

Suzanne Collins's The Hunger Games Trilogy: On the Path to Early Maturity

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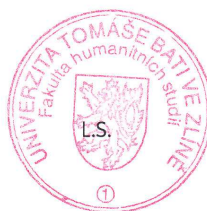
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce podrobně studuje a analyzuje protagonistku trilogie Hry o život Suzanne Collinsové, Katniss Everdeenovou, a všechno, co ji ovlivnilo na cestě k dospělosti, a to jak postavy, tak události. Jelikož se trilogie nedá zařadit pouze do jednoho žánru, termíny jako bildungsroman a dystopická literatura pro mládež budou vysvětleny v první části bakalářské práce a stejně tak bude trilogie zasazena do kontextu literární tvorby Suzanne Collinsové. Druhá část bude již pojednávat o postavě Katniss a vlivech, které na ni od raného mládí působily a jejich dopad na její psychický vývoj.

Klíčová slova: bildungsroman, Trilogie Hry o život, Suzanne Collinsová, Katniss Everdeenová, dospělost

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis studies and analyzes the main character of the trilogy of The Hunger Games, Katniss Everdeen by the author Suzanne Collins, and everything that influences her on her path to early maturity, not only the characters she encounters, but events as well. As the trilogy cannot be classified as belonging to only one genre, terms like Bildungsroman and Dystopian Literature for Young Adults will be introduced in the first part of this bachelor thesis. The trilogy will be put in the context of Suzanne Collins' writing. The second part deals with Katniss as the protagonist, and details the influences that affect her from the period of her youth and their consequences on her psychological development.

Keywords: Bildungsroman, The Hunger Games Trilogy, Suzanne Collins, Katniss Everdeen, Maturity

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INTRODUCTION

“We all create the person we become by our choices as we go through life. In a real sense, by the time we are adults, we are the sum total of the choices we have made.”¹ This thought by Eleanor Roosevelt suggests that maturity is a state of mind based on people’s decisions and abilities rather than an issue of age. This notion can also be extended to the main protagonist of The Hunger Games trilogy Katniss Everdeen, who even as a young girl has to face difficult choices in her life, implied through the quandaries she is faced with, as well as a degree of seriousness that marks her out from her peers, thus forcing her to adopt a state of early maturity.

Convoluting routes in the narrative of the protagonist Katniss are depicted in the trilogy of The Hunger Games, so that she and her choices in life are watched closely. It is expected that her journey is not going to be easy due to many obstructions – both internal and external – which she may come across, as the strong characters do not have it easy when growing up. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to determine whether Katniss matures prematurely and what the most influential events and characters are in her maturing process.

In the first chapter of this thesis the *bildungsroman* as a genre is presented along with a description of its main features and any subsequent links with The Hunger Games trilogy. The features of *the young adult dystopian literature* are portrayed as well, which not only correspond with Bildungsroman conventions, but also broaden the features of bildungsroman, aiding the depiction of crucial issues affecting Katniss’ psychological and emotional development. In Chapter Two, Suzanne Collins is introduced as a writer, and her Hunger Games trilogy is discussed in the context of contemporary literature for young adults. A brief overview of the trilogy narrative is given to offer an outline of the story, to facilitate the understanding of the analysis that follows.

The influences that contribute to Katniss’ ongoing maturity are dealt with in Chapter Three, which undergo analysis. Both the events and characters that impact on Katniss’ mental, emotional, intellectual and moral development are described, and conclusions are expressed, alongside connotations highlighting Katniss’ development towards maturity. Finally, the relationship of Katniss with two boys is depicted in the last chapter. This con-

¹ Eleanor Roosevelt and Donald Wigal, *The Wisdom of Eleanor Roosevelt*, ed. Donald Wigal (NYC: Kensington Publishing Corporation, 2003), 293.

siders her changing feelings towards them both, from which consequences for Katniss' maturing are deduced. Her final choice is explained, as too is the result of it, relating to fundamental change of her mind.

1 THE HUNGER GAMES AS A MULTIGENRE TRILOGY

For the purposes of this thesis which is to monitor Katniss' personal growth in The Hunger Games Trilogy from her childhood to the transformation to the grown-up woman the term bildungsroman is essential to understand correctly. Thus first of all the definition of bildungsroman will be introduced and then the female bildungsroman will be brought out as well, as a closely related to the matter. Furthermore, dystopia, dystopian literature and young adult dystopian literature will be explained because Hunger Games as many other contemporary books cannot be classified as to belong only to one genre.

1.1 Bildungsroman

Having roots in German language the word is derived from German Bildung meaning 'educational' and Roman 'a novel.' According to Oxford interpretative dictionary the term is understood as a "novel dealing with one person's formative years or spiritual education."² For the first time, the word bildungsroman was used by Wilhelm Dilthey in his *Life of Schleiermacher* (1870) however it was after publishing *Poetry and Experience* in 1906 that the term became popular and publicly used. Dilthey claimed that bildungsroman is strictly German accomplishment, "a product of unique political circumstances and an antithesis of the French and English novels of social realism."³ Later, during the First World War this ideology was widened with enhancement of nationalistic passion by Thomas Mann and others and became the philosophy of the Third Reich. After 1945, academics were trying to deny the deduction of Dilthey's, but "retained his basic premise: suddenly, the Bildungsroman was regarded as a literary symptom of the German Sonderweg [exceptionality], the separate path into modernity that had paved the way for fascism."⁴ While the word bildungsroman was introduced in 19th century, first work of the genre was considered to be the *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Wolfgang von Goethe from 1795 although there are older narratives which deal with resembling motifs.

² Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. "bildungsroman,"

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Bildungsroman>.

³ Karl Morgenstern and Tobias Boes, "On the Nature of the 'Bildungsroman,'" *Modern Language Association* 124, no. 2 (March 2009): 647, accessed February 27, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25614309>.

⁴ Ibid.

More detailed description dated from 1976 determines Bildungsroman as “a progression of connected events that led up to a definite denouement.”⁵ Marianne Hirsch Gottfried elaborates her premise and claims that it “concentrates on actions, thoughts, and reflections equally and attempts to portray a total personality: physical, emotional, intellectual, and moral.”⁶ Although this definition is precise, co-author of this analysis David H. Miles contributes to this thought by adding “a balance between the social and the personal, and so forth”⁷ is just as important. His premise is also elaborated by statement which says that at the same time bildungsroman “maintains a peculiar balance between the social and the personal and explores their interaction,”⁸ as one usually cannot in seclusion, one has to be a part of community or have social encounters with people from not only from their peer group to progress.

1.1.1 The Female Bildungsroman

Also known as the frauenroman is a narrative from a female perspective about coming-of-age can be understood as a subcategory of a bildungsroman. There are development differences between the frauenroman and the bildungsroman but many similarities as well such as “the protagonist’s involvement in his or her own development, self-reflection and introspection, and reintegration into society.”⁹

However, in its infancy authors writing the female bildungsroman focused on de-meaning problems of Victorian woman such as “the struggle with the expectations of social accomplishments and wifehood defining her entire being”¹⁰ as the female development was problematic due to the social restriction in the 19th century. As the bildungsroman with male protagonist with narrative of undergoing educational development accompanied with growth and citizenry, the female bildungsroman was “radical, but not nonexistent”¹¹

⁵ Marianne Hirsch Gottfried and David H. Miles, “Defining Bildungsroman as a Genre,” *Modern Language Association* 91, no. 1 (January 1976): 122-123, accessed February 27, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/461404>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Laura Pressman, “The Bildungsroman Project,” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <http://bildungsromanproject.com/literary-examples/>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Laura Pressman, “The Bildungsroman Project,” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <http://bildungsromanproject.com/female-bildungsroman/>.

as the society as such was not able to accept and appreciate the topic concentrating on a girl coming of age.

The first extensively acknowledged female bildungsroman is considered to be *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë where the main female protagonist undergoes “personal development beyond social and economic status.”¹² As the theme of the novel was controversial in her time for the reason that it follows “an orphaned girl receiving an education, thus shattering the strict class boundaries of the time,”¹³ it was published under the pseudonym Currer Bell. *Jane Eyre* is considered to be different from the other female bildungsromans of the time for the reason that others portray female protagonist as “growing down instead of growing up.”¹⁴ ‘Growing down’ can be explained as that female authors of bildungsroman genre are more likely to depict their female protagonist more to deal with “nostalgia, loss, home and community, and the generation gap between mothers and their daughters.”¹⁵ This suggests that the protagonists are focusing more onto the past and memories rather than onto the future, which has the effect of not growing up. This opinion is in favor of Henthorne, who states that Katniss “becomes increasingly less self-assured and less capable.”¹⁶ Continuing developing his statement with the pointing out that Katniss had not eaten or cleansed herself for a while thus she is “no longer the strong, independent person she once was.”¹⁷ His argument is supported by stating that Katniss eventually marries and has children although she claimed repetitively she would never. His premise is valuable to the point of the realization of what Katniss was able to do in all three volumes of the trilogy – she stood up to the reigning, she became the face of rebellion not only as a symbol but as capable warrior as well. Consequently, she gave the possibility of founding new, better and prosperous state, in which children are not sent into the arena to fight to death. That was the main reason she did not want to have children, therefore in the end not at all valid in the premise of Henthorne making his argument faulty.

¹² Carol Lazzaro-Weis, “The Female ‘Bildungsroman’: Calling It into Question,” *NWSA Journal* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 21, accessed February 27, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4315991>.

¹³ Laura Pressman, “The Bildungsroman Project,” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <http://bildungsromanproject.com/female-bildungsroman/>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Tom Henthorne, *Approaching the Hunger Games Trilogy: A Literary and Cultural Analysis*, (Jefferson, NC: Jefferson and McFarland, 2012), 35.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Despite the ‘growing down instead of growing up’ opinion of the female bildungsromans, the literary works has developed. From the eighteenth century till now their authors lead the female protagonists to today’s shape, making them strong, yet able to evolve. Among the most widely known pieces of contemporary female bildungsroman belongs *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret* (1970) by Judy Blume, *Speak* (1999) by Laurie Halse Anderson, *Twilight* (2005) by Stephenie Meyer, *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins and most recent trilogy of the *Divergent* (2011) by Veronica Roth. All of these books mentioned, the protagonists are dealing with serious problems. Namely in *Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret* where Margaret is torn between two religions and is trying to find what she truly believes in, and *Divergent*, whose protagonist Tris is to upset long established system of society while fighting for her life as she is different and society believes that people like her have to be eliminated.

