



Female Protagonist in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*: A Mythical Heroism in the Modern Age

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Abstract

A myth is considered as a manner of communication or a missive that is not an object, an idea, or a concept, but a creative manner of making sense in human existence. The matter of making sense of a given world is the main circumstance of human actuality. So, myth offers a great influence and contribution to make a sense of human history. Moreover, a myth on which social consciousness is based provides the inner world of mankind to meet the outside world. From a literary point of view, mythical literature reflects the way people recognize truth, but mythical signs have a significant place in the creation of social truth. Accordingly, social consciousness is only personified in social performs, thus myth is interweaved with these performs. Myth can be seen as an archetypal way to interpret a human's psychology and subconscious, so all realities in the lifecycle, particularly life and death, are matters of mythologies. Traditions and myths have the mystery of human existence and simultaneously they signify the first products of creative production, forming the starting point of artistic and artistic narrative fictions coming after them. Myth forms the starting point of innovative and artistic narrative fiction coming after myth. As such, myth is seen as the seeds of the future that will overflow and it uses these literary formulas of the artistic prodigy of the individuals and the conscious artist talent of society. Because of that, fiction is under the influence of mythology as one of the most operative and effective forms of art in the social and cultural field. As a result, all cultural features shape the same socio-cultural frame undergo the production process according to the power of each other. Therefore, it becomes an interesting and challenging spot for many women writers of the modern age; one of these writers is Suzanne Collins (1962-). This study is an attempt to trace the mythical abilities that affect the female protagonist in Suzanne Collins' dystopian fiction, *The Hunger Games*, in the modern age.

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1. Introduction

Mythical heroism originates in the traditional stories during history has been applied to many different perceptions in different civilizations, philosophies, and different social cultures. The mythical heroism as a signifier for the meaning of myth changes according to the objectives of the period it reflects. Traditionally, mythical heroism fights for individual glory, yet honor has little with those who are fighting in the modern age. Mythical heroism in the twentieth century is characterized to be constructed in the figure of a new mythical female protagonist that is a loyal, dutiful, and respectful warrior. On the other hand, because of wars and the rise of different states, there is a necessity for new mythologies depicting mythical female protagonists who fight and sacrifice by themselves to protect their land.

So, the modern female protagonist has the potential to behave in a mythical-like figure, even when this involves living a normal life with courage and endurance. As a result, all the conceivable origins and causes for such performance are scrutinized. (Bownas, 2018: 56)^[5].

The Hunger Games in its modern mythical import dramatizes central cultural mythology about self-contradictory values embodied in American Dream. Katniss' story represents extreme differences between the two end poles of American society, life in her region is backward and technology is minimal. On the other hand, Capitol is categorized as the essence of advancement and exploitation in time that her life is reliant on wasteland where she hunts fate to stay alive, sacrifice herself to protect her people, and win the death mythological game. Katniss said "I'm ashamed I never tried to help [Avon] in the woods. That I let the Capitol kill the boy and mutilate her without lifting a finger. Just like I was watching the Games." (Collins, 2008: 85)^[10] However, the modern myth of the western world seems to be a manifestation of the wilderness of technology more than the wilderness of nature which is metaphorically expressed as a monster-state that is invented in *The Hunger Games*. Moreover, the society of *The Hunger Games* is a too complex system of rituals that efficiently sustain the American dream monstrous dictatorship which demonstrates power and means to traumatize the district population. (Limpár, 202: 182).

In modern mythical games, the focus is on the entertainment importance of the costumes of the tributes and the setting of the game abandoning any determination of tragedy. On the other hand, the old-fashioned tragedy's purpose is to provoke the influence of the catharsis that means relief or purging of tough and suppressed emotions. According to *The Hunger Games*, Collins exposes the debate over the ethical issues of the wars especially in cultures that promote ferocity and depravity without the determination of catharsis as a sign of entertainment. So, the writer creates the mythical female protagonist with her mythical battles to guide her readers through such a mythical culture. The mythical games involve double struggle, the external struggle between characters and the internal one that Katniss suffers from by which she attempts to exercise ethical agency after determining what is ethical. Thus, according to the criterion of such society, Katniss creates her ethical manner that is built on what she knows to be ethically right not on what society promotes to be right. (Ann, 2020: 41-42)^[2].

Moreover, *The Hunger Games* exposes the hypocrisy of the moral slogans which most rebels call that are based on strong moral subjects. Collins reveals the corruption of moral agency during the time of war. If the matter related to the ordinary game aims at entertaining, there will be sort of moral issues throughout the games. But, if the game is a deadly game in which each soldier tries to save himself whatever the result, the moral requirements will be crushed to achieve the victory. During wartime, the soldier's moral agency is spontaneously allied with the army's entire moral aim and therefore the ethics of the leader can obscure the soldier's moral conduct. So, during the deadly game which seems to be a disastrous war, the rebels perform horrible deeds in the name of peace. The wartime removes the mask of the revolution's slogans and bans the rebels' minds from the moral hypocrisy. Moreover, Collins addresses such moral hypocrisy and corruption of moral agency within times of wars throughout Katniss' depression and dismay of such corrupted deeds. Yet, during the war games, Katniss

sacrifices her morality by refusing to argue against the team's battle corrupted plan. Though Katniss should decide whether to forfeit her moral ability to enact her desired agency or to act at all, the death war game is won by the rebels but at great cost. (Ibid: 52).

