

Towards Youths' Rebellion : Injustice and Tyranny in Suzanne Collins' The Hunger Games (Book One)

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and friends. A special feeling of gratitude is dedicated to my loving parents whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. To my sweet sister, Ahlem, and my brother, Fouad, who have never left my side and are very special. I also dedicate this dissertation to my friends who have supported me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done. I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my best friend, Lina, and to my journey partner my dear, Nesrine, with whom I shared the good and tiring tasks.

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the injustice and tyranny practiced by the capitol of Panem towards the districts, focusing on the signs of the coming rebellion led by the youth in *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins. *The Hunger Games* is a dystopian novel which presents a post apocalyptic vision of what used to be North America, telling the story of 16 year old rebellious Katniss Everdeen. Suzanne Collins discusses indirectly the issues of current society in her book to send a message urging people to change. The novel has subverted the general understanding of male hero and created a new image of a rebellious heroine. This study analyses the political message in Collins' novel and places Katniss in spotlight and analyses the book from an ecofeminist perspective which maintains a special bond between women and nature. Katniss is a perfect illustration of the determined, powerful woman who rebels against the patriarchal order in the hegemonic, male dystopia. Thus, this thesis aims to investigate the signs that led Katniss to rebel against the capitol and also to reveal an environmental role in relation with the female protagonist.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: A Theoretical Overview of Dystopian Literature.....	5
I.1. Origins of Dystopian Literature.....	5
I.1.1. Definition and Characteristics of Dystopian Literature.....	5
I.1.2. Booker’s Dystopia.....	9
I.2. Modern Writers and Dystopian Literature.....	15
I.2.1 H. G. Wells’ <i>The Time Machine</i>	15
I.2.2 Aldus Huxley’s <i>Brave New World</i>	17
I.2.3 George Orwell’s <i>Nineteen Eighty Four</i>	18
I.3. Young Adult Dystopian Literature.....	19
Chapter Two: Analysis of the Political Message in <i>The Hunger Games</i>.....	22
II.1. The Writer and Work: An Introduction.....	22
II.1.1. Biography of Suzanne Collins.....	22
II.1.2. Summary of <i>The Hunger Games</i>	23
II.2. Representation of the American Present and History in <i>The Hunger Games</i>	25

II.3. Politics of Panem.....	30
II.4. Signs of the Coming Rebellion.....	32
Chapter Three: Youth and Nature in <i>The Hunger Games</i>.....	36
III.1. Youth in <i>The Hunger Games</i>	36
III.2. An Eco-Analytic Reading of <i>The Hunger Games</i>	39
III.2.1. Connections to and Disconnections from Nature in the Novel.....	41
III.2.2. <i>The Hunger Games</i> Through an Ecofeminist Lens.....	43
III.3. Katniss Everdeen: A Female Protagonist in Contemporary Dystopia.....	47
Conclusion.....	53
Abstract (French)	
Abstract(Arabic)	

Introduction

The technological developments that pervaded the world today play an immense role in molding the minds of young adults. This molding caused by technology drives the youth to reject the old traditions and rules. Youths no longer want to be bound by the straps of the elders' thoughts, they rather prefer to experiment and apply their own thoughts. This development covered the literature as well. Nowadays novels use technological development as an inspiration to attract the young adults. A specific type of literature that depicts a worst-case scenario where a bureaucratic, technological, amoral, and totalitarian control is practiced by an oppressive upper class over an oppressed lower class is known as dystopian literature. Dystopian literature gives a futuristic, imaginative vision in which the illusion of a perfect society is displayed to show the disadvantages of the technological development. This genre is the interest of a lot of contemporary writers.

This study aims to show the signs of the coming rebellion in Panem in *The Hunger Games* by Susan Collins. The injustice and tyranny practiced by the capital on the twelve districts leads to the rebellion that takes place in books two: *Catching Fire* and three: *Mockingjay*. Young adults' literature is the new trend among writers. Best sellers nowadays all include a futuristic, dystopian vision. This study will shed light on the drastic changes of literary interests from realistic post modern vision to futuristic dystopian and pessimistic vision using *The Hunger Games* as a case study, through answering the following questions: What is the political message in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*? How does the novel represent injustice and tyranny? What role do technology and nature play in the story? How does the female main character influence the story?

The Hunger Games is the interest of numerous scholars; many studies were conducted revolving around the unusual cruelty and oppression featured in the novel. Moreover, the feminist side of the novel, being written by a woman and having a female protagonist drew

the attention of feminists. Nonetheless, the political side of the book seems to be taking more attention than most, the involvement of politics in young adult literature is the main concern of scholars and researchers. This study seeks to analyze the political message in Collins' *The Hunger Games*, through examining the signs that lead to the uprising of the main character Katniss Everdeen and other youngsters against the ruling power of the elders. Furthermore, the study provides an analysis of the novel making reference to the inclusion of technology, history, and nature as contributing factors.

Suzanne Collins is an American author who was born in Connecticut in 1962. She was a successful children's television writer until she wrote *The Underland Chronicles* which opened the door for her as a book writer. In 2008, she wrote *The Hunger Games*; the first book of a series. Collins approached the dystopian type of literature in her novel, *The Hunger Games* which achieved best seller. This novel tells the story of a nation named Panem; an oppressive capital and twelve oppressed districts. The districts rebelled against the capital before and lost, as a punishment an annual televised hunger games are arranged. A boy and a girl are randomly chosen from each district to fight to death on live TV. The sixteen year old Katniss Everdeen volunteers to represent her district in the games instead of her sister. Katniss finds herself in the arena with twenty three other tributes in a situation of kill or get killed.

Environment and Nature play a major role in contemporary dystopian novels in general and *The Hunger Games* specifically. Ecological critique is the first choice of scholars to analyze a contemporary dystopian novel because writers nowadays try to convey a warning to people about what could possibly happen to nature if they continue their careless actions. An ecological reading for the novel is needed to discuss the major role played by nature and its effect on the characters. For having a female protagonist, ecofeminist literary theory is highly suitable to highlight the relation between the main character, Katniss, and nature. Also, as

argued by feminists, environment and women are one cause since both suffer from the bad deeds of men.

This study will contain three chapters. The first chapter will tackle the theories of dystopian writing, as well as the theme of tyranny and injustice. The second chapter is analytical and will try to analyze the political message in the novel. The third chapter is also analytical and will focus on the role of Katniss as a heroine in the rebellion.

Chapter one is a theoretical discussion of the broad sense of the dystopian genre of writing. It details the turns in history that led to the transition from utopia to dystopia taking into account the points of view of both critics, Gregory Claeys and Keith M. Booker as pioneers in the dystopian critique. As masterpieces in this literary genre, this chapter examines these three works, H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, Aldus Huxley's *Brave New World*, and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. These three works are regarded as the main and most significant dystopian works in history due to their diverse futuristic concerns. The last section is dedicated to young adult dystopian writing as the major concern of this study is youth.

Chapter two introduces the writer Suzanne Collins and her work *The Hunger Games* then it sheds light on the political theme of the novel. It delineates the relation of the work with the American present and history, stressing the hiding messages that the writer wants to convey to readers like the unjustified fascination with reality television. Also, a section is devoted to examine the political system of Panem and the dictatorship practiced by its President Snow. Pressure always causes explosion, the constant tyranny and injustice people were facing in the districts of Panem must come to an end. Thus, the last section describes this tyranny and points out the signs that show a rebellion is about to happen in the following books of the series.

Chapter three is also analytical. It manifests the role of youth and nature in the novel. As a significant part of the book youth present the main attraction to the novel since the main characters are adolescents and the book is intended for young adults. The first section deals with the child sacrifice in *The Hunger Games*, criticizing the cruelty towards children. The second section is an eco-analytic reading of the novel studying the environmental side of the novel and how it contributes in clarifying the dystopian image, making reference to ecofeminism emphasizing the common points between the feminist and environmental causes. The last section is dedicated to the protagonist Katniss Everdeen and her heroic role in relation to dystopian literature.

The Hunger Games is a contemporary novel that tackles the major issues in our current world. The book offers a futuristic vision of possibly disastrous outcomes of technological and political decisions. Stressing the contribution of young adults in attaining social change, the novel attracts young readers for their fascination with the imaginative idealistic characters.

Chapter One: A Theoretical Overview of Dystopian Literature

This chapter is a theoretical examination of dystopian literature as a literary genre in contemporary young adult writings; it specifies its origin, definition and development. It also provides the important features and themes tackled within this genre. The first section deals with the roots and expansion of dystopian literature. The section answers questions like: How is dystopian literature defined by scholars? What are its features and major themes? The second section exhibits some of the most important modern and contemporary dystopian writings. It attempts to explain how George Orwell with his *1984* inspired Suzanne Collins? How Suzanne Collins with her *Hunger Games* is an inspiration to young writers like Veronica Roth? The third section sheds light on young adult dystopian literature (YA). It denotes its particular themes, taking into consideration the impact of dystopian novels on adolescents' minds.

I.1 Origin of Dystopian Literature

I.1.1 Definition and Characteristics of Dystopian Literature

Defining Dystopia will only be possible if we clarify the meaning of Utopia which is its opposite. *The Penguin English Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* offers an accurate definition of Utopia: “Sir Thomas More was the first to apply this word (from Greek ou, 'not' + topos, 'place') to a literary genre when he named his imaginary republic Utopia (1516), a pun on eutopia, 'place (where all is) well'” (957). The notion of an earthly haven was mentioned by several writers and philosophers in Greek works among them was Plato in his *Republic* (4th BC) where he “depicted a state in which rulers are philosophers, goods and women are communally owned, slavery is taken for granted, and the breeding of children is controlled on eugenic lines. There was to be no art or drama and next to no poetry. It was a Spartan utopia; indeed, the prototype of the totalitarian state” (958).

More's Utopia was much similar to Plato's communist state; "No private property, free universal education, six hours' manual work a day, utility clothes, free medical treatment, meals in civic restaurants (meals accompanied by reading or music). All religions were to be tolerated, but the penal code, especially in sexual matters, was harsh; adultery led to slavery; repeated offences to death" (958). The evolution of Utopia reached its peak in the 19th c by witnessing an increasing number of utopian writings. In this period real attempts were made in order to put Utopia into actual practice.

When all the attempts to create a perfect world and making Utopia real seemed only impossible, anti- utopia or also known as Dystopia emerged presenting 'the doom awaiting mankind'(958). Dystopia is considered as the opposite of Utopia, as Gary Saul Morson puts it, "Whereas utopias describe an escape from history, these anti-utopias describe an escape, or attempted escape, to history, which is to say, to the world of contingency, conflict, and uncertainty" (128). This means that whereas Utopia is an escape from the deception in the real world, Dystopia is an escape to it.

