

The protagonist of the novel the hunger games essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



In recent years Dystopia has grown to a rather popularity genre, among older as well as younger readers. One reason for its popularity is the film adaptations of several dystopian novels that have been brought the genre in front of a larger audience. Young adult fiction has also grown from a marginal genre to a most popular one. Furthermore, young adults seem to be eager to read dystopian fiction, which has created a new sub genre of dystopian young adult literature.

Among the most successful Dystopia written for young adult are Suzanne Collins " The Hunger Games". This thesis concentrates on a futuristic and oppressive society which is typical for dystopias and because both have young female protagonists who are developing their identities, gaining independence and find their place in the society. " The Hunger Games" is a best example of dystopian fiction. It is set in future North America a nation called Panem. It is divided into twelve districts and the capitol, where the elite and the government are located. The society oppresses most of its citizens with the threat of violence, punishment and death and controls them with strict rules. The center of the novel is a game show called Hunger Games, where twenty four children and teenagers, two from each district are sent to fight for their lives.

The winner is the last on standing. The protagonist of the novel is nominated as one of the players, which set off the events and forces her to grow from a teenager to an adult fast. The purpose of this thesis is to study the different themes dealt with in " The Hunger Games". The themes chosen for this study are the forming of relationships, finding one's place in society and

identity development in the novel. These themes are always presented in the novel with a young protagonist and they also link to the lives of real young adults.

In this chapter which is focuses on identity development. Identity is viewed from different aspects, such as identification, self-image, feeling of belonging and traumas that have a negative impact on development. " The Hunger Games" follows the growth of a sixteen year old girl called Katniss Everdeen. She is describes as small and almost child-like in her features, but also as athletic, muscular and well fed because of her hunting. She lives with her mother and younger sister in District 12, which is the poorest district in the country of Panem.

She is half orphan, as her father passed away in a mining accident several years before the events in the novel take place. She has fragmented identity, which changes as she leaves her homes and head towards fight and rebellions. In " The Hunger Games" Katniss becomes the provider of the family at a young age and therefore cannot enjoy a care-free childhood during her adolescence. With only one parent left living in the country's poorest area, Katniss life is struggle, poaching meet to eat and trading in the black market of the town.

Her father used to be a poacher and taught her how to hunt with a bow and arrow and how to recognize edible plants in woods. He also introduced her to the black market, where he used to sell the game he did not need himself. " My father knew and he taught me some before he was blown to bits in a

mine explosion. There was nothing even to bury. I was eleven then. Five years later, I still wake screaming for him to run.”(Hunger Games, 5)

With this information, Katniss could provide for her mother and sister since she was twelve years old. Thus her role in the family changed directly from a child to an adult she is the one making sure the family has enough to eat and she is also the one taking care of the finances, trading in the black market or selling the illegal game directly to potential buyers. Katniss plays several roles throughout the series such as the martyr, the protector, the romantic and the symbol of rebellion.

Her fluid identities make her a complex character. Her vulnerability, fear, and insecurity make her relatable, while her athletic skill and determination make her admirable. Her flexibility when it comes to different roles as well as her reliability makes Katniss a well rounded character.

Hunger Games (2008) is the first novel of the trilogy, features a gladiator like fight to the death with a modern twist. The Hunger Games is an annual event held by the capitol as a means to control society.

Two tributes from each district are selected to fight for survival. As young tributes from each district struggle to survive for the viewing pleasure of Panem, Katniss emerges as a fierce competitor. She makes herself stand out initially by vulnerability to take the place of her younger sister Prim. Her success is in part due to her ability to be flexible with her identity using her knowledge of the games and awareness of her audience to her advantage.

She emerges as a co-victor with Peeta, another tribute from District 12, who acted as her ally. Their victory is controversial, as their fake double suicide attempt is seen as rebellious on the part of the Capitol. Throughout the games the fabricated romance between Katniss and Peeta helps keep the audience enthralled, and in turn continues their sponsorship which is essential for survival. At the novel's resolution, Katniss and Peeta return home, unsure of their futures with regards to their relationship as well as their safety from the government.

The second novel *Catching Fire* (2009) explores how Katniss uses her existing knowledge of performance to survive yet again. Beginning with the victory tour, president Snow informs Katniss that she must convince him and the rest of Panem, that her action in the last Hunger Games were based on love and not on rebellion. Katniss has the added pressure of performing the role of Peeta's devoted lover while simultaneously navigating her romantic feeling towards him.

Additionally, her feelings towards her long-time friend. Gale creates a romantic triangle star crossed lovers, resulting Katniss' confused emotions. Adding to the conflict, Katniss forced to survive the arena once more as the twenty fifth annual Hunger Games is actually the Quarter Quell. The Quarter Quell requires existing victors to return to the arena to battle for their lives. Katniss now draw on her previous experiences and audience fans as advantageous factors to help her in the games. This book features increasing political tension as district begin to rebel, and the games turn out to be façade to overturn the government.

