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**Women Empowerment and Gender Stereotype Challenge in  
Postmodern Dystopian Young Adult Fiction: Suzanne Collins's  
*The Hunger Games***

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## Abstract

This dissertation investigates females empowerment within dystopian young adult fiction and the subversion of the stereotypical representation of women's roles during the twenty-first century exploring Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*, focusing on the heroine Katniss Everdeen among other female characters. It also examines the impact of the strong portrayal of female roles upon adolescent readers. And investigates how young readers would relate to these fictional characters. Launching our query required answering the following questions which combined: How postmodern YA dystopian fiction shaped new conceptualizations about gender roles and women's empowerment from feministic and gender studies examination of the book? To what extent does postmodern YA dystopia affect female characters psyche, to embrace various archetypical images through psychoanalytical analysis? How would the psychological struggles of powerful females in dystopia create an ideal model? What are the potential impacts of females' empowerment upon young readers through exploring young readers' perspectives from a survey? Based on the findings of the present dissertation, it can be concluded that postmodern females' performance have radically changed within dystopian YA fiction to alter the whole stereotypical representation of gender identity, thus, females moved further in their empowerment to adopt a highly powerful and centered roles in equal society for both genders. Finally, it explores young readers' attitudes toward female empowerment within dystopia and shows the positivism of the female protagonist embodiment of both feminine and masculine characteristics for young readers to create perfect role models and a distinctive empowerment. This study encourages readers to know the impact of postmodernist fiction to change the traditional representation of women, thus altering the negative assumptions toward women roles and experiencing their empowerment.

**Key words:** young adult fiction, dystopia, gender roles, women's empowerment.

## Hypothèse

Cette thèse examine l'autonomisation des femmes dans la fiction dystopique pour jeunes adultes et la subversion de la représentation stéréotypée des rôles des femmes au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle en explorant *Les jeux de la faim* de Suzanne Collins, en se concentrant sur l'héroïne Katniss Everdeen et d'autres personnages féminins. Il examine également l'impact de la forte représentation des rôles féminins sur les lecteurs adolescents. Et examine comment les jeunes lecteurs s'identifieraient à ces personnages de fiction. Pour lancer notre requête, nous avons dû répondre aux questions suivantes, qui ont été combinées: Comment la fiction dystopique postmoderne de YA a-t-elle façonné de nouvelles conceptualisations sur les rôles de genre et l'autonomisation des femmes à partir de l'examen féministe et des études sur le genre du livre ? Dans quelle mesure la dystopie postmoderne YA affecte-t-elle le psychisme des personnages féminins, à embrasser diverses images archétypiques à travers l'analyse psychanalytique ? Comment les luttes psychologiques des femmes puissantes dans la dystopie pourraient-elles créer un modèle idéal ? Quels sont les impacts potentiels de l'autonomisation des femmes sur les jeunes lecteurs en explorant les perspectives des jeunes lecteurs à partir d'une enquête ? Sur la base des résultats de la présente thèse, on peut conclure que les performances des femmes postmodernes ont radicalement changé au sein de la fiction dystopique YA pour modifier l'ensemble de la représentation stéréotypée de l'identité de genre, ainsi, les femmes ont progressé dans leur autonomisation à adopter un rôle très puissant et centré dans une société égale pour les deux sexes. Enfin, il explore les attitudes des jeunes lecteurs à l'égard de l'autonomisation des femmes au sein de la dystopie et montre le positivisme du protagoniste féminine qui incarne à la fois les caractéristiques féminines et masculines pour que les jeunes lecteurs créent des modèles parfaits et une autonomisation distinctive. Cette étude encourage les lecteurs à connaître l'impact de la fiction postmoderniste

pour changer la représentation traditionnelle des femmes, modifiant ainsi les préjugés négatifs à l'égard des rôles des femmes et leur autonomisation.

**Mots- Clé:** fiction pour jeunes adultes, dystopie, rôles de genre, autonomisation des femmes.

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في موضوع تقوية الصورة التقليدية للمرأة في أدب الشباب الخيالي الغير مثالي و محو الصورة النمطية أو الاعتقادات الخاطئة حول خلال رواية كولينز المعنونة بمباريات مع التركيز على بطلنة الرواية كاتنيس أفردين وبعض الشخصيات النسائية الأخرى. لها آثار التصوير القوي على القراء المراهقين لتغيير تحيزاتهم المحتملة حول هذا الموضوع و تبيان الاجتماعية لكلا الجنسين ليست محددة بيولوجياً. كذلك تحقق في احتمالية ارتباط القراء الشباب مع هاته الشخصيات الخيالية لتبني قدوة افتراضية. بالإجابة عن أسئلة معينة، و ما يلي: كيف شكل أدب الشباب الغير مثالي تصورات جديدة حول دوار الجنسين وتمكين النساء من خلال دراسات نسوية وجنسانية دب الشباب الغير مثالي لما بعد الحداثة في شخصية النساء السيكولوجية و تبنينهم لمختلف صور نموذجية وذلك من خلال دراسات وتحقيقات سيكولوجية كيف يمكن للصرعات السيكولوجية للمرأة القوية في العالم الغير مثالي أن تخلق نموذج ما هي الآثار المحتملة لتقوية دور المرأة على القراء الشباب وذلك من خلال استكشاف وجهات نظرهم من دراسة استقصائية بناءً على نتائج الأطروحة الحالية ، يمكن أن نستنتج أن أدب الشباب الخيالي الغير مثالي في مرحلة ما بعد الحداثة قد تغيرت جذريا وذلك من خلال التغيير النمطي هوية الجنس إعطاء إمكانية أكبر ل أجناسهم مما جعلها تتبنى أدوار رئيسية تفوقت فيها أدائيا على هذه الأطروحة قوية أدوا العالم الغير مثالي قد أظهرت إيجابية تجسيد بطلنة الرواية لأدوار تمزج بين الـ الأنثوية و الذكورية مثالية مع تمكين نادر للمرأة. و منه يمكن القول هذه الدرا حفز القراء على معرفة تأثير خيا تغيير التمثيل التقليدي الكامل للمرأة، بالتالي تغيير الافتراضات المتحيزة تمكينها أو تقويتها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** الخيال العلمي للمراهقين ادوار الجنسين تمكين المرأة.

### **Dedication**

I dedicate this work to my lovely, precious parents.

### **Dedication**

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved parents, who have continually provide me with their moral, spiritual, emotional, and financial support. Expend my gratitude to my brothers, sisters, classmates and friends especially Basma and Ismahane who shared their words of advice and encouragement to finish this study.

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**List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

ALA	The American Library Association
ALSC	The Association for Library Service to Children
CYBIL	Children's and Young Adult Bloggers Literary Awards
NAIBA	New Atlantic Independent Book Sellers Association
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
THG	The Hunger Games
WID	Women in Development
YA	Young Adult

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## Introduction

Postmodern movement is regarded as a mere reaction to modernist ideologies and a considerable break from traditional literary rules; which had introduced many changes in literature including Young Adult Literature genre; the latter became increasingly acclaimed and popular among teenagers as it turned to depict more dystopian futuristic societies. This dystopian genre had emerged in response to the old utopian genre to match the new changes which occurred during the postmodern era whether ideologically, socially, and politically. During the twenty first century, young adult fiction's writers shifted their attention toward the position of women in society and they were mainly involved with the third wave of feminism to empower females' roles and resolve the boundaries between femininity and masculinity within dystopia. *The Hunger Games* by the American writer Suzanne Collins became prominently an international YA book that successfully reflected the new modern roles of females and reshaped new representations about women in post apocalyptic world.

The release of the American trilogy *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (*The Hunger Games* 2008, *Catching Fire* 2009, *Mockingjay* 2010) had its day in the sun, and gained an immense popularity as dystopian young adult fiction novels that were adopted as a Hollywood movie and translated into fifty one languages. However, the present research is concerned with the first book of this trilogy, which was announced as the Amazon's top selling book in August 14, 2008 surpassing even *Harry Potter's* series, in addition to New York Times' best seller list for two hundred successive weeks and sold more than 28 million copies in the USA alone in 2014. The prominent success of *The Hunger Games* made it an inspiring novel that can direct the teenagers' interest to the new literary genre "Young Adult literature".

*The Hunger Games* is labeled as being a pro-feminist novel due to various interpretations of many readers and critics, many of them pointed out that the protagonist “

Katniss Everdeen” is a fierce female character, self reliant, self sufficient and she had equal opportunities as the male character “ Peeta Mellark”; which is the same idea that feminism champions (equality). This thesis argues that *The Hunger Games* book strengthened the role of females within dystopia to champion empowerment rather than equality as most of the females have pillar strengths to adopt radical representation from previous literatures.

Throughout the strong portrayal of the female characters, the researcher can investigate the attempt of Suzanne Collins to correct the wrong assumptions based on gender and to challenge the stereotypical image of women through showing females’ unique ability to manifest stronger roles than males. Thus the assumptions based on gender take a new turn during postmodern era. Collins also attempted to not only give an equal status between both sexes as feminism advocates but to provide an empowerment illusion to the female’s roles as Katniss Everdeen says “no one will forget me. Not my look. Not my name. Katniss. The girl who was on fire”(Collins 69).

It was hypothesized that Suzanne Collins’ Novel *The Hunger Games* supported females and it was considered as a pro feminist work as well as a dystopian Marxist novel. However, this dissertation hypothesizes that *The Hunger Games* was not seeking only egalitarianism between the two genders but women’ empowerment through dystopian genre, hence, to examine the potential consequences of this radical representation on young readers to form new assumptions about females’ roles, as well as investigating dystopian female characters impacts on teenagers to form a role model.

Throughout this dissertation, the researchers will investigate the new tendencies of female writers during postmodern era, in addition, how they aimed to improve women situation in society to challenge stereotypical roles and empower women through the subversion of male biased dystopia. In addition to the careful analysis of the progress of the females’ roles with particular focus on the major female characters’ psyche taking Suzanne

Collins's *The Hunger Games* as case study, which is one of the very few American young adult literary books that gave a female character the opportunity to be a stronger protagonist over males.

The major aims behind introducing the theme of women empowerment and challenging gender stereotype in Collins' novel, focusing on the two variables of feminism and psychology, is to reform young adult's reader assumptions about female old stereotypical image, and to direct their interest to their roles in the dystopian world. Also, this dissertation will focus on psychology because *The Hunger Games* belongs to young adult literature so it is mainly directed to adolescents, who are just beginners in reading, analyzing, and understanding literary works. Hence it will be easy to influence their thinking about different matters either in a positive or a negative way, which may shape their personality and outlook to the world in the future. Feminist notions are mainly focusing on reducing the imbalance between both genders by providing equal opportunities, economic and political rights, however, the general assumptions about male and female as binary opposition that each gender has a specific role to accomplish depending on his gender identity. For example, men are "action heroes" while women are "caregivers", This gender stereotype is approved even by books and movies, hence, *The Hunger Games* portrayal of fierce female fighter in a dystopian world may reform teenagers' perspectives and alter their assumptions about the conventional representation of female characters in society because those adult readers are more likely to be influenced by characters portrayal and human actions represented in fiction. The third aim of this study is to provide more analysis to the novel from a feministic perspective due to the fact that *The Hunger Games* is widely discussed as a dystopian and pro feministic novel.

This study's preliminarily literature review show that *The Hunger Games* had been discussed as a postmodern book that benefits feminism. According to the previous research

about *The Hunger Games*, it was examined mainly either as a Pro feminist novel that ended inequality or a Marxist novel that studies class struggles based on “socioeconomic analysis”. The first was a result of the victor shared between Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark, and their mutual assistance and support. In addition, their studies were based on the fact that Katniss was not capable of continuing her fight without Peeta’s moral support. While the second was basing their focus on the Marxist studies of the novel, due to the Capitol’s system of dividing the whole country into districts, preventing their unity, and mainly exploiting their resources ending up with high imbalance in the distribution of wealth. Unlike both previous views, this study deals with women empowerment to highlight the advancement of women position in society in postmodern young adult dystopian fiction as new area of study in the analysis of *The Hunger Games*.

This dissertation depends mainly on Suzanne Collins’ book *The Hunger Games*(2008) as a primary source; this novel centered on a 16 years old girl named Katniss Everdeen who lives in the poor district 12 in a futuristic dystopian nation called Panem, where the Capitol leaders oppressed all the citizens. The heroine’s little sister unfairly was thrown as tribute in an annual deadly event known as “Hunger Games”, which is gladiatorial combat between teenagers for survival and the winner would get the privileges’ of the capitol, hence, good fortune. As a reaction, the protagonist volunteered to enter the Games instead of her sister Primrose Everdeen in order to save her; and the story portrays Katniss’ rebellious actions to revolt against the oppressive rules and gain freedom in dystopia. Moreover, the researchers would conduct a survey entitled “The Impact of Women’s Empowerment in Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* on the Adolescent Readers’ Psyche” to investigate the possible impacts of women empowerment in dystopia on young readers. Also, the researchers would listen to an interview with the American writer Suzanne Collins by Scholastic Inc (2009) in which the writer provided the origin of her inspiration to write the book, and the feedback of young



readers toward dystopian and how they questioned some relevant events to their own experiences. Collins' *Confess* provides some invisible signals to Katniss' empowerment as a "futuristic Theseus".

The secondary sources used in this dissertation are the Commission on Women and Development's document of "The Women Empowerment Approach: A Methodological Guide", and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation's "Handbook in Gender and Empowerment Assessment"; they both explore the perspectives about the empowerment of women individually or collectively. McHale Brian's *postmodernist fiction* shaped the researcher's understanding towards postmodernism fiction philosophical terrain which is the exploration of ontological concerns (post cognitive) unlike modernism that explores epistemological concerns (cognitive). The examination of certain academic websites about postmodern literature and the characteristics of its characters have showed that it emerged against enlightenment and modernist dogmas which focuses on fragmentation, paradox, and irony; for example, the characters portrayal appears to be chaotic and traumatized with the horror of a major event in their lives and their inability to deal with their consciousness such as Katniss' experience in *The Hunger Games* (suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). Thus, to conceptualize Katniss' psychic personality, the researchers have deeply examined the psychological literary theory, through reading several books such as Tyson Lois's *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide* which shaped our understanding about the various psychological concepts used in literature such as defenses, anxieties, dreams and symbols, unconsciousness, hence, it builds a rich background about psychoanalytic criticism. Moreover, the selection of few chapters from *Blackwell Guide to Literary Theory* written by Gregory Castle which are concerned with psychoanalysis, postmodernism, feminist theory, and Gender and Sexuality.

Concerning the Feminist movement, Rhonda Hammer and Douglass Kellner's "Waves of Feminism" shaped the researchers' understanding of the historical background of the movement which spread from the US to the Western Europe based on Egalitarianism (equality of sexes). However, this dissertation is concerned only with the third wave (1990s-2000s) that emphasizes on identity, gender, changes of stereotype, media portrayals, and sexual identities. In addition, the researcher would support this thesis about women's empowerment and challenging gender roles with Jane Freedman's *Introduction to Feminism*, and Dr. Lisa Firestone's "Introduction to Gender Stereotype" to analyze how Collins Challenged this female stereotype in her novel.

*The Hunger Games* is recognized as a Young Adult fiction that addresses certain themes which might interest the adolescent readers such as gender issues. Thus, this interest might turn up to improve their views as well as their reading ability. So, the researchers have delved into reading "Gender Issues in Young Adult Literature" by Kathryn Jacob to support our study with, since it discussed the issue of Young Adult literature and to what extent it can improve the adolescent reading ability and alter their views in addition to the female representation in Young Adult literature. Finally, in order to get a general overview about the novel, the researcher have read *The Hunger Games an EMC study Guide* by Graham and Kate Oliver, in addition reading the biography of Suzanne Collins.

Throughout Suzanne Collins's YA novel *The Hunger Games* (2008), the examination of women's empowerment through the Feministic and Psychoanalytic lenses portrayed how the dystopian heroines were able to fight and rebel against high authorities, due to their higher self esteem, greater independence, and determination to achieve social change, as well as, the new psychological struggles of powerful females within dystopia. Hence, it is considerable to follow certain methodology, which combines : ( a) the feministic analysis of the novel and examining gender studies to focus on gender roles and empowerment within postmodern

dystopian fiction. (b) The psychoanalytic analysis of the novel's female characters' psyche with their various archetypes that might have impacts on readers to identify with the character who might represent an appropriate role model. (c) Conducting a survey to analyze the possible consequences of females' empowerment upon young readers

This work is going to be handled through descriptive and content analysis approaches. The former is going to build the basis on which the analysis' results are going to take place, which means that the researchers are going to have a theoretical section that will contain the background information about the essential concepts in the dissertation starting by the American literature to the American postmodern literature and young adult literature till the biography and psychoanalysis of the author and introducing the book, as basis for the desired results. Then we will make the analytical part using an eclectic approach that is a combination of feminism and psychoanalytical literary criticism to reach the final result of the work which is approving or disapproving the hypothesis of the empowerment of women and challenging the gender stereotype through Katniss' character in Collins' novel. In addition to the previous points, this study will contain a survey directed to Adolescents who have read *The Hunger Games* to collect the data that will be analyzed to unveil any possible impacts of Females' empowerment on the adolescents' readers.

This research aims to argue that Collins have altered the traditional female roles within dystopia to radically move to an empowerment, hence, she increased women power to subvert male dominance in equal society, and that this new radical representation provides a new and deeper insight into women psychology that may impact adolescent readers.

This dissertation is going to be divided into three chapters, in which we will discuss and analyze the two variables Feminism and Psychoanalysis based on the novel that is written by Suzanne Collins *The Hunger Games*. The first chapter is going to be mainly descriptive and theoretical to give a full background and information about the key concepts of the

dissertation will deal with, which are postmodern literature, Young Adult literature, and American postmodern young adult literature, in addition to the two theories feminism and psychoanalysis. The second chapter will study the two variables discussed in the first chapter, in relation to the literary era and genre, through an analytical study of the novel to discover any of its characteristics as an American postmodern young adult book through psychology and feminism to discover the changed features of the female characters. The last chapter will contain a survey directed to adolescent readers of the novel to unveil whether there is any possible impact of the change in the female roles that were previously discussed, on them

Clearly, the accomplishment of this dissertation “Women Empowerment and Challenging Gender Stereotype in Postmodern Young Adult Fiction” will provide an insight into women and gender studies field. And since the target audience of this study is young adult readers, it will provide numerous benefits by offering those adolescents a chance to rethink the female roles in dystopian world. Also, they will be well informed about the changes the feminist movement witnessed, from just demanding political equality to alter the whole stereotype of females by 2000s, and not only examining feminism studies in general but studying the female character portrayal in details and how the female stereotype was challenged in postmodern fiction. In addition, this dissertation would promote young adult views about the psychological conflicts and the chaotic personality of postmodern characters due to external changes.

## **Chapter One: Theoretical Overview**

This chapter is going to be divided into two sections, the first one deal with brief explanation of the postmodernity and postmodern theory, followed by postmodern literature, with its definition, emergence, characteristics and some postmodern concepts related to the study. In addition, this section explores young adult fiction's emergence, historical developments, then it goes through American postmodern young adult (YA) fiction and three of its branches. Second section explains both psychoanalysis and feminism literary theories with their criticism and application, moving to the gender issues in the American postmodern Young Adult fiction.

### **1.1 Postmodernism and Young Adult American Fiction**

This section discusses postmodernism theory and the major changes happened in literature during this literary period and how it opposed modernism theory in several concepts which obviously appear in the literature of each period. It also explains and represents Young Adult fiction as new category of literature in the United States, its subgenres, its history as well as its postmodern characteristics in order to clarify the literary affiliations of *The Hunger Games* novel as it is an American postmodern Young Adult dystopian fiction.

#### **1.1.1 Postmodernism**

Postmodernism or Postmodern theory had received a lot of attention during the last few decades. It represents a departure from modernism due to the fact that several postmodern critics were inspired by postmodernity to contradict and rebuilt certain concepts held during the Enlightenment and modernism. Unlike postmodernism, postmodernity refers to a period of history (postmodern age) or the way in which the world have responded to this particular era. Whereas postmodernity focused on the conditions of society during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century in industrialized nations, including the omnipresence of mass media, mass production, economic integration, the rise of global economic arrangements, and service economy,

postmodernism referred to a set of ideas which emerged during the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century as an area of academic study and it appeared in various disciplines such as art, music, architecture, literature, film, fashion, technology, sociology, and communication (Pooja).

Denis Hlynka defined the concept of postmodernism as being in state of flux and it is hard to capture. It is described as a “Condition” rather than an “ideology” because this condition spread throughout all the aspects of the current society and it can be found in science, literature, education, sociology, architecture, art, and philosophy (2-3). According to him, and in order to understand postmodernism, it was set in opposition to modernity due to several characteristics that define each movement of them, postmodernism was described as “suspicious and skeptical” to all modernism premises. Hlynka discusses how both Habermas and Lyotard defined modernism and postmodernism, he said if modernism represents “knowledge” to Habermas, to Lyotard “. . . the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as postindustrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age” (Lyotard 3). Also, he discusses how Tinning reveals that postmodernism questioned the possible benefits of new technology and how it contrasts metanarratives and reason, “. . . has as its basis a questioning of the assumptions of positivist science. It rejects the notion of a grand narrative and the notion that truth is to be found through the application of rational thought or enlightenment. . . ” (qtd. in Hlynka 3).

Postmodernism became a prominent phenomenon during the late twentieth century, the latter offered new perspectives of viewing the world, however, it was deeply related to post structuralism and deconstruction theories. According to Hicks, philosophers such as Jean François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, and Richard Rotry are regarded as “the postmodern vanguard” (1). They are who set the direction for the postmodern movement, as they provide it with vigorous tools, and also, they are regarded as the strategist leaders (1). Both postmodernism and post structuralism share a common point. While postmodernism was

an anti realist movement, post structuralism also had questioned reality because it regarded truth as mere construction depending on the person's discourse "Post-structuralism moved beyond this, questioning the very notions of Truth, Reality, Meaning, Sincerity, Good etc. It regarded *all* absolutes as constructions, truth was created, it was an effect, it wasn't present 'in' something" (Mann). For the deconstruction theory, is based on revealing the relationship that exists between the text and the meaning and that system of thought is in fact contradictory because it creates binary opposition in which one term is prioritized or privileged over the second one, then invert it to show that the prioritized term is only dependant on the marginal one and it exists because of it. Finally, to displace those oppositions mainly to generate new perspectives that is not necessarily to be an ultimate truth (Mann).

