The Effects of Revolution Upon the development of Women's Capabilities and Freedom

An Analysis of the Trilogy, *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins

with

a Special Focus on the Protagonist, Katniss Everdeen

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“Are you preparing for another war, Plutarch?” I ask.

"Oh, not now. Now we're in a sweet period where everyone agrees that our recent horrors should never be repeated," he says. "But collective thinking is usually short-lived. We're fickle, stupid beings with poor memories and a great gift for self-destruction. Although who knows? Maybe this will be it, Katniss."

(Collins, 2011)
To my mother, the spring of patience, generosity, and compassion

And to my father’s soul who taught me what the real spirit of life is

Special thanks to:

My supervisor, Francoise Monnoyeur-Broitman

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And Saeed, a unique friend, for his continuous mental supports
# Contents

1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1

2 Plot preview ........................................................................................................................... 4

3 Methodology of Research ..................................................................................................... 7

4 Theoretical frameworks ......................................................................................................... 8

5 Analyses .................................................................................................................................. 9

5.1 The characterization of females in liberal feminism .......................................................... 9

5.1.1 Women in political realms ............................................................................................. 10

5.1.1.1 Political evolution in Katniss’ character .................................................................. 10

5.1.1.2 Progression in Prim’s political character ................................................................. 14

5.1.1.3 Political characterization of other females in Panem ......................................... 15

5.1.2 The role of the state in women’s equality ................................................................. 18

5.1.3 Intersexual relationship & liberal feminism ................................................................. 21

5.1.3.1 Females in their erotic, marital and sexual relations ....................................... 21

5.1.3.2 Legality in intersexual relationships .................................................................... 24

5.1.3.3 Equal repartition of tasks and emotional duties in intersexual relationships ....... 26

5.2 Radical feminism & physiological features ..................................................................... 29

5.2.1 Are women an inferior class in Panem? .................................................................... 29

5.2.2 Are physical features natural or acquired? ................................................................ 32

5.2.3 Are women differentiated from men by their biological differences? ..................... 35

5.2.4 Radical feminism propositions for achieving “biological oneness” ......................... 36

5.2.4.1 Androgyny .............................................................................................................. 36

5.2.4.2 Substitution of matriarchy instead of patriarchy ................................................. 38

5.2.4.3 Development of individual strategies in women ................................................. 39

5.3 Women’s work: Marxist feminism theory ................................................................... 42

5.3.1 Women’s position in the public sphere of Panem before the rebellion ............... 42

5.3.2 Women’s positions in the private sphere of Panem before the rebellion .......... 44

5.3.3 Women’s professions and positions in Panem after the rebellion ....................... 47

6 Conclusions ......................................................................................................................... 49

7 Works Cited ......................................................................................................................... 51
1 Introduction

The Hunger Games’ author is Suzanne Collins, an American professor who began writing for children’s television in 1991.¹ Collins started writing the The Hunger Games trilogy in 2008. The first book was published under the same title in 2008. It was followed by Catching Fire in 2009, and finally the last book, Mockingjay, appeared by the end of August 2010. The events of the novel were inspired by the interests and closeness of the writer to nature. The intended audiences of the novel are mainly children and teenagers, but adults have also enjoyed reading it.² The trilogy has two main plots, which progress simultaneously from the beginning to the end of the story. The master plot is sociopolitical, in which a romantic story is situated as well. This trilogy is a post-apocalyptic story, which occurs in an imaginary land named Panem, a country that would be built on the ruins of North America in an unknown future. The Hunger Games is the narrative of a dystopian nation that stages a rebellion against the tyrannical ruling government, but after revolution, its people fall back into a new regime of arrogant policies.

Collins drew inspiration for her trilogy from ancient Greek and Roman myths. The name and type of characters, plot, events, as well as the political system of Panem are clear imitations of ancient Greece and the descriptions that the Greek historian, Plutarch, mentioned in his book, Parallel Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans (1906), in the first century. The name of Plutarch, given to a character in the novel, is an allusion to this author. From some aspects Panem is comparable with ancient Athens in the time of Solon. Athens had a tyranny not unlike Snow, the president of Panem, and Solon was a wise and honest hero who, like Katniss, was not submissive in state affairs and refused the idea of dictatorship. His peer in The Hunger Games is a heroine, Katniss Everdeen. From another point of view, District 13 may be comparable with Sparta or Lacedaemon, one of the most prominent city-states in ancient Greece, when Lycurgus was its lawgiver. One important point that changes the general construction of Collins’ novel is the fact that she uses a female heroine like Katniss rather than a male hero such as Solon or Lacedaemon (Plutarch, 1906, pp. 168-202).

¹ Cited in http://www.suzannecollinsbooks.com/bio.htm
² Cited in http://suzannecollins.org
*The Hunger Games*, the title of the first book, is clearly the name of a series of competitions in which young people fight to the last breath. Even so, it is also a metaphor that likens the real life of people to a game, a game in which people attempt to save themselves from hunger and misery. *Catching Fire* literally portrays the bombing and destruction of the districts by the government, but ironically it also symbolizes the blast of rage in the people. The last eponymous title, *Mockingjay*, represents the nickname which is given to Katniss Everdeen, because the last volume is the climax of the mental and moral maturity of the heroine. It also has a connotative meaning. Mockingjays are birds that are produced by the mating of jabberjays and mockingbirds. Jabberjays are male birds which are produced by Capitol, the capital of Panem, and can imitate human speech. Mockingbirds are female birds which live in the districts and they can sing beautifully. Mockingjays are the birds which can replicate both birds’ songs and human melodies (Collins, *The Hunger Games*, 2009, p. 52). They are “a slap in the face to the Capitol” dictatorship (Collins, 2009, p. 51). The title emphasizes the necessity of cooperation, solidarity, and unification of males and females and also between the Capitol and the people of the districts.

The story is narrated from a first person point of view through superior persona. Collins selects the female protagonist as the narrator so that she can truly express her feministic theme through a feminine lens. Thus, the voice of the novel’s women is heard more strongly in the story line. Selecting a third person narrator with unknown gender would make the valiant actions of the heroine and power of females artificial, untouchable and unrealistic. The focalizing rarely changes during the story and constituent and supplementary events are narrated through the heroine herself and via different writing styles: direct or indirect speech, interior monologues and flashbacks. The interior monologues of Katniss are a direct way for the author to develop the reader’s knowledge of the thoughts and the inner world of the women in the story.

I think the present paper is the first one which obviously zooms in on feminine issues in *The Hunger Games*. *The Hunger Games* is a recent novel which is often analyzed from a political or social point of view, but less so from a feminist approach. I extracted some general ideas for the essay by studying a large quantity of previous criticisms and interpretations, but there is not a lot of direct feminist criticism available which can be compared with it. *The Hunger Games* expresses a series of common pains which many nations have experienced during their history. Revolution, dictatorship, and male dominancy
are shared events among many countries and Panem. These common points engage a worldwide readership for this book. It may be a good motivation why I chose this trilogy.

People often want to obtain more democracy and rights through revolutions, but democracy is not achieved, unless by cultural and mental revolution within a society. Revolutions are frequently only a competition between two political parties and they end up with replacing one dictator with another one. The misery does not end after a revolution, but it is reshaped. I analyze women’s situation in Panem society before and after the rebellion, as a section of a people who have fallen victim to the phenomenon of a revolution. A limitation in choosing sexual partners and the lack of freedom and equal rights for spouses in marriage and divorce are particular oppressions that women encounter in many countries. Legal limitations in relationships between the opposite sexes and their separation on different levels of social communications lead girls to enter into marriage without premarital relations and enough knowledge about the opposite sex. Consequently, they encounter the problems after marriage. Since they have not legal rights for separation without their husbands’ permission, they fall into the marriage trap for a lifetime. Economic causes confirm the women’s position in this snare. When women have very restricted access to jobs, most of them become entities that are imprisoned inside their own homes without social positions or economic independence. Keeping women away from problems outside the home, for their own protection, and keeping them economically dependent on men are the clearest signs of women’s exploitation in the family. It makes families small colonies under the control of men and demolishes love in couples’ relationships. This is one of the topics which is discussed in this paper.

The objective of this essay is to analyze and evaluate women’s conditions and gender equality in Panem society before and after the revolution, conditions such as the political, physical, marital, financial ones, etc. It is also discussed, which aspects of women’s lives are improved and which aspects are left unchanged after the rebellion. How far may revolution and the political system be influential upon the development of women and the decrease in male domination in Panem, as an example of real communities? In the final process of analysis, the lack of meritocracy in Panem society is discussed as the result of gender discriminations or the essence of policy. There are also comparisons between Panem and Greece and their heroes. The result of this comparison is, discovering a fluctuation in values, morals and political thoughts from ancient times up to an unknown future. Katniss as the
heroine and the ideal female of society is primarily analyzed in each part, and then the other female characters are explored, depending on their roles and importance in the different parts.

Three major theories of feminism: liberal, radical and Marxist theories are incorporated as a basis for the analysis. The first chapter debates the extent of activities and the presence of women in the political realm, laws for women, and the quality of intersexual relations before and after the revolution from a liberal feminist point of view. In the second chapter, there is a comparison between physical and biological features of men and women from a radical feminist point of view. In this chapter it is discussed whether physical features can be a factor for social classifications before and after the rebellion. Also, some radical feminist propositions regarding biological unification between males and females are examined within the context of Panem society. The third chapter compares the occupational and economic positions of women in public and private spheres in Panem before and after the rebellion. The situation for women in a capitalistic system before the revolution is explored, based on Marxist feminism and communist society after the rebellion, and then analyzed according to the principles of socialist feminism.

2 Plot review

All of the story’s events occur in the country of Panem. The political center of Panem is the Capitol, and it is ruled by a dictator president, Snow. Panem includes twelve districts which are deprived of the Capitol’s privileges and facilities. Panem used to have thirteen districts, but since District 13 was equipped with nuclear weapons, it was able to overcome the Capitol and to form an independent government. The hunger game is the name of a yearly competition which was designed 75 years earlier, the year of District 13’s independence, by the Capitol. The Capitol, by these games, wants to make the people aware that they can never again be unified, and forces them to stand always against each other. In these competitions a young girl and boy between the ages of 12 and 18 are selected from each district. These contestants are called tribute. They are taken to an arena and forced to combat with each other until all of them are killed except one. The last remaining tribute is the victor. The games are televised live for all of the citizens of Panem to see. Every 25 years there is a special game, named Quarter Quell, with different regulations.

The story’s protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, is sixteen years old. She lives with her mother and younger sister, 12 year old Prim, in district 12. District 12 is the most
impoverished one. Her father was killed in a mine explosion and her mother experienced a psychosis after his death. Then Katniss, from childhood, becomes the provider of the family. Once, when they are facing starvation, Peeta Mellark, a baker’s son, saves them with some bread. Katniss, who has learned hunting and archery skills from her father, begins to hunt illegally in the woods together with a boy, Gale. He is also a provider and suffers from the same poverty.

The novel begins on Reaping day, the day of balloting for the Hunger Games. Prim and Peeta are selected. Katniss from the sense of love and responsibility for her sister, volunteers to go instead of her. She and Peeta go to Capitol for the primary ceremonies, along with a team. The team includes an organizer, Effie Trinket, a drunken mentor, Haymitch Abernathy, who was previously a victor of district 12, Cinna, their designer, and some other stylists. Before their departure, Katniss receives a gift, as her district token, from her friend, Madge. It is a gold pin on which is attached a mockingjay. She keeps it until the end of the story.

In the training sessions, Katniss astonishes all of the game-makers by bravely shooting her arrow through them, and Peeta surprises all, especially Katniss, by declaring his love for her. He claims that his purpose for doing so is to attract more valuable sponsors. At the beginning of the game, Peeta teams up with the strongest tributes, but Katniss chooses a little black girl, Rue, as an ally. After Rue is killed, Katniss honors her death by covering her corpse with flowers. In the middle of the game, Katniss is saved from death by Peeta. Now she feels a double debt to him. In the last stages of the game, the game-makers suddenly declare that in this game exceptionally, a pair of tributes who belong to the same district can be victors. Katniss, who pretends to fall in love with Peeta, finds him badly injured. She risks her life in order to bring medicine for him. Finally, they succeed in becoming the last survivors, but just when they think they might be safe, the rules are again changed to one victor. Katniss threatens the game-makers with a double suicide. They surrender and the game ends with two victors.

