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## **Identity Construction in Suzanne Collins'**

### ***The Hunger Games: The Hunger Games and Catching Fire***

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#### **Board of Examiners**

**Chair:** Mrs. BOUALEGUE Nadjiba

**Supervisor:** Mrs. MAGHMOUL Leila

**Examiner:** Mrs. MAHTALI Ahlem

#### **Submitted By**

ALLELE Inchirah

#### **Supervisor**

Mrs. MAGHMOUL Leila

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**This thesis is dedicated to my parents**

*For their endless love, care, support and understanding*

To all my friends, thank you for your support. Just like Peeta's bread gave Katniss hope, your friendship gave me hope so huge thanks to all of you. I cannot list all of the names here but you are always in my heart and mind.

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## Abstract

Due to the popularity of young adult dystopian literature, this thesis aims to analyse novels written by Suzanne Collins *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire*. The thesis in the first chapter investigates dystopian fiction and young adult literature. In the second chapter the focus is on the identity construction of the protagonists and their quest for justice under the choices that are forced on them by their society. The third chapter examines how gender is portrayed in Collins's work, the focus on the construction of gender, the protagonists learn to perform different gender roles, those different appearances, and performances, although imposed, but have helped them to restore the different parts of identity. The thesis concludes that Collins does not give answers to everything, but it states that Collins does create a kind of awareness toward important issues in society.

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## Introduction

Young Adult Dystopian literature has been on the rise since the end of the Cold War. As the world experienced the Cold War, authors started thinking about a catastrophic event and what life would be like following it. The authors hope to draw in readers as they focus their novels on an environmental crisis and subsequent ecological collapse. These disaster scenario books were popular well into the 1990's and continue to be popular today (Arrow 65).

In young adult dystopian fiction, the setting, themes, and characters are a proper fit with the ideological changes that happen during the pre-adulthood. There will frequently be an incident in the protagonist's life that uncovers the reality of their society. Dystopian novels that show the struggle of finding the self and discuss social and moral issues are generally welcomed by young people that are building up the capacity to understand more the complex issues within the society (Stevens).

*The Hunger Games* (2008) and *Catching Fire* (2009) are broadly mainstream dystopian books. This thesis investigates Collins' *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire*, the attention will be on how the dystopian culture shapes the identity parts of the protagonists. While trying to shape their identity, Panem forces hard life conditions on the main characters, yet rather than staying easygoing and quelled, the heroes discover new ideas in their dystopian world.

Collins gives hope by shedding the light on how the adoration that the individual carries in his/her heart for the darling ones can give them a strength which gives the young people trust that they have the ability to improve things. Despite the fact that the culture and society are the primary elements that shape the character, in any case, there is dependably an open door for disobedience.

Suzanne Marie Collins is an American novelist and television writer, the author of The New York Times best-selling series The Underland Chronicles and *The Hunger Games* trilogy (Wikipedia). After *Gregor the Overlander* in 2003 was published and gain huge popularity among readers, making Suzanne Collins beloved from loyal readers of different ages (Egan 6).

Collins expresses that she was inspired by both the classic Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur and the modern reality television. Collins said that there was a reality television programming in TV station and real war scope of the Iraq War in the news; she could not separate between what was genuine and what was entertainment. She says: “I am sitting there flipping around and on one channel there is a group of young people competing for...And on the next, a group of young people fighting an actual war... and the lines began to blur in this very unsettling way, and I thought of this story” (“Suzanne Collins – Scholastic” 1).

Collins consolidated between current unscripted television and the ancient Roman gladiator games to make the idea of *the Hunger Games*. The reaping day is the day to arbitrarily choose a twenty-four kid to take part in the Games which is a reflection of the gladiator games. Collins wants the young people to be the dynamic member in the story as a result of that she picks youngsters to be tributes in the Games (Margolis 1). Collins shows how those tributes are victimized by a corrupted system which means the Games confirm the corruption of the adult world.

In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen, the hero, volunteers to assume her sister’s position as a tribute. In *Catching Fire*, Katniss again winds up in the field and President Snow threatens her and her family since she defeated him and the Gamemakers in the previous Games. While in the field for the second time, Katniss and a portion of alternate tributes are protected by radicals and taken to District 13, demolished in the past war as indicated by Panem propaganda.



This present study aims to analyzing the current representation of identity construction in dystopian books for young adults. The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is entitled Young Adult Dystopian Literature which examines the rise of the dystopian novels, and it first addresses the origins of utopia and dystopia. Then it investigates dystopian fiction and young adult literature and also highlights common themes that most of the dystopian works talk about justice, oppression, identities and gender roles. Each writer discusses this issue from a different corner, using different literary techniques and styles as well.

The second chapter explores the identity construction and development of the protagonists under very harsh circumstances that their authoritarian society imposes on them. It examines the influence of dystopian society on the individuals' behavior that imposes different factors to form their identity and analyses how the main characters free themselves from the control and oppose the abuse of the authority through the act of rebellion.

The third chapter discusses the social influence on the gender identity and social activities; this chapter examines how gender is portrayed in Collins's work which challenges the gender stereotypes. The focus is on the process of establishing the concept of gender roles in a given society, as well as how this changes over time.

The significance of this research mainly lies in analyzing and depicting the psychological changes of the identity of the protagonists. It is highly noticeable that this change was caused by the Games. It also sheds a light on gender roles, quest for identity. The main objectives of this study are; to examine the social effects on the psychological and behavioral changes of protagonists. In addition, it seeks to study gender as performance. More often, the present study aims at investigating the development of identity of the main characters. This present study aims to analyse the current representation of identity construction in dystopian books for young adults. It discusses the idea of the dystopian world,

How the tributes are then regarded and perceived by the Capitols. This thesis is based on the sociological criticism approach that examines literature in cultural and social context, and which is used in this study as a tool to understand the young adult dystopian literature and relies as well on the psychoanalytic approach to analyse the influence of society on both the process of identity construction and gender roles. Thus, some of the questions to be answered in the present study are; is the society should be allowed to do whatever it takes to keep the order and law? How does the society affect the process of the identity construction? And how this dystopian society imposes certain roles on them? And what are the inner conflicts that the protagonists experience? In the first place, however, at beginning the thesis starts with explaining what do the words “utopia” and “dystopia” even mean?

## Chapter One: Young Adult Dystopian Literature

As teens approach adolescence they find themselves starting to give careful consideration to what is happening around them in the society. Ethically, teenagers are moving from the black and white perspective of youngsters toward a more perspective of grown-ups. They no longer belong to the world of childhood, and they still remain uncertain of their role in the world of adulthood. Dystopian novels for young adults convey a message that says: “it is never too late to start over. If you were not happy with yesterday, try something different today. Do not stay stuck. Do better” (Wong). Therefore, this chapter investigates dystopian fiction and young adult literature.

The term “utopia” was first used in Thomas More’s eponymous *Utopia* (1516), though its origins are traced back to antiquity. Utopia refers to a morally perfect place. The utopian works aim to teach the young reader to change the situation, to transform the society, teach them to learn more about the society and about human behavior, “without the Utopians of other times, men would still live in caves, miserable and naked. It was Utopians who traced the lines of the first City.....Out of generous dreams come beneficial realities. Utopia is the principle of all progress, and the essay into a better future” (Mumford 22).