Stephen. R. C. Hicks in explaining modern and postmodern states that any intellectual movement's definition is acquired through its fundamental premises ". . . any intellectual movement has metaphysics, conception of nature and values, and an epistemology" (5). Although postmodernism had not accepted several past philosophical alternatives, disliked the universal and the fixed, it situated our thoughts and actions with consistent framework of premises. Hicks points out that postmodernism metaphysically is an anti realistic theory, hence, it substitutes social linguistic constructionist reality (6), which means that it rejects the objective reality of the world and embraces reality as a subjective construct by the human thoughts because those assumptions about reality are formed in coordination with others. Thus, reality differs according to society, events, and time thereafter people may construct concepts and ideas that did not exist until it is validated by a person or language. Epistemologically, postmodernism rejected the existence of an independent reality; it denies reason as a tool to acquire an objective knowledge. Hence through adopting a social linguistic constructionist, it emphasizes "subjectivity", "conventionality", and

“incommensurability” of those constructs. Postmodernism Epistemologically believes that the human personality or identity takes its components and knowledge from the society it belongs to, knowing that those societies are different at the level of race, ethnicity, sex and wealth and this is a main reason for stimulating conflicts among them through denying reason, and power was the primarily tool used to solve them which in turn lead to the dominance of relations, submission, and oppression.

According to the postmodern thought, human natures are collectivists because their identities develop in large sociolinguistic groups in which they vary across dimensions such as sex, ethnicity, race, and wealth. Thus, relations of conflicts between these groups were heavily emphasized, and through denying reason, power was used primarily to solve them which in turn led to the dominance of relations, submission, and oppression. Finally, the major characteristic of the postmodern themes in ethics and politics is that they identify and sympathize with the oppressed from these groups. Thus, there is willingness to enter the fray on their parts (Hicks 6). Also Hicks argues, in a chapter “What Postmodernism Is” in his book *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault* that all postmodern essentials are totally set as opposites to the modern one:

Instead of natural reality—anti-realism. Instead of experience and reason—linguistic social subjectivism. Instead of individual identity and autonomy—various race, sex, and class groupisms. Instead of human interests as fundamentally harmonious and tending toward mutually-beneficial interaction—conflict and oppression. Instead of valuing individualism in values, markets, and politics—calls for communalism, solidarity, and egalitarian restraints. Instead of prizing the achievements of science and technology—suspicion tending toward outright hostility. (14)

The term postmodernism started to be widely used in literature in the 1960s, by cultural critics and commentators in the United States, like Susan Sontag and Leslie Fiedler.



They used this word to portray a new literary sensitiveness and awareness against the modern philosophy with all its components either by adjusting or expanding them (Bran1). Ellis et al in their book *Literature for Life: Modern and Contemporary Texts* described Postmodernism in literature as “. . . post-modernism refers to work which has an eclectic and experimental approach. It reveals a breakdown in distinctions traditionally drawn between genres, between what is considered high and low culture, between western cultures and religions. . . ” (XI).

This shows that postmodernism in literature is used to describe the developments that happened in literature in the postmodern era; those developments included the rejection of the modern enlightenment ideas, and the adoption of new concepts, themes and techniques.

Postmodern literature had been viewed as specific depiction of life and culture that it shows the human being's identity crisis and his conflicts in a hypocritical society in search for legitimization. This theme mainly gains more prominence in American literature, then in British, Australian, and Canadian literature from the former oppressed inhabitants and from former British colonies. Later in American literature, it depicts the industrialization and commercialization negative impacts. These authors criticized western ethical norms and attitudes; hence, they emphasized oriental understanding of the world and peaceful life. The postmodern writers sought new principles of composition as they wrote about the content of existentialism; they wanted to capture the human situation in the most concentrated form. These writers employ various devices to represent chaotic world such as fragmentation, questionable narrators, contradiction, excess, permutation, paradox, discontinuity, randomness, short circuit (Rezaei 16-17). Rezaei also had summarized the major features of post modernist literature as “Responses to modernism and its ideas, Responses to technological advances, Greater diversity of cultures that leads to cultural pluralism, reconceptualization's of society and history” (20).

Postmodern theorists from different parts of the world went through extreme ways to reach the concepts or the components that made the postmodern theory remarkable. The French politician and literary theorist Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) was one among those theorists who have worked on the concept of "metanarrative or grand narrative "in his book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* he stated that “simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives” (xxiv). Thus, this concept was rejected during in postmodernism and Metanarrative is defined as story about story, it was meant to explain historical knowledge and experiences. John Stephen explains the term as “. . . a metanarrative is a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience” (6). Intertextuality is another postmodern literary concept; it was originally coined during post structuralism by Julia Kristeva to be widely accepted and used in postmodern literature, and this technique requires from the writer to borrow a part from another literary work and make a kind of relationship between both texts to give his text wider space for interpretation (Novak).

Metafiction is another concept added to the literary list by the postmodern theorists, which is “. . . essentially writing about writing or "foregrounding the apparatus", making the artificiality of art or the fictionality of fiction apparent to the reader and generally disregards the necessity for "willful suspension of disbelief”(Sharma and Chaudhary 195). In addition to this, there are more literary concepts including Irony, playfulness, black humor, pastiche, fabulation, poioumena, historiographic metafiction, temporal distortion, magic realism, technoculture and hyperreality, paranoia, maximalism, minimalism and most importantly fragmentation. It is a literary aspect that characterized the postmodern literature; it can be visible through the characters due to their fragmented identities in chaotic world where they are morally corrupted, in the plot through the use of non linearity, as well as the themes. For example, Fredric Jameson suggests that the fragmented subject is unable to “organize its past

and future into coherent experience” (1). This makes him isolated and disconnected from time, place and other characters.

### 1.1.2 Young Adult Fiction

Fiction as a literary genre, which includes prose imaginative works, contains sub-genres or categories directed to different social layers, and YA fiction is one of those categories. Young adult fiction refers to imaginative stories and books generally about teenagers or adolescents dealing with themes, topics and issues suitable and customary to their age and can affect them in a way or another. Adolescents’ age generally ranging between 10 to 19 years old, as it was declared by The Young Adult Service Division of The American Library Association, or simply its most known definition as a literature or a fiction that is intended for readers between ages of 12 and 20.

Books for young readers were existed before the emergence of the term YA literature in 1968, but they were not specified for a certain age group (children, young adult, adults...), before that, the term junior or juvenile appeared in 1933 by Rose Wilder Lane, until 1802 where Sarah Trimmer published her book *The Guardian of Education* which is a periodical for reviewing children’s literature in Britain. Trimmer in her book specified the term “Books for children” for young readers 14 years old, and the term “Books for Young Persons” for the above 14 till 21 readers.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, YA characters started to take part instead of many books, and though there were several influential YA books such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *Ragged Dick* by Horatio Alger, *St. Almob* by Augusta Jane Evans and *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, but teenagers have read also books from other categories like Charles Dickens’ *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*. By the 1930s, the American Library Association (ALA) created the Young People’s Reading Roundtable which gave

priority to teenagers to form their culture and literature through publishing special books for them.

After the Second World War, Maureen Daly published the first book that officially belongs to YA literature entitled *Seventeenth Summer*. Between 1950s and 1960s, Young Adult Services Division was made as a result of the huge attention paid by the psychologists to the adolescence as an important. 1956 marked the publication of the most popular YA book, S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*, this book revealed the reality and darkness of YA lives, and turned the world's eyes to YA literature, followed by this period YA literature started its golden age (1970s-1980s) when writers started to go deep in teens world, and tackled hard hitting topics, then YA fiction entered its darkest time, and the publication of the books of this category decreased due to the low rates of birth, but the few published books during that period became best sellers nowadays, when teenager' number increased. Coming back to the surface, YA fiction met its second golden age, with the publication of the *Harry potter* series by J.K Rowling in 1998 which inspired many writers. 2000 marked the real publishing industrial value with the two most popular and best seller YA books ever *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer and *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (Cachinero 4-8).

### **1.1.3 Postmodern YA American Fiction**

The emergence of YA literature as a vague category was many years before the beginning of the postmodern era. The postmodern era marked remarkable developments in YA literature which was known as its golden age thanks to the American writers whom added a special touch on YA literature, that lead it to be read by different ages' people in different parts of the world, and be on the top of best seller books' lists. The postmodern American writers took a different curve in the content of their writings about and for the young adults; they discussed the dark side and the real experiences and serious problems that any adult can go through including theft, robbery, killing, suicide, drugs, and corruption added to

adventures, romance or horror events which makes the plot more complex. One of the illustrative novels that shows the success of American YA literature during this period is *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, it was published in 1956, it was very influencing for many writers to go on the same path such as *Go Ask Alice* by Beatrice Sparks and *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, also the series of *Sweet Valley High* by Francine Paschal and *Goosebumps* series by R.L Stine.

At the end of the postmodern period, about the 1990s young adult literature was neglected, then it returned stronger than before during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, knowing that some scholars consider this period as a continuation of postmodernism while others call it the contemporary period. YA literature responded positively to the war circumstances and the hard political conditions in USA. Those negative conditions lead the American writers to shift from the positive utopian view to the negative dystopian illustration of the future societies, which lead to the emergence of the "Dystopian Fiction" which aims to criticize modern societies by depicting their negative aspects and highlighting their weaknesses (Cachinero 4-8).

#### **1.1.4 Science Fiction, Dystopias, and Utopias**

Young adult genre became a prominent category during the contemporary era; this new genre of literature had various names juvenile, bildungsroman, teens etc. although it is regarded as a distinctive category and had its own characteristics, it follows the basic elements of fiction which include characters, themes, style, and plot that mainly crossed with romantic subplot in every story. Along with this genre, there are also subgenres including fantasy, science fiction, dystopia which usually set in opposition with utopia.

Science fiction is a sub-genre that had futuristic settings and focuses on the new advanced technology, science, and world building that was described as "...exhaustively researched, and feature unusual planets as a setting. Usually exotic aliens have evolved there,

and humans can visit only with difficulty, if at all” (“Science Fiction Subgenre”). Dystopia is regarded as a sub-genre of science fiction; Jen Scott Curwood, in “The Hunger Games: Literature, Literacy, and Online Affinity Spaces”, stated that dystopian fiction came under science fiction as its subgenre “science fiction includes subgenres such as cyberpunk, post-apocalyptic, and dystopian fiction, and it’s related to other genres like fantasy and speculative fiction” (418).

The dystopian was mainly given in opposition to the utopian, when the former reflects corrupted societies with the lack of moral values, oppressed and controlled by the government authority, full of inequalities and problems where the protagonist seeks to improve his own life and may be to liberate his society through the dilemma that include war, death of his beloved, and fidelity; the latter is an idealistic world full of beauty, peace, kindness, and happiness where the laws, politics, and conditions are respected. Hence, the utopian and dystopian society are being opposites in characteristics “dystopias are characterized as a society that is a counter-utopia, a repressed, controlled, restricted system with multiple social controls put into place via government, military, or a powerful authority figure. Issues of surveillance and invasive technologies are often key. . . ” (Spisak). In addition and in order to give more characteristics to the dystopian society Terri Chung states that:

propaganda is used to control the citizens of society, information, independent thought, and freedom are restricted, a figurehead or concept is worshipped by the citizens of the society, citizens are perceived to be under constant surveillance, citizens have a fear of the outside world, citizens live in a dehumanized state, the natural world is banished and distrusted, citizens conform to uniform expectations. Individuality and dissent are bad, and the society is an illusion of a perfect utopian world.

During the contemporary era, dystopian became well known phenomenon especially in young adult fiction. Philip Stoner pointed out that the genre of dystopian literature was

redefined in 1991 after the release of the dystopian novel *We* by Yevgeny Zamyatin because during the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was regarded as a political commentary. This dystopian novel by Zamyatin is considered “the birth of modern dystopia”. Stoner states that dystopian literature became popular as YA only in 1993 when Lowry released *The Giver* that she expanded the personal discovery idea. After that period dystopian became a lovable genre at YA readers. And during contemporary era, *The Hunger Games* is the prime example of that genre (1).

## **1.2 The Psychoanalysis and Feminism Literary Theory and Criticism**

The second section is divided into two main titles, Feminism, and psychoanalysis as Literary Theory and Criticism, the basic perspectives and concepts related to both theories are going to be discussed and explained as well as presenting their application on literary works paying more attention to the concepts related to the study or specifically to the novel, which will facilitate the novel’s analysis. Moreover this section is going to cover the major gender issues related to postmodern American young adult fiction to discover the changes and the special features and developments occurred on both genders in literature.

### **1.2.1 Feminism Literary Theory and Criticism**

This title presents the major feminism perspectives about equality between both genders as well as the three various waves and their claiming focusing on the third wave since it is affected *The Hunger Games*’ female characters, also, it explains the feminist theory and its depiction of women as subject of study and their representations in literature including the different gender issues in the novel’s literary genre the Young Adult fiction during the postmodern era in America.

#### **1.2.1.1 Feminism Literary Theory**

Feminism or women’s movement is a set of political, philosophical, and ideological movements by women-folk to express their awareness about their subordination in amale centered society, thus liberating themselves from male chauvinism and patriarchy.

Essentially, all of these feminism theories attempt to limit gender inequality between men and women and to achieve equal economic, social, and political rights; this was regarded as the “Core feminism” (Freedman 1-2).

Feminists’ requests of equality developed and changed through time, which resulted in a change in the reasons behind their movements. The most important movements were gathered under three waves according to their purposes and timing, to give three waves of feminism. The first wave was between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it was mainly about suffragettes, they asked for equal rights to vote in the United States and Europe. Thereafter, in the late 1960<sub>s</sub> and 1970<sub>s</sub> the second wave went beyond political equality, to more private issues like the new emerged minorities, the homosexuals, and blacks (Freedman 4). The last wave was from the mid-1990s onward, known as grrl feminism or the new feminism, it was based on the previous success made by the first two waves as it was stated by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards in their book *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future* stated that “The Third Wave is buoyed by the confidence of having more opportunities and less sexism” (83). This wave was led mainly by young girls who make a linguistic fight against their critics, instead of only defending or refusing the stereotypical vision made about them, they challenged the notions of universal womanhood, to draw attention to the different categories among women, and their different matters according to age, gender, race, culture. (Krolokke et al.15-16).

Feminist theory is widely linked to a variety of other literary theories, it is a dynamic theory. Generally, all of those feminist perspectives aimed to improve women’s position and identity, to achieve equal rights between both genders, and to develop women’s writings. Feminist literary theory studied both genders’ identities as being opposites, thus freeing women from previous limited roles depending on their gender. Also, it had criticized the dominance of male thoughts in the field of literature and focused on female authors and their



experience because at early ages women were not allowed to enter literary field, thus, they chose pen male names to cover their identities and to fight sexism and prejudice. It examines the role of female in the development of culture, explores the existence of female language, and also it constructs new meaning of some notions such as womanhood and gender roles. The feminist theory rejected all what is male-biased, anti-women, and patriarchal. It explores themes such as oppression, discrimination, gender stereotyping, and objectivation. Thus, the feminist literature can be defined as “. . . literature which questions male dominated ideologies and interpretations of human existence. It often highlights women’s struggle to gain equal rights and equal standing with their male counterparts in all fields and walks of life.” (Deborah et al. IX).

### **1.2.1.2 Feminism Literary Criticism**

As a product of patriarchal society and a culture of priority to one sex, literature was in its turn monosexual, which resulted in a falsified, disguised view or a total concealment of women. This view started to change after the emergence of feminist literary theory several feminist literary movements led by supporters of equality between men and women. Based on those movements’ principles, feminism literary criticism that is considered as a binary study focusing on women’s representation through three directions; women’s image in literature, in the literature written by women, and the relation between women and the “conditions of representability” (Crosby 247).

Gill Plain and Susan Sellers in their book *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism* argue that literary criticism started after the second wave of feminism although it was not fully formed during this period, it was mainly to culminate women writing and writing about women etc (3). Ann B. Dobie in the chapter of “Feminist Criticism” in her book *Theory into Practice: an Introduction to Literary Criticism* argues that feminist criticism holds that most of the critics looked at the history of literature mainly to rediscover the old forgotten works

writing by women, and to reevaluate others, or to examine those literary works' cultural context. They analyze and criticize the division of power between male and female that puts women in an inferior position. Those critics limited the stereotypical image of women and gave them more free roles through exposing the prejudice and premises of the patriarchal. They sought to change the world through the evaluation of human being as being rational and creative, thus the world would change. And in order to get this result, they wanted to change the way people read literature (104). Dobie, in her book, mainly divided the feminist critics into three major groups, the first one studies the difference between male and female literary works although not all of the feminist critics agree about it because they believe that this difference would result in the assumption of female inferiority.

The second group studies power relationship in literature, mainly the imbalance of power between male and female. As for the third group, it studies female experience because those critics wanted to probe into female unique personality and experience through identifying female tradition of literature. This idea was so interesting for the French critics who worked to reject male norms and authority and to recognize women's abilities beyond traditional binary opposition. In this study concerned with the third group, feminist critics examine the image of women in female writer's work, as well as images of motherhood; however, they claim that the examination of the unique personality and experiences of female may result in female chauvinism because those scholars argue for superior gender (104-109).

### **1.2.1.3 Gender Issues in American Postmodern Young Adult Fiction**

During contemporary era, young adult fiction increasing popularity became a well known phenomenon among adolescent's readers as well as researchers, and critics. Several changes that YA brought with it contributed to its emergence, as it focused on dystopia to reflect some postmodern issues. In addition to this, YA had focused on the adoption of female protagonist into this dystopian world and gave women sense of power to cause certain

changes, which in turn liberated or subverted her stereotypical traditional role based on gender. According to Oxford Reference, gender roles were defined as “A set of behavior patterns, attitudes, and personality characteristics stereotypically perceived as masculine or feminine within a culture” (“Gender Roles”). As a result and through the adoption of Gender issues as main subject matter, American young adult literature challenged the stereotypical vision about women that were portrayed long ago in the different literary genres, moving female characters from the margin to the center of the literary stories. American postmodern writers gave women strong characters capable of defying the old standards which were restricting them on the margin, as well as men’s roles, and also overcome all the weak generalizations perceived by individuals about their marginalized roles which took the feminine performance into a new direction. Since YA fiction had shifted its focus to female, it became necessary for writers to include sexual life of these adolescents, for example Helen Harper in her article *Studying masculinity (ies) in books about girls* stated that “The focus on adolescence means that budding sexuality and the body can be a significant aspect of the narrative and to the analysis in ways that children’s literature would not” (512). During this postmodern period, writers went far from equality between both genders in young adult literature, to women’s empowerment, which turned the social standards against men, and gave priority to women in the stories, where readers can find female characters enjoying the protagonists’ roles, doing heroic actions in non-ideal worlds, where men are just secondary characters.

According to Oxford English Living Dictionaries, empowerment can be defined as “The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one’s life and claiming one’s rights” (“Empowerment”). Thus, women’s empowerment is the process of attaining more power and confidence. Moreover, this concept of empowerment had been defined by several scholars in different ways, for example the Norwegian Agency for

Development Cooperation (NORAD) which defined the empowerment, in its “Handbook in Gender Empowerment Assessment”, as “Empowerment means increased opportunity for women and men to control their life, It gives power to make decisions, power to have your voice heard, power to put things on the agenda, power to negotiate on something that is not negotiable, power within yourself to challenge past customs (4).

Andrea Cornwall in her journal article “Women’s Empowerment: What Works?” Argues that women empowerment between 1980s -1990s according to Batliwala is an approach under women in development (WID) which is a trend of thought after the feminist consciousness raising. To her, empowerment is the process of challenging male dominated ideologies and norms, as well as challenging their subordination; women gained equality and control over ideologies, resources, institutions because power is in their favor, thus the perception about them would change. According to feminists, women empowerment is their ability to make decisions and choices because they have the right to influence the other by developing their economic and political power to defend themselves and oppose oppression, and its occurrence depends on women’s knowledge about their position (343-345).

According to the Commission on Women and Development document’s “The Women Empowerment Approach: A Methodological Guide”. The Beijing Declaration defined the concept of empowerment within gender studies as women’ ability to fully participate in the development in all societal spheres on equality basis including “decision making process”, “access to power”, thus, empowerment goes further the emphasis of confidence, self esteem, or process of choosing ones’ own life (9).

### **1.2.2 Psychoanalysis Literary Theory and Criticism**

This section contains a presentation of the basics of the psychoanalysis literary theory focusing on the perspectives that are commonly used the American writers, in relation to Young Adult dystopian fiction to which our case study belongs. In addition, it will go through

psychoanalysis literary criticism by giving an explanation of the main components of the psyche as well as the internal conflicts to balance those components, or the defence mechanisms that enable the personality to stay stable. Also, it demonstrates the major psychoanalytic concepts used to interpret literary works and which are related to this study.

### **1.2.2.1 Psychoanalysis Literary Theory**

Whereas psychoanalysis is regarded as a clinical therapeutic practice that refers to the systematic study of the mind, mainly to solve some psychoanalytic problems related to the psyche of individuals, psychoanalytic literary theory is the fundamental connection between literature and psychoanalysis because it was heavily inspired and influenced by the theories of certain psychologists such as Carl Jung, Jacques Lacan, as well as Sigmund Freud notions of “the unconscious” ,and “dreams and repression” relationships; these two notions mainly served to develop the psychoanalytic theory.

The literary text was seen by critics as kind of “dream” which means that the text repress its real content (latent) behind its obvious content (manifest), and this changing from latent to manifest is called dream work. The critics and in order to return back from the manifest to the latent thoughts, they would study the symbolism and language of the literary text. It is not essential that the psychoanalytic theory should focus on the individual’s psyche only but since it is widely improved by the Freudian concepts, they can be applied on the literary text in three ways. First, through considering the effects of the author’s psychological conflicts on his own literary work, second, through the analysis of the literary characters in the text as a real human being, finally, through the effects of the literary text on the readers to reveal their internal fears and desires. Although these concepts contributed to understanding the deepest meaning of the literary text, they were highly criticized by several critics as being weak to reach the full richness and complexity of the literary text (“Psychoanalytic Literary Theory” 1-4).

