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***From Outsider to Leader: A Study of Female
Characters in Young Adult Dystopian Literature***

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1. Introduction

The aim of this work is to analyse *The Hunger Games* trilogy written by American author Suzanne Collins (2008, 2009, and 2010)¹ in order to understand how Katniss Everdeen goes from being a marginal and invisible character from District Twelve to becoming a heroine, and therefore, a female role model for teenage readers. This analysis is done here considering the limitations placed by patriarchy and by the fact of the character's belonging to a low social stratum, which will imply the use of a female version of the classic narrative structure of the hero's journey developed by Joseph Campbell (1949). In order to do so, I will first define what Young Adult—YA henceforward—Literature and Young Adult Dystopian Literature are. Then, I will focus on how female characters are represented in both YA and YA dystopian novels. Finally, I will apply Victoria Schmidt's heroine's journey arc to *The Hunger Games* trilogy, to see how Katniss Everdeen becomes a heroine.

Young Adult Literature is a type of writing whose main target audience is adolescents between twelve and eighteen. It is not only written for this type of readers but, sometimes, produced by and featuring teenagers themselves. Although YA is aimed at these ages, there are also non-YA readers. YA literature can be understood as something dynamic because its main topics and themes are constantly being redefined. According to Bean and Moni (2003) this is because nowadays there is no sense of a fixed space. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid traditional settings such as the home or the school and to move into the shifting social arena in which we live, searching for new non-fixated settings so that readers can easily identify with the struggles of the protagonist of the novel.² The topics vary according to the thoughts and preoccupations of the time, to the extent that sometimes authors write about themes that go from falling in love with a vampire or an alien,³ to entering a real-life *battle royal* competition to avoid the possible death of your sister.⁴ Authors seem to be always seeking for either

¹ From now on and to avoid the unnecessary repetition of the author's name, the primary sources will be cited by publication year and page number: *The Hunger Games* will appear as (2008, x), *Catching Fire* as (2009, x), and *Mockingjay* as (2010, x).

² An example of those new settings would be the so-called *non-places* like cyberspace, which may be the reason why Ernest Cline decided to set his novel *Ready Player One* (2011) inside a virtual world. See *Goodreads* for further information: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/9969571-ready-player-one>

³ The protagonist of the Lux Saga by Jennifer L. Armentrout falls in love with an alien in *Obsidian* (2012): <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/12578077-obsidian>

⁴ A Battle Royal (also Royale) Competition is one where many combatants fight until only one of them remains alive. The name comes from Koushun Takami's dystopian novel *Battle Royale* (1999). Nowadays, there are videogames such as Fortnite which have a virtual *battle royal mode*. The trilogy that

new juvenile topics or ways of adapting the aspects of reality that are depicted in adult books to the young adult public.

YA Dystopian Literature is a subgenre of science fiction that generally features an extreme government which controls its citizens (Prucher 2007). However, the subgenre has its updates according to the teenagers' preoccupations and anxieties of each period, the same way YA literature does. It is also mixed with other genres such as fantasy, romance or horror.⁵ Moreover, dystopian literature tends to have a satiric component through which the author can complain about political issues. In the case of YA dystopian literature, that element is still there when the authors tend to make humour of issues that are really happening nowadays. For instance, in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, Suzanne Collins creates a reality TV show in order to portray how the people from the different districts are watching their tributes compete in a death match. This constitutes a critique of how people tend to naturalise the brutal and crude images that they watch on TV without feeling the urge to interrupt what they are doing, as if they were watching a film instead of the piece of reality that it is.

Young Adult Dystopian Literature is one of the most best-selling genres in the 21st century. As an example of this phenomenon we have Suzanne Collins' trilogy *The Hunger Games* (2008, 2009, and 2010) along with James Dashner's *The Maze Runner* saga (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2016), Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One* (2011), Lauren Oliver's *Delirium* trilogy (2011, 2012, and 2013), or Marie Lu's *The Young Elites* (2014, 2015, and 2016). Although dystopia had its earliest upsurge in the 20th century with the publication of Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921) and George Orwell's *1984* (1949), a revival of the genre has taken place. This phenomenon may be linked to the fact that dystopian literature has its origin in utopias, such as Thomas More's novel of the same name (1516), which portrayed the idea of an imagined society that is going to progress until it becomes a perfect place for its citizens. Utopia became Dystopia

I will analyse includes this type of competitions, as it is the way people fight inside the *The Hunger Games*' arena (2008). Katniss decides to join the contest to avoid her sister from entering it, as she has been randomly selected as a *tribute*—i.e. a participant on the competition. See the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* for further information on battle royal: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/battle%20royal>

⁵ An example of this can be found in the case of Marie Lu's *The Young Elites* trilogy (2014, 2015, 2016), where the author decides to create multiple kingdoms, such as Dalia, which is based on a Renaissance version of Venice, concretely during the Black Death. For further information on *The Young Elites*, see: https://theyoungelites.fandom.com/wiki/The_Young_Elites_Wiki

when people stopped believing the vague ideas and empty promises they were being made after having witnessed imperial oppression, fascism and two World Wars.