According to Gregory Claeys in his book *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*, "The term 'dystopia' enters common currency only in the twentieth century, though it appears intermittently beforehand (dys-topia or 'cacotopia', bad place, having been used by John Stuart Mill in an 1868 parliamentary debate" (107). Dystopia exhibits the nightmarish vision of the writers after the First World War slaughter. Mostly depicted as the satire of utopian aspiration, Dystopia portrays the society controlled by evil or negative political and social development (107). Dystopian literature portrays the negative outcomes of the Enlightenment and the technological development that occurred at that time focusing on the consequences of their misuse.

Gregory Claeys in his article "The Origins of Dystopia" explains the two major turns that led to the shift from optimistic Utopia to the pessimistic Dystopia. Before clarifying the

two turns, Claey's makes a clear cut between science fiction and Dystopia referring to Dystopia as the 'feasible negative vision of social and political development' pointing out that feasible here implies that no extraordinary or unrealistic features are overshadowing the narrative. Furthermore, he affirms that totalitarian dystopia is clearly dystopia because it reflects realities however; Eugenic dystopia [the term was coined by Francis Galton as a brief word that expresses "the science of improving stock" (Galton 25)] remains questionable due to the developments happening every day. Moreover, he argues that a trip to another planet may have been a science fiction in 1850 but may not be so in 2020, therefore, eugenic dystopia may include dystopian elements but will not be a clear dystopia, and it may be more related to science fiction (109).

The first dystopian turn is highly related to the French Revolution, which created a relationship between three main elements: "utopian thought, here some of the underlying principles of the Revolution; the creation of fictional utopias; and a fictional anti- or dystopian response" (Claey's 110). After the war the essential themes in the 1800 s writings were satirical visions on the failed aspirations of the revolution, writers were disappointed in the negative results of the war which made them concentrate mainly on mocking the war and the system as a whole. After the 1900 s the imaginary texts would be dystopian or science fiction set both in the future giving a more futuristic view, these latter extended the pessimistic view to the future, writers were predicting a dark future using satire as their main technique.

The second dystopian turn occurred with the combination of the two themes of eugenics and socialism. 1800 s utopian texts were mostly influenced by Owenism and emphasized the strong relation between Darwinism and socialism, stressing the fact that class division here is discussed as a utopian theme. These utopian writings used the theme of 'Darwinian utopia' to describe the desired perfect society. However, in these writings, Japanese and Chinese were

neglected whereas Black people were totally eliminated, which makes such writings to non-whites dystopian rather than utopian (Claeys 111).

Eugenics as a theme was portrayed positively at first when trying to reduce the size of the family or to increase the productivity and efficiency of the society. Nonetheless, this theme grew bigger toward negativity when emphasizing the superiority of Anglo-Saxons over other races like Japanese for example; others like black people for example were totally eliminated, hence these texts were not Utopian for non whites. Other themes also nourished the dystopian writings include technology, alien invasions, ecological catastrophes, and the urge for primitivism (Claeys 112).

The societies depicted in dystopian writings show the class division discussed by Karl Marx in his Marxist theory. Such societies show a poor and weak class controlled by a bourgeoisie class. Moreover, these societies are ran by a totalitarian system which grants absolute control over the individual to the political authority in the state, in this case the individual is a subject to the state that is denied his/her right to oppose the state or express his/her opinion (Booker 4).

Dystopian stories mainly tackle issues of survival and struggle against oppression, focusing on the class division discussed in Marxist. The focal point targeted in dystopian literature is rebellion, the main character or the hero of the story is the one who questions the power of the abusive government. In order to be able to confront injustice, usually the main character obtains his/her power from environment and nature.

Environment plays a substantial role in dystopian literature; it serves as a refuge from destructive technological boost the world is witnessing. In contemporary dystopian writings, technological progress means simultaneously two movements, away from nature as wildness and towards nature as a garden which means controlled by humans (Hughes and Wheeler 3).

Therefore, in these writings the hero is empowered by nature; he/she uses nature as an escape from the control of technology and humans.

The time of the story is also a crucial factor; the notion of the time traveling introduced by H. G. Wells in his novel *The Time Machine* (1895) set the ground for the futuristic vision of all dystopian stories. In dystopian writings, present or past realistic issues are discussed in an imaginary futuristic story, in which major political and social problems are their fundamental constituent (Claeys 113).

The controlling system in dystopian stories is totalitarianism, which enables the tyrannical government to rule the oppressed society. In order to be able to apply this system, the government makes sure to separate the society, by creating a gap in families. Individuals feel hopeless and powerless due to the fear and paranoia embedded in their minds from the government. Moreover to retain this fear, the government uses propaganda and technology; these two play an immense role in keeping people under control.

By the time it emerged, dystopia instantly became the interest of many scholars, which mainly wrote books discussing the definition and transition from Utopia to Dystopia. M. Keith Booker is one of the first critics who tackled this genre and his book *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature* is regarded as one of the most detailed books which define and explain Dystopia. Therefore, it is crucial to integrate Booker's definition in this study.

I.1.2 Booker's Dystopia

M. Keith Booker takes after the dystopian impulse in modern literature by setting it inside the theoretical and philosophical structures of Theodor Adorno, Sigmund Freud and Friedrich Nietzsche. He is less worried about the historical backdrop of the dystopian genre, and concentrates rather on the uncertainty and ambiguity of dystopic fiction, its relationship to its utopian counterpart, and its utilization as a medium to social criticism, which is in fact one

of the characterizing components of current dystopian fiction. His book *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature* is a resource on dystopian theory.

In his introduction, Booker offers one of the most detailed definitions of the transition from Utopia to Dystopia. He introduces the idea of Parks in relation to both Utopia and Dystopia, and he focuses on Disney Land as an example. According to Booker, Disney world represents the imaginary land that combines technology and fantasy, in other words, it is the realization of Utopia. One part of Disney Park is called the Magic Kingdom which contains castles and cartoons, this part appears as a fairyland to children. Another part of Disney draws no limits for technological development that may create a better tomorrow; this part is more suitable for adults. Further, a different area takes visitors behind the scenes of Disney movies and their magic (Booker 2).

The main attraction about Disney and other similar parks is escapism; they offer an escape from reality that captivates people. Disney world displays the negative side of Utopia which is escapism, and the positive one which is the embodiment of platonic image of Utopia that shows the actual potential of reality. Disney Park emphasizes how challenging it is the project of Utopia, yet it shows both the technological and imaginative capabilities of humans. The increasing number of visitors is mesmerized by the peaceful utopian atmosphere of the park and stunned not only by the marvelous technologies but also by the ‘clockwork precision’ by which the entire operation of organizing crowds is run (Booker 2).

The way crowds are organized ‘antlike’ to move from one allure to another under the supervision of the overseers of the park gives a sinister dystopian hint. There is always a dark side about parks and the technologies that inspires movies like *Westworld* and *Futureworld* to deal with the Robophobic nature of humans. Disneyworld for many is more negative than positive; the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard introduced two key concepts the “hyperreal” and “simulation” to analyze post modernist writings. In order to explain the hyperreal

Baudrillard argues that Disneyland is the perfect example as he explains in his article “*Simulacra and Simulation*”:

Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, which *is* Disneyland (just as prisons are there to conceal the fact that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is carceral). Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. (172)

Baudrillard suggests that when the representation of something exceeds the real one, like when a statue looks more real than the person himself this is called the hyperreal. He argues that Disneyland is concealing the fact that all America is equivalent to it. Because Disneyland is as real as America and America is as imaginary as Disneyland.

In his book, Booker consents with Baudrillard on this idea, yet he thinks that parks do not present themselves as being entirely apart from reality. Disneyworld attracts people to the imaginary part of it and makes them think they are living their dream; it has an explicit corporate sponsorship. Visitors are trading with “Disney dollars” rather than real money, they buy what they are supposed to buy, they see what they are supposed to see and they waste hours waiting to do so. Booker asserts that: “Disneyworld is both the idealization of the American dream and the ideal carceral society of consumer capitalism” (3).

Booker further adds that the doubleness of Disneyworld confirms that what may be a dream to someone could be a nightmare to another. This vision raised skeptical ideas among modern thinkers towards utopian thought, which led to their split. To confirm this idea,

Booker uses American literary critic Fredric Jameson's thoughts, which he states in his work *Marxism* that Utopian thought is significant for the empowerment of meaningful political action in the present, he further sees that dystopian thought on another hand is less responsible or effective than utopian one. Gary Saul Morison on the other hand explains the difference between utopia and dystopia and states: "Whereas utopias describe an escape from history, these anti-utopias describe an escape, or attempted escape, to history, which is to say, to the world of contingency, conflict, and uncertainty" (128). Morison is more in favor of dystopian thought than utopian one, which is exactly the opposite of Jameson's ideas. Whereas Jameson thinks that utopian notion pushes people to create a better reality, Morison thinks that embracing the dystopian thought is better because it is closer to reality.

The notion of science is a fundamental point in both Utopia and Dystopia. Amidst modern thinkers, Booker adds that, Karl Marx was one of the most influential ones who discussed socialism and its relation with scientific development, "For Marx socialism was not a fantasy but an inevitable reality, and he attempted to demonstrate through a scientific analysis of capitalist society that Communism was the natural, even necessary result of the historical evolution of capitalism" (Booker 4). Additionally, Booker argues that, modern utopian thought is related to the faith in rationality and science that both Marx and Engels emphasize; they include reflections of the enlightenment views in their philosophies despite their negative attitude towards bourgeois ideology which is closely related to the enlightenment.

Furthermore, Booker points out that, alongside with Marx and Engels, Jurgen Habermas, one of the leading contemporary theorists of "modernity" has suggested that the idea of being "modern" as we know it began only with the rise of modern science in the seventeenth century. In particular, the new science opened exciting new possibilities and inspired a belief in "the infinite progress of knowledge and in the infinite advance towards

social and moral betterment" (qtd. in Booker 4). This vision believes in the capability of science to create a better future which is commonly known among utopian thinkers.

On the other hand, Booker contrasts with the opinion of Robert E. Scholes and Eric S. Rabkin who bring out the role that science nowadays plays in our life, and emphasize its opposition to atavism which utopian thought offers. Rabkin argues that in utopian societies citizens are in an atavistic state that turns them into children controlled by leaders which. Rabkin further adds that: "In utopias, knowledge of the self and that things might be otherwise are enemies of the perfect society Citizens, therefore, are returned to an atavistic state they become children under the rule of the authority figure that gives them certain responsibilities that distract them from individual desires, like sexual intimacy and individual expression" (Rabkin 7). They further add that science is what makes us consider the consequences of our actions which lead to the supplanting of utopian thought by dystopian one:

In the twentieth century our world is shaped by science. It is only reasonable then that our atavistic urges to escape must deal with science. But science and atavism are enemies. Science allows no retreating in time, and insists on contemplating the consequences of actions. In our time the utopian impulse has been largely replaced by dystopian projections of disastrous current trends (qtd. in Booker 5).