2. Methodology

2.1. The Impact of the Classical Myth in The Hunger Games

Traditional myths are one of the ancient beliefs and values of humanity and it is likely to find traces even in our day since they are subconscious sides of societies. In Greek mythology, the supernatural abilities of mythical heroism are usually based on war strategies. Moreover, the use of mechanisms such as arrow, bone, bow, and iron on the battlefield is the most notable aspect in the mythic heroines. In addition, the mythic gods and the enemies that heroines battle against are also common. Another feature paralleling myths is that the mental state and feeling of mythic fighters are parallel to those of mythical gods. On the other hand, in the modern age and as a result of the progress and possibilities of technology, mythologies have found a chance to appear in contemporary life. The state of love lives of mythical heroines looks like the emotional relations of mythical gods in many ways, even if they end or break up at some points. But, one can say that the essential difference between mythic heroines and mythic gods is mainly their physical appearance. The physical appearance of mythical heroines, which is similar to mythical gods in many traditions, has transformed incomparable with the changing sense of control and beauty in modern culture. Furthermore, the mythological female protagonist in the modern age, in light of all these implications, is quite similar to the ancient mythical gods and Greek legends and have altered over time, all-pervading into all parts of the global cultures through film arts. (Adeline Guerber, Hélène and H. A. Guerber, 1993: 1-2)^[1].

According to the ancient Greeks and Roman, they created their heroines as leaders and believed in them. These fictional stories passed away by word of mouth, and thanks to Iliad and Odessa by Homer, though they were then written down. As such, planets and star clusters are called after the deities of Rome, and even expressions they use frequently, like echo, erotic, chaos, and volcano invent from Greek mythologies and legends. This leads to the fact that myth is a mental power to bond societies and cultures. So, the general understanding of the mythical heroine comes from the Greeks and Rome. In the modern age and due to globalization, the world becomes more complex and narratives change form and content to continue with their intricacy. Contemporary, the vivid concept is to change those mythologies and call them marvelous heroines. The mythic heroism first appeared in comic strips by marvel comics and then they were presented as movies, thus, mythic heroines become universally known. This study aims at finding out archetypal points of universal mythic heroines and their origins in young adult fiction compared with ancient traditions. Accordingly, traditions and myths have the mystery of human existence and simultaneously they signify the first products of creative production. (Spies, 2020: 13-14).

The mythical heroine is the main character of narrative fiction. Mythical heroism appears in fiction and realism in numerous forms. Throughout history, the delineation of heroism has grown to incorporate modern communal as well as societal beliefs and values, though it remains constructed on an essential basis of moral respectability predominant in

the philosophical dimension. In modern literary culture, myths have modified themselves to social as well as cultural actors of the worlds or societies they lived. As a result, they adapt their sequences to identify them as mythologies. Mullen (1998, 48) ^[32] claims that in a modern nation, myths are the soul of human society as well as being the memory card of it. Thus, the cultures that keep myths and protect them active and alive are sustained by the influential feature of the human personality. As such, along with this progress, myth redefines itself to the existing circumstances, forms the human society, and starts to process the progress as a part of the change. Moreover, mythologies that come back in an artistic scene trigger and social changes that reappear in the mass media provide legends efficiently for the use of modern age cultures. (Campbell, 1972: 14-15) ^[9].

In a past traditional sense, the mythical heroine is not only involved in treacherous adventures or battles but also achievements and feats of supreme bravery and courage. Additionally, the modern heroine is more self-sacrificing and more selfless that they put others in front of themselves to look after them from being damaged both psychologically and physically. Generally, traditional heroines and modern ones are enormously heroic and special in their destiny. The mythical, as well as epical heroine, possesses extraordinary mental geniuses and physical talents. So, the mythical heroine takes the story along with her to the end that is usually her successor, in some cases, her disastrous end. However, the modern mythical heroine plays a complicated role in facing psychological and mental quandaries as she is an ordinary woman. This fact is very clear in *The Hunger Games* trilogy when Collins does not treat her loyal readers gently because in both series her beloved and central characters are fated to die. For instance, the readers get a common sense of just how gloomy the sequence is expected to be when Katniss' first true and close friend, Rue, is killed horribly. (Wiener, 2015:13-14) ^[18] Katniss states that "Rue's death has forced me to confront my own fury against the cruelty, the injustice they inflict upon us. But here, even more strongly than at home, I feel my impotence. There's no way to take revenge on the Capitol. Is there?" (Collins, 2008: 6) ^[10].

The dystopian novel, *The Hunger Games*, linked the modern methodology with the classical one in its aim as well as the elements involved. In his book *The Advent of Literary Dystopia* (2000: 147), Carter Kaplan states that the dystopian work exposes mythical fiction to portray societies based on intellectual myth and essays prognostication and mythical prophecy. The mythical modern dystopian fiction examines the possible effects that intellectual mythology can have on people and society. So, myth becomes an important element of influencing the content of dystopian fiction. Though such a myth is interpreted in a modern or futuristic form, its roots of the past are still unrecognizable. Thus, *The Hunger Games* is classified as a modern dystopian narrative and a form of young adult literature that is built on the Greek myth of Theseus and Minotaur in its message and mission. Therefore, the mythical female protagonist works to link the modern myth with the classical one by a reproduction of the tension between a communal narrative and a singular survivor narrative. On the other hand, Theseus seems to be, like his cousin Hercules, a brilliant hero, thus he is always searching for more difficult responsibilities and his aim seems to be celebrated and immortalized to claim fame. (Garriott et al., 2014: 130) ^[19].

