the Capitol, she has to adopt another challenging role, this time in the carefully staged spectacle of District 13 as the face of the revolution.

Katniss is very much aware of what her participation and role mean to herself and District 13 people.

“What they want is for me to truly take on the role they designed for me. The symbol of the revolution. The Mockingjay. It isn’t enough, what I’ve done in the past, defying the Capitol in the Games, providing a rallying point. I must now become the actual leader, the face the voice, the embodiment of the revolution. The person who the districts—most of which are now openly at war with the Capitol—can count on to blaze the path to victory. I won’t have to do it alone. They have a whole team of people to make me over, dress me, write my speeches, orchestrate my appearances—as if that doesn’t sound horribly familiar—and all I have to do is play my part” (Collins 2010, 10-11).

As in the Capitol, Katniss has a prep team that prepares her for public appearances and propaganda spots. Along with her ingenious strategist and leader of the rebellion, Plutarch, President Alma Coin is interested in Katniss’s image and voice to harness political support for the rebellion and her own agenda as appearance is a significant factor, or a selling point, in the manufacturing of the Mockingjay. “The rebellion leaders also find Katniss’ appearance lacking and [...] they strive to make her look like a realistic fighter while emphasizing her attractiveness, another connection between [Cornell’s] hegemonic masculinity (tough, able protector) and emphasized femininity (appealing, alluring)” (Woloshyn, Taber and Lane 2013, 155). One prep team member asks “how grimy can we make [Katniss] without disgusting people?” (Collins 2010, 44) because she, as a heroine and a female, has to be “scarred and bloody” and “stunning” (Collins 2010, 44), and “sexy”, too. (Collins 2010, 70). Also, she cannot choose her own uniform and accessories. She is presented as an object that

serves for the male gaze. Rather than her accomplishments, it is Katniss's appearance as a female and how she acts that is defined, valued and highlighted.

However, for the first time, Katniss gains a semi-autonomous opportunity for political action negotiating with Coin, an intelligent and arrogant Machiavellian leader who rules District 13 with strict codes of conduct and military culture. Coin needs Katniss as the symbol of the rebellion no matter what, including the deal she reluctantly makes with Katniss regarding the pardon of the captured tributes. Katniss seems to have a choice this time in accepting the role of Mockingjay, but she feels herself responsible mainly for Peeta, who is meanwhile being held captive and brainwashed. Aware of the fact that she has limited political power, Katniss does her best to be able to use this role to her advantage and tells Coin:

“[The captured tributes will] be granted immunity! You will personally pledge this in front of the entire population of District Thirteen and the remainder of Twelve. Soon. Today. It will be recorded for future generations. You will hold yourself and your government responsible for their safety, or you'll find yourself another Mockingjay!” (Collins 2010, 41).

Katniss, as a girl and a tribute, gets the right to speak in public contributing to the decision-making process of the war. She is in the position of asserting her own requests in the military agenda even if they are limited to her own and Peeta's survival. Katniss's setting of her own terms to someone in power shows that she is in a powerful position as a woman unlike any other women in her own league. In response to Katniss, Coin announces it to her people and makes the deal official despite some growing concerns in the crowd. Therefore, she warns Katniss clearly: “You better perform” (Collins 2010, 41). This alliance with Coin underlies Katniss's challenge between following her own agenda, to kill Snow, and meeting Coin's political demands. Failure in her performance will threaten her objective and her and her loved ones' survival. She is forced to conform to the social and political obligations as the manufactured Mockingjay because she realizes “[President Coin] has been the quickest to determine that [she has] an agenda of [her] own and [is] therefore not to be trusted. She has been the first to publicly brand [her] as a threat” (Collins 2010, 59). Under Coin's constant watch, Katniss now has to go on performing as a public brand, yet she remains the only female who can dictate her own terms to a power figure.

Unlike her previous feminine performance in front of the cameras in Panem, Katniss finds out that the only way to be the Mockingjay is to strip off her orchestrated and dictated performances, and hold on to authentic feelings and actions. Although she now has another PR team that deals with her make-up, costumes, scripts and her strategic performances, she gradually finds power and liberty in her genuine acts and feelings. After her disappointing initial performance in an action scene where she is supposed to say “People of Panem, we fight, we dare, we end our hunger for justice!” (Collins 2010, 71), Katniss remembers how convincing her previous performances were when Peeta was also involved, because her performances were constructed as a counterpoint to Peeta’s. Katniss says “It’s amazing, really, how long I have survived the cameras. The credit for that, of course, goes to Peeta. Alone, I can’t be the Mockingjay” (Collins 2010, 73). It is ironic that she must hold on to something real to be able to be fake. However, the team finds out that the authentic moments Katniss has are the ones when no one tells her what to do, such as her volunteering for Prim, or showing respect to Rue, or drugging Peeta to save his life. Therefore, the team decides to go after similar authentic moments of Katniss in shooting her promotion footage in order to ensure a convincing spectacle. One of these moments is when Katniss forgets she is in a costume being recorded by cameras. For example, the prop team arranges a visit to a temporary hospital in District 8 hoping to shoot scenes in which Katniss will possibly feel emotional and authentic. During the visit, she witnesses the wounded, the suffering and all those people trying to survive in warfare. It is then she comprehends that all her acts of defiance she demonstrates have already been considered as a symbol of hope by those people who are filled with comfort and inspiration in her presence. Katniss reveals “I was their Mockingjay long before I accepted the role” (Collins 2010, 90). Driven by this revelation and mood, Katniss has to witness that the hospital is being bombarded, killing everybody in it. It makes her defy the orders to stay behind bunkers and furiously shoots down enemy bombers exposing herself and risking her own life. It’s her genuine emotion and humanity that grab the attention of the audience and make her message stronger. Without any direction or script, Katniss turns to the camera and addresses the audience: “President Snow says he’s sending us a message? Well I have one for him. You can torture us and bomb us and burn our districts to the ground, but do you see that? ... Fire is