As the society since Victorian era had changed, so did topics depicted in the female bildungsroman. In the past it would be considered outrageous to write about “sexuality, higher education, bodily changes, theme of rape”¹⁸ as such, much less with connection to girls. The current general public with almost no taboos accepts these issues as important to discuss and “enables the female bildungsroman genre to grow and develop.”¹⁹ Among the most common themes that appear in contemporary pieces of frauenroman belongs a love story or “a connection to another person.”²⁰ Comparing to the earlier works where the love story is included as well, however, from a different perspective meaning arranged marriages as a closure. There is a resemblance in growth between a male and a female protagonist as “the emotions and lessons learned by them are very similar,”²¹ despite their differences in the development during time. Therefore this similitude supports the belief that the female bildungsroman is “simply an extension of the genre [bildungsroman] rather than an antithesis.”²²

¹⁸ Laura Pressman, “The Bildungsroman Project,” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <http://bildungsromanproject.com/female-bildungsroman/>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

1.2 Young Adult Dystopian Literature

The Hunger Games Trilogy is classified not only as a bildungsroman but as a piece of young adult dystopian literature as well which is not an antithesis to the statement of Hunger Games being a bildungsroman but rather supporting this premise. The understanding of circumstances of Katniss' coming-of-age in the trilogy is crucial. Generally speaking, dystopia is understood as the opposite of 'utopia,' being explained by the Oxford Dictionary as "an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one."²³ Dystopian literature therefore depicts social and political construction in such world where young adults are portrayed as "suffering, especially collectively."²⁴

The protagonists of the young adult dystopian literature have gone through "traumatic social and personal awakening."²⁵ Not only did they begin to see flaws of the society they live in, but they start to rebel. To summarize, young adult dystopian literature combines a novel of growing up, not only physically but also mentally, with attributes of innocence losing. Furthermore, protagonists are most of the time in possession of "awesome mind control,"²⁶ which make them think deeper about the society as such and therefore face "decisions that mirror those made by society: What are the proper limits of freedom? To what extent can one rebel?"²⁷ This is what Katniss is trying to resolve throughout the trilogy; how much rebellion is acceptable and what the consequences of her rebellion will be.

As dystopian literature is concerned, the genre "challenges"²⁸ the precondition of utopic writings that humankind is able to be perfect, "arguing humanity's inherent flaws negate the possibility of constructing perfect societies."²⁹ Authors of dystopian literature write in order to alarm the audience on purpose. They demonstrate impossibility of a civilization without any blemish by "showing the awful results of what happens if the goal is

²³ Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. dystopia, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/dystopia>.

²⁴ Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry, *Utopian and Dystopian Writing For Children And Young Adults* (London: Routledge, 2003), 10-11.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Dystopian Literature," Questia Trusted Online Research, accessed February 27, 2015, <https://www.questia.com/library/literature/literary-themes-and-topics/dystopian-literature>.

²⁹ Ibid.

social perfection rather than incremental social improvement,”³⁰ which was the state that Panem was in from the view of the inhabitants of the Capitol before Katniss stood up to them. The citizens of the Capitol were the ones satisfied with the condition of their system of government, living in luxury and affluence, whereas others fighting with famine and shortage. This was caused mainly because they did not see how hard it is for people to live in such districts. The citizens of the Capitol assumed that everybody in the districts is satisfied as they are, which explains why they presumed their system as the perfect one, therefore no attempt at social improvement had been done. Dystopian works of literature therefore disturb the reader to the extent of “accepting humanity’s flaws as ineradicable”³¹ and therefore prevail upon audience to strive for “a better society rather than an ideal one.”³² This is shown in the way how the Panem is described in the novel – as twelve districts that are under the rule of the Capitol. President Snow has no interest in helping to the districts suffering from lack of various things, starting with food and medicine and ending with proper education about other districts.

³⁰ “Dystopian Literature,” Questia Trusted Online Research, accessed February 27, 2015, <https://www.questia.com/library/literature/literary-themes-and-topics/dystopian-literature>.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

2 SUZANNE COLLINS

Professional career of Suzanne Collins begun in 1991 as she focused on preschool viewers by writing for children's television Nickelodeon, including firstly *Clarissa Explains it All* – “about self-confident, assertive and intelligent girls,”³³ secondly, *Oswald*, octopus of color blue who with his friends experiences all kinds of venturesome moments while exploring their hometown which usually involves figuring out a complication.³⁴ All of which were nominated for Emmy Award. And thirdly, *The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo*, which is dealing with young seemingly ordinary girl whose part-time job is helping with small things at the local police office where she with help of her friends always finds a way to help to solve crimes which the police is helpless with.³⁵

Her first New York Times bestseller was her war-fantasy series of five parts *The Underland Chronicles* based on *Alice in Wonderland* with rather urban features.³⁶ *The Hunger Games*, published in 2008 for the first time, is her biggest international bestseller so far. It has been published in fifty six countries in fifty one languages making it so popular that the rights for the movie were bought by Lions Gate Entertainment.³⁷ Autobiographical picture book of hers, *Year of the Jungle*, was published in 2013 where her six-years-old self deals with deploying of her father to Vietnam. Being it first book after her world-wide success of *The Hunger Games* it has been translated to eleven languages and sold in twelve foreign countries.³⁸

From the description of Collins's works it is obvious that she has a leaning towards young people. Mainly, she contributes to young children entertainment while depicting the theme on the adventure, mystery and overcoming difficulties. She deals with all these issues more seriously in the trilogy of *Hunger Games* as its protagonist is a young girl who young adults can relate easily with.

³³ Charlotte Brunson, Julie D'Acci and Lynn Spigel, *Feminist Television Criticism: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press): 192.

³⁴ “Oswald,” Internet Movie Database, accessed March 25, 2015, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0293734/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl.

³⁵ “The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo,” Internet Movie Database, accessed March 25, 2015, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0115283/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl.

³⁶ See “Biography,” Suzanne Collins, accessed February 21, 2015, <http://www.suzannecollinsbooks.com/bio.htm>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

2.1 The Hunger Games Trilogy

The thought of the annual fight-to-death reality show is “based on the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur”³⁹ as Collins says in her interview for School Library Journal. The myth tells the story where the Athens had to send seven Athenian maidens and seven Athenian boys to Crete where the Minotaur, half-man half-bull monster, dwelt at the middle of the Labyrinth. Athenians had to do so annually as a reminder of defeat in a war which they lost to king Minos of Crete.⁴⁰ Theseus, son of Aethera and two fathers – god Poseidon and king Aegeus, volunteered to go into the Labyrinth in hope to kill the Minotaur and to release Athens from the curse that king Minos put on them. He succeeded. Mainly with help of Ariadne, daughter of Minos, who fancied Theseus and gave him a sword and magical ball of thread, which helped him to find his way back from the Labyrinth.⁴¹

“The message is, mess with us and we’ll do something worse than kill you – we’ll kill your children,”⁴² continues Collins. The sacrifices of Athens end with Theseus’ arrival – he kills the Minotaur and Athens is saved. “In her own way, Katniss is a futuristic Theseus,”⁴³ concludes Collins. She indicates that Katniss was able to stop the Hunger Games and helped with new way of life in Panem.

The actual inspiration to write The Hunger Games came one night, when Collins was switching television channels where there were reality shows with young people fighting over a price and an actual war reports when “the lines between these stories started to blur and then Katniss’ story came to me,”⁴⁴ states Collins. She adds that in the war, soldiers are fighting for their own lives and they are not going to disappear when the advertisements start to broadcast as it is when watching sitcom and the viewers do not care about the military men’s fates. This fact is dealt with in the first book of the trilogy when each minute of the tributes’ life in the arena is broadcasted all over the Panem so nobody could forget the price they have to pay in regards to remembering the uprising that was seventy four years ago that hardly someone can remember.

³⁹ Suzanne Collins, interview by Rick Margolis, School Library Journal, September 1, 2008.

⁴⁰ See Alain Quesnel, *Řecko: Mýty a Legendy*, trans. Evžen Lukeš, (Praha: Limited, 1992), 64.

⁴¹ See Sandrine Augusta-Boulatrot, *Slovník Řecko-římské mytologie a kultury*, trans. Věra Hrubanová, (Praha: EWA Edition, 1993), 237-240.

⁴² Suzanne Collins, interview by Rick Margolis, School Library Journal, September 1, 2008.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

For the purpose of further understand of the analysis, The Hunger Games trilogy will be introduced briefly. The narrative depicts dystopian land of Panem, which is divided into Twelve Districts situated in Northern America. Each of them has to draw two tributes to the annual Hunger Games held as a reminder of defeated rebellion. That rebellion occurred 74 years ago, and as the Hunger Games are warning that another revolution must not happen again as one of the Districts was demolished. The President of the Panem is Snow who is persistent and hates to be mocked or ridiculed. On the Reaping day, the day when the drawing of the tributes who are to send into the arena is held, the readers meet sixteen years old Katniss Everdeen who has to take care of her mother and her younger sister Primrose, age 12, as their father has died in the mining explosion few years back. To do so, she hunts and then trades the prey for the bread and other essential supplies. She does these things with Gale whose father also died in the mining accident. And as Gale is the oldest child and has many siblings, he is the provider of their family. As the Reaping prosecutes, her sister gets chosen and in that moment Katniss volunteers in order to save her life. The boy tribute from her district is Peeta Mellark whose family owns the bakery. Therefore, he saved Katniss and her family before the starvation. Katniss is torn whether to kill him in the arena or not. Luckily, thanks to Haymitch, she is spared of making this decision. Haymitch, as he won one of the previous games is coaching and mentoring them to look presentable for the Panem. He is drunkard. Yet still trying to save their lives along with Effie Trinket who is District Twelve tribute's escort; she makes sure they are on time everywhere.