### 1.2.2.2 Psychoanalysis Literary Criticism

Psychoanalytic criticism is the interpretation of the literary text psychoanalytically through the adoption of certain psychoanalytic concepts (dreams, id, ego, super ego, repression, defense mechanisms, unconscious etc) in order to understand the text usefully. According to some critics such as Liouus Tyson “. . . we read psychoanalytically, is to see which concepts are operating in the text in such a way as to enrich our understanding of the work and, if we plan to write a paper about it, to yield a meaningful, coherent psychoanalytic interpretation” (35). Psychoanalytic theory is used to understand the psychological relationships of human being to death, to sexuality etc or the narrator’s unconscious problems when asserted to the course of the story, however, certain critics rejected this idea of using psychoanalysis to analyze literary characters arguing that they are not real human being, the psychoanalytic critics responded that those literary characters may represent real human psychological experiences in general and it is legitimate to analyze these literary characters from a psychoanalytic perspective. In addition to, these psychoanalytic concepts used in literary text are not limited to one genre and even used in nonfiction “Any human production that involves images, that seems to have narrative content. . . , or that relates to the psychology of those who produce or use it. . . can be interpreted using psychoanalytic tools” (Tyson 37).

The concept of unconsciousness was discussed years before its development by Freud, where the mental life was divided into three parts which are the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. Those elements usually represented by an iceberg that have a great part hidden under the water as an illustration for our unconsciousness, which is the hidden and uncontrolled part of the human mind or mental life that contains one’s own fears, desires, emotions that we are incapable of getting access to all what is happening there as Freud mentioned in his essay “Psychoanalysis”, “what is in your mind is not identical with what you

are conscious of; whether something is going on in your mind and whether you hear of it, are two different things” (189). This can show that people as social creatures are affected in a way or another by events and conditions surrounding them, because they are not totally logical creatures, so they may follow their feelings in some cases to make unjustified acts, as it was clarified in *The Strategy of Desire* by Earnest Ditcher that “it has been proved beyond any doubt that many of our daily decisions are governed by motivations over which we have no control and of which we are often quite unaware” (12).

The analysis of the unconsciousness in the literary work can give the ability of deconstructing the keystones of the repressed wishes, fears, hardships, conflicts and desires, as well as clarifying any social obligations inside the writer’s or the character’s mind or surrounding them, which can help the readers to understand the reasons behind many ambiguous events in the story, or justify actions done by the characters or even shed the light on the purposes which led the writer to develop his piece of writing in a specific way.

Freud professed that the internal conflicts we have in our minds are results of the human’s desires and feelings which are repressed by the cultural restrictions. Those unconscious conflicts lead to the division of the human’s psyche into three parts the “Id”, the “ego”, and the “superego” which are known by the structural hypothesis of the mental functioning. The three parts are so complicated and important for studying the mental life, which make them a subject of study for many scholars. Charles Brenner in his textbook *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis* suggested that “We may say that id comprises the psychic representatives of the drives, the ego consists of those functions which have to do with the individual’s relation to his environment, and the superego comprises the moral precepts of our minds as well as our ideal aspirations” (38). In other words, the psyche’s components are two polarities and one mediator. The first contains the id which is the impetuous part which follows the orders of the instincts by practicing any wished desires that

gives the person a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction over all logical restrictions, in contradiction, the superego works only in response to moral values, because it is the idealistic part of the psyche which can control the id by causing a feeling of guilt after and response to the instincts. In between, there is the ego which responds to reality, in order to make a compromise between the id and the superego.

The ability of understanding and classifying a text, a character, or an author as id, ego, or superego helps the readers to direct their attention to the figurative meaning of the literary work in order to benefit from each piece of it to manipulate his own psyche between the instincts, the reality and the morality.

Defense mechanisms are the processes used by the ego to control the id, and keep the repressed things always in the unconscious part of the psyche. The analysis of the defense mechanisms used by a writer enables the readers to understand the characters' behavior and even relate them to reality to obtain a certain balance. It includes different techniques used according to the situation that characters' face. Ambivalence is one of the defense mechanisms, that makes the person hold two contradicted feelings simultaneously toward the same person or object, the two feelings may rapidly rotate to replace each other within the person who wants to enjoy two contradicted volitions, the same thing occurs during reaction formation but the only difference is that in this latter one of the feelings will overwhelm the other. Another known defense mechanism is Avoidance which is a refusal of getting into situations that may bring out the repressed feelings in the unconsciousness, similarly Denial or disavowal requires the refusal of an incident because of its relation to something exists in the unconsciousness, and totally removing it from the consciousness or convincing ourselves that it does not exist in reality. In addition there is the fixation which manifests in a manic attachment to something resulted by a traumatic experience. The defense mechanisms contain also identification as a desire to resemble someone or something in a certain way, as well as



rationalization which defends the id's behaviors by giving it a rational or logical reason, last and most important defense mechanism is regression in which the brain takes the person back to an earlier event or experience that may be happy or painful to escape his present current situation. ("Psychoanalytic Criticism" 89-90)

Sigmund Freud suggested that the repressed desires, wishes, fears and emotions in the unconsciousness can cause a kind of imbalance in the psyche, which leads the brain to relieve the pressure of the instincts' pressure through "dreams" which is a defense mechanism used by the ego, and used only when the person is asleep and it was defined as:

Dreams are understood to be the hallucinatory fulfillment of irrational wishes and particularly sexual wishes which have originated in our early childhood and have not been fully transformed into reaction formations or sublimations. These wishes are expressed as being fulfilled when our conscious control is weakened, as is the case in sleep. (Fromm 67)

As in reality, the unconsciousness again cannot be free while sleeping in terms of some desires, which will be replaced in dreams by symbols.

Carl Jung was among the influential psychologists beside Freud, who worked on a theory named after him The Jungian Psychoanalytic Theory, he discussed many psychological concepts among them the archetype that it cannot be defined or understood without moving through the collective unconscious, which was defined by Carl Jung in his book *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* as a part of the psyche that did not exist before in the conscious either through personal experience nor through personal acquisition, but by inheritance and composed mainly of archetypes(3-4). Starting from this definition of the collective unconsciousness, archetypes, began to be understood as something unconscious never existed in the conscious, and according to Carl Jung it "indicates the existence of definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere" (Bruere 103).

In other words it is a group of themes, thoughts, and images shared the same meaning universally because they are taken from the human collective unconscious.

Carl Jung distinguished many archetypes which are the mother archetype that is a listed within the charitable archetypes, as a result of our intimate thorough relationship, and our need for her from childhood till death, this archetype starts unconsciously and embody it in reality toward our mothers, and in case the mother is not present or not capable of illustrating her archetype, the child tend to replace her by another comforting person, place, or an object. Fatherhood is also important for humans psyche in its development in life, so it appeared as another familial archetype for his support, guidance, responsibility and authority. In addition, persona is another archetype taken from a Latin term which means mask, and it represents the mask, the person wears in front of public and the image people draw about him, it can be both good impression that is needed to fulfill the social role, or the false impression that is needed to Control opinions and behaviors of people around you. Additionally, the most known archetype is Hero, who represents the good side of the ego, defending moral values and defeating bad people to protect his country or even the world. Last archetype is considered as the most important one and it is known as self archetype, that consider the ultimate unity of one's personality as the self or the perfection, but Jung believed that this perfection cannot be achieved except with death (Boeree5/17, 9/17). In addition, the villain and the innocence archetype which represent the antagonist and the pure characters in the story.

To conclude, postmodernism during the late twentieth century had emerged in response to the new condition of society and it affected various disciplines, including literature, to reject all modernism premises such as reason implying that rational thought would not lead to truth, as well as questioning the positivism of the new technology. Postmodern literary works had widely affected with the new conditions in society to adopt

new themes that reflect humans' identity crisis in chaotic world, hence, it implies various concepts, and techniques such as fragmentation, irony, paradox, hyperreality, intertextuality to portray the exact representation of characters during this postmodern age. During postmodernism, there reappear a literary genre known as young adult fiction and became increasingly interesting for adolescents' readers because it embraces certain themes and issues that suits their age. The postmodern era represent the golden age of YA fiction, which moved from a utopian to a more dystopian illustration of the future societies, depicting dark real experiences of teenagers, as well empowering the female's roles in dystopian world freeing her from all old representations based on gender. In addition to postmodernism theory and YA fiction, the feminism and psychoanalysis are both theories of literary study where the former aims to resolve biased representations of female and to limit subordination, male chauvinism and patriarchy. The latter is a fundamental study of the psyche of the characters, the author, and readers in literary work.

## **Chapter Two: *The Hunger Games* in the Postmodern Feministic and Psychoanalytical Context**

Chapter two is a mere application of the first chapter's theories. In other words, the first novel of the trilogy *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins will be scrutinized through three main streams. The first one is Postmodernism theory to examine all postmodern elements displayed throughout *The Hunger Games* book, its literary genre (young adult fiction) and the major changes that affect it during this particular era to shed light on how the novel adapted its new transformation in term of gender issues and the strong portrayal of female protagonist within dystopia. Secondly, to explore the traces of Feminism theory within the book mainly the third wave to cover the major subversion occurred to females' roles, and the protagonist along with some other female characters' empowerment. The last thing to be discussed in this chapter is the psychoanalytical analysis of the females' characters including the major archetypes they represent in the novel.

### **2.1 *The Hunger Games* as a Postmodern Young Adult Novel**

*The Hunger Games* novel is classified among the most famous Young Adult dystopian genre during the twenty first century. Under this title, the traces of the postmodern elements would be studied throughout the content and the style, as well as the various characteristics of the novel's genre either as a dystopian novel or a Young Adult one in relation to its nationality and the literary period.

#### **2.1.1 Postmodernism Features throughout *The Hunger Games***

The literary period in which the novel was written is considered the most important source of inspiration for the writer, which was reflected on two levels, the content and the style, through special characteristics that belong to this era. There are many writers who were influenced by the postmodern thoughts including Suzanne Collins. Suzanne Marie Collins is an American writer born on August 10, 1962, in Hartford, Connecticut; she is the daughter of

Michael (pilot in the U.S. Air Forces) and Jane, and sister of Drew, Joanie, and Kathy Collins. In 1992 Suzanne got married to Charles Pryor and they have two children Charlie and Isabel Pryor. She received a degree in Theatre Arts from Alabama School of Fine Arts in 1980. Five years later, she completed her study specializing in telecommunications and theatre; later in 1989, she received her degree from New York University Tisch School of the Arts in Dramatic Writing, only after two years she started her career by writing scripts for children TV shows for different channels until she met the author James Promio who motivated her to start writing books. Her first book *Gregor the Overlander*, which is a part of a series entitled *The Underland Chronicles*, was published in 2003, and followed by the other parts of the same series *Gregor and the Prophecy of Bane*, *Gregor and the Curse of the Warmbloods*, *Gregor and the Marks of Secret*, and *Gregor and the Code of Claw*. Then she wrote *When Charlie McButton Lost Power*, and within three years starting from 2008 Suzanne published *The Hunger Games* trilogy starting by *The Hunger Games* followed by *Catching Fire* to end it by *Mockingjay*. As a result of her successful career, Suzanne Collins received The Children's Novel Award New Atlantic Independent Booksellers Association' (NAIBA), for *The Underland Chronicles* in 2004, and the award of Notable Children's Recording by The 'Association for Library Service to Children' ('ALSC') in 2006. In 2008, *The Hunger Games* was announced as the 'Best Young Adult Book' by the 'KIRKUS Review' magazine. In the same year, Collins received the 'CYBIL Award' for 'Fantasy and Science Fiction' for the aforementioned book. Two years later, she received the 'Georgia Peach Book Awards for Teen Readers', and this was followed by the 'California Young Reader Medal' in 2011 (“Suzanne Collins biography” 1-6).

*The Hunger Games* is the most famous dystopian novel by Suzanne Collins. As a postmodern work, it contains various elements illustrating the literature of this era, including the rejection of the universal truth. For example, during the course of the story, the reader

learned that Panem's districts wealth is not distributed equally, some are wealthy, and others suffer from poverty. During the process of entering the Games, reality differ among the tributes depending on their districts' economic and social condition. The career tributes from wealthier districts consider the competition in this annual event as a great honor, and it was regarded as the best chance to show their professional skills in killing, as well as their ability to show unmercy to assassinate the other tributes and obtain victory even if they lost the sense of humanity and had become unemotional. However, the Games for tributes from poor districts like Katniss Everdeen are a symbol of blood and oppression from the capitol. It is an inhuman and aggressive act against those young tributes and this may represent a truth for them (Collins 21-24). Katniss hated the fact of being part of this annual event because it reminds her of being controlled as a puppet, and victimized by the Capitol.

Additionally Katniss's early tragic life and her struggle to fight starvation lead her to always think that Peeta Mellark had always been lived in comfort since he is from a good family; however, this reality differs for Peeta because his favorable economic situation did not bring him happiness due to the a fact of always being victimized by his evil, greedy mother. Thus, Katniss's and Peeta's perspectives about survival are different depending on their discourses. Also, the portrayal of a televised bloody gladiatorial Games among teenagers to entertain the Capitol's citizens reflects the postmodern tendency toward the negative impacts of new technology and it showed the writer's interest in the negative effects of wars that became wide spread phenomena during this era because Collins mainly have mentioned in almost of her interviews that *The Hunger Games* had also inspired by the Iraq war (Yaroub 1-2).

*The Hunger Games* also reflected many other postmodern characteristics; starting by the narration style which is in a total subjectivity by its protagonist Katniss Everdeen, who is telling the events from her own point of view starting the whole book by "When I wake up,

the other side of the bed is cold. My fingers stretch out, seeking Prim's warmth but finding only the rough canvas cover of the mattress."(Collins 1). This subjective narration is based on a complex plot that started simple until the death of Katniss's father, or the first rising event led her to start looking after her family replacing him, through hunting and trading, and it was followed by the first and most important climax illustrated in collecting the name of Primrose Everdeen in the reaping day. Consequently, Katniss volunteered to replace her, and the latter indicated the start of her real struggle. The plot did not really go for a falling event after the previously mentioned climax, but it went in a linear way, full of hard situations on the way to the Capitol, inside the Capitol, and while taking part in the Games until the Gamemakers announced that they have changed the rule about the ability of two tributes from the same district to win the Games together.

After this declaration, Katniss decided to find Peeta and to start playing the role of cross loved stars to attract more sponsors, and that was the second rising event followed by its climax which is the second declaration by the Gamemakers to go back to the old rule that gives the victory to an only one tribute. Katniss created the falling event of the whole story when she tricked the Gamemakers by pretending to commit suicide with Peeta using the poisoned blueberries, which obliged the Gamemakers to accept both of them as winners, since they cannot end the most important event of the year without a subject to entertain the capitol's citizens for the rest of the year. The flow of the events was full of flash backs mainly retrieving Katniss's memories, about the death of her father or hunting with him, about her first meeting with Peeta and Gale, and about her sister during the Games to calm herself by imagining her facial expressions like when Katniss bought her a goat as a present for her birthday "You should have seen Prim's reaction when we walked in with that goat. . . She was so excited she started crying and laughing all at once" (Collins 267).

*The Hunger Games* also depicts certain postmodern themes including hyperreality, intertextuality, fragmentation, alienation, and irony. The first is regarded as the inability to distinguish between reality and simulation of reality as they became intertwined. Throughout the novel, the reader learned that the heroine Katniss Everdeen in district twelve had voluntarily entered a simulated arena in the Capitol to replace her little sister Primrose Everdeen. The arena is a simulation of reality through putting tributes in this fake setting, which is manmade and technologically controlled weather affecting the nature or the genetically engineered animals. As the Games began, the simulated arena became more realistic to the sponsors and audience because they started betting on the tributes and sent gifts to help them instead of assisting them in the real world in Panem.

Concerning intertextuality, *The Hunger Games* had wide references to different texts. When Collins interviewed to give feedback to certain questions about the novel, she mentioned her influence with William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* that seemed to share similar ideologeme of 'absolute power corrupts absolutely' with *The Hunger Games*. Thus, Collins mainly invested in the corruption and power's issues (Connors 19). The best illustration throughout Golding's novel is when Jacks became the powerful leader of his group on the island. He started punishing everyone who challenged his authority and even killed those children, whereas in Collins's novel, the Capitol's totalitarian government seemed corrupt, because it had the authority to control the entire districts, hence, it applied harsh rules upon them and punished every sign of rebellion that threatened its power. Collins also shaped the meaning of the novel text with various ancient Greek Roman myths such as 'Theseus and the Minotaur' in which Athens had to send eight youths and seven maidens to the king Minos in Crete where they were thrown to be devoured by a terrible monster named Minotaur. This cruel action by the king was a punishment for their past deeds as well as a message to remind them that he is capable of killing them and their children if they mess with



him. So parents sat powerless to stop him until his son Theseus volunteered to go to the Minotaur and killed him. As Collins mentioned in her interview that Katniss is the future Thesus because she volunteered to enter the deadly Games and save her sister and why not all Panem's citizen from the authority of the Capitol.

Collins also mentioned that even the name of the nation Panem came from a Roman game 'Panem and Circenses' and literally means 'bread and circuses'. It is a gladiatorial combat in an arena to entertain the audience and satisfy dissatisfaction by the government that often releases lions on gladiators to finish them off. *The Hunger Games* are also a gladiatorial combat between teenagers inside a special designed arena to entertain the Capitol's audience and they released mutts on them at the end of the Games. They also practiced a Roman ritual as they entered the stadium on chariots (Everett 2). Ironically, the Mockingjay name signals a kind of mimicry toward the Capitol's weakness and inability to control its fate. Originally, it was the Capitol's leaders' bird to spy on their enemies, however, it was released to die in the wilderness as punishment for its failure but it survived because it mated with the mockingbird.

*The Hunger Games* as postmodern novel depicts new narrative techniques such as fragmentation that it tends to portray morally corrupt characters in chaotic dystopian nation especially the heroine of the story Katniss Everdeen. Throughout the novel, Katniss's identity appeared unstable and shattered because of her inability to organize her past and present into a coherent experience. Also, she seemed emotionally detached from her own environment because her tragic life in district twelve and the present bad experiences of stress in the Capitol affected her ability to organize her future life as well. Thus, in this chaotic state, Katniss appeared an alienated character in a non-idealistic world, disconnected from both time and place. For example, before entering the annual event organized by the Capitol, the reader had learned that Katniss lived in a poor district specialized in coal industry where citizens

suffer from poverty and starvation as well as the oppression of their freedoms by the government. In her early life, Katniss experienced a huge sorrow because of tragic end of her father's life "My father had been killed in the mine accident three months earlier in the bitterest January anyone could remember" (Collins 26). This incident made Katniss obsessed by her father's accident and she developed uncertain emotions toward her mother who fell sick in a heavy dark world of sorrow leaving a great responsibility to Katniss who was just eleven years old "I didn't trust her. And some small gnarled place inside me hated her for her weakness, for her neglect, for the months she had put us through" (Collins 53). However, when Katniss volunteered in the reaping day instead of her sister Primrose Everdeen, she became very frustrated due to questioning her family's fate once she enters the Games, especially her beloved sister. Katniss expressed her fears as a scream out of anger toward her mother, however, she quickly gave her a strong hug, and this was the first attempt from Katniss to show good feelings to her untrusted mother.

During the Games, Katniss seemed to have uncertain emotions toward her supposed lover in the Games, Peeta Mellark. She suspected his kindness toward her although she cared about that kind boy who once saved her family from starvation. At the same time, Katniss kept thinking of her unforgettable memories with her friend Gale and their trusted relationship although it was not romantic. She longed for him and kept hearing his voice inside her mind because they shared mutual hatred for the Capitol as well as mutual need for survival. Katniss kept remembering her good moments with Gale in the forest and she deeply missed him. She started comparing Gale with Peeta in the Games "I can't help comparing what I have with Gale to I'm pretending to have with Peeta. How I never question Gale's motives while I do nothing but doubt the latter's" (Collins 112). Katniss pretended to obey the rules of their mentor and played with Peeta the role of crossed lovers star to win more sponsors in the Games, however; she started to feel something toward him and really cares about his innate

kindness but she kept persuading herself that she is just playing that romantic role“ . . . I’m almost foolishly happy and then confusion sweeps over me. Because we are supposed to be making up this stuff, playing at being in love, not actually being in love” (Collins 301). Katniss felt secure and happy with him but an interior conflict kept affecting her mind, because she knew that this relationship will not end with marriage in the future as she would never secure the safety of her children even as being the victor of the game, “I know I’ll never marry, never risk bringing a child into the world. . . My kids’ names would go right into the reaping balls with everyone else’s. And I’ll never let that happen” (Collins 311).

Throughout the course of the Games, Katniss Everdeen felt disconnected from time and place; she knew that winning the Games means wealth and fame whereas losing it means death. The fact of being manipulated by the Capitol caused Katniss scattered thoughts because she hated the fact that young tributes were obliged to kill each other without mercy for the sake of survival. Katniss hated to kill innocent teenagers; however, she had to do so in order to survive. Thus, she almost had nightmares and hallucinations during the Games “I enter a nightmare from which I wake repeatedly only to find a great terror waiting for me” (Collins 195). The actual experiences in the Capitol lead her to think of the future and how she would adapt to the new life in the victor’s village after the end of the Games. She thought of the possibility of returning home in the victor village, where she can guarantee her family safety from starvation, however, she questioned her identity and life in this period, whether to stop hunting, never get married and suffer loneliness because she would not risk bringing up a child and sacrifice his life in the Games. She questioned even her relation with Peeta after the Games and the possibility of their friendship after this cross loved star role.

The chaotic situation that Katniss suffered in the Capitol affected her badly to the point she lost the sense of belonging, she longed to return back home where she can find security with her mother and Prim despite the bad relation that tied her with her mother

“Imagining my home makes me ache with loneliness” (Collins 54). In addition, she retrieved her memories with Gale in the forest where they released the tension through insulting the Capitol and mimic their voice as well as hunting animals. Katniss travelled with her thoughts to Gale’s suggestion of escaping together as if she is trying to escape this horrible reality in the Capitol because she was obliged to act violently to survive. She wanted to escape the Capitol’s control that restricted her freedom.