catching! ... And if we burn, you burn with us!” (Collins 2010, 99-100). This is a clear outburst from a heroine who must be taken into account not by her appearance, but her authentic deeds. Katniss portrays an image of a young woman who can explicitly dare to challenge what threatens and enslaves her people; a futuristic Jeanne d’Arc.

4. KATNISS AS A FREE AGENT

Katniss turns into a powerful individual not hindered and defined by her appearance anymore. She becomes a free agent who is fully conscious of her power and duty due to the harsh realities of war she is actively and deeply involved in. Collins suggests that “the human costs of war are almost beyond comprehension: Katniss can think about the war and contemplate its consequences, but the horror can never be reduced to words or thoughts” (Henthorne 2012, 70). The same emotion and rationale that have made her become a part of the rebellion now begin to tell her that she cannot show devotion to the war that puts her in a position of killing people from other Districts no matter what. “Having seen that in pursuing their interests the rebels can be as brutal and inhumane as the Capitol, she decides to act independently of them, pursuing her own personal vendetta rather than the rebel cause” (Henthorne 2012, 72). Even though she is not a soldier, she manages to be assigned to an attack mission on the Capitol hoping for an opportunity to assassinate President Snow. Upon her team commander’s death, she finally breaks away from her squad, lying to them about having new orders from Coin to take down Snow. This is the time she frees herself from her constraints and holds responsibility for her own actions as “a free agent” (Henthorne 2012, 73). Without any prop team and instructions, Katniss heads to the City Center to locate Snow. On her way, she experiences the war and its horrors directly. She witnesses the sheer death of men, women and children pierced by bullets, torn apart by shrapnels. What strikes her most is the fact that it is not only Peacekeepers shooting, but also the rebels, including her, killing people blindly. “Peacekeeper, rebel, citizen, who knows? Everything that moves is a target. People shoot reflexively, and I’m no exception. Heart pounding, adrenalin burning through me, everyone is my enemy. [...] There is nothing to do but move forward, killing whoever comes in our path” (Collins 2010, 341). Obviously, war kills everyone regardless of sides, districts, color, sex or age; and ultimately transforms individuals

like Katniss into murderers even if they never intended to be so. “As a dynamic character whose attitude develops and changes over the course of the Hunger Games trilogy, Katniss [...] becomes a different person, not only because of what she sees, but because of what she does” (Henthorne 2012, 74). As Katniss gets more involved with the war firsthand, she finds out more about what war actually means and she has to experience it the hard way as she breaks with the roles she has to perform.

Another factor that empowers Katniss to resolve to act alone is that she gradually gets disillusioned with the sanctuary-like image of District 13. Along with experiencing how horrible the war is, she realizes District 13 is not really what she used to think it was; and the side she is fighting with shows resemblance to the enemy, the Capitol, she is fighting against. Similar to the Capitol, civil liberties are restricted; food and consumption is strictly regulated and violations of the regulations are subjected to severe punishments. Also, District 13 controls information as the Capitol does. Just as the Capitol edits and manipulates the broadcasts to exhibit its post-products to Panem, “District 13 struggles for control over the broadcast, [...] realizing that control over this medium of communication means control over reality. Peeta is used as a puppet by the Capitol, just as Katniss is manipulated by District 13 during the battle for control of the airwaves” (Wezner 2012, 153). As the Capitol and District 13 compete with each other in the same ways by constructing fiction behind the backstage of the reality of war, Katniss struggles to construct her own reality and autonomy without an obligation to perform. She realizes for what purposes District 13 uses her image, along with Peeta and Finnick’s, as public faces for propaganda spot.

Similarly, Katniss’s disillusion grows as she becomes more aware of the fact that she is constantly being monitored and controlled by the panoptic and surveillance devices of District 13 in the same way she used to be in the Capitol. According to Wezner, “Katniss’s evolution from a marginalized district’s tribute to a full-scale rebellion’s symbolic image occurs in part because of her increasing recognition of the function of surveillance and spectacle in identity formation and, ultimately, because of her manipulation of these factors” (Wezner 2012, 154). District 13 provides a similarity to the Capitol in terms of using these devices. Perhaps, it is more regimented and evilly cunning because its controlling mechanisms are disguised and hidden.