The above-mentioned 21st-century success of YA Dystopian Literature is relevant for this project, as it “examines the roots of social behaviour and encourages the child to question his or her own society”(Hintz and Ostry 2013, 1). The boom can therefore be an indicator that young readers do not support that idea of an idyllic society anymore and prefer to buy dystopian literature instead. They appear to consider that this genre of books not only feels, but is, more real. Caroline Zielinski writes in *The Guardian* that the coronavirus crisis has made her read more dystopian literature than ever. She considers that reading it is an effective way of coping with the current situation. She states that “[d]ystopian fiction helps us think through what reality could be like, and shows us how people might cope with adversity” (Zielinski 2020).

Female representation in YA books varies and depends, according to what we have mentioned earlier, on the teenagers’ preoccupations and fears of the time. As one of the main interests of females is supposed to be love, there are plenty of YA books that contain tropes such as love triangles or platonic loves. For instance, we have the character of Bella Swan, who is still the focus of an ongoing discussion about whether she is a good role model for female readers or not. This debate is mainly because she is seen by some as a heroine that empowers herself towards the end of her journey in the final book of the *Twilight* saga (Meyer 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2020), and by others as another stereotypically female character that loses her identity to a toxic relationship with the vampire Edward Cullen.⁶

However, it is also possible to read YA books in which romantic relationships are not toxic and women are represented in more diverse and/or original ways. An example would be Miranda Kenneally’s book *Coming Up for Air* (2017), where Maggie’s main preoccupation is to be able to enter the Olympic swimming trials by being better than her rival Roxy. Although there are romantic scenes in the novel, the main plot does not revolve around Maggie and Levi’s relationship; but it focuses on her ambitions, her

⁶ I understand these stereotypically female characters as a generally cliché and undeveloped female figure that meets a boy—or a man, since they also appear in adult literature—for whom she develops intense feelings. She falls in love with him losing her identity, to the extent that she becomes a passive character whose life and thoughts are all about her story with the boy. Some examples that come to mind are: Nora Grey from *Hush, Hush* (Fitzpatrick 2009), Abby Abernathy from *Beautiful Disaster* (McGuire 2011), Anastasia Steele from *Fifty Shades of Grey* (James 2011) or Tessa Young from *After* (Todd 2014).

fears and her life. In a similar vein, another book that would be a good example of positive female representation is the thriller *Dare Me* (2012) by Megan Abbott, which is also about a sports team. This time, the focus of the plot is a cheerleading team, and we meet Addy Hanlon, who is a protagonist with big goals and who will not stop until she has achieved them. One relevant aspect of *Dare Me* is that it has almost no male characters, and the central point of the novel is the relationships and dynamics of power among the female characters.

Having briefly touched upon some instances of contemporary YA novels in order to see how females are represented, it is necessary to move on to the specific object of study of this thesis. There are some 21st-century YA Dystopian novels with little female representation, such as Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One* or James Dashner's *The Maze Runner*, mentioned above. Both are written by male authors who decide to focus on the life of a male protagonist. Cline's revolves around the life of Wade Watts, who lives in a caravan tower and is trying to compete against other players for Halliday's prize inside the virtual world of Oasis. However, there are two secondary female characters: Art3mis, whose importance is mainly based on the love story that she shares with her male leading counterpart Wade Watts, and Aech, the hero's best friend inside Oasis, who we discover is a black woman towards the middle of the novel. If we apply Campbell's monomyth to Cline's work, Wade can be understood as an Arthurian hero that "moves from pixels to print, from videogame to romance, [and] from the virtual to the real", whose main quest is to seek for Halliday's Easter egg so as "to improve the condition of those around him, to make the world [a better place]" (Aronstein and Thompson 2015).

In the case of Dashner's saga, although the premise is that when a girl named Theresa Agnes enters the Glade everything changes, the author decides to focus on the adventures of the male protagonist, Thomas. However, in the following books Theresa not only becomes a more relevant character but also plays an important role in the novels, as we discover that, for instance, she even helps Thomas to build one of the mazes.⁷ Dashner's saga has some similitude with our object of study, to the extent that Thomas can be understood as Katniss Everdeen's male counterpart. Thomas is a modern version of Theseus whose heroic journey begins when he wakes up with no

⁷ For further information on *The Maze Runner* saga, see: https://mazerunner.fandom.com/wiki/The_Maze_Runner_Wiki

memory inside a maze and finishes when he tries to get out of the maze with Theresa's help.

Differently from these male-centred titles, Marie Lu's *The Young Elites*, Lauren Oliver's *Delirium* and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* have in common that they are written by women and have as protagonists female characters who belong to the margins of society and become central figures by the end of the trilogy. Adelina Amouteru in *The Young Elites* is a *malfetto*, a survivor of the blood fever with scars and supernatural powers that will help her to rule the country of Kenettra. In *Delirium*, Lena Haloway is an uncured runaway who, questioning the government's ideas about *deliria*—a love disease from which all citizens must be cured—becomes a member of the resistance. Finally, we have Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games*, who is transformed into the *mockingjay*—a symbol of rebellion against the main force of the story, the Capitol. Katniss shifts to a central character although she belongs to District Twelve, which is the smallest and poorest of the thirteen districts of Panem. To clarify how marginal protagonists can become heroines, the following sections will focus on the character of Katniss. First, we will define what *marginal* means in the context of this paper, and later we will use Victoria Schmidt's heroine's journey arc to delve into the analysis of Suzanne Collins' main protagonist.