Once Peeta and Katniss are in the arena, Peeta makes an alliance with Carriers, tributes from districts where the children are trained for the Hunger Games and thus have better chance to become victors. On the other hand, Katniss becomes ally with Rue, tribute from District 11, which is similarly disadvantaged as District 12. When Katniss is trapped onto a tree by the Carrier pack Rue points out onto the nest of tracker jacker, genetically altered wasps that cause heavy hallucinations and in some cases death. Katniss cuts the branch with the nest off and the tracker jackers attack the Carriers. But Rue dies later on and Katniss loses her only ally. The Gamemakers, who manage the events in the arena, change the rules so that not one, but two victors can be crowned, but both have to be from the same district. As Peeta is not dead yet, Katniss decides to find him and intends to win with him. However, when only Katniss and Peeta are alive, the Gamemakers withdraw the rule about two victors stating there can be only one. Although both Katniss and Peeta want to eat poi-

sonous berries in order to commit suicide and they almost die, they both survive and both are crowned victors. Their victory is something that no one intended to happen so they are forced by the President Snow to pretend they are in love with each other and play the berries as an act of desperate love instead of mocking the Capitol.

In the second book of the trilogy, Peeta and Katniss have to go into the arena once again due to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Hunger Games. It is called Quarter Quell and each twenty-five years something special happens. That year, the tributes will be chosen from the previous winners. In the Capitol, Peeta and Katniss meet with Finnick, District 4 tribute, and Johanna from District 7. Later, in the arena, they all make an alliance. After they create elaborate plan to electrocute the remaining victors, the plan fails and eventually the arena explodes. As the planes rescue the tributes from the rest of the arena, only one of the planes does not belong to the Capitol but to the rebels and District 13, which saves only Katniss and Finnick. Even though it was believed that the District 13 was demolished and no one survived, the district was self-sustainable and thus its people managed to survive. President Coin who is the head of the District 13, welcomed the people of the District 12 as the Capitol send bombers on it, and only a handful of people managed to escape. It was Gale who gathered citizens of the District 12 and he led them into the woods from where they watched their home to burn to the ground.

The District 13 is a refuge for all the rebels. They are trained there and prepared for the war, which is to be. But Coin needs a Mockingjay, the symbol of the rebellion, and at first, Katniss is reluctant to be one but eventually agrees. After a few trips to the battle field where she encouraged rebels in their cause, she is badly hurt. Also, as only Finnick and Katniss were rescued from the arena, the rebels free Peeta from the Capitol. In the Capitol, they changed Peeta's memories about Katniss and persuaded him that she wants to kill him, consequently making him a machine to kill Katniss. She escapes to the District 4 where she also explores her feelings towards Gale who is there as well. After the successful mission in the district, she trains to be sent into the Capitol, at the very end of the war, to kill Snow. When she manages to pass exams, Katniss is inserted to the squad that later on Peeta joins to, which she does not like. After the death of their commander Boggs, she takes the lead of the squad and is on the way to the center of the Capitol. Katniss masters to get into the center of the Capitol only to see little children and her sister, Prim, get eaten by the fire, by which she is burned too. After her recovery she is supposed to kill Snow, but kills Coin instead.

3 ANALYSIS

In this part, the focus will be put onto the events as well as characters of the trilogy that are crucial for coming of age of Katniss. In order to show her progress, these events and influence of particular characters on Katniss will be dealt in chronological order. “We never know which lives we influence, or when, or why,”⁴⁵ says Stephen King in one of his books. Some would include even *how* as well because human beings are social creatures, which live in groups and therefore are affecting lives of one another. Among those who influence others while not being aware of their influencing powers belongs Katniss, the protagonist of the Hunger Games trilogy. This phenomenon is shown in one of Peeta’s utterances in discussion about people from outside sponsoring tributes in the arena with small but life-saving gifts. “She has no idea. The effect she can have,”⁴⁶ and as mentioned before, Katniss as someone who is not aware of her power does not understand and refuses any influence she might have or what so ever but later on, she accepts it at last.

3.1 Before the Hunger Games

At the beginning of the first volume of the Hunger Games trilogy the readers learn about the family background. After the death of their father, the mother of Primrose and Katniss “sat by, blank and unreachable”⁴⁷ and “suffering from immobilizing sadness”⁴⁸ ignorant of her surroundings and what is more, her daughters. In retrospective, Katniss states that the first hint of a problem with their mother was right after the ring denoting a mine accident. Their mother should have looked for Katniss and Prim and not vice versa. After they have learned that their father is dead, they have struggled for a few weeks as they were on the edge of starvation. That time, Katniss have gone out, to trade some old clothes for food, unfortunately with no luck. But the image of starving Prim kept Katniss from going home “empty-handed of any hope”⁴⁹ and pushing her to keep going and not to give up.

3.1.1 Keeping the Family Alive

In the weeks immediately following the death of their father, Katniss was desperate and starving. Emerging on the backyard of the bakery, she sees Peeta burning loaves bread on

⁴⁵ Stephen King, *11/22/63* (New York City: Scribner, 2012), 454.

⁴⁶ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 111.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 10.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 43.

purpose, which could cause him beating, only to throw them to her. As she made eye contact with him the next morning as if she wanted to thank him, her gaze slid upon the first dandelion growing that spring and she “thought of the hours spent in the woods with [her] father and [she] knew how [they] were going to survive.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, Katniss describes how there has been the connection between Peeta and “the bread that gave [her] hope, and the dandelion that reminded [her] that [she] was not doomed”⁵¹ ever since. Essentially, not being for Peeta and the burnt bread Katniss might have never realized that she is able to obtain food and therefore to become the provider of her family.

As Katniss gained hope and courage to go under the fence to hunt some squirrels and pick up plants, she states “I checked and double-checked the plants I harvested with my father’s pictures. I kept us alive.”⁵² Even after their mother slowly returned to them, Katniss remained mistrustful to her as she was “waiting for her to disappear on [Katniss and Primrose] again”⁵³ resulting in Katniss’ alienation “to protect myself [Katniss] from needing her”⁵⁴ mother. While Katniss fills the adult one in the family, Hastings claims that “any ‘normal’ adolescent feelings have been suppressed, and her psychosocial development has been halted by her father’s death.”⁵⁵ But this premise can be disproved by his own words as Katniss is the provider of the family and fulfills the role of a parent taking care of others thus the statement completely denies itself. This signifies that her psychosocial development was expedited rather than ‘halted.’

When Katniss meets Gale in the woods for the first time while admiring his snares for rabbits, it is a shock for her because the woods are forbidden territory. But they both have the same intention of feeding their own families because Gale’s father died in the same mine explosion as Katniss’s. They talked about hunting and she offered him a bow if he had something to trade. “Not food. I wanted knowledge. I wanted to set my own snares that caught a belt of fat rabbits one day.”⁵⁶ For a twelve year old girl knowledge is not something to trade for, not in their political establishment, much less under ordinary cir-

⁴⁹ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 111.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 39.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid, 62.

⁵³ Ibid, 64.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 64.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 135.

cumstances. It shows her concerns about future, how conscious she already was and what is more, the awareness about the uncertainty of the future establishment thus a step towards maturity.

3.1.2 Volunteering

After years of hunting and providing her family decent level of living, her sister Prim is to be attend the Reaping, the drawing of the tributes for the Hunger Games, for the first time. The Hunger Games are held annually as to remind the districts of the rebellion seventy-four years ago and the consequences that such rebellion can have. During the rioting, also called the Dark Days, District Thirteen was destroyed as to prove that the Capitol is all mighty and not to be questioned. Therefore, the Capitol organizes the Hunger Games each year, when each district has to conduce with both male and female tributes whose names are to be reaped. Afterwards they are sent into the arena where they fight to death. The arena and everything that happens in it is televised throughout the whole Panem so everyone can see how they murder each other. The last man standing is crowned as the victor and receives much money. The ironic motto of this killing pronounced by the broadcasters says “happy Hunger Games, and may the odds be *ever* in your favour,”⁵⁷ only that the odds almost never are, especially in Katniss’ case.

When Effie Trinket, the escort of District 12 tributes for many years, reads out the name Primrose Everdeen, Katniss’ reaction is described like “struggling to inhale, to exhale, to do anything, unable to speak, totally stunned as the name bounces around inside of my skull.”⁵⁸ She admits that she did not worry about Prim being reaped since only one strip of paper had her name on it. Whereas Katniss had her name there twenty times.⁵⁹ When she recovers herself and reaches for Prim, “with one sweep of [her] arm, [she] push[se] [Prim] behind [her]”⁶⁰ and volunteers as a tribute.

Katniss volunteers out of love. Pharr states that it was forasmuch as “an innate belief that Prim is not only a vulnerable child but also a better human being than Katniss will ever be.”⁶¹ Considering Prim’s need to doctor animals that Katniss shoots for them to eat,

⁵⁷ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 9.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 25.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 26.

⁶¹ Mary F. Pharr, “Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy,” ed. Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A Clark (Jefferson, NC: Jefferson and McFarland, 2012), 223.

rather than learn the skill of hunting itself, the innocence of Prim's is ever-present. Action of volunteering is therefore "more instinctive than calculated"⁶² further states Pharr, as the first thing on Katniss' mind was how to protect Prim from almost certain death in the arena.

The volunteering alone is a thing unusual as nobody there can remember how it is done officially. The word 'tribute' in District 12 "is pretty much synonymous with the word *corpse*."⁶³ There is only one victor of the Games from the District Twelve, Haymitch. That alone gave them the reason to believe that winning the Games is nearly impossible for their district. People feel sorry for Katniss because she "has had to act as [mother]"⁶⁴ when the inability had stricken their true one and also because that she is basically going to die. After her volunteering, people are silently standing even though Effie Trinket is calling for applause for the brave girl. Instead, they press their three middle fingers of their left hand against their lips and hold them out to her. It is a gesture of District Twelve from times passed and rarely used, only occasionally at the funerals. "It means thanks, it means admiration, it means goodbye to someone you love."⁶⁵ By that, they acknowledged that she is going to sacrifice herself in order to save Prim. They paid their respect to Katniss because they know what she has been doing for her family after the unfortunate event of the death of their father.