The narrative fiction of *The Hunger Games* is built on several

imitations of the myth that help to reflect the classical issues in a modern copy. For instance, the scene of punishment in which King Minos is furious over the loss of his son Androugeus. One can compare this scene to the punishment of Districts in the light of the revolution which they do against the tyrannical authority in Panem as well as sending out the tributes for a fated mission. Though in Athena the population should sacrifice in total fourteen of young females and young males, each district should send out one female and one male to be twenty-four young totally in *The Hunger Games*. So, in Athena people suffer every nine years, while tributes in *The Hunger Games* realm are selected every year. According to one of the interviews, Collins conveys a direct message of the myth in *The Hunger Games*: "mess with us and we'll do something worse than kill you—we'll kill your children. And the parents sat by apparently powerless to stop it." (Margolis, 2010:124) ^[28] additionally, Collins said that Katniss reflects the games in the novel as follows:

The rules of *The Hunger Games* are simple. In punishment for the uprising, each of the twelve districts must provide one girl and one boy, called tributes, to participate. The twenty-four tributes will be imprisoned in a vast outdoor arena that could hold anything from a burning desert to a frozen wasteland. Over several weeks, the competitors must fight to the death. The last tribute standing wins. (Collins, 2008:19) ^[10].

Furthermore, one can find the mythical characteristic features that can be seen in another myth when Katniss takes the place of her sister as a volunteer in the dangerous games just as Theseus did for young Athenians. As such, Collins identifies Katniss as futuristic Theseus when she volunteered since she is the mother's sister and she is always responsible for her sister trying to protect her. This is very clear in the novel when Prim is chosen as a tribute, "Hadn't I done everything?" (Collins, 2008:22) ^[10]. Thus, fiction and myth are interweaved together with much approval as Athenians promptly respect Theseus for his good deeds and graciousness. On the other hand, Katniss is honored by her parallel District 12 citizens. (Margolis, 2010: 133) ^[28] "At first one, then another, then almost every member of the crowd touches the three middle fingers of their left hand to their lips and holds it out to me. It is an old and rarely used gesture of our district, occasionally seen at funerals. It means thanks, it means admiration, it means good-bye to someone you love," Katniss says. (Collins, 2008: 25) ^[10].

2.2. The Mythical Heroine as a Mirror's Reflection of Humanity

The mythical female protagonist needs to explore society's inner darkest fears which represent the worst traits and the messy that people are horrified of. So, the heroine uses her emotional and mythical faculty to attract her audience to her personality. The mythical heroine needs to be more genuine and passionate since feelings are the most universal thing in humanity. Generally, people love, hate, and anger, so the heroine should do her best to reflect the psychological inner of the human race. In different literary situations, the mythical heroin is a self-reflection in her characterization such as those female protagonists in stories passed down for generations in legends or myths. Katniss says "I want to do something, right here, right now, to shame them, to make them accountable, to show the Capitol that whatever they do or force us to do that there is a part of every tribute they can't own. That Rue was more than a piece in their Games. And so

am I.” (Collins, 2008: 236-7) ^[10] Those heroines are self-reflective in that they explain what other people’s purpose was in sacrificing for others and being selfless forever. Myth is regarded as the soul of human society as well as being the memory card of it. (Sacha, 2019: 1-2).

Furthermore, mythical heroism is a way of presenting human culture in each age since myth can be considered as the place where the idea is created from the question and its answer. In determining and shaping the conscious dimension of society, the modern sociological and cultural changes have a main role. Thus, the mythical heroism reflects the return to the beginning of the truth because myth reveals existence as well as it reveals god at the same time. The mythical protagonist can reflect the role of the author him/herself since myth has no author and the supernatural elements are attributed to mythical stories. Katniss,” I said aloud. It’s the plant I was named for. And I heard my father’s voice joking, as long as you can find yourself, you’ll never starve.” (Collins, 2008:17) ^[10]

Additionally, myth narrates the story and the mythical heroine is the narrator of it. (Brunel, 1996: 3) ^[6].

Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949)

^[8] is still the most important study on heroic mythologies. According to his study, Campbell said that in each fiction there is an archetypal model of mythical heroism in which the mission or journey is divided into three phases: the separation, initiation, and return that forms the basis of the story. Campbell explains that in the separation phase, the heroin is called to fulfill her mythical duty and embarks on a quest which at first, she does hesitantly or unwillingly. Accordingly, during the heroic journey, the female protagonist develops and grows up mentally and physically and this development enables her to take on a privileged and dominant position within her society to which she eventually returns. Katniss describes herself as “I am not pretty. I am not beautiful. I am as radiant as the sun.” (Collins, 2008:116) ^[10] Thus, the heroine’s job is to pass on knowledge and help the nation to make sense of their lives and their societies. Though Campbell finds that not all mythical heroines have the same physical strength or violence to achieve their aims of victory, rather all of them can fight and win the battles as a crucial feature that differentiates them. (Campbell, 1949: 23-24) ^[8].

Additionally, the mythical heroism reflects the face of an archetypal culture and has heroic and mythical abilities that represent the celebration of humanity. In certain situations, the mythical heroine reflects the ordinary features of humanity and probes all human emotions and senses. Moreover, mythical heroism works as a mirror image to the themes which touch the core of human life. “It’s technically against the rules to train tributes before they reach the Capitol but it happens every year. In District 12, we call them the Career Tributes or just the Careers. And like as not, the winner will be one of them.” (Collins, 2008:48) ^[10] However, mythologies are not fair to feminists and the mythical female protagonist often features powerful characteristics and may be replete with disastrous marriage or rape. So, a mythical heroine allows her nation to contemplate their humanity without asking them to question their canons of beliefs as stories of god, fate, faith, or immortality. (Kirk, 2014: 1-2).