The origins of the word are from the Greek *ou* (not) and *topos* (place), in this signifying no spot or no place. In spite of there are likewise overtones for good place i.e eu-topos from the homonymous Greek prefix eu which means good (The British Library). Plato’s *Republic* is the first utopian work which describes an imaginary idealistic society (Mumford 12).

The famous works of utopian literature are *Republic* and *Laws* by Plato, *The Virtuous City* (Al-Madina al-Fadila) by Al-Farabi, *Sacred History* by Euhemerus, *La Città felice* by Francesco Patrizi and *Utopia* by Thomas More among the others (Wikipedia). The center

theme is justice and all describe a utopian society which idealistically designed by intelligent and unselfish people. The nature of utopian works centers its attention on providing an itemized depiction of the society and its laws. There is little, assuming any, conflict (if everything is faultless, there is no place for dissension), and the utopian works represents the zenith of human advancement and accomplishment.

The perfect society is the center of topic of the utopian works. As Eurich explains that utopian society contain different social classes: philosophers (the upper class), army (middle class) and laborers (the lower class), where authority depends on knowledge and character, not honorability of blood or legacy (68). The possibility of private property comes to an end and by providing the right life conditions this is able of taking out desire and envy (Eurich 67). However, the twentieth century witnessed the rise of dystopian literature.

Utopia and Dystopia, the former refers to a morally perfect place and the latter refers to a less than perfect place. A dystopian world then is the opposite of the ideal world, a society where everything lacks morality. Dystopia is “a utopia that has gone wrong, or a utopia that functions only for a particular segment of society” (Gordin, Tilley and Prakash 1). A dystopian society is usually ruled by a dictator or a government which instead of protecting its citizens, it spreads its forces and control. A society which criminalizes any form of innovativeness or creativity and the citizens are completely oppressed by the government.

In dystopian fiction, the setting, themes, and characters are a proper fit with the ideological changes that happen during the pre-adulthood. There will frequently be an incident in the protagonist’s life that uncovers the reality of their society. Dystopian novels that show the struggle of finding the self and discuss social and moral issues are generally welcomed by young people who are building up the capacity to more understand the complex issues within the society (Stevens).

Numerous of the dystopian societies provide an idealistic way of life for few citizens mainly to those who are in charge to rule while those societies oppress the rest of the population and deprive them of all their natural and civil rights, these constraints of the society that try to control everyone. In which case, the young adults feel disconnected and this brutal and unjust situation motivates them to make a change and start a journey of the self.

Usually in literature what matters is the moral lesson that is learnt through the adventure whether it is happy or tragic ending. The message of the work can be even easily conveyed if the protagonist finds themselves go through tragic events and experience loss (Steinberg 97). In this case, several works of dystopia are seen as morality stories; their point is to indicate the problems of the present days in futuristic setting.

Briefly, a dystopian work focuses on a struggling of the individual or group of people in an assumed utopian society, a place where there is a total loss of humanity because the upper class in the dystopian society sees humanity from a different angle. They unashamedly repress the citizens' mind and heart and use the human fears and weakness to keep total control. Usually, the writers give the readers guidelines which make them more open-minded for overcoming such a corrupted society in their own life.

### 1. Young Adult Dystopian Literature

VanderStaay defines Young Adult literature as “literature wherein the protagonist is either a teenager or one who approaches problems from a teenage perspective. Such novels are generally of moderate length and told from the first person” (1). Young Adult Literature is written for readers between the ages from twelve to eighteen years of age, nonetheless, due to the popularity of the works the young adult dystopian fiction reaches an audience from

different ages. Furthermore, 55 percent of the purchasers of those books are from the age of eighteen years old and more (Hill 5).

Originally, literature written for teenagers goes back to *Seventeenth Summer* by Maureen Daly a book written and published for young adults after WWII when teenagers got their own distinction as a social demographic. However, the beginning of the young adult dystopian literature was in 1993 with *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, the genre describes a dystopian society and protagonist quests to save the world or overcome forces of evil and starts to flourish in the 2000s (Strickland, CNN).

Young Adult dystopian literature has of many subgenres and contemporary young adult dystopian works are the most well-known ones amongst teenagers for the time being since the 2000s (The Artifice). Dystopian fiction is a blend of idealism, tragedy, science-fiction and Bildungsroman which makes those dystopian works gain huge popularity among the readers (Hill 6). Dystopian Literature has common elements such as “liberty and self-determination, environmental destruction and looming catastrophe, questions of identity, and the increasingly fragile boundaries between technology and the self” (Basu, Broad, and Hintz 1).

The aim of the stories is to teach lessons about the issues confronted by mankind and to offer the joy of living new experiences with the protagonists. The dystopian works usually use first person narration to keep the readers close to the events; those fictional societies usually face the threat of natural devastation. (Hintz 2).

Young adult literature creates a possible future scenario of the world that contains authoritarian society, repressed citizens, and natural disasters. All this sounds terrifying, however, young adults enjoy reading such stories but critics believe that those stories are harsh for a young mind. The young adult dystopian books are indeed harsh but they are

written to bring in the young adults to the harsh realities of the world because this ugly truth about the real world cannot be hidden from them for eternity. Yet the writers are doing so in an appropriate way. The writers end up creating the harmony between truth and hope which means always leave a candle burning in the darkness (Alchive 3).

Reeve explains that the young adults are attracted to those stories because they start to acquire the ability of critical thinking which allows them to become “aware of the deep injustices in the wider world, which dystopian fiction often reflects” maybe “it’s just cool to mentally recast yourself as a rebel against some future tyranny. There’s a strong element of wish fulfillment in dystopian fiction” (1) which fulfill their desire to free themselves from the authority of the adults in the real life.

The young adult dystopian literature addresses the unstable emotions that the teenagers are going through they, “become able to synthesize information into ideas. Teens want to exercise their new skill” (Alchive 3) in the real world and discover who they are. The young adult dystopia offers them a new experience even though with open or tragic ending but always gives hope: “The mood of the dystopian young adult genre can be grim, but the general idea is the triumph over the direct circumstances” (Alchive 3).

The dystopian literature aims to entertain the readers, as well as to give them a chance to comprehend the aspects of the dystopian culture. The dystopian works gain huge vogue among young adult, the reason behind is that the topics are relevant to today’s popular social issues. It satisfies the desire for disobedience and revolution to make better change, and the whole work is written from adolescence perspective (Stevens).

The young adult dystopian novels as well motivate the young people to read. Those novels not only provide the young adults with a good plot to read but also important experiences that help them to construct their identity and find their path in life. Since the

process of identity construction starts from the knowledge, life experiences and imagination and reading plays an important part of this process. The young adult dystopian literature wants to teach the new generation of nowadays the true meaning of justice, and make them aware not to follow the same path as the previous generation; hoping that the future will not be as gloomy as the past and the present.

The most famous dystopian novels are *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld, *The Maze Runner* by James Dashner, *Delirium* by Lauren Oliver, *Divergent* by Veronica Roth, *Harry Potter* by J.K. Rowling, *Matched* by Ally Condie and *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins. All those young adults dystopia externalize the turmoil which the young adults experience during the process of reaching the adolescence in dystopian society (Stevens).