Katniss's actions in nature are kept in control by a tracking device attached to her ankle, and are restricted by an electrified fence, which was less threatening in Panem. Also, the omnipresent threat of punishment reveals itself in a scene in which Katniss's prep team is imprisoned in District 13 for taking some bread. As seen, similar to the Capitol's public punishments and executions, the panoptic system as a disciplinary mechanism of District 13 is deeply felt in its rule. The function of this mechanism is best illustrated by Foucault in his *Discipline and Punishment* in which he presents a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism referring to Jeremy Bentham's concept of panopticon in *The Panopticon Writings* (Bozovic 1995). It is an

“enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings” (Foucault 1995, 197).

Coin seems to rule District 13 in pretty much the same way Snow does. By the arrest of Katniss's team, Coin sends a powerful signal to her and other citizens to show her sovereignty in case of disobedience and threat against the order she wants to keep. For that reason, Coin “herself embodies the characteristics of the panopticon she governs. [...] She represents District's disciplinary modality of power that observes individuals, gathers and organizes data, and imposes its codes of conduct within society” (Wezner 2012, 152). Katniss knows that Coin views her as a threat, a to-be-martyr who would sacrifice herself to inspire the rebellion. Coin's authority and power are challenged once Katniss makes demands in public. Upon Katniss's question to Boggs about why Coin wants her dead, he replies “you will throw support to someone. Would it be President Coin? [...] If your immediate answer isn't Coin, then you're a threat. You're the face of the rebellion. You may have more influence than any other single person” (Collins 2010, 265-266). The persona constructed for Katniss is now so influential that it begins to threaten Coin for fear of losing her influence to Katniss who has been questioning her role in the rebellion due to her growing distrust and concern with the cause.

In the closing chapters of the book, Katniss's final deed as the Mockingjay makes the biggest and most influential difference of all. Along with the acute realities of District 13, the horrors of war and her critical role in all of this, she is struck by the realization that the bombing of the children, including her sister Prim, outside Snow's mansion was actually ordered by Coin. Worse than anything she has faced in her life, it puts Katniss in a half-dead condition making her think that she has not been the Mockingjay all along but a "fire mutt" in agony, "Cinna's bird, ignited, flying frantically to escape something inescapable" (Collins 2010, 348). When the moment Katniss has waited, endured and fought for to kill Snow comes, she realizes that "the system of governance she is fighting for is as inhumane and unjust as the system it replaces. Her fear that the promised new world is just another version of the old" (Henthorne 2012, 56). Coin proves it when she offers to use Capitol children for one last Hunger Games, hinting that the Games probably will not end even in her time and will let the cycle of violence and injustice persist as usual. Finally, Coin's cynical plan to eliminate Katniss from her role as a public figure by letting her kill Snow in public backfires on her and she winds up being killed. The symbolic and public execution of Snow is perhaps something Katniss has never dreamed of, yet her decision to kill Coin instead is based on a moral responsibility and ethics indicating that what she has endured, worked and sacrificed for should hopefully result in a better world. Killing Coin in the presence of the audience of District 13 and Panem enables Katniss to send a powerful message to all the Districts and the beaten Capitol. The message implies that there will be no Hunger Games ever again in which young girls like Katniss and her sister have to adopt traditional female roles, performances and appearances to survive in a patriarchal framework that dictates compliance and submission through oppression and subjugation. The fact that Coin's characteristics bear strong resemblance to Snow's, hints that under Coin's rule, the District 13 society would apparently not be much different from Panem in time. After all, President Coin does not seem to promise a salvation and empowerment for women in the society where she, as a powerful woman, will be in charge. Tyson mentions that

"For Cixous, women will not learn to resist patriarchal thinking by becoming part of the patriarchal power structure, that is, obtain equal status and equal opportunity in current patriarchal society. For women's acquisition of power within the existing sociopolitical system would not adequately change the

system. Indeed, the result would be that women would become more like patriarchal men because they would learn to think as patriarchal men have been trained to think. Instead, she argues that, as the source of life, women are themselves the source of power, of energy” (Tyson 2006, 100).

By using her own judgement, power and energy to end someone’s life without any script, guidance, force or fear, Katniss breaks free of her socially-constructed performance that clouds her own true self, that is, she ends her own performance by sacrificing herself for everybody. In a way, Katniss becomes an advocate for women, men, gays, lesbians, people of color (i.e. Rue), the poor and the rich by shaping the end of the rebellion and becoming a political insurgent. The face of the revolution turns into the revolution itself; and most importantly, a strong heroine changes the social order as well as herself.

5. A NEW KATNISS

Throughout the trilogy, Katniss has found herself in the blurred lines of authenticity and performance that make her question, resist and adapt to several roles she has to take on under a controlling power that watches her all the time. Always holding on to her survival instincts, Katniss has also acted for the benefit of others, the ones she loves, to keep them alive. However, what she has gone through since the beginning, including Prim’s death and President Coin’s assassination, has a significant effect on Katniss’ character and identity development. Although she suffers from burnout syndrome, severe depression, grief and suicidal impulses, Katniss ultimately proves herself to be a sexually, economically and educationally independent young woman in the closing parts of the trilogy.

Katniss’s recovery and metamorphosis take time. She now must find meaning, solace and a new identity in a new life of her own and Peeta together. “Ultimately, for Katniss to find a meaningful place in a society where she can feel at home, she needs to find a space where social norms are not aimed at control and bodies are not constantly disciplined for political ends” (Van Dyke 2012, 264). Katniss starts to go through a difficult process of reconstructing her identity and life back in District

12 where she is without cameras, audience, dictators and performances. She has to live an unscripted life in return for an ambiguous one.