The mythical heroine is the main character of narrative fiction. In a traditional sense, the heroine is not only involved in treacherous adventures or battles but also achievements and feats of supreme bravery and courage. However, in traditional legends the heroine should be a divine ancestor, for instance, was born of a mortal or a god. The mythical

heroine should be a queen, princess, or a member of a noble family; thus, she is more attractive and stronger physically and mentally than other people. On the other hand, the modern heroin is more self-sacrificing and more selfless that she puts others in front of herself to look after them from being damaged both psychologically and physically. Katniss reflects this meaning when she said “but our lives aren’t just measured in years. They are measured in the lives of people we touch around us.” (Collins, 2008: 11) ^[10] Generally, traditional heroines and modern ones are enormously heroic and special in their destiny. The mythical, as well as epical heroine, possesses extraordinary mental geniuses and bodily talents. So, the mythical heroine takes the story along with her to the end which is usually her victory, but in some cases her disastrous end. However, the modern heroine plays a complicated role in facing psychological and mental quandaries as she is an ordinary woman. (Spies, 2012: 15-16) ^[27].

As a mythical figure, Katniss rejects the conventional role of femininity as motherhood which they reflect or view as societal enslavement. Her negative of traditional femininity leads her to become gender-neutral, partaking features of manhood and womanhood while embodying neither. Katniss’ mythical mission starts after her father passes away and she leaves the domestic sphere to join the forest life and be the breadwinner of her family. So, her status as gender-neutral makes her act out the audiences’ idea of traditional femininity. According to Katniss, survival is based on her ability to appear traditionally feminine rather than fully embodying the concept. As such, Collins’ *The Hunger Game* trilogy emerges Katniss as a mythical heroine who handles the beauty myth and manages to find self-sufficiency through directing her appearance. Like traditional mythical heroes, Katniss can survive by achieving the perfect balance of her real personality and the performance as a consummate mythical warrior. Yet, Katniss steps further in the death games and travels from the domestic domain to the manhood world when she fights to protect her nation and achieve autonomy. However, the woman is no longer has to choose between saving the world and attending to nurturing duties. On the other hand, she is more gifted at accomplishing both as she fights as a mythical warrior and being a mother’s sister for her sister. (Palumbo *et al.*, 2012:197-8) ^[34].

Collins in *The Hunger Games* not only reflects the heroic characteristics of a modern mythical woman rather she reflects the spark of hope that all populations have. She tries to prove that the game is an exercise of hope which is stronger than fear. Katniss rises hope through her male-like figure role of hunting to provide for her family as the father figure and protect her nation from evil. On the other hand, Prim exposes the hope in the novel as her symbolizing the youth and womanhood which support Katniss even in her frustration moment when she thinks that she will lose her life by her volunteers in the death games “I’ll be all right, Katniss,” says Prim, clasping my face in her hands. “But you have to take care, too. You’re so fast and brave. Maybe you can win.” (Collins, 2008: 37) ^[10] So, Prim leads Katniss to win at the end by her hope and faith in her sister’s abilities even in times of loss, she maintains the same hopefulness especially after her father’s death and the ruin of her home. As such, Collins exposes the matter of hope not only when the character’s desire is fulfilled, but even when everything goes wrong. So, “hope is the only thing stronger than fear. A little hope is effective, a lot of hope is dangerous.” (Collins, 2008:120) ^[10]

Therefore, hope becomes the only weapon and the powerful one in the deadly games especially when the Capitol stacks the odds against the Districts. In addition, Prim becomes an enormous source of hope even for Katniss and influences the major events in the novel in turn Katniss' actions offer hope to the whole nation. Generally, Prim and nation represent everything that Katniss and illustrates the bright face of the rebellion since without hope there will never have been a revolution. (Ann, 2020:123-4)^[2].

3. Analysis

3.1 Mythical Images in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* Analysis

Analysis of Collin's *The Hunger Games* sequences will provide distinctions between traditional and modern heroism as well as focus on the developments of heroine archetypes. *The Hunger Games* was relatively motivated by the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur besides the motivation of Collins' father's career in the Air Force, which gave her vision to scarceness, famishment, and the effects of war. Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy presents a full understanding of the perfect heroine archetypes in literature, so this paper will further examine heroism and ultimately bring light to the compassionate, empathic, and inspirational qualities prevalent across heroic figures. Additionally, the definition of modern and classical heroism is pretty much the same, but also, they do have their differences. A traditional heroine is a primeval or extraordinary heroine while a modern heroine is someone who puts others before themselves and is self-sacrificing in an archetypal way. For instance, the heroine may give her own life easier to protect another. So, classical and modern heroines have their resemblances, but they also have their variances. (Garriott, 2014:131-2)^[19].