3.2 In the Arena

For the purposes of further argumentation it is important to know some things that preceded entrance of Katniss and Peeta to the arena. When Peeta declared his love for Katniss before the whole Panem during the interview, he made Katniss desirable not only for ordinary people but for investors who contributes with, often live-saving, gifts that can be delivered into the arena as well. A gift for the tribute in the arena often means the difference between life and death. At first she thought that he is not serious about his love, but she learns that he is indeed in love with her causing Katniss unwillingness to kill him in the arena. When they are in the arena, Peeta joins the pack of Carriers, tributes who trained

⁶² Mary F. Pharr, "Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy," ed. Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A Clark (Jefferson, NC: Jefferson and McFarland, 2012), 223.

⁶³ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 27.

⁶⁴ Mollie Hall, "I Can't Think About Kissing: Strong Female Protagonists and Romance in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction," (senior thesis, Eastern Michigan University, 2012), 40.

hard for the Hunger Games and often volunteered in order to become rich and famous. He helps them to track down Katniss and kill her. Of course, this is just because he wants to save her. When the Carriers trap Katniss on a tree Rue, District 11 tribute, shows up in the treetop. She points out the nest of the tracker jackers, genetically altered wasp with poisonous stings. Katniss cuts off the branch with their nest causing the tracker jackers to attack the Carriers. Although Katniss being stung herself she manages to get down from the tree an escape.

3.2.1 Taking Care of Rue

When Katniss awakens from the attack of the tracker jackers, and finds Rue, who showed her their nest, they become allies. As Rue is only twelve years old, she reminds Katniss of her sister, Prim. After the successful plan of blowing up supplies of Carrier pack in order to sever them from the permanent supply of food, Katniss is worried about Rue as she is not at the place they agreed on meeting, so she is gone to look for her. In the meantime Rue was trapped in a snare and as Katniss is breaking her free, Rue gets killed by a Carrier, who is consequently killed by Katniss.

Katniss sings to Rue as she passes away. She also honors her death by surrounding her body with white flowers signifying Rue's innocence and Katniss' compassion. It also shows Katniss' understanding of the Hunger Games and her repugnance to the reciprocal children killing, which can be viewed as an act of a rebellion. Even if the Gamemakers choose to "turn the cameras elsewhere, they'll have to bring them back when they collect the bodies and everyone will see her then and know I did it,"⁶⁶ states Katniss. As she is saying her goodbye to Rue, she uses the old and rare gesture signifying thanks, admiration, love and goodbye which perfectly depicts Katniss's feelings towards Rue. This shows her loyalty towards not only her ally but towards her loved ones as well. Also, she is determined to bring just retribution onto the Capitol's inhumane punishment of innocent people. Both her sense of loyalty and justice is a sign of her mental growth.

These are signs of a small rebellion as such tenderness has not been seen in the Hunger Games yet. She does them "to embarrass the people who created the Games"⁶⁷ that

⁶⁵ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 29.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁶⁷ Mollie Hall, "I Can't Think About Kissing: Strong Female Protagonists and Romance in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction," (senior thesis, Eastern Michigan University, 2012), 44.

force young people, technically speaking children even, to fight each other to death. Rue's death made Katniss understand both Peeta's wish not to be just a piece in their Games and Gale's anger towards Capitol and realizes "it's the capitol I hate, for doing this to all of us."⁶⁸ Thus Rue's death empowered Katniss "to fight against the power that controls"⁶⁹ lives not only of the tributes, but of all citizens of the Panem as well.

3.2.2 Fighting for Life and Holding out the Berries

The first rule of the Hunger Games is that there is always one victor. However, the Gamemakers decides to alter it onto two victors but they both have to be from one district, just to enable Peeta and Katniss spend time together in the arena as Peeta declared his love towards Katniss. After the rule change of the Hunger Games, a while after Rue's death, Katniss is determined to win. So Katniss did not have to track down Peeta but she decided to do so as to pay the debt regarding the bread Peeta gave her once. Considering the connection that Katniss has between Peeta and the bread that gave Katniss hope, the decision of finding Peeta and keeping him alive is one of the easiest for Katniss.

The only thing they need to do to stay alive is continuing with the star-crossed lovers from District Twelve, as the citizens now them after Peeta's confession, is to maintain the positive viewer ratings and to keep the gifts from investors coming. In order to do so, Katniss is forced by Haymitch, their mentor, to feed the romance, which includes becoming close not only on the physical level but on the mental too. Haymitch is in charge of their potential gifts from investors. Katniss quickly "learns to interpret the giving or withholding the rewards."⁷⁰ For example, when Katniss is dehydrated and thinks about why he has not sent her water, she realizes "*maybe he's sending you a message. There's only one good reason Haymitch could be withholding water from me. Because he knows I've almost found it.*"⁷¹ Also, after the talk in the cave when Katniss says kind and loving things to Peeta, he sends a whole meal for two. That is when Katniss almost "hear Haymitch's smug, if slightly exasperated, words 'Yes, *that's* what I'm looking for, sweetheart,'"⁷² suggesting he is encouraging their romance to earn more investors to their own sake as well as trying

⁶⁸ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 286.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Don Latham and Jonathan M. Hollister, "The Games People Play: Information and Media Literacies in the Hunger Games Trilogy," *Children Literature in Education* 45, no. 1 (March 2014), 39.

⁷¹ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 204.

⁷² Ibid, 368.

to keep them both alive. Also, this mentioned, as Katniss is becoming to understand Haymitch and his thinking she is mentally maturing too. Katniss manifests her understanding of these unspoken messages suggesting her mental development in terms of adapting to others if their intentions are clear and clean. Hall states, “romance is non-existent in the arena, so it makes the pair unusual,”⁷³ as the viewers are expecting anything but the love story and making the citizens to sympathize with them and hence to want them keep alive. Peeta and Katniss’ “budding romance, though initially artificial, has an emotional resonance for Katniss.”⁷⁴ At first, she is reluctant to any display of her feelings so she is just acting like she loves Peeta. At least she thinks she is acting, but “their performances have a basis in long-held emotions.”⁷⁵ When they are forced to stay in the cave due to bad weather, Peeta is sharing his feelings and Katniss is trying to do so as well. This is the moment when the reader realizes that Peeta was telling the truth from the beginning. He truly loves her. It started from the first day of school and continued with giving bread to her even though it meant to get a beating until now. They share a kiss and Katniss says she “actually feel[s] a stirring inside”⁷⁶ and makes her want another one which is confusing her. This shows that not only alleged non-existing feelings are there but that she wants to discover what those feelings actually are too.

After they have learned that there are only three living tributes, Peeta and Katniss are determined to keep each other alive. They succeed and as the last tribute dies they are the last ones living in the Arena. As they hug in relieve, the announcement from the Gamemakers withdraws the first one, saying that there could be only one victor. But neither of them can kill the other one, especially when they spend last couple of days together, sharing feelings and kisses. Neither of them wants to “carry the guilt from the death of the other with them for the rest of their lives,”⁷⁷ although they are forced to. That is the crucial moment when Katniss realizes “*they have to have a victor*”⁷⁸ so she comes up with a plan.

⁷³ Mollie Hall, “‘I Can’t Think About Kissing:’ Strong Female Protagonists and Romance in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction,” (senior thesis, Eastern Michigan University, 2012), 43.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 45.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 46.

⁷⁶ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 362.

⁷⁷ Mollie Hall, “‘I Can’t Think About Kissing:’ Strong Female Protagonists and Romance in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction,” (senior thesis, Eastern Michigan University, 2012), 46.

⁷⁸ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 417.

“Without a victor, the whole thing would blow up in the Gamemakers’ faces,”⁷⁹ or even the thought that they will both die could change the circumstances and they would both save their lives. This shows also the big risk they both are willing to undertake. The plan might not have worked and they both would be death. Katniss holds out the poisonous berries they gathered earlier. This act challenges the rules of the Hunger Games and offers an “ultimatum; two winners or none at all.”⁸⁰ Suicide is viewed like “an act of independence and resistance towards the Capitol,”⁸¹ states Hamre, and consequently, they are openly rebelling on live television. This threat therefore becomes the symbol of the independent thinking and later uprising against the oppressing regime. At the last moment, two victors of seventy-fourth Hunger Games are presented. Although with the threat of being punished for the disobedience of the rules set up by the Capitol, they both live. This idea of Katniss suggests her social awareness and the desire to break free from the tyrannical governmental structure of Panem, which corresponds with the young adult dystopian literature and consequently suggesting Katniss’ psychosocial development in growing up.

3.3 After the Games

Seneca Crane, the head Gamemaker, paid for his softness of heart with his life. Letting two tributes win for the first time was definitely for the last time as well as President Snow cannot stand to be mocked. When Katniss held out the berries it was “more an issue of survival than of rebellion.”⁸² Of course, she wanted to survive, but in retrospective, she thought of outsmarting only the Gamemakers and was not considering the effect that it might have onto the Capitol. “But the Hunger Games are their weapon and you are not supposed to be able to defeat it,”⁸³ she expands when she realizes consequences of her action, suggesting her rising political awareness and thus another step on her path to maturity. And even though both Katniss and Peeta would have eaten the berries, she is the one to be blamed and punished. She was the initiator. Therefore, Katniss accepts her responsibility for her actions, thus makes another step towards early maturity.

⁷⁹ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 418.

⁸⁰ Kjellaug Therese Hauge Hamre, “Suzanne Collins’ *Hunger Games* Trilogy and Social Criticism,” (master’s thesis, University of Oslo, 2012), 21.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Don Latham and Jonathan M. Hollister, “The Games People Play: Information and Media Literacies in the Hunger Games Trilogy,” *Children Literature in Education*, Vol. 45, Is. 1 (March 2014), 42.