2. The Heroine's Journey

According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2007, 32), the marginal is a consequence of the binary structure of the different dominant discourses that exist, such as patriarchy or imperialism. This means that if there is a margin it is because of the existence of a centre, which at the same time depends on the economic and political exploitation of the margin. In the case of *The Hunger Games*, we have the Capitol as the centre of power and the thirteen districts of Panem as the periphery. The marginal would be a position that defines the protagonists of the trilogy in terms of the limitations that they have to access either the centre or its resources. The heroine of Collins' trilogy, Katniss Everdeen, can be defined, therefore, as a marginal heroine, as she belongs to District Twelve and she is aware of where she comes from. A good example to illustrate this may be the following scene of *Catching Fire*, where Katniss thinks about her district after she and her Hunger Games' partner Peeta Mellark have been offered a drink to vomit and continue to eat at a party held at the Capitol:

All I can think of is the emaciated bodies of the children on our kitchen table as my mother prescribes what the parents can't give. More food. Now that we're rich, she'll send some home with them. But often in the old days, there was nothing to give and the child was past saving, anyway. And here in the Capitol they're vomiting for the pleasure of filling their bellies again and again. Not from some illness of body or mind, not from spoiled food. It's what everyone does at a party. (Collins 2009, 80)

One of the limitations that can determine Katniss' position in the trilogy is invisibility. Darkness and misery exist in District Twelve because of the Capitol's light and prosperity. We know to what extent darkness surrounds the life of the members of this district in a moment of *Catching Fire* that contrasts this darkness with the light that becoming a victor—i.e. a winner of The Hunger Games—brings. Katniss remembers how poor people celebrate weddings where she lives, after wearing the wedding dress that President Snow wants her to display in the interview before her second journey inside the arena. Weddings in District Twelve are a type of ritual that only involves a piece of bread, because most people cannot afford the costs of an official ceremony held in the Justice Building. Right after this reminiscence, Peeta tells the audience of the Games that Katniss and himself had already married through this toasting ritual. This darkness can be understood in terms of invisibility because this wedding ritual would be unknown to the members of the other districts if it were not for Peeta. Therefore, the fact that they everyone is aware of their situation can be a hint of how Peeta and Katniss are moving from margins to centre.

As I want to focus on how Katniss becomes a heroine, I will use Victoria Schmidt's heroine's journey arc, which is a broader variation of Maureen Murdock's Arc. Murdock's, in turn, as explained in The Heroine Journey's Project website (Ballard et al. n.d.), was based on Joseph Campbell's hero's journey, a classic story structure that describes how the hero leaves home, goes on an adventure, faces a crisis and returns home completely transformed after having won or overcome adversity (Campbell 2008, 23). Campbell divides the journey of the hero in three acts: separation, initiation and return. Campbell understood that "[in] the whole mythological tradition the woman is there. All she has to do is to realise that she's the place that people are trying to get to" (Murdock 2013).

Contrary to Campbell, Murdock considers that women do not want to embody those characters that only wait until the hero arrives, that they have curiosity, they want to go outside to explore the unknown, the way heroes do. However, she understands that the heroine's journey, although it derives from Campbell's arc, "the model of [its] stages is particular to women" (Murdock 2013). Her journey begins with a rejection of the feminine, it continues with the heroine seeking for an adventure where she can find success power or prestige, having male allies beside her. It is at this specific part of the journey that women meet the underworld, what Murdock names the *dark feminine*. The heroine feels she needs to heal the *feminine wound*. Murdock's journey finishes with the heroine returning home redefining the female values and attempting to integrate them with the skills she has learned from her male allies.

The diagram below depicts how Schmidt analyses the heroine's journey. According to her (2012), it begins with the heroine questioning the authority and gathering the courage to go into the *perfect world* alone. The journey will finish with the heroine facing her own symbolic death. This last process that she undergoes is defined by Schmidt as "[enduring] the transformation toward being reborn as a complete being in charge of her own life" (2012, 186). The journey is a process of nine stages which can be divided in three acts following the classical structure: containment, transformation and emergence. Each of Suzanne Collins' books is also divided in three acts: *The Tributes*, *The Games*, *The Victor* (2008), *The Spark*, *The Quell*, *The Enemy* (2009), and *The Ashes*, *The Assault*, *The Assassin* (2010).