Collins' *The Hunger Games* reveals the mission of Katniss Everdeen by using monomyth sequence within the *Catching Fire* novel. Collins' trilogy shows that Katniss' heroic journey is fulfilled by the three major stages of monomyth fictional cycle. The first stage is the separation stage which shows the performance of the heroine's regular habits and the manner she gets and develops the challenge. This period is started after Katniss is defied by President Snow to lessen the revolts performance of every area. Additionally, all periods of exit points are designed within the narrative fiction. During the separation period, Katniss has prepared herself for every conceivable challenge that is expected from President Snow since she has passed the previous Hunger Games. As a mythical heroine, Katniss acquires many experiences of her previous life. According to the initiation stage, she does not face Atonement with Father owed to her adulthood to face every glitch founded on her previous experience in the 74th *Hunger Games*. Moreover, Katniss does not face her temptress in the initiation stage, but in the return stage. (Montgomery, 2012: 67)^[31].

Accordingly, this study exposes that Katniss entirely passed her trials. As a mythic heroine, she used her past skills in her previous *Hunger Games* to finish the Quarter Quell. She is helped by her new partners to end the Quell. On the other hand, the female protagonist does not encounter her return stage completely since the narrative fiction ends with her denial to return home. However, it is caused by her incomplete problem to release her sister, Prim, from Capitol's hovercraft. Because of that, Katniss' duty and her heroic mission in this trilogy can be seen as the bridge to communicate and relate between the first and third novels of

The Hunger Games. Thus, the trilogy shows that the female protagonist cultivates herself from a previous victor of Hunger Games to a rising mark of revolt in Panem. Furthermore, Katniss suffers trauma from her ordeal and she has to perform numerous identities throughout the story to the degree that she tries to remember who "[...she is] and who [...she is]" not. (Collins, 2008: 371)^[10] Yet, she does not lose her core identity as a volunteer honor and liberty warrior. (Murphy, 2018: 109)^[33].

Collins vigorously presents her modern myth and exploits the depression of modern authority to create the modern identity of the liberated female protagonist. Inspired by her father's severe experience, Collins benefits from the free education in her father's living classroom. The father grew up during the melancholy and learned to survive by any means. Thus, Collins insists to create her kingdom of independence authority because political power is corrupted and the state is the political embodiment of immoral authority. So, allowing people to exercise their utter authorization and absolute liberty is the best way to achieve a respected life. In such cases, revolutionaries see the political government as immoral, illegitimate, and corrupted more than being unnecessary. The modern political power cannot give a healthy answer to the revolutionaries about the relationship between authority and morality. For this reason, the young rebels take direct actions against the authority of government by re-originating democracy itself. They do this because they believe that the government does not save them and their families, so they have to save themselves. (Weber, 2014: 241)^[36]

This meaning is very clear when Katniss said "In District 12, looking old is something of an achievement since so many people die early. You see an elderly person, you want to congratulate them on their longevity, ask the secret of survival. A plump person is envied because they aren't scraping by like the majority of us. But [in the Capitol] it is different. Wrinkles aren't desirable. A round belly isn't a sign of success." (Collins, 2008:124-5)^[10].

The Hunger Games is considered a hybrid novel, not only because it involves mythical elements, but even involves a mixture of romance, war literature, young adult literature, and dystopian fiction. The female protagonist in *The Hunger Games*, as a mythical heroine, tries to break the rules of the patriarchal society. Katniss blends manhood and womanhood in her mission just as a representation of women in Panem society before and after the rebellion. Throughout the novel, one can see that women in Panem society don't live an ordinary life of the "angel in the house" women like the Victorian woman, rather she seems to be well integrated and maybe in the same status as a man. The father's speech to her represents the status of women in such a dystopian society "As long as you can find yourself, you'll never starve." (Collins, 2008:52)^[10] However, a woman in a high position whether in a social or political position is not mentioned at all. From the first glance, one can notice that gender quality is not existing in Capitol nor Panem. Thus, habits like "ladies first" are a sign of appreciation of women, but just an act of good manners. Though women in *The Hunger Games* live in a patriarchal society, Katniss creates a mythical identity to be unique in a chaotic world. (Eismann, 2014, 2-3)^[15].

The Hunger Games is read as the best example of a dystopian novel that justifies war as a political power including violence. So, the story involves ideologemes about power and who wields it. As such, the novel refers to the corrupt nature of politics and the tyrannical regime. Additionally, the myth

of *The Hunger Games* is a good representation of the myth of the Roman empire. The dystopian realm of the story implies that the American people are too focused on a free government whose country in the U.S. has been renamed as Panem. Panem is divided into districts and governed from a capital, just as the Romans divided their provinces and ruled from far: "When I was younger, 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" (Collins, 2008: 6) ^[10] Moreover, seven main characters are borrowed their names directly from *Julius Caesar*: Caesar, Brutus, Cinna, Cato, Octavia, Portia, and Flavius. So, *The Hunger Games* is based on the classical myth to reflect the present and the future of U.S life which involves the corruption of the regime besides the loss of human life and is watched by the audience just as Roman gladiatorial games were. As a result, Katniss is considered the only face of the mythical female protagonist of these rebellious games, and thus as the rebel leader says to her "you are the Mockingjay Katniss. ... While you live, the revolution lives." (Collins, 2008: 386) ^[10] She is not just a military leader but she is propaganda that is reflected through her self-description as an emblem of her rebellion rather than the brains behind it "I must now become the actual reader, the face, the voice, the embodiment of the revolution They have a whole team of people to make me over, dress me, write my speeches, orchestrate appearances And all I have to do is play my part." (Collins, 2008: 10-11) ^[10] Consequently, she has to kill the first leader of the new nation for typical democracy to have any chance at all of working. Therefore, this study examines the main aspects in which mythical female protagonist is represented, whether justifying the heroic actions or producing a fictional model to which the majority can aspire. (Connors, 2014:22-23) ^[12].