For instance, in *Uglies* the appearance is extremely important in this dystopian world where young adults are turned pretty by plastic surgery. In *Matched* the young people are matched with their life partners and this match is determined by a computer program. *Divergent* is a society which is divided into five factions. As every individual enters adulthood, they must choose a faction and this choice based on an aptitude test. They readers find themselves in front of new society, yet the obstacles that the protagonists face, in one way or another seem familiar to their real world (Lewis Chris 2).

In such a dehumanizing society it seems that the control and oppression are the basis of their power whether physical control or mental control. Those who are rule, use the rest of population as a tool to maintain their luxurious lifestyle and brainwashing the young people to avoid any disobedience.

## 2. Control and Oppression in the Young Adult dystopia

Control defined as the power to influence or direct people's behavior or the course of events (Oxford dictionary 379). Most dystopian writings introduce a corrupted society that



uses all means of control and oppression to maintain an illusion of ideal society. The dystopian society oppressed the citizens by using different forms of control, both physical and psychological control regularly implemented by dictatorship or theocratic (Hintz 3).

The dystopian society as Bowman states “Personally, I believe that a true dystopia, at its core, has a lot to do with the main character discovering a fatal flaw in their otherwise perfect society” (1), those repressed citizens are not aware of their own blindness. Furthermore, the fear of the punishments keeps them in line and self-constructed becomes like pushing water uphill with a rake. The journey starts “when the protagonist is moving from satisfied to suspicious, to conflicted, and finally to aware, where they have some sort of realization that their world is far from perfect. Sometimes they even rebel” (Bowman 1). These protagonists face the similar adolescence conflicts to discover the self, yet they find faith to continue their journey.

To illustrate, *The Maze Runner* is a story deals with the control of the authority over its citizens, a place where the teenagers imprisoned in a maze with lost memories as part of a scientific experiment. They have to face their fear and uncertainty. The maze seems to have no escape which is can be a metaphor of the social control.

Under such a repressive society, the protagonists find themselves confronted with difficulties, outer and inner, and start the struggle of questioning the self and overcoming those difficulties as part of their process of identity construction. They have to face concrete obstacles in their dystopian world, and as well, they have to face the limited expectations of adolescence in their society. In such a dystopian society the identities then are not a matter of personal choice, but rather are imposed by the society that considers any questioning of the self as a form of rebellion. People may not be very talented or wise to choose their own personalities, yet they cannot give up on that freedom of choice. The young protagonists in

the dystopian works never feel that they belong to the society, those thoughts often lead to rebellion and resistance which displeasure those who are in power (Feenberg 53).

### 3. Identity in the Young Adult Dystopian Literature

The rebellion becomes a form of reaction against all the oppression and control that the authoritarian society imposes on the people. And the rebellion itself takes different forms; in the young adult dystopian literature the flame of the rebellion is the protagonists' realization of the truth of their society. They refuse to surround to the social control and order that is imposed by the authority, and often start to construct an identity based on their experiences. Through the process of identity construction, the readers feel that they can relate to the protagonists.

For instance, in *The Giver* "governments create uniform societies because they are afraid of change and individuality" (Hill 116), such a society eliminates the freedom of choice because they believe that people are selfish. When people have the freedom to choose, they choose wrong, every single time. However, the protagonist sees the defects in his society and has hope if he shares this knowledge with his friends, this can make a better change (Hill 56).

Through the process of identity construction, the more protagonists get wiser the more they find themselves separated from their friends and family since they start to think differently. Their awareness includes that they do not need to be fit in the society to exist and be worth living, and acquire a new concept of self-acceptance. This stage of self-evolution can be a source of inspiration to the rest of the repressed citizens to make better change (Feenberg 191).

However, at certain points during the story, the protagonists feel lost and struggle to escape from their situation, they depend on the help of persons who are close to them such as

family, friends or trusted people. Relying on each other is something important yet this does not mean to eliminate self-reliance. The encouragement of their beloved ones gives them strength to face the unknown and most of all to face their fears. Such a rigid society can cause the desire to change and enemies so family and friends can keep hopes too high (Hill 30).

The young adult dystopian literature has connections to young adults' real life. It shows that life has a lot of things to explore and learn about. In YA dystopia the protagonists discover the true meaning of humanity and their rights as a human being. Those novels open the young adults' eyes, heart, and minds that there are for real corrupted societies, dictators, and repressed people and the tragedy is that the whole world agrees that situation is right and their duty is to make a better change.

## Chapter Two: Identity Construction

The young adult dystopian literature explores the identity construction and development of the protagonists under very harsh circumstances that their dystopian society imposes on them. Usually, the quest for identity comes in a form of rebellion act against the control and oppression when the protagonists start to see flaws of the society. Though the protagonists go through different situations, yet the goal is the same which is to construct their true identity and correct what is wrong in the society (Strickland 1). This chapter explores the identity construction and development of the protagonists under very harsh circumstances that their authoritarian society imposes on them.

Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire* are dystopian novels discuss social issues. The story is neither about a game nor about hunger, it is about discovering the identity and rebellion against the social control and oppression for the sake of social change and justice (Peterfreund 128). Therefore, this chapter aims to examine the protagonists' quest for identity, applying the sociological and *psychoanalytic* approaches.

In Panem, the Games designed by the Capitols to keep their control on people in the districts. The designers even cheat to accomplish their very particular ends; the only winners are the Capitols. People in the districts are aware of the injustice in Panem. However, there is nothing they can do since the authoritarian society controls all the source of life to keep them busy with their survival (Pharr and Clark 181).

Logically the wealthier the person is, the more likely he/she is to act fairly. But researchers in psychology prove that wealth has an impact on people's generosity and sense of connectedness "wealthy people give more money to charity because they have more money to give. But studies show that middle-class and poorer people give higher proportions of their money to charity" (Grewal 1). The citizens of the Capitol ruthlessly abuse the twelve

districts in Panem, giving themselves a good requirement of living while intentionally keeping whatever is left of the populace subjects to destitution. The novels *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire* take pains to reveal how much this limits of their ability to sympathize with the less fortunate.

There is a common idea about not having enough assets would lead to selfishness. Psychologists suggest that the answer is that wealth and fortune give individuals a feeling of flexibility and freedom from others. The less the people need to depend on others, the less they may think about their emotions. This means that the wealth, prestigious social status, and education influence how much people care about the feelings of others. This leads individuals towards being more self-centered. Another reason has to do with the attitudes towards greed is that the upper-class people may be more likely to adopt the concept of the end justify the means. That is wealthier people are more likely to agree with statements that greed is justified, beneficial, and morally defensible (Grewal 2). This does not mean that “affluence makes you evil. It is not that the upper classes are coldhearted, they may just not be as adept at recognizing the cues and signals of suffering because they have not had to deal with as many obstacles in their lives” (Jeremy 3).

Individuals’ everyday lives in a form of a strictly regimented routine where lives are prescribed by society. Thus, district citizens have no a choice of what they can or cannot do, have lost the control over their own actions and worst of all their children have become part of brutal games. The Capitols are normally peaceful citizens but they enjoy watching all this unnecessary death and suffering. Normally they are not barbaric, and yet, they seem to enjoy the Games year after year, which shows that their enjoyment and continue patronage of the Games, indicates that they are, in fact, at least sadists if not barbaric (Shaffer 77).

