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**An Exploration of Dystopian Fiction: a Darwinian study of
*Suzanne Collins's the Hunger Games (2008)***

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Abstract:

One of the most important philosophical theories of the late twentieth century is the philosophical inspiration at the time which was the Dystopian or the distressed literature. No investigator of a scientific or literary subject denies that the historical reasoning that justified the existence of such a philosophical view. This research focus on this part dystopia, This philosophical approach was examined in its ideological development and its philosophical dimensions. In this three chapters, this study is going to apply social Darwinism with the creation of its applied model in Suzann Collins's The Hunger Games as it covers the aspects of survivability, competition, and individuality.

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General Introduction

Dystopian fiction has been a popular literary genre for more than a century. Many novels have been written in the periods of great pessimism which are epitomized by wars, power abuse, tyranny and many other happenings. Dystopia defined as being the reverse of Utopia. Most of the old writers fictionalize their writing with the utopian mode of inspiration. As an opposite to earlier fictional utopias (depictions of idealized societies that promise a glorious future), dystopian fiction instead satirizes utopian ideals or describes societies where negative social forces have supremacy (Scholes and Ostenson 11).

They have always dealt with political and social problems that could be possible threats for humanity if we keep on living like we do, signaling the underlying intention that reading dystopian fiction might make the readers criticize the world we live in (Spisak 60). Besides, Charles Darwin's evolutionary principles of the "struggle for survival" and "survival of the fittest" become the main motifs and themes for several contemporary novels. As result, dystopian fiction becomes a fertile ground of literary studies.

The impact of Social Darwinism upon literature became the focus of various academic research which explores identity, survival, and individuality. The later notions were highly interpreted in *The Hunger Games* which is regarded as a fine example of dystopian fiction. *The Hunger Games* consist of a trilogy of novels that are set in the dystopian future written by Suzanne Collins. The name of *The Hunger Games* reflects the yearly traditional competition that has been in Panem for approximately 74 years. In the games, a draw randomly selects one girl and one boy aged between 12 and 18 years from each District. They engage each other in a battle that is televised in a live manner to the entire country. In the story, the protagonist Katniss Everdeen has to survive in this dystopian environment, since, she has profitable abilities which allow her to do so.

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The present study will concentrate on the work of Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* to explore its dystopian world with regard to the Dystopia theories in a combination with Social Darwinism. Hence, this study will discuss the novel from Darwinian perspectives, where she introduced survival aspects as a vehicle to express her opinion and ideas about dystopian visualization. The main objective of this dissertation is thus to analyze this novel as such to illustrate whether Collins can be considered a social Darwinist or not.

The *Hunger Games* trilogy is a real representation of Social Darwinism as it makes the reader imagine the idea of Darwinian competition. The story about the games of elimination. Each year, twenty-four participants are placed in the natural landscape, where they fight basics elements like, animals, plants, and killing each other until only one champion who survive with his life. In this vein "survival of the fittest" is a faithful interpretation of this novel which has a major impact on Charles Darwin.

For this reason, in the literary analysis of this dissertation, the main objective will be to discover the extent to which Darwin's theories, and accordingly, Social Darwinist perspectives, have influenced Collins's writings. How has she interpreted, and thus, agreed with or deviated from these theories? As will be demonstrated later on, Social Darwinism is a rather unclear concept, defined and applied in different ways, hence, this dissertation will study to what extent, and in what way Collins can be regarded as a social Darwinist?

What is hypothesized, therefore, is that Social Darwinism is a crucial insight in dystopian societies which are usually about survival, individuality, and competition. Hence, Suzanne Collins, perhaps, has engaged the protagonist of story Katniss Everdeen in a successful way of presenting the idea "Natural Selection" throughout her profitable abilities.

The significance of the present study lies in the contributions it hopes to achieve. Such a study, we believe, would contribute to the debate about the importance for understanding the

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Darwinian impact on literature by focusing on the concept of survival of the fittest by natural selection presented in the work of Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*. Moreover, it is expected to contribute to the field of literature and literary studies. It might be helpful for those who are interested in the study of dystopian literature.