3.2 The Mythical Female Protagonist in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*

The first appearance of the female protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, is on the reaping day when the tributes will be selected by lottery from her home, District 12: "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. She must have had bad dreams and climbed in with another mother. Of course, she did. This is the day of reaping." (Collins, 2008: 3) ^[10] On this day, her sister is selected, so Katniss takes her sister's place to protect her. Katniss becomes the volunteer as a tribute in a gladiatorial fight to the death among the teenage warriors from Panem, "With one sweep of my arm, I push her behind me. I volunteer!. I gasp. I volunteer as tribute!" (Collins, 2008: 22) ^[10] Katniss survives with her partner Peeta in the death game, yet Capitol and President Snow break the rule of naming a single survival victor. "Tonight. After the reaping, everyone is supposed to celebrate. And a lot of people do, out of relief that their children have been spared for another year. But at least two families will pull their shutters, lock their doors, and try to figure out how they will survive the painful weeks to come." (Collins, 2008:10) ^[10] Katniss seems to be the factual mythical heroine among all warriors, even though she has made an enemy in President Snow during the catastrophic game. However, all her sacrifice to those she loves and who are always suffering, everything is personal for her. During the progression of *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay*, part one and part two, the heroine is torn and

pulled by the control of her love. For instance, in *Catching Fire*, Katniss has to leave her family, Gale, and District 12 to win what is called the victory tour which turns out to be a seething- under-the-surface rebellion tour. On the other hand, *Mockingjay*, which takes its name from the pin that she wears in the first game, becomes the main sign of the rebelliousness of the mythical protagonist. Thus, both President Snow and the warriors try to use Katniss' triangle love against her, for Peeta and Prime. Yet, she has something none can defeat her or control her power and confidence just as the mythical figures throughout history. (David Matzco McCarthy and Kurt E. Blaugher, 2017:28) ^[29].

Throughout the fated games, the mythical protagonist removes the mask of the external world by her direct involvement in the battle for survival to be aware of the larger world of Panem. During her journey to Capitol, she exposes the fact of the discrimination and inequality that plagues the realm she lives in. she explains her opinion in a very high style to describe the misery in her society:

What must it be like, I wonder, to live in a world where food appears at the press of a button? How would I spend the hours I now commit to combing the woods for sustenance if it were so easy to come by? What do they do all day, these people in the Capitol, besides decorating their bodies and waiting around for a new shipment of tributes to roll in and die for their entertainment?" (Collins, 2008:2) ^[10].

Katniss' vital act of revolution is a personal face of her dissension and her criticism for both the rules of the game and the political and economic sense. *The Hunger Games* exposes three main phases in Katniss' life throughout the three books novel, though there is an increase in the scale during the trilogy. The first novel represents the phase that is primary with the heroine and her then limited view of Panem. Consequently, the scale starts to increase during the events of *Mockingjay* when Katniss seems to be uncomfortable accommodation with her role as a figurehead of the revolution. Katniss is now an adult whose extensive concerns have progressed from the individual to the national, so she becomes able to put the national duty on her desires. The mythical heroine is involved in a real war to protect the future of Panem and thousands of people rather than her responsibility just her own family. Therefore, Katniss becomes someone who can move the population of the Districts of Panem from depression to hope and to be introduced to a more adult world with actual tasks and real consequences of her mythical duty. (Robb, 2014: 14) ^[25].

According to the standard of the patriarchal system, there is not a high status for women. The modern female protagonist tries to create a new identity for those women who do not have a clear voice to get their rights. So, the female protagonist affects the young-adult readers positively and negatively. Katniss appears in the novel as a strong and self-governing female protagonist to be identified by millions of young-adult females as they read the novel. "Katniss doesn't let herself get attached to people and doesn't let anyone know how she feels. She loves her younger sister, Prim, more than anything in the world. She comes off as hard, but she does have sympathy." (Collins, 2008:165) ^[10] For example, the dangerous lack of gender justice training for educators produces injustices and discrimination in schoolrooms. After all, *The Hunger Games* can be considered as a modern motivation to test the gender abilities that the mythical female protagonist may have to defeat gender equity. (Vellanoweth, 2014: 55) ^[35].

In ancient myths, there is a lack of a mythical female protagonist which shows a historical viewpoint regarding how society believed that all mythical protagonists were always men. Within the trilogy *The Hunger Games*, Collins refashions Katniss Everdeen of Greek myth. Throughout the three stages of the novel, the readers succeed in identifying the structure of all deadly games and noticing a parallel with the mythical tale of Theseus and his heroic conquering of the Minotaur in Daedalus's labyrinth. The similarity reflects the scarifying and selflessness of Katniss Everdeen like Theseus, who presented himself as one of the adults and young women who were drawn by lot to be directed sacrificially to the Minotaur. Moreover, Katniss tolerates striking parallels to the rare Greek female protagonist, Atalanta. Both of them are beautiful huntresses, though (Bulfinch, 1998:112). Additionally, Katniss bears a striking similarity to the rare Greek heroine, Atalanta. Motivated by Theseus and Atalanta, Collins's trilogy ingeniously reinterprets mythical heroism through the multi-faceted protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, who represents the option of a female protagonist and the faith that mythical heroism needs more than ordinary mannish virility. (Hamilton, 1998: 244).