This kind of feeling known as the Schadenfreude ((pronounced SHAH-den-froi-duh), a word of German origin that means malicious joy at the misfortune of the others). It is ordinary if human envy the others but if someone enjoys the suffering of other people is satanic which shows a clear sign of the lack of morality that demonstrates that the people in the Capitol have a huge capacity to feel schadenfreude, this highlights their self-interested, darker side of human nature. In such a society the schadenfreude is an inevitable result. They are programmed to judge themselves by comparing their status to the others'. By seeing someone's misfortune, people feel better about themselves and raise their own social standing (Nietzsche 314).

Panem divides the citizens according to the social class pyramid, the Capitol are the wealthier citizens and then the twelve districts come in line from the one to twelve and each district is isolated by a fence to eliminate any kind of communications as a result to prevent any disobedience (GradeSaver 2). Capitol's is main goal from the full control is to create a huge gap between the rich and the poor to enhance its own power because when the people has the freedom and choice the consequence is a rebellion against the oppression (Wilson 212).

### 1.1 The Games as form of Social Justice

The authoritarian society always has its own view of justice, the elites in charge claim that they are establishing a social justice and equality, yet they build a society based on the miscarriage of justice. They provide freedom and equality for specific social class usually upper class and oppress the working and lower classes (Gottlieb 33).

In the ancient Rome Empire, there was a violent games named the Colosseum. Roman citizens were enjoying the massacres, they even responded by raising the applause. It is possible that they did not care because gladiators were volunteers. Basically, most of them

were criminals, runaway slaves, or traitors. Therefore, the audiences convinced themselves that the game is just another form of justice, so they simply cheer as the gladiators fight to the death or were ripped to shreds by the lions (Shaffer 80).

In Panem, the Capitols believe that the Games serve the justice. Unlike the offenders in the Colosseum, the tributes are innocent; their only sin is that they born in the districts. The Games suppose to serve justice; the punishment of randomly selected tributes gives the Capitol's citizens the feeling of satisfaction that the justice has been established. Since these young people feel less than human, and once a victim has been reduced to the status of a subhuman, it becomes easier for many people to give free rein to their schadenfreude. They look less prestigious. Surely, this makes them look more like nonhuman animals than human beings in the eyes of the Capitols. However, it is not justice to keep forcing children to kill each other for the sake of having forgiveness of previous disobedience (Shaffer 76).

### 1.2 The Quest for Self-Discovery

The Capitols aim to eliminate any kind of identity development; the people in the districts are totally isolated and trapped. they cannot move anywhere outside their districts only if they allowed to do so, like in the case of Katniss and Peeta to participate in the Games and Gale during the rebellion. Both Gale and Katniss show kind of an insurgency in the decision making since they go hunting beyond the fence. Furthermore, Gale wants to leave the district and always dreams of rebellion (Haynes 23).

The identity of those characters starts to develop out of their curiosity and realization of the flaws within the society around them, where people who have everything live side by side with others who have nothing. In the Capitol, young people at their ages are enjoying life and freedom to the fullest, while in their places they are dying; they are surviving and many are in-between. Under the rule of such an oppressive and rigid society, the people have to do

anything to survive even if that means trying different identities. The dystopian society has negative influences on the construction of identity. Such a society contains challenges and overcoming them is part of constructing an identity (Peterfreund 141).

### 1. The Journey of Identity Construction

Identity is the set of behavioral or personal characteristics. The person constructs an identity through the interaction with others and with the culturally transformed material world. At the basic level, all human beings are too familiar, yet everyone constructs it from their life experiences, accomplishments, personalities, and aspirations (Steinhart 6).

Lawler believes that identity is a combination of sameness and difference. The origin of the word identity is from the Latin word *Idem* which means same. That is the human race share common identities e.g. as a human being, as race, gender and so on. However, there are aspects of identity which suggests people's uniqueness from others (2).

The society has a huge impact on the identity construction, Erikson sheds a light on social identity from a social dimension "a functioning social identity nurtures the 'ego identity' and promotes a strong sense of self" (Erikson 269). Identity construction is the improvement of an individual's unmistakable identity, which is viewed as a persevering element in a specific phase of life by which a man is perceived or known. This procedure characterizes people to others and themselves, a sense of uniqueness from others. Identity construction clearly influences personal identity by which the individual considers him or herself as a discrete and separate entity (Boundless 2).

In such a dystopian society, the concept of an identity is shallow, the focus only on external appearances and social classes: "In the Capitols the appearances are everything, you can see it in the power of architecture of the buildings and in the design in the city, which showcases the Capitol's might. You can see it in the local fashion too" (Egan 98). People's



outfit is a reflection of who they are personally, socially, and historically without the need to make any references to their intelligence, knowledge, ideas, ideologies, and feelings (Annenberg 1). The protagonists find themselves facing two contradicting identities. Their thoughts reflect their own identity, the true them. However, they have to act as someone who has an identity that has been forced on them by society (Ngcobo-Sithole 2).

The protagonists face difficulties to fit in a society, where humans resemble lifeless workers and the goals they have set for themselves become somewhat frustrating. Each one of them finds a temporary escape from all the oppression that the society puts them through. Both Katniss and Gale find peace of mind in the woods and Peeta in art. However, they must hold their secrets and memories to themselves while they live in fear of being found out and get punished.

During life, people experience different crises or conflicts. Each of the conflict emerges at a certain point in life stages. The particular stage relevant to identity construction takes place during adolescence. The young adults try to figure out who they are in order to form a basic identity that they will build on during their life, especially concerning social and professional identities. However, they face the difficulties of determining one's own identity (Erikson 3-4).

The journey of identity construction to discover the true self, starts when the person is no more satisfied with their life as it stands. The participation in the Games was the plot twist in the direction of their perspectives; they begin to develop a sense of the need to change. However, these feelings grow out for survival, not out of a willingness rebellion. Yet it helps them to effectively construct their identity. The protagonists' journey characterised by quick growth and change, emotional turmoil, a search for self-identity, and a struggle to free themselves from the chains of the society.

## 2.1 Katniss

Katniss consciously constructs an identity when she participates in the Games. However, the whole process starts after the death of her father, when she takes on her shoulders all the responsibilities for the survival of her family which is the core of her identity. Unlike teenagers in her age, she is not sentimental or girly. For instance, she hates the family cat, Buttercup. For her, it is just an extra mouth to feed. This would explain why she tries to drown the poor thing in a bucket; thinking that would save him from the fate of starvation. Likewise, she cannot even imagine herself having children, as she tells Gale that she does not want to have kids. Katniss lives in a brutal world with no future so she would not bring children into such a life of pain, sorrow, and poverty (Wilson 11).

Katniss is an introvert, and to avoid disappointments she never expects a lot from anyone. She only trusts and counts on her best friend, Gale. At the same times people around her do not seem willing to get close to her as well, even the family cat keeps his distance from her due to her aggressive behavior toward him. However, after her selfless act at the reaping day with face to be devoid of emotion, refusing to let the rest of the world see her tears, out of blue she becomes someone worthy. As she understands that being worthy is the key to gain people's admiration (Wilson 15).