⁸³ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 435.

3.3.1 Consequences of the Berries and the Reaction of President Snow

As “districts must never again rebel against the supposedly all-powerful capitol,”⁸⁴ and Katniss already gave a “slap to the face of the Capitol”⁸⁵ with the berries, she fears that she will be somehow punished. Her fears are revealed while preparing for the interview with Ceasar Flickerman when he compliments her about her winning and previous coronation and assures her that nothing she say can be wrong. In that moment, Katniss thinks “*Oh Ceasar, if only that were true. But actually, President Snow may be arranging some sort of ‘accident’ for me as we speak.*”⁸⁶ Clearly, she does not think that after what she has done she can just walk away, guilty free. She assumes that the vengeance will come, sooner or later.

Katniss and Peeta are later indeed threatened to end up just the same as Seneca Crane because President Snow does not believe that the berries were an act of inability to survive without each other as it is presented to the Panem, but rather an act of dissent. Snow states it can be viewed also as “an act of defiance towards the Capitol that could ignite a revolution.”⁸⁷ But what Katniss does not know is that in the districts is already unrest because people are not satisfied with the establishment of Panem. Snow reveals his logic that her act “will inspire others to act to overthrow his regime,”⁸⁸ which is exactly what he does not like considering he is the President who is not to be doubted and overthrown.

Therefore, before the Victory Tour, a tour around all of the districts that includes giving speeches and attending dinners, which is also “a way of reminding people that the Hunger Games never really go away,”⁸⁹ Snow visits Katniss offering open approach with no lies. When she agrees with it, Snow makes a comment about how he was sure that Katniss would not want anything to happen to her or her loved ones. Then continues, absolutely ignoring the fact that he just threaten to kill with no hesitation, expressing his believes about Katniss being indifferent towards Peeta and despite her denial, he does not believe

⁸⁴ Mary F. Pharr, “Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy,” ed. Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A Clark (Jefferson, NC: Jefferson and McFarland, 2012), 222.

⁸⁵ Don Latham and Jonathan M. Hollister, “The Games People Play: Information and Media Literacies in the Hunger Games Trilogy,” *Children Literature in Education*, Vol. 45, Is. 1 (March 2014), 42.

⁸⁶ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 445.

⁸⁷ Don Latham and Jonathan M. Hollister, “The Games People Play: Information and Media Literacies in the Hunger Games Trilogy,” *Children Literature in Education*, Vol. 45, Is. 1 (March 2014), 42.

⁸⁸ Mollie Hall, “‘I Can’t Think About Kissing:’ Strong Female Protagonists and Romance in Dystopian Young Adult Fiction,” (senior thesis, Eastern Michigan University, 2012), 52.

⁸⁹ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 449.

her. And if Snow was not convinced of her love, people at the districts might not be convinced as well. When Katniss asks why not just kill her publicly and spare himself all the trouble with her he politely and calmly answers that it “would only add fuel to the flames.”⁹⁰ Then Snow describes the political situation in the districts and pointing out that she, “the girl on fire, have provided a spark that, left unattended, may grow to an inferno that destroys Panem.”⁹¹ Suddenly, Katniss understands that her berries get yet another different proportion meaning to support the rebellion after the unintentional impulse she has provided. Thus, President Snow wants to make sure that no other act of rebellion will happen again. He anticipates Katniss to suppress the growing riots in the districts by playing her role as a foolishly in-love girl who did not know what she was doing. Katniss, promising to assure citizens of her love, Snow suggests aiming higher in case falling short, “convince *me*.”⁹² She realizes that it will not be easy task because Peeta is the likeable one. However, she is determined to make everyone believe she is in love with him in order to keep her loved ones alive even if it would mean to displaying and discussing her presumed feelings in front of the whole Panem. This suggests the internal determination, which is a sign of an adult rather than a child and thus shows another Katniss’ step on her way towards early maturity.

Katniss does not mention this immediate threat hanging over her head to Peeta but she shares it with Haymitch as she considers him as a reliable and politically skilled enough to help her. While discussing this with him, Haymitch reveals how the supposed love will continue. They both will become mentors. Every year during the Hunger Games, everyone will want to know about their romance and private life. And then she realizes “there’s only one future, if I want to keep those I love alive and stay alive myself. I’ll have to marry Peeta.”⁹³ This is not something she intended to do as she does not yet know what her feelings towards Gale or Peeta are. She arrives to the awareness of the Capitol and Snow yet again controlling her life and dictating what she will do with her life, meaning she developed understanding of current political situation, thus matured a bit more.

While they start their Victory Tour in District Eleven (and continue in descending order) they are both expected to give a speech to the assembly at the square. What they do

⁹⁰ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 27.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid, 34.

not know however, is that District Eleven is one of the rebelling ones. During Peeta's speech, he donates both his and Katniss' one month of their winnings to the families of death tributes. Despite Katniss's reluctance to give a speech, she does at once when she realizes "*I haven't thanked her,*"⁹⁴ Rue, her ally. Thresh could have killed Katniss but did not as an acknowledgement of the alliance of hers with Rue and thus earning Katniss' respect, she thanks families of both Rue and Thresh. Then, the four-note tune of Rue's sounds from the crowd and everyone "presses the three middle fingers of their left hand against their lips and extends them"⁹⁵ the same way Katniss gave her goodbye to Rue in the arena. This displays the gratitude of District Eleven citizens; they respect her for taking care of Rue in the arena, her retribution on Rue's killer and her following kind deeds towards Rue after her death. This epiphany is a sign of her both moral and emotional maturing.

Since the donating one month victor's winning to the District Eleven death tributes was not in conformity with the law, Peeta with Katniss are no longer in charge of writing their own speeches. With the happening in the District Eleven they also endanger the lives of Katniss' loved ones so she decides to initiate Peeta into the threat made by Snow. And while they are trying to suppress the thought of rebellion in the districts, they are growing back together. At the end of their Victory Tour, there is big party hosted by the president Snow himself, where Peeta proposes to Katniss to marry him to continue in their love story. However, Katniss learns that she failed in convincing him and although Katniss sees "the end of hope, the beginning of the destruction of everything [Katniss] hold[s] dear in the world,"⁹⁶ she is relieved. She is calmed by the fact that she does not have to ask herself whether this venture of hers will be successful or not as she knows the result even if it is definite no. As Katniss see almost everyone wearing somehow the winner's token, her token of mockingjay, she is pleased with it and feels satisfaction and states "I can only imagine how nuts that makes President Snow."⁹⁷ Because in the Capitol, the berries are viewed just as an act of a desperate girl trying to save her love and is not the sign of rebels suggest-

⁹³ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 54.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

ing that the citizens have no idea of the rebellion taking place in the districts. This indicates Katniss' intellectual development, as she reconciles with the situation described above.

When Peeta and Katniss' arrive back to District Twelve they have plenty of free time they do what they are good at. "[Katniss] hunt[s]. He [Peeta] bakes. [They] have [their] own ways to stay busy, to keep thoughts of [their] time as contestants in the Hunger Games at bay."⁹⁸ This suggests that Katniss is inclining towards masculine activities whereas Peeta tends to show feminine attributes. Katniss' masculinity might be caused by her going hunting with her father when she was young. Also, after the death of her father, she saw her mother going through a complete breakdown and promised herself that she will never be that weak. Peeta's feminine side can be seen in cases, which he wants to solve by talking and not by the force or when he takes care of supplying Katniss and Haymitch with freshly baked goods. Also, as both Peeta and Katniss are expected to adopt any free time activity to show off to the crowds, Peeta paints and not only some silly simple pictures, but deep elaborated paintings reflecting the time he was in the arena. Later on, they are both working on the family book of Everdeens. There are entries about the healing and edible plants and notes about hunting too. Katniss describes the plant to Peeta who draws it firstly on a piece of paper and when Katniss is satisfied with it as it is important not to confuse it with another plant which is poisonous, he draws it into a book. The drawing is mostly feminine attribute as well as baking. What is more, Katniss clearly claims that Peeta is better with words than she is, meaning the expressing feelings as Peeta has no difficulty with it unlike Katniss who is not sure what does she feel. This clearly displays that in the Katniss – Peeta relationship, both hold the position of the other gender causing them to complement each other thus signifies her emotional development.

New Peacekeepers, men who police the order throughout the Panem, arrive to District Twelve as well. The new Head Peacekeeper is established into the governance and because of him, offences so long overlooked that District Twelve have forgotten they are illegal are being prosecuted. The fence surrounding the district is fully charged not only during the obligatory broadcasting as it used to be in the past, but permanently. Gale, not knowing about the arrival of the new Head Peacekeeper and not knowing about his strictness showed himself with his prey publicly. This has led to the first public whipping, which

⁹⁸ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 18.

Katniss has tried to stop as she hates when someone she cares about is being hurt. Consequently, she receives a whip herself. Of course, this was not wisest, but luckily Haymitch and Peeta came to help. The whipping is once again established alongside with stocks and food shortages, wage cuts of the mine workers and extended working hours causing people to starve to the verge of the death.

At first, there was this initiative of Katniss to flee to the woods with her loved ones. It must be pointed out that she was thinking about it to avoid the unpleasant reality ahead of her – Snow’s threat, obligation to calm rioting districts and acting to be madly in love. And after she learns that Snow was not satisfied with her manifestation of her love towards Peeta, she is even more determined to escape from this oppressing regime. She states: “I find myself standing up straighter and with more confidence than I have in weeks”⁹⁹ implying that the heaviness has lifted up from her chest and she does not have to struggle with all of those commitments mentioned above. And albeit Katniss initially wants to avoid the responsibility for the berries in the arena and to flee to District Thirteen, as she learns it might still exist underground from a pair of refugees she meets in the woods, she does not desert. But she thinks of Prim, that she cannot run, she has to protect her. She realizes that Prim has been through more than Katniss at her age, considering their father’s death and the presence in the Hunger Games, she thinks the Capitol is to blame. If the Capitol did not make the miners to go deeper and deeper in the hunt for more coal, the lives of the miners could be spared. She is right of course as she is adding things to the list of what the Capitol is responsible for – letting them starve to death, work in inhuman conditions in the mines, allowing the youngest children to be reaped to the Hunger Games. “Because what has been done to them [Prim and Rue] is so wrong, so beyond justification, so evil. Because no one has the right to treat them as they have been treated,”¹⁰⁰ states Katniss while thinking about Rue pointless death or making Prim to watch her sister fight to death in the arena. When she remembers Rue, it is beyond doubt she have decided she will not run away. She will rather stand behind whatever rebellion she put into motion and fight for better world for future children, which indicates not only her intellectual development but her moral one as well.