As Collins does with most of the cultural trends she critiques in her novel, she takes postmodern culture’s assurances of a fragmented and ever-changing self to their logical conclusions. This fragmentation is clearly reflected in *The Hunger Games*, particularly in the portrayal of the Careers’ unhealthy identities as well as in Katniss Everdeen’s inner struggle with the many facets of her identity that occurs throughout the book. Collins juxtaposes the identities of her characters, ultimately revealing the possibility of a healthy multiplicity of identity being integrated into a singular sense of self. The careers are specially trained to kill by any means and do what it takes to win the Games. The example for that is what Clove did with Katniss during the feast beside the Cornucopia, where she was able to kill her with one hit, but she preferred to torment her through choosing a knife to kill her with as Katniss described the act “Clove opens her jacket. It’s lined with an impressive array of knives. She carefully selects an almost dainty-looking number with a cruel, curved blade.” (Collins 285). Beside the careful choice of the knife, Clove was trying to intimidate Katniss by showing her the horrible ways she may use to kill her “For a moment, she surveys my face, tilting it from side to side as if it’s a block of wood and she’s deciding exactly what pattern to carve on it.” Then she chose Katniss’s lips “I think we’ll start with your mouth.”(Collins 280). At the same time the careers tributes are trustful and very faithful to each other, despite the fact that they know that they are obliged to fight and kill each other at the end of the Games. Their faithfulness appeared clearly when Clove was about to kill Katniss in the ugliest possible

way, only to fulfill her promise to Cato “I promised Cato if he let me have you, I’d give the audience a good show.” And even when Thresh was about to kill her, she was asking for Cato’s help and after her death “. . . Cato kneels beside Clove, spear in hand, begging her to stay with him.” (Collins 289), while he could just celebrate because another tribute did him the favor of killing her instead of doing it himself.

### **2.1.2 *The Hunger Games*’ YA Characteristics**

*The Hunger Games* novel had earned a huge success as young adult fictional story and it is a distinctive work from the past YA literature because it depicts dystopia to portray the experiences of groups of teenagers in post-apocalyptic world after the Third World War in Panem as well as highlighting the negative aspects of this futuristic society. This nation was led by a strict ruler named President Snow who had a total economic and political power over all the twelve districts that surrounded Panem. The districts were responsible for serving the needs of the capitol through the different industries each district is specialized in. The story focused mainly on the teenagers of the poor district twelve, their experiences of starvation, and their struggle in an evil society to survive because these districts vary in their wealth.

In addition to this, teenagers had experienced the corruption of the government, which leads to their horror and restriction. For example, the miserable situation and poverty in district twelve caused Katniss’s crisis and trauma, she had to be responsible for providing food for her family after she had lost her father when she was eleven years old “District Twelve. Where you can starve to death in safety,” (Collins 6). The same conditions had also an effect on Katniss’s best friend Gale which turned to be an extreme hatred for the capitol but he was unable to express it publicly because he will be punished for his rebellion. In addition, the bad conditions in the mines caused her father death in an accident because he had to work, this incident caused young Katniss’s deep sorrow “The numbness of his loss had passed, and the pain would hit me out of nowhere, doubling me over, racking my body with

sobs.” (Collins 26), which in turn caused the loss of her mother. Moreover, the Capitol and in order to remind the citizens of dark days of the rebellion as well as its total control over them had organized an annual event ‘Hunger Games’ in which participants, from children, are selected arbitrarily to enter the Games as gladiators, and they were obliged to act violently and risk their lives in the arena for the sake of survival and returning home as a victor. This event had transmitted real dark experiences with violence, killing, playful romance, horror, and suicide for those teenagers throughout the story because it affected them badly and they became morally corrupt.

During the postmodern era, *The Hunger Games* became a well known young adult book among teenagers who seemed obsessed with its heroine Katniss Everdeen. Due to the fact that gender issues and dystopia became a widely known phenomena in YA books during this postmodern era, the novel portrayed a super powerful heroine who struggles in non idealistic world to end up the corruption of a dictatorial government and free her society from oppressive leaders who may stop any sign of rebellion with toxic bomb and cause destruction. This in turn showed Collins intention to reflect some issues related to this postmodern age which is the tremendous effect of wars and nuclear weapons. Collins liberated Katniss’s role from all previous female traditional roles which gave Katniss a priority in the story. In addition, the novel had widely depicted the sexual life of Katniss as an adolescent teenager with her partner Peeta as well as her frustrated emotions toward people surrounding her that seemed to suite the readers’ age. Thus, the romantic plot throughout the novel played an important role to engage them with the story.

### **2.1.3 *The Hunger Games* as Science Fiction and Dystopian Fiction**

*The Hunger Games* novel had successfully demonstrated a dystopian society in futuristic nation named Panem that was established in post-apocalyptic world after the Third World War, and ruled by a totalitarian government that widely oppressed all the districts

surrounding the nation. The Capitol who ruled the entire districts was once threatened by the uprising of the thirteen's district that rebelled against the dictatorial rules of President Snow. Thus, to restore peace and ensure the stability of the nation against the rebellion of the districts, the leader of Panem and under the treaty of treason had organized the Hunger Games to remind the citizens' of Panem of the 'Dark Days' and of its total power and relentless. President Snow had punished the uprising of the districts, so, each district must provide two participants called tributes who were obliged to kill each other for the sake of survival because the winner would get a fortune "The twenty-four tributes will be imprisoned in vast outdoor arena that could hold anything from a burning desert to a frozen wasteland. Over a period of several weeks, the competitors must fight to death" (Collins 18). This annual event is televised in all Panem where parents are obliged to watch their children die and face all kinds of violence and stand powerless against the Capitol authority and oppression and where families go through an inner torture, the Capitol citizens are entertained by these deadly Games. In addition, most of the tributes suffered political inequalities depending on their loyalty to the Capitol because when some districts enjoy wealth and extra privileges, other districts such as district twelve suffer from poverty and starvation. For example, whereas the poor districts 'tributes were even banned from entering the forest and owning weapons in their homelands, the wealthy districts' tributes or the volunteers are well trained and that was "... technically against the rules to train tributes before they reach the Capitol but it happens every year" (Collins 94).

Panem's corrupted government mainly applied harsh rules and bound its citizens' freedom; because it worked to limit their voice in society. This helps explain why the Capitol punished whoever rebelled against its rules through turning him/her into an Avox such as the redheaded girl who was a rebellious servant in the Capitol. As Haymitch explained to Katniss

an Avox is “Someone who committed a crime. They cut her tongue so she can’t speak . . . she’s probably a traitor of some sort” (Collins 77).

The dystopian society of Panem and the dire circumstances had widely shaped the character of the protagonist Katniss Everdeen to hold dystopian features. For example, throughout the story, the heroine Katniss questioned the miserable situation that citizens suffered from as well all the existing social, political values thus she ended up promoting the idea of survival especially that she showed hatred toward the ‘reaping process’ organized by Capitol to force teenagers to kill one another in the arena. From the beginning of the story, Katniss showed dissatisfaction with Panem’s inhumane, violent society as well as the tyrannical government, because she believes that there is something wrong with her society “When I was younger, I scared my mother to death, the things I would blurt out about district 12, about the people who rule the country, Panem, from the far-off city called the Capitol” (Collins 6).

Katniss recognized the truth about her society and knew that she wanted to do something beneficial to her citizens and freeing them from poverty and the Capitol’s oppression. However, being alone does not serve her intention. As a result, Katniss felt separated from her surrounding because they do not share the similar awareness, and the citizen were give up to be satisfied and powerless against the bad situations and the strict rules, they were even accepted the Capitol’s obligation to treat the Games as festivity rather than a mean of inhuman torture and destruction. The only trusted friend was Gale Hawthorne because they share mutual vision for example Gale and Katniss had always expressed their hatred toward the Capitol in the woods where no one dared to venture. Both of them believe that change was mandatory, thus, when Katniss volunteered in the Games, Gale reinforced her confidence that she can be a victor. In addition, when tributes are just trying to survive in the arena, Katniss struggle was how to prevent what’s happening between teenagers because she



knew that they were obliged to fight. Thus, she tried to make the audience recognize the dystopian world negative aspects depending on her perspectives because she challenged the Capitol's rules through decorating Rue's body with flowers and acting with Peeta to commit suicide and leave them with no victor.

*The Hunger Games* belongs to science fiction genre that it depicts futuristic setting in post-apocalyptic world and it encounters new scientific principles as well as focusing on advanced technology. For example, the arena where tributes fight to death was an advanced setting and technologically controlled by the Gamemakers. They controlled the temperature, the weather, the environment, and even the tributes were treated with highly advanced medicines and carried out the corpse of dead tributes using sophisticated means of transportation such as the hovercrafts. Throughout the novel, Katniss was hit her calf and hand with a fireball in the arena, however, the sponsors sent her a magical medicine that erased all the pain in a moment ". . . leaving a pleasant cooling sensation behind" (Collins 188).

The Capitol is an idealist place with highly advanced technological instrument and life conditions. For example, the Capitol's roof was provided with electricity that could prevent the tributes from jumping and throw them back on the roof. Also, at the end of the Games Katniss was astonished with their sophisticated instrument in the hospital, they even dared to alter Katniss surgically if Haymitch had not objected it. In addition to this, Katniss had faced very strange creatures made in the Capitol's laboratories such as the Tracker jackers, which are dangerous wasps genetically coded to attack whoever disturbs their nests and they have extremely dangerous venom that can cause death "Most people can't tolerate more than a few stings. Some die at once. If you live, the hallucinations brought on by the venom have actually driven people to madness" (Collins 185). The Jabberjays also are genetically altered birds in the Capitol's labs that were released in the districts during the rebellion days to spy

on the Capitol's enemies since they were able to memorize and repeat human's conversations. Throughout *The Hunger Games*, Katniss in the arena had also faced strange wild wolves made in the Capitol's labs that can stand on their back legs easily and they were called Mutts. Katniss discovered that these strange human creatures are the murdered tributes and they were programmed by the Gamemakers to hate the survival tributes as a revenge for their death.

## **2.2 A Feministic and Psychoanalytical Interpretations of *The Hunger Games***

Undoubtedly *The Hunger Games* is a postmodern novel; hence, it is necessary to discuss the feministic subject in a postmodern way, which means valuing women. Suzanne Collins created special powerful female heroines in a dystopian country, for the sake of making them capable of challenging the stereotypical vision about women. In addition to, the psychoanalytic examination of the characters component of personalities including the Id, Ego, and Superego, as well as, the various defence mechanisms that they manifested throughout the novel as strategy against unacceptable impulses, and the various archetypes embodied.

### **2.2.1 The Challenge of Gender Stereotype in *The Hunger Games***

According to the theory of hegemonic masculinity, Connell's argued that males as a dominant gender in society have to manifest superior roles of "protector", "provider", and "hunter" while females must adopt more subordinate roles such as "domestic duties" and "protection" (Riddell 22). However, *The Hunger Games* during the twenty-first century is regarded as the best example to defy these traditional gender roles in dystopia and break from patriarchy. Collins had succeeded to challenge female's marginalization and to create super powerful characters that were able to possess strong survival skills, traditionally perceived as masculine. In addition, they displayed very powerful dominant identities throughout the story. For example, Collins had portrayed most of the female careers as having equal killing skills with their male partners who seemingly had trusted their females' partners' ability to be a

support in the battle field. Clove was among the characters that represented the new image of strong female fighter, knives' thrower, and abolish the weakened feminized view upon her because she highly mastered those survival skills. She was tough, cruel, and displayed huge sense of ferocity that mainly subverted the usual feminine emotions of tenderness, and sensitivity. Along with Cato, Clove did not represent the inferiorized power but the powerful, independent ally. Even her death proves her position in Cato's team because he “. . . kneel[ed] beside Clove, spear in hand, begging her to stay with him” (Collins 289). Glimmer, the other female career had also displayed non-traditional roles such as archery. Rue was a kid who also successfully defied the stereotypical representation that is her professional survival skills in climbing trees which is an unusual feminine role. Throughout the novel, The Fox Face girl's actions cannot be classified among feminine ones although she had not mastered any survival skills. However, she shows high logical thinking to survive in the arena without displaying any emotions when outfoxing the other tributes and steal their food.

The increased interest of gender roles in young adult fiction during the postmodern era was due to the rise of the women's movement mainly the third wave, thus, most researches shifted to gender stereotype. For example from this feministic perspective, the American writer Suzanne Collins aimed to limit gender inequality and to reject the stereotypical representation of a female, freeing the heroine Katniss Everdeen identity from previous limited roles restricted to a woman depending on her biology giving her a more centered role in the story as a powerful character. Collins, also, gave her male characters various roles that can be perceived as feminine in patriarchal to portray the unique personality of each individual regardless of the gender identity because each character in the novel was influenced by his environment or society, hence, Katniss and Peeta are no longer being opposites. Throughout the novel, Collins improved Katniss's role through portraying the heroine as having distinctive skills for survival that were exclusively for man in a patriarchal

society although she seemed to play a too feminine emotional role as well. For example, Katniss was biologically described as small as all girls were; however, she had a super powerful personality and she was able to challenge herself in the hardest situation. Katniss had the courage to volunteer and enter deadly Games and risk her life to save her beloved sister. She insisted to appear strong in front of the audience and not to cry “. . . I’ve had a lot of practice at wiping my face clean of emotions and I do this now” (Collins 40).

In contrast, her partner Peeta Mellark seemed too weak, and “. . . has obviously been crying and interestingly enough does not seem to be trying to cover it up” (Collins 40). Katniss was a skillful hunter, trapper, archer who would dare to enter the banned forest to prevent her family from facing starvation. Moreover, she sold her hunts in the black market, which is a forbidden place. She was the small strong girl who could face her sick mother with anger and the career tributes in the Capitol “I may be smaller naturally, but overall my family’s resourcefulness has given me an edge in that area. I stand straight, and while I’m thin, I’m strong” (Collins 94). Moreover, Peeta Mellark is strong and not a coward man and he had the masculine power to lift very heavy weights. However, he seemed to have a weak personality toward his mother who slaps him whenever he burns a piece of bread. Peeta was a baker who spent most of his time in the kitchen, thus, he was less experienced with defending himself and he lacked the needed skills in the arena, “I can’t do anything. . . Unless you count baking bread” (Collins 89). Also, He was the kind of boy who obeys the rules of Capitol and never risked entering the forest in the Seam. However, Peeta was an emotional romantic boy who can play with words unlike Katniss “I fumble. I’m not as smooth with words as Peeta” (Collins 297). Another example is Katniss’s attitude toward Peeta which seemed to challenge this traditional image about both genders is Katniss’s responsibility to protect Peeta and guide him in the forest because he was less experienced although she mocks his random steps in the woods. For example, throughout the novel before separating to search for some food, Katniss

seemed to panick when she does not receive a signal from Peeta as they agreed and shouts on him angrily because she was afraid that Cato would kill him.

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Previous female roles were related to clothes as females are expected to dress in a certain way, however, the role of Katniss as a caregiver girl who was responsible for her family supplies, comforting her sister after the nightmares, and singing for her before sleeping. Hence, the overlapping of the household and caregiver qualities gave Katniss a mixture of feminine emotions and masculine power characteristics that affected her physical look. During the events of the whole book, readers can see that Katniss was in a simple look, as she described it at the beginning of the book “I swing my legs off the bed and slide into my hunting boots. Supple leather that has molded to my feet. I pull on trousers, a shirt, tuck my long dark braid up into a cap, and grab my forage bag.” (Collins 4), which is not overly feminine but still attractive, instead she focused much more on hunting and trading as a source of income proving that she is an independent girl. Suzanne’s success in creating a female personality including both gender special qualities makes Katniss a special female heroine who broke the stereotypical vision about female and male roles.

### **2.2.2 The Hunger Games’ Women Empowerment**

As any postmodern novel, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins became a widely successful book that removed the old stereotypical roles of female characters and created a very powerful strong females’ presence for some other characters who differ in their motivations to hold this power. These distinctive characteristics between females in the novel had created diversity in their personality because where some females gained equality between both genders; others gained higher power that surpassed even the male’s one. For instance, the career female tribute’s Clove had been widely an empowered character that

seemed to represent a radical powerful villain against the protagonist. Clove was a highly skilled fighter, in throwing knives that she never missed a target. She was vicious, smart, and the scariest tribute who volunteered to enter the Games at an early age due to her strong confidence and awareness of her killing competences, which might earn her the honor of winning the Games.

This career female was able to surpass the heroine strength and she had the chance to maliciously slaughter the heroine as she was raised to be a killing machine. She was trained to not value her own life as well as the other's one for the sake of the Capitol's entertainment because of their loyalty and closeness to the Capitol's authority. Clove was raised in a wealthy district where they make trains and supplies for the Peacekeepers as well as manufacturing weapons, thus, she was economically well off. Politically, she was powerful as all careers gained various privileges and the support of the Capitol. Socially, the careers are publically famous and most of the sponsors choose to bet on them in the Games, and it was due to their good chances to survive. Clove was highly conscious of her position in the Capitol, that her strength was based on ruthlessness and inhumanity.

Clove had a sadistic personality and strong confidence that she aimed to purchase the girl who outscored her in the training center, and torture her causing her a very slow, painful death. Hence, Female career's Clove had exploited her empowerment to show no mercy and remorse toward lower rank children, to show her emotionless and bloody personality, and to prove her power and capabilities and competences to attain whatever she targeted. Even Clove's name represented a dark red flower that symbolizes blood, death, and also a kind of spice ("Hunger Games Name Meanings"), or the action of splitting things with a sharp instrument to refer to her knives throwing skill. Clove's power would not have prevented her from being the winner of the Games but her attitude of underestimating the situations did. The latter Cost her life.

Throughout the novel, Glimmer also was one of the female's careers powerful characters. She was given higher social, political and economic independence due to the richness and closeness of district one to the Capitol similar to district two. They were faithful to the Capitol's leaders due to the fact that their wealthy district was responsible for producing luxury items to the Capitol. For example, Glimmer had mastered a killing skill that was archery as she was well trained on it before volunteering to enter the 74th annual Hunger Games. Throughout the Games, Glimmer had formed an alliance with the other career's tributes as being the powerful team to catch mainly Katniss whose skill represents a huge threat for them and to prove their ferocity, invincibility, and superiority. The Fox Face girl was another empowered character from district five, however, unlike the career females, the Fox Face girl power was distinctive as she uses very strategic intelligent ways to survive without risking being involved in a bloodbath. She was sly, smart, and very fast, and she had never formed an alliance with the tributes, as no one can predict from where she will appear. The Fox Face had no real skill in using weapons as she scored five during private training in front of the Gamemakers. Instead, she preferred to depend on her mind and through chasing chances by hiding and analyzing situations around her.

Rue was among the empowered female's characters that were raised differently than the career females mainly because she was the most identified character with the heroine Katniss Everdeen as they share similar perspectives that the oppression imposed on citizens in Panem should end. Although Rue was the youngest girl in the arena, she was highly empowered due to her young age; she can easily be underestimated of not representing a huge threat. However, she had special strategies and abilities for survival such as using herb to heal wounds, picking up edible foods, making use of her experiences when she was working in the orchard in district eleven, and climbing trees very fast to spy at the other tributes. Rue was the first tribute that saved Katniss's life through warning her of the Tracker jacker's nest and

treated her from the wasps' venom and formed an alliance with her. Even Rue's name symbolizes a medical plant. It also symbolizes regret which seemed to match better with Katniss's deep sorrow for the failure to save Rue's life. She represented bravery, and strength in personality even when she was dying because when she suffered from the injury of the spear, she kept calming her devastated ally (Katniss) and encouraging her to win "You have to win" (Collins 233), and also asked her to "Sing" (Collins 234). She had also mastered the Mockingjay calls that symbolized the Capitol's fallibility, rebellion, and freedom. She even receives the Mockingjay pin as a gift from Katniss and it symbolized resistance of the oppressive Capitol's regimes. However, she returned it back to Katniss as a sign of confidence in her winning ability just like the Mockingjay.

Rue also represented the Mockingjay call, thus, she represents the oppressed innocence who longed for freedom and the voice of humanity in the arena. The Avox girl also represented the voice of rebellion and to a certain degree, she is an empowered character. She had faced the oppression of the Capitol whether be it socially, economically, or politically. For example, the Avox girl was a servant in the Capitol's who rebelled against rules because she may have believed that her position had to change. However, she was punished as a traitor, her tongue was cut off. Even her satisfaction with Katniss's rebellious actions at end of the Games hide a great supporter for a coming rebellion against the Capitol because she might knew that Katniss was finally the savior of the entire nation.

Suzanne Collins, the writer of *The Hunger Games* novel had succeeded in creating an empowered radical female heroine in a dystopian society who had a special distinctive name of a plant that signals her path as a hunter, and great fighter in the woods. Katniss or the arrow headed plant refers to her archery skills and her affection with wilderness to master new powerful strategies to survive because she had every time to make a fateful decision that would prevent her family starvation. Like the reviving roots of the Katniss plant that prevent



starvation, Katniss Everdeen had also played an essential role to save her family (“Hunger Games Name Meanings”). As Katniss’s father said “As long as you can find yourself, you’ll never starve” (Collins 52). Katniss or “the girl on fire” as an empowered character had always represented strength intertwined with intelligence, sensibility, and tenderness, rebellion, transformation and passion in a balanced way, so, she became very inspirational for both male and female characters as well as a source of irritation even to the most powerful tributes, the careers.

It had been argued that females’ empowerment is their ability to gain more political, economic, and social power to avoid oppression. To claim her rights and prove her existence due to her increasing awareness of her position in society, hence, she will make more powerful decisions. In addition to, her ability to increase more chances and opportunities for better changes. For example, throughout the novel, although Katniss Everdeen was economically, socially, and politically weak to stand against the oppression of the Capitol toward the entire citizens in Panem, She was with Gale the only citizens who shared the same awareness and hatred of the source of their sufferance because they thought that there is something wrong that needs change. Katniss Everdeen was obsessed with a way to improve not only her economic situation, but to liberate all the citizens of Panem which was a highly dangerous idea because it could be achieved only through rebellion. She dared to think of the Capitol as a bad enemy when every citizen was totally under its mercy, as if they were slaves deprived even of their ability to think of their miserable condition.