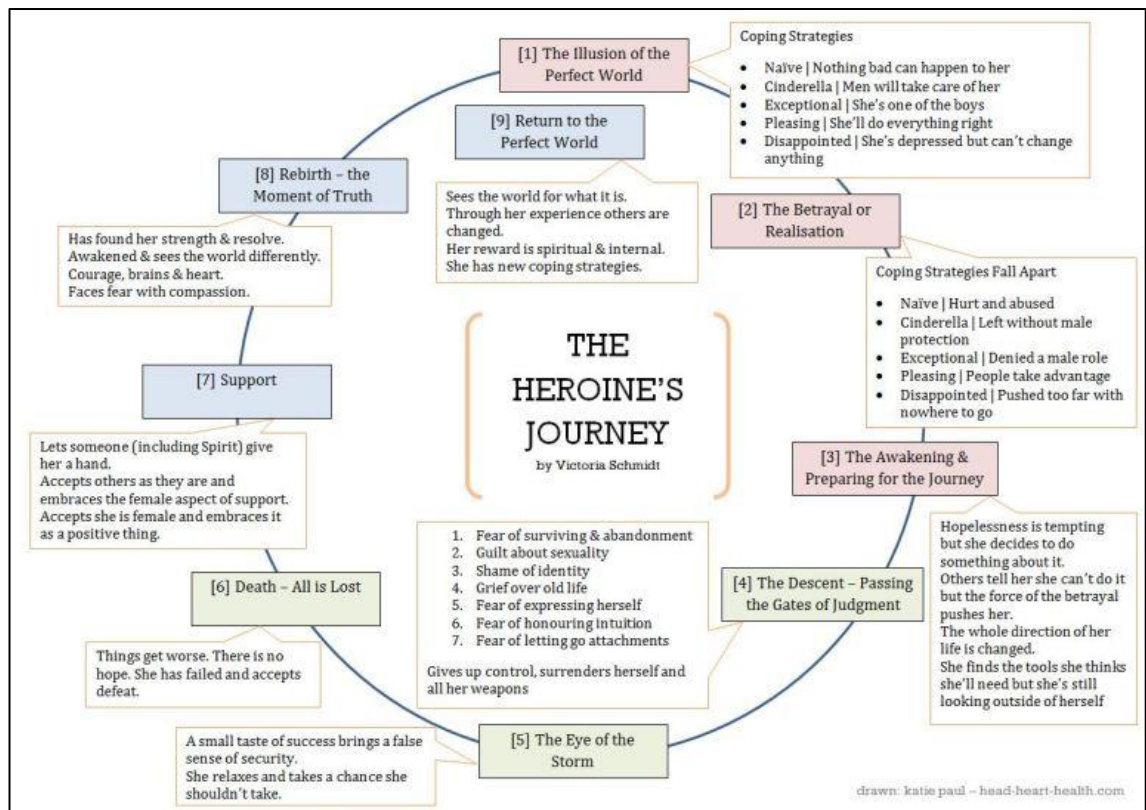


Figure 1
Heroine's journey arc by Victoria Schmidt. Drawing by Katie Paul
(Paul, 2013)

Sections three through five below will be an in-depth analysis of *The Hunger Games* trilogy according to this diagram. It is possible to consider that Katniss Everdeen enrolls in the heroine's journey four times: three times which would correspond to each of the trilogy's book, and a fourth one—the *macrojourney*, if you will—which runs throughout the whole series, from the beginning of *The Hunger Games* to the end of *Mockingjay*. Due to the word limit of this paper, we will develop the Containment Act of Katniss' *macrojourney*, which corresponds with *The Hunger Games*, in section three, her Transformation Act —i.e. *Catching Fire*—will be analysed in section four, and we will see her Emergence Act in *Mockingjay* and further conclusions in sections five and six.

3. Becoming the Mockingjay I: Containment

Several research studies have been conducted on *The Hunger Games* trilogy, not only on the book series but also on the films. In 2013, Roya Ghaffarpour studied *The Hunger Games* from a postcolonial perspective applying Homi Bhabha's ideas. She concluded

that Katniss and Peeta were colonised people and the Capitol was the coloniser, and that the protagonists shifted their identities when they encountered the coloniser's culture (Ghaffarpour 2013). Dimas P. S. Utomo applied Hegel's master-slave dialectic to *The Hunger Games* film concluding that the Capitol is the master and Panem is the slave (Utomo 2015). The same year, Michelle Ann Abate (2015) analysed the structure of *The Hunger Games* applying queer studies and affirmed that Collins' novel "[blurs] the lines between femininity and masculinity" and outlines a narrative that goes beyond gender and sexuality. On her part, Andrea Ruthven (2017) decided to apply postfeminist theory to *The Hunger Games*, concluding that Katniss is a symbol of third-wave feminism that takes a critical post-humanist perspective and resists the neo-liberal ideas of individualism by becoming the face of rebellion to ensure the common good.

Moreover, there are some dissertations that share our object of study: Katniss Everdeen's hero's journey. Hidayatun Nikhmah (2014) researched about whether Katniss Everdeen fit as a hero or not according to Campbell's journey pattern. She concluded that, as fourteen of Campbell's seventeen stages were found in *The Hunger Games* film, Katniss could be understood as a hero in his terms. Bella Arti Desimasari (2017) applied Campbell's theory to Collins' trilogy concluding that Katniss could be considered a heroine despite differences at Campbell's initiation passage and regarding the fact that she does not experience the seventeen stages of Campbell's monomyth. However, neither of them applied Victoria Schmidt's heroine's journey model to Collins' trilogy.

Schmidt argues that there must be a "perfect world" portrayed as a negative place that will move the heroine and "endure her quest for something better throughout the story" (2012, 187). Katniss' perfect world is depicted in the first book of *The Hunger Games*. It is called Panem and it is described by the Capitol as "the country that rose up out of the ashes out of a place that was once called North America" (Collins, 2008, 18). Several disasters such as droughts and storms have led to the destruction of the land resulting in "Panem, a shining Capitol ringed by thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens" (2008, 18). We learn in these pages that there were some uprisings against the Capitol known as the Dark Days, where twelve districts were defeated and the thirteenth was obliterated. With the Treaty of Treason, the Capitol gave the districts "some new laws to guarantee peace and, as [a] yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave [them] the Hunger Games" (2008, 18). With

this, Collins introduces not only a background for the story, but also the specific context where the heroine will begin her journey.