Following her sister's death, Katniss's mental state gets worse and it causes her to distance herself from others and suffer from guilt. Starting with her father's loss and followed by Snow's imposing threats, Katniss's traumas revealed themselves in the short and long run. They show symptoms such as nightmares, anxiety, emotional detachment and fear of intimacy, all of which get more severe when she realizes that she does not have a sister to protect and avenge anymore. Therefore, Henthorne argues that "Katniss loses both her sense of self and her ability to differentiate between the real and the unreal, [...] apparently unable to separate who she really is from the various roles she has been assigned by others": the survivor, the girl on fire, the love-struck girl and the symbol of revolution. (2012, 133). He adds that Katniss's confusion about her own identity is expressed when she resembles herself to a fire mutt, which means "she cannot maintain the various identities she has been assigned but has lost her sense of self" (2012, 134). She even becomes suicidal now that she cannot devote herself to the purpose of protecting her sister. Guilty, soulless and in-between, Katniss hates herself along with all humanity and stops her basic human needs like eating, drinking and sleeping. She expects death asking questions:

"How difficult can it be to arrange the execution of one murderous girl? I continue with my own annihilation. [...] For a few days I feel quite unwell and think I may finally be traveling out of this life. [...] And then a terrible thought hits me: what if they're not going to kill me? What if they have more plans for me?" (Collins 2010, 376).

Katniss learns that she has to live her life in District 12 under Dr. Aurelius's care until further notice because no one knows what to do with her now that the war is over. Katniss is still unclear about her role in the future, so she asks Plutarch if he is preparing for another war. His reply is uncomfortably true: "Everyone agrees that our recent horrors should never be repeated. But collective thinking is usually short-lived. We're fickle, stupid beings with poor memories and a great gift for self-destruction" (Collins 2010, 379). It shows the amnesiac tendency of Panem hints that the future may not bring peace to Katniss.

Forgetting could be Panem's weakness in the future and it could be predicted that people might suffer again because of it, yet it is Katniss's memories of her background that help her to cure. "In light of Panem's poor memory, the true power of Katniss's revolt is not assuming the role of Mockingjay. Her power comes in disengaging from public vision and narrative as well as her separation from the visibility of the public and the strength of her memories" (Koenig 2012, 47). Along with the people that come to her house to take care of her, it is Katniss's memories that help her to recover and instill a spark of life in her. Around the house, she finds her father's old leather jacket, her mother's handwritten book of healing plants, her parents' wedding photo, her bows and even their cat Buttercup. She confronts Prim's death once again, but then finds comfort thanks to the cat. She also reconnects with her mother on the phone, crying together. What she keeps dead inside her begins to liven up with Katniss's holding on to living beings and the objects that help her reanimate old memories and bonds. Katniss grows more resilient and perseverant and she decides to create a book in which they recorded "all the details it would be a crime to forget" (Collins 2010, 386). By this way, Katniss starts narrating with Peeta and Haymitch what is genuinely worth remembering such as her father's laugh, Peeta's father with the cookies, Rue and many more. All these memories and people represent authenticity and meaningfulness that are free from performance for the sake of others. Her effort to survive is not based on performance, but true memories and true identities.

Katniss and Peeta provide meaning to their lives by holding on to each other. They reconstruct their lives by keeping busy, sharing work and most importantly, strengthening their bond in difficult times. While Peeta is still haunted by flashbacks that come suddenly, Katniss suffers from nightmares of lost children. Yet, she knows where to find comfort:

"Peeta and I grow back together. [...] His arms are there to comfort me. And eventually his lips. [...] What I need is the dandelion in the spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that" (Collins 2010, 388)

In most parts of the trilogy, their performances and staged affair before the audience to win sympathy blur the authenticity in their relationship, confusing the characters and the readers alike about which emotions and attitudes are real. Yet, having stripped off their previous performances, Peeta and Katniss start an ultimate relationship which seems to be authentic. Unlike the previous patriarchal conditions in which rejecting Peeta in public meant rejecting the role of a heterosexual and inferior woman in the eyes of supporters, Katniss now freely “picks whoever she thinks she can’t survive without” (Collins 2010, 388). At first, Katniss’s gender role revolves around emphasized femininity exhibiting her as a desirable, yet weak girl who needs protection from men, but she proves the opposite and grows as a damaged, but strong woman who manages to save and cure herself along with a male figure, Peeta. She is no longer defined by the man she chooses to marry, her choices and accomplishments have made her who she is. It can be argued that Katniss is portrayed as an independent woman who does not necessarily have to choose a partner when she has to. She is empowered to define her own sexual and family life freely.

In the epilogue of *Mockingjay*, Collins portrays Katniss as a wife and a mother. DeVault argues:

“Given her violent bid for autonomy and independence throughout the trilogy, relegating Katniss to the domestic sphere seems to do her a grave disservice. [...] However, Katniss’s ending affords her the luxury of creating and controlling her domestic space. [...] Motherhood seems to be almost a reward for her hard work and sacrifice, a way for her to find peace” (2012, 197).