Katniss was well aware that change needs tremendous power and support that citizens’ lack. She knew that she had to struggle to possess this political, social, and economic power first before she becomes able to induce the needed change and end the oppressive rules, claim their rights of living a comfortable life, end their exploitation, and enjoy freedom. Collins portrayed Katniss’s powerful personality from the beginning of the novel through series of

actions in the Seam that showed sparkles of rebellion which gradually developed to cause the whole destruction of the corrupt system of Panem's government although the only thing that makes the process slow was her inability to trust the powerless people surrounding her. For instance, in district twelve, when Katniss thinks of how she would end corruption and oppression, showing her grudge unpublicly, visiting forbidden places, admiring Mockingjays that reminds her of the Capitol's loss, and had the power to criticize her mother's irresponsibility. On the other hand, Peeta Mellark was unable to resist his own mother's abuse that beats him for every piece of bread he burns as well as obeying the Capitol's rules strictly.

During the reaping day, Katniss courageously volunteered to replace her sister in the Games and save her sister's life while exposing her own life to danger. This unusual reaction showed Katniss as highly powerful and rare girl because most of the volunteers were the careers and they had a special training. As Katniss claimed, "Family devotion only goes so far for most people on reaping day. What I did was the radical thing" (Collins 26). Although she was aware of her position in society and her desire to avoid the oppression, she suspected her power at first to win the Games. However, all citizen's of Panem including her friend Gale appreciated her killing skills, and Peeta's mother rated her over her son claiming that district twelve finally would have a winner this year because Katniss's temper and the way she was raised proves her internal power. Even her mentor, Haymitch, believed that Katniss hide a very strong character that may lead to a revolution for freedom. He knew that certain situations in the arena would bring her rebellion in the face of the Capitol although he never declared that Katniss was his favorite and that he rated her over her male partner due to their bad relationship.

Katniss hated his weakness and his inability to control his life, However, Peeta confirms Haymitch preference to Katniss than him. For instance, before entering the arena when tributes showed their secret skills to the Gamemakers, Katniss challenged them when

they ignored her and shot an arrow toward their side and went out without permission. However, Haymitch seemed satisfied with Katniss's actions impacts upon the Gamemakers as well as the audience although she risked to be turned into an *Avox*. Katniss's temper attracted Haymitch to pay more attention to her than Peeta in advising them how to act in the arena; he knew that Peeta would obey rules unlike the rebellious Katniss who would not hesitate to resist his guidance. For example, at the beginning of the Games, Haymitch advised his tributes to not race the other tributes to the Cornucopia, however, Katniss took the risk to reach to the Cornucopia and get the weapon that would increase her chances of survival whereas Peeta ran directly to the wood. Another example that showed Katniss as an empowered character in the arena is her independent decisions. She had the ability to form an alliance with Rue and work as a team depending on her feminine emotions because this little girl Rue almost reminded her of the innocence of her sister Primrose Everdeen. The latter led to breaking the rules of the Games as the tributes should act as enemies and kill each other in the arena. On the other hand, Peeta chose to team up with the career tributes and it was not sign of deception but as a strategic way for survival, he had no chance in front of their professional skills in killing, hence, he exploited their desire to find Katniss who represent a huge threat for them to survive.

Suzanne Collins had given Katniss's character the spirit of the Mockingjay bird which is a great symbol of rebellion and resistance. Throughout the novel, Katniss had a special relation and strong attraction to the Mockingjay birds which were “. . . funny birds and something of slap in the face of the Capitol” (Collins 42). These birds had broken free from the Capitol's control and symbolize freedom. Before, they were known as the Jabberjay birds, which were made in the Capitol's lab as a weapon to spy at the districts during rebellion. Later, the Jabberjays were released to die in the wild as they failed when the citizens began touse them to mock the Capitol. However, they broke free and survived as they mated with

the mockingbirds female to create new species which had the ability to repeat songs and replicate bird whistles as well as human melodies. For example, throughout the novel, Katniss had a fascinating ability to affect these birds when she sings because they went silent in respect to her voice. Even her stylist Cinna chose the Mockingjay pin to decorate her dress to indirectly refer to her power to escape the Capitol control and become a symbol of freedom and rebellion as the Mockingjay. Unlike the ferocious girl, Katniss who symbolized rebellion, Peeta Mellark had more represented as the kind spirit full of love and kindness, and the support for Katniss.

In addition, Collins had empowered the role of Katniss in her ability to make decisions concerning rights and the only way to reach to them was through rebellion, thus, Katniss in the arena had made very important decisions that signs rebellion which represent an indirect way for claiming rights. For example, after a long hesitation and psychological torture toward killing innocent children in the arena for survival, and after the death of her ally Rue from district eleven, Katniss decided to decorate Rue's funeral with wild flowers "blossoms in beautiful shades of violet and yellow and white. . . I decorate her body in flowers . . . they'll have to show it. Everyone will see her then and know I did it. Rue could really be asleep in the meadow after all" (Collins 237). And even challenging the Capitol's authority through sending forbidden action that is the three finger sign as indication of love and it usually meant goodbye to a loved person. After this moment, Katniss decided to end whoever responsible for Rue's death and she started gaining the social support from Rue's district because Katniss, for the first time in the Hunger Games, had received a gift from district eleven. Also after the Gamemakers had obliged the two last tributes to kill each other, Katniss decision to pretend of committing suicide with Peeta to finish the Games without a victor had obliged the Capitol's government to change the rules of the Games and end it with

two victors. Katniss's rebellious decision tarnished the reputation of the Games and showed her power which led to changing *the Hunger Games* rules thereafter.

### **2.2.3 A Psychoanalytical View on *The Hunger Games***

Throughout the novel, Clove's complex behaviors and actions had widely represented the Id from the Freudian theory perspective. To illustrate, Clove was like all other careers; well fed, strong, aggressive, cruel, sadistic, fast and highly skilled with knives. Clove was very arrogant and boasted about her skills. At the beginning of the Games, she stayed beside the Cornucopia where she killed many tributes there. Then she focused mainly on killing Katniss to prove her superiority. Hence, Clove's unconsciously worked to satisfy the Id's pleasure because Clove's killing actions aimed to show her inner desires for blood, entertainment, torturing others, and power but not just an impulse to survive. On one hand, when Clove's attempted to kill Katniss, she maliciously tried to kill her and mutilate her face slowly to cause her a painful death. A normal person would kill her directly to ensure her advancement in the Games, but Clove's Id wants to enjoy torturing Katniss instead of a fast death.

Similarly, the other female career Glimmer who seemed to share similar Id's drives as Clove and although she was not really smart or skillful, yet controlled by her Id. For instance, when Glimmer along with Career team found Katniss on the tree, Glimmer without doubt volunteered to kill her using her silver bow to fulfill her Id's desires and satisfy her gratification needs.

The Fox Face girl from district five was an intelligent, sly girl who was ranging between the control of her Ego and Id. The Fox Face girl was highly conscious that the real conditions in the arena were not in her favor due to her lack of survival skills, thus, her Ego caused her to adopt a very strategic way to ensure survival without being exposed to danger. She avoided any kind of confrontation with other tributes, or killing them despite the fact that

she knew all their strategies, plans and locations through her careful analysis. However, the Fox Face girl also widely fulfilled her Id's desires because her Id's eating desire directed her to steal food from other tributes to please her urges effortlessly.

Rue, the little girl from district 11 had represented the Id according to the Freudian perspective. Despite the similarities she shared with Katniss's sister Primrose, she was much courageous and the skillful; she accepted the Games as an adventure not a bloody war. In addition, she showed an ability to learn hunting and forming alliances to kill other tributes, which reflected her readiness to do anything for survival especially against the Careers who were loyal to the Capitol. Rue's Id's orders were to revenge and kill the career tributes mainly. For example, throughout the Games, Rue had almost spied on the careers because they represented a threat to her life; hence, her alliance with Katniss was to fulfill her survival instincts. Even when she was dying; she kept asking Katniss if she had successfully blown up the Career supplies. The above mentioned remarks about reflect clearly to which extent she was following her Id's survival instincts.

Katniss Everdeen, the hunter in the forest, the trader in the black market, and the strongest tribute of the Hunger Games; or the beautiful girl who attracted all the audience during the opening ceremonies and the coronation ceremonies. This complex combination that existed in a female character deserves a psychoanalytical study to clarify it. The mental components of Katniss's personality are very rich and her Id, Ego and Super Ego are fighting each other to overwhelm the other.

The Id part of Katniss's character appears many times to resist the laws of the Capitol and mainly to fulfill her desires to live, and since life is an important theme in *The Hunger Games*, Katniss is one of the characters who fought to survive before, during and after the Games. The id appeared in the beginning of the book when Katniss's father died and her family was in danger of dying from hunger because it is something familiar in their district as

she mentioned “District Twelve. Where you can starve to death in safety,” (Collins 6), which stimulated her to start working. According to the id’s orders in order to fulfill her desires mainly of hunger, she owned a bow and started hunting and trading in the hob or the black market which is illegal in district twelve as Katniss explained, “. . . Even though trespassing in the woods is illegal and poaching carries the severest of penalties . . .” and “My bow is a rarity . . . My father could have made good money selling them, but if the officials found out he would have been publicly executed for inciting a rebellion” (Collins 5). In this discourse its becoming clear that Katniss risked her life by breaking the Capitol’s rules by following her desires. In addition to the district twelve’s rules, Katniss broke even the human rules through killing both animals in an excellent way says Peeta. “My father buys her squirrels. He always comments on how the arrows never pierce the body. She hits everyone in the eye. It’s the same with the rabbits she sells the butcher. She can even bring down deer” (Collins 88). As well as people, “The boy from District 1 dies before he can pull out the spear. My arrow drives deeply into the center of his neck. He falls to his knees and halves the brief remainder of his life by yanking out the arrow and drowning in his own blood” (Collins 229). Despite the fact that Katniss did not enjoyed killing people, she was able to do it and she enjoyed hunting and killing animals.

In contrast, Katniss’s super ego appeared mainly in the reaping day, when the odds unfairly puts Primrose Everdeen in the Hunger Games, hence, Katniss volunteers to save her beloved sister who was just eleven years old. The thing that had always caused dissatisfaction during reaping days in Panem “I can hear the crowd murmuring unhappily as they always do when a twelve-year-old gets chosen because no one thinks this is fair”(Collins 21), and that was not a matter of the sisterhood relation between them, but because there are many other tributes who have elder sisters or brothers but they did not dare to volunteer or to protect them, such as Peeta Mellark who have two older brothers “but one is probably too old now to

volunteer and the other won't" (Collins 26). Morally, Katniss refused the fact that girls at this age can be a part of these bloody Games, that's why she chose the little Rue as her ally, and did her best to feed and protect her. After the Games, Katniss started blaming herself for the tributes she killed, and those feelings turned into nightmares.

Between both id and super ego, Katniss's ego controlled her during most events of the story, so she pretended to be calm and avoided everything that may lead her or her family to a dangerous situation. The questions, the ideas, and any topic around the capitol were a red line for her, so avoided them as she said "I scared my mother to death, the things I would blurt out about District 12, about the people who rule our country, Panem, from the far-off city called the Capitol. Eventually I understood this would only lead us to more trouble. So I learned to hold my tongue" (Collins 6), or talked about them with Gale in the forest where no one can hear them.

This dystopian space and the various psychological struggles that affected some of the characters had brought in some unconscious psychological strategies as protection against the traumatic experiences in the arena. For example, throughout the novel, the career tributes had experienced a set of dangerous circumstances whether physically or emotionally which in turn seemed to have an adverse effect on them. The careers for instance had formed an alliance although their awareness that they have to kill each other at the end because the Games allow one victor only, hence, the careers seemed to use denial as a defence mechanism to refuse the reality that generates strong anxiety. Clove's traumatic experience after the death of most of the career members caused her to protect herself psychologically using fixation as she became obsessively attached to Cato. The Avox girl had experienced a very traumatic experience as they had maimed her tongue and although Katniss did not save her that day in the forest, the Avox seemed to avoid (the Avoidance defence mechanism) this distressing subject that reminded her of an aggressive event. Katniss expected that the Avox would blame her and



bear grudges against her but her actions showed support to Katniss. Rue's alliance with the heroine showed a deeper desire to resemble Katniss's skills and behaviors, and power; thus, she seemed to pass through identification as a defence mechanism. The Fox Face girl had showed rationalization as a psychological strategy to justify her negative actions of stealing other tributes' supplies; she explained this by the need to survive to make her actions consciously tolerable. This justification was stated when Katniss said that she was stealing a small or unnoticeable part of their supplies while she can take everything, as if she was reducing the quantity of the stolen food to reduce the feeling of guilt.

Dreams and symbols played a very important role as defence mechanism for the heroine Katniss Everdeen to fulfill her repressed thoughts and emotions. During her time in the Capitol, the protagonist was already struggling with her inner sorrow for the death of her father in a mine accident and her deep hatred for the Capitol which was the major reason for the sufferance of all citizens in Panem. For example, throughout the story Katniss dreamed of herself weakly accepting and missing her mother although she never trust her in reality "My mother's hand strokes my cheek and I don't push it away as I would in wakefulness, never wanting her to know how much I crave that gentle touch" (Collins 290). This dream indicates Katniss's longing for the security of home with her mother and her inner tiredness because she does not belong to this violent environment. Moreover, throughout the story, Katniss was obsessed with inner fear of her little sister because she seemed always responsible for protecting and providing a comfortable life for her due to her mother sickness and being unable to care for them. She struggled with her inner sadness for her father's death, her heavy responsibility toward the other people because she longed for changing the actual situation, thus, she always had dreams as a defensive strategy to confront her repressed emotions of fear. This can be well illustrated in Collins's book *The Hunger Games* when Katniss narrates:

My slumbers are filled with disturbing dreams. The face of the redheaded girl intertwines with gory images from earlier Hunger Games, with my mother withdrawn and unreachable, with Prim emaciated and terrified. I bolt up screaming for my father to run as the mine explodes into a million deadly bits of light. (86)

Throughout the novel, Katniss displayed several defence mechanisms, such as ambivalence. In one hand, towards her mother because she was attached to her and scared that she might lose her “I was terrified. . . all I knew was that I had lost not only a father, but a mother as well. . . the district would have taken us away from her and placed us in the community home.” (Collins 27), but still unable to forgive her or treat her like any child can treat his mother because she is not from the forgiving type as she mentioned. In the other hand, she used ambivalence towards Peeta where she was swaying between being impressed with his kindness and fully attracted to him “. . . just throwing me the bread was an enormous kindness. . .” (Collins 31), to a state of suspicion from his kindness whether it is a part of a strategy for the Games “To appear weak and frightened, to reassure the other tributes that he is no competition at all, and then come out fighting” (Collins 41), and a sort of hate because of his alliance with the careers “I will eagerly watch the night skies for signs of his death, if I don’t kill him first myself.” (Collins 162). Those ambivalent feelings, Katniss holds towards Peeta, transformed in a later stage into a reaction formation in which love overwhelmed the doubt. Fixation is the second defence mechanism used by Katniss, which is illustrated in her strong relation with her sister Primrose as she said when Gale asked her to escape Panem “Prim, who is the only person in the world I’m certain I love?” (Collins 10), and it was as a result of her traumatic experience with her father’s death (the saddest incident in her life) that she became highly attached to her beloved sister. In addition to the ambivalence and fixation, identification also pushed Katniss to resemble her father in his ability to make the arrows and bows in a perfect way but she admitted that she failed “I have tried copying my father’s bows

with poor results.”(Collins 39), also she wished to have her mother and sister’s ability in learning herbal therapy and treating bad injuries as Katniss claimed that she had always scared burnings and that she “Go[es] and hunt[s] while my mother and Prim attend to what I have neither the skill nor the courage to face”(Collins 256).

Katniss was defending any illegal or bad thing she thinks about or she does, by hunger and the hard conditions they are going through. For example, stealing coal from the mines, or when thinking to steal bread or any other thing to eat. She justified hunting or killing animals by her needs for money, and she goes further in doing so, to give life defence as a reason to kill people during the Games. This psychological defence is known as rationalization to the id’s instincts to give tolerable excuses to her negative actions and avoid feeling of guilt. During moments when Katniss confronted with stressful and anxious experiences, she tends to escape the current moment through retrieving old good memories about Primrose and home. This defence is known as regression and it is strategy used by Katniss to carry her thoughts from current difficult situations.

The last two defence mechanisms Katniss used are the denial and the avoidance. The former occurred after Rue’s death which was described by Katniss as sleep “I lean forward and press my lips against her temple. Slowly, as if not to wake her. . .” (Collins 235-236), “. . . I decorate her body in the flowers. Covering the ugly wound. Wreathing her face. Weaving her hair with bright colors. . . She could really be asleep in that meadow after all.” (Collins 237). This shows that Katniss refused the fact that she is dead. Avoidance as defence strategy had happened during the last moments of the Games where she refused or avoided to kill Peeta or to let him suicide so “I can’t let him go. I just can’t.”(Collins 340), “No, you can’t kill yourself,” (Collins 343). Katniss aimed to avoid killing a beloved person because death is deeply related to a traumatic aggressive experience that resulted from her father’s accident.

The psychological balance that Katniss achieved enabled her to play much more than one role. She was the hunter and the trader who brings the necessary food and money to the family, she was the care giver who always thinks of “. . . how would they live without [her]? Who would fill [their] mouths that are always asking for more?” (Collins 9), and the protector of her little sister as she said “I protect Prim in every way I can”(Collins 15), which puts her in the father archetype that she seemed aware of, as Katniss said “. . . I took over as head of the family.” (Collins 27). She presented also a mother archetype when her mother was depressed, so Katniss was the one who cooked and took care of Prim’s studies, appearance, and food “. . . I bought our food at the market and cooked it as best I could and tried to keep Prim and myself looking presentable.”(Collins 27).

Suzanne Collins created also a persona archetype in Katniss’s character, where she was trying each time to wear a different mask to serve a certain public need. Each of these archetypes has its own values and personality traits, thus, Katniss holds different archetypes which create various distinctive roles for the heroine. Firstly and as it was previously explained, Katniss wore the mask of the caregiver, the family head, the student, and the hunter, but the real Katniss appeared only in the forest with Gale. Then she tried to control her face’s features to avoid letting people predict her thoughts through them which seemed to serve her both in Capitol and in the Seam. Her unreadable face and unreachable character protected Katniss and her family against any external danger because Katniss’s real character and thoughts may cause to them the harm of the Capitol, in addition, it helps her in front of the cameras to look emotionless, more confident, fearless, and strong. The ability of changing the masks to fit different roles or to fulfill different public needs helped Katniss a lot inside the arena. Consequently, she attracted different sponsors.

Also Katniss holds the rebellious archetype as well as representing an archetypical hero because she was courageous to challenge the Capitol rules and she tried to prove her own

worth as well the entire controlled citizens, thus, she was the only tribute who calls for rebellion and revenge in the arena through sings. She holds the lover archetype because throughout the Games the reader may experience Katniss's parental love and her strong relationship with her friends Peeta and Gale although she seemed to refuse any romantic relationship with both of them. Moreover, the other female characters in the novel represented different archetypes. First, the innocent archetype was embodied through Rue's character since she was very faithful, simple, optimistic, and her main goal was safety. In addition she was dependant somehow on Katniss. Second, the villain archetype which was reflected through Clove and Glimmer's personalities, who were skillful and highly trained but they used this advantage without any mercy for their personal benefits; more clearly, they misused their power in killing and torturing just for the sake of being the victor.

To conclude, *The Hunger Games* as dystopian young adult fiction had widely reflected the new tendencies toward gender issues during postmodern era and how the preferences for females' protagonist within dystopia became increasingly acclaimed due to the radical portrayal of women's roles. The subversion of females' role within dystopia caused teenagers to hold new assumptions about gender roles moving to women's empowerment. Collins had successfully altered the stereotypical representations between both genders through giving the personal discourse much importance of shaping the characters' personality regardless of gender identity, thus, she perfectly balanced her characters roles which lead to the creation of distinctive personalities, and the abolishment of inferiority for both genders. This equal representation of gender roles had reduced male chauvinism in this dystopian nation and to enable females' powerful free roles, however, Collins aimed to empower women through challenging and claiming rights from the whole oppressive regime. She portrayed how women are able to fight a high authority to impose their free choices and to claim freedom for all citizens, how women dare to even enter into a revolution and they were capable to achieve

better social changes confidently, also, to portray women ability to make alliances and powerful decisions in the battle field. However, they manifest widely complex psychological strategies that suits with a dystopian atmosphere.

### **Chapter Three: Survey about the Impact of Women' Empowerment in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* on Adolescent Readers.**

The changes that *The Hunger Games* made on the level of women's roles in literature might possibly have an impact on their readers in general and on adolescent readers in particular, since it belongs to Young Adult literature. This survey is an opportunity to thoroughly investigate the various adolescent readers' perspectives toward females' roles during the postmodern era. Moreover, it will discuss various questions about females' roles before reading *The Hunger Games*' then after reading it, in order to know their previous assumptions about women, then to check any changes after seeing the empowerment given to *The Hunger Games*' characters. The survey was sent through email to a sample of 30 respondents aged between 12 and 21; from an official Facebook group of *The Hunger Games*' fans, who volunteered to take part.

#### **3.1 Introduction to *The Hunger Games*' Female Characters between Challenging Gender Stereotype and Representing Role Models**

*The Hunger Games* portrayed very distinctive empowered females' roles to the young adult readers. This new subversion of women's representation especially within a non-idealistic world was able to provide the readers with new insights and perspectives about new versions of powerful female heroines, and showing the postmodern women's psyche to enabled them to challenge and defeat their struggles. These distinctive representations of females brought new views about male-dominance in the society allowing females to move to more centered roles that surpassed the males' one. Thus, women's empowerment, especially within a dystopian space is more likely to affect young readers who are in the process of building a personality to endorse the new stronger image of women whether to alter any rigid conceptualizations about gender roles or relate to the characters to create an adequate role model. *The Hunger Games*' distinctive portrayal of young women's psychological

personalities lead to the release of different sorts of women's empowerments for the readers, thus, any individual's assumptions about his/her ideal empowerment for female may differ.