According to the Capitol's new laws, and as punishment for the districts' uprising,

each of the twelve districts must provide one girl and one boy [from ages twelve to eighteen], called tributes, to participate. The twenty-four tributes will be imprisoned in a vast outdoor arena that could hold [any danger] [...]. The competitors must fight to the death. The last tribute standing wins. (2008, 18)

The rules are simple. However, there are other norms that are relevant to our heroine, such as the fact that there is an unfair *reaping system*, which makes the teenagers from poor families like Katniss' more likely to become tributes. With this system, they can opt for adding more possibilities to entering the arena in exchange for *tesserae*, which "is worth a meagre year's supply of grain and oil for one person" (2008, 13). Collins also introduces in this part a socioeconomic conflict between Gale—who is in the same situation as Katniss—and Madge, the Mayor's daughter, who is less likely to become a tribute. However, Katniss and Gale acknowledge that it is not Madge's fault, but the Capitol's.

It is at this first stage when Collins presents to us Katniss' traits and the people surrounding her. The heroine's socioeconomic background and identity are depicted through details such as the fact that she has tried to kill Prim's cat because they could not afford another mouth to feed, but she did not do it because it was very important for her sister. Readers discover that hunting is an illegal activity because Collins tells us that going after animals with Gale is what makes Katniss happy, and that her weapon is a bow that her father crafted for her before dying in a mining accident. We are told that she and Gale try to feed the people of Panem and trade what they hunt in the woods for salt or oil. Collins describes Katniss as a person that is very protective with her sister Prim, to the extent that she would do anything to keep her alive, even if that means volunteering as a tribute to avoid the little girl from entering the arena, which is exactly what happens.

Schmidt explains that the heroine has some coping strategies that will allow her to deal with the perfect world. Katniss fits with what is described by Schmidt (2012, 189) as the *disappointed type*, a woman who is angry and depressed but unable to

change the perfect world, although she is aware that it is what makes her feel bad: “I protect Prim in every way I can, but I’m powerless against the reaping” (2008, 15). She tends to sacrifice herself for the others and wants to find a positive female role model:

But the money ran out and we were slowly starving to death. [...] I kept telling myself if I could only hold until May, just May 8th, I would turn twelve and be able to sign up for the tesserae and get that precious grain and oil to feed us. Only there were still several weeks to go. (2008, 27-28)

The second stage in Schmidt’s journey is the betrayal or realisation (2012, 192). Here, the heroine is left with the choice of either entering the adventure or staying where she is. In other words, she considers the need of making a change after being betrayed by someone in the novel. In the case of Katniss, she chooses to sacrifice herself to avoid her little sister Primrose from entering The Hunger Games after having been elected as tribute. Katniss experiences her first hunch of betrayal when she agrees on working together with Peeta, but in turn, he asks Haymitch—one of their mentors—to be coached separately. This will not be the last treachery, since she will be betrayed repeated times throughout the trilogy. However, there is one moment of awakening that occurs inside the arena and is very relevant to our analysis:

I want to do something, right here, right now, to shame them, to make them accountable, to show the Capitol that whatever they do or force us to do there is a part of every tribute they can’t own. That Rue was more than a piece of their Games. And so am I. (2008, 236-237)

The death of Rue, Katniss’ ally inside the arena, will make Katniss see the Games as an invitation for change. She comprehends that the Games are unfair as they are killing innocent people, and she desires to do something against the Capitol. Katniss is determined to “press the three middle fingers of [her] left hand against [her] lips and hold them out in her direction” (2008, 237), which will surely be read by the Capitol as a sign of defiance. To round up the symbolism, when she is challenging the powerful centre with her gesture, “a young [mockingjay], lands on a branch before [Katniss] and bursts out Rue’s melody” (2008, 237). Moreover, there is another important moment that will motivate our heroine to improve the situation. Right after Rue dies, there is a rule change in the Games. The new rule says that “both tributes from the same district will be declared winners if they are the last two alive” (2008, 244), which means that if Katniss finds Peeta, both can be the victors of that Games’ edition. Yet, when Katniss

and Peeta are the only ones left, there is another modification in the rules: there will only be one winner, which makes Katniss realise that they are a pawn of the Gamemakers' show.

Schmidt's third stage (2012, 197) is the point of the narrative when the heroine opens her eyes and reacts after having been betrayed by someone or after realising that her life is going to become drastically different. Schmidt explains that she can take two roads: a passive road, where the heroine blames either the others or herself, victimises herself or gives up; or an active road, where the heroine decides to see the betrayal as a lesson, as an invitation to adventure or as a challenge. Katniss takes the active option: from the beginning she sacrifices herself because of an emotional reason—to save Prim.