In light of DeVault’s remark, we can say that Katniss reconstructs the things she has lost: her family, identity, autonomy and independence. Unlike her orchestrated pregnancy scenario back in Panem, she has the fundamental sexual and reproductive rights. Having control over her body, she has the authority to make decisions about having children with anyone she wishes. In the closing scene, Collins draws a pastoral, dream-like imagery that evokes innocence and hope. Katniss’s children playing in the Meadow over the graves of District 12 show that she finally believes that the future can hold hope and change if not perfection. Thanks to her actions and sacrifices, the new Panem has become safe enough to have children for the time being. Collins portrays Katniss’s children as nameless and not in much detail, yet in contrast with the

troubled and violent children of the trilogy. However, she still seems to be concerned about the future. She knows that her children will eventually learn about her past, her nightmares. “Why they came. Why they won’t ever really go away. I’ll tell them how I survive it” (Collins 2010, 390). Apart from sexual and domestic control, Katniss also has control and autonomy in the educational environment of her household. She can educate her children about oppressive and patriarchal governments that impose themselves on their societies through domination and subjugation.

Instead of happiness and relief, the end seems to hint exhaustion and caution along with hope. Collins seems to seek a resolution between the dystopic world of her novel and a desired, utopian conclusion even her main character is not sure about. Tan summarizes the ending of the trilogy:

“There is an uneasiness in the ending of the Hunger Games trilogy, a sense of purgatorial limbo as the end of dystopian destruction is juxtaposed with pastoral beginning, and it is Katniss who stands as the fulcrum who unites, and yet disrupts, the full union of these worlds, refusing to lose herself—or allow readers to lose themselves—in the full joys of utopian conclusion” (2014, 48).

It is common in the conventions of a young adult novel that there is a romantic conflict between sexes and this conflict is resolved by the main character’s making a choice between two mates. Many teenagers may be pleased with the ending of the trilogy as Katniss and Peeta are portrayed to have finally come together to live happily ever after with their kids. However, Collins obviously approaches the readers presenting more significant and meaningful ideas in depth. She “is doing something much more radical, that is, challenging the idea that a woman’s happiness and success is ultimately determined by her choice in a mate” (Henthorne 2012, 61). In other words, Katniss is no longer defined by her choice in partner, nor by her performance and looks. The end is about how she manages to define herself and her destiny as a young, strong woman.

6. KATNISS AS A FEMINIST FIGUREHEAD

Throughout the trilogy, Katniss is portrayed as a complex character with multiple and contrasting gender roles that demonstrate feminine and masculine attributes at the same time. These roles are shaped and adopted in a broad range including her relationship with Gale and Peeta as well as her individual role in the course of survival. Instead of fitting into stereotypical patterns of sexes, she breaks down and defies binary oppositions of sexes each of which presents related norms and expectations of behaviors and appearance. Characteristics of an action heroine such as progressiveness, empowerment and independence also add to her fluid gender roles and to the fact that she transforms into a political and feminist figurehead who seeks liberation and challenge in her society. In these respects, Katniss can be argued to fit well with some principles of second wave and third wave feminism.

Katniss's possession of masculine and feminine attributes enables her to become a more complex person instead of conforming to traditional gender patterns ultimately challenging the assumption that gender and sex are two identical concepts. Connell comments on the French feminist Simone De Beauvoir who redefined these concepts:

“Being a man or a woman, then, is not a pre-determined state. It is a becoming, a condition actively under construction. The pioneering French feminist Simone de Beauvoir put this in a classic phrase: 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.' Though the positions of women and men are not simply parallel, the principle is also true for men: one is not born masculine, but has to become a man” (R. Connell 2009, 5).

Challenging gender categories and domination, Beauvoir rejected the idea of the polarity of masculinity and femininity. With this distinction, attributing roles and social values of women and men to biological necessity does not seem to be possible, which means that men and women can adopt roles that do not necessarily fit society's expectations. Connell goes on to say that “psychological research suggests that the great majority of us combine masculine and feminine characteristics, in varying blends, rather than being all one or all the other. Gender ambiguity can be an object of fascination and desire” (R. Connell 2009, 6). Reflecting gender ambiguity, Katniss challenges the male monopoly on power, liberty and aggression along with the fact

that she proves that women can also be strong and even stronger than men, who can also be more sensitive than women.

The idea of the combination of masculine and feminine characteristics in one's identity is strongly connected with Sandra Bem's concept of "androgyny", a personality type defined by a balance of both masculine and feminine attitudes and roles as a positive, desirable and powerful condition. Bem mentions that androgyny challenges gender polarization in psychology and compares the assumptions of both:

"Whereas it had earlier been assumed that sex should determine the kind of self-concept an individual should develop and the kind of behaviour she or he should engage in, now it was being suggested not only that an individual should be free to have her or his own unique blending of temperament and behaviour but, even more important, that the very division of attributes and behaviours into the categories of masculine and feminine was somewhere between problematic and immoral" (Bem 1993, 121).