For example, Sarah Colleen Riddell stated that the conversation of Skinner and McCord's about gender on *The Hunger Games*:

Makes a leap that few books do, allowing for Katniss, a young woman, to be the hero for all readers, regardless of gender identity . . . Katniss is, to a large degree, free of characterization based solely on her gender . . . she's allowed complex emotion, physical agility and strength, self-doubt, and vulnerability, all while, most importantly, being a woman in a main-character role. Her gender is never the focus. (qtd. in Riddell 30-31)

It is compatible with the novel, because regardless to Katniss's gender, she was able to attract a huge amount of support to challenge the oppressive rules aggressively and adopt pure free choices that reflected her own perspective toward the situations in Panem and how change should occur. Ending up with the subversion of all traditional representations of femininity and masculinity, since Katniss's aggressive actions toward the Capitol's leaders would be defined as purely masculine in patriarchy. Similar to this, it can be assumable that the powerful portrayal of the female careers is able to reflect the same vision because regardless of Clove and Glimmer's genders, they were able to make the audience bet on their survival skills (knives' throwing, archery) and proved that they were highly trusted from the participants, because they represented women who mastered non stereotypical roles.

Consequently, gender roles in postmodern dystopian fiction are in a way of taking new directions for both readers and writers.

The empowerment of females' in *The Hunger Games* may influence adolescent readers to identify with the novel's characters' stronger personalities and create a hypothetical image of their role model. For example, the strong representation of females' protagonist



psyche especially in dystopian world is capable to receive more teens' interest for forming role model. Most of the heroines, in non-idealist world, struggle with the negative social conditions to improve them, they would make unconditional sacrifices due to internal struggle of how to solve these bad situations and gain human achievements. This, in turn lead young readers to be exposed to various real, inhuman situations, complexities and how the dystopian environment would create strong personalities, hence, readers may interact with those complexities as they associate them with themselves especially the ones they experienced themselves.

### **3.2 The Statistics of the Survey's Answers**

This survey that is entitled "The Impact of Women's Empowerment in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* on the Adolescent Readers' psyche", contains an introductory paragraph, which introduces the aim of the survey, and the time the answers may take, in addition to an insurance of confidentiality for the answers. Also, it contains some important definitions for some key words in the survey to avoid any misunderstandings. After this part, the participants can start supplying their answers to the three parts of the survey. The first part deals with personal information. It contains some personal questions such as age, gender, and how many times they read the book, which are of vital importance to categorize the answers of the other parts. Whereas the second part is designed to seek the reader's background knowledge about feminism as well as their view about women before reading the book, the last part contains similar question but more specific to the characters of the novel. The latter would help the researchers administer the survey and compare the answers before and after reading the book to be able to gauge any possible impact of reading the novel on the readers view about women.

### 3.2.1 The Statistics of the Participants Personal Information

The following tables are an illustration of the results gathered from the answers of the survey's first section which is entitled Personal Information.

**Table 1. Number of the Participants According to their Age**

Age	12-14	15-18	19-21
Number of participants	06	14	10

The table shows how the participants' numbers were divided between 12 to 21. As it can be seen, the youngest group of the respondents who are aged between 12 and 14 represents 20% from the total number. The second category of participants aged between 15 and 18 includes the highest number for 47%, while 33% are aged between 19 and 21.

**Table 2. Number of the Participants According to Their Gender**

Age	12-14		15-18		19-21	
Gender	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Number of Participants	02	04	05	09	03	07

A percentage of 33% from the participants are males; half of them were aged between 15 to 18 years old, only 20% belongs to the second category of 12 to 14, while 30% demonstrates the male respondents who aged between 19 to 21 years old. However, 67% of the participants represents females from the whole number, 45% of them were between 15 to 18 years old, while only 20% were ranging between 12 and 14, the rest are between 19 and 21 with 35%.

**Table 03: The Number of Times the Book Was Read by the Participants**

Age	12-14		15-18		19-21	
Gender	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>The Book Readings</b>						
<b>One time</b>	02	03	03	05	00	06
<b>Two times</b>	00	01	00	02	02	00
<b>Three times</b>	00	00	00	00	00	01
<b>Four times</b>	00	00	00	00	00	00
<b>Five times or more</b>	00	00	02	02	01	00

The table number three provides information about how many times the respondents have read *The Hunger Games* and it shows that the majority of them read the book only once by percentage of 63%, while it decreased to 17% for those who have read it twice. However, the smallest percentage with 3% belongs to the participants who have read it three times, while 17% for those who have read it 5 times or more.

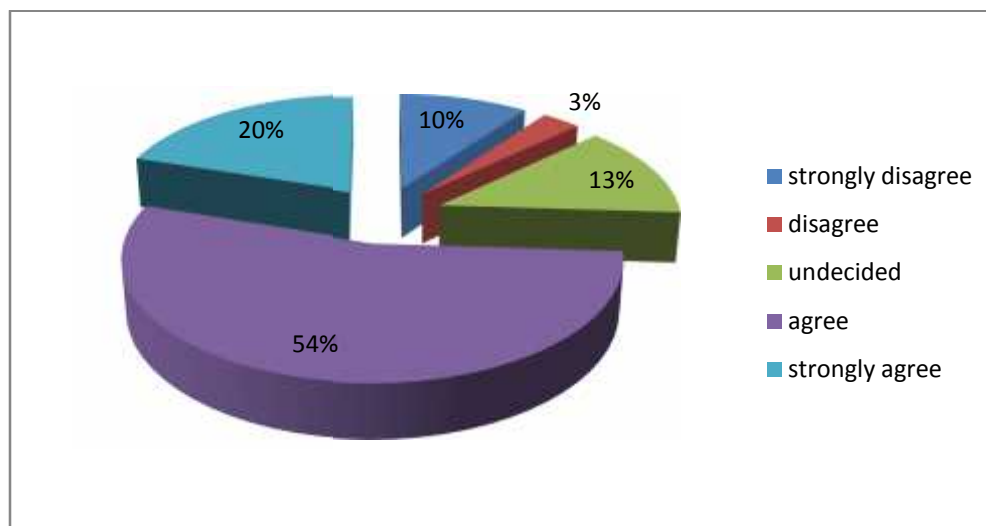
### 3.2.2 The Participants' Perspectives toward Gender Roles before Reading the Book

- The Role of Women's Gender Sensitiveness for Shaping a Biased Assumption about Females in the Readers' Minds.

Gender identity had played a significant role for shaping both men and women's roles in society in literature, however, it may end up forming biased representations about the roles of women in the readers' mind. This traditional view about gender roles had been challenged especially during the postmodern era where most of the writers depict powerful roles; hence, question 6 is aimed to investigate if the readers had already biased assumptions about the females' roles in literature before reading *The Hunger Games* and if they still stick to past

view of masculine dominance depending on women' sensitive nature and her physical weakness to prove their perspectives.

**Figure 1. The Relation between the Gender Nature of Women and Their Roles in Literature**

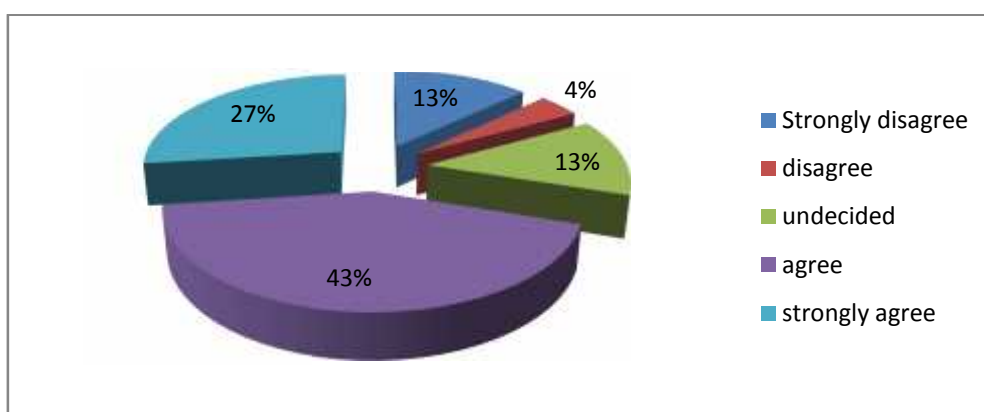


The chart is divided into five parts to highlight the readers' personal perspectives toward women' roles in fiction and it shows that the largest number from the whole participants with 54% agreed that the roles of women are determined due to her sensitive and emotional nature, while the percentage of females who agreed upon this view was 63%. The second largest number of respondents who strongly agreed that gender roles is determined with 20% while 13% went for those who were not aware if the gender can affect the roles of women in literature or not. The rest of participants with 13% refused any relation between women's nature and their marginalized roles in literature as they claimed their awareness toward women' ability to hold powerful roles, this percentage was divided into two levels; First, by total refusal (10%); second, by simple disagreement (only 3%). Depending on these results, it can be assumed that women roles were biased as they were perceived as secondary characters in literature due to excessive portrayal of male chauvinism in fiction.

- The Changes of Women's Perception after Empowerment.

In order to examine readers perspectives toward gender roles in literature after moving femininity to the empowering center, the researchers asked the participants the following question numbered seven and it is formulated as “After women’s empowerment, do you think that gender is still capable of defining the females’ roles in literature?”, to know if those teenagers who had already biased conceptualizations had changed their perspectives after the empowerment (due the powerful, daring roles that women depicted in dystopia during the postmodern era).

**Figure 2. The Effect of Women’s Empowerment on the Biased Assumptions about Women by Readers**

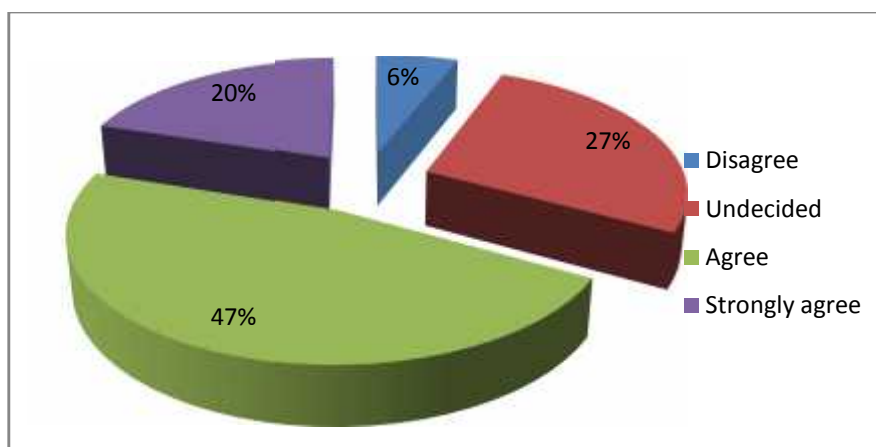


The findings of this question, as chart 02 displays marked a change in the participants view about the relation between the feminine gender and its role in literature, after women empowerment, where the researchers find a majority of 70% believed that women’s roles are no longer determined by their gender, 43% from this percentage goes to those who have answered with agree, and 27% the strongly agreed participants. Only 17% (13% strongly disagree and 4% disagree ) from the total number of the participants have not remarked any changes in females’ roles, and the rest (13%) are still confused whether the women empowerment added in changes in women’s roles or not.

- The Preferences for Female Dystopian Protagonist

The examination of the previous question proved that the readers' perception toward gender roles had changed after women empowerment especially within the dystopian fiction that depicted more radical female heroines; hence, it became highly acclaimed and preferred for the audience. The question eight designed as "Do you think that the preferences for female characters have radically changed within dystopian fiction?" aims to explore the readers' opinions about whether the radical roles of women within dystopia made them more preferable as literary characters or "female dystopian protagonist" by young readers.

**Figure 3. The Effect of the Dystopian Fiction on the Preferences for Women' Roles**



This chart provides information about the impacts of dystopian genre to move females to the center and made them more preferable to the young readers, it shows that 47% agreed, and 20% strongly agreed that the dystopian fiction made a radical change in the females characters to attract readers to new representations, 27% were undecided about whether there is a preference for females in the dystopian fiction or not, and only 6% have not seen any significance.

- Expectations of the Traits which Appeared more in Katniss's Performance

Before reading the novel, the researchers asked for readers' opinions toward the potential traits of the protagonist. Question nine was as follows "How do you perceive Katniss's traits as a female protagonist?" to know how the participants would imagine

Katniss's performance as powerful dystopian heroine in dystopia, whether a strong female with total masculine traits or powerful sensitive female who combines both gender traits.

**Table 4. Predictions about Katniss's Traits as Female Heroine**

Age	12-14		15-18		19-21	
Gender	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Choices</b>						
<b>Female traits</b>	00	00	01	02	02	04
<b>Male traits</b>	00	01	00	00	00	00
<b>Both gender traits</b>	02	03	04	07	01	06
<b>Others</b>	00	00	00	00	00	00

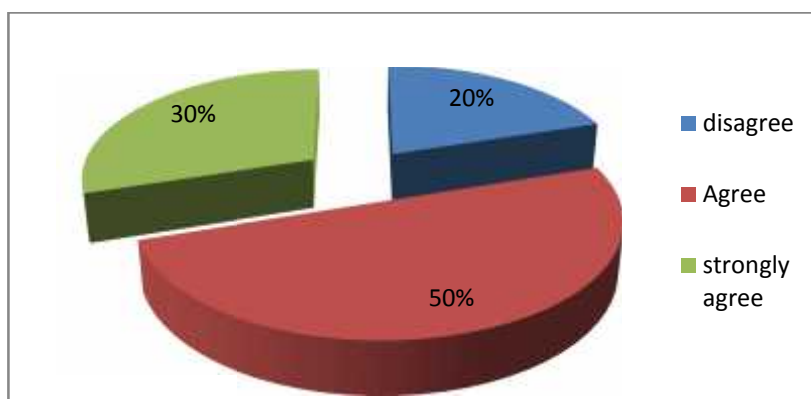
The table above reveals that out of the total number of 30 participants, 23 have predicted Katniss acting both gender traits, which represents 77% of the respondents, while 20% have predicted her more with female traits, and only one female participant aged between 12 to 14 perceived the powerful Katniss with more masculine traits without manifesting any feminine emotions.

- Comparison of both Genders Performance

For the purpose of investigating the effect of women's empowerment on both genders performance, the tenth question was constructed as follow, Can a powerful female protagonist surpass a male protagonist? And it aims to highlight the participants' perspectives about the powerful roles that females' depicted and if they are able to make women appear stronger and even surpasses males' performance.

**Figure 4. Comparison between the Performance of an Empowered Female and a Male**

**Protagonist**



The slices of the pie chart compare the participants' perspectives toward the ability of female performance to exceed male's one, most of the participants with 80% accepted the possibility of powerful female who can defeat male (50% agreed and 30% strongly agreed on it) which proves the decrease of the male dominance. From the other side, 20% disagreed with the idea.

- The expected characteristics for an ideal female character for adolescents

The researchers had conducted the eleventh question "What are the potential characteristics in a female protagonist that might have an impact upon adolescent readers to alter their biased assumptions about female roles?" to access the readers' opinions toward the most significant trait in female protagonist to subvert the traditional conceptualizations toward gender roles, thus, it aims is to know the potential basic characteristics that may strengthen the females' roles to create powerful heroine who is able to defeat stereotypical gender roles and to create an ideal protagonist who may affect readers' perception about her role.



**Table 5. The Characteristics Needed in a Female Character to Remove the Biased Assumptions of the Readers about Female Roles**

Age	12-14		15-18		19-21	
Gender	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Choices</b>						
<b>Humanistic</b>	00	02	04	00	01	00
<b>Heroic</b>	01	02	05	03	03	02
<b>Emotional logical balance</b>	02	04	02	07	03	05
<b>Strategic thinking</b>	00	02	02	04	04	00
<b>Others</b>	00	00	00	00	00	00

In this question, the participants have the ability to pick more than one answer, and the table shows that most of them choose emotional and logical balance as the first and most needed characteristics in a female protagonist in order to have an impact upon adolescent readers to alter their biased assumptions about female roles in literature because mainly females were well known for their over sensitivity that mainly prevented them to appear strong. This choice was based on the fact that it gained 43% from the total choices. The second largest percentage went for Heroic characteristics with 16 votes, which is equivalent to 30%, then the strategic thinking by 23%, and last the humanistic characteristics with only 13%.

### **3.2.3 The Potential Changes in the Participants' Opinions toward Gender Roles after Reading the Book**

- *The Hunger Games'* Females Performance

For the sake of examining the respondents' opinions after experiencing *The Hunger Games'* females performance and to collect the needed data to highlight the difference in their

perspectives before and after reading the book, the researchers prepared question twelve as, “How can you describe the females’ roles in *The Hunger Games*?” in order to study the participants’ views specifically about how they perceived *The Hunger Games*’ female roles throughout the novel.

**Table 6. The Participants’ Impression about the Females’ Roles in *The Hunger Games***

Age	12-14		15-18		19-21	
Gender	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Choices</b>						
<b>Too weak</b>	00	00	00	00	00	00
<b>Stereotypical roles</b>	00	00	00	00	00	00
<b>Equal to males</b>	00	02	03	00	02	02
<b>More powerful than males</b>	02	02	02	08	01	05

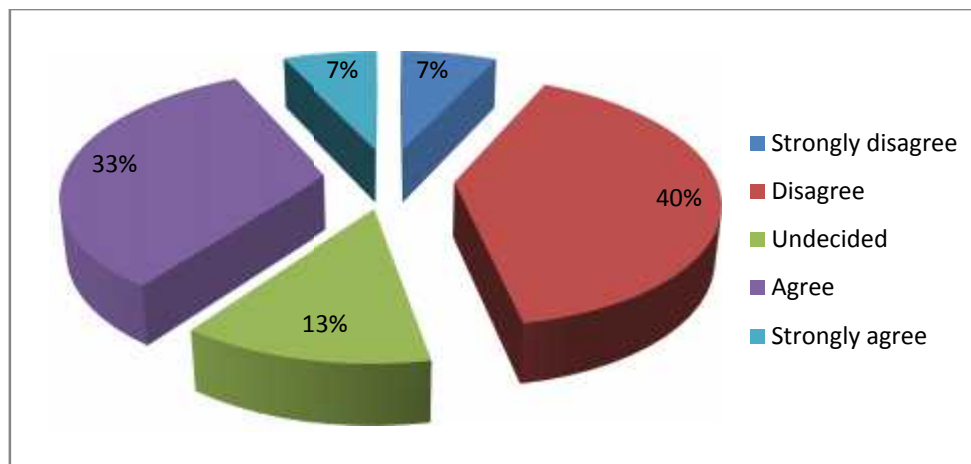
This table shows the participants various points of views toward the female characters performance in the book and it revealed that most of them described females’ roles in *The Hunger Games* as more powerful than males with highest percentage 70% , the latter was exceeded by female percentages by approximately 5% to became totally (75%). It also shows that 30% of the participants believed that females in the novel were equal to males’ performance and manifested similar power; however, it shows that none of participants perceived that they displayed weak roles or reflected the stereotypical representations.

- The Impact of Katniss’s Power on the Readers’ Focus on the Other Female Characters

The Heroine of *The Hunger Games* book was described as highly empowered character that can easily attract readers’ attention to focus on her; hence, it might be possible to marginalize the other female. The question thirteen constructed as, “Do you think that the empowerment of the protagonist Katniss undermined the other female characters?” is

designed to examine their view about the other females' performance, and if Katniss's power was the focus of attention.

**Figure 5. The influence of Katniss's Empowerment on the Other Female Characters**



The pie chart demonstrates data about the impacts of Katniss's empowerment on the other females throughout the book. According to 40% of the respondents, Katniss' power did not undermine the other female character as they also manifested strong personalities and skills. 33% from the whole number of the participants agreed that her higher empowerment undermined the other females and covered their roles; While only 13% still undecided if her power undermined the other female characters or not. The same percentage 7% was shared between those who strongly agreed and strongly disagreed on Katniss's power negative effect on the other females.

- Different Changes in Katniss's Character Detected by the Readers

Focusing on the protagonist's character, the question fourteen was formulated as "During the story, did any changes occur on Katniss' character?", in order to investigate whether the participants have noticed any changes in Katniss' character during the story, also to know how they perceived the changing image of her personality if found and how it developed, in addition, the participants may expose their views about the external factors which were the basic reason behind the changes in her personality.

**Table 7. The Changes in Katniss's Character According to the Participants**

Age	12-14		15-18		19-21	
Gender	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Choices</b>						
<b>Total change</b>	02	02	00	03	03	02
<b>Few changes</b>	00	01	03	06	00	04
<b>No change</b>	00	01	02	00	00	01

A percentage of 13% from the participants did not remark any change in Katniss's character, and they have explained that by her ability to balance between power and emotions all along the story, in addition to the fact that she was strong from the beginning of the story. And 47% of the participants remarked few changes in Katniss' character. Some of them focused on her emotions toward Peeta, which decreased her power and turned her into a more emotional girl, while the others saw that the struggles she faced made her more responsible for aiding her family and more powerful to protect them. In addition, she realized her strength and learned how to use it and how to control her emotions. Other 40% of the respondents remarked a total change on Katniss character. They explained that by her awareness of her power, responsibilities, and her position in the house and in society, which pushed her to transform from the little teenager who is still studying, into a hunter taking care of her family, then into a heroine by protecting her little sister Primrose, and last to a victor of the Games.

- **The Impact of the Masculine Traits on Katniss's Power**

The researchers tried to elaborate the details of Katniss' character, through asking whether Suzanne Collins' attribution of certain masculine traits to Katniss Everdeen represents the corner stone of her strength or not. Since Katniss had embodied both masculine and feminine roles, the aim of the fifteenth question is to examine how the participants

perceived the role of the masculine part in her powerful character and whether it contributed to influence Katniss' performance in the battlefield.