Survival is an important part of Katniss's identity, after the death of her father, Katniss needed to take a decision, so she puts aside her own sorrow and battles for her family and for herself. For her, a person can either lament for their loss or can move on; either die or survive. Even her name, Katniss, refers to a root, a bluish tuber but a hardy survivor. Therefore, she becomes an object to the Games' cameras, even when things get sort of convoluted. Katniss crafts a persona to pick up sponsors, all this for the sake of surviving no matter what are the circumstances (Wilson 22).

However, being part of a world where image means everything, she always has to think twice before making any decision. This causes a many set of trauma, most importantly her dad dies and she has to take care of her the family, then volunteers in the Games to save her sister. Moreover, during the games, she is killing people that she knows. The one that affects her most was the death of her young dearest ally Rue from District Eleven (Faithallen 1).

After all the experiences that she goes through in her entire life, Katniss becomes aware of exactly what she symbolizes, she is the Mockingjay, the flame of the rebellion, and eventually, as far as the outside world is concerned, a broken shell of a girl pushed to the edge of insanity and beyond. Sometimes Katniss uses masks on purpose, but most of the time they are thrust upon her. But one thing is certain unlike many citizens of the Capitols; Katniss has no desire to be famous. She has no desire to be known (Barnes 15).

Katniss herself is no more of a rebel than an actual Mockingjay, an animal who never thought of thwarting the Capitol and merely wanted to survive. That is who Katniss is, underneath all of the masks, Katniss is a survivor, and she is a protector. She is a person who creates family everywhere she goes and a person who loves fiercely; but in a brutal world, the world in which she cannot protect the ones she loves, a world in which survival and living without her loved ones, this is more of a curse than it is a blessing (Barnes 22).

## 2.2 Peeta

Unlike Katniss who spends enough time trying to discover a way to manipulate the audience in the Games, Peeta has more clarity. He understands from the get-go, maybe even on the rooftop that he cannot get away. Rather, he chooses to carve out an identity that will stay genuine regardless of his circumstances. Peeta's choice has a few parallels to the Christian mantra Peeta is honest in his conviction and confession. From the beginning, he

makes a balance of conviction (wants to play the Game in his own way and stays true to himself) and confession (he has to kill in order to win). The mucky-muck, who is ready to fight even though he's a simple baker's son who is willing to save lives than to take it (Britton 2).

The fact that, Peeta already knows he is capable of nearly anything. He can be selfish and brave and benevolent and bloody all in the meantime. But both he and Katniss murder only for survival. Wallace notes that Peeta is very good with words which make him able to create connections with people. He is funny and caring, and a good listener. Peeta looks soft and adorable but he actually proves that he is a tough person. When he gets injured during the Games he describes the colors of the paints he uses in his art instead of complaining about the pain (Wallace 2).

The people may consider these qualities, this sensitivity and regard for the pain of others, are not as typically masculine characteristics, yet Peeta is indeed portrayed as masculine. He is man but not necessarily in a traditional sense. Peeta would agree that having an eye for beauty is not the same thing as weakness. Peeta does not hide his feelings toward Katniss. He confesses his feelings for her freely. Peeta is honest and eager to share his feelings; sometimes to the fault. He is not exactly the good boy, but maybe the nice boy at least (Wallace 2).

Peeta is adaptable like the water, the water has no shape and it modifies its level and pace as the need requires. Water is steadily changing and satisfies humans' survival. Peeta realizes that the less he forces things to happen, and the more accepting and calm about his life's direction he is the easier he can flow with and live his life. He goes with the flows to create the opportunities and keep the positive energy. Peeta allows himself to surrender, breathe, trust, and simply let go, then he can accept the goodness that comes (Senise 2).

Although he is a good speaker, Peeta uses his gifts for selfless causes. He thinks of the people he and Katniss have watched die with sorrow and wants to honor their memories. Especially his speech in Rue's district during the Victory Tour: "It can in no way replace your losses, but as a token of our thanks we'd like for each of the tributes' families from District Eleven to receive one month of our winnings every year for the duration of our lives" (Collins "*Catching Fire*" 59).

At the core of his identity, Peeta is a survivor. He is very bold and brave, however, he would prefer to be a peacekeeper, and negotiate issues using his words rather than solve it with his fists. It is a bit like wanting everyone to get along, but knowing that it is not possible, so he will do what he can to avoid as much bloodshed as possible. This part of him that he does not want to change himself, Peeta tells Katniss that he does not want them to change him in the arena so he could at least die as himself. The fact that Katniss chooses Peeta plays an important part in the message that Collins wants to convey when Peeta gave Katniss the bread he did not only save her life but also gave her strength and hope. Thus, Peeta's role in Katniss's life becomes even more important.

It is a revolutionary statement, no doubt. However, Peeta does not mean it that way; he simply needs to keep up his identity, not to others, but rather to himself. To be the same person he knew as himself, not as what society needs him to be. In the event that anything, that makes him more enduring and dependable than the others, since he knows who he is, what he is capable of, and what he needs to do. Peeta says: "I could think of a way to . . . to show the Capitol they don't own me. That I'm more than just a piece in their Games," (Collins "*The Hunger Games*" 141). Peeta is soft and easy to be hurt emotionally yet he proves that he can surprise people with unexpected acts (Wallace 2).

### 1.3 Gale

Gale's identity development starts from a poacher in the backwoods to an undeniable knight archetype. He is without a doubt the most traditionally manly character. He is known for his rebellious spirit and sense of obligation to protect the people around him. From the very beginning, Gale gives an impression how a rough independent guy, making traps and shooting animals and living off the land, he is a survivor with the special reward of amazing attractiveness. As the novel advances Gale develops from lone wolf in the woods to military avenger (Wallace 2).

Gale suggests to Katniss that they run away together. Gale is thinking outside of the box that the society has placed him in, although, he knows the impossibility of his suggestion, but it is still a real desire. He wants to live off the grid, away from the Capitol's rules and regulations. He wants to fend for himself and Katniss, to make his own rules, to be free. Gale also seems to recognize that speaking out will only lead to trouble, and thus only lets his true opinions run wild when he is deep in the forest with Katniss. He wants to do something small; run away with Katniss. But as the story progress in *Catching Fire* he wants to act in ways that affect more than just those in his inner circle. His goals become more impressive, more aggressive because he begins to understand that the revolution is not just his; it is everyone's. And thus, he is willing to fight for everyone (Collins "Catching Fire").

According to Pearce, Gale is a warrior. He is a rebel. He is a knight. The mysterious, dark, brooding boy who values honor, the greater good, and justice over any worldly thing, Gale portrays the image of a real man, he protects others over himself, and he is the only one who is not afraid of the Capitol publicly. While most citizens of Panem are scared of the Capitol and President Snow, Gale is willing to fight back. Gale is just like the knight that is too good to be true. Collins gives Gale the characteristics of a knight (209).