This study falls within dystopian literary theories, precisely apocalyptic science fiction. It will discuss dystopia particularly the representation of social Darwinism in the *Hunger Games*. The data used are of qualitative nature. Therefore, an analytic-descriptive approach will conduct this study. The specific procedure used in the selection of quotations involves close reading¹ to have a deep understanding of the novel and demonstrate the survival aspect used in this dystopian fiction.

In literary criticism, close reading is a careful and sustained interpretation of literary texts. It emphasizes the single and the particular over the general, affected by close attention to individual words, the syntax, and the order in which the sentences unfold ideas, as the reader scans the line of text.

This investigation will be made up of three chapters; the first chapter discusses the theoretical background on which this study draws its contributions, dealing with the notion of Dystopia in companies with science fiction. While the second chapter analyzes the social Darwinism and its impact on literature and dystopian fiction as well by exploring the notion of survival of the fittest by natural selection. The third chapter analyzes the application of those ideas which lie on *The Hunger Games* and clarify this elements survival, individuality, and competition that goes into the details of the novel.

After searching and checking a number of sources, the majority of the studies which have been done on *The Hunger Games* are either articles, doctoral thesis or book chapters; yet,

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no study so far has discussed the subject of investigating the dystopian world of the novel without exploring its philosophical dimension. Therefore, a study is needed to examine the extent to which the novel can be delved from a Darwinian point of view as it covers the notions of survivability, individuality, and competition.

Dystopia is pictured as a substitution to the utopia, it represents an image of invented society, which is imperfect and affected by the influences of tyranny, terrorism, poverty, misery and advanced technologies. Therefore, the *Hunger Games* holds the concerns of the above characteristics, especially, by applying the insights of social Darwinism in order to look for the representation of survival aspects.

Accordingly, I structured my searching through books, master research, search engine, and other sources reveal a subtle number of works published on the subject of dystopian fiction, for example, Claeys, Charles Darwin and Suzanne Collins.

George Claeys, *The Cambridge companion to utopian literature*, explored the shift between utopia and dystopia. He also presented different definitions of science fiction, the origin, and characteristics that make this kind of literature specific and horrific in imaginative aspect for the futuristic world. It was used by writers to criticize their societies and governments.

Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*, presented the idea of the "survival of the fittest" to rationalize neglecting and mistreating the poor and to encourage fear about their unnatural (rise). The approach of social Darwinism holds that the poor should be abandoned so they will die out as quickly as possible. Darwin himself worried that survival was simply a subject of chance.

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Suzann Collins, *The Hunger Games*, science fiction, presented a reluctant brave woman, Katniss Everdeen, who is fascinated by the tyrannical country of Panem. It has an ideological analysis by identifying themes of oppression, which compare it like the current U.S. social systems such as economic, political, and social aspects.

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All utopias literary production of the twentieth century tended to be replaced by dystopias; a term suggesting negative utopia. This chapter will introduce some basic theoretical concepts related to this literary genre and explore Social Darwinism by some scholars such as Halliday, Malthus and Spencer who explore the concept of Survival of the fittest.

Section one: A Historical Overview

The Utopian fiction stands for a literary type, a political pattern and a social system. It is a reflection of an ideal world. The Writers of this particular genre often envision an imaginary perfect place in terms of social equality, political reforms and economic equity.

1. From Utopian fiction to Dystopian Fiction:

Dystopia as a term and concept appeared clearly the first half of the 20th century as a result of the appearance of various dictatorships that caused two disastrous World Wars. Dystopias tend to criticize all forms of totalitarianism and to expected what may happen in the future.