**Figure 6. The Role of the Masculine Traits in Katniss's Character**

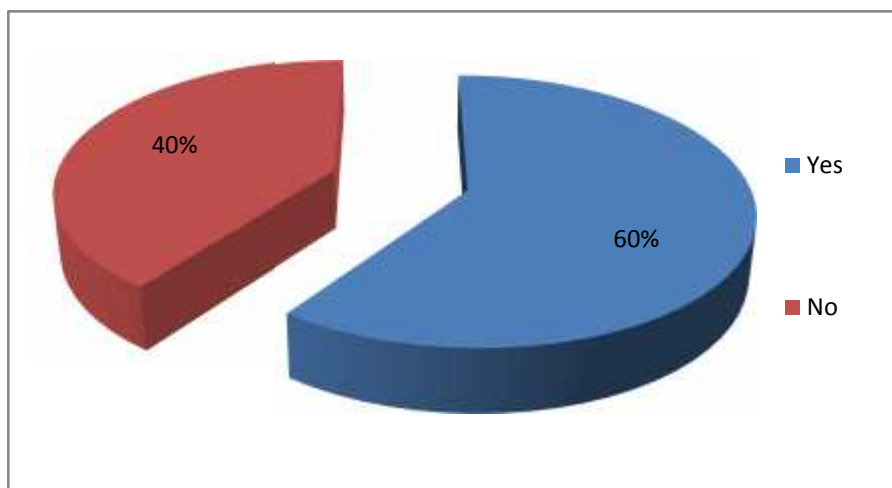
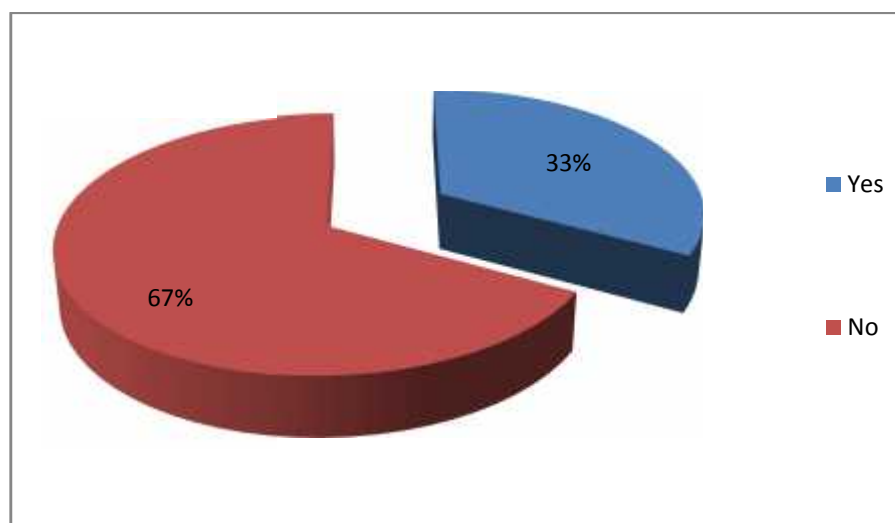


Figure 06 represents that 60% of the participants supported the view that the male traits in Katniss's character were as a corner stone for her power. First, because she masters archery and it was thanks to it that she scored a high mark and defended herself in the Games. Second, because she could not face males without having at least one of their traits. Last, if she had only female traits, she would not be able to reach any of her goals (feeding her family, protecting them, winning the Games); while 40% out of the respondents refused the male traits to be the corner stone of Katniss' power, since her strength was not for her as much as it was for the others, mainly a result of fear from hunger, death, and losing the people she loved. Adding to that, she was balancing between power and sensitivity since she did not intend to resemble males.

- **The Role of the Feminine Traits in Katniss's Character**

In relation to the previous question, this question number sixteen questions whether the feminine characteristics in Katniss Everdeen undermine her power or not, and it aims to investigate the participants' opinions about the feminine sensitivity and emotions' roles in the protagonist' character, to know if they had weakened her performance.

**Figure 7. The Impact of Katniss Femininity on her Power**



Only 33% agreed that the female traits undermined Katniss' power, because she could not control her emotions in some situations where she was supposed to be emotionless, and her struggles started only because of her weakness and strong love towards her sister, and even her love story with Peeta Mellark. Those participants agreed that she could get rid of all her troubles had she been emotionless. Whereas 67% saw that Katniss' female characteristics were complementary to the male traits to reach a certain perfection of balance between both. In addition, her sensibility and emotions were not a reason for surrender or weakness; instead they motivated her to be powerful and to find solutions for her nation's bad conditions of her nation. Katniss's emotions lead her to look for change played a great role in winning public interest, and people's support and it had never undermined her power but the opposite.

- The Impact of Women Empowerment on Males' Roles

Question seventeen that is "How do you perceive Katniss' performance in comparison to the male tributes' performance?" is designed to investigate the possible change in the readers' opinions after seeing Katniss' performance and comparing it with the males' one throughout the novel. For those who said that female is able to surpass males' performance before reading the novel, to prove their prediction, and for those who said no, whether they would change their opinion.

**Table 8. Comparison between Katniss's Performance and the Male Performance**

Age	12-14		15-18		19-21	
Gender	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
More powerful than males	02	03	03	05	02	03
Equal performance	00	01	02	04	00	03
Unique performance	00	00	00	00	01	01

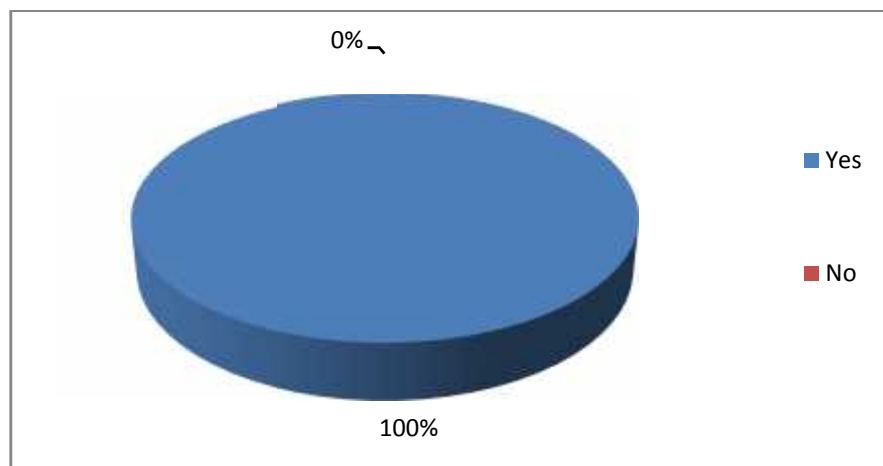
The answers of this question varied between three main perspectives, starting by the majority's view (18 participants/ 60%) that perceived Katniss as more powerful than males and better performing, because she was depending on her power, skills, intelligence, and strategies, while males were depending mainly on one of the previous mentioned points, which makes her performance much impressive than theirs. She surpassed them also by her determination, consequent to the huge support and confidence people have in her. The view of those who have seen Katniss' performance as equal to the males' performance (10 respondents/ 33%), justifying their view by the defense strategy she followed which gave the attackers an advantage in power, and her avoidance to kill people, in addition to the sensitivity and femininity that pushed her backward. Only two respondents (7%), however, thought that Katniss' performance is unique because she combined what cannot work together successfully. She killed but felt guilty, she felt weak but she resisted and won, she demonstrates a power mixed with humanity.

- The Impact of the Dystopian Conditions on Reinforcing Women's Roles in the Readers Minds

This question aimed to know whether the powerful role of Katniss in a dystopian space was able to provoke readers to change their views about women performance, the researchers asked the participants in question number eighteen whether they think that the

empowerment of Katniss in dystopian world may affect the adolescent readers' perception about women's performance.

**Figure 8. The Effect of the Empowerment of Katniss, in a Dystopian World, on the Adolescent Readers' Perception of Women Performance**



All the participants with no exceptions agreed that the empowerment of Katniss in dystopian world may affect the adolescent readers' perception about women performance. Katniss is well rounded and an emotionally driven character with flaws, in the sense that she committed what many may consider unspeakable acts, specifically taking people's lives. She demonstrated a caring and empathetic human side which levels her expressions of violence. She also demonstrated a fragile balance. Furthermore, she represented women from a new angle that have never been presented before, and she had represented the multiple roles the women can play through combining masculine and feminine roles in one character (the mother, the father, the survivor, the hunter, the hero...). Additionally, her strength and success as teenage girl in the unusual conditions of the dystopian Panem would oblige the readers to rethink about the status of women.

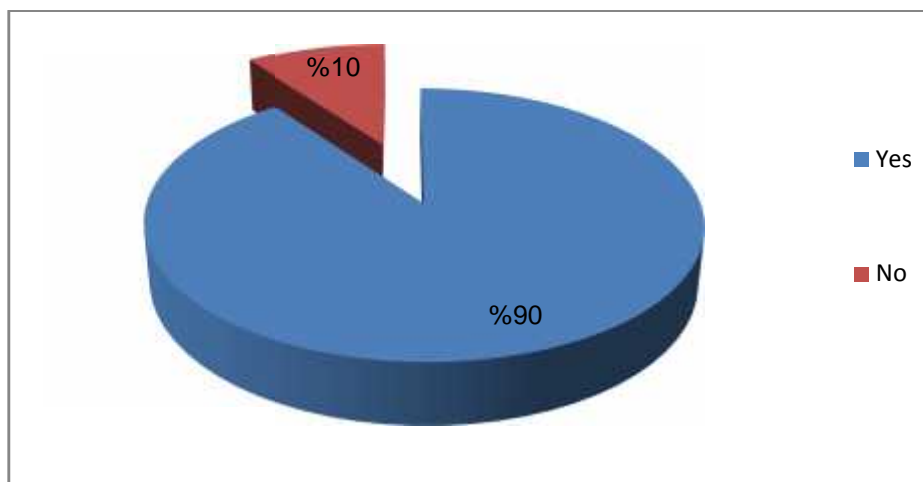
- Teenagers' Impression toward Katniss

After investigating the different perspectives of the adolescent readers about the Katniss' character, the researchers also question the possibility of Katniss to be an idol for female teenagers to follow according to the participants. Question nineteen was formed to



know how Katniss might be an ideal and impressive character for those teenagers, and to check what they prefer to adopt from her personality considering that she was obliged to kill for survival.

**Figure 9. Prospects for Katniss to be an Idol for Female Teenagers**



The majority of the participants 90% answered with a yes for Katniss to be an idol for teenage females for different reasons among which, her strength, resistance, intelligence, responsibility, and for being independent. Secondly, because she resisted all the bad things that happened to her and benefited from them in developing her personality, also she was able to increase girls' awareness about what they are capable of doing. Only 10% have not seen Katniss as an idol for teen girls, due to the aggressive reactions she had in most situations, and that she is still a killer even if she was defending herself, because we cannot give teenagers the permission to kill for whichever reason.

- The Reasons of Clove's Failure Despite her Power

“In your opinion, why Clove was not the heroine of the Games although she was a highly empowered character?” Is the question number twenty, which aims is unveil whether ferocity and power are only needed to create super powerful heroine for the readers.

The answers of all the respondents agreed that Clove cannot be a heroine only because she is powerful, because power alone is not sufficient. In addition, she entered the Games to

fulfill her desire of killing and torturing, she is like a killing machine, and she had no emotions, she lacked the strategic thinking because she thought that she is not in need for that since she is very powerful, she was arrogant and underestimated the other tributes.

- The impact of the Female Character's Power on the Attention She can Receive

Question twenty one that is “Do you think that Clove could receive similar public interest as Katniss Everdeen if she was the heroine?” was designed to investigate whether Clove's ferocity, physical power and skills were enough to achieve public interest including the readers' interest and support.

**Table 9. The Extent to which Clove Can Receive Public Interest**

Age	12-14		15-18		19-21	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
<b>Choices</b>						
<b>She can attract public interest</b>	00	00	02	02	01	03
<b>She cannot attract public interest</b>	02	04	01	07	04	04

Table nine shows that there are two contradicted views about the ability of Clove's power to attract the public interest, the first assumed that she cannot attract the public interest because she lacks that impressive character which can bring eyes on her, and she was among a team with two powerful guys that reduced her attraction. In addition, she lacked strategic thinking which means that she won't last long in the Games and no one will be attracted by a temporary character. While the second believed that Clove can attract the capitol's citizens since she can give them a good bloody show due to her ability of being emotionless and bloodlust. This view was reflected on the readers' personalities, thus, the participants who preferred an emotionless tribute, agreed that Clove can attract public interest as Katniss did; while the participants who required the presence of a humanistic part in the characters' personalities, disagreed about Clove's ability to attract the readers or viewers of the Games.

- The Reason behind the Female Careers Failure

By asking “What was missing in the female careers characters to be other heroines for Panem?” the researchers aimed to highlight the reason behind the female career’s failure in the Games, and to find the corner stone of their weakness to win the position of heroines or to find the qualities found in Katniss’s character which enabled her to win the Games, and peoples’ support, and was missed in the female careers.

### Glimmer

**Table 10. The Missing Heroine’ Characteristics in Glimmer’s Character**

<b>Age</b>	<b>12-14</b>		<b>15-18</b>		<b>19-21</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Choices</b>						
<b>Power and skills</b>	01	01	04	06	03	03
<b>Humanity</b>	01	01	03	04	01	01
<b>Strategy</b>	02	04	04	01	03	01
<b>Others</b>	00	00	00	00	00	00

Table ten shows the statistics of the missing characteristics in Glimmer’s personality to be another heroine for Panem, according to the participants. Although she was a career tribute, Glimmer lacked power and skills according to 41% of the participants and that can be justified mainly by her failure to use the arch to kill Katniss despite the fact that she was not far from her. 25% from the participants saw in her personality an absence of humanity since she was a career tribute and all the careers were trained to kill not to feel, while 34% said that she lacks strategy.

## Clove

**Table 11. The Missing Heroine' Characteristics in Clove's Character**

<b>Age</b>	<b>12-14</b>		<b>15-18</b>		<b>19-21</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Power and skills</b>	01	01	02	00	01	01
<b>Humanity</b>	01	03	03	05	04	03
<b>Strategy</b>	01	02	04	07	03	03
<b>Others</b>	00	00	00	00	00	00

Although she resisted for a long period in the Games and she was very skillful in using knives, but few participants (13%) claim that she missed the power and the skills in Clove's character and that was the main reason for not being a heroine for them. While 42% said that it was the absence of humanity which kept her away from being a heroine and this is due to being a member from the careers team, and the majority (45%) agreed that she only lacked strategy which may control her power, skills, and desire for killing, also to guide her efficiently in the Games.

- The Different Influence of the Poor Social Conditions on Characters

Having nearly the same living conditions and empowerment as Katniss, why did the female tributes from the poor districts such as Rue lacked the ambition for change? Was the twenty third question, that was asked to highlight the difference between females who were raised in similar living condition and differ in their views for change, for the sake of investigating whether similar social conditions were enough to create a powerful personality with an ambition to reverse the whole situation in Panem.

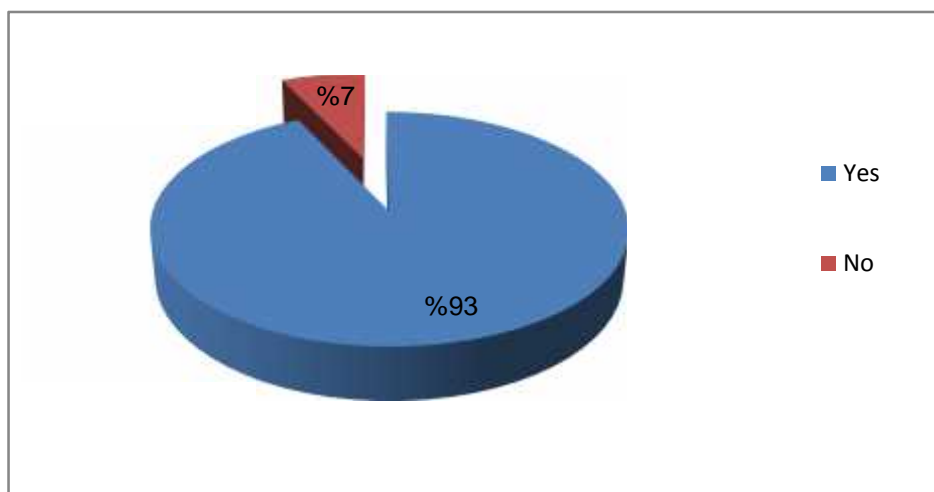
The answers of this question show that all the respondents have agreed that the other tributes from poor districts did not have a chance to discuss those topics in their districts,

unlike Katniss who had a chance to do that in the meadow with gale, and it can be a stimulus for change. They preferred the bad life on death; since the capitol can destroy them they lacked Katniss' determination and skills. Katniss received a huge support while they do not share similar conditions but not similar way of thinking they did not lack ambition for change as much as they lacked courage to face the capitol.

- The effects of the social circumstances on the readers view about women

Question twenty four "Can we consider that the characters of the girls of *The Hunger Games* were a product of their social circumstances?" is conceived to find out whether the readers took into consideration the effects of social circumstances on shaping the characters' personality and perspectives, or they judged them according to their gender.

**Figure 10. The Role of the Social Conditions of Panem in Affecting the Readers' View about the Female Characters**

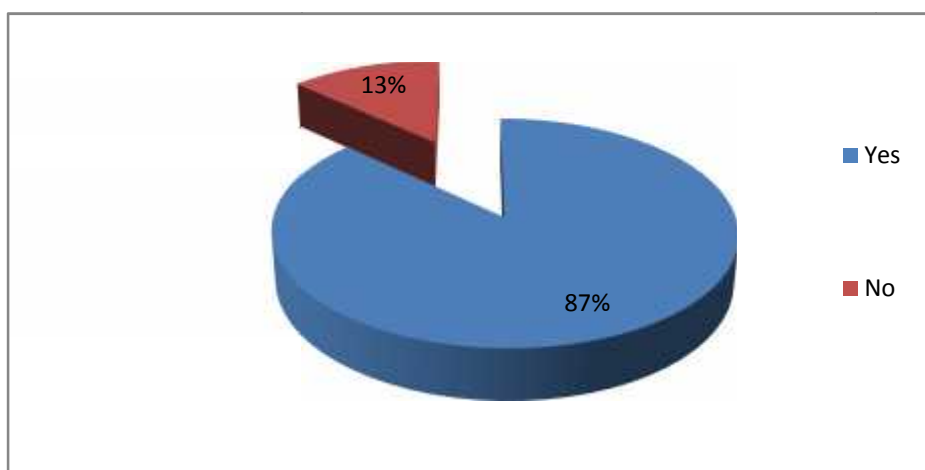


According to figure number 10, 93% of the participants, the social conditions in Panem are the main contributors to the bad characteristics of the females' characters of *The Hunger Games* because of the poor conditions in their districts, the lack of food, being obliged to work and the pressure of the capitol. In addition to the Games and deaths they causes each year, which led to creating aggressive girls, killers, and females without femininity. Whereas 7% denied any effect of the social circumstances on the female

characters giving Katniss, Primrose, Madge, Rue as examples of females who resist the social conditions and created strong personalities yet feminine. Those views indicate that the participants have not judged the female characters based on their gender.

The Avox's Rebellion between Empowerment and ordinary performance. The researchers formulated the question twenty five as "Do you think that the rebellion of the Avox can classify her among the empowered girl?" aiming to investigate if the Avox girl's actions toward the Capitol are able to signal a sign of empowerment to the readers although she was qualified with punishment.

**Figure 11. Interpretations of the Avox's Rebellion**



Most respondents (87%) classified the Avox girl among the empowered female characters because her rebellion or the act of cutting her tongue is a clarification that she have challenged the capitol's rules, and that's an act of power from her since she already knows the results but tried to change her situation. In contrast, only 13% have seen that her rebellion was not a result of any power or a sign of empowerment, because it is not clear why her tongue was cut, and even if we consider that she fled in order not to be enslaved in the capitol, that cannot be power since she have chosen to escape instead of confrontation fighting for freedom.

Powerful Secondary Female Characters in the Novel. The researchers asked the participants if they would write a name of a female character that seemed empowered for them, other than the heroine, in order to cover all readers' opinions about whether the other females were empowered or it was only Katniss who enjoyed this feature in the novel.

**Table 12. Strong Female Characters other than Katniss**

<b>Age</b>	<b>12-14</b>		<b>15-18</b>		<b>19-21</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Choices</b>						
<b>None of the characters</b>	00	01	01	02	01	00
<b>Rue</b>	01	01	02	04	01	01
<b>Clove</b>	01	01	01	01	01	04
<b>Fox face</b>	00	01	01	02	02	02

Few participants 17% said that there are no other empowered female characters except Katniss Everdeen, while 83% from them have seen that Katniss was not the only empowered females. 33% have chosen Clove as an empowered female, due to her power and skills which propped her situation in the Games. And 30% have chosen Rue as instead, since she was able to use her knowledge about plants properly, and she was very skillful in climbing and jumping between the trees thanks to her small size; whereas 20% have chosen Fox face as an empowered female for her strategic thinking.

- The Impact of Katniss's Empowerment on the Readers View about Women

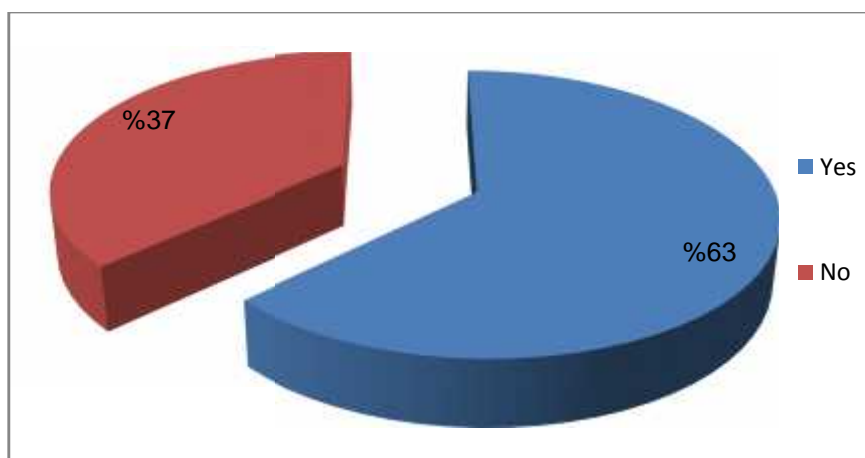
“After experiencing katniss's empowerment throughout the novel, how can you describe your own view about females in literature?” was the twenty eighth question that aimed to highlight the impression that Katniss's power might have on their views to rethink of female role in literature especially when referring to old novels that depicted subordinate female roles.

Consequently, all the participants agreed that the Role of Katniss Everdeen was so unique and powerful that it can take women to a different level of improvement, and she opened new literary perspective about women since she embodied new sides of women's characters.

- A Powerful Female between Reality and Fiction

Last question was “Can the vision of Katniss Everdeen, the powerful girl in the novel reflect the vision of real women?” and it aimed to explore to which extent a fictional character can be related to the real women in readers' mind.