The English knight can be seen as a historical figure; others would consider him as a literary figure. Others still might say they are more myth than man. The knights had some historical basis the knights existed in the medieval period, but they originated as mounted thugs hired by rulers like William the Conqueror. In literature, writers turned the sword-wielding French conquerors and rough-and-tumble cattlemen into the chivalrous knight. That is to say even back then, people wanted a strong male to lead them. However, most people see that the knight is mostly a myth. A little bit of history and a lot of storytelling, but mostly a mythological figure, a symbol, and an icon (Pearce 211).

Gale's identity progresses faster than the ones who are in his ages, he can see the flaws in the society and want to change them. He grows as a man who fights for what is right, for justice, not for what is best for him. Gale wants to be a person that Katniss cannot live without, but the very best thing for Gale, arguably, would have been to lay down his arms. However, the moment he learns that District Eight is revolting against the Capitol in *Catching Fire*, he puts the revolution above everything even Katniss. Katniss wants to run away with those she loves, because of her family, her inner circle, is more important to her than the general populace. Gale flatly tells Katniss: "don't you see? It cannot be about just saving us anymore. Not if the rebellion's begun!" (Collins "Catching Fire" 100).

The ordinary people would not understand him, usually for the ordinary people the family, by blood or by bond, is their priority, and yet somehow Gale is ready to abandon them for the greater good. This is the dark side of the knights they are figures live alone without families. They do not end up settling down or have a wife and three kids to get back to after the day's quest is done, even if they sometimes want to. They are independents who show up, save the day, then ride off into the sunset. While Gale has a family, but they do not seem to play into any of his plans after the revolution begins. Gale loves his family and friends, but the knight always loves the cause more (Pearce 213).

Gale is unforgettable even though he is ridden off into the sunset. It might be desirable, reading about Katniss and Peeta's children playing in a meadow, to cast away memories of the violence that led to a revolution, a revolution that turned District Twelve into something beautiful. After all, no one wants to reflect on something ugly when everyone is finally happy or remember the hero, the warrior, the revolutionary who made it all possible. Gale is the noble knight. He is the reason the story has a happy ending; even if he does not have a horse (Pearce 218).

## 2. The Quest For the Change

The last phase of their identity construction is to act rebelliously and to start to ask for change. The development starts by making rebellious decisions. For instance, in the case of Katniss; she decides that the Capitol either accept them both as victor or they will not have a winner at all. Peeta, however, is kind of an inconsistency, though he is the kindest character, but at the same time, he is one of the best liars. At the point when the tributes have their last broadcast interviews before the Quarter Quell<sup>1</sup>, Peeta takes the show by creating one as well as two incredible falsehoods. He said that they're already married in their hearts and she's pregnant. Thus, the ability of making a decision catalyzes the act rebellion for the sake of better change.

The core of identity is the desire to survive which led eventually to the quest for change and creates justice. The social justice is the belief that everyone has the right to express themselves freely and enjoy the same social rights, and opportunities as every other citizen. The protagonists reach maturity from the previous painful experiences, they "refuse to become docile and compliant" (Hintz 260) and instead become agents of change.

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Both Cinna and Haymitch help to clarify the vision for these young protagonists “at least one benevolent adult portrayed as if in self-defense, having the function of a mentor, who explains the truth to the confused adolescents” (Nikolajeva 79). Both guide the protagonists to see the flaws in the society, yet, they are not the ones who start the actions; but rather the protagonists who do so. Simply, the reason is that the young adults can more easily cope with the new situation more than adults (Nikolajeva 79).

The need of survival helps to start the process of identity construction, the protagonists stand up against the oppression and create a new society. The willingness for justice is the desire to establish a society without oppression and mistreatment, where citizens are able to live and be valued in a society no matter what district they belong to. Those young protagonists follow their inner desire for better society and mix it along with the guidance of these mentors into some sort of magic elixir that will guarantee success.

### **Chapter Three: The Construction of Gender**

The society influences the construction of gender. Thus, it influences gender and social activities; this chapter examines how gender is portrayed in Collins's works which challenges the gender stereotypes, the focus on the process of establishing the concept of gender roles in a given society. The chapter discusses the social influence on the gender identity and social activities; this chapter examines how gender is portrayed in Collins's work which challenges the gender stereotypes. This chapter applies social psychoanalysis and feminist approaches to gender as a part of the identity.

The dystopia investigates gender norms today by transforming them into a fictional society. The society of Panem holds contemporary concepts of gender and equality, concepts of how femininity is shaped. The person does not born as female but it is a production of performing certain behaviors. That is, gender is an aspect of identity that is gradually acquired, which means femininity is manners or set of social rules that are taught and learned throughout the lifetime (De Beauvoir 35).

#### **1. Gender as Performance**

Gender is defined as identity; typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. It is the condition of being female or male; sex; females or males considered as a group expressions used by one gender. However, a performance is defined as the act of performing. It is the act of performing or the manner in which or the efficiency with which something reacts or fulfills its intended purpose (English 580 Group 2).

The gender performance is created by the repetition of behaviors in relation to society or culture and the role that persons performs or plays on purpose is related to their gender identity or the gender that the person presents to the world. Butler considers gender as the

cultural meanings and forms that the body acquires, that is to say, it is only a performance, rather than something innate to the woman (Butler 95).

The society limits the concepts of being women that are defined as feminine, that is, women are considered not only different from men but also inferior to them. Women in society are seen as the other, while man or women all are human beings. De Beauvoir wants the world to rethink about how patriarchal structures use the sexual difference to oppress women, prohibit them from exercise their capabilities and take off their freedom. She refuses the concept that gender was destined (301).

Nonetheless, the issue is not femininity as such, yet rather the absence of opportunities that are accessible to men more than to women. Which means is not gender itself, but rather the social idea of gender alongside stereotyping that forces young men to be manly and young ladies to be ladylike or pay a high social cost. Katniss rejects to submissively accept her fate; she uses her skills of hunting and breaks the rules for the sake of the survival of her family (Arrow 162).

It is important to distinguish between sex and gender, that is, sex refers to the biological and its dependents are reproductive organs hormone levels. That distinguishes men and women. Gender, however, refers to the changeable roles, behaviors, activities, and personality traits that a society views as appropriate or normal for men and women. Gender standards are influenced by family, peers, mass media, and the larger community. Nowadays, for instance, caring for dependents, preparing family meals, wearing makeup, and being empathetic are considered feminine, whereas breadwinning, making household repairs, building muscle, and being protective are considered masculine (De Beauvoir 35).

The genders are results of performing certain roles. People are not born with specific gender but rather they acquire it from their society as a production of imitation. Thus, gender

is not inherent but instead an act which has been repeated. That is, gender is built to look like something natural. The idea of gender performance portrays how gender is constructed. So gender is constructed through the repetition of acts. As a result, people express their gender through their behaviors, acts, and appearances (Butler 179).

Gender is socially constructed and aftereffect of socio-cultural impacts all through a person's improvement. Gender identity can be influenced by the society, and it differs from one society to another depends on how the society defines and characterizes female and male roles. Gender identity can be as well influenced by the social class, family values, and religion. Gender is a basic component of society and the sociological centrality of gender is that it is a device by which society controls its individuals (Power 1).

The concept of social construction of gender focuses on the social differences, as the basis for gender identity. The society influences the gender expectations and shapes behaviors and norm regarding gender. The social construction of gender could be further seen by the way parents treat their children, the way they raise them up to behavior and so on.