In 2009, Collins states "I appreciated the Greek mythological promise of a conquering power that bent all of its subjects to its will through violence and maintained fear and domination through a not so subtle reminder to the neighboring people that they are not free and autonomous." (Blasingame, 2009: 726-7)^[4] So, the modern mythical heroine, Katniss Everdeen, is a good representation of classical mythical heroes, Theseus and Spartacus. However, Katniss highlights all the qualities that have conventionally been considered masculine and her male equivalent in the games has conventionally feminine feature characteristics. She becomes the modern mythical heroine in a contrast with the extensively disseminated death-match spectacle of the oppressive state, Panem (an inventive futuristic North America). Thus, the heroine becomes the mythical reprisal against the totalitarian government itself and the idea of tyrannical violence in Panem that is ruled by a tyrannical regime and oppressive leader. Such a government uses the Hunger Games as harsh punishment for the young rebellions against the cruel regime. (Ritzenhoff, 2014: 56)^[24].

From the first glance, Katniss' character seems to be embodied the roles of archetypal breadwinner, masculine, nurturer, and feminine for her mother and juvenile sister, Primrose. After she loses her father in a coalmining explosion, Katniss admits that "my mother was locked in some dark world of sadness [...] At eleven years old, with Prim just seven, I took over as head of the family. There was no choice" (Collins, 2008: 27)^[10]. So, Katniss is forced to bear the harsh problems of mature obligation and adult responsibility. Since her father's death, Katniss takes his bow and arrows to the forests and evokes his lessons in the weapon's practice, and risks potential punishment by providing for her family through illegal hunting in the title of blood game. The mythical characteristics which differentiate Katniss as a mythical heroine are a paternalistic and male role as hunter, breadwinner, and father role figure that is added to Collins's explanatory construct of mythical heroism. She said "my father knew and he taught me some before he was blown to bits in a mine explosion. There was nothing even to bury. I was eleven then. Five years later, I still wake up screaming for him to run." (Collins, 2008: 5)^[10].

Katniss plays the role of motherhood successfully as a

nurturer for her young sister with the virtual lack of her inattentive mother. She expresses this feeling when she said: "I bought our food at the market and cooked it as best as I could and tried to keep Prim and myself looking presentable." (Collins, 2008:27)^[10] From her early childhood of eleven years to her youthful of sixteen, Katniss kills the egoistic need to minimize duty for others or complaint about the disastrous absence of a peaceful youth. She instantaneously offers to battle in her sister's stead, which appears to be inconsistent when she stresses that: "family devotion only goes so far for most people on reaping day. What I did was the radical thing." (Collins, 2008:26)^[10] In her book *Mythology*, Edith Hamilton states that Theseus represents Katniss in that he finished his adolescence with his mother in their home during the absence of his father. (Edith, 1942: 209) However, Theseus leaves his mother's home for the heroic and mythical journey, Theseus and Katniss express willpower in crushing the likelihoods of their souls. Accordingly, Katniss justly creates her starring role as a mythical female protagonist through her self-sacrificing piety to the family. (Moncrieff, 1912: 155)^[30].

Katniss is so far away from self-importance and detachments herself from pride in different ways. For instance, during her mythical journey, she constructs this distance through her obvious embarrassment with the Capitol's tendencies. The Capitol which represents the rule's region shows garb of affected colors and creates fashion standards such as vibrant hair and men sporting make-up comprising Panem, the dystopian vision for North America. Thus, during Katniss' first training to act like a lady for her onscreen interview before the blood games, she seems to be frustrated and says: "I kick off my heels and stomp down to the dining room, hiking my skirt up to my thighs." (Collins, 2008: 116)^[10] She would rather "pull-on trousers, a shirt, tuck [her] long dark braid up into a cap, and grab [her] forage bag" to go hunting, even with her selection of style choices. (Collins, 2008: 4)^[10] She views her desire to hide her femininity by tucking up her hair which is related to vulnerability. So, to be equivalent to mythical norms, she changes her style of clothing from feminine to masculine such as a pair of pants, shirt, and cap to reflect her departure from gender norms and embrace her inherent androgyny. (CarrieLynn D. Reinhard & Christopher J, 2017:56-57)^[7].

Additionally, Katniss deviates from the traditional norms of mythical characteristics and breaks the rules of conventional myth. The traditional hero should be from the privileged white people according to social, political, and economic considerations. On the contrary, Katniss represents the poor class to rebel against the tyranny of the oppressive regime to rise a modern mythical figure, in addition, to break the rule of being the mythical figure is restricted on masculinity. Katniss exposes her feelings about the tyrannical regime that guide the whole nation "I'm going to kill Snow. Nothing good is safe while he's alive. And I can't make another speech about it. No more cameras. No more propos. No more games. He needs to see my eyes when I kill him." (Collins, 2008:4)^[10] Thus, the control of the mythical quest warrior does not mean that hegemonic masculinity is fundamentally heroic or mythical, but it testifies to the prevalence of patriarchal ideas and structures which influence Western cultures, societies, and fiction. (Hohenstein, 2019:3)^[21].

Mythical heroism in the modern age deviates from the normal characteristics of traditional myth. Katniss breaks the rules of gender and socialization and rebels against the political,

social, and cultural reality:

Welcome to the new Panem. Today, on the avenue of the tributes, all of Panem, a free Panem, will watch more than a mere spectacle. We are gathered to witness a historic moment of justice. Today, the greatest friend to the revolution will fire the shot to end all wars. May her arrow signify the end of tyranny and the beginning of a new era. Mockingjay, may your aim be as true as your heart is pure. Katniss said. (Collins, 2008:2) ^[10].