⁹⁹ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 93.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 149.

3.3.2 Quarter Quell

Every twenty-five years of the Hunger Games, there are anniversary games called the Quarter Quell. Each of these promises something special. Each has its own envelope with the card saying what will be different. For example, on the twenty-fifth hunger games the districts had to hold an election and vote on the tributes to send into the arena. On the fiftieth anniversary, the districts were required to send twice as many tributes. And for the seventy-fifth anniversary, “as a reminder to the rebels that even the strongest among them cannot overcome the power of the Capitol, the male and the female tributes will be reaped from their existing pool of victors.”¹⁰¹ And as Katniss is the only girl tribute from District 12 it is certain she will go back to the arena.

Katniss takes a moment to absorb this news and suddenly she realizes she has to go back into the arena. It is clear Katniss will participate in the Games, but so does Peeta or Haymitch. As Katniss becomes aware of this fact, she rushes to Haymitch to beg him to go into the arena instead of Peeta. However, Peeta visited Haymitch earlier than her, asking Haymitch to let him go back with Katniss. Peeta argument was that since Haymitch were trying to keep Katniss alive the last time, he owes Peeta and should let him go back with Katniss because Peeta wants to protect her. But Katniss is determined to save Peeta arguing this time it is him whom they will try to keep alive. During the Reaping, Haymitch’s name is chosen but Peeta volunteers, sending Peeta and Katniss yet again into the arena. On the way to the Capitol Katniss and Peeta watch the only tape of the Quarter Quell they have. It was the year when Haymitch became a victor by using the force field around the arena as a weapon not only “against the other tributes, but the Capitol, too,”¹⁰² Katniss realizes. It made them look stupid and casted a bad image on them, as Gamemakers never intended the tributes to use the force field to their advantage. Katniss figures that it was almost as bad holding the berries. She consequently learns who Haymitch really is, smart and daring, and that she is just as same as he is and figures “two people who have caused the Capitol so much trouble can think of a way to get Peeta home alive.”¹⁰³ This statement of hers advocates that she is steadfastly resolved to even sacrifice her life for Peeta’s. After the initial encounter with other tributes-victors during their training, Katniss states that many of them

¹⁰¹ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 208.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 243.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 244.

are so damaged that her instinct would be to protect them, “but all of them must die if I’m to save Peeta.”¹⁰⁴ This clearly shows not only her willingness to die, but to kill others as well despite she does not like killing implying her strong will and thus her emotional and moral development.

Naturally, the people of Panem are not happy about victors going back to fight to death. Many of the victors are popular in the Capitol as people have become attached to them. During the interviews with all of the tributes, every one of them is somehow complaining about the situation they are in, but only in between the lines. Considering that the wedding of Peeta and Katniss that is not about to happen eventually, people “have been weeping and even calling for a change,”¹⁰⁵ suggesting the dissatisfaction with the Quarter Quell. When Katniss is interviewed, she twirls as she always does during the interviews due to her stylist Cinna who always designs dresses for her, which make her unforgettable. But this time, her wedding dress, worn on the request of President Snow, slowly burns out and turns Katniss into a mockingjay, both her token and a symbol of rebels. As it is a symbol of the rebellion too, she is scared for Cinna, as he “always channel his emotions into his work,”¹⁰⁶ meaning he is supportive of the rioting and intends for Katniss to be a part of it. Afterwards, it is Peeta’s turn to be interviewed. He states that he and Katniss already got married in District Twelve and that she is expecting a baby. Not that it was true, but they are trying everything possible to cancel these games as the rest of the tributes-victors. Katniss comments on Peeta’s statement as “he has only lit the fuse on a bomb that the victors themselves have been building, hoping someone would be able to detonate it.”¹⁰⁷ Now even the citizens of the Capitol are beginning to question this Quarter Quell and are starting to realize what a horrible thing it is. As a final act of defiance from the tributes, they all join hands and for the first time since the last rebellion the unity among districts have been publicly shown. Of course, Katniss started it when she reached for Peeta’s hand and the hand of the other tribute next to her, putting yet another small act of defiance to the Capitol onto her list showing again her political awareness and defiance against Snow as well as her emotion and intellectual development.

¹⁰⁴ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 281.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 302.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 306.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 309.

Despite their best efforts, the tributes have to go back into the arena. As Katniss is readying for the launch, the Peacekeepers come and beat Cinna who is there with her for his dress that made Katniss a Mockingjay. She is helpless because she is trapped on the plate that should launch her into the arena behind the glass. Surely, they timed their coming to disconcert Katniss before the Games, realizes Katniss. And they succeeded because Katniss cannot focus as the plate is rising revealing the arena. All she can think about is Cinna in the pool of blood. However everything is very bright so she comes to focus at once realizing she is sees water everywhere around her. *“This is no place for a girl on fire.”*¹⁰⁸ Since Cinna has been attacked and rebels have been dying in the revolution she comes to conclusion that she owes them and therefore refuses to “play the Games on the Capitol’s terms” considering it as her last act of defiance. As she focuses onto the arena she recognizes that it is not only water that surrounds her, but in the distance there are woods. But to get to the Cornucopia she has to dive into the water and swim. Luckily, her father taught her to swim in a lake in the woods back home so she is in the advantage in comparison with other tributes. After she reaches the Cornucopia, Finnick the tribute from District Four appears there as well wearing the bangle that belonged to Haymitch. And there it is again, comprehends Katniss, Haymitch is sending her messages into the arena and she is forced her to adapt, thus is coming to maturity due this mental advanced state.

After Katniss and Peeta’s teaming up with Finnick and Mags and running into the woods, there is a tension between Katniss and Finnick. Although Haymitch approved him as an ally, she does not trust him and even plans on killing him. It is when Peeta hits the force field surrounding the arena and dies that Finnick resuscitates him and consequently earns Katniss’ trust. The reaction of Katniss after reviving Peeta back to the land of living is puzzling for Finnick as he did not believe that Katniss loves Peeta. Finnick explains it later saying “I knew I misjudged you. That you do love him. Anyone paying attention could see how much you care about him.”¹⁰⁹ Along with everyone who had doubts about her love, he is proven otherwise, including Snow. This implies Katniss’ emotional growth ergo maturing.

While the group is on the move through the jungle and coming across difficulties, Katniss is determined more than ever to keep Peeta alive. She mentions the last Games

¹⁰⁸ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 317.

when she thought only about saving herself with the encounter with muttations, and how it was different then. But now she states “I trap my terror, push it down, and stay by his side. This time my survival isn’t the goal. Peeta’s is.”¹¹⁰ It is when Mags sacrifices herself in order to save Peeta and later another tribute saves him from the certain death too that she becomes suspicious that she does not know about something. What is more, Johanna, District Seven tribute, gets both tributes from District Three for Katniss to earn her alliance even though they do not like each other at the training. By the time they learn that the arena is designed like a clock, they immediately plan to make a use of it. Unfortunately, while executing the plan, many things go wrong – they are attacked by other tributes, Katniss is attacked by Johanna and Katniss is about to shoot Finnick. In that moment, an arrow prepared to fire, she remembers the words of Haymitch giving her the last advice “when you’re in the arena, just remember who the enemy is.”¹¹¹ The answer is so clear in Katniss’ mind, “who starves and tortures and kills us in the arena? Who will soon kill everyone I love”¹¹² and not other tributes. This realization is important to Katniss as she wants to punish the Capitol for all the troubles and suffering and as she does not want to kill other people if it is not to save her life. It is also a characteristic sign of mental and emotional maturing of Katniss. In that moment Katniss shoots the arrow into the force field causing the arena to explode. The explosion is massive and tributes are rescued by hovercraft. However not every one of them is to return to the Capitol.

The hovercraft that collects Katniss, as she learns after she wakes up from unconsciousness, is to go to the District Thirteen. It was the plan of Haymitch and Plutarch Heavensbee, the Head Gamemaker, to break tributes out from the arena from the beginning. Other tributes had varying degrees of knowledge about it but all of them agreed to keep Peeta alive to maintain Katniss in the alliance with the rebels. That was the reason of the tributes sacrificing their lives to protect Peeta, to be in favour with Katniss. In the time they are picked up from the arena, most of the districts are in a full-scale rebellion and they needed to save Katniss as she is the mockingjay, and as “while she lives, the revolution lives,”¹¹³ elaborates Plutarch. But because they were not able to rescue Peeta as well, Kat-

¹⁰⁹ Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 182.

¹¹⁰ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 359.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 456.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 457.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 466.

niss expresses her anger and disappointment by fighting with Haymitch. Restrained, she hates everybody around her for not rescuing Peeta escalating to her refusing to eat and drink. Although she resists treatment as she believes that she betrayed Peeta for failing to keep him alive. It was Gale, who brought her back to her senses when he described that there is no District Twelve that it had been bombed out as they shared a bond once. This indicate growth of Katniss emotional and mental spheres as she can be reached only by some characters who are close and only by those she trusts.