In Catching Fire, Peeta and Katniss go on a Victory Tour around Panem. They see the signs of uprising in the districts which are extinguished by the officials brutally. After the tour, houses and monthly payments are given to them, but Snow is aware of the fake romantic plot. He threatens Katniss with dire consequences, if she does not continue her love story. Katniss who is in love with Gale suggests to him that they escape to the woods. Gale rejects
this idea and decides to take part in the upcoming rebellion. One year passes. The next hunger game is a Quarter Quell. This year the Capitol decides to choose tributes among the previous victors. Katniss and Peeta are again chosen and depart to a new arena. Peeta continues to proclaim his love for Katniss and declares that she is pregnant with his child. Katniss now finds herself in a love dilemma between Peeta and Gale. In the middle of the game, Katniss and some other tributes are rescued by the forces of district 13, while Peeta and other live tributes are taken captive by the Capitol. Katniss later learns that Haymitch and one of the game-makers’ heads, Plutarch Heavensbee, have collaborated clandestinely with the president of district 13, Alma Coin. She also understands some of the tributes were informed of this plan before the game.

In the *Mockingjay*, the people of the districts rise up and Snow responds by bombing them. Katniss’ mind is not in perfect health. Many people of district 12 are killed in the bombing, but Katniss’ family are rescued and transferred to district 13 by Gale, who has joined District 13 in advance. Katniss’ mother, who is a skilled healer, begins to work with Prim as her assistant in a hospital in District 13. Finnick, the male tribute from district 4 in the Quarter Quell, marries Annie, a girl from his district who has become mad after her victory in an earlier hunger game. Katniss becomes the symbol of revolution and begins to fight with Snow directly. President Coin promised Katniss if she plays her part correctly, Peeta and the other prisoners will be saved, and the execution of Snow will be given to Katniss in the day of triumph. Peeta, who is hijacked by the Capitol, suffers from a neurosis after his freedom. He imagines Katniss as an enemy and wants to kill her.

Coin later sends Katniss on a mission to the Capitol. Midway the head of the group is killed and Katniss takes charge of the group. On her own she decides to lead the group that assassinates Snow. She loses many of her companions on the way, and encounters with the painful scene of children who are killed by bomb in the front of Snow’s mansion. Prim is also among the children. After the Capitol is overthrown completely and Coin gains power, Katniss learns through Snow that the children and her sister were killed by the bombers of district 13. Katniss also finds out that Coin has decided to continue the Hunger Games, this time by using Capitol’s children. Thus, at the moment when she must execute Snow, she turns her bow toward Coin and kills her instead. Snow also dies by an unknown cause at the same time. Commander Payler becomes the new president of Panem, and Katniss is returned to her town. In the epilogue Katniss marries Peeta, who has recovered and come back to district 12, and they continue to live with their two children there. Katniss is happy that her
children and the other children of Panem will not be agonized by the Hunger Games in the future.

3 Methodology of Research

The general methodology of this essay is interpretative. In interpretive methods, the researcher understands and assesses the subject according to its relationship within a social and historical context. S/he finds relationships, contradictions, and similarities between the details of the subject and general theoretical concepts. S/he also should be aware of multiple previous interpretations, biases or distortions about the subject (Klein & Myers, 1999). The present analysis is not based on a comparison of the story’s events with a real society, because the setting of the story is imaginary. Also, since the novel is new and the major theme of the story is not feminism, there is limited previous criticism and interpretation to challenge. The present paper employs more hermeneutic and symptomatic methods. It is more individual and subjective and the novel analysis is based on theories and concepts of feminism.

The hermeneutic method is a subjective method for literary analysis. It is not based on the empirical universe and scientific realism (Berthon, Pitt, Ewing, & Carr, 2002). In this method, linguistic meanings based on the conditions of usage and authorial intentions can have infinite interpretations and connotative meanings. The hermeneutic method creates an interpretative ambiguity and does not include a pre-determined set of mechanical criteria (Marshall & Brady, 2001). Gadamer, like Heidegger, believed that all things that we know and do are the results of our understanding and interpretation. Hermeneutics is not a method for understanding, but it is the art of understanding. It is an attempt “to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 263). Understanding is always the result of interpretation. In hermeneutics the process of understanding is a continuous movement from the parts to the whole and vice versa (Klein & Myers, 1999). In this paper understanding occurs by moving from the parts to the whole. Individual analysis of the female characters leads to a general conclusion for the whole of female society. The hermeneutical method focuses on one aspect of the subject which is being examined. It compares the narrative’s elements with a theoretical model (Gadamer, 1975, p. 355). In this paper the focus of interpretation is on women and the novel is only analyzed within a feminist
framework. Symptomatic interpretation does not necessarily correspond with the intentional themes of the author. In this kind of interpretation critics express things that are psychologically or culturally significant, even if the author would not agree or would be shocked by reading it. The author implies or expresses, deliberately or unconsciously, the context of her/his life and this is extracted by literary critics (Abbott, 2008, pp. 104-105).

4 Theoretical frameworks

In the present paper the novel is generally discussed based on three main theories of feminism. The conditions of the story’s women are analyzed from the perspectives of liberal, radical, and Marxist feminism.

Liberal feminism has a 300-year history. In the 18th century it argued for equal natural rights like the potential of full rationality for women. In the 19th century, it argued for equal law and citizenship rights, and in the 20th century, it persisted in developing the welfare status and social reforms for equal opportunity for women (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 27-28). Baehr (2012) divides liberal feminism into two major parts: classical liberal or libertarian feminism and egalitarian liberal feminism. The former group conceives the freedom of women in freedom from coercive interference and achieving self-ownership. Equity feminism, a subgroup of libertarian feminism, believes that the source of oppression is the state and feminism’s political roles put an end to the laws which limit or prefer women. Cultural libertarian feminism believes the source of oppression is patriarchal. The latter group believes that woman’s freedom lies in the creation of enabling conditions which satisfy women’s needs and interests and give them personal and political autonomy. In the first chapter the role of Panem’s women in the political and public arenas, the role of the state in enacting equal laws, rights, duties and generally meritocracy, women’s freedom in their erotic and sexual relations and the part of state in such relations are analyzed before and after the revolution.

Radical feminism is a phenomenon of the 20th century, but its principles are also deeply rooted in the ideas of 18th and 19th century feminism (Saulnier, 1996, p. 29). The early radical feminists were white middle class, college educated American women. At that time they did not have a perfect perception of working-class women or women of color (Jaggar, 1983, p. 83). Radical feminism focuses on conceptions of human nature like sex roles and androgyne, women’s biology, and definition of gender (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 85-95). One of the
important principles of radical feminism is “personal is political” which means that private and public are not two separate spheres. Radical feminism believes the root of women’s oppression is patriarchy and though the biological differences between men and women are fundamental, hierarchy should be eliminated. Radical feminism requests that radical changes should occur in social systems like law, tradition, economy, education, religion, etc. (Saulnier, 1996, pp. 32-42). In the second chapter, which is based on radical feminist theories, the physiological situation of the women of Panem is analyzed. Then the aggressiveness of women and men, women’s relations with culture and nature, and the quality of some of the males’ and females’ features are evaluated. Finally it is concluded whether physical and biological features are natural or acquired. Androgyny, matriarchy, and the development of individual strategies, as suggestions of radical feminism for achieving biological oneness, are also examined in the female characters.

According to Jackson (1998, pp. 12-13) feminists believe the origin of women’s subordination stands in the social relation between men and women. In the 1970s and early 1980s, Marxist theory focuses on capitalist class relations and class discrepancies. Marxist feminists attempt to discover a relationship between capitalism and male domination by extending, modifying, or reformulating Marxist ideas. Marxist and socialist feminists believe that women’s subordination is a consequence of capitalist social relations and class struggles (Jackson, 1998, pp. 12-13). Marxism persists in arguing for why men should not be exploited in the capitalist economy, while Marxist feminism explains that men and women equally should not be exploited in the labor market (Jackson, 1998, p. 17). Eisenstein (1979) argues that capitalism is the latest historical form of patriarchy (Thompson, 2001, p. 61). Evelyn Reed (1978, p. 127) poses that class differences are superior to differences of sex or gender (Jaggar, 1983, p. 133). In the last chapter of the present paper, the economic and professional positions of the women of Panem inside and outside the home are analyzed based on Marxism and socialist feminist theories.

5 Analyses
5.1 The characterization of females in liberal feminism

In this chapter some important ideas of liberal feminism are employed for exploring gender equality in Panem society. The importance of political roles of women in society, the role of the state in determining laws, rights, and duties for gender equality, and women’s access to a secure and fair sexual relationship are the main topics of this chapter. In each part, the analysis of women’s situation demonstrates: how much Panem’s society, before and after the rebellion, is close to the ideals of liberal feminism, and how much it does improve or remain unchanged in different fields after revolution.

5.1.1 Women in political realms

As Jaggar (1983) emphasizes, today’s liberal feminists fight for equal political positions and better representation of women in public offices (Saulnier, 1996, p. 13). Baehr (2012) discusses the fact that women still do not have any power in many public institutions such as churches, universities, and law making bodies. Egalitarian liberal feminists attempt to increase women’s participation in public forums and political debates. In this way some cultural stereotypes should change, women’s needs and interests should be legitimized and men’s dominance in institutions should be removed (Baehr, 2012). Karen Green (2006) argues for “guaranteed equal representation of both sexes in parliament” (Baehr, 2012).

In order to show women’s activities within the political spheres of Panem, firstly the presence, activities, evolution and improvement of the Everdeen sisters within political forums are interpreted. This is followed by the political activities of other female characters within the districts and the Capitol before the rebellion. Finally, the women’s ability to shine in sensitive political positions in District 13 and Panem after the revolution is described.

5.1.1.1 Political evolution in Katniss’ character

Politics is like a game and this game is a continuous phenomenon in the entirety of Katniss’ life. Katniss fights the whole time to survive in this game. The political character of Katniss progresses simultaneously with her surrounding environment and events, and the general condition of her life. The author develops Katniss’ character and thoughts from the small society of her family to the big family of her country. In the first volume, Katniss is a piece in the Hunger Game that is designed by politicians. As the series continues, Katniss
along with the politicians themselves enter into a bigger game in the real world. The political role of Katniss Everdeen, the protagonist of the story, is explored in these games step by step and it is illustrated how much she comes closer to the ideals of the liberal feminist approach along the way.

**Katniss in The Hunger Games**

Before the first arena, Katniss’ life is limited in the extent of the woods surrounding her district. She hunts and kills the animals that live in the woods in order to survive herself and her family. The extent of her political activity is so restricted and she speaks and acts against the Capitol’s legislations indirectly and very conservatively. “So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 7). Her first violation of the laws occurs when she passes heedlessly through electrified fences in order to go hunting in the woods. Although the arena of the first game is a jungle which is so similar to her area’s woods, the targets are humans and she feels responsibility for the protection of her allies as well. Now she needs to show stronger reactions rather than politics. Katniss illustrates her boldness in the training sessions by shooting her arrow towards the apple that is among the heads of game makers (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 124).

Alliance and unification within and among the districts is one of the dangers that have always threatened Capitol. Katniss begins to plant the seeds of union from the beginning of the first volume. She holds Peeta’s hand during the primary ceremonies (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 96), and she is his loyal ally to the end of the game. Her pure and truthful cooperation with Rue is also another example of Katniss’ attempts at showing unification to the Capitol. Katniss also carries a mockingjay pin in the arena. As it is mentioned above, mockingjays are the symbol of the Capitol’s failure. She also fearlessly covers Rue’s corpse with flowers in the arena (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, pp. 286-287), the action “that smacks of rebellion” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 441). Katniss gives a message to the politicians when she explodes the property of richer districts tributes. She requests of them equality between the districts. At the climax of The Hunger Games, she violates the games’ rules by planning a double suicide. She demonstrates that the Capitol’s rules are fragile; one game may have no victor or may have two victors. “‘It seemed too rebellious’” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 451).
Katniss in *Catching Fire*

In the second book of the series, *Catching Fire*, the second arena is an island in which its adventures are quite different from the woods of District 12. Katniss protects more people than her close friends and relatives, and her enemies are more experienced and dangerous than in the first Hunger Game. But even so, Katniss does not yet enter into the real political arena. She knows these competitors are not her real enemy. “[O]n the whole, I do not hate them. And some I like” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 281). She wonders why she truly planned the double suicide. Was it for the people of her district, for her debt to or love for Peeta, or to defy Capitol? And finally, she concludes, if I hold the poisonous berries out “to defy the Capitol, I am someone of worth” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 143). Katniss refuses “to play the Hunger Games by the Capitol’s rules” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 293). During the training sessions of the Quarter Quell Katniss shows her political awareness by creatively making a dummy of Seneca Crane.