The second part of this third stage is the preparation for the journey, where the heroine gathers the tools that she will need, including a list of allies. Among the things useful for her preparation, Schmidt (2012, 199) decides that they can include saying goodbye to the loved ones, asking for advice, and gathering weapons or clothing. It is also the time when a mentor shows up. In the case of Katniss, she has Peeta not only as her main ally, but also as her friend and lover. Haymitch and Effie play the role of the mentors, "overseeing [them] right into the arena" (2008, 73). They will be aiding Katniss and Peeta in advising them how to behave in order to gain sponsors and get gifts that will help them survive. Cinna will help Katniss to become the Mockingjay, not only with advice, but also with the clothing that he creates for her and Peeta, such as Katniss' dresses that will be symbolic in defying President Snow. Although Katniss and Peeta began their adventure with bad vibrations it is not easy for them to kill each other, as their mentors' strategy for gaining sponsors and getting gifts is to portray them as star-crossed lovers. However, there will not be a downfall for them as they are clever enough to be conscious of that:

Yes, they have to have a victor. Without a victor, the whole thing would blow up in the Gamemakers' face. They'd have failed the Capitol. Might possibly even be executed, slowly and painfully while the cameras broadcast it to every screen in the country. If Peeta and I were both to die, or they thought we were... (2008, 344)

In this part of the journey, Katniss already knows that the Capitol's prestige depends upon both tributes. However, she does not notice that her decision of having the star-crossed lovers committing suicide by eating the poisonous berries in front of the

cameras is the beginning of a big change whose impact and aftermath will be felt later. Katniss will still have to prepare for more journeys which would be a part of the heroine's *microjourneys* analyses, one that will take place in *Catching Fire* and another one that will occur by the middle of *Mockingjay*. However, this first journey is connected to the heroine's returning home, as we will see later.

4. Becoming the Mockingjay II: Transformation

After having made a life-changing decision, says Schmidt (2012, 203), the heroine has to face those changes that come with it. At this fourth stage, she faces obstacles that can make her want to drop her journey. Among them can be patriarchal assumptions, such as the fact that women are weak, passive and powerless. Katniss Everdeen has faced the death of one of her allies. However, it did not make her want to return home. On the contrary, she decides to do something so the Capitol is revealed for what it is. She uses her relationship with Peeta in the beginning of *Catching Fire* as a strategy to attract sponsors as they have previously done in *The Hunger Games*. Moreover, they tell everyone they plan to marry, and Peeta tells everyone on television that Katniss is pregnant. However, Katniss still does not know if what they have is something real or not.

Schmidt (2012, 205) explains that there are some issues or problems that can help writers give their characters a shape, as they are useful to determine how characters will react to the conflicts in the story and, therefore, how they will evolve. Among the seven types of problems that Schmidt classifies are the so-called *issues of facing fear, surviving and finding safety and security*, and others of *dealing with attachment and finding self-awareness*, which are the ones that Katniss experiences in the trilogy. We understand that she confronts the ones belonging to the first type, because, when we answer Schmidt's questions, we see that Katniss is afraid of intimacy because of fear of abandonment—her father died in a mine accident—and of depending on someone else—Peeta, Snow, her family, The Games, her mentors, her allies—. She is able to support herself and put a roof over her head—and over her family's head too—and she pushes herself too much to avoid fear—the protagonist has entered in a survival game to avoid her sister from being killed inside those Games, now she also fears losing Peeta. Moreover, when we answer Schmidt's questions to the second type of issues mentioned above, we see that Katniss is open-minded—as we have seen previously, she is aware of

the socioeconomic conflicts caused by the Capitol—but at the same time is blindly obeying others—her mentors, and even Snow without realising that she is being manipulated. The protagonist realises that the Quarter Quell is the way in which she is paying for rebelling against the Capitol, as we will see in Section 3.

According to Schmidt (2012, 206), the heroine has to go with the flow of events instead of against them, and she needs her brain and her courage to do so. Katniss will need to trust her mentors and allies on what to do, not only in the Quarter Quell, but also after them. Katniss' strategy of the star-crossed lovers will not be useful this time. She will need new strategies, so she allies with Finnick Odair, Wiress and Beetee among other tributes. Schmidt finds out that this fourth level ends with a miniclimax, which is the following scene:

“Tick, tock,” Wiress says in her sleep. As the lightning ceases and the blood rain begins just to the right of it, her words suddenly make sense.

“Oh,” I say under my breath. “Tick, tock.” My eyes sweep around the full circle of the arena and I know she's right. “Tick, tock. This is a clock”. (2009, 325)

The fifth stage of the heroine's journey is the Eye of the Storm, where the heroine “gets a small taste of success, which will later fuel her motive to succeed again, knowing how wonderful success feels” (Schmidt 2012, 209). When, thanks to Wiress, the tributes discover that the arena has been arranged as a clock and that every hour means that a new danger appears, depending on the part of the arena they are in, Katniss gets the “small taste of success” that Schmidt mentions. They know that if they are aware of how the arena is arranged, they will be prepared to face any danger; they will know how to play the game. At this level, “the hero relaxes a bit and possibly takes a chance she shouldn't take. The villain watches from afar laughing, scheming, and waiting” (Schmidt 2012, 210). Once the tributes discover the clock pattern, the Gamemakers, laughing while they watch the Quarter Quell battle royal, decide to rotate the platform where the clock is, so the tributes cannot determine what time it is. However, some chapters later there will be another eye of the storm for Katniss and her friends: with Beetee's help, she will discover a way of blowing up the force field that covers the arena, which will make the tributes get out of the cage alive, boycotting the Games for the second time.

The sixth stage of the journey is when the villain comes back and the heroine thinks that everything is over. It “is like a reversal and ends with a dark moment where all seems lost” (Schmidt 2012, 211). Katniss feels here that everything is lost, that she has failed in her promise to keep Peeta safe:

“...a reminder to the rebels that even the strongest among them cannot overcome the power of the Capitol...”