The role of science in utopian literature is monumental and it is the main reason for the turn from utopia to dystopia. Thomas More, as the first who introduced Utopia, used the notion of "natural science" which is different from the modern science that led to dystopia. With the development reached in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some, writers like Jonathan Swift were already warning of the potential dangers (especially spiritual) of an overreliance on scientific and technological methods of thought and problem solving (Booker 6).

As Booker discusses, scientist Bacon's early predictions were starting to be realized by the nineteenth century. Bacon has a famous saying that goes as "knowledge is power" supporting the privileges of controlling nature that humans were capable of after this development, still humans were the ones being controlled by technology. For Some Frankfurt School thinkers like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, this skepticism towards utopian thought of the inevitability of socialism takes the form of a suspicion of the Enlightenment itself. In their work *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer argue that the technological development of the enlightenment was enslaving rather than liberating "What men want to learn from nature is how to use it in order to wholly dominate it and other men" (4).

Booker also includes Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy which represents the key point in the turn to skepticism and dystopian thinking. Nietzsche was influenced by Adorno's suspicion of rationality, he argues that not everything should be explained in a rational way, but rather some strangeness of the world should be maintained. Nietzsche's skepticism and challenge of power compiles with Freud's ideas as Booker asserts in his book: "Nietzsche's late-nineteenth-century challenge to the authority of the past also has much in common with the project of Sigmund Freud, who himself in many ways exemplifies the twentieth-century turn from utopian optimism to dystopian skepticism"(9).

Freud's hatred towards the past developed his pessimistic view "the past is not simply dead weight to be cast off by enlightened minds but active and engaged threatening to master the present" (qtd. in Booker 9). In his book *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) Freud emphasizes the role of the society in repressing human desires and making people unhappy. In other writings he criticized both the Soviet Union and America making reference to the control they practice on others due to their scientific development. He points out the notion of

scapegoat that is usually present in dystopian societies whose governments enforce their own beliefs on the marginalized groups (Booker 11).

Moreover, Freud states that religion is what holds back humans from being happy. He adds that societies with the excuse of religion try to control human impulses and deprive people from being happy. According to him, religion is the delusion oppressed use to find protection from dystopian totalitarian governments; they use it to remold reality. Also Booker confirms that: “for both Freud and dystopian governments, sexuality functions as a central focus for repressive energies largely because it is also a potential source of powerful *subversive* energies” (12).

Booker further states that the French philosopher Michel Foucault rejects the current status of the present but opposes the idea of the utopian alternative. Foucault's emphasis on continual change comes from sense of cultural issues that might be viewed as dystopian more than utopian, embodying a fundamental suspicion of any and all idealized visions of society (Booker 15).

Booker's definition and explanation of the transition from Utopia to Dystopia is so rich due to the fact that it relies on the points of view of capable and well known philosophers and writers. As he explains how technology is the turning point which opened the doors for dystopian creativity he also stresses the contrasts between Utopia and Dystopia.

I.2. Modern Writers and Dystopian Literature

I.2.1 H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*

Among other critics, Gregory Claeys considers H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* as the dystopian “*entrée*” (Claeys 112); he sees it as the first genuine dystopian novel. Herbert George Wells is an English writer famous for his science fiction writings as well as political and war knowledge. In his article “Zamyatin, Wells and the Utopian Literary Tradition”, Christopher Collins witnesses that: “Well's record of scientific prophecy is remarkable. He

predicted military aviation before the Wright brothers' first craft left the ground, and by 1914 he predicted the dropping of atomic bombs by aircraft in war. His political prophecy has not (yet) been so well justified" (353). Moreover H.G. Wells presented an idealistic and alternative view on society in his *A Modern Utopia*, a novel regarded as the last great classic utopia.

According to Peter Firchow in his article "H G Wells' The Time Machine: In Search of Time Future and Time Past", Wells' novel *The Time Machine* is viewed as an opening to dystopia. It is significant "in its extraordinary innovativeness, an innovativeness that is as literary as it is scientific" (123). *The Time Machine* belongs to the genre of speculative fiction; this latter encloses fantasy, horror, science fiction, supernatural and dystopian fiction. In this novel, Wells introduces the possibility of time travelling, he treats the future as a past that demonstrates the distinctive characteristics between Utopia and Dystopia. The future as past executes a crucial role to Wells, it additionally turned out to be progressively fundamental to the basic discussion of social and political thoughts in his fiction, regardless of whether through the voice of a third person narrator or as intervened through characters (Stock 9).

Moreover, Collins states that Wells saw that family is important and rejected the communism of wives. Yet, "he would remove children from their parents at birth and put them under the care and control of the community for the benefit of child, parent and society" (354). Wells paved the way for other writers of dystopian fiction like Zamyatin whose novel *We* is considered by Booker to be the real first dystopian work. Adam Stock in his research "The Future-as-past in Dystopian Fiction" argues that Zamyatin borrowed a lot of features from Wells' writings; also he expressed his admiration towards Wells' early utopian novels and scientific ideas (7).

I.2.2 Aldus Huxley's *Brave New World*

In her work “Control and Resistance in the Dystopian Novel: A Comparative Analysis”, Julia Gerhard states that Huxley’s *Brave New World*, written in 1931, is one of the most influential dystopian novels. The novel was created due to Huxley’s fears of the potential disastrous results of the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the early twentieth century. Huxley worried that the increasing number of factories in Europe that transformed human beings into machines would lead to the loss of individuality (10). His fears grew after he visited America and was petrified by the worship of entertainment, materialism and commercialization. These fears about the future of humanity helped him produce his famous work *Brave New World* which, as suggested by Mustafa Mencütekin, depicts an “inhuman society controlled by technology, in which art and religion have been abolished and human beings reproduce by artificial fertilization” (qtd. in Gerhard 10).

In this society, people are divided into different groups according to their abilities and capacities and forced to grow up and accept their fate. As a means of social control, the state makes sure to keep the people happy. Happiness is “accomplished through hypnopædic conditioning at birth and reinforced by sexual promiscuity, entertainment, and Soma, a drug that is supposed to calm one down if he or she starts to feel depressed” (qtd. in Gerhard 11). Thus, Huxley in his dystopia displays the cost of maintaining happiness and social stability while reviling the nightmarish dystopian side of what appears to be a perfect utopian world.

I.2.3 George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*

By the appearance of Dystopia, people were more interested in it than Utopia. Gerhard in her work asserts that, David Riesman explains the drift into dystopian thought as an outcome of scientific progress, which creates a negative view on the future of mankind: “When governments have power to exterminate the globe, it is not surprising that anti Utopian

novels, like *1984*, are popular, while utopian political thought about a more hopeful future nearly disappears” (qtd. in Gerhard 2).

Orwell’s dystopia *1984*, which is considered one of the dystopian classics, was the result of an intense concern for the future generations. *1984*, published in 1949, was inspired by Zamyatin’s *We* and was written as a mockery of Stalinism. Gerhard argues that: “Unlike Zamyatin, who wrote *We* predicting what *might* happen in the future of the Soviet Union under the Stalinist regime, Orwell conceived *1984* after observing all of the atrocities of Stalin’s brutality and his omnipotent control over people” (Gerhard 11).

Orwell noticed the corruption and the injustice exercised by Stalin towards Russian citizens and the rise of Hitler in Germany and was afraid that communism or fascism might spread throughout Europe during the Second World War. In his dystopian work, Orwell portrays a society under a brutal dictatorship where people are under constant surveillance, where history is rewritten depending on governmental needs, where freedom is restricted and where individuality is considered a thought crime.

Big Brother, the leader of the only existing political party, is strengthened by means of propaganda, manipulation of the history, the invention of Newspeak (the new English that has no hate words), and telescreens for surveillance. Gerhard adds that: “This is the kind of grim future Orwell envisioned after witnessing the consequences of a ruthless Stalinist regime in Russia, and he warned about what might happen if history were to repeat itself” (Gerhard 12).

Moreover, in his article “The Origins of Dystopia” Claey’s highlights the differences between Huxley’s Dystopia and Orwell’s Dystopia. According to Claey’s, Huxley’s future vision is related to pleasure and satisfaction as he stresses freedom of sexual relationships; on the contrary Orwell’s vision is gloomy and painful stressing the frightful outcomes of technological development. Huxley went deeper “into the behavioral psychology

of consumer society” (125), where people own what they don’t need, however, Orwell showed a clearer and more genuine image of the twentieth century’s barbarity (125).

Orwell came to see Huxley's 'totally materialistic obscene development in light of indulgence' as 'a peril past', and endlessly less threatening than totalitarianism, asserting that: “we are in danger of quite a different kind of world, the centralized slave state, ruled over by a small clique who are in effect a new ruling class, though they might be adoptive rather than hereditary. Such a state would not be hedonistic; on the contrary its dynamic would come from some kind of rabid nationalism and leader-worship” (qtd. in Claeys 124). Hence, Orwell criticized *Brave New World* for he thought the novel did not clarify why society should be layered the specific way it is. Also Huxley satirized the demands for equality which Orwell supported (Claeys 126).

Dystopia as a theme in modern writings influenced more contemporary writers. Critics say that Huxley was influenced by Plato’s *The Republic*; Orwell was influenced by Zamyatin *We*; also Suzanne Collins was influenced by Orwell to write her bestseller *The Hunger Games*. Contemporary dystopian writings are more directed for young adult readers because most of them are adopted into successful movies. Collins herself was the influence of Veronica Roth whose novel *Divergent* is almost as successful as *The Hunger Games*.

I.3 Young Adult Dystopian Literature

Not surprisingly, contemporary teens growing up under “nearly continuous adult supervision” (Miller 3), of parents, institutions and entire governments, are attracted to books which magnify sociopolitical issues of their time and in which protagonists rebel against authority. Michael Cart, an expert in Young Adult literature wrote two books explaining the meaning and value of young adult literature; he defines young adult literature as:

Novels meant for audiences aged 12 to 18; it has been expanded in recent years to include an even younger audience of 10 and 11 year olds. The term

“literature” has also been shifted to include works of nonfiction and poetry, as well as more visual works such as graphic novels. Some have argued for the upper age limit on young adult literature to be radically changed to 30 or even 35 since these books often appeal to people well beyond their teenage years (qtd. in Stamper 1)

Significantly, the presence of hope distinguishes the Young Adult dystopias from many classic Adult dystopias (Springen 23-24). This optimism teaches adolescents that they have something to cherish and inspires them to actively improve their situation, if necessary, just like the protagonists do (23). Classics such as Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) and Orwell’s *1984* do not offer such an optimistic conclusion, or if they do so it is very subtle and easily overlooked. Unlike such dystopias which are often pessimistic about human nature, dystopias for children and young adults focus on heroism and the power to survive (Sambell 249). Lorraine Pullan in her article “A Revolutionary Act: Investigating the Draw of Dystopia in Young Adult Literature,” argues that dystopias in general attract young adult readers because of its reflection of reality, and through young protagonists who are able to carry changes on the society. This provides adolescents with the opportunity to involve in real issues and try to solve them (1).