Katniss gradually learns the importance of presence within the political arena. She violates even from Snow’s command, and she does not marry with Peeta. Rejection of her escape plan by Gale induces her to begin to think about an even more magnificent political challenge like rebellion. She discovers that life is like the arena. “[Y]ou have to stop running and turn around” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 144). In real life running away from the problems is not always effective. She extends the circle of persons whom she must protect. “[I]t isn’t enough to keep myself, or my family, or my friends alive by running away” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 144). Her fight with Snow is not only for Prim or Rue, but it is now for the sake of all the districts’ children like Rory, Vick, Posy and Rue’s younger siblings (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, pp. 148-149). Katniss develops the interaction between districts by helping Thresh’s and Rue’s families. She is “[t]he symbol of the rebellion” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 466), but not yet formally. Plutarch believes while she lives, “the revolution lives” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 466).

Katniss in *Mockingjay*

In all feminist novels, the protagonist becomes more aware about her ability and agency, and her voice is heard more powerfully at the end of the story (Trites, 1997, p. 7). In
the third volume the arena becomes the whole of Panem for Katniss. It is wider and more
dangerous than the arenas which were created by the game-makers. She “[feels] the arena all
around [her]” (Collins, 2011, p. 340). The tributes are Panem’s political leaders, who are the
true enemies of Katniss and Panem. Katniss fights to protect her nation today and forever.
She fights to make the world “somewhere in the future, with no games, no Capitol” (Collins,
Catching Fire, 2009, p. 427). In the beginning of Mockingjay, Katniss is introduced formally
as mockngjay, but she does not yet have any real role on the political scene. She laments that
she is “‘not even a real soldier. Just one of Plutarch’s televised puppets’” (Collins, 2011, p.
301). Katniss is no longer a pawn in Snow’s Hunger Games, but instead she has become
another piece in Coin’s game, a bigger game in which even “[…] Snow will be a player,

Gradually, as Boggs, Katniss’ protector in the missions, refers, Katniss becomes “the
face of the rebellion” (Collins, 2011, p. 310) and more influential than any other single
person. She does not remain more in the hands of “another power player” (Collins, 2011, p.
70). She arrives at the peak of her boldness that undermines both Snow and Coin by more
straight strategies. She, in spite of Haymitch’s commands, fights against Snow’s bombers in
District 8. It is she who takes the entire responsibilities of the mission upon herself and plans
Snow’s assassination. Katniss bravely assassinates Coin in the sight of all the people instead
of Snow. She cries not only in her own voice but the voice of her father and other workers.
This decision is not planned in one moment but it is “[…] erupted out of years of hatred and
resentment” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 149).

Katniss develops the level of her expectations of herself and finds a kind of
cosmopolitan ideas. “I should try to think bigger, beyond our current situation […]” (Collins,
2011, p. 45). Her battles are not yet her “own personal vendetta against Snow” (Collins,
2011, p. 274). She does not want to protect only the people of the districts and to kill
Capitol’s nation. She dedicates the fortune, salvation, and welfare to all people and a total
unification to the Panem as a whole. She refuses Gale’s plan to kill innocent people in the
mines of District 2. Katniss abolishes the misery of the Hunger Game forever. She saves not
only all of the districts and Capitol’s children, but also the life of the next generation all over
the country. From the beginning Katniss challenges this tradition implicitly by killing her
own motherhood instinct. She symbolizes it by hunting rabbits. Rabbit is “a traditional
symbol of female fertility” (Trites, 1997, p. 75).
Abstract of Katniss’ political character

In the Hunger Games, Katniss has some transgressions against a political dictator, but she does not have any official role in political institutions. She is conservative and mostly silent. She masks her own true self, but struggles to achieve political power. In Catching Fire, Katniss decides to avoid weak, indirect, and conservative strategies faced with the government’s policies, but she does not yet have a real political role. She is halfway to achieving an equal political position with men, which is the goal of liberal feminism. In the third volume, Katniss becomes the symbol of rebellion and finally receives an important political role. Katniss’ struggle against the Capitol develops throughout the story, and she achieves the peak of her power within the last chapter. She has a volcanic character which overcomes any system or social institution that limits and represses her, or introduces her as the “other”. Katniss extends her political views higher than her male peer, Gale, who welcomes Coin’s proposition for new careers of Hunger Games in Capitol. She becomes a super heroine and political activist who breaks down the whole of both political and sexual frontiers and surpasses her gender role in the society. Katniss, in the climax of her political character, is comparable with Solon who rose up and gave the best laws and democracy to Athenians (Plutarch, 1906, pp. 168-202).

By the end of the series, Katniss finally achieves the three purposes of liberal feminism. First, she succeeds in changing some cultural stereotypes. Katniss can demolish the dangerous stereotype of the Hunger Game. This is a horrible tradition which threatens the lives of not only girls, but children of both sexes. Second, Katniss aids in legitimizing women’s needs and interests by ending the Hunger Games. She ensures that future mothers can bear and see their children grow in a safe environment. And finally Katniss removes men’s domination in institutions. At the end of the story the women take over most political positions from men and they rule over Panem.

5.1.1.2 Progression in Prim’s political character

Prim is another character whose presence in political spheres shows an evolution from being a weak character in the first volume to the climax of her braveness in the last book. Her name is the name of a flower (Collins, 2011, p. 447). It symbolizes that her character is
elegant and fragile. In the beginning of the story, she is so immature and is only amused inside the home with her cat and goat. On Reaping day she is one year older than when Katniss became the survivor of the family, but she is still dependent upon her mother and sister. She even has “[…] trouble keeping [her] blouse tucked in at the back” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 17). She still lives in her childish fantastic world in Catching Fire, when she is fascinated by Katniss’ wedding dresses (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 142).

In the third volume, Prim comes out from the childhood world. “Time and tragedy have forced her to grow too quickly, at least for my taste, into a young woman who stitches bleeding wounds and knows our mother can hear only so much” (Collins, 2011, p. 40). A child, who could not manage her own clothes, alters into a professional nurse in District 13. In this stage, Katniss sees her as being even more perfect than herself. She believes “she has inherited the best qualities [their] family has to offer: [her] mother’s healing hands, [her] father’s level head, and [her] fight” (Collins, 2011, p. 214). The climax of the political presence of Prim is her attendance in front of Snow’s mansion. At the end, she is not killed like a weak rat in arenas, but she is martyred courageously and consciously in war. She sacrifices herself like a torch to lighten her country. Katniss asserts “I watched my little sister become a human torch” (Collins, 2011, p. 412). She is martyred for her political awareness which is the purpose of the liberal feminist approach.

The interesting point is that none of the Everdeen sisters with their entire capabilities can earn a proper political position, even in the new political system after the rebellion. In the section on meritocracy, it is discussed that political levels aren’t determined in any governments by the efficiencies of people, but it is the relationships and flexibility of people in the face of the political system which determine their positions. Gender hierarchy may be removed after revolution but no governors can tolerate the dangerous powers and opponent faculties from either sex. The intelligent adversaries are condemned to silence or death after revolution. It is one of the other most obvious common principles between Athens and Panem’s politics. Solon withdrew from policy and began the great work in verse after enacting the best laws for his countrymen (Plutarch, 1906, p. 201).

5.1.1.3 Political characterization of other females in Panem

The political presence of women is different between the districts and the Capitol in Panem before the rebellion. In the districts, women have political intelligence and activities,
but they lack any political power at all. In the Capitol, women neither think about nor take part in political activities. Overall, the presence of women in the political arenas is ignored before the rebellion in the whole of Panem.

The women of Capitol before the rebellion

The Capitol’s women are depicted as shallow and they never speak or think about important subjects like science or politics during the story. For example, Effie believes that by “[…] enough pressure on coal it turns to pearls” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 91). They repeat the same occupation for years without probing around it. They mostly work as stylists or in other superficial jobs. Katniss attributes to them the description “total idiot” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 76). These women are not stupid, but it is the capitalist system that holds them back intentionally and does not let them interfere in political activities. The governing system amuses them with their fantasy world and superficial things like their strange and extraordinary hair styles and clothes.

Tigris is one of the Capitol’s girls who had worked as a stylist for many years under Snow’s reign. She was used only as an instrument and thrown away to dwell in a small shop after her youthfulness. She did not have any political activity in Snow’s government. During the rising, she represents her real power as a free human being. She enters the political forum and fearlessly plays a key role in saving Katniss and her friends. She can earn political power during the revolution, the same thing as liberal feminism desired. Such awareness in a lower level is also seen in the behavior of Katniss’ prep team after they are taken as hostages, and also in Effie from the Quarter Quell.

If the mayor’s family is accounted a part of Capitol, Madge Undersee is another character who does not seem vigorous in social activities. At first, for the sake of her father’s position, she embodies a passive character like her symbolic surname, but later her political voice is portrayed through her mockingjay pin. The mockingjay becomes the symbol of rebellion. It is the symbol of the suppressed voices of women who have even the potential of causing the downfall of a government, but they are kept silent like cinders under the ash by male politicians. The author in this way shows symbolically the political potential of Panem’s females, the potential which liberal feminism persists should be free.
The women of districts before the rebellion

The women of the districts, unlike those of Capitol, sound smarter, more informed and much more interested in attending and interfering in political activity. However, they also lack political positions. They try to hold important roles in the rising. Bonnie and Twill are two of the pioneers of the revolution. Purnia is a daughter who saves Gale from death by her wise and brave interference (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 132). The female victims have key roles in the progression of the rising. In the primary steps of the victory tour when the bases of the rising are being shaped, two women are killed for their interference (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, pp. 80-81). In The Hunger Games, Rue’s death induces Katniss to commit a revolutionary action, in Catching Fire, female Morphling and Mags are two women who sacrifice themselves in order to save Peeta and Katniss, and in Mockingjay, Prim’s death has a big influence on the next decisions of Katniss.

The women of Panem after the rebellion

In Panem after the revolution and in District 13, the highest political positions are in the hands of women, just like Spartan society, where the wives could think and participate in political affairs. Lacedaemon women also were the only women in the world who could rule men. It was natural for them to think and speak as men (Plutarch, 1906, p. 102). Both Alma Coin, the president of District 13, and Commander Paylor, the new president of Panem, are females. Jackson, the head of soldiers, Cressida, the leader of camera crew, Lyme, the strong commander of District 2, and Soldier York, Katniss’ trainer in District 13, all are the women with high political positions in the governing system of the district 13.

The capitalistic system under Snow’s dictatorship, contrary to liberal feminism principles, does not allow women to be representatives in the political spheres, not even in Capitol. But the communist system, which is used in District 13 and in Panem after the rebellion, is closer to liberal feminist ideals. Women are allowed to enter political institutions. They even have great political roles, such as president. Engagement in political activities is one of the most important consequences of revolution for women in Panem, the right that a Communistic system bestows upon them. In the whole of Panem, the districts’ women from the beginning of the story and Capitol’s women from the time of the rising, have an ascending movement towards presence in the political arenas.
5.1.2 The role of the state in women’s equality

Meritocracy in liberal feminism & Panem society

Jagar (1983) refers to meritocracy as an important principle in liberal feminism. Early liberal feminists noted that rights, status, resources, and rewards should be given based on higher capacity of reason and intellectual capabilities, not based on gender structure and physical strengths. Eisenstein (1981) argued that there is no rational hierarchy between men and women. If women are defined based on their intellectual capacities rather than their physical properties, they may find equal availability to social sources. Liberal feminists extend John Locke’s rational theory and believe that since humans are essentially rational, physical differences are unimportant (Saulnier, 1996, pp. 11-12).