Katniss rebels against gender inequalities and fights to achieve her rights and raise her will to defeat the oppression of Panem. She pays a high price to achieve her aim during her horrific mythical experiences in *The Hunger Games*. Moreover, Katniss notes the hollowness and spiritual price of a step toward victory "I killed a boy whose name I don't even know." (Collins, 2008:283) ^[10] Though Katniss' job is to help weak people to get their rights from the oppressive state, she uses violent actions in time she is against the violence. However, she epitomizes empathy, even her violent actions emerge from that empathy. So, she acts not from self-centeredness but self-sacrifice. (Carrie Lynn D. Reinhard · Christopher J, 2017: 58) ^[7].

From a feminist perspective, *The Hunger Games* illuminates the power relationship between man and woman. According to Collins' philosophy, only adolescents can save the world since once they become mature, they will be too unethical to do so any longer. Katniss is one of those adolescents who challenges the fixed boundaries of the tyrannical government as a powerfully destabilizing force. Katniss' mythical ability to stand against the evil she faces examines Katniss' growth from warrior to a philosopher. Thus, Katniss is seen by a critique to be exploited various modes of power to win the war and achieve victory at the end as Collins explains that "... it's important for me to write about war is I think that the concept of war, the specific of war, the nature of war, the ethical ambiguities of war, It is not going to end at a commercial break. It's not something fabricated, it's not a game. It's your life." (Collins, 2008:107) ^[10] As such, Katniss' story serves as a reminder to the readers that the chance and possibility for sovereignty and freedom are always existing and can be achieved. Additionally, Katniss' myth reflects the social and cultural criticism as a metaphor for the damage that male-controlled societies impose on female adolescents. Consequently, it is inundating with the balanced stream of messages that function to actively bound the topics situations they identify as available to them. Katniss said "I stand there, feeling broken and small, thousands of eyes trained on me. There's a long pause. Then, from somewhere in the crowd, someone whistles Rue's four-note mocking-jay tune. The one that meant safety in the arena." (Collins, 2008:61) ^[10] Therefore, Katniss works to awaken in readers the sense of social and ethical responsibility and offers the readers the opportunity of overcoming institutionalized ethical and virtuous convenience and inertia. (Connors, 2014: 9) ^[12].

So, the study focuses on the mystical female protagonist of the three books who completes a legendary mission. Accordingly, as a result of this heroic journey, she changes from an ordinary girl to a mythical star and changes the fate of a whole population. According to Collins' philosophy, Katniss creates a leap from other heroines of the 21st century to become a symbol of rebellion. Collins achieved her aim by standing simultaneously strong and vulnerable to her readers and by her talent to achieve her responsibilities without

imitating the conventional gender stereotypes of her surroundings. The novel represents the traits and myths of Greek mythos and compares them to the dystopian young adult trilogy of *The Hunger Games*. It states ethical issues to young adults who face struggle difficulties in modern society and to the booklovers of other ages at the same time. As such, the trilogy examines the problem of evil and how the mythical female protagonist overcomes it. Thus, Collins' archetypal star, Katniss, is considered the accurate image and true embodiment of the Greek mythical warrior. As a result, Collins' mind is influenced by Greek mythology which involves the main contemporary issues that are what truly makes the book show up and attractive for the bibliophiles of all ages. the problem of evil and how the characters overcome it. (Kovac, 2014:110) ^[23].

4. Conclusion

The definition of mythical heroism has changed to fit the modern social standards and values, though it remains constructed on a basic foundation of ethical virtue prevalent in the philosophical literature. The mythical heroism appears in literature and realism in numerous forms to fit with the aims and objectives of the user. As such, the idea of a mythical heroine creates in traditions from the distant past and has applied to many diverse ideas in diverse cultures, philosophies, societies, and historical time eras. So, the mythical signifier of modern heroism changes according to the purposes of the handler. Accordingly, this paper studies the concept of the valiant myths that have been created in the modern age to justify the heroic deeds of the female protagonist in authority and to create a fictional model to which the young adults can aspire. Collins in *The Hunger Games* trilogy scrutinizes taboo issues such as the ethics of wars or what is called posttraumatic stress disorder, malnourishment, dangerous poverty, and systematic domination. Collins refashions Katniss Everen with Greek mythology to make her readers identify the structure of these lethal games within the novel, so they may note a corresponding with the mythical story of Theseus and his heroic success of the Minotaur in Daedalus' labyrinth. In addition, the writer presents the female protagonist in a mythical character with whom most individuals readily recognize her as an extreme altruist. She is ready to risk her own life to save the life of her family and her nation as she possesses the potential to act in ways that might be measured to be heroic, even when this implicates living a normal life with courage and survival. As a result, Collins' *The Hunger Games* has demonstrated through her symbolism and characterization that survival is the result of power, which is shown through the book in many ways. Each character has some sort of power and some more than the others stuck out the most. Thus, Suzanne Collins fashioned a mythical female protagonist that all young teenagers should look up to, and not once does she seem contrived. Though Katniss is not perfect, she is courageous in the face of true tyranny. At the same time, Katniss is also damaged, but her energy for revenge sometimes clouds her decision. The mythical female protagonist chooses rebirth over hatred. After all, *The Hunger Games* is not black and white, but a complicated novel occupied with twists.

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