She also says that the concept of androgyny echoes the feminist ideals of the 70s and was especially idealized by feminists such as Carolyn Heilburn and Adrienne Rich. Referring to Heilburn's main book in which she introduces her work on androgyny, Bem mentions how Heilburn approaches the concept:

"I believe that our future salvation lies in a movement away from sexual polarization and the prison of gender toward a world in which individual roles and the modes of personal behaviour can be freely chosen. The ideal toward which I believe we should move is best described by the term 'androgyny'. This ancient Greek word - from andro (male) and gyn (female) ... seeks to liberate the individual from the confines of the appropriate...It suggest a spectrum upon which human beings choose their places without regard to propriety or custom" (Heilburn 1973, 9-11).

Apart from Katniss's own, Gale and Peeta also demonstrate androgynous roles in their relationship with Katniss. After the games, Peeta shows some traits of heteronormative masculinity when he makes Katniss an object of love in front of audience. On the other hand, it could be argued that he represents a feminine figure compared to Katniss. He publicly cries, makes cakes with flowers on them and he is continually in need of protection and recovery from mental and physical handicaps. Therefore, Katniss is seen as more masculine than Peeta. Hunter, provider and warrior,

Gale is another masculine character. He is wild, assertive and angry. However, when it comes to his love with Katniss, he is the one who becomes vulnerable as she does not declare love for him. Dreaming about a settled life, he also wants to run away together and have children in the future, which hints feminine features. In her relationship with Gale and Peeta, Katniss also switches gender roles. When she is with Gale, Katniss seems to have a feminine role. Gale tries to protect, guide and accompany her. Katniss expresses her trust in him describing his masculine look: “this is the first time I really feel it, lean and hard-muscled against my own” (Collins 2008, 44). When with Peeta, Katniss adopts a masculine role that saves and takes care of him. These facts show us that not only Katniss, but also other main characters switch gender roles.

Deconstructing binary oppositions such as active / passive, subject / object, strong / weak, thus embracing an ambiguous, multi-layered and diverse identity that goes beyond society’s gender expectations, Katniss is portrayed as an action heroine that challenges her culture’s gender norms and promises empowerment and liberation against oppression in every sense. This ties Katniss in well with third wave feminism. Heywood says it “respects not only differences between women based on race, ethnicity, religion, and economic standing but also makes allowance for different identities within a single person” (Heywood 2006, xx). She goes on to say that “third-wave feminist ideas about identity embrace notions of contradiction, multiplicity, and ambiguity, building on postmodern theory’s critique of ideas about the unified self and engaging with the fluid nature of gender and sexual identity” (Heywood 2006, 257-258). With all these multifaceted qualities, Katniss fits within the fluid interpretation of gender and sexuality as well as the hybridity that the third-wave accepts. Katniss draws similarities to third wave feminists who “battle such obstacles by inverting sexist, racist, and classist symbols, fighting patriarchy with irony, answering violence with stories of survival, and combating continued exclusion with grassroots activism and radical democracy” (Brunell 2016).

Katniss’ fluid gender qualities and her empowerment in the process of becoming a feminist heroine prove to the young adult readers of the trilogy that they can explore their identities by moving beyond the gender expectations and roles which

they could be asked to fit in. In this way, they can empower themselves to be liberated, powerful and self-determined individuals of their societies. Katniss is a role model for young adult women as a strong female who also proves that being defined and valued by accomplishment can influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and political order. As the images of women, as well as gender expectations that young adult females can look up to, are usually presented and promoted by various media instruments, Collins shows the reader that these images cannot be reduced to binaries of body image and appearance. For that reason, “by blending genres, blending gendered characteristics, and crossing gendered divisions, Collins’s *The Hunger Games* becomes a hybridized entry into the canon of adolescent literature” (Lem and Hassel 2012, 126). Katniss succeeds to be a spearhead of a social and ideological change that encourage and inspire the reader to take action and initiative against oppressive practices of any sort in the hope of achieving a better world.

CONCLUSION

The quest for a better life has, for a long time, been of curious concern to humanity for a long time and it has vividly revealed itself in many works of utopian fiction such as Plato's *Republic* (around 380 BC) and Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). Associated with the developments of their eras like the Enlightenment, the discovery of the New World, the Renaissance and the industrial revolution, works of utopian fiction fascinated readers thanks to their elaborated depiction of an imaginary world of superior social and governmental systems in which equality, justice, prosperity and happiness prevail. However, major social and industrial developments were treated with skepticism as they also led to an era of poverty, inequality and growing discontent. As utopian ideals shuttered, authors were driven to critique and write about the political, economical and social issues of their time picturing the high probability of a bleak future of oppression, violence and tyranny. The catastrophic consequences of the world wars were immediate and deep at social and individual levels. The dark world that drew a stark contrast with utopian worlds urged authors to mirror a dystopian society in which citizens are oppressively ruled under constant surveillance, and freedom as well as individuality are restricted. Dystopian fiction emerged as a warning to millions of readers signalling the possibility of a horrible future if the terrible conditions of their society did not change or improve.

In today's world of unceasing war, terror, violence, oppression and conflict, many authors chose to appeal to young adolescents by writing about the fight and struggle of their peers. They are portrayed as the liberating young protagonists who are assigned to be the spearheads of society in order to achieve what their elders cannot or will not achieve to ensure a better world. This thesis analyzed *The Hunger Games* trilogy and its protagonist Katniss Everdeen through the perspective of gender studies in an attempt to investigate, under the feminist framework, how gender functions as a social construct, how gender relations work and are represented, and how binary and traditionally-defined gender roles are challenged. Furthermore, this study tried to examine the representation of gender performativity and the fluid gender roles of Katniss Everdeen in her burdensome search for survival and freedom. All the sacrifices she makes by performing and complying enable her to gradually transgress gender

boundaries and end up transforming into a powerful, feminist heroine within the society she manages to change in the end.