In Panem society, political positions are seen as rewards and sources of power which must be distributed among people based on their rationality. As has been discussed previously, Panem’s women, in spite of their faculties and attempts, are deprived of political positions before the rebellion; therefore Panem lacks meritocracy before the rebellion. After the rebellion, although gender and class hierarchy are dismissed and power is apparently in the hands of women, power is still not given to people based on their efficiency, reason or even physical power. Katniss is at the peak of courage, intelligence, and physical capabilities, but no high social or political position is suggested to her after the rebellion, because she is dangerous for politics. Mental and intellectual powers aren’t so important forces in determining social positions neither before nor after the rebellion. Panem lacks meritocracy even after the rebellion from a political point of view, but it has an economic reciprocity after the rebellion. In the last chapter, it is clarified how high professions and economic resources are allocated to men before the rebellion, but these distribute equally between men and women after the rebellion.

Solon’s laws also allowed restoration of disfranchised people except those that are condemned for murder or plotting against the government. It shows that even after Solon’s legislations, like Panem after the revolution, violation against policy is penalized like a homicide. Government did not tolerate its opposites from any level or sex. Some people
might be deprived of their rights for their opinions against the governing system (Plutarch, 1906, pp. 186-187). Athens also lacked pure reciprocity.

**Equal laws, rights, and duties in liberal feminism & Panem**

According to McElroy (1991, p. 3), classical liberal or libertarian feminists as well as politically conservative feminists believe that the law should treat both women and men equally. The state must ensure that justice is exercised equally between men and women within the structure of society (Cited in Baehr, 2012). John Rawls’ contractualist liberal theory (1993) argues that the state should distribute benefits, burdens, rights and duties fairly in the major social institutions (Cited in Baehr, 2012). Private institutions are free to have a preferential treatment for women, but the state must have identical treatment regardless of sex (Baehr, 2012).

Taylor (1992, p. 228) believes equity feminism objects to laws that restrict women’s liberty. Paul (1989) also denies that the laws which prefer and protect women in particular. He states that laws should not have preferential treatment for women. (Cited in Baehr, 2012) McElory (1998) claims the states which support the denial of women’s rights are themselves oppressors. Jaggar (1983) states that some liberal feminists insist on elimination of all protective legislations, because they believe that these regulations only ensure more protection of men’s domination and women’s subordination (Cited in Saulnier, 1996, p. 15). Giddings (1988) states that some other feminists support these rules because they believe it is better to “extend the protections to men rather than to take them away from women” (Cited in Saulnier, 1996, p. 15). The state should provide enabling conditions for women, and women themselves must develop the conditions for their emancipation. Some critics argue that sometimes, although enabling conditions are provided, women may themselves choose to be limited (Baehr, 2012).

Cathy Young (2007) argues that cultural libertarian feminists believe traditional, religious, and civil institutions are the source of women’s oppression and the patriarchal nature of society (Cited in Baehr, 2012). Young (2006) comments if an anti-feminist religious tradition is enforced by law, the women are oppressed (Cited in Baehr, 2012). Some equity feminists believe that traditional values should not be imposed or prohibited on citizens by the state (Baehr, 2012).
Panem before the rebellion is a society in which its regulations generally are contrary to basic human rights. The hunger game is the most apparent evidence for violation of human rights. The rules and treatments are unfair but completely identical for men and women. The identity and social rights of a woman are considered exactly equal to those of a man. The tradition of the Hunger Game is so brutal and barbaric, but there is no inequality between sexes in its rules and performance. Choosing a pair of tributes of two sexes from each district is a good proof for this claim. Time, condition, arms and any other facility or punishment in the games are equal for girls and boys. The quality and quantity of yearly rewards that the Capitol gives to the winners are equal for both sexes. The capitol gives justice points after training sessions to both sexes without caring about their gender or district. Katniss can get the point 11 after the first training session.

There is no extra sympathy for girls, and they automatically do not expect more care and support than men. Nobody treats them differently, neither harsher nor even a little softer than a male. For example, Rue is only a little girl, but no rule excludes her from attending the game and no extra privilege is given to her. Before the Quarter Quell, people suppose that Katniss is pregnant, but there is no regulation which protects a pregnant woman from participating in such a dangerous game. The Capitol’s methods of torture and punishment are identical for both sexes. Lavania and Pollux become Avox by the Capitol in the same way. Avox is the name of criminals who are captured and mutilated by Capitol. Although enabling conditions and facilities are so limited for women in the districts, they mostly act perfectly in the public and private spheres. Katniss, Rue, and many other female characters know how they have to gain from their minimum conditions. They do not give up their hopes and do not surrender to difficulties. They choose to act simply as human beings, without taking their gender into consideration.

Keeping women away from real life problems and difficulties as an excuse for their protection only provides an apparent and obligatory relief condition for them, and holds them back. It makes them think that they cannot progress and participate freely in social activity. Mrs. Undersee and her daughter are the outstanding examples of such women who are under the protection of Mr.Undersee and the government. They have no progression in social affairs. Katniss has an equally difficult situation with men, and she challenges the different
kinds of shortcomings. She acts as a subject and improves her personality towards being an ideal human being for her society.

Snow’s government has no social prohibition, cultural tradition, or religious rule which separates boys and girls, prohibits some things for girls, or gives extra rights to boys. Solon also denies seriously barbaric ceremonies in his legislations. He emphasizes moderation of worship and abating women’s mourning in funerals (Plutarch, 1906, p. 178). Absence of religion is attached to Panem from the beginning of the story. Gale and Katniss are in a common horrible economic situation and carry the economic burden of their families, but no cultural or religious restriction or tradition stands in the way of Katniss’ social activities as a girl. They can have a free relationship from childhood without any restrictions. They both can hunt and sell their goods for the same price alongside each other. Delly and Peeta also are intimate classmates and have been friends since they were kids. They continue their friendship in their youth without interference of any external force, tradition, or legislation. Sparta’s boys and girls were also free in choosing the way that they dressed. Young women, like young men, could be naked and sing and dance without shame in the feasts of Sparta (Plutarch, 1906, p. 101). Both the women of Panem and Sparta owe a major part of such equality to the absence of religions, traditions, and superstitions.

5.1.3 Intersexual relationship & liberal feminism

In this section, firstly Katniss’ character is analyzed in her erotic relations. Then different kinds of intersexual relations of the women in Panem, before and after the rebellion, are commented on. In the third part, the laws regarding partners’ relationships and marriage in Panem are discussed. And the subject of the final part is the equivalence and reciprocity in intersexual relations of women in Panem. All of the above are interpreted and compared with the theories of liberal feminism.

5.1.3.1 Females in their erotic, marital and sexual relations

Giddings (1988) proclaims that “liberal feminists have fought for women’s right to control their own bodies” (Cited in Saulnier, 1996, p. 13). One of the main purposes of libertarian feminism is women’s ability to achieve self-ownership and freedom from coercive interference of men (Baehr, 2012). Almodovar (2002) and Lahrman (1997, p. 23) declare that
women should have sexual autonomy. It implies that women should be free in sexual activities like buying and selling of sex, defending oneself against sexual aggression, choosing intimate and sexual relationships and reproductive matters (Cited in Baehr, 2012). McElroy (1991, p. 20) also states that women should be free in choosing their intimate associations and private marriage (Cited in Baehr, 2012). Baehr (2012) refers to Stevens’ statement (Stevens, Hugo, & Biscan, 2002) that women must have this right to defend themselves against sexual aggression.

Katniss

The Capitol’s rules and Panem’s condition sound completely unfair to intersexual relationships. How does Katniss fight against this injustice before and after the rebellion? Katniss is a girl who chooses. She does not let herself be chosen by the others. She fights so that she can choose her romantic partner and future husband of her own free will, not by force. She disobeys both Snow’s orders and also Peeta’s decision. Katniss, by her delay in choosing her partner, wants to deny the obligatory marriage from two points of view. Subsequently, I explain, by some proofs of the novel, how she does want to defend her gender identity as a free human being, and her right as a free resident.

In the first step, Katniss wants to condemn Peeta, who looks at her as a passive object. “But now Peeta has made me an object of love” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 165). She tries to demonstrate that Peeta does not have the right to impose himself upon her. Katniss does not want to be objectified or possessed by a male lover. She wants to determine the boundaries of her sexuality herself. Katniss contests and even hurts Peeta, because he does not respect her. He does not even ask Katniss’ opinion, before he declares his love for her on camera. Katniss does not allow Peeta to enter her heart, before she becomes sure about her own true feelings. She should be sure whether she feels love for or debt to Peeta. She intends to prove that both partners have an equal right in selecting each other, and both of them must gain from a voluntary relationship.

In the second step, Katniss objects to the oppression of tyranny. She bans the state that breaks the private boundaries of the nation and determines the lines of its citizens’ personal lives. She stands bravely against President Snow and even wants to escape to the woods from a compulsory marriage. “I have chosen Gale and the rebellion, and a future with
Peeta is the Capitol’s design, not mine” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 147). She decides to demonstrate that though the Capitol has domination over their assets and lives, it cannot govern their hearts. Katniss finally marries Peeta, but this marriage is the result of her personal decision. It is neither the result of an official command nor a feeling of debt or Peeta’s force. Katniss acts according to Solon’s legislation which forbade unloving marriages. Solon insisted that marriage should not be for gain, but it must be for “pure love, kind affection, and birth of children” (Plutarch, 1906, p. 188). Now she is truly in love with Peeta, both on and off cameras. Katniss is a favorite character for liberal feminism in this field as well.

**Panem’s women: before and after rebellion**

In Panem, before the revolution, women usually have no sexual autonomy or control over their own bodies and feelings. This subject is analyzed from different points of view; women in their erotic and emotional relations, women in buying and selling sex, and women in their marriage. Although there is no written rule which prohibits and restricts emotional and erotic relations, it is classism that determines the time and type of sexual relationship of people. Girls and boys of lower classes are not free to express their true amorous emotions to each other.

Katniss kisses a boy for the first time at the age of 16 (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 315) because she “[…] never had much time or use for it”, (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, pp. 364-5) while merchant girls “[…] navigate these waters so easily” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 364). Katniss masks her emotions before Gale and tries to pretend that she looks at him just as a good hunting partner. Peeta can also never mention his true feelings to Katniss before the night of the interview, even though he has been in love with her for many years. He confesses to Katniss in the arena how he tried to talk with her but he did not succeed (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 366). Peeta’s father, in spite of his interest in Katniss’ mother, could never express his real feelings for her (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 365). The same thing was applied in Sparta, where the boys in their group training had no chance to have a lover or any communication with girls (Plutarch, 1906, p. 107).
Sex trading and prostitution are not so free and fair in Panem. Neither female nor male prostitutes do their job with their personal consent. They do not have free choice or personal autonomy in their sexual relationships. In actuality, they are exploited by the aristocrats for their low social and economic level. They are objects used for the pleasure of high class people. Finnick must be a sexual slave of Capitol’s women and he cannot marry his lover under the reign of Snow. In District 12, hungry women of the Seam are abused by Cray, “who bought desperate girls to devour and discard because he could” (Collins, 2011, p. 199). Darius is also a peacekeeper who flirts with the district’s women. “[...] women around the Hob who he said had paid far more than a rabbit to enjoy his lips” (Collins, 2011, p. 233).

Marriage and choosing a partner in a capitalist system are again based on social class. Katniss’ parents cannot marry each other easily because of difference in their social levels. Katniss’ father was an impoverished miner while her mother’s parents were “part of the small merchant class” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 9). When Peeta’s father speaks about Katniss’ parents, he uses the term “ran off” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 365). It means they could not marry freely and easily. Katniss explains that “One of the few freedoms [they] have in District 12 is the right to marry who [they] want or not marry at all. And now even that has been taken away from [them]” (P 21 V2). Katniss and Finick are not free in choosing their spouses. No rule restricts them but they are under the direct pressure of President Snow. He not only wants to determine Katniss’ future husband, but he wants to decide all of the details of her wedding and future life. He even individually chooses and sends her a wedding gown in order to display further his dominance over her.