Moreover, Pullan contends that, literary historian Hans Robert Jauss stated that the readership is the most significant item that determines the value of a literary work in history, Jauss points out:

A literary work is not an object that stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period. It is not a monument which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue. It is much more like an orchestration which strikes ever new chords among its readers and which frees the text from the substance of the words and makes it meaningful for the time. (qtd. in Pullan 2)

In other words, the response that the text gets from its readers is what decides its weight, the primary readers of the dystopian genre are adolescents and they are the ones who shaped its success and its popularity (Pullen 2).

The shift from Utopia to dystopia is a major historical transition in literature. Due to war despair consequences and technological development writers no longer dream of the ideal place utopia but rather prepare themselves for the worst case scenario dystopia.

Chapter Two: Analysis of the Political Message in *The Hunger Games*

Suzanne Collins' best seller and reward-winner *The Hunger Games* (2008) explores the effects of war on teenagers. This novel is viewed as a master piece when it comes to young adult literature, Collins managed to tie together the past, present and future of the American society in a dystopian young adult novel.

This chapter is Analytical that stresses on the political message behind *The Hunger Games*. The first section provides an overview about the novel and the writer Suzanne Collins. The second section is about the embodiment of the reality shows' obsession in *The Hunger Games* and the use of media as a means to control the audience (people), it also specifies the inspirations of Collins. The third section discusses the political system in Panem, the novel shedding light on the tyrannical government and its discrimination of the people. The fourth and last section illuminates the signs leading to the uprising of people.

II.1. The Writer and Work: An introduction

II.1.1. Biography of Suzanne Collins

Suzanne Collins is an American author and screenwriter; she was born in August 10, 1962, Hartford, Connecticut, U.S. She is best known for the immensely popular "Hunger Games Trilogy" of young-adult novels (2008–10).

Due to her father's job as a career officer in the U.S. Air Force, her family moved frequently so she spent time in Indiana and Belgium before graduating from high school in Birmingham, Alabama. After graduation, Collins worked as a television writer in the 1990s, mainly for children shows such as: *Clarissa Explains It All* and *Clifford's Puppy Days* (Cunningham).

In 2003, Collins wrote her first children's novel *Gregor the Overlander*, which tells the story of a young 11 year old boy finding a subterranean world where giants and humans live

together in harmony. The book was a big success due to its sense of adventure, thus Collins wrote four other parts in a series named the *Underland Chronicles*.

By 2008, Collins wrote *The Hunger Games*, a dystopian novel presenting a post apocalyptic vision of what used to be North America. The novel tells the story of the tyrannical capitol of Panem which obliges its twelve districts to sacrifice twenty four boys and girls to fight till death in televised competition. Inspired by classical Greek myths and reality television fascination the novel is intended at young adult readers. The heroine Katniss Everdeen and coheres Peeta Mellark and Gale gain the attention of teenagers. Followed by two other parts *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010) the series gain a lot of attention from both critics and fans which classified it as best-seller for years (Cunningham).

The film adaptation of the book gave the novel more exposure which increased its success even more. Cunningham states that: “ By that time [2012] more than 30 million copies of the trilogy were in print in the United States alone, and e-book sales were particularly robust”. The movie was close to the novel, not many changes were made which made it very successful, and Katniss was played by Jennifer Lawrence who nailed the part. Other works of Collins are *When Charlie McButton Lost Power* (2005) and *Year of the Jungle: Memories from the Home Front* (2013).

II.1.2. Summary of *The Hunger Games*

Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (2008) is a dystopian novel that consists of three parts, each part has nine chapters. It tells the story of a place called Panem, which is a country that rose after its destruction. The destruction was caused by a rebellion of thirteen districts. The rebellion failed and the capital decided to punish the districts. The thirteenth district was destroyed to present a lesson for the other ones, and the twelve remained districts were living in very poor conditions, suffering of lack of food as well as electricity and water. On top of this, as a continuous reminder of the losses that the rebellion caused, the capital organizes

annual hunger games. Each district was to sacrifice two tributes, a boy and a girl that have to be twelve to eighteen years old.

Part one is entitled “the tributes”; it starts with the main character Katniss narrating the events. In this part the readers are introduced to the main characters, Katniss, her mother, Gale her best friend, Prim her sister and Peeta the son of the baker. It’s the day of the reaping (choosing the female and male tributes) and everyone is getting ready, Prim’s name is in the lot’s bowl for the first time which means that she can be chosen as a tribute. Not so lucky poor little Prim is chosen as a tribute and Katniss volunteers in her sister’s place, Peeta Mellark the baker’s son is the one chosen as the boy tribute. Therefore, both tributes are taken to the capitol to be trained with the other tributes in order to fight in the arena.

Part two is entitled “the games”, in this part tributes are ready to fight and led to the arena. From the start Katniss was the main target for the other tributes; they saw her as their biggest threat and formed an alliance in order to eliminate her. A little girl named Rue helped Katniss and they became friends, Katniss really loved Rue like her little sister, as a revenge on Katniss a member of the alliance formed before killed the poor little girl. Rue’s death was devastating to Katniss, she couldn’t deal with it easily but with this death she felt one thing stronger than pain and sorrow and that is the increasing grudge towards the capitol. Out of the blue the game maker Claudius Templesmith makes an announcement that there is a rule change stating that two tributes may be crowned victors if they are from the same district, and Katniss automatically called the name of Peeta.

Part three is entitled “the victor”, after a long search for Peeta, Katniss finally finds him lying on the side of the river badly wounded using camouflage to hide from enemies. She helps him up and moves him to a safe cave; Katniss tries to make Peeta feels better even though she knows his injury is only getting worse. Claudius, the games maker, makes a new announcement inviting the tributes to a feast where each one will find something he/she really

needs, this means that all tributes will be there, Katniss knows she will find Peeta's medicine, yet he prevents her from going arguing that it will be too dangerous. As soon as Peeta falls asleep, Katniss goes to the feast where she nearly gets killed but is saved and brings the medicine. Time is passing and the games are almost over, in search for food Peeta picks a poisoned berry named "night lock" which a girl from district five ate and died from because she was following Peeta.

Katniss takes some night lock thinking it may fool Cato the boy tribute from district one, suddenly it already becomes dark, game makers are rushing the grand finally. Out of nowhere monster dogs come at Katniss and Peeta which lead them to the place where the games started called Cornucopia, there they find Cato with whom they fight and finally kill. A twist of events occurs when Claudius announces the invalidation of the rule allowing two tributes to win, which meant Katniss should kill Peeta or vice versa. Katniss and Peeta decide to eat the night locks and commit double suicide which forces the game maker to crown them both victors. This act is considered as a revolt against the capitol and the rules which really bother President Snow and make Katniss his biggest threat.

The Hunger Games relates to the American reality and past, as all dystopian books Collins criticizes realistic aspects in the American society in an indirect way through the imaginative story of the country of Panem and the heroine Katniss Everdeen.

II.2. Representations of the American Present and History in *The Hunger Games*

In a ten part interview posted by the YouTube channel "I read YA", Suzanne Collins discussed both her classical and contemporary inspirations among other details. In part one Collins shared with her readers her very first inspiration for *The Hunger Games*, which is the Greek myth "Theseus" in which Athens needs to send each year seven youths and seven maidens to be thrown into a labyrinth where they will be a feast for a monster called Minotaur. Collins all stunned by the cruelty of this tale and fond of the Greek gladiator games

decided that her novel should include three main elements similar to Greek mythology; a powerful ruthless government, people fighting to death and to make this a popular entertainment.

In part two named “Contemporary Inspiration” Collins went further explaining the contemporary part of *The Hunger Games*, she told the story on her experience with the Vietnam war, when her father went to war she was always afraid of what would happen to him. Furthermore she recounts that:

one night I was lying in bed ... I was just sort of channel surfing on television ... I was flipping through images of reality television were there was these young people competing for a million dollars... then I was flipping and I was seeing footage from the Iraq war, and these two things began to sort of fuse together in a very unsettling way... and that was the moment where I got the idea of Katniss’ story (Contemporary Inspiration).

The reality show *Survivor* is so close to *The Hunger Games* Collins herself referred to it and said she was astonished by the type of entertainment shows people are watching. *Survivor* features a crew of real people cast away to compete against each other for a million dollars. During this competition they face cruel physical challenges including lack of food, water and comfy means of life; in addition the elimination process is the most competitive, where every week they all gather to vote one person out and the last one standing is the winner.

Likewise, Collins tackled the issue of wars and the news about wars arguing that those who have no relatives in the war will never feel the same towards it as those who have loved ones in the war, therefore the pictures shown in the news may be hurtful to some but they are unfortunately meaningless to others. Using all of this together, Collins managed to combine the people’s obsession with reality TV and the cruel war clips with her Greek mythology fascination in her novel. The similarities between all the above mentioned elements and *The*

Hunger Games are obvious, Collins used the arena, Greek names, and the concept of the strong government sacrificing youth and used it as an entertainment to highlight the faults of the society we are living in.

The concept of reality TV in *The Hunger Games* is drawing a lot of attention, scholars and critics are interested in the relation of this aspect in the novel with the obsession of Americans with reality shows. Collins in her interview coins the fact that people are looking differently to those participants in reality shows, it is like they are detached from them they no longer feel their pain or consider them as normal as she states: “There is another level of *The Hunger Games* which is more contemporary and that deals with our sort of fascination with reality television and you’ll see a lot of aspects of that also because the games are televised across the nation of Panem”. In their article “Creating a New Ethics: Student Responses, Reality Television, and Audience Awareness,” Linda J. Rice and Katie Wrabel tackle this issue in relation to *The Hunger Games*, stating that: “The world loves to watch the stars go through problematic, humiliating, or horrific events because they do not think of the people as real; they see them as pure entertainment. It shows a lack of compassion and even a lack of understanding for fellow people” (qtd. in Rice and Wrabel 186).

In the novel Collins stresses that, the most effective means to keep control over citizens of the districts is media. Lack of awareness is the key element for the easy control of people by the government, having no idea about the real facts and in short ignorance is why propaganda works effectively on the poor people of Panem. Manipulating people through media is easy, one only needs to create enough facts to scare and convince them, in *The Hunger Games* the government uses technology in more than one way to keep the districts under control. When Katniss is narrating the story she mentions one way the government used technology to spy on people during the old rebellion, which is the Jabber Jays, this bird is

genetically modified to copy the discussions of the rebellious and repeat it to the government (Collins 43).