In the districts, there are little contrasts between the roles of ladies and men than today. For instance, the coal miners are men and women. The Gamemakers pick both one young lady and one kid to partake in the yearly Games. Even in the Capitol, the place of wealth and comfy life, gendered beauty norms seem to have no gender differences in the application of makeup and in the types of plastic surgeries of women and men. In Panem gender seems to differ from nowadays' perhaps that is why Katniss breaks those gender norms willy-nilly and she does seem to suffer neither self-condemnation nor social condemnation for doing so (Borsellino 116).

### 1.1 Gender Roles in Panem

Despite the fact that, Panem is a horrible place to live in, Panem seems to have no gender discriminations. For instance, the sponsors choose the tributes by their skills and talents like in the case of Katniss and Clove; also President Coin is as powerful as President Snow. However, the prejudice and stereotype, unfortunately, exist within the society (Arrow 95).

In Panem, people are not judged the same way as nowadays since these characters are strong enough that the gender role difference is acceptable. To illustrate, President Snow is a traditional masculine. He uses white roses to mark his presence; Flowers particularly roses are viewed as feminine and in this way frail and white color is referred to peace, yet President Snow is able to dye the white rose with threatening characters (Dragonclaws 2).

However, in Panem, there are two exceptions, persons that the harsh life conditions make them softer and gentle. The characters of Peeta and Primrose, both are non-aggressive, sensitive and deeply caring. Peeta is an artist and baker, while Primrose is a healer. These characters serve as the moral center of the society of Panem exactly due to their impermeability to the violence around them (Quraishi 1).

The process of gender construction is not formed inside the person but is a result of the social influence. In the case of Katniss, her gender identity reflects the place she lives in, a poor district where she has to fight starvation every single day. Thus, she designed to be tough and skillful in order to survive. the conditions she lives in make her kind of masculine more than feminine, however, she learns how to be flexible to fit in any situations e.g. she acts so feminine to gain sponsors during the Games (V 97).

### 1.2 Gendering of Katniss

Katniss appears to be a strong independent young lady, her character shows the gender norms of masculinity more than femininity. This is due to the fact that she grows up in

very harsh life conditions. Thus her focus is only on the survival of her family, and acting like a lady like is not part of her to-do list (Green-Barteet 37). Once Katniss turns into a tribute, she learns that mastering the traditional role of femininity is the key to her survival. That is why her stylist who work to make her look unforgettable (Henthorne 53).

The male and female is not really an issue in the poor districts, for instance, Peeta is a baker, which is more like a feminine work. Besides, he loves art, which is a gentle part of nature. That spots him as an inverse to Gale. Gale is a hunter and later on a warrior which a masculine work. However, Katniss is herself torn between her masculinized way of life as a survivor and the limited expectation of femininity that the audiences in the Capitol want her to be “They are physical and male manifestations of Katniss’s competing values and personality traits, which shift uncertainly between feminine and masculine expectations.....Her journey to selfhood is...in determining...which set of values and behaviors, masculine or feminine, she accepts as her own” (Garriott 64).

Life in the District Twelve makes Collins’ protagonist a strong young lady who, through a blend of gumption and luck, challenges power to end up a hero, and she breaks the stereotype of female. That is, Katniss does whatever it takes to protect her family, and yet she never understands the impact she has on the others, she inspires people (Green-Barteet 39).

Katniss believes that her capacity is not beyond the protection of her family. She does not yet recognize that her determination to survive at any cost can be read as a subversive act. She considers anything identified with disobedience as pointless. Katniss’s life has shown her that the Capitol is in control of everybody and everything. She may challenge the codes of her society. However, she does that just to survive (Green-Barteet 39).

Katniss has a unique method for motivating the youthful female by depicting a solid and courageous woman. Katniss sees the resistance does not change anything. Yet, she

challenges the Capitol twice during the Games, putting herself on the way to subjectivity. First of all, the death of her ally Rue from District Eleven provokes her to do something to shame the Capitoles, to convey the message that says they are more than just a piece of their game. The second act of resistance happens when Katniss recommends to Peeta that they eat the berries together since she realizes that the game must have a victor so she decides they either accept them both as victors or not having one at all (Green-Barteet 40).

Katniss is a phenomenal female who appears to fit in any situations. She is a hunter, her father who taught her to hunt in the woods, and taught her how to find food and medicinal herbs; the very skills that would be so crucial to her survival in the Games. Katniss is in charge of the survival of her family; she learned how to break the rules to keep her family together. She performs the role of the provider and does not submissively accept her destiny; she does what it takes to survive. Such characteristics like hunting skills and deep thought and fighting for survival are related with masculinity yet those totally depict Katniss (Miller 147).

The survival of her family plays the major role in her gender construction process; this may give the impression that she is soft and warm. However, Katniss is emotionless; she masters any role that is related to survival of her family. She engages in many brave actions usually done by men, Katniss takes risks, in the time; she can perform the traditional role of female and be lady-like. Thus, Katniss plays any role that guarantees the survival of her and her family (Miller 148).

### 1.3 Gendering of Peeta

Collins' characterization of Peeta is a brand new idea in the young adult dystopian literature so far. Although he is so sensitive, yet Peeta's masculinity is not questioned. Peeta is a type of person who knows his limits and always prefers to keep his both feet on the

ground. For instance, he has been in love with Katniss since he heard her singing when he was a kid, however, he does not speak to her until the Reaping day. Unlike the traditional male protagonists, who act tough and emotionless, Peeta lets the others see him cry even he confesses his feeling to her though he knows all the country is watching him (Stormy 1).

Peeta has a big family. They have a bakery that is why Peeta knows how to decorate cakes and bake, his family is not as poor as the majority of families in his district i.e. they have something to eat. His job one of the greatest stereotypes for ladies, baking is traditionally a female role. In fact, the story has other characters who may describe as feminine, yet Peeta is tough and smart as well. He can be both sweet and kind, additionally strong, brave and savvy. After the Reaping he just wants to die himself and wishes the Games will not change him (Madelynn 2).

Peeta shows Collins' ability to create a character beyond the readers' expectations of the traditional gender role. He is good with words and language which means he has high verbal intelligence. He knows how to play gender roles for more concrete effects on the people around him. He is a baker which stereotypical work of females, even during the Games he seems like a helpless guy by acting as a lover boy. However, later on, Peeta proves that he is brave and useful. He masters gender role reversal to serve his situation (V 99).

## 2. The Star-Crossed Lovers from District Twelve

At the point when Cinna requests that Katniss and Peeta hold hands during the ceremony, "The Star-Crossed Lovers from District Twelve" attract the audiences' attention and Katniss turns out to be significantly more fascinating to everybody the minute Peeta freely admits his love for her. At the beginning, Katniss refuses to be a piece of that showmance, yet at the end, she comprehends that the importance of using the romance with Peeta to make herself more attractive. Both Katniss and Peeta understand that playing the



traditional gender role will get them more sponsors. During the Games, they keep acting for the cameras in the way the audience expect them to act (Miller 156).