In the communist society of Panem after the revolution, and also in District 13, women attain their sexual autonomy and they have control over their own bodies and feelings. They choose their sexual partners freely. Finnick Odair and Annie Cresta can marry freely in District 13. Katniss chooses Peeta of her own free will, not under the government’s force. Panem, after the revolution, satisfies the liberal feminist desires. There is no sign of prostitution and people seem free in their sexual relationships, marriage, and general control over their bodies. Lycurgus also, in an answer to a stranger who asked how adulterers would be punished, said explicitly “‘there are no adulterers in our country’” (Plutarch, 1906, p. 104).
5.1.3.2 Legality in intersexual relationships

Cornell (1998) states that moral laws which prohibit and restrict women’s options in prostitution, abortion, sexual expression, or family forms should not be enacted and enforced by the state (Cited in Baehr, 2012). Cornell (1998) and Nussbaum (2002) claim that egalitarian liberal feminists reject the law which prohibits prostitution. They advocate sex trade if women’s safety is protected and they have control over their own body (Cited in Baehr, 2012). Cornell (1998, pp. 57-58) also states egalitarian liberal feminists reject legal prohibition of pornography.


Before the rebellion, prostitution and pornography are popular issues which the government does not prohibit. Officials force women and men to this profession. As it was described, the Seam’s women or Finnick do it only because of poverty or because of the threats of Capitol. Televising romantic scenes between Peeta and Katniss, and inducing them to play more for more gifts shows compulsory pornography is one of the other sexual problems of Panem. “One kiss equals one pot of broth” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 316).

Snow’s government is rejected from this point of view by liberal feminism, while prostitution and pornography are seen rarely in Coin’s government. Solon’s laws also rejected prostitution. Anyone who sexually molested a woman by force or deceit was penalized, but the females were free to sell themselves openly or hire out their bodies unless they were an unmarried girl (Plutarch, 1906, pp. 190-191).
The political system of neither Snow nor Coin employs the advices of liberal feminism in the reformation of marriage regulations. From this aspect, Panem is yet similar to both Athens and Sparta. The marital rules are foolish before Solon’s legislations in Athens. For example, an heiress widow should marry with the nearest kinsman of her husband (Plutarch, 1906, p. 187). In Sparta men could not be single so long and bachelors were penalized (Plutarch, 1906, p. 102). The girls must keep their virginity to the wedding night. The bridegroom visited his bride sometimes after the birth of their child by daylight (Plutarch, 1906, p. 103).

The marriage according to traditional rules is one of the defaults of Snow’s government which does not amend even after the rebellion. Marriage is formalized by celebrating great ceremonies in the Capitol and being in the Justice building in the districts in Snow’s time. It is defined only by signing a paper in District 13. Peeta boldly ridicules all these rules and states “Oh it’s not an official marriage. We didn’t go to the Justice Building or anything” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 308). “And to us, we’re more married than any piece of paper or big party could make us” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 308).

The differences between the Capitol and District 13 are thrown into sharp relief by the event. When Coin says “wedding,” she means two people signing a piece of paper and being assigned a new compartment. Plutarch (1906, p. 262) means marriage in hundreds of people dressed in finery at a three-day celebration. It is amusing to watch them haggle over the details.

5.1.3.3 Equal repartition of tasks and emotional duties in intersexual relationships

Egalitarian liberal feminists insist on fairness or justice in personal relationships. Jean Hampton (1993) states “heterosexual intimate relationships often fail to be fair or just” (Cited in Baehr, 2012). In such relationships, women are exploited to care about the other. According to Hampton’s view, a personal relationship is fair only if both parties accept fair distribution of costs and benefits. She explains that many women enter or remain in relationships for affective benefits. Hampton insists an affectionate nature is valuable but it should not figure in the evaluation of a relationship’s fairness. Linda Radzik (2005) confirms
Hampton’s claim and explains that a relationship is fair when each person gives as much as she/he gets (Cited in Baehr, 2012). Procedural accounts oppose what Hampton recommends and insist one can enter and remain in a personal relationship while one party gives more and another gives less. The matter which is important is that women are not pressured into or unable to exit from the relationship (Baehr, 2012).

In this novel the affective and materialistic burdens of life are carried equally between men and women. In a couple’s relationship, chivalric action is not exclusively in the hands of men and loyalty is not necessarily an exclusively feminine feature. Peeta stands against his mother and saves the life of Katniss in his childhood. He also defends her against Cato in the first arena. Katniss compensates it. She is a devotee of Peeta in different scenes of the story. She risks her life to bring a backpack from the feast in order to save Peeta’s life in the first arena. Katniss also swears to keep Peeta alive in the Quarter Quell (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 226). The minor romantic plot of Finnick Odair and Annie Cresta also shows that loyalty and virtue are not features restricted only to women. Finnick, as a very handsome male character and “sex symbol” (Collins, 2011, p. 13) rejects all of his “fancy lovers in the Capitol” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 420) and remains faithful to his love, Annie, “a poor, mad girl” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 420) from his home.

In the process of the story’s events, gender roles change sometimes, but it is important that responsibilities are distributed fairly. Fairness in the partners’ relationship is seen from the beginning of the story. Peeta is skillful in the arts which are attributed mostly to girls, like baking bread and decorating cakes. He also has the art of speaking and drawing. “I let Peeta speak for us both” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 314). Katniss is also a genius in skills like archery, hunting, and climbing, which are popularly known as masculine activities. They break the regulation of gender roles and show gender roles can be replaced, but both sides have active roles and work always beside each other.

The women are not just receivers of material, rational, and physical aids and givers of nurturing, emotional and sexual services. Katniss is not subordinate and object. The author does not portray another sleeping beauty that grows into a predetermined and limited condition. Katniss is not a passive heroine who is kissed and saved by a male awakener, but it is she who kisses and awakens Peeta in their cave in the Hunger Games (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 316). It is again Katniss who kisses Peeta’s lips in a symbolic action and
wants to revive him from Snow’s wizard in the last volume. “I lean in and kiss Peeta full on the mouth. His whole body starts shuddering, but I keep my lips pressed to his until I have to come up for air” (Collins, 2011, p. 366). She tries to return the memories which were killed by Snow’s tracker jackers. Katniss is not Cinderella who waits for a dreamy prince to come and save her from poverty, but she instead saves herself, her beloved and her nation bravely from the Hunger Games. Equivalence and justice in a relationship are seen in Panem before and after the rebellion and Panem adjusts to liberal feminism from this aspect.

Abstract of the chapter

Some violations of women’s rights are reformed after the rebellion, some rights which women have possessed from the previous regime were kept in the new one, and some old defaults also remain in the new government in Panem’s society. Snow’s regime holds back women in political fields and when the governing system changes, they can get political power, freedom, and positions. People are restricted in different forms of their intersexual relationships in Snow’s state and the state acts weakly in encountering prostitution and pornography. After the revolution these rules and relations become more fair and free. These are social improvements after the revolution according to the ideals of liberal feminism.

Lack of religious, cultural and legal restrictions for women and reciprocity in the relations of couples and generally in relations between males and females are positive social features which are kept from the beginning of the story. Violation of human rights, lack of meritocracy and traditional marital regulations are some of the problems in Panem which remain unsolved after the rebellion. These issues do not correspond with liberal feminist criteria even in the society after revolution. Katniss, the heroine of the story, has a progressive movement toward the ideals of liberal feminist theories. She is active a little at first, grows during the story, and achieves the peak of her character at the rebellion. She cannot find a high position even at the end of the story, because she is not a good artist in the play of politics.
5.2 Radical feminism & physiological features

This chapter follows two main objectives: First, comparing of biological and physical features of men and women, and second, examining radical feminism’s propositions for attaining biological equality in Panem society. Some radical feminists insist on biological differences between men and women and some others reject it. In the first part three main questions are answered. First, is there basically any difference in physical and biological features between the men and women of Panem? Second, are biological features natural or acquired? And the last question discusses whether women and men are classified in two completely different groups based on the common biological features? In the second part of this chapter some of radical feminism’s propositions for achieving biological oneness between men and women are examined in Panem society. Moreover it is pointed out briefly whether these suggestions are failed or successful plans.

5.2.1 Are women an inferior class in Panem?

Some radical feminists know biological differences as one cause for gender hierarchy and the origin of women’s subordination and male-dominancy in societies. Koedt (1973) discusses that men become oppressors and women are conditioned to serve men only for the sake of biological differences (Cited Saulnier, 1996, p. 35). Unavoidable biological differences reinforce male dominancy. “Historically men created social structures based on biology, with the intent of securing power over women” (Saulnier, 1996, p. 35). Shulamith Firestone (1970) states that sexual division of labor in social organizations is for the sake of biological differences (Cited in Jaggar, 1983, p. 91).

As was explained previously, the women of the Districts are more active than the Capitol, thus, they are the center of attention in this part as well. Their physical power and body, skills and qualifications, mental power and intelligence are exemplified and compared with men respectively. It leads to the answer to the question: Are women really different from men? In each part, primarily Katniss’ features and then other female characters are represented.
Physical power and body

Katniss and other female characters in the districts seem more or less as strong as male characters. They have no anatomical and physical shortage. Katniss claims that “I may be smaller naturally, but [...] I’m strong” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 115). She is a super woman with a great body and physical condition which can recover after serious injuries. Katniss is hurt, hospitalized, and recovers several times in the story line. In the first arena, she is burned, stung, stabbed, and seriously injured, but her strong body can recover and achieve its health again. In the second volume when she drops from the top of a tree beyond the fence, or when she fights against Snow’s bombers in District 8, she is critically injured and hospitalized, but she quickly regains her health. In the Mockingjay, Katniss can regain her physical and psychological health after she is burned in the bombings and is harmed by hunger-strike.

The girls are as resistant as the boys against thirst, hunger, sleeplessness, and other brutal conditions. The number of remaining boys and girls at the ending stages of the games and the equal number of male and female victors who are present in the Quarter Quell confirm this claim. Katniss’ toleration of sleeplessness, thirst, physical and mental fatigue and infection is appreciable in the first arena. Peeta’s mother knows Katniss to be more capable than her own son in the game (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 110). Johanna can tolerate sleeplessness very well in the Quarter Quell (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 422). Women in various ranges of aging possess great physical health. Aging and pregnancy do not undermine their power and energy. Female tributes like Wiress, Mags, and Seeder, who are older, can compete so energetically in an intensive game like the Quarter Quell. The narrator explains that Seeder “must be around sixty, but she still looks strong, […]” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 257). Also the powerful presence of women like Cecelia, who is the mother of several children, shows that pregnancy and child bearing have not made her weaker than men.

Skills and qualifications

The districts’ women are as qualified, experienced, and skillful as men. Katniss has a unique talent in archery in which none of the other male or female characters can compete with her. Katniss expresses her voice through her art. She is also competent in fishing and
gathering. She employs these skills to compete against her enemies and to survive in the arenas. Katniss has a ready and well-trained body that can run quicker than the boys. “Johanna and I are the fastest and most sure-footed on the jungle floor” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 446). Katniss can climb from the trees, a job that the boys cannot do in the first arena. Among the boys, Gale can hunt with traps, Finnick is an expert in working with a trident, and Beetee is a technician in wire. In the female’s party also Wiress is a clever technician, Rue can fly among foliages, and Clove can throws knives precisely. Sometimes female characters are even more nimble than the male counterparts. Enobaria is swifter than Gloss. She can escape from Katniss’ shooting but Gloss cannot (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 326).

Sparta after Lycurgus also had a rigorous training camp and brave men and women warriors (Swank, 2012). Lycurgus ordered the maidens to exercise with wrestling, running, throwing the quoit, and casting the dart in order to have strong and healthy bodies, take firmer root, and find better growth (Plutarch, 1906, p. 101). Cartledge (2004) claimed that Spartan girls were not kept secluded in the home and they played their part. They received education and training similar to Spartan boys, although they did not serve in the army (Swank, 2012).