This spying method failed because people found out about these birds and used them as a means to play the capitol itself. When this process failed, the government retrieved the jabber jays and as far as they know eliminated them, what they didn't know nor expected is that the jabber jays mated with the mocking birds and produced the Mocking jay. The mocking jay is a bird that repeats every sound a human makes and is used to send signals among people.

The power of media can be extremely misleading, for example in *The Hunger Games* when Katniss and Peeta start to play the role of star crossed lovers. The media is used to misdirect attention from Rue's death to the romance between the couple which will absorb the anger of the mob. From the part of the tributes (Katniss and Peeta) playing the star crossed lovers is more beneficial since rich sponsors would send them food and other gifts to help them survive (Bonnarp 8). Collins tried to send a message about people's obsessions with reality TV and the way it affects them but when the book was released and later adapted to a movie the first reaction among readers especially teenagers was to split into two groups, team Peeta supporting the couple Katniss and Peeta and team Gale supporting the couple Katniss and Gale.

This is the biggest issue she relates to her book, in *The Hunger Games* Collins is stressing the reaction of the people in the capitol to the tributes and how it differs from that of the people in the districts. Due to the fact that they don't actually have a relative in the games, they do not have to sacrifice their own, the people in the capitol are excited about the games they consider it as a great festival where they get to enjoy a great show and bet on tributes and when it's over they can just move on with their lives. Whereas, people from the districts, living the fear of losing a child, are not really so excited for the games, each time they are

forced to send one of their children to death and obliged to watch them die. As Susan Shau Ming Tan discusses in her article “Burn with Us: Sacrificing Childhood in *The Hunger Games*”: “... adult survival meaning child death. All children in the districts of Panem live under this threat of adult culture, and one can imagine that when a child threatened by such violence looks at himself in Lacan’s mirror, a recognition of this vulnerability must accompany any recognition of self”(56). The influence of the games on the children themselves, growing up knowing what fate is waiting for them increases a sense of instability within them.

The Hunger Games relates as much to the present life of the Americans as it does to the past, the historical background of the novel is too obvious to be ignored. Collins covered both history and present to make her book more realistic.

When reading *The Hunger Games*, one instantly notices the relation between the rebellion fuelled by the thirteen districts against the capitol of Panem and the rebellion of the thirteen states of America against the mother country England. Collins borrowed this incident from the American history and used it as a background to her story, yet she changed the results of the rebellion to create more dramatic events that leads to her dystopian story. The beauty in Collins’ idea is that she took something from the past and placed it in the future to start a whole new vision. While scholars are more interested in the present tense relations with *The Hunger Games*, this particular point about the past seems even more interesting.

The way Collins is trying to relate the events of the novel with both the present and the past is marvelous. The fact that she changed the result of the rebellion is rising the question what if everything was different? What if America never retrieved its freedom? This brings us to question the real message behind writing the novel itself. Even though Collins herself never actually mentioned this point anywhere it is obvious once reading the novel, which suggests that maybe she never discussed it because she was never asked about it.

Combining the relevance of the novel with both the present and the past of the United States of America suggests the involvement of the politics in the novel with reality too. One of the major dystopian themes is the political hints discussed in the novels, and *The Hunger Games* is no different, it also gives a great importance to political implications.

II.3 Politics of Panem

The country of Panem represented in the novel is composed of the rich strong capitol and the poor submissive 12 districts. The origin of the control of the capitol over the districts goes back to the previously led rebellion in a trial of gaining freedom. The power of media is vested in hypnotizing the people convincing them that the only way of keeping peace is by organizing the annual games. Led by the desire to survive, the powerless people of the districts figured that the only way to live is to abide the law set by the capitol.

In her thesis *Young Adult Dystopian Literature on Fire: the Importance of The Hunger Games Trilogy to Critical Thinking and Social Justice*, Rilana Thepen stresses that:

The Capitol aims to maintain a utopian setting for its citizens and therefore creates a dystopian reality in the districts. Drawing upon the [...] difference between reality and the Real, Slavoj Žižek explains that “‘reality’ is the social reality of the actual people involved in interaction and in the productive processes, while the Real is the inexorable ‘abstract’, spectral logic of capital that determines what goes on in social reality” (qtd. in Thepen 12). Due to this, the relationship between the government and the districts could be regarded as a form of colonialism and capitalism. (13)

This suggests that the capitol’s control goes beyond surveillance and tyranny; it is more of a brain wash. The capitol does its best to keep people convinced that this is the best and most merciful solution after the rebellion.

In an interview with James Blasingame, Collins explains that the socio-political connotations of *The Hunger Games* are “very intentionally created to characterize current and past world events, including the use of hunger as a weapon to control populations” (726). Another ruthless means the government uses to keep restraint of the people is hunger as it provides very little of essential foods. Gilbert- Hickey Meghan in her article “Gender Rolls: Bread and Resistance in *The Hunger Games* Trilogy” argues that:

In the first book of Suzanne Collins’s *Hunger Games* trilogy, alone, there are over one hundred references to food: tough meats and creamy cheeses, juicy fruits and flavorful sauces. And while the series’ protagonist ranks the lamb stew as the best thing about her nation’s Capitol, it’s not a surprise that no food is given more attention, or as much complicated clout, as bread.

Bread appears in the first novel as a means of survival. (2)

For example, in order to get tessera, which is a one year supply of grain and oil for one person, kids of the districts are forced to enter their names in the pool which raises the odds of being chosen as tribute as Katniss explains it in the novel: “Say you are poor and starving as we were. You can opt to add your name more times in exchange for tessera. Each tessera is worth a meager year’s supply of grain and oil for one person. You may do this for each of your family members as well” (Collins 14). Shau Ming Tan comments on this point stating that: “Thus, the system is constructed to turn children into agents of their family’s survival: adults cannot provide, but children can. Childhood is stripped away as families and adults offer up their children as potential sacrifice” (4), this suggests that children hold more responsibility than adults.

The political system of Panem gives some districts more privilege than others, each district is concerned with a specific type of craft to provide the capital with; on the basis of these crafts districts are classified. Districts one and two are the capitol’s favorites because

they provide it with luxury items like diamonds and gold. District 11 provides agriculture and 12 coal that is why they are the poorest districts.

II.4. Signs of the Coming Rebellion

Pressure generates explosion, the unbearable tyranny and injustice people in the districts of Panem are facing from the tyrannical government has reached a point where it is impossible to move on therefore people are triggered waiting for a sign of hope to rebel.

Across the story of book one, signs are given that there will be a sequel and there will be a rebellion. The way the government treats people of the districts suggest from the beginning that they will come to the point of explosion and rebel against the capital and president Snow. The government forces people of the districts to work for its prosperity, district 12 provides coal which is essential for producing electricity, district 11 agricultural products, district 7 wood crafts, districts 1 and 2 provide diamonds and luxury products plus trained peacekeepers. Each district's work is necessary for the wellbeing of the rich people in the capitol and not for themselves, when Katniss teams up with Rue she thinks she will have more things to eat, but Rue explains otherwise: "Oh, no, we're not allowed to eat the corps [says Rue]. They arrest you or something? [Katniss] ask. They whip you and make everyone else watch, says Rue" (Collins 201).

The fact that people are producing goods and not even able or allowed to benefit from them creates this kind of grudge that sooner or later would drive them to rise against their government. Starvation is one of the key factors that create hostility towards the capital; food is an essential theme in the novel that relates directly to the name Panem specifically.

According to the urban dictionary 'Panem' derives from the Latin phrase Panem et Circenses, which literally translates into 'bread and circuses' ("Panem"). The phrase itself is used to describe entertainment used to distract public attention from more important matters.

Therefore, the disregardance of the government on the starvation and suffering of people is the first sign that they will rise against it.

Knowing that the will to revolt is there, what people need is a torch of hope to lead them through it. Katniss volunteering instead of her sister brings a slight amount of hope in her district, when she goes up on that stand people gives her the three fingers salute which as Collins explains in the novel: “It is an old and rarely used gesture of our district, occasionally seen at funerals. It means thanks, it means admiration, it means good-bye to someone you love” (Collins 25). Hence, the salute is an old tradition of district 12, it is recently refreshed at the 74th Hunger Games’ reaping when Katniss volunteers instead of her sister Prim. Instead of applauding the event, as they always had, the people of the District raise their tree fingers in defiance.

The salute has even bigger influence the time when Katniss makes it after the death of Rue, again it is a kind of confrontation against the Capitol, because a tribute is showing love and respect to another, in a game where they are supposed to kill each other for entertainment. This act is considered as a threat to the government, the fact that someone is acting in an unusual way at the games, now Katniss herself is a threat to the government because to the people she did something no one else could have done so she is becoming their hope. The three fingers salute is now tied to Katniss - the Mocking jay herself - and the rebellion revolves around her because she is the spark that set the things in motion. Hence, Katniss makes this symbol and as the book shows, the first riots and protests of the uprising against the Capitol begin.

When Katniss gives the three fingers salute at the time of Rue’s death, people in district 11 give her the salute back showing solidarity, one of them even hits a peacekeeper which leads others to act too. It is the first time since the first rebellion (also referred to as the dark days) that someone takes an action against the government, from this moment; President

Snow classifies Katniss as an enemy. So the second sign is Rue's death, because as this happened Katniss admits she is willing to fight as she threatens: "I want to do something, right here, right now, to shame them, to make them accountable, to show the Capitol that whatever they do or force us to do there is a part of every tribute they can't own. That Rue was more than a piece in their Games. And so am I" (Collins 233).

From then on, the significance of the gesture completely changes and it becomes a symbol of the revolution effectively, a way for the citizens of the Districts to say goodbye to the overbearing force and power of the Capitol. Blokker discusses this same point and states that: "A first act of defiance is her [Katniss'] covering her ally Rue, who had just been killed and who reminds her so much of Prim, in wildflowers and using district 12's sign of solidarity – which has transcended its original meaning – on live-camera" (43). Blokker in her work suggests that these acts of defiance and Katniss' transcending norms of gender and sexuality are what pushed her for becoming the Mockingjay (44). When Katniss wears a pin with the Mockingjay bird on it in the 74th Hunger Games, the Capitol is angry. They believe it will result in an uprising because the Capitol sees the Mockingjay as a failure. This is why Katniss becomes "The Mockingjay" and leads the rebels, people see in her the little hope they were waiting for in order to stop the dictatorship of their President.

Things are starting to heat up from now on because Katniss is viewed as the number one threat for the Capitol, and President Snow is worried. This makes things bad for Katniss but what makes it even worse is the coming act she commits. What Katniss does is the third sign the rebellion. After Rue's death and in an attempt to ease things down, the game maker announces that there will be two winners if they are both from the same district (Collins 241), here Katniss instantly thinks of Peeta. However President Snow does not like this, he warns his game maker against making mistakes, which shows that he will kill his own people in order to stay on the top. At the end of the games when Katniss brings out the night locks to

commit a double suicide with Peeta she triggers a gun to her head because at this moment she officially makes herself an enemy of the capitol. After the games Haymitch ,Katniss and Peeta's mentor, states: " Listen up. You're in trouble. Word is the Capitol's furious about you showing them up in the arena. The one thing they can't stand is being laughed at and they're the joke of Panem" (350).

People now as pleased as the Capitol is furious because they see in Katniss the hope they were wishing for, now they finally see someone standing in the face of the tyranny and injustice. Thereupon, they will stand up too because this time they think they can win exactly like Katniss did and her as a leader is what they want.

Chapter Three: Youth and Nature in *The Hunger Games*

This chapter stresses the important role played by youths along book one, especially the female heroine Katniss Everdeen. The first section reveals the relationship between youngsters and adults in the book; it sheds light on the role played by each of them. The second section is an ecocritical reading of the novel, it details the role of environment and nature in the book and how it contributes to the dystopian genre, dealing with both connections to and disconnections from nature. Furthermore this section focuses on ecofeminism as a concept in relation to Katniss. The third and last section stresses the heroic actions of Katniss and the way she unknowingly leads people towards a second rebellion against the capitol.

III.1. Youth in *The Hunger Games*

The role of youth in the novel is momentous; they are the essence of the story from the protagonist Katniss to the less mentioned one. The notion of children in *The Hunger Games* is the interest of scholars due to the unusual cruelty they have to go through. In the book the range of adolescence is clearly stated by the age 12 to 18 as they can be chosen as tributes.

In her article “No Child Left Unharmed: The Image of the Child in *The Hunger Games*”, Sara Harvey examines the role of children in the dystopian nation of Panem. As she starts explaining the responsibilities children are bogged by, she gives the example of the *tessera* as she states: “The *tessera* are only one example of how the Capitol shifts the roles of power as it seeks to reward its citizen” (1). Children are the ones responsible to bring food to their families as they demand a *tessera*, in return they put their names one more time in the pool. Also parents are no longer taking responsibilities for their children; “the parents are removed from the role of the protector which should stand between the child and the Capitol” (1). In other words, the parents helplessly agree to sacrifice their children as tributes without any resistance.

Even though, the children grow up listening to stories of the war and its results from their parents, the capitol tells the same story but from another perspective; putting the blame on the people. According to Harvey, the capitol distorts the real story of the history of the rebellion in order to control the children. Harvey argues that the history of the rebellion is: “a history that is very well known by the adults of the districts and most of the older children. This is one of the first indicators that the government is trying to access control over the children because it suggests brainwashing” (2). As President Snow tells this history, he specifies three examples of those affected by the war: “the widows, the orphans, and a motherless child” (Harvey 2), he removes the father when he recognizes the widows, both parents when he names orphans and the mother when he identifies motherless child. Harvey suggests that: “Once he has removed the parents from this first part of his speech, he replaces the parental roles with the government” (2).

In “Burn with Us: Sacrificing Childhood in *The Hunger Games*,” Shau Ming Tan further discusses the importance of young tributes, specifically Katniss, the heroine: “Children are lost and voices are silenced, and as Katniss fights against the dictates of society that demand this sacrifice she becomes ‘the girl on fire,’ fighting against the impotency of the burning child’s cry, demanding that the adult world take notice” (55). Katniss stands in the face of the capitol in order to draw the attention of adults, she defends the image of children demanding that adults pay attention and take responsibilities from the hands of children as they are supposed to. Shau Ming Tan suggests that the system of the *Games* is put into place in order to alter the children into “agents of their family’s survival” (56). Shau Ming Tan clarifies also how children are deprived from their childhood by stating: “Childhood is stripped away as families and adults offer up their children as potential sacrifice. In what will emerge as a common trope throughout the series, survival is intimately linked with death in this case, adult survival meaning child death” (56).

Katniss is a rebellious; she does not like being controlled. In the novel, it is noticed that the power that Katniss ultimately uses is her own. Katniss explores her power by pushing against the boundaries of her image. In the novel, Katniss contemplates that putting pressure on the children to kill each other allows the Capitol to show the children that they “are at their mercy” (Collins 18). Her ability to decipher the intentions behind the actions of the capitol is the one that fuel her antagonism towards the capitol and the whole system including the adults, for not standing up for the injustice towards children.

Sarah O. Murphy in “The Child Soldier and the Self in *Ender’s Game* and *The Hunger Games*” stresses Katniss’ uniqueness in assessing the relationship between the capitol and its people by arguing:

Katniss undergoes a similar repeated process of realizing how her violence and power are actually created by the adults in charge. The realization leads her to question the purpose of that power. From the very beginning she recognizes that the Games are a sick method of control and that the Capitol is an oppressor, but Katniss nonetheless refers to Peeta and the other children in the arena as her ‘enemies’ or the other ‘tributes’ both terms suggesting the Capitol’s perspective. (qtd. in Harvey 6)

However, Murphy suggests that even unwillingly Katniss is somehow following the capitol’s perspective as she sees the other tributes as enemies.

The capitol takes the tributes and places them in the arena, a place in the wilderness yet controlled by the capitol, giving the idea that it is all in the hands of the capitol. The role represented by nature in the novel proves its significance, therefore an eco-analytic reading of *The Hunger Games* is the most suitable.

III.2. An Eco-Analytic Reading of *The Hunger Games*

In his article “Ecology and dystopia,” Brian Stableford provides an accurate background to both terms: “The terms ‘ecology’ and ‘dystopia’ were first improvised from

their Greek roots in the mid-nineteenth century. The former was used by Henry David Thoreau in 1858 before being formally defined as a branch of biology seven years later by Ernst Haeckel, while the latter was employed by John Stuart Mill in 1868” (259). Ecology according to the Cambridge English Dictionary is the science that studies the relationships between air, land, water, plants...etc (‘ecology’), and dystopia as mentioned before is the pessimistic opposite of utopia. The undeniable relationship between humans and nature forced the development of this study to reach a wider range of literature and literary criticism.

Carissa Ann Baker, in her article “Outside the Seam: The Construction of and Relationship to Panem’s Nature,” defines ecological criticism as: “an emerging field that investigates relationships between people, texts, and environments” (198). The ecocritical scholar Cheryl Glotfelty argues that ecological criticism is also known as the: “study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” or an “earth-centered approach to literary studies” with *place* as a “new critical category” (qtd. in Baker 198). Baker further adds that the 1980s noticed the birth of environmental literary studies, yet she points out that ecological criticism has gone through several phases including: “investigations of literary depictions of nature, rediscovering nature writing, locating place in authorial identity, and aligning it with other literary theories” (199).

Environment in literary texts held multiple perspectives in particular the apocalyptic vision which reached movies also, and this is what Rowland Hughes and Pat Wheeler discuss in their critical survey: “Eco-dystopias: Nature and the Dystopian Imagination”. They relate the environmental to dystopian genre of writing; the environmental apocalypse draws a lot of attention from the audience and is more successful in cinema. Roland Emmerich’s *The Day After Tomorrow*, which depicts an apocalyptic vision of the rise and freeze of the Atlantic Ocean creating a new ice age, is according to Hughes and Wheeler one of the well known examples of environmental apocalypse (1).

Hughes and Wheeler further argue that: “It is certainly true that climate change is most commonly, and most forcefully, communicated in the language of disaster, which seems to provide the most compelling and persuasive means of persuading its audience, not only of the devastation being wreaked upon global ecosystems, but of the human consequences of that devastation” (2). These environmental apocalyptic movies force people to reconsider their thoughtless actions towards nature after witnessing the potential disastrous consequences of these actions. This apocalyptic vision accommodates with dystopian literary genre which urged the dawn of eco-dystopia. In addition, Hughes and Wheeler argue that:

[T]he human relationship to the natural world has long been central to the dystopian imagination, and the eco-dystopian ‘vocabulary’ has been enlarged by more than merely climate change in recent years. . . . Rapid advances in genetic research, the growth of the internet, and fears of pandemic viruses have each provoked a variety of responses in contemporary dystopian literature and cinema. (3)

Hughes and Wheeler emphasize the role of technology in the flowering of eco-dystopian books and films. According to them, the technological cluster that emerged during the 1990s influenced the eco-dystopian works. This influence has two directions as specified by Hughes and Wheeler: “technological progress means both a movement away from and simultaneously a movement into or towards nature – away from nature-as-wilderness, but towards nature-as garden, a constructed, mediated, engineered nature that is still essential to our definitions of urban space or technological utopia” (3). The involvement of technology gives dystopian writers a new vision of what role nature possesses in their books, they no longer narrow themselves to apocalyptic vision only as they used to.

III.2.1. Connections to and Disconnections from Nature in the Novel

Collins' *The Hunger Games* manifests both directions of nature in eco-dystopian writings. The protagonist Katniss is influenced by both kinds of nature. According to Janice Bland and Anne Strotmann in their article "*The Hunger Games: An Ecocritical Reading*", in order to read *The Hunger Games* an ecocritical reading we need to look for three main tropes. The first is the apocalypse which is highly related to the book since the setting is a post apocalyptic nation of Panem. The second is the pastoral which is represented by the meadow in district 12, and the third is the wilderness which is represented by the areas out of the range of the capitol like the woods around district 12. All of these notions are essential in the novel and Collins focused on each side of these in different places (27).

Before explaining the three tropes first we need to define nature since it is a fluid and contested term. Kate Soper explains that, in its "commonest and most fundamental sense, the term "nature" refers to everything which is not human and distinguished from the work of humanity," and she further maintains that nature is "the idea through which we conceptualize what is "other" to ourselves" (qtd. in Hughes and Wheeler 3). Nature here is the "other" which is not controlled nor understood by humans, it is beyond their power.

The uncontrolled nature is powerful and aggressive causing natural disasters like floods, droughts, plagues and other catastrophes. According to Lawrence Buell, such unruly nature is: "the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal" (qtd. in Bland and Strotmann 27). This imagination is crucial for it presents an awakening for people due to its implications of the destiny of our world. This use of nature as apocalypse is the fuel to contemporary writings. In *The Hunger Games*, the country of Panem is a post apocalyptic setting as it is a country: "that rose up out of the ashes of a place that was once called North America", destroyed by 'the disasters, the droughts, the storms, the fires, the encroaching seas that swallowed up so

much of the land, the brutal war..." (Collins 21), this war resulted in the collapse of the districts to be controlled by the brutal capitol.

The pastoral tradition creates two key contrasts: "the spatial distinction of town and country as well as a temporal distinction of a fallen present and an idyllic past" (Bland and Strotmann 28). In *The Hunger Games*, in the very first pages Katniss explains: "Our house is almost at the edge of the Seam. I only have to pass a few gates to reach the scruffy field called the Meadow" (Collins 5). Also, she describes how district 12 is a combination of the meadow as a space between the poor coal mines and the wilderness of the woods around the district. The meadow is presented in the novel as an imaginative place where it is peaceful and safe for children, this is featured in the song Katniss sings to her sister Prim and to Rue when she was dying:

Deep in the meadow, under the willow
 A bed of grass, a soft green pillow
 Lay down your head, and close your sleepy eyes
 And when again they open, the sun will rise
 Here it's safe, here it's warm
 Here the daisies guard you from every harm. (Collins 231)

The third trope is wilderness which is "a space outside given cultural identities and modes of thinking or practice" (Bland and Strotmann 30). Beyond the fence of district 12, there are the uncontrolled woods; the place which is out of the reach of the tyrannical capitol. Katniss describes the wilderness: "the fence has been successful at keeping the flesh-eaters out of District 12. Inside the woods they roam freely, and there are added concerns like venomous snakes, rabid animals, and no real paths to follow" (Collins 6). This proves how wild life exists beyond the electrified fence of district 12. Katniss' ability to hunt and retrieve food from the wild woods gives her an advantage in the arena.

Going back to the point of technology intervention in the eco-dystopian writings discussed by Hughes and Wheeler, the arena of the games is the perfect example for this intervention. The game makers have an eye on everything that happens inside the arena which is a forest like place. As an example of the technological control of the arena, at the beginning of the games when Katniss reached the edge of the arena in order to move her back closer to the other tributes they start a fire with the click of a button. Also, when they create the hybrid dogs and send them to kill Katniss and Peeta at the end. This shows the ability technology provides humans with to control nature after disasters.

III.2.2. *The Hunger Games* through an Ecofeminist Lens

As the protagonist is a female, ecofeminism seems to be a more suitable approach to analyze the novel. According to Cenk Tan:

The term ecofeminism was first coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne in her famous 1974 work *Le féminisme ou la mort*. (Feminism or death) She argued that the liberation of nature could not be held apart of women's liberation. As a sub-branch of feminism, ecofeminism's main concern is the struggle against patriarchal world order and liberation of women. In addition to that, the theory forms a connection between women and nature and asserts that both have been oppressed by the system of patriarchy. (Tan 33)

Ecofeminism relates women's emotions and feelings to nature and environment. Feminists relate the liberation of women is the same as the liberation of nature. As Rosemary Radford Ruether states that:

The ecology and the women's movement are a united cause: Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological aims within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's

movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this society. (qtd. in Tan 33)

Moreover, Tan numerates several arguments for why feminist thoughts and ecological concerns should be related. First, he states that everything related to women, nature, sentiments...etc has been labeled as unworthy while on the other hand all what is related to masculinity and men is considered to be worthy and important. Second, feminists argue that women and animals have become the central victims of environmental pollution. Third, and the most significant concern to feminists is the fact that important decisions made about nature and women are made by men. These arguments relate nature to women. In this light, ecofeminists consider nature and women as united and should not be separated from each other.

Karen J. Warren defines four basic principles of ecofeminism also known as ecological feminism:

- (1) There are important connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature;
- (2) understanding the nature of these connections is necessary to any adequate understanding of the oppression of women and the oppression of nature;
- (3) feminist theory and practice must include an ecological perspective; and
- (4) solutions to ecological problems must include a feminist perspective.” (qtd. in Tan 34)

Feminists argue that the common point between women and nature is their ability to give life. Yet the struggle is that this ability is considered as a burden since it is not appreciated by men. Men consider themselves as ‘protagonists’ since everything works in their favor, like women and nature are just existing to ensure the well being of the male (Tan 34).

Concerning this issue of the relation between nature and women, Sean P. Connors, in his article “I Try to Remember Who I am and Who I am Not: The Subjugation of Nature and Women in *The Hunger Games*”, asserts that Ecofeminist philosophy, which developed in the 1970s, represents a combination of shared concerns by ecologists and feminists. Rather, ecofeminism is better connoted as a home for other theories like spiritual ecofeminists, traditional Marxist ecofeminists, cultural ecofeminists, and regardless of their differences, these theories have one thing in common which is as Murphy argues: “a masculinist linkage of women and nature that denigrates and threatens both” (qtd. in Connors 140).

According to Bennett, ecofeminism is concerned with a lot of issues, including women’s rights, animal rights, water and air cleanliness, and the oppression of people in Third World Countries by industrialized nations. Nevertheless, she argues that, ecofeminism is defined by “two concepts: its belief in the interrelatedness of all things and its commitment to supplanting hierarchically organized societies with egalitarian communities” (qtd. in Connors 140). In regard to the latter, she states:

[Ecofeminists] assert that valuing one kind of life over another (white over black, male over female, human animals over other animals, industrialized living over agricultural life) will keep the hierarchy firmly entrenched, leaving traditionally defined “male” qualities—physical power, mechanistic ability, analytical and linear thinking—to be affirmed over “female” qualities—empathy, sensuality, emotion. (qtd. in Connors 140)

Women and nature as discussed by scholars are inseparable in *The Hunger Games*; this is represented by Katniss’ relation to nature. In the novel, at the very beginning, Katniss says: “Gale says I never smile except in the woods” (Collins 7), the woods present a peaceful place and a refuge for Katniss away from the eyes of others.

Katniss has so much in common with nature; this could be observed by her task as a provider. Nature provides us with food so does Katniss for her family, Katniss admits that as she states: “The woods became our savior, and each day I went a bit farther into its arms. It was slow-going at first, but I was determined to feed us. I stole eggs from nests, caught fish in nets, sometimes managed to shoot a squirrel or rabbit for stew, and gathered the various plants that sprung up beneath my feet” (Collins 51).

Nature is Katniss’ provider of food and protection. In the woods Katniss escapes from peace keepers, collects goods, and hunts animals, as she mentions “The woods became our savior, and each day I went a bit farther into its arms” (Collins 51). The arena is somehow controlled by the capitol but still it offers protection for Katniss like the high trees that helped her escape from the career tributes. Also when Katniss got stung by Tracker Jackers, Rue saved her using leaves from medical plants. This proves the amount of help nature provides for Katniss all along and how much Katniss knows about nature.

The main relation between nature and Katniss is that both are exploited by the brutal masculine capitol. The arena is the first example of nature exploitation since the game makers are using technology to control natural events like day and night. For Katniss, it starts from the day she arrives to the capitol, she passes through stylists in order to make her appropriate for the show as she is nothing more than an entertainment object. Moreover, one example of the exploitation of both Katniss and nature that stands out is at the games. In the arena, Katniss relies on her survival skills and the similarities between the chosen arena and the woods of her district to seek high ground and avoid confrontation with other tributes. However, that does not suit the purpose of entertainment the game makers desire, thus they create a fire to push Katniss back towards the other tributes. This unnaturally started fire is a cruel use of technology for exploiting both nature by burning it and Katniss by making her face death.

Katniss' strong character is what helps her survive all the mistreatments by the tyrannical Capitol. She presents an idealistic image of the contemporary female heroine.

III.3. Katniss Everdeen: A Female Protagonist in Contemporary Dystopia

The contemporary image of the female protagonists in dystopian writings is the major factor that is pulling the attention of young adult audience. The usual representation of the classical female stereotype makes these new heroines attractive, desirable and stands as role models.

Dane Moreaux, in his article "Mythical Hero versus the Modern Heroine: The Female Hero in Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*", introduces the several differences between the classical Greek hero and the contemporary heroine. Since Collins was inspired by the Greek myth of *Theseus and the Minotaur*, it is only logical to compare the heroine of Collins' book Katniss to the hero of her inspiration Theseus. The two have much in common: "Like Theseus, who "offered himself as one of the [youths and maidens]" who "were, according to custom, drawn by lot to be sent" sacrificially to the Minotaur, Katniss Everdeen volunteers to fight to the death in the Hunger Games" (Moreaux 3).

The first impression readers get of Katniss is what makes her strong. From the beginning the readers notice the roles she embodies in her life, as a provider and a nurturer. After her father's death, Katniss acknowledges, "my mother was locked in some dark world of sadness [...] at eleven years old, with Prim just seven, I took over as head of the family. There was no choice" (Collins 27). Starting from childhood, Katniss is beaten down by adult responsibilities. Katniss from the age of eleven took the responsibility to take care of her mother and her sister Prim. She narrates in this passage her role as a nurturer: "I bought our food at the market and cooked it as best as I could and tried to keep Prim and myself looking presentable" (Collins 27).

Katniss exhibits the features of heroism when she volunteers instead of her sister Prim to fight for death in the annual 'Hunger Games'. Such act shows her selflessness and how far she is willing to go to protect her sister. This also proves her bravery as she volunteers to fight for death and does not hesitate for one second. However, there is a slight difference between Katniss and Theseus as Moreaux clarifies:

While Katniss embraces both aggressive diligence (represented by her persistence to survive) and subdued compassion (signified by her self-sacrifice for others), Theseus merely wants to become a great hero as quickly as possible, and easy safety was certainly not the way to do that, so whereas, Katniss demonstrates sincerity in her self-sacrifice, while Theseus merely seeks the entitlement of great hero. (Moreaux 3)

The difference here is that classical Greek heroes fight for personal glory, their primary aim is to be remembered. Whereas contemporary heroines are less selfish, they present the best of both sides, they are compassioned and emotional (feminine side) but also brave and strong (masculine side).

In her article "Female Characters as Role Models in Young Adult Literature," Julia Stamper explains how contemporary female characters are redefined in young adult literature. She gives the examples of: "Katniss [*The Hunger Games*], Tally [*Uglies*], Hermione [*Harry Potter*], and Lace [*Peeps*] are all presented as clever, headstrong women who are more than capable of keeping up with (or even outshining) the men in their stories and who sometimes have to bend a few rules to get what they need" (17). These female characters are strong and stubborn; they stand up in the face of men and the system to get out of the old stereotype. Katniss shows a lot of defiance towards the capitol as for example she hunts illegally, even though it is a crime that "carries the severest of penalties," in order to provide her family with food and income from trading (Collins 5).

Furthermore, what is in common among these young adult books is that: “Each of these stories eventually adds in a romantic element to the plot, but it is never the main focus. The romance is one way of helping to further develop the characters, but it could be omitted from the story without any serious detriment to either the plot or overall characterization” (Stamper 17). Romance is always there, it is an essential part in the story; however, it is not the main focus; it is a side show to help the heroines in their journeys. In *The Hunger Games*, the showmance is used to help Katniss and Peeta survive the games, as it is all entertainment.

The romance is merely strategic as it aims at gaining sympathy and support of the sponsors. Tom Henthorne aptly describes Katniss’ and Peeta’s relationship as a “showmance” that will make them popular because it is unique and dramatic (qtd. in Blokker 41). When Peeta admits having a crush on Katniss in the televised interview with Caesar Flickerman, she gets so upset, but Haymitch clarifies things to her:

“You are a fool,” Haymitch says in disgust. “Do you think he hurt you? That boy just gave you something you could never achieve on your own.” “He made me look weak!” I say. “He made you look desirable! And let’s face it, you can use all the help you can get in that department. You were about as romantic as dirt until he said he wanted you. Now they all do.

You’re all they’re talking about. The star-crossed lovers from District Twelve!” says Haymitch.(Collins 134)

Being desirable can be real helpful with sponsors, this is what Katniss realizes after calming down. Audience will sympathize with her, cheer for her, and even try to help her. And the audience needs to be entertained after all, this is what the games are about for them, therefore, she starts manipulating them. She knows that: “Being Panem’s sweetheart ... allows her to subvert authority more effectively than she could as the more masculine Katniss the Huntress” (Blokker 42). The showmance is at its best when the game maker tries to calm

people down after the death of Rue, as he announces that: “both tributes from the same district will be declared winners if they are the last two alive” (Collins 241). Instantly Katniss thinks of Peeta and starts looking for him, the real showmance is starting.

After finding each other, they survive together until the end, even when the game maker ruins the romance by announcing: “The earlier revision has been revoked. Closer examination of the rule book has disclosed that only one winner may be allowed” (Collins 337). By this, the aim is to force Katniss and Peeta to fight each other in order to fulfill the wish of the capitol. Katniss realizes that: “They never intended to let us both live. This has all been devised by the Game makers to guarantee the most dramatic showdown in history. And like a fool, I bought into it” (Collins 337). At this point both of them are in shock not knowing how to react.

After staring blankly at each other to let the news sink in, Peeta directly offers to sacrifice himself arguing that he loves Katniss too much to live without her. He further adds that: “We both know they have to have a victor. It can only be one of us” (Collins 338). These words are trapped in Katniss’ mind which led her to think: “Yes, they have to have a victor. Without a victor, the whole thing would blow up in the Game makers’ faces. They’d have failed the Capitol. Might possibly even be executed, slowly and painfully while the cameras broadcast it to every screen in the country. If Peeta and I were both to die, or they thought we were...” (Collins 338). Now this brings a rebellious idea into Katniss’ mind to beat the game makers at their own game by creating a dramatic event.

A simple action by Katniss ruins the expectation of the capitol and brings truth to the showmance, when she decides to commit a double suicide with Peeta by eating the poisoned berries. The game maker stops them at that moment for they need to have a winner. Here Katniss plays the winning card by attracting the crowd since the games are for entertainment. The capitol agrees to crown them both victors.

Going back to the capitol, both Katniss and Peeta are tired and taken to the hospital. After days of cleaning them up, preparing them for the live show, Katniss is finally with Cinna trying her outfit. Before, Cinna and through his fashion made Katniss ‘the girl on fire,’ but now he chooses a simple dress. Katniss describes herself wearing the dress as: “I look, very simply, like a girl. A young one. Fourteen at the most. Innocent. Harmless” (Collins 349). This is unusual from Cinna, who is known of making rebellious statements against the capitol with his style, Katniss continues asking:

“I thought it’d be something more . . . sophisticated looking,” I say.

“I thought Peeta would like this better,” he answers carefully.

Peeta? No, it’s not about Peeta. It’s about the Capitol and the Game makers and the audience. Although I do not yet understand Cinna’s design, it’s a reminder the Games are not quite finished. And beneath his benign reply, I sense a warning. Of something he can’t even mention in front of his own team. (Collins 349)

The sentence that captures the attention in Katniss’ speech is that: “the Games are not quite finished”, which means she is not safe just yet.

As Katniss goes up for the stage, Haymitch requests a hug and mumbles few words fast in her ear: “Listen up. You’re in trouble. Word is the Capitol’s furious about you showing them up in the arena. The one thing they can’t stand is being laughed at and they’re the joke of Panem,” (Collins 350). Here Katniss realizes the kind of trouble she is in, the capitol is not going to let this go, they will punish her for the rebellious act she pulled in the games. Here Haymitch advises her that the only solution is playing the public’s feelings: “Your only defense can be you were so madly in love you weren’t responsible for your actions” says Haymitch (Collins 350).

The moment of the crowning comes and President Snow is the one to crown the victors when he looks at Katniss she describes: “his eyes, just inches from mine, are as unforgiving as a snake’s. That’s when I know that even though both of us would have eaten the berries, I am to blame for having the idea. I’m the instigator. I’m the one to be punished” (Collins 357). Already on the train home, Katniss confronts Peeta with the reality of the showmance, here real feelings are reviled, Peeta who is deeply in love with Katniss is heartbroken to find out she is only pretending as she explains: “I did what it took to stay alive, to keep us both alive in the arena” (Collins 366). This reinforces the spirit of survival Katniss has in her that she is willing to go as far as it is needed to keep herself and her family safe.

Katniss is the first to stand up in the face of the capitol; she has challenged the game makers and made them accept her terms. This creates a slight hope for the people; they see in her the strength they all do not have. This is featured later in the following books of the series *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay* where the rebellion actually takes place.

Conclusion

The continuous tyranny and injustice people in the districts of Panem face leads to anger and grudge towards the capitol. Suzanne Collins in *The Hunger Games* deals with several issues that the American society is suffering from in an indirect way, like reality TV obsession, threats of war, authoritarian governments and obsession with fashion trends. The novel is intended for young adults as the story goes (the ones able for change); Collins is sending a message for adolescents to pursue their rights and to take charge of change in their society.

Suzanne Collins is a contemporary American writer who started her professional career in 1991. At her beginnings, Collins wrote televised shows for children like *Clarissa Explains it All*, *The Mystery Flies of Shelby Woo*, *Little Bear*, *Oswald*, and *Clifford's Puppy Days*. Pushed by her friend the writer James Proimos to try writing books and inspired by *Alice in Wonderland*, she wrote her first book *Gregor the Overlander* the first in a series named *The Underland Chronicles* which achieved New York Times bestseller. Her big success was due to her other series *The Hunger Games*, the first book of the series released in 2008 spent six years in the New York Times bestseller list.

The Hunger Games is a compelling novel focusing on life in an authoritarian society in which young people must compete to death in the annual 'Hunger Games'. The main character, 16 year old Katniss Everdeen, volunteers for the 'Hunger Games' instead of her younger sister, Prim, and her experiences and fight to survive are the core of the book. This book has been chosen by Kansas State University to be given to all of the incoming freshmen to read so that they will all be able to discuss it throughout the campus and in their classes. It has also become assigned reading in many high schools. The book is rich with serious themes not only about governments, personal freedom, and sacrifice but also about what it means to be you and not submit to society's expectations (Kennedy).

Dystopian fiction serves as a premonition against possible future perils of humanity. Its popularity is largely attributed to its overdose of action and commercial success which explains the high number of film adaptations in Hollywood. The large amount of attention dystopian writing is gaining is due to the fact that it reconciles with nowadays technological development. Young adult dystopian writing is the new trend; it is taking over contemporary writings. Dystopian writings are presenting hints of what future might be if we do not take better consideration of the consequences of our actions.

The political aspect in *The Hunger Games* holds a strong message to encourage social change. In the novel when Katniss stands up to the capitol and President Snow, she beats them at their own game. By this, Collins is setting an example for adolescents to take charge, to stand up for what they believe is right and to affect social change.

The environmental aspect is very important in contemporary dystopian works like the apocalyptic vision which is exhibited as a warning for people to start caring about nature. In the novel, Collins showed two sides of nature, the wild side and the artificial one. Wilderness is presented as an empowerment for Katniss because it is far from the capitol's eyes, whereas the artificial side is corrupted by technology, and controlled by the game makers. Collins suggests that we should keep natural resources safe as they are and control the magnitude of technological development.

This study highlights Collins' message in *The Hunger Games* which stresses that youth should have more saying in the decision making. The novel encourages social change as well as the improvement of lifestyle.

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Résumé

Cette thèse discute l'injustice et la tyrannie pratiquée par la Capitale de Panem vers les provinces, en se concentrant sur les signes de la révolte menée par la jeunesse dans *Le Jeu de Faim* par Suzanne Collins. *Le Jeu de Faim* est un roman dystopique qui présente une vision post-apocalyptique de ce qu'a eu l'habitude d'être l'Amérique du Nord, en racontant l'histoire de Katniss Everdeen, une révolte de 16 ans. Suzanne Collins a discuté indirectement des problèmes de la société actuelle dans son livre pour envoyer un message demandant aux gens de changer. Le roman a submergé la compréhension générale d'un héros masculin et a créé une nouvelle image de l'héroïne rebelle. Cette étude analyse le message politique dans le roman de Collins et situe Katniss dans le projecteur et analyse le livre d'une perspective écoféministe qui entretient un lien spécial entre les femmes et la nature. Katniss est une illustration parfaite de la femme déterminée, puissante qui se rebelle contre l'ordre patriarcal dans la dystopie hégémonique, masculine. Cette thèse vise donc à examiner les signes qui ont poussé Katniss à se rebeller contre la Capitale et aussi révéler également le rôle environnemental en relation avec le protagoniste féminin.

المخلص

تتناقش هذه الأطروحة الظلم و الاستبداد المطبق من طرف عاصمة بانام نحو مقاطعاتها. مع التأكيد على العلامات الدالة على حدوث تمرد يقوده المراهقون في رواية العاب الجوع لسوزان كولينز. ألعاب الجوع هي رواية ديستوبية تعكس نظرة مروعة لما بعد الكارثة التي حدثت فيم كان سابقا أمريكا الشمالية. هذه الرواية تخبر قصة الثائرة كاتنيس أفردين ذات السادسة عشر. تناقش كولينز بطريقة غير مباشرة مشاكل المجتمع الحالي في كتابها بهدف بعث رسالة لحث الناس على التغيير. غيرت الرواية المفهوم السابق للبطل الذكر و خلقت صورة حديثة للبطله الثائرة. تحلل هذه الدراسة الرسالة السياسية في رواية كولينز و تضع كاتنيس في دائرة الضوء لتحليل الكتاب من منظور نسائي إيكولوجي الذي يحافظ علي الرابطة بين المرأة و الطبيعة. كاتنيس هي مثال رائع عن المرأة القوية و المصممة التي تنثور ضد المعتقدات السائدة للمجتمع الذكوري. تهدف هذه الأطروحة اذن الى البحث عن العلامات التي دفعت كاتنيس لان تنثور ضد العاصمة و أيضا ان تكشف دور البيئته بالبطله.