Katniss's metamorphosis into a powerful heroine and a figurehead of social change requires her to adopt multiple gender roles throughout the trilogy. We are first introduced to her masculine role. After her father's death, she takes control of her household as the provider and the protector of the family instead of relying on her mother's passiveness and poor conditions of her family. Instead of doing household duties like knitting, housework and healing, Katniss shows hunting and trading skills as she learned from her father. Also, her choice of outfits and interest in weapons make her different from her mother and sister. She is attached to her father's old bow and excited by the design, functionality and technology of weapons, especially the ones in the Training Center. Katniss's masculine characteristics reveal themselves in her personal qualities that are traditionally attributed to men in a patriarchal society. Because men are more valued than women in such societies, personal traits like intelligence, efficacy, aggression and self-sufficiency stereotypically define men. In the arena, she strategizes her moves to defeat her enemies, proves she is physically strong and a true survivor. In order not to look weak, she even performs as if she is not hurt or scared. Adopting masculine-related gender roles, Katniss defies traditional gender roles and the characteristics that are associated with them. On the other hand, Katniss never loses her instinct to protect the ones she loves. For the good of Prim, Peeta and Gale, she is protective, soft-hearted and even nurturing. As a young girl, her protective attitude and instinct link her with a mother archetype. This means that she does not possess a single gender role, instead it shows that Katniss can adapt to a blend of men and women's gender roles. Katniss blurs the binary characteristics of sexes and this empowers her to survive and adapt.

Unlike her naturally expressed masculine traits in District 12, Katniss is fit into a set of gendered performances that necessitates her to perform traditional forms of femininity with regard to her survival when she becomes a tribute with Peeta. His public expression of love interest in Katniss puts her in the status of a 'desirable girl'. She notices the audience of the Capitol reacts favorably and joyfully to her feminine attitudes and looks, especially when she is with Peeta. It does not take long for her to

realize that her acceptance and survival are based on her femininity as a performance. This says a lot about how the Capitol prioritizes sexual identity and heterosexuality. Since Katniss is a woman, the Capitol takes it for granted that she must naturally be heterosexual and feminine. As Katniss grows more aware of her new role, she takes her performance to a new level seemingly getting engaged to Peeta and even pretending to be pregnant. The announcement of pregnancy suggests that she is a desirable, but vulnerable woman who needs attention and protection by a man.

Also, Peeta plays an important role as the masculine counterpoint to Katniss's femininity. The masculine figure represents patriarchy in Panem and as his sex necessitates, he is entitled to be the head of the family. In this sense, his biological entity makes him superior although he and Katniss are socio-economically equal in the Districts. Peeta's claim for Katniss' love and Panem's expectations put Katniss in a position of 'emphasized feminine', in R.W. Connell's terms, which is characterized by innocence, fragility, motherly and heterosexual features. It poses a direct contrast to 'hegemonic masculinity' that suggests toughness, strength, decisiveness and autonomy. Whereas Gale is the best example for this role, Peeta is the marginal and alternative form of masculinity. Because Peeta is the one who designates the heteronormative and patriarchal roles in Panem by claiming Katniss as a lover, the possibility of rejecting him for Katniss means defying the Capitol and losing her chances of survival.

The Capitol's approach to gender is also based on aesthetic prioritization of bodily transformation and performance. For Panem, appearance in accordance with one's sex is important. Katniss's femininity and body are sexualized and emphasized in accordance with her feminine role. Thus, her look is objectified in the public gaze by several fashionable dresses and accessories to add to the believability of her role as a compliant feminine figure. Believability and public appearance also matter in the propaganda shots of District 13. Katniss's image and appearance are what Alma Coin is interested in to harness political support for the rebellion. Instead of her achievements, it is Katniss's sexiness and attractiveness in front of the audience that matter.

Katniss is no longer required to perform as the female counterpart to Peeta when she adopts the role of the Mockingjay. It is based on her symbolic image of the rebellion to collect political and military support, so she is expected to perform as a heroic and strong female figure in front of cameras. Her role is now based on a collective purpose, that is, it is not her survival on the line only, but also the other Districts'. However, it is obvious that she feels empowered and liberated when she goes out of script and shows rebellious acts. She gradually discovers her power as a female fighter who can make a change. She makes alliances, threatens a double suicide in the Arena, gives hope to the people District 11 in Rue's funeral, and starts a disturbance in Panem in her Mockingjay wedding dress. Moreover, she gets an opportunity to negotiate the pardoning of the captured tributes with President Coin. She gets the right to talk in public contributing to the decision-making process of the war. She subsequently finds out that she should strip off the dictated performances and hold on to the authentic feelings that make her powerful. Therefore, she turns into a powerful, young woman who is not defined by her appearance and orchestrated performances, but her deeds.