**Mental power and smartness**

Almost all of the female characters are as smart as the males. They attempt to employ their mental power and intelligence as much as their physical strength. Katniss all the time strives to employ her intellectual power, when she feels her archery skill and her physical power are insufficient for her survival. In the first volume, it is Katniss that determines the victors with her stroke of genius. In the Quarter Quell, Katniss discovers the function of spile (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 353) and understands the meaning of Wiress from “tick tock” (ibid. p. 392) before anybody else.

In the first arena, Foxface is a good example of a girl who can remain alive by her keenness and cleverness after many robust male tributes like Thresh are killed. As Katniss comments if there were “[…] some sort of test, she would have been the smartest of all the tributes” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 394). Rue also is the girl who ingeniously persuades Katniss to cut down the limb of tree and to infuriate the tracker jackers. She shows
that her powerful mind overcomes the strong bodies of the male tributes. In the Quarter Quell, Wiress is the first who finds out the mystery of similarity between the island and the clock. “‘Oh, she’s more than smart’, says Beetee. ‘She’s intuitive.’” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 399). And finally while Darius is not capable of saving Gale from the whipping of Romulus Thread, Purnia is a girl who saves him smartly (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 132).

Collins has patterned her female characters on Sparta's women who have equal biological features with men. Lycurgus guaranteed mental and physical health and strong body of the citizens by a fair division of stuffs between them. He forced them to eat at a common table from the same bread and the same meat, the system that is also observed in District 13 (Plutarch, 1906, p. 95). In Panem, there are also some females who are psychologically and physically weaker than men. For example Katniss’ mother does not have a stable psyche after her husband’s death. She keeps this weakness to the end of the story after the death of Prim too. Mrs. Undersee has a headache whenever the narrator recalls her in the novel. There are also girls like Madge and Delly Cartwright from whom no courageous action is seen. As the conclusion of the whole of these comparisons, a woman can be stronger or weaker than a man and biological differences between men and women are not based upon their gender.

5.2.2 Are physical features natural or acquired?

Women biologically have the responsibility of reproduction and feeding of infants. It makes them physically weaker than men and forces them to withdraw from economic activities. Then they become physically and economically dependent on men. It makes a biological relationship between men and women which Firestone (1970) calls “the biological family” (Jaggar, 1983, p. 91). But radical feminists stand against anti-feminists that believe human biology is fixed and women’s subordination is natural and inevitable. Radical feminists insist it is humans, not nature that define the biological differences and constitute oppression against women (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 88-89).
The female characters of the story with various features and strengths demonstrate that biological distinctions are not innate, natural, or genetic. It cannot be expressed that all women are born with the same innate features that are inseparable from them. Biological features are acquisitive and are shaped based on training and socialization. To show this statement, two important theories of radical feminism are discussed in the following: aggressiveness in men and women, and the relationship of women with nature and culture.

**Aggressiveness in men and women (psychologically and sexually)**

Some radical feminists believe biological differences lead to innate male aggression and physical coercion like rape and battery (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 104-105). Susan Brownmiller (1975) believes women’s subordination is owing to anatomical difference in the genital construction of men and women. She states that men have known that they have the capability to rape women from prehistoric times to the present. Men have used sexual assault as a basic weapon to force women into obedience and keep them in a state of fear. Since women cannot rape men, they are assumed to be weaker individuals who should always be at the service of stronger ones.

A group of radical feminists believe there is a flaw in male biology and this flaw makes men dangerous to women. Men are innately more aggressive than women and this carries the threat of physical violence like abuse, beating, and raping of women (Jaggar, 1983, p. 94). Jaggar (1983) argues that it is always men who abuse women by physical and sexual assaults. Dworkin (1988) determined that in a patriarchal system in all cases of incest, sexual harassment, prostitution, and pornography, women sexually are captured and humiliated by men, but women never can exploit men sexually to meet their own needs (Cited in Saulnier, 1996, p. 39).

Female characters of this novel reject natural and innate features through rejecting the theory which claims that men are innately more aggressive than women. Panem’s females are not both psychologically and sexually less aggressive than males. The story’s events reject that female characters are more vulnerable, sensitive and weaker than men. Women become even more savage than men in the harsh conditions of the arena. In *The Hunger Games*, Clove attacks Katniss twice savagely. The plans like the killing of District 2’s people,
bombing the children, and beginning a new career of hunger games represent the aggressive character of Alma Coins.

Both men and women are sexually abused equal in the Panem society. It is social class, not gender, which determines who is the abuser and abused. The wealthy people, male or female, can abuse the opposite sex. The handsome and powerless boys like Finnick are abused by aristocratic women of the Capitol. Finnick was “[a] district slave” (Collins, 2011, p. 199).

“‘President Snow used to…sell me…my body, that is,’ Finnick begins in a flat, removed tone. ‘I wasn’t the only one. If a victor is considered desirable, the president gives them as a reward or allows people to buy them for an exorbitant amount of money. If you refuse, he kills someone you love. So you do it.’” (Collins, 2011, p. 198)

These examples reject aggressiveness as an innate biological feature for men, the characteristic which makes them more powerful than or superior to women. It is social class and condition which determines aggressiveness in Panem’s people.

**Women’s relationship with culture and nature**

Patriarchy rules insist that woman’s understanding of the world is different from a man’s. A traditional western philosophy characterizes the feminine with nature and the masculine with culture. This philosophy claims that women from the function of their bodies and lack of reason are close to animals, and men with their strong logic can create culture. Radical feminism accepts that women are closer to nature than men, but it claims that this feature is a source of special strength, knowledge and power for women not a genetic defect (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 96-97).

Some important questions should be answered in this part. Firstly, are women biologically closer to nature? Secondly, if it is so, why and what are its consequences? And third, is it an innate or acquisitive feature? Katniss is the best example from the females’ society of Panem who is so close to nature. She feeds several mouths from nature through fishing, hunting and gathering. She can connect with the birds, hunt animals, and use natural resources better than Peeta for her survival in the first arena. Katniss persists in staying in her
natural shape. She is disgusted by clothing in fashion, make up, manicuring nails, waxing, and overall conversion from “Beauty Base Zero” (Collins, 2011, p. 71). She loves her natural appearance. She prefers to braid her hair simply behind and she is happy when her legs’ hairs grow back (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 59). She loves to be far from a “painted Capitol mask” (Collins, 2011, p. 107).

Katniss’ love of nature is not genetic, but it is originated in some other reasons; first, Katniss knows nature is a major source for feeding and protection. “Above all I am hoping for trees, which may afford me some means of concealment and food and shelter” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 169). Second, she wants to be in her natural appearance because she does not want to hide her face or her thoughts behind the painted covers and masks like the people of the Capitol. She believes that the Capitol’s people try to conceal their clumsy natures by cosmetic surgeries, wearing masks, and makeup. The internal world of human beings is more important than the external for her. Third, Katniss knows that turning females from their basic beauty is a type of discrimination between boys and girls. She thinks waxing is wasting time and a negative point for girls in the arena.

“It means I get to spend the morning having the hair ripped off my body while Peeta sleeps in. I hadn’t thought about it much, but in the arena at least some of the boys got to keep their body hair whereas none of the girls did” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, pp. 58-59).

Katniss is close to nature and hates everything which separates her from her natural beauty. It is not because females are genetically close to animals and nature or they lack logic. Both Katniss and Prim are females. Katniss under the training of her father becomes closer to nature, but her sister who is brought up with her mother isn’t like Katniss. Katniss becomes deliberately, not genetically, close to nature to benefit from it. She is close to nature because she is smart. She knows how to communicate with nature and employ it for her benefit. Besides her closeness to nature, she is capable of being close to culture, social problems, and political issues better than any man.

5.2.3 Are women differentiated from men by their biological differences?

Some other radical feminists oppose the idea of biological difference and classification of men and women into two completely distinct classes based on physical features and gender. bell hooks (1981) challenges the idea that all women are fundamentally
similar to each other on one side and all men have identical features on the opposite side. Difference among human beings is not based on gender. One cannot define common characteristics for males and another group of attributes for women. It means women and men do not possess essentially different features (Cited in Saulnier, 1996, p. 41). Some radical feminists argue that since women share a common oppression, they belong to one class and men receive many benefits from women’s exploitation as a class (Jaggar, 1983, p. 102).

The first and the second questions make easy the way to answer the third question: first, distribution of physical characteristics is not based on gender. The atmosphere that Collins creates from the beginning of the story in the districts presents a society in which women can be both physically and mentally as powerful as men and even sometimes more powerful than them. She portrays a society in which biological features cannot polarize men against women. Second, women’s features are not merely natural but they are mostly acquisitive. The women do not have some common innate weaknesses which prevent them from competing with boys. Since Panem’s women reject the idea that biological features are static, innate and genetic, and do not have natural differences from men, they cannot be classified with the same features on the inferior side and men on the superior side.

In Panem, men are not one party which is equipped with reason, mind, physical power, and military tactics in a subjective position, and women are not objectified only with child bearing and rearing skills. The women are not “the Other”, the source of mere emotion, object of enquiry, and generally inferior and at the service of men. As it is exemplified, the distribution of faculty, skill, intelligence, mental and physical power is equal between men and women. No attribute is exclusively attached to men or women. Katniss does everything that she desires. She is a symbol who verifies that gender features and roles are changeable.

5.2.4 Radical feminist propositions for achieving “biological oneness”

Patriarchal thinking polarizes and separates the world’s realities. It puts mind against matter, self against other, reason against emotion, enquirer against object of enquiry, and man against woman, a dualism or a hierarchy in which one side is always superior to the other based on nature. Radical feminism rejects this artificial hierarchy and claims a non-dualistic
structure for the world. Radical feminists argue that patriarchal polarities are ontological and are the result of a long history of patriarchal oppression. They insist on wholeness and oneness of the universe and assert that women are a part of nature rather than separate from it (Jaggar, 1983, p. 96).

Radical feminism suggests some solutions like androgyny, substitution of matriarchy instead of patriarchy, and development of individual strategies in women for achieving wholeness, oneness, and unification between men and women. In this section, it is clarified if these propositions of radical feminism are seen in the females’ society of Panem and whether these suggestions are successful or failed plans.

### 5.2.4.1 Androgyny

Radical feminists reject dualism and suggest different solutions for fighting against it. Millet (1969) suggests combining the most positive traits of each sex and producing an androgynous person as a solution for this problem (Cited in Saulnier, 1996, p. 35). But not all radical feminists know androgyny as an ideal phenomenon. Jagar (1983) argues that although rigid sexual roles distort people, not even an ideal androgynous person is really a complete and healthy human. S/he would have problematic traits too.

Is Katniss androgynous? Katniss is a tomboy who tries to copy all masculine behaviors and avoids the clichés which historically are attributed to an archetypical girl. She accepts the responsibilities which traditionally were given to a boy. Collins gives some harsh crafts like hunting or fighting which have been before in the hands of heroes, to the heroine. Women usually are protected and men are protectors, women are consumers and men are producers. But in this story, Katniss is both provider and protector. Katniss is a knight who keeps her protective spirit even in the arena. Rue does not seem a suitable ally for her, but Katniss, like a great champion, decides to support her.

All of her mentors and patterns from the beginning of her life are males. Her father, Cinna, and Haymitch are men. The champion of Katniss in life is her father. Katniss, according to her own claim, has her “father’s blood” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 388). Even her facial features are similar to her father’s. Katniss has learned her skills from the father, and she has shaped her personality based on her father’s patterns. Cinna believes that Katniss is a super-woman. He requests Katniss that she looks at in the mirror. “I do not see a
girl, or even a woman but some unearthly being that looks like she might make her home in the volcano that destroyed so many in Haymitch’s Quell” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 248).

Since Katniss has been compelled to fall into a harsh condition, her feelings as a girl are suppressed. She avoids the emotional attitudes of other girls. She needs the warm touch and hug of her mother, but she suppresses this need inside herself and shows a cold relationship with her mother. She never lets her mother know how much she needs her and how much she misses her (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 353). She also decides to suppress her feelings as a wife and as a mother. From the beginning of the story Katniss states that she is uninterested in marrying and having children in the future. “I know I’ll never marry, never risk bringing a child into the world” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 378). The economic conditions of her life make her see children as “[…] mouths that are always asking for more” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 11).