The Utopian literature first appearance dates back to 380 BC, when the famous philosopher Plato wrote his best-recognized work *The Republic*, which is believed to be the first epitome of utopia as a genre and his best achievement in philosophy and social theory. Centuries later, the utopian fiction came into existence when the term Utopia was first introduced in the Latin book *Utopia* in 1516, written by Sir Thomas More who was an English author, Renaissance humanist, lawyer, political leader, social philosopher and councillor to the king of England at that time Henry VIII. Thomas at that time was known best for the invention of a word, and for his development of an idea that would be published all around

the globe. His notion would later shape philosophies, books and political movements such as Gandhi's passive resistance principle, the English novel Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe and the foundation of Pennsylvania as a state in America.

The title of the book refers to the two Greek words: "eutopos", "good place" and "outpost", "no place". After the translation of the original manuscript in English in the year 1551, various writers took the opportunity to develop this genre. Based on Sir Thomas's famous book, the previous mentioned writers who imitated the book Utopia developed a different genre by the insertion of their personal ideas to More's ideal society; paving the way for the Utopian literature to develop over the centuries.

Starting from More's Utopia, in which Thomas discusses his voyage with a great traveller named Raphael Hythloday to an unknown island, which is considered by Raphael to be the best place on earth. In this novel, Sir Thomas was showing his disapproval with the state of the European countries at that time (greed, corruption...). Followed by Francis Bacon's New Atlantis; this novel describes a legendary island called Bensalem. Its residents are enlightened, generous and dignified. Francis mentioned a scientific research centre on that island, Solomon's House, which represents his imagination of an ideal vision for the human kind. Pursued by Candide by Voltaire who was a French writer, playwright and poet. This novel is often referred to as "All for the Best". The protagonist Candide reaches an isolated city in South America known by the name El Dorado. This city is perfect in every terms, no poverty, no organized government and no religion; the inhabitants live in total harmony and equality. Candide contrasts between the city's peaceful lifestyle, unique architecture, developed educational system, and the greedy, despicable Europe he came from.

"Equality, A History of Lithconia" by James Reynolds, initially released as an eight-part article, Equality is America's first Utopia. It depicts an ideal community named Lithconia, which is based on the doctrine of absolute equality, for all citizens, where the

human nature could prosper and society could attain perfection. Other works such as Tomaso Campanella's *La Città del Sole* (English: *The City of the Sun*) and James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, in addition to the above mentioned, marked the history of Utopian narratives. These books, mainly the ones about travelling stand for criticizing the actual community to which the book is intended. For example, Thomas' utopia is about England during the 16th century and how it is supposed to be. Hence, it is obvious that the Utopian narratives are created out of a political need for changing the society. In order to support this idea, Gregory Claeys declared in the aftermath of the French revolution, "we witness a dialectical relationship emerging between three elements: Utopian thought, here some of the underlying principles of the Revolution; the creation of fictional Utopias; and a fictional anti- or Dystopian response" (CLAEYS, 2010, p.110). What differentiates the Utopian fiction from a philosophical or a political written work is the depiction of an idealized social setting in the form of a fictional novel; involving characters whom we can sympathise or argue with throughout the plot events.

2. Utopia and Society

What characterises Utopian literature is the social criticism of what is actually happening within the society and providing the possible propositions about how it should be. It is what differentiates Utopia from fantasy and science fiction. The author of the Utopian novel visualises a society with limited social conditions, which are definitely different from the ones of his own. Then he reveals the desired results behind his selected social conditions by relying on the suggested scenario of his Utopian community. Taking for example More's Utopia that is evolutionary, revolutionary and reformist urging the reader to develop his critical sense. Some other characteristics that utopian fiction presents: the Utopia is often a far place, almost impossible to reach, it displays optimism and euphoria...etc. In order for the

Utopian fiction to work, some aspects should be in the novel such as the absence of strictness, giving rise to myths, the use of mystery and imagination.

Furthermore, some notions of the 18th century philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau concerning a perfect Arcadian society had affected some Utopian authors. Henry David Thoreau with his book *Walden* was also remarkably inspiring to many authors of Utopian Fiction.

Section Two: The Utopian Literature

By the late 19th century, a new genre came to be very popular, known as the Dystopia or the Anti-Utopia literature. It reflects the harsh economic situation during the mid-19th century.