3.3.3 The Mockingjay

Mockingjay, the offspring of female mockingbirds and male mutation, genetically enhanced birds named jabberjays, is a “creature Capitol never intended to exist.”¹¹⁴ Jabberjays could remember whole passages of conversations among rebels so that they can repeat the exact words in the Capitol. But when the rebels figured out that they are being spied, the Capitol left the jabberjays in the wild supposing they will die. However, the birds have thrived in a new form, disputing the Capitol that was not “anticipating its will to live.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, Katniss being the Mockingjay has gained yet another interpretation and that being someone that Capitol never wanted to exist, being someone who gave the people of Panem the strength and determination to defy the oppressive regime of the Capitol just like Snow suspect her to be. Unlike most of her peers, Katniss sees the true meaning of jabberjays. In comparison with her friend Madge, who thinks that “they are just songbirds,”¹¹⁶ Katniss sees the connection with the rebellion in the past and the undesirable consequences of the Capitol’s own creation back on itself, thus making her more matured in terms of the political awareness and intellectual development.

Although Katniss knows what she, as the symbol of Mockingjay, means to the rebellion, she is reluctant to perform as one. It is because she is afraid that even more people will die because of her, she asks herself “could any good I do possibly outweigh the damage?”¹¹⁷ She is well aware of the price of killing, just as Peeta says, “to murder innocent people? It costs everything you are.”¹¹⁸ Even though Katniss did not kill them personally,

¹¹⁴ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 112.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 15.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

she would feel responsible for all those deaths. She already feels that way as the ninety percent of her district burned to death after Capitol's bombing. What is more, Katniss realizes she is yet again a piece in someone else's game, namely Coin's, who is the President of the District Thirteen. It is when she finds her preparation team badly bruised she knows "who's really in control and what happens if she's not obeyed."¹¹⁹ It is the same notion of power than President Snow showed her while threatening, making them alike. But, Katniss has a conversation with her sister Prim, who is no more that little girl but already a grown up young woman as Prim sees to the bottom of the problem, pointing out Katniss is important for the cause of rebels and therefore Katniss can get almost anything she wants. Katniss understands and makes a use of it later. And after a dreadful interview of Peeta's, Gale tells her "Katniss... he's still trying to keep you alive."¹²⁰ That way Katniss realizes that although they are not in the arena anymore, "the Games are still on"¹²¹ and both Peeta and Katniss are resolved to preserve each other alive. When Peeta's calling for a ceasefire causes Katniss to realize that doing nothing will not make things better so she comes to the decision to become the Mockingjay indicating another mental change causing Katniss' maturing.

Katniss puts together a list of demands under which she will become the Mockingjay in order to have some control. She is still determined to keep Peeta alive although, or may be because, he is in the Capitol and because of the damage he could unconsciously cause. What is more, she demands the immunity not only for Peeta, but for other tributes that could be saved from the Capitol as well, including Johanna who were on the rebellion side all along and Annie, Finnick's love. The list continues with things such as hunting with Gale in the woods, keeping their cat and what is the most important, killing Snow as Katniss feels vengeful after all the misery she has to gone through because of him. At the assembly where President Coin makes her speech in front of all citizens of the District Thirteen she adds a clause that in case of not fulfilling the requirements of the Mockingjay properly, Katniss and potentially rescued tributes will be prosecuted. "In other words, I step out of line and we're all dead,"¹²² understands Katniss deducing she is yet again a piece in someone else's game. This public speech of Coin's also determines Katniss as a possible

¹¹⁹ Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 60.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 35.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 36.

threat as Coin does not trust Katniss because she understands that Katniss has an agenda of her own. And Katniss realizes this all which shows her as a capable observer the political issues and behave accordingly, another important issue of her maturing, which is in process.

Katniss goes to District Eight where the clip of her fighting is to be filmed not only to show that she is well and fighting to provide rebels the example, but to show compassion with the injured as well. All goes well until the point when more bombers come back to finish off the hospital. Katniss with Gale are on the roof, shooting onto the bombers, but they are not able to stop them soon enough. Then she makes a speech onto the camera, stating “if we burn, you burn with us,”¹²³ suggesting she knows well that if the Capitol wins the war there will be nobody to rule over as they will kill everyone standing in their way. This also suggests Katniss’ acceptance of responsibility for her actions and at the same time moral development of hers.

After her arrival back to District Thirteen, another interview with Peeta is aired. This time he does not look as good as the first time but rather skinnier and even hurt. Still, he warns District Thirteen about the bombing that is to come. When evacuated, Katniss, plays with their family cat that chase light, causing her to realize that she is actually the cat and the light is Peeta. Indicating that keeping the light out of the cat’s reach or Peeta from Katniss is the way of torturing by the Capitol, namely President Snow. Not only Katniss convinced President Snow at last with the way she reacted to his death and resuscitation in the arena, she “gave him the weapon he needed to break me,”¹²⁴ states Katniss. This resolution unarms Katniss completely as she states that being Mockingjay is impossible, as everything she says will have consequences for Peeta. “But not his death, no, nothing so merciful as that. Snow will ensure that his life is much worse than death,”¹²⁵ causing Katniss a wave of sadness and aversion to everything that prevent her from doing anything. This realization points out Katniss’ interpersonal development, which can be understood as another step towards her maturity.

As everyone is determined to keep Katniss as the Mockingjay going, the rescue of Peeta is planned. Excitement of Peeta’s coming caused both Katniss and Haymitch to ig-

¹²² Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2009), 69.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 118.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 183.

nore the fact that something is not quite right, which is that Peeta is trying to kill Katniss. As it turns out, he has been hijacked, meaning his memory was altered while him being injected the venom of the tracker jackers which itself causes horrifying hallucinations as the venom attacks the part of the brain that causes fear. Now Peeta considers Katniss as one of the mutation who endangers his life and therefore she must be killed. Katniss is hurt and disgusted by the wickedness of the Capitol. “Snow has stolen him from me, twisted him beyond recognition and made me a present of him,”¹²⁶ with the purpose of incapacitate Katniss as the symbol of the rebellion, realizes Katniss. Consequently, the memories of how Peeta was kind and steady and warm follow. But only when something is no longer there, people appreciate it causing Katniss to mourn Peeta even more than if he was dead. It is until later, when he is better and they are both in the Capitol as a part of team to shoot short propaganda videos, she realizes what it would be like if their positions were reversed. She knows he would not give up on her so she is trying to approach him and help him to restore his memories with a help of a game Real or Not Real. After Peeta’s statement, the answer Real or Not Real from the squad follows with a brief explanation. But Katniss go even further and tells him about his favorite color, activity and his old self. She states “I wish I could read what’s going on in his mind, that I could go in and untangle the mess of lies.”¹²⁷ It would not have happened not being Haymitch who pointed out, reversed scenario – Katniss being hijacked and trying to kill Peeta. This twist in Katniss’ behavior can be viewed as her development in emotional, moral and even intellectual maturing as the change occurs in emotions, thoughts and morality. Afterwards, Peeta is doing better as he is able to suppress the blackouts causing him wanting to kill Katniss.

Katniss is then aware of the hidden agenda of Coins for Peeta being sent to her team into the Capitol. “Why does Coin want me[Katniss] dead now?”¹²⁸ she asks, implying that she realizes her own “expendability when it would be more advantageous to the revolution for her to die a martyr than to live a heroine.”¹²⁹ As she has fulfilled her primary goal, to unify the districts and therefore leaving only last thing she could do to add fire to the rebel-

¹²⁵ Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 190.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 227.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 351.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 309.

¹²⁹ A. Waller Hastings, “*The Hunger Games: Dystopia and the Adolescent Mind*,” (lecture, WVACET Conference, West Liberty University, West Virginia, October 15, 2010).

lion, to die. Of course, she will fight for her life and not giving Coin the satisfaction of having one problem less, showing her advance state of her mentality.

Afterwards, Katniss is able to disguise herself as a citizen of the Capitol and thus to get closer to President Snow along with the rest of her squad, leaving only Peeta, Gale and two men from the camera crew. But before she can near to the mansion, the parachutes are released from a hovercraft to a group of children. They assume it is kind of help as it is viewed in the arenas. But the parachutes detonate. And while Katniss sees her sister Prim to doctor the injured children, the rest of the parachutes detonate causing Prim as well as Katniss to become human torches. Although with scar tissue, Katniss survives and leaves her with the guilt and anger that she aims towards the President Snow because Prim died in the fire and the hovercraft had the seal of Panem on it. One time during her recovery in the President's mansion, Katniss accidentally wanders into the rooms of President Snow who is waiting to be executed. They are discussing the things that happened and although he admits he is "not above killing children,"¹³⁰ claims he is not to be blamed for the parachute bombs. As Katniss expresses her disbelief, Snow replies "I thought we had agreed not to lie to each other,"¹³¹ making Katniss think deep about that bombing situation. She remembers Gale's draft of a snare targeting the human emotions such as compassion thus leaving more dead behind. "While torture and crimes against humanity are expected of the Capitol, Coin's own regime is not above such practices"¹³² either, considering Coin aimed Katniss' sister in particular to make Katniss hate President Snow even more. Thus on the execution day, Katniss does not shoot Snow, but Coin instead showing her conviction of Coin's being behind the attack. This indicates Katniss' steady sense of morality and readiness to accept the consequences of her deeds, which are characteristics of an adult rather than a child.

After the execution of Coin, Katniss wants rather die than risk her chances of interrogation with probable torture, but Peeta prevents this attempt of hers as he is still trying to keep her alive, an old habit from the arenas. She is put into an apartment where she is thinking of the ways she could commit suicide; considering taking pills that she is given all at once, bleeding to death or not eating. But she is under constant surveillance that makes

¹³⁰ Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 417.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 418.

¹³² Anthony Pavlik, "Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy," ed. Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A Clark (Jefferson, NC: Jefferson and McFarland, 2012), 33.

her think “taking my life is the Capitol’s privilege. Again,”¹³³ referring to the Hunger Games and the time after when she was trying to convince Snow about her love. But after a few days, she starts to sing, which can be considered as therapeutic thus “marking the hope arising from the death of her heroic self.”¹³⁴ She promises herself that even if she did not succeed with her suicide and they designed her dream weapons, she would never again be brainwashed “into the necessity of using them.”¹³⁵ She comes to a conclusion that they should have let some decent species take over because the world, where the children go into the Hunger Games or where they are bombed by parachutes symbolizing hope, benefits to no one. This in particular conclusion of hers is important while speaking about her maturing, as the reflection of a world surrounding her is commented on in depressive yet objective way.