People of the Capitols have no jobs, they live a luxurious life, and their only entertainment is the annual Games. Providing a story of a young love is something attractive to them, however, in the district love is the spark that starts the rebellion. Though the showmance is just a strategy to survive yet, to be star-crossed is both fated and predestined. The plan of playing the star-crossed lovers is to confirm that both Peeta and Katniss are just ordinary people that perform the traditional gender stereotypes and have no desire for rebellion (Madelynn 2).

It sounds so cruel to use young people for entertaining the Capitols. The process of shipping the star-crossed lovers from District 12 act, while making literally everything in the arena against Katniss and Peeta. However, both kept their humanity and empathy toward the other tributes, though, they are used and physically and emotionally torn apart by sadistic society. At every turn, they are encouraged by the conditions of their lives to challenge the society and not being just a toy in the hands of the Capitols. They protect each other and despite the fact that the odds are never in their favor, they are still able to provide help and love (Arrow 2).

The Capitols cut the links between child and parent, and between man and man, and between man and woman and that is why helping others is considered as a powerful act or even as an act of rebellion. The fact that Katniss participates in the Games instead of her sister is a proof that the Capitol could not really disconnect those links but “There is no fear in love” (1 John 4:18) and even the romance that Peeta and Katniss put on for the audiences is in stoking the flames of the rebellion. President Snow considers those acts of love as something rebellious. When the love they feel is against the laws of those in control, then

love is a rebellious act. The moment Katniss and Peeta decide to commit suicide at the end of the Games instead of killing one another, President Snow sees it as dangerous because it could be explained as an act of rebellion. In *Catching Fire*, he orders Katniss to convince not only the people of the districts but him that her act is out of love, not out of disobedience against the Capitol. President Snow threatens Katniss that either to choose to look like a rebel and pay the price not only her but her entire district, or to look like a girl in love (Wilson 32).

The Capitol educates nearly everybody in Panem to consider the tributes as less than human: when Katniss is first being styled by her prep team, they wax and scrub her and afterward state happily that she looks almost like a person. Prior to that, Gale tells Katniss that hunting the other tributes will not be any different to hunting animals in the woods. And transforming the tributes into mutt is another example of the Capitol's commitment to dehumanization. However, Katniss and Peeta among others do not follow the Capitol's perspective. They spot the value in human life, even as they are forced into becoming a murder or fighter (Wilson 34).

For instance, Katniss makes an alliance with Rue during the Games, rather than simply killing her. When Rue has been killed, Katniss sings to her and covers her body with flowers. It seems that this act has a small effect, the act of singing to a dead child and covering her body with flowers have immediate and long-distance effects. District Eleven sends Katniss bread. Rue's fellow tribute (Thresh) could kill Katniss during the Games but instead, he showed Katniss mercy. In *Catching Fire*, an old man from District Eleven whistles Rue's melody to Katniss to show their support for her (Wilson 35).

People of the Capitol cannot understand that is choosing love over survival is the eventual act of defiance. It is not one or the other; the love and rebellion are one in the same.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Julia and Winston's love does not survive, the torture they had faced was stronger than their love. The time they see each other again; Winston remembers an old song lyric:

*Under the spreading chestnut tree*

*I sold you and you sold me. (Orwell "1984" 370-1).*

*The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire*, show that that the feeling of love conquers the feeling of loathe, even in conditions, as shocking as Katniss and Peeta's "the object was not to stay alive but to stay human" (Orwell "1984" 148), their adoration survives what Winston and Julia's could not. This does not mean that the power of love is always a victorious force in *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire*. Katniss's mother is a healer who can face shocking injury and disease, however, after the death of her husband she had gone into a total unconscious, she states that she cannot function at all. This means that love can be the strength of any of the characters but is also their greatest weakness. Notwithstanding, despite the fact that Katniss and Peeta experience the ill effects of both physical and mental injuries, because of their encounters in the arena, however, they can proceed onward and survive the agony. They cope with the moments of terror and pain. they can survive their murkiness since she comprehends the truth of that the heart is a weapon, and the way to keep fighting against all the horror and cruelty of the world is to wield that weapon, to keep loving (Borsellino 39).

The society has an important influence in the process of constructing the gender. That is gender can be seen as performances that make the person able to influence how others perceive him/her. In order to survive, the protagonists have to conform to the society's limited expectations of gender which is itself an act of defense that leads to free themselves from the chains of social order, stereotypes and construct their own gender.

## Conclusion

The issue of identity construction has scholarly brought a wide attention in the field of young adult dystopian literature. Thus, the young adult literature is viewed as an important way to teach young adults about flaws of the society and show them that the path to reach justice is not by building perfect society but by creating equal opportunities for the individuals, its aim is to shape young adults into citizens that will really make a future idealistic world.

The young adult dystopian literature has connections to young adults' real life. It shows that the life has a lot of things to explore and learn about. In young adult dystopia the protagonists discover the true meaning of humanity and their rights as a human being. Those novels open the young adults' eyes, heart, and minds that there are for real corrupted societies, dictators, and repressed people and the tragedy is that the whole world agrees that situation is right and their duty is to make a better change.

Gender roles and stereotypes have been widely studied and researched in the field of young adult dystopian literature. The importance of the study of gender roles is based on the belief that what young adults read shapes their view of themselves and society.

Young adult dystopian novels are meant to teach moral lessons about the issues that humanity faced while at the same time offer the pleasure and escape, also encourage the young adult to learn more about themselves and how to grow to become mature adults. From the beginning of dystopian novels, the people are introduced to protagonists humbled by the conditions of their oppressive dystopian society and give hope that change in the novel will be in the favor of the characters.

In Collins' dystopian *Panem*, from the start, the protagonists live in their own way of thinking. Some hunt illegally in the woods beyond the fence borders order to provide food

and money for their family others express their feelings and thought through works of art, all for the sake of escaping from the starvation and repression. Katniss, Peeta, and Gale turn up to be heroes who stand against the corrupted society for the sake of the survival of their own community. The hidden message thus appears to be that the people should fight for what they believe in, for what they desire out of life, for rights, hopes, and ambitions.

That portrays how corrupted society as Panem effects their identity development. Ultimately, it is very difficult to predetermine paths in life in order to establish one's own conflicted hopes and dreams. The need of survival helps to start the process of identity construction, the protagonists stand up against the injustice and creates a new society. The willingness for justice is the desire to establish a society without oppression and mistreatment, where citizens are able to live and be valued in a society no matter what district they belong to. Those young protagonists follow their inner desire for better society and mix it along with the guidance of these mentors into some sort of magic elixir that will guarantee success.

Both novels (*The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fires*) show that gender comes out from playing out different performances. In other words, the individual learns which characteristics are truly helpful and creative, and which one would wish to discard. Collins' shows how the society can negatively influence this process. They struggle with having to perform according to the Capitol's limited expectation of gender. Though, both novels portray that those different performances are imposed, yet have helped the protagonists to restore the different parts of their gender identity.

Collins reflects the present day, nowadays there is not such a hunger games but there is a similar economic system the rich countries take control over all the sources and declare wars to gain as much power as possible leaving the rest of the poor countries live in poverty. In addition, the regimes of those rich countries create a stereotype that dehumanizes the

people in those poor countries and even makes it acceptable to kill and starve those people under the name of justice. Furthermore, it becomes acceptable to see people living in poverty and suffer from war and the worst there is a continuation to cut off social support for them.

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