Not even the strongest of the strong will triumph. Perhaps they never intended to have a victor in these Games at all. Or perhaps my final act of rebellion forced their hand.

I’m sorry, Peeta, I think. I’m sorry I couldn’t save you. Save him? More likely I stole his last chance at life, condemned him, by destroying the force field. Maybe, if we had all played by the rules, they might have let him alive. (2009, 380; italics in the original)

According to Schmidt, it is a moment when the villain feels threatened by the accomplishments of the heroine and desires to destroy her. He does so by adding an additional betrayal, which as we will see later on, in the case of Katniss means Peeta being captured and hijacked by the Capitol. At this point the heroine “is captured, humiliated, tossed around, and left to die. It’s over. She failed at her journey and accepts defeat. She wanders, confused about the turn of events and can’t understand where everything went wrong. She can’t see the gifts that await her on the other side” (Schmidt 2012, 212). In Collins’ second book, this transpires in Katniss’ words when she explains:

The next time I surface, my hands are tied down to the table, the tubes back in my arm. I can open my eyes and lift my head slightly, though. I’m in a large room with low ceilings and a silvery light. There are two rows of beds facing each other. I can hear the breathing of what I assume are my fellow victors. (2009, 382)

Moreover, Schmidt accepts that the heroine can be deceived again, which it is exactly what happens in *The Hunger Games*. At this moment of the journey, we discover that Katniss has been a puppet once more, but on this occasion, she has been Plutarch Heavensbee’s pawn. Thus, Katniss considers her mentors, her allies and even her friends to be untrustworthy:

It's an awful lot to take in, this elaborate plan in which I was a piece, just as I was meant to be a piece in the Hunger Games. Used without consent, without knowledge. At least in the Hunger Games, I knew I was being played with. My supposed friends have been a lot more secretive. (2009, 385)

The Death-All Is Lost stage of Schmidt's journey also applies to the first two chapters of *Mockingjay*. Katniss sees that District Twelve has been completely devastated and feels that everything is literally lost. This step joins the act of Transformation with the one of Emergence. Katniss' wings have been burned to the ground. She has not only survived Snow's fatal games twice, but also managed to escape from the arena alive. She is about to get out of the cage. She must think for herself, not blindly obeying the others. In order to do so, she will have to discover how much help she needs from the people surrounding her, as we will discover in the last section of this thesis.

5. Becoming the Mockingjay III: Emergence

According to Schmidt (2012, 214), in the seventh stage the heroine "goes through her own awakening and comes out willing to accept help from others". Katniss discovers in *Mockingjay* how important team work is. Hence, she agrees on collaborating with Plutarch and President Coin by being the face of the propaganda that the rebels of District Thirteen will broadcast in all Panem, and in the Capitol with the help of Beetee. Their so-called *propops* will serve, not only as a statement of intents to President Snow, but also to communicate with Peeta, who is held captive in the Capitol:

In some cases, like mysteries and horror stories, the hero finds herself totally alone as everyone else has died or disappeared. In this case, another character has already set up the tools or set out the information she'll need to find her way out. She's still being helped. (Schmidt 2012, 214)

In the case of Katniss, she does feel alone, as Peeta is not with her. However, her mother, Prim and Gale are still with her in District Thirteen. And so are Finnick, Haymitch and Effie. Katniss will need support not only at this stage of the novel to rescue Peeta, but also later with her plans to kill President Snow. For instance, when Tigris help her team in their attempt to reach the Capitol. This level, referred to as *support* by Victoria Schmidt, has also appeared earlier in the acts of Containment and

Transformation and it had the same effect on the structure of Katniss's microjourneys in *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire*. We have the abovementioned example of Rue, and also the alliances that Katniss has to make in the second book of the trilogy. With this support, our heroine will be better prepared to fight Snow.

Schmidt indicates that the eighth stage of the journey is when the heroine "walks straight into the lion's den" (2012, 217). Katniss is not afraid to die. Instead, there is one scene in *Mockingjay* when she even takes advantage of the thought that she has been killed:

The hero has learned to set boundaries, take action, and listen to her own inner voice. She has reclaimed her identity and her weapons and realizes she is the creator of her own fear. She has found her courage, used her brains, and won her own heart. The three combined are needed to attain her goal. (Schmidt 2012, 217)

After rescuing Peeta and discovering how he has been brainwashed, Katniss decides that she will go to the Capitol with the other soldiers. She has reclaimed her identity as the mockingjay and understands how, by proving her love for Peeta, she has given Snow the weapon that he needed to break her. So, she concludes that Snow will control her by torturing Peeta. It is in this part of the novel that Katniss notices that the Capitol is the opposite of strong, as it depends on the districts for everything, so if the districts declare their freedom, the Capitol will collapse.