Meanwhile, she is tried, released and back in the District Twelve where her real home is. However, she remains ignorant to the outer world until Peeta comes with bushes of Primroses and plants it next to the house of Katniss’. This makes Katniss realize that the “evil thing is inside, not out,” and encourages Katniss to start to care of herself again, even go to the woods. She comments that day as one that “the old Katniss” would like, suggesting that she feels different, old and broken, which indicates her self-realization which is a sign of a grown up. When Prim’s cat finds its way back to the Katniss’ home, she is upset at first as she does not like the cat and as he is reminding her of Prim. As she is angry because she is yelling at the cat that Prim will never come again, she breaks and cries realizing and accepting the finality of Prim’s death. Refusing the cat can be interpreted as a metaphor for refusing to accept Prim’s death. Consequently, Katniss’ acceptance of the cat suggests her coming to terms with Prim’s passing therefore showing Katniss’ emotional and psychological development.

¹³³ Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 438.

¹³⁴ Sarah Outterson Murphy, “Of Bread, Blood and The Hunger Games: Critical Essays on the Suzanne Collins Trilogy,” ed. Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A Clark (Jefferson, NC: Jefferson and McFarland, 2012), 207.

¹³⁵ Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 440.

3.4 Gale vs. Peeta and Family Life

“*Today I might lose both of them,*”¹³⁶ realizes Katniss when Gale is in the team sent to rescue Peeta from the Capitol after Quarter Quell. Anything can go wrong. Katniss loves them both, each of them in a different way and she is terrified to lose either of them. At the beginning of the Hunger Games trilogy Katniss clearly states that she does not want to get married, much less to have children. But at the very end, she does both. Considering that Katniss knows Gale from the age of eleven and that they have been hunting partners since, they had to rely on each other and trust each other with their lives, Gale should be the one. Her indecisiveness shows her internal battle throughout the trilogy that can be viewed as an emotional development as her feelings towards both of them evolve.

But Peeta, the tribute with whom Katniss goes to the arena, had provided her the bread when she and her family were starving, thus giving her the hope and promise that things will improve that she needed so desperately. Of course, she remembers him for that as she expressed during the reaping, why him, why the boy with the bread? She states that “*odds are someone else will kill him before I do,*”¹³⁷ showing her determination to go back home, to her family and hoping she will not be the one to kill him. At first, she questions everything Peeta does. Waving to the cameras at the railway station, holding her hand during the ride to the Capitol, declaring his love to her during an interview or making an alliance with Careers is everything that Katniss does not know what to think of. After that, she is willing to kill him to get home, but after she learns that it is possible for them to be the victors together, she finds and take care of Peeta as she considers it as a payback for the bread. He saved life her, she saved life him and they are equal now. Except when it is declared that only one victor can be crowned, she is not willing to kill Peeta because if she had, she would “spend the rest of my life in this arena, trying to think my way out.”¹³⁸ And thanks to the berries, they survive both. The survival after the Games is dependent on their love story, so much kissing and love expressing action is required. Consequently she realizes that “there’s only one future, if I want to keep those I love alive and stay alive myself. I’ll have to marry Peeta.”¹³⁹ What is the worst for Katniss is that she cannot be with anyone

¹³⁶ Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 194.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 40.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 417.

¹³⁹ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 54.

else if she wanted to. She hates that she has been dictated in the Games but when the Capitol is not giving any option in her love life, she hates it even more. She comes to the conclusion that she will never be entirely free of the Capitol. It is the time, when Katniss starts to wonder what she does actually feel towards Gale, the strong hunting partner who always has had her back. But at the same time, while working on the book, Katniss is observant of Peeta admiring his gentle work and his looks. She states “I also become a little fixated on his eyelashes (...). One afternoon Peeta stops shading a blossom and looks up so suddenly that I start, as though I were caught spying on him, which in a strange way maybe I was,”¹⁴⁰ showing also that Katniss is not indifferent towards Peeta but rather develops strong emotional bond towards him suggesting her development.

At the time Katniss is torn between Gale and Peeta. And as she is going back into the arena at the Quarter Quell, she is yet again trying to keep Peeta alive. And considering that she already shared kisses with Gale, the first time she feels something stirring inside is while kissing Peeta. When she loses him during the rescuing from the collapsing arena, she is so desperate she would rather kill Peeta than to let the Capitol “choose the agonizing means of his death,”¹⁴¹ as a consequence of her blowing up the arena. She is not handling well the separation as Katniss being in District Thirteen and Peeta in the Capitol, where he was hijacked so soldiers go on the rescue mission. Although he is back and alive and despite of what she feels for him, she “accept[s] deep down that he’ll never come back to me,”¹⁴² so she explores the possibility to be with Gale. She kisses Gale “to make up for all the kisses she’s withheld, and because she’s so desperately lonely she can’t stand it,”¹⁴³ which are absolutely different reasons with comparison when she was kissing Peeta whom she was kissing for the camera and viewers. But as they are both stubborn and had different opinions on things they fight a lot. When she sees Gale’s snare luring more victims on the compassion with others, she thinks that it crosses some kind of line whereas Gale says it is the same principle the Capitol uses meaning for Katniss that Gale has descended to their level. While Peeta hates Katniss and at the same time is jealous of Gale, Gale confesses he understands Peeta as he felt the exact same type of hate as Peeta does when she was kissing Peeta in the Games. But as Peeta makes progress with fighting against the hijacking conse-

¹⁴⁰ Suzanne Collins, *Catching Fire* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 195.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 462.

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 231.

quences, Katniss slowly gains hope that one day he will be all right. As they are all on the mission to kill President Snow in the Capitol and Peeta can seriously endanger them, he begs the whole crew to kill him or let him to kill himself. As Katniss is still determined to keep Peeta alive, she refuses as she would never forgive herself. After arriving into shop whose owner takes them as to a refuge, Gale and Peeta discuss Katniss and her feelings while everyone is asleep. They are both convinced that she loves the other one, both giving examples of how she acts, but both hoping she will pick him. As they are to move towards the center of the Capitol, they have to separate. While saying goodbye to Peeta, Katniss hugs him and remembers of all the embraces before, “perhaps not fully appreciated then, but so sweet in my memory, and now gone for ever,”¹⁴⁴ implying she loves him. When Katniss get burned at the city center, tried for shooting Coin and discharged to go home, to District Twelve, it is Peeta who gives her the impulse to live again whereas Gale is doing some reparation in the District Two. This suggests Peeta has bigger influence on Katniss than anyone else as Katniss undergoes the emotional, moral and intellectual development.

Peeta and Katniss grow back together; they both comfort each other either after hijacking flashbacks or nightmares of mutts and finally the hunger that overtook her only once, on the beach, on the Quarter Quell. What Katniss states, is that what she needs to survive is not Gale’s fire of rage and hatred. What she needs is the dandelion in the spring, the hope that life will continue no matter of the losses. “And only Peeta can give me that,”¹⁴⁵ resolving in the marriage and kids, as there are no more Hunger Games to which the children are sent to almost certain death of which Katniss was so terrified of, indicating the final step of her psychological maturing.

¹⁴³ Suzanne Collins, *Mockingjay* (London: Scholastic, 2010), 231.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 395.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 453.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to determine whether Katniss Everdeen, the protagonist of The Hunger Games trilogy, faces early maturity. If so, the goal was to emphasize the events and characters that prove to be most formative and influential on her path to early maturity. The most important things Katniss encounters that also shape her development are highlighted.

Clearly, Katniss has lived through much more in a few years than most people experience in their whole lives. To start with, as an eleven year old girl she goes into the woods, which is illegal, in order to keep her family alive. Afterwards, during two years of her life that the trilogy depicts, she makes many little steps which advance her budding maturity. As Katniss has the capacity to love the others, it often comes at the cost of sacrificing her own life. This is shown when she volunteers to enter The Hunger Games instead of her sister, or during the Quarter Quell, when she is decided that the one victor who is to leave the arena alive is Peeta, not her. Her love and compassion is also shown in the way she takes care of Rue, her ally in the arena during her first Hunger Games. In these situations, her emotional development is stressed.

Considering the relationships with her loved ones, each of them contributes differently towards Katniss' development. First to be mentioned is Haymitch. He and Katniss are much alike and hence understand each other. Without him, she would not be able to realize what offering the berries meant. Without him, she would say or do something which would most certainly lead to her death. What is more, he was the one who points out that she has been disfavoring Peeta after his return from the Capitol; something Peeta would never do to Katniss if their positions were reversed. Thanks to Gale she accepts the fact of Peeta trying to keep her alive all the way from the Capitol, in addition to which he provides the impetus she needs to decide to become a symbol and motivate the rebels; meaning becoming the Mockingjay. Peeta, who she marries at the end and has two children with, could be considered by far as the most influential character. She knows that he is the innocent one who is against the needless killing in consideration of the traps prepared for the Capitol during the war. Peeta was everything she was not, implying the need for him in her life and eventually marriage with him. These all relate to positive impulses on her path to maturity. However there are negative aspects contributing to her coming of age as well. Such negative approach is denoted by President Snow. Due to his threats, laws and readiness to do whatever it takes to break Katniss, she makes most of the mature decisions even though she

knows he will not be pleased, which puts her in danger. This is connoted when Katniss holds out the berries in order to humiliate the Gamemakers, who represent the Capitol and everything that is bad in their world. Additionally, her maturity is demonstrated when she chooses to shoot into the arena instead of to a tribute, as *the real enemy* threatening Katniss is not another tribute but the Capitol and everything it represents.

To sum up, the analysis has proved that Katniss indeed matures early. This can be viewed as resulting from the political circumstances or the people she cares about. After all, as Eleanor Roosevelt pointed out, all the choices that are end up shaping a new person. Katniss makes numerous ones, leading to the emergence of a new person, Katniss Everdeen the adult.

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