Katniss is not interested in issues like hair style, clothing, and make-up like other girls. Unlike other girls she has no special “[o]pinions on clothes, hair, makeup” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 258). She knows high heeled shoes as the worst part of her play in the Capitol (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 139). She does not even try on her wedding dress before the day of the photo shoot (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 199). Katniss, based on radical feminism criteria, tries to have an androgynous character, but she cannot keep her own feminine features parallel with the features of the opposite sex. She replaces her feminine features with a series of artificial masculine characteristics.

**Androgyny as a failed plan**

During the story, Katniss tries to reject the characteristics which biologically and socially are defined for females. But are all of her needs and interests satisfied by having such a character? Katniss suppresses her feelings for her mother but this suppressed need is exposed when she is in the bunker of District 13 under the Capitol’s assault. “My mother wraps her arms around us. I allow myself to feel young for a moment and rest my head on her shoulder” (Collins, 2011, p. 172). Katniss, at the beginning of the story, avoids nurturing and care-giving, but when Peeta is injured and in need of care, Katniss learns the importance of
nursing. Katniss, at the beginning of the story, refuses to have a family, but at the end she
marries and has children.

“Successful feminist characters are those who adopt the best traits of both genders to
strengthen themselves personally and within their communities” (Trites, 1997, p. 25). At the
end, Katniss shows that an androgynous person cannot possess all the features of both sexes
side by side. She is not a complete, ideal and healthy human being. She demonstrates that an
ideal woman is one who can develop all of her potentials. Katniss at the end of the story tries
to create a kind of balance between the masculine and feminine aspects of her psyche. Then
the androgyny of radical feminism is measured as a failed project in the feminine world of the
story.

5.2.4.2 Substitution of matriarchy instead of patriarchy

Some radical feminists support the substitution of matriarchy, a society in which
women rule, instead of patriarchy (Jaggar, 1983, p. 103). After the rebellion, according
previous discussions, major social positions are in the hands of women. Therefore, Panem is
in appearance a matriarchal society, but because of the lack of meritocracy it is not perfect.
The society would be a success if social positions and resources were given to people based
on their efficiency, qualification and capability. Social class, gender and political relations
cannot be correct criteria for making a utopia. Matriarchy in Panem after revolution cannot
make a unified and equal society, and women cannot achieve all equal rights even in this
society. Katniss with all of her qualifications cannot get her proper position even after the
revolution.

5.2.4.3 Development of individual strategies in women

Some equity feminists believe that women do not need to give up their gender
difference in order to benefit from their freedom. Some radical feminists believe an ideal
woman is a woman who develops her full human powers, the powers which have been
suppressed by male domination (Jaggar, 1983, p. 97). Women can free themselves from sex
roles by developing some of their individual traits and strategies (Baehr, 2012). Lahrman
(1997, p. 33) lays emphasis on traits like ambition, assertiveness, and decisiveness, Stevens
independently” and “taking responsibility for oneself” for the emancipation of women (Cited in Baehr, 2012). Lahrman (1997) quotes from Elizabeth Cady Stanton that women can free themselves from customs, dependence, and superstition, if they accept responsibility for their own life (Cited in Baehr, 2012).

Development of some important individual traits and strategies in women is another plan of radical feminism for removing discrepancies between males and females. The process of forming some of these attributes in Katniss is explicated. Self-confidence is a feature which is improved from childhood inside Katniss. Katniss has a symbolic name. It is the name of a root. Katniss, like a root, is strong, stable, solid, and resistant. She can tolerate all stresses, tensions, and disasters. Katniss recalls her father’s words: “As long as you can find yourself, you’ll never starve” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 63). “[F]ind yourself” has a double meaning. It literally means finding the root with the same name Katniss, and it has a literary and deeper meaning that is finding self-confidence. Katniss’ father encourages her to have independence and confidence, and implies that as long as she trusts herself and knows her abilities, she will survive.

The features like autonomy, assertiveness and decisiveness, just like the other characteristics, gradually evolve in Katniss’ character. In The Hunger Games, Katniss is not the perfect, mature, and independent girl that her father desired her to be. She underestimates her skills and she feels the need of the others’ support. She feels the need of a male partner both in her physical and spiritual affairs. She needs Gale, because he gives her a sense of security, the sense that she got before from her father. “Gale gave me a sense of security I’d lacked since my father’s death” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 135). She also feels to need Peeta, who gives her a sense of confidence. “I’m glad now I have Peeta to clutch for balance, he is so steady, solid as a rock.” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 85). She also needs Haymitch as a mentor and counselor. The need of Katniss for men shows that she does not have enough assertiveness and self-confidence in the first volume.

In Catching Fire, she still has a sense of dependency. When she is trapped behind an electrified fence, she finds herself for the first time alone in constant danger without the support of a man. She feels the need of Gale there. “It’s happened a few times over the years, but Gale was always with me” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 182). Katniss keeps her conservative strategy to some extent. When she goes to District 11 on a victory tour, she remains silent in front of Rue’s and Thresh’s family. Katniss does not have the self-
confidence to become a leader. She believes that a leader must be someone with conviction, unflinching courage, and persuasive words. She does not see herself qualified with these attributes (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 150). Katniss tries to induce and increase the sense of her courage and self-confidence by engaging problems, not by escaping from them. In the beginning of Mockingjay, Katniss is not yet perfect. She is manipulated by political leaders. “Both my voice and body have a jerky, disjointed quality, like a puppet being manipulated by unseen forces” (Collins, 2011, p. 87). But she shows her braveness via actions like planning Snow’s assassination. Executing Coin instead of Snow is the climax of her assertiveness and courage.

Katniss, in addition to freedom, strives to attain self-discovery, self-awareness, self-possession, and her real identity as a human being during the story. She wants to be a free human being who can think and act independently. Before entering the first arena, Katniss thinks more about her survival, while Peeta reminds her of identity and purity of self. “I bite my lip, feeling inferior. While I’ve been ruminating on the availability of trees, Peeta has been struggling with how to maintain his identity. His purity of self” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 171). Mockingjay has a sense of Katniss’ identity. Katniss forgets her mockingjay pin before the hunger game, and Cinna reminds her. Cinna wants to remind Katniss of her identity and self-confidence through this pin. In the first arena Katniss thinks “[…] I’m not really sure who I am, what my identity is” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 378). Katniss tries to determine her fate by her own decision, but she can keep her independence only in some constrained moments. She does some courageous actions like burying Rue among flowers or planning a double suicide to show she is more than a piece in the game.

In Catching Fire, Katniss improves her self-confidence. “And I love it. Getting to be myself at last” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 256). She deceives the Capitol and shows that she can do something according to her own decision and in spite of the Capitol’s wishes. “If I can make it clear that I’m still defying the Capitol right up to the end, the Capitol will have killed me… but not my spirit” (Collins, Catching Fire, 2009, p. 293). Katniss believes that the Capitol only can kill her, but if she keeps her identity as a human being, her spirit, her ideology, the effects of her actions will remain forever. She becomes ready for being the symbol of rebellion and freedom little by little.
In *Mockingjay*, Cinna turns Katniss’ dress from a favorite design of Snow into a mockingjay. It teaches Katniss that she should be herself, not someone Snow wishes. Katniss removes all of her masks and finds her real self. She acts based on her own free will. She chooses to be the mockingjay willingly and intentionally, and acts in significant events assertively based on her actual wishes. Even when she is sentenced to execution, she decides to determine the condition of her death herself by hunger-strike. She decides to shape her own destiny. The improvement of individual traits sounds a successful plan of radical feminism for achieving unification and equivalence between men and women in the novel. Katniss can arrive at all of her great goals and goes even higher than her male peers via the development of her individual strategies. She is an independent woman who feels no more need of a male’s support at the end.

**Abstract of the chapter**

In the first section of this chapter the physical and biological features of Panem’s women are analyzed and it is inferred that, firstly, there are no physical and biological differences between male and female characters. Secondly, biological features are not innate and natural, and thirdly women cannot be classified as the “Other” for their biological features. In the second part androgyny and substitution of matriarchy instead of patriarchy are measured as failed projects of radical feminism for arriving at biological oneness between men and women, while the development of women’s individual strategies is supposed a success plan in the feminine society of Panem.

**5.3 Women’s work: Marxist feminist theory**

This chapter includes two parts. In the first part, the condition and problems of females’ work in the social system and in their private life in Panem before the rebellion is analyzed based on Marxist feminist theories. First part shows how much females’ condition in public/private realms is close to a capitalist society. In the second part, professional problems of women are interpreted, based on socialist feminist theories. This part clarifies how much economic problems of female society of Panem is solved in the communist system after the revolution.
5.3.1 Women’s position in the public sphere of Panem before rebellion

Eisenstein (1979) knows capitalism as one form of patriarchy (Cited in Thompson, 2001, p. 61). Capitalist systems, by designating women for domestic labor and sex segmentation of the work force, reinforce patriarchy or women’s subordination (Thompson, 2001, p. 61). Jackson (1998, pp. 14-16) explains that a group of Marxist feminists, orthodox Marxists, concentrate on the role of women in the productive, not reproductive, process of modern society. They believe classism and the capitalist economy make sex segmentation in the labor force. Women are exploited in the labor market in different forms, including, different positions for men and women with the same qualifications, paying lower wages to women for equal jobs, offering fewer occupations and less employment to women, and the frequent employment of women on a part time basis.

They believe women are a pool of flexible and cheap labor force with marginal wages, and they have potential of replacing male workers. Women are subordinate in the economic system of capitalism (Jackson, 1998, pp. 14-16). In a capitalist society, women do compulsory labor with great difficulty and have no real alternative. They are non-owners (Jaggar, 1983, p. 131). Harry Braverman (1974) explains that in a capitalist system, females often are employed as household workers. They work as nurses, cooks, cleaners, dishwashers, laundresses, etc. They usually work alone or in small groups and in the tasks that are separated from the market, but men work as industrial workers in larger groups (Cited in Jaggar, 1983, p. 145).

Marxist feminists believe that Capitalism and patriarchy are interwoven and the gender division of labor is unavoidable in both public and private spheres in a capitalist system. Classism and sexism are two salient features of capitalism, but classism is more fundamental than gender hierarchy. In Snow’s government, high positions are in the hands of upper class men of the Capitol, and no common people, neither men nor women in the districts, possess key roles. The main political roles of the districts such as mayors are selected by the Capitol, and are always chosen among men. Then high positions are managed by both male and high classes of the Capitol. Life situations and consequently capabilities, conditions, and positions are different for women in the Capitol and in the districts; therefore, each of these conditions is explored separately.
Capitol’s women

Panem before the revolution follows the principles of capitalism, like Athens society before Solon. Discrepancy between poor and rich is so deep and people are classified into different classes based on their economic power (Plutarch, 1906, p. 185). Sexual division of labor is dominant in the Capitol. The Capitol’s key roles are in the hands of men. The president of Capitol is Snow. Seneca Crane and Plutarch Heavensbee, the heads of the game-makers, and even announcers and interviewers in the games are males. The Capitol’s women have no essential positions and often work in marginal jobs. They mostly work in the decorative jobs. Effie Trinket is the woman who is the escort and organizer of the District 12 team, without any right to make important decisions. Octavia, Venia, and Portia are women who work as the stylists in the prep team. It is remarkable that these jobs are not exclusively in the hands of women and there are also peer male characters like Flavius and Portia in similar positions. It shows that in the Capitol, men are free in choosing an occupation, but women with higher positions, like Atala who is a head trainer, are observed rarely.

The women of districts

The women of the districts are not just consumers, passive, and subordinate. They can have their social activity in the public sphere beside men. They are employed regularly in non-domestic vocations, but mostly in compulsory labor as the workers without good and permanent positions and fair wages. Katniss is a girl who appears in the society just like her peer, Gale, and does everything which Gale does without having more restrictions. Bonnie and Twill are factory workers who work in similar conditions as the other male workers. Bristel and Ripper work in the mine just like Katniss’ father, Gale or other male miners. Rue and her parents work in the farms. Peeta’s parents work beside each other in their bakery. The women also can deal in the market. Rooba is a butcher, and even Ripper who lost her arm in the mine sells white liquor. The highest position for the districts’ people is employment as a peacekeeper. Even peacekeepers are employed from both sexes. In District 12, Darius is a male and Purnia is a female peacekeeper.