**Figure 12. The Vision Represented by Katniss between Reality and Fiction**



Although she is a fictional character but 63% of the participants accepted that the vision of Katniss Everdeen, the powerful girl in the novel, could reflect the vision of real women especially when we talk about females in our era. Since they share many characteristics with Katniss such as being responsible, independent, workers, care givers, confident and can be even fighters to defend their families. Katniss reflects two sides of women, first that in fiction or in reality each woman is suffering differently, but they are still resisting. Secondly, the vision of a powerful woman regardless to how she is powerful because all women are strong but each in her own way. The rest of the participants or 37% perceive Katniss as a fictional character that will never exist in reality, and even if she existed she will be less powerful, empowered in a different way, or rare to be found.



### **3.3 The Analysis of the Survey's Sections' Statistics**

This part will include a discussion and analysis for the previously mentioned answers and statistics focusing mainly on the second and the third parts of the survey, to extract a result that may help the researchers to achieve the targeted aim behind this survey. Each section's statistics are going to be analyzed individually, and then they will be discussed together under one title to resume the main results obtained from the whole statistics of all the answers and sections of the survey.

#### **3.3.1 The Results of the Second Section's Statistics**

Before reading the book, and as statistics in first figure show, most participants agreed that women's roles are determined by the nature of their gender, which means that they have perceived women's roles in literature based on the feminine biological structure. In fact, this opinion goes back to the patriarchal society, in which women were obliged to be dependent on men, and their roles in society were restricted to specific home duties; so all the writers who belong to those societies, will transmit in their writings what they have seen in their communities; and by spreading those literatures, the view of the house wives, care givers, sensitive, and weak women was also spreading and taking its roots too deep in the society. But the development of society in general, and literature in particular and the emergence of feminism movements then women's empowerment, lead to a positive change in women's roles which in turn affected the readers views about them. This was clearly shown in the answers of the respondents in figures two and three, through a majority agreement that women started moving to the center after women's empowerment especially within the dystopian fiction. In addition, they have chosen emotional and logical balance as the most needed characteristic in female character to enable her changing the biased view about women, followed by heroic, strategic thinking and humanistic depending on the same order.

In relation to *The Hunger Games* characters, there were positive expectations for the female characters, due to the previous mentioned changes; which allowed the participants to accept females in different roles and with different characteristics. It was the case for Katniss Everdeen, the heroine of the novel, where she was expected by most participants for acting with both gender traits, and described as more powerful than males.

### **3.3.2 Third Section's Statistics' Analysis**

*The Hunger Games'* Females were not an exception from the huge change in women's roles as well as the readers' views about women's roles. According to most readers who have answered the survey, most female characters in the novel were more powerful than males, and that the power of the heroine Katniss Everdeen could not undermine even the secondary female characters. These answers can show the interest was given by the respondents to the females' roles in the story, and they should have discovered an important characteristic in each female; which were credited with making them strong enough to attract readers' interest, despite the existence of all the male characters in the story.

During the story most participants have remarked either few or total change on Katniss's character, as a sign for personality's development since the common changes were becoming more responsible, more aware, and stronger; which are all positive and likable characteristics in a woman character in comparison to the passive roles they used to act. Moreover, and in relation to the previous answers of the participants who have said that Katniss was acting in both gender traits, they have thought that the masculine traits in Katniss's character have added to her power, at the same time, feminine traits did not undermined her power. Those choices can be justified with the success Katniss achieved by controlling her sensitive emotions of her feminine innateness, and her higher aggression acquired through the traumatic events in her life; this was the unique characteristic in Katniss's personality which made her more successful than the other females who tended

either to aggressiveness or sensitiveness only. In addition, the participants believed that Katniss' personality's mixture between masculine and feminine traits was not the source of her power or attraction, as it was the balance she achieved between both traits throughout the story. In their opinion, her role was much empowered that she surpassed the male characters, since she owned their skills and strength additionally to her own humanity and intelligence; for that the participants made her a turning point of the weak women view they held previously. Furthermore, Katniss represents a good idol for female teenagers according to most of the readers' perspectives due to her positive traits although she killed. Thus, it can be assumed that the effect of Katniss's empowerment was positive as the respondents seemed to select the best of her traits as humanity, responsibility, love, sacrifice, logic and emotions balance. However, most of the participants seemed to criticize other females especially the careers for lacking humanity and ambition although they claimed their higher empowerment, and that was the main reason for losing the public interest and the chance to be heroines or victors of the Games.

These results indicate a reader's awareness of the content of the book, especially the developments of the role of women, because their choices proved that they have understand the changes of women's roles, and make the difference between different levels and ways of the empowerment Collins gave to her females characters.

### **3.3.3 General Outcomes of the Survey's Main Question**

On the light of what has been discussed in this dissertation and based on the answers of the adolescent respondents, undoubtedly there is a positive impact of women's empowerment in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* on the adolescent readers. Furthermore, this empowerment created a challenge to the stereotypical image through which women were depicted in earlier literature, and split the lens into different corners that gave them a more important part in the story to act. For that, *The Hunger Games* gave a touch of

perfection to the improvements in women's roles, since it collected what the postmodern writers and young adult dystopian literature gave to all females in segments, to one woman as a whole. Which means that the role of either an intelligent, working or a fighter are all or most gathered in one personality of one female character. Those results of the *The Hunger Games*' success are proved by the confession of the majority of our respondents that the empowered females as Katniss, Clove, Glimmer, Foxface, Avox girl, Rue and others are a good illustration of the combination between a sensitive, feminine, brave, skillful, responsible and independent women, also they have created a new sense of power mixed either with sensitiveness or humanity and they were able to balance them in an impressive way that could never be missed or ignored by the readers.

The investigation about the impact of women's empowerment and challenging gender stereotype in *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins poured in one end, which is, the readers were positively influenced by the book. This influence was mainly related to women's roles' interpretations, where most participants become aware of the changes and developments that have been introduced to the roles of women during postmodernism especially in this young adult dystopian novel. The adolescents' awareness was embodied in their focus on all the females in the story, including the good and bad characteristics in their personalities, also it was clearly shown in their accommodation of the importance of women's roles in literature, and understanding women's ability to perform different roles, regardless to their requirements, because they possess advantages that motivate them to display their hidden power.

## Conclusion

This research is an in-depth study and an investigation of women's empowerment and the challenge of the traditional gender roles in the young adult book *The Hunger Games* (2009). It examines how the postmodern writer challenged the traditional gender roles within dystopian to alter biased assumptions about women's roles, hence, subverting male dominance ideologies as well as subordination in an equal society. It argues that Collins succeeded to move to female empowerment as a result of the strong portrayal of her female characters roles as they were enabled more independence, confident decision makers, and contributed to gain social change through rebellion. Thus, the powerful new representation might possibly have great impacts on young readers' psyche toward women's position in society and their roles, as well as investigating the possibility of dystopian female heroines to represent an ideal role model through experiencing their new psychological struggles which might seem relevant to their own.

Since this dissertation argues for Collins's attempt to challenge the stereotypical image of women in dystopian YA fiction and to alter the biased conceptualizations about feminine inferiority, then, Collins moves to women empowerment due to the strong portrayal of females' roles. Since the book is directed to young readers, the thesis argues for possible impacts of this empowerment on their psyche. Thus, in order to attain the designed objectives, the researchers analyzed the content through the Feministic and psychoanalytic lenses, conducting a survey study to investigate the possible impacts of this empowerment. First, the dissertation was divided into three chapters to provide background about the concepts used through theoretical descriptive of feminism and psychoanalysis, then, content analysis based on the latter. Finally, the survey would include open-ended questions, closed-ended questions, which allow for a deep analysis of the readers' opinions, hence, constructing a clear image

about the impacts of empowerment on young readers to create a positive view about women's roles and to alter any previous biased assumptions.

This research entitled "Women's Empowerment and Challenging Gender Stereotype in Postmodern Dystopian Young Adult Fiction" is divided into three chapters. The first one is a form of theoretical overview, it investigated the postmodern era new tendencies and the major changes brought to young adult literary genre, which moved to adopt more powerful female protagonist in dystopian settings, as well as providing background information about the various postmodern literary concepts and themes. Since *The Hunger Games* belongs to science fiction and dystopian genre, the chapter covered the major characteristics of both genres including the dystopian protagonist's character. Moreover, it examined feminism and psychoanalysis theories through introducing the history of feminism with major focus on the third wave that served the dissertation's themes which dealt with femininity empowering center and gender roles and also defining the concept of women's empowerment according to different scholars. In psychoanalysis theory, the chapter covered the major psychoanalytic concepts used to interpret a literary text including the various defence mechanisms used by the characters. The second chapter entitled "*The Hunger Games* in the Postmodern Feministic and Psychoanalytic Context" is the analytical part of the first chapter. In this chapter, the researchers analyzed the postmodern elements and YA genre characteristics in the novel through applying the different concepts explained before, as well as, analyzing the novel's dystopian and science fiction genre characteristics. Concerning Feministic and Psychoanalytic analysis of the novel, the researchers explored how Collins altered the stereotypical image of women in dystopia and moved to females' empowerment in an equal society through their strong roles' portrayal. Moreover, the researchers analyzed the females' characters psyche (Id, Ego, Super Ego) and analyzed the various defence mechanisms used by the characters in reaction to their traumatic experiences that suit the dystopian genre. The last chapter is a

survey entitled “The Impacts of Women Empowerment in Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games* on the Readers’ Psyche”. This dissertation covered a short introduction to the potential effect of the distinctive females’ representations by Collins through gender roles subversion and empowerment on young readers, as well as, the possibility of characters imperfect psychology in dystopia to affect young readers who might associate relevant experiences to their own. Hence, they are more likely to identify with the characters and adopt their powerful strategies to solve their own problems leading to forming a role model. Then the chapter covered the survey analysis including personal information, seeking readers’ knowledge about women’ roles before reading the book, and after reading it to highlight how they would be affected with powerful characters roles and remove any biased assumptions about females’ roles, and which character they mostly identified with his/her personality. Finally, the findings were analyzed.

The completion of this thesis entitled “Women Empowerment and Challenging Gender Stereotype in Postmodern Young Adult literature” on *The Hunger Games* 2008 affirms that Collins had successfully liberated the female roles from the constraints of patriarchal society within the dystopian genre, hence, she created an equal society when both genders struggle to resolve their bad conditions. Regardless of their gender, *The Hunger Games*’ females’ characters had gained equal access to display strong roles. For example, when some of them were able to have masculine skills including hunting, throwing knives, being responsible for their families, working in the orchards, being tough and aggressive, some of the males had the physical masculine strength but they worked in the kitchen, being highly romantic and emotional. Collins balanced both gender roles in her novel, hence, she does not seem to inferiorize males’ performance to prove females’ capacity to hold powerful roles. She achieved this result depending on the importance of personal discourse of shaping

ones' personality and roles regardless of gender identity. This reformation of women's image challenged the gender stereotype and empowered the female roles in literature.

Throughout this dissertation, the researchers argued that Collins subversion of gender roles and her successful attempt to create an equal society for both gender had highly empowered the female roles. As a postmodern writer, Collins selection of the dystopian genre had widely moved females to center roles to affirm their voice and identity to contribute along with males to the development of Panem through ending the Capitol's oppressive rules. However, she strengthened the females' roles over the males one through giving women more chance to adopt the savior role and to claim all citizens rights through revolution. Hence, females' characters in *The Hunger Games* did not just emphasis their own self esteem, confidence, and choosing their own life, but they moved further in their empowerment to make powerful rebellious decisions even in the battle field where most of males just sought survival. Moreover, and as a result of the creation of an equal society where both genders participated to improve their situations, females were empowered as they were entitled to equal access to power because in this hard conditions females were not motionless but a powerful support that can be depended on to resolve any problem. Furthermore, they affirmed higher power through their emotions and logical balance, strategies, which proved that feminine emotions are no longer signs of weakness but a powerful motivation to aim for a better social change. However, females' empowerment throughout *The Hunger Games* was invested into two directions positively and negatively, for example, when the protagonist and other females made strong decisions and accessed power to resolve societal problems and participated in the development of Panem, some others invested this empowerment for the sake of entertainment and proving their superiority.

The new representation of powerful females within the dystopian genre proves its impacts on the shaping of a new psychology for powerful heroines as a reaction to non-



idealistic social situations. Throughout the novel, most of the females' characters manifested complex psychological struggles to create imperfect psychology. However, the protagonist Katniss Everdeen manifested the most psychological conflicts due to certain traumatic events, she had experienced hard conditions and contradictory feelings between hatred toward the regime that restricted their freedom and obliged her to kill for survival, between her love and doubt toward the future, including the traumatic experiences with poverty, death, and her mother's sickness that ended up with nightmares and strong alienation and fragmentation. All these conflicts created an imperfect psychological personality that widely influenced young readers to relate with the protagonist rather than other females as they associate these experiences with their own in real life. The various archetypes (the rebel, caregiver, father archetypes, persona, mother archetype, hero archetype) that Katniss manifested throughout the novel portrayed her distinctive character that positively affected adolescent to affirm that masculine along with feminine traits in a female just create their perfect ideal model. The protagonist had widely influenced young readers to adopt her emotion and logical balance as well as her sense of humanity; the latter was adopted as an excuse to forgive her killing actions claiming Katniss's human sense caused her psychological torture, which made readers relate to her regardless of the other females who had power, but no emotions.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. The Survey

#### The Impact of Women's Empowerment in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* on the Adolescent Readers' Psyche

Thank you for accepting to take part in this study, which aims to investigate any possible impact of women's empowerment in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* (first book of the trilogy) on adolescent readers' psyche. This survey should take between 5 to 10 minutes to be answered, and it is important to note that there are no right or wrong answers. You, as the respondent, will be assured anonymity and all responses you provide will be kept in the strictest confidentiality.

- For more clarification, here are some needed definitions of the key words in this survey according to the meaning it is used for in this study:
  - ✓ **Protagonist:** A protagonist is the central character or leading figure in poetry, narrative, novel or any other story. A protagonist is sometimes a "hero" to the audience or readers. The word originally came from the Greek language, and in Greek drama, it refers to the person who led the chorus. Later on, the word started being used as a term for the first actor in order of performance. This major character can be a male or a female.
  - ✓ **Note:** the male or the female character will have no special characteristics except the one of the protagonist.
  - ✓ **Women empowerment:** It is the females' ability to challenge subordination and gain control over ideologies, institutions, and resources in order to surpass male power.
  - ✓ **Dystopian literature:** is a genre of fictional writing used to explore social and political structures in 'a dark, nightmare world.' The term **dystopia** is defined as a society characterized

by poverty, squalor or oppression and the theme is most commonly used in science fiction and speculative fiction genres.

### I. Personal Information:

Please put an «X» in the corresponding space to the desired answer, or provide a response when prompted:

1. Age		
12-14 .....	15-18 .....	over 18 .....
2. Gender		
Male .....	Female .....	other/ prefer not to say .....
3. Field of study .....		
4. Have you read The Hunger Games novel? Yes ..... No .....		
5. How many times have you read The Hunger Games? .....		

### II. Before reading the book:

6. Does the gender nature of women determine the female's roles in literature?

Strongly disagree ..... Disagree ..... Undecided ..... Agree ..... Strongly agree  
.....

7. After women's empowerment, do you think that gender is still capable of defining the females' roles in literature?

Strongly disagree ..... Disagree ..... Undecided ..... Agree ..... Strongly agree  
.....

8. Do you think that the preferences for female characters have radically changed within dystopian fiction?

Strongly disagree ..... Disagree ..... Undecided ..... Agree ..... Strongly agree  
 .....

9. How do you perceive Katniss’s traits as a female protagonist?

Female traits ..... male traits..... both gender traits ..... other (please specify bellow) .....  
 .....

10. Can a powerful female protagonist surpass a male protagonist?

Strongly disagree ..... Disagree ..... Undecided ..... Agree ..... Strongly agree  
 .....

11. What are the potential characteristics in a female protagonist that might have an impact upon adolescent readers to alter their biased assumptions about female roles?

Humanistic..... Heroic .... Emotional and logical balance ..... Strategic thinking .....  
 Other (please specify bellow) ...  
 .....

**III. After reading the book:**

12. How can you describe the females’ roles in *The Hunger Games*?

Too weak ..... Stereotypical roles ..... Equal to males’ ..... More powerful than males’  
 .....

13. Do you think that the empowerment of the protagonist Katniss undermined the other female characters?

Strongly disagree ..... Disagree ..... Undecided ..... Agree ..... Strongly agree .....

14. During the story, did any changes occur on Katniss’ character?

Total change ..... Few changes ..... No changes .....

- Mention any remarkable change (s)

.....  
 .....



15. Do you think that Suzanne Collins attribution of certain masculine traits to Katniss Everdeen represents the corner stone of her strength?

Yes ..... No .....

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....  
.....

16. Do the feminine characteristics in Katniss Everdeen undermine her power?

Yes ..... No .....

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....  
.....

17. How do you perceive Katniss’s performance in comparison to the male tributes’ performance?

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....  
.....

18. Do you think that the empowerment of Katniss in dystopian world may affect the adolescent readers’ perception about women performance?

Yes ..... No .....

- Please expand your response:

.....

.....  
.....

19. Can Katniss be an idol for female teenagers to follow?

Yes ..... No .....

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....  
.....

20. In your opinion, why Clove was not the heroine of the games although she was a highly empowered character?

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....

21. Do you think that Clove was able to receive similar public interest as Katniss Everdeen if she was the heroine?

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....

22. What was missing in the female careers' characters to be other heroines for Panem?

a. Glimmer

Power and skills ..... humanity ..... lack of strategy ..... other (please specify bellow)

.....  
.....

b. Clove

Power and skills ..... humanity ..... lack of strategy ..... other (please specify bellow)

.....

23. Having nearly the same living conditions and empowerment as Katniss, why did the female tributes from the poor districts such as Rue lacked the ambition for change?

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....

24. Can we consider that the characters of the girls of *The Hunger Games* were a product of their social circumstances?

Yes ..... No .....

25. Do you think that the rebellion of the Avox can classify her among the empowered girl?

Yes ..... No .....

- Why? (Please justify)

.....

26. Other than the heroine, would you write a name of a female character that seemed empowered to you?

.....

- Mention how she was empowered briefly:

.....  
.....  
.....

27. After experiencing katniss's empowerment throughout the novel, how can you describe your own view about females in literature?

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....

28. Can the vision of Katniss Everdeen, the powerful girl in the novel, reflect the vision of real women?

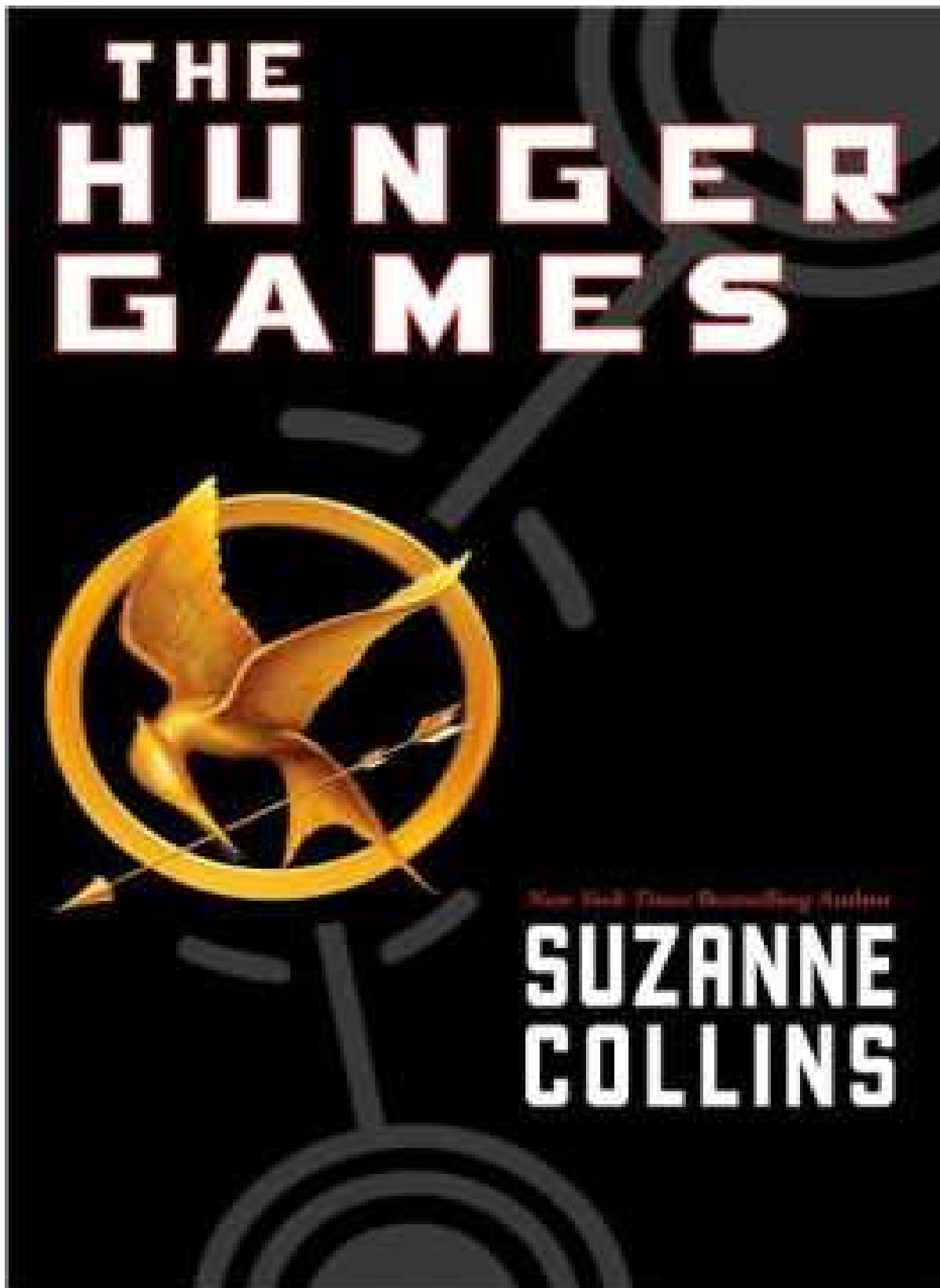
Yes ..... No .....

- Please expand your response:

.....  
.....

**Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey, your responses are appreciated and will be treated with the strictest confidentiality.**

Appendix B. The Cover Page of *The Hunger Games* Book



**Appendix C. Picture of the Group through which we have Contacted the Participants**