Katniss becomes a free agent who is fully conscious of her power and duty. She experiences the harsh reality and horrors of war in person; that is, the fact that the war kills everyone regardless of sides, districts, sex, age or ideas. As she becomes hyperaware of her surroundings, she is disillusioned with Coin and District 13, both of which do not promise any change or improvement. The omnipresent threat of punishment and control in Panem and District 13; and similar Machiavellian endeavors that both leaders pursue make Katniss follow her own agenda. She becomes capable of making her own judgement and breaks free of her socially-constructed performance that leaves her true self in the shadows. Her decision to kill Coin sends out a significant message that there will not be Hunger Games organization again and that urges men and women to adopt traditional gender roles, performances and appearances to survive and please others under an oppressive regime. Therefore, Katniss becomes an advocate for women, men, gays, lesbians, people of color, the poor and the rich for a better world. The face of the revolution turns into the revolution itself.

A new Katniss is born from the ashes of what she gone through from the beginning. Despite her sufferings, she ultimately proves herself to be a sexually, economically and educationally liberated young woman. She finds solace in her memories and the people she loves, all of which represent authenticity and meaningfulness. This time, the effort she makes for survival is not based on performances, but genuine possessions. Katniss's relationship with Peeta seems to be more authentic while their earlier performances and staged relationship in front of the audience confuse the characters and the reader about their real emotions and attitudes. Having rejected the roles she was assigned earlier, Katniss can now choose her own partner freely, someone she cannot survive without. Her role as a desirable but weak girl who depends on her male counterpart is gone now. Instead, she manages to cure herself along with a male figure, Peeta. She is no longer defined by a man, her choices and accomplishments shape her identity. Moreover, she has ultimate control on her own body, which means she is the one to make decisions about having children unlike the orchestrated pregnancy scenario in Panem. Apart from sexual and domestic control, Katniss can now educate her own children on the oppressive and patriarchal governments that could emerge one day as well as what suffering she has survived.

The critical approach to this thesis within the feminist framework included references to various feminists of the second wave and third wave feminist movements. The author of *Sexual Politics* (1970), second wave feminist Kate Millett argues that the institutionalised power men establish through patriarchy shows itself in social and political forms of oppression, which is dominantly exerted on women to fit them into objectified, traditional feminine roles. Katniss's position in the novel ties well with Millett's argument because she is the one who is assigned to these roles. Simone de Beauvoir also acted against women's subjugation by rejecting innately pre-determined states of sexes along with the power and powerlessness that are attributed to them. In this work, it was shown that Katniss defies and rejects the binary oppositions of gender roles by demonstrating androgynous characteristics. In this sense, it relates to the perspective of Sandra Bem's concept of androgyny which challenges gender polarization. Moreover, this work argued that Panem's and President Snow's heterosexual assumptions towards Katniss and her relationship with the two male characters are in parallel with Adrienne Rich's argument. She claims in

Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence (1980) that women are forced to be compulsorily heterosexual under the assumption that they should be innately sexually oriented toward men. Apart from second wave feminists, third wave feminists were also mentioned in this work. Unlike the second wave feminists' effort to differentiate between sex and gender, third wave feminism aspired to embrace an ambiguous, multi-layered and diverse identity that goes beyond society's gender expectations. Gender theorist and philosopher, Judith Butler is one of the prominent figures that influenced third wave feminism with her theory of gender performativity. In the light of her argument that most gender actions are witnessed, reproduced, and internalized to be taken on as a performative quality, it was explored how Katniss was repeatedly engaged in gendering acts by her performances. Accordingly, Katniss was portrayed as a feminist heroine that challenges her culture's gender norms, and promises empowerment as well as liberation against oppression by the fluidity of her gender roles.

Katniss is a complex and multi-dimensional female character who stands out as a realistic depiction of the complexities and difficulties of being a young female adolescent in a dystopian society. She has flaws and strengths like anyone. The reader witnesses her thoughts, beliefs, actions, disappointments, mistakes, happiness and, most importantly, her fight. For this reason, she serves the feminist endeavor in young adult literature to inspire young women to be strong, independent and accomplished in the face of oppression, exploitation and commodification. Obviously, *The Hunger Games* is an influential book that provokes readers to engage in further critical discussions. Therefore, considering the catalyzing effect of young adult literature, readers are humbly encouraged to critically reflect on their own society with regard to common issues such as gender roles, social justice and politics. It is also hoped that the multi-thematic characteristic of the novel is exploited in further research in order to provide a deeper and richer understanding of the potential it has to offer to society.

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ÖZGEÇMİŞ

11 Temmuz 1982 tarihinde Adana’da doğdum. İlk, orta ve lise öğrenimimi Mersin’de tamamladıktan sonra başladığım Selçuk Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünden 2004 yılında mezun oldum. Aynı sene başladığım profesyonel kariyerime Selçuk Üniversitesi, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, Beykent Üniversitesi’nde İngilizce Okutmanı ve bazı özel kurumlarda eğitim yöneticiliği yaparak devam ettim. 2017 yılında çalışmaya başladığım Kadir Has Üniversitesi İngilizce Hazırlık Okulu’nda okutmanlık görevim devam etmektedir.

Edebiyatta özel ilgi alanım Genç Yetişkin Edebiyatı ve Bilim Kurgu türlerinde distopya konusudur.

Taşkın Bora KOÇ