To achieve her last goal, in the ninth stage of the journey, the heroine will see her transformation. There are different parts of Katniss' internal monologue through the final part of *Mockingjay* that portray this, such as:

I am Cinna's bird, ignited, flying frantically to escape something inescapable. The feathers of flame that grow from my body. Beating my wings only fans the blaze. Finally, my wings begin to falter, I lose height, and gravity pulls me into a foamy sea the color of Finnick's eyes. (2010, 348)

For the first time in the trilogy, Katniss accepts her fate. She overcomes the fear that pushed her inside the arena—the fear of losing her sister: "Gradually, I'm forced to accept who I am. A badly burned girl with no wings. With no fire. And no sister" (2010, 350). Moreover, Katniss will shoot an arrow to President Coin instead of killing Snow, after accepting that her sister could have been killed by the bombing of the rebels, so as we interpret that she does not want either of them to rule Panem. Katniss returns to the

perfect world and it is here the second time in the trilogy that Collins strategically mentions Madge, the girl of the socioeconomic conflict of *The Hunger Games*. We learn that Madge has died, and that she was “the girl who gave [Katniss] the pin that gave [her] a name” (2010, 384). The last scene before the Epilogue is also a symbolic one: while Katniss first wanted to kill Prim’s cat because they could not afford feeding him, she is now giving Buttercup all the bacon she has for breakfast. Buttercup and Peeta are everything that is left from the heroine’s earlier world.

Schmidt points out that many women writers feel their stories are episodic rather than ending in a straight linear line. This is one of the aspects that would differentiate the heroine’s journey from the hero’s journey, as male stories tend to end in a straight linear line. Schmidt specifies that “the feminine hero gets an internal reward [...] and leaves the reader a sense of hope” (2012, 221). The Epilogue of *Mockingjay* gives us hope for the future. We learn that Katniss and Peeta have had two children and that there have not been Hunger Games in fifteen years, although children learn about them at school and their daughter is aware that their parents have played a role in the games. Katniss wonders in her final monologue how she will tell their children about her nightmares. She tells us that her nightmares are “like a game. Repetitive. Even a little tedious after more than twenty years. But there are much worse games to play” (2010, 390). Thus, although *Mockingjay* has a straight linear ending, it gives the reader a sense of a never-ending cycle.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this thesis was to analyse Katniss Everdeen’s *macrojourney* in Suzanne Collins’ trilogy *The Hunger Games* using Victoria Schmidt’s monomyth. Schmidt’s heroine’s journey consists of three passages: Containment, Transformation and Emergence. These passages contain nine stages that correspond to the nine parts in the internal structure of Collins’ trilogy. The heroine goes through the nine stages, which proves that our result differs from the studies of Hidayatun Nikmah, who stated that Katniss went through fourteen out of seventeen stages of the hero’s journey, and Bella Arti Desimasiri, whose result was that Katniss goes through sixteen out of seventeen stages when applying Campbell’s theory to the book trilogy. Thus, Katniss can be considered a heroine as she fully completes Schmidt’s heroine’s journey within Schmidt’s paradigm.

The levels of Containment are: The Illusion of a Perfect World, The Betrayal or Realisation, and The Awakening-Preparing for the Journey, and comprise The Tributes, The Games, and The Victor's parts from *The Hunger Games*. The most interesting finding at this stage is that although Katniss is aware of the socioeconomic conflict and the unfair situation that surrounds her, she will not notice the impact that her actions will have on the Capitol and on Panem until stage 9, by the end of *Mockingjay*. Thus, the stage of Betrayal and Realisation is repeated at least thrice in the whole trilogy.

The steps of Transformation are: The Descent-Passing the Gates of Judgement, The Eye of the Storm, and Death-All Is Lost, and encompass The Spark, The Quell, and The Enemy's parts from *Catching Fire*, although the last stage is still developing in the first chapters of *Mockingjay* before Katniss asks Coin and Plutarch Havensbee help to rescue Peeta from Capitol. One interesting finding is that *Catching Fire* starts and finishes with Katniss feeling hopeless, but because of two different reasons: first, because she knows that she will be punished for defying Snow, and then because she knows that the torture will be stronger and imminent as she has gone against the Capitol twice.

Finally, the stages of Emergence are the following: Support, Rebirth-The Moment of Truth, and Full Circle-Return to the Perfect World, which corresponds with The Ashes, The Assault, and The Assassin from *Mockingjay*. Support is another stage that is repeated at least three times in the trilogy. In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss meets Peeta and her mentoring team and her stylists, whom she still has to trust by the end of *Mockingjay*. Inside the arena of the first Games, Katniss finds Rue, whom she allies. Inside the Quell's arena, in *Catching Fire*, she confides in Finnick Odair and Mags from District Four, Beetee and Wires from District Three, and Joanna Mason from District Seven. Finally, in *Mockingjay*, Katniss has to co-work with Plutarch Havensbee, President Coin and the propos' team they create to portray her as the face of rebellion. Tigris is the last person that Katniss trusts. The killing of Prim is what makes her have her final realisation: she becomes a heroine when she decides that neither Coin nor Snow will rule Panem. There will not be Hunger Games anymore and our heroine will complete her journey going back to her perfect world.

The ending of the trilogy symbolises how Katniss has gone from the margins to the centre of society. In the beginning of *The Hunger Games*, she could not afford to feed Prim's cat, but at the end of *Mockingjay* she gives her cat all her bacon as she is too

upset to eat. Moreover, in the Epilogue, we read that Katniss and Peeta's children learn the story of their parents at school; a story that is completely different from the one that our protagonists had been taught when they were children. The version they learn is not told from the Capitol's point of view, but it is the perspective of the people from the districts, which were in the margins of society. Thus, Katniss becomes a heroine and her journey will be told to others the same way Arthur's, Theseus' or Ulysses' stories were.

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