Since districts’ people mostly belong to low economic class with less prestigious positions, sexual division of labor is observed lesser among them. In the districts, women are free and capable of doing all professions which men do, but there is no proof that men also do
all types of vocations. Marginal jobs like household work and care giving are exclusively in
the hands of women. Katniss’ mother is a free care giver and Hazelle, Gale’s mother, is a
laundress and later a house worker in Haymitch’s home, while there is no male character with
identical positions in the society. Then, in sexual division of work in the districts, the lowest
positions are allocated to the women.

Generally, analyzing women’s activities in the public sphere in the whole of Panem
shows according to Marxist feminist principles that Panem is a capitalist society in which,
though women are not limited to the home, the sexual division of labor is seen all over.
Women are not in a good economic and social condition and do not receive enough payment
for their work.

5.3.2 Women’s positions in the private sphere of Panem before the rebellion

In a capitalist society, domestic work is an unpaid labor which is a primary duty of
women. Engels excludes housewives from society, and suggests that the work of women
inside the home is not real work (Jaggar, 1983, p. 145). Marxists do not pay attention to the
division of domestic labor between men and women. They do not think about men’s benefit
from the work of their wives in the home (Jackson, 1998, p. 16). Christine Delphy (1976)
argues “the relationship between the domestic and capitalist modes of production” (Cited in
Jackson, 1998, p. 17). Even women who work outside the home and can earn a sufficient
income to meet their own costs should do housework. In this case they work for nothing. In a
capitalist economy men and women are not exploited equally (Cited in Jackson, 1998, p. 16-
17).

Heidi Hartmann (1981) discusses women’s paid work outside the home and the
interconnection between capitalism and patriarchy. When there is capitalism alongside
patriarchy, gender division will be inevitable in both home and work place. During the 19th
century women were excluded from well-paid and skilled occupations and they were
marginalized in the labor market, so they were constrained into marriage for survival. Within
marriage, domestic services, housework, and childcare became their primary responsibilities,
and they could not compete more in the labor market (Cited in Jackson, 1998, p. 18).
In a capitalist system, the women are designed for unpaid labor in the small groups of their families like housework, bearing and raising children, and giving sexual services to men. If the mayor’s family of District 12 is seen as a piece of Capitol society, Mrs. Undersee, the mayor’s wife, is an example of a traditional woman who is restricted to her family with typical unpaid responsibilities and has no active role in the public sphere. She depends on her husband completely. Between the people of the districts, Mrs. Everdeen is a plain model of a conventional feminine character who works only at home. Gale’s mother is also another example of a woman who does unpaid duties inside the home, “[…] a woman whose swollen belly announced she was just days away from giving birth” (Collins, The Hunger Games, 2009, p. 134).

The author intentionally avoids mentioning the first names of Mrs. Undersee and Mrs. Everdeen and their own surnames during the story. By calling them by their husband’s names, she shows how much the housewives depend upon their husbands. Collins shows that since they do not have any role in public life, they do not have an independent identity as a free human being either. Both of them are imprisoned in the small group of their families with a limited relationship with the outside world.

Katniss’ mother is an unpaid laborer in both the housework and her profession as healer. She depends intensively on her husband and Katniss and does not have an autonomous character. She is a skilled healer and caregiver, but she cannot use her art and skill as a job and make money through it. She is limited to the private sphere and her skill is seen as domestic work. There is no governmental organization or hospital which gives her credit as a qualified nurse or employs her as a paid labor force. She receives no money for her services to the patients and she is dependent on Katniss economically.

Gale’s mother, Hazelle, is a woman who works outside the home, but she must care for her children and does the work of her own home as well without receiving payment. The reader cannot see any scene where Gale, who plays the role of the father, helps inside the home. When Hazelle wants to visit her son after the whipping in the home of Katniss, she takes her children to a girl, Leevy, while there are several men in that scene. It shows domestic work and child-care are defined as a woman’s duty in Panem.
Removing gender division in the private sphere does not mean replacing the traditional roles of men and women. The novel exhibits women who are as capable as men in the public sphere, but do these women participate in housework or not? The feminist protagonist, Katniss, is capable of doing outside work equally or even better than men, but can she fulfill her responsibilities inside the home as well as outside? Or does she leave the whole burden of domestic work for her mother or in her marital life for Peeta? No scene shows Katniss doing housework or child rearing. Replacing gender roles also violates Marxist feminist principles and it is another kind of sexual division in the domestic realm.

Even women who have a sufficient income should do compulsory housework for nothing. Housekeeping is an important part in human life which historically is considered unimportant and without payment. One of the purposes of Marxist feminism is giving value to domestic work and a just distribution of public/domestic labor between men and women. In the whole of the novel there is no evidence which shows that women receive any payment for housework or any descriptions which demonstrate men’s participation in child rearing or domestic work. So, sexual segmentation is definitely seen in the private sphere of Panem before the rebellion.

5.3.3 Women’s professions and positions in Panem after the rebellion

Marxism defines two kinds of work. The work inside the home that is procreation, child bearing, child rearing, nurturing, sexual services, and domestic work, and the work outside the home that is the production of means for satisfying the material needs of human beings like food, shelter, clothing. Marxism believes procreation is women’s duty in the private sphere and production is men’s duty in the public sphere (Jaggar, 1983, p. 143).

Socialist feminism has a slogan: “A woman’s place is everywhere” (Jaggar, 1983, p. 129). Socialist feminism removes the sexual division of labor and claims that both men and women are capable in both production and procreation. It insists on the omission of all forms of sexual division of labor in industry and parenthood (Jaggar, 1983, pp. 134-5). “The men must participate fully in child rearing and, so far as possible, in child bearing” (Jaggar, 1983, p. 132). Jaggar discusses that procreation is a part of the economic foundation of society (Jaggar, 1983, p. 143). Socialist feminism points out that public/private distinctions are the way to rationalize the exploitation of women and the super exploitation of working women (Jaggar, 1983, p. 144).
The main objective of this part of the essay is to show how much women’s situation in public/private spheres changes based on socialist feminist principles in Panem after the revolution. Panem approaches to the communist society which Lycurgus made after his laws. He established a new division of the lands, removed extreme inequality among people and made them live on an equal footing (Plutarch, 1906, p. 93). In district 13 and also in the Capitol after the revolution, the borders between production and procreation are broken by removing capitalism. Gender hierarchy and classism are removed in work and women are employed in the public sphere in the extended range of professions, from the lowest to the highest. It is exemplified in the political condition of women in the first chapter. They are not only seen in the role of assistant and secretary, but they have key roles beside men. This freedom in choosing jobs largely removed class discrepancy in the whole of society.

The sexual division of labor between public and private spheres is almost removed. In district 13 all people, men and women, have a job. This is another common point between Panem and Sparta. Sparta was a city with an abundance of laborers, and nobody was left idle (Plutarch, 1906, p. 190). Domestic work like cooking and child rearing are not women’s duties inside the home, but these are social responsibilities and someone who does them receives wages in District 13. In Sparta, bringing up children was not a parental duty but it was a social responsibility. Children from seven years old were enrolled in certain companies and classes where they all lived under the same order and discipline (Plutarch, 1906, p. 106). Katniss’ mother can get a proper job after the rebellion in District 13. Her skills as care-giver and healer are no longer considered unpaid and a part of her domestic work. She gets a proper position in a hospital and works in her favorite field. Now she has a job and she can provide accommodation and food for herself. She can manage her life independently and finds her self-confidence.

Abstract of the chapter

In this chapter the positions, professions, and responsibilities of Panem’s women are analyzed based on Marxist feminist theory inside and outside the home before the rebellion. Panem society before the rebellion is so close to a capitalist system. Women do not have equal work conditions and the sexual division of work is visible all over Panem. Women
arrive at emancipation in the world of work after the revolution. They find equal rights in their jobs inside and outside the home.

6 Conclusions

Panem is a society with a system of capitalism and a monarchy at its head before the revolution. People rise up by the persuasion and leadership of a girl to change society into a utopia. Katniss plays the role of Lycurgus in Sparta or Solon in ancient Athens. She, like her archaic peers, understands at the end that the society cannot be completely modified under any political structure. Women can develop some of their rights like interference in political arenas, sexual autonomy, and equal professions with men in a communist system after a revolution. However, many of women’s needs for the complete removal of discrimination remain unresolved even after a revolution. Before the revolution, it is classism and the economic position of people and after the revolution, it is political relations, which more than any other kind of hierarchy, do not let intelligent people of both sexes achieve their proper social positions.

One of the salient privileges of Snow’s government over the other tyrannies like ancient Greek monarchies, which is kept from the beginning of the story, is lack of religion, traditions, and superstitions. It makes laws identical for both men and women from the beginning of the story, and lets women become free in some public activities, dressing, exercising, and their relation with the opposite sex. They can learn harsh skills even in Snow’s reign. Panem’s females from the beginning of the story possess healthy and strong bodies. They are well trained in different kinds of combat skills, and they are equal with boys in the arenas. The people of Panem are not classified based on their physical features and gender. Radical feminist proposals like androgyny and matriarchy are not successful projects for unification between the sexes in Panem. The development of women’s individual traits as a complete human being seems the only successful way for achieving oneness between the sexes.

Unequal distribution of jobs between men and women, which is the consequence of capitalism, restricts women to the circle of household work. It holds them back from advancement in the labor market and presence in the public sphere, and makes women economically dependent on men. After the revolution, women find their proper positions and
they can employ their full potentials in public realms; hence, an ideal society is established from the socialist feminist point of view. Communism acts as a successful social system for the female society of Panem in the work market. Creating such a community with equal conditions, facilities and opportunities for all people in all classes is the same thing as Lycurgus persisted within his legislations.

All the major and minor conflicts of the story occur between a female and a male character and lead ultimately to female triumph. The Capitol is in the hand of a man and District 13 in the hand of a woman. Capitol is overthrown by District 13 at the end. The novel has closure on the level of expectation, but it does not have closure on the level of question. A typical closure of the story is the overcoming by good forces, by the guidance of a woman, over an evil, who is a man. Panem almost becomes a society where females are at its head, but even such a society will not be an ideal one. Female domination and communism do not guarantee permanent prosperity for Panem’s people. As Alma Coin intended to begin a new series of hunger games with new players, Commander Paylor may have similar plans in her mind and present another type of dictatorship and misery for people.

Collins uses the name of a great historian, Plutarch, in her novel for a character who has a hand in politics during the whole of the story. All of the historical stories which Plutarch narrates are also about different Greek governments and political characters. The character Plutarch Heavensbee, like Plutarch’s heroes, Lycurgus and Solon, belongs to royal system from the beginning. He rebels against the political system of his era. Lycurgus and Solon withdraw from their political positions after enacting and performing their revolutionary laws. Solon inclined to verse and Lycurgus ended his life by himself. But Plutarch Heavensbee sticks to his political part during the story, in Snow’s time as a game maker, throughout the rising as the leader of the rebellion in District 13, and after the revolution as the secretary for communications in the new government of Panem. Plutarch’s heroes make the laws in the defense of human rights as a whole, while Plutarch Heavensbee only saves the lives of people like Katniss who can help him in achieving power. This may represent how the motivation of great political men has changed from patriotism to avidity for power during history. What makes Collins’ work different from the historical stories of Plutarch is the direct interference and active participation of women in public spheres and in the process of the uprising. In Sparta or Athens, women have marginal, not major, roles even after new laws. Laws do not give subjective roles to women in the society, but the women are more protected objects under the laws.
Collins employs in her story on the one hand ancient elements, and on the other side she describes the advanced arms and scenes beyond today’s technology. In doing so, she infers that the barbaric and fierce behaviors of totalitarian systems which have existed from archaic time will be prolonged till unknown future. The overall impression is that the human desire for an ideal society and total removal of oppression will remain unfulfilled. I think the comparison and contrast between the hunger game in the modern world and the barbaric combat of gladiators in the ancient world, or the story’s setting and events compared with similar ones in the real world are interesting topics which can be analyzed in subsequent criticisms on this trilogy.

7 Bibliography