Mockingjay (2010), the third and final title in Collins' trilogy shows the growth of Katniss' character. In this book Katniss has become a symbol of rebellion through the symbol of the Mockingjay, she is a spokeswoman for change. Under the care of District 13, Katniss trains to be a soldier to overthrow the capitol and assassinate President Snow. During the war against the capitol Katniss' younger sister Prim is killed. Realizing that she has been manipulated by sides, the government and the rebels, Katniss does not know whom she can trust. In the end she kills president Coin of District 13 and returns home.

She realizes that she will never fully recover from her losses, although she tries to move forward in her life with Peeta and their two children. From the first novel of the trilogy, Katniss demonstrates performance in terms of gender and public persona. As her true self, without the presence of cameras, Katniss exhibits behavior that is both stereotypically masculine and feminine. Katniss presented as innate femaleness as evidenced in her interaction with her younger sister Prim. Katniss explains that once citizens reach the age of twelve, their name is put in the pool for the reaping.

At the age of thirteen, the name is entered twice. Prim is dressed in a reaping outfit formerly belonging to Katniss. This is Prim's first reaping and Katniss, who normally protects her young sister, feels powerless to do anything. " I protect Prim in every way I can, but I'm powerless against the reaping" (Hunger Games, 15) It shows Katniss' feminine towards her sister Katniss displays a nurturing, motherly side towards Prim as she helps her younger sister get dressed and comforts her when she was bad dreams.

By contrast, Katniss shows a masculine side as she determinedly assumes her deceased father's role. Adept with bow and arrow, Katniss is a primary provider for her mother and Prim, as she is one who hunts and provides food for the family. After her father's death, Katniss' mother enters a state of depression. This forces Katniss to assume the role as the nucleus of the family by taking on the roles of both parents.

The Dystopian society of Panem forces two youngsters from each of the twelve districts to participate in "The Hunger Games". The rules are very simple; the twenty four players must kill each other and survive in the wilderness until only one remains. "Desire is death" (Shakespeare, sonnet 147, 42). When her younger sister, Primrose Everdeen, is selected as one of the "tributes" of their district. Katniss volunteers to take her place in the games. She and her male counterpart, Peeta are pitted against bigger, stronger representatives, some of whom have trained for their whole lives. "I volunteer! I gasp. I volunteer as tribute!" (Hunger Games, 22).

Before the Hunger Games start, Katniss is branded though not by choice. In a pre-game interview, Peeta her fellow tribute from District 12, declares his love for Katniss to the public. This romantic proclamation immediately throws Katniss off-guard as she was not looking for an alliance, let alone a manufactured romantic relationship. After Katniss unleashes her initial frustration on Peeta, Haymitch points out, "that boy just gave you something you could never achieve on your own... he make you look desirable!" (Hunger Games, 135). Peeta's announcement assists in creating an identity for Katniss to perform in the arena. To the audience, Katniss in

her role as the star-crossed lovers. Katniss in her role as the star-crossed lover, demonstrates that both her identity and as a result culture actively engage in the process of reinvention.

Haymitch serves as a very human and intermittently likeable mentor figure for Katniss and Peeta. He coaches the pair from a position of experience, he understand the rules of the Hunger Games and the celebrity surrounding it. He knows the importance of creating a persona, and encourages Katniss to go along with the romance plat introduced by Peeta. As Haymitch states to Katniss, “ you were about as romantic as dirt until he said he wanted you. Now they all do. You’re talking about. The star crossed lovers from District twelve!” (Hunger Games, 135). This quote is the audience desire for romance in game fuels Katniss’ new identity.

In our current world we have all media, all the time, access to television, computers, everything. Our reality television has to go to greater lengths for more “ interesting” content. Here the author Suzanne Collins also portrays the hunger games as reality television in her dystopia and holds up a mirror to modern society and its consumption of reality television. This idea of fabrication a reality poses a conflict for Katniss as she needs to negotiate her new identity as the star-crossed lover based on the relationship between herself, Peeta, the audience and the Game makers. In order to create tension and excitement for the audience as well as fuel their interest in the District twelve romance, the game makers create a scenario in which Katniss must further explore her new identity.

By announcing that two tributes from the same district may be crowned as victors, Katniss comes to realize that this alteration of the rules was made to suit her fictitious identity as she ponders, “ The star-crossed lovers...Peeta must have been playing that angle all along. Why else would the game makes have made this unprecedented change in the rules? For two tributes to have a shot at winning our ‘ romance’ must be so popular with the audience that condemning it would jeopardize the success of the games”. (Hunger games, 247).