1. The Dystopian Fiction:

The Dystopian fiction represents a literary form, which is totally the opposite of utopia. It is an imagined place where everything is corrupted and wrong. The Writers of this genre often discuss the idea of a dehumanized world, characterised by: freedom restriction, Totalitarian regimes, bureaucratic control, wars and the total negligence of society. Dystopian works usually discuss a story about small groups or minorities who risk their lives in order to survive against all the odds.

The dystopian fiction has grown to be a very well-known literary genre for a long time. John Stuart Mill was the first one who introduced the word Dystopia for the first time in 1868 during a political speech about the state of Ireland.

In his speech, John found fault with the government's plan on Irish monarchy declaring that "What is commonly called Utopian is something too good to be practicable; but what they [the government] appear to favour is bad to be practicable." Mill was a political

economist, an English philosopher and a civil servant. Nicknamed “the most influential English-speaking philosopher of the nineteenth century”, he was one of the great figures at that time. His name generally related to the history of Liberalism due to his major contributions to the political economy, political theory and the social theory.

Based on John Stuart’s speech, the Oxford English Dictionary defines the word dystopia, as “an imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible.” As dystopia is described as the inverse of utopia, the two terms are clearly interrelated. This relation has its roots in far ancient times. Professor Gregory Claeys traced the origins of the two opposite terms in mythology and stated, “It invites us to consider the parallel religious prehistories of both concepts, which in the Christian tradition are dominated by the ideas of Eden and Heaven, on the one hand, and Hell on the other.” ” (Claeys, 2014,p 54)

Even though the word dystopia was created only during the 19th century, but the notion of dystopian society had been dealt with many centuries earlier. The idea of heaven and hell confirm that some trails of the concept dystopia are linked directly to Ancient Greece. Also, the fact that most of dystopia’s aspects are gradually derived from utopia. According to Gregory Claeys “from time immemorial people have thought about the possibility of the construction of a better world, but they have also been aware of the likelihood of a future which might be worse than the present.” (Claeys,16)

The idea of perfection was demonstrated in the 18th century, when people started thinking positively in exceeding their own ability, which resulted in the rise of utopia. It is characterised by unimaginable visions of the future; the majority of the literary utopias of that period offered a mirror where man would not be able to see his reflection but only that of a much distorted image of humanity.” (Claeys, 16)

Throughout the 20th century, the perception of Dystopia in literature has been different in various ways. Many famous writers from different periods such as Aldous Huxley, George Orwell and Jack London were driven by the variable situation of politics in the world to create a series of heterogeneous fictional novels. Among these works, we have *Brave New World* by Huxley and George Orwell's *1984*. Thomas Patrick Moylan properly summarized the setting against which these classics were formed: "Dystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century. A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination." Because of these events and their results, works of fiction have widened the range of complexity of the perception of dystopia.

Some Dystopian novels are produced to describe or criticize a current state of a certain society, while some others are written to fulfil a religious objective. Thus, according to the content and the aim of each novel; they can be classified as prophetic and non-prophetic books. The following characteristics are related to the non-prophetic fiction: the narrative must be intended to criticize the reality of a society or some features that fall within the class of satire or social criticism. It has to depict the society as an entity, not one person or two; the description must be diverse. It has to portray an eradicated, abhorred system, which affects the society in every way possible.

Concerning the prophetic fiction, it can be distinguished according to the following aspects: the story is generally taking place in the future with some relevance to the present and if the reader could not notice such relevance, the prophetic idea is lost. The idea of warning must be present in the novel, even if it is not the intention of the author to convey

such idea. In order to illustrate the idea of a prophetic novel, here are two famous prophetic dystopian works: *Brave New World* by Huxley and *1984* by Orwell.

2. The Transformation from Utopia into Dystopia:

A noticeable alteration from utopian to dystopian literature took place by the end of the 19th century. Due to the increasing pessimism caused by the consequences of the scientific and industrial progress, and the growing disorder in the world. Utopias are no longer a centre of interest like the ones they used to be. Utopian literature was gradually transforming into a center