

The choice between gale and peeta in mockingjay

Literature



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Throughout the books, it is inevitable that the series will have a romantic conclusion, and in the middle of the uprising against the Capitol, Gale and Peeta discuss Katniss' final choice at the end of the war with Gale declaring "Katniss will pick whoever she thinks she can't survive without" (*Mockingjay* 329, italics added). This sort of speculation about a female character's romantic choices trivializes her representation. Katniss herself lashes out against this assessment of Gale's when she asserts, albeit only to the readers that "...my best friend predicts I will choose the person who I think I " can't survive without". There's not the least indication that love, or desire, or even compatibility will sway me. I'll just conduct an unfeeling assessment of what my potential mates can offer me. As if in the end, it will be the question of whether a baker or a hunter will extend my longevity the most." (330)

Her insistence that she is more than her choice of " potential suitors" is however not validated further and loses its power later when the readers are told: ...I knew this would have happened anyway. That what I need to survive is not Gale's fire, kindles with rage and hatred. I have plenty of fire myself. What I need is... the promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that. (*Mockingjay* 388)

The ineluctable nature of her choice, coupled with the explanation or rather justification she offers for it points to the fact that it ceases to be a ' choice' anymore. The narrative pushes her into a certain direction that serves to reinforce the idea that she has no autonomy in the matter. The need for a happy ending in the series instigates the ultimate negation of feministic

ideals, apart from those that have been already examined. Katniss further undergoes a regressive character development when she gives in to the existing heteronormative, patriarchal paradigm through her removal from the public sphere and induction into a life of domesticity and motherhood. This is exemplified by, as well as established through, her removal from an 'active', public sphere of existence, her confinement to "the roles of lover and mother [that] restrict her to the domestic sphere and eclipse her roles as protector and rebel" () and the coming of age nature of the series which insidiously serves to restrict her into a structure of stable passivity disguised as an inevitable maturation into adulthood.

At the end of *Mockingjay*, Katniss, nearly catatonic with grief over losing her sister Prim, undergoes a trial in absentia for murdering President Coin instead of President Snow. After this trial, she is exiled to District 12. It is not clear what the official duration of her exile is; nevertheless, she presumably chooses to voluntarily isolate herself to the small community that remains within district 12. The larger point, be it that her exile was voluntary or not, is that it "relegated her to a life outside of the political world she played such a central role in" (Tan 37) She is no longer a part of the public realm where she could affect social change- her primary enterprise as the protagonist of a dystopian narrative- and her willing withdrawal (due to trauma or otherwise) from that space is as problematic as her forcible ejection from it. In case of the former, the transition from a fierce agent of change to a reclusive ex-rebel negates her value as 'Katniss Everdeen'. In the case of the latter, there is an obvious overriding of her agency and a loss of her autonomy.

A similar loss of autonomy may be observed in what is the other side of the coin to Katniss' eviction from the political public sphere- her confinement to the domestic space. This confinement manifests in her "easy subsumation" into a heterosexual marital structure where she also maintains the "reproductive status quo". She conform to the dominant discourses of gender and sexuality and furthermore, there is the fact that fantasy as a genre insists upon shattering of societal norms and conventions. The series' resolution goes against the spirit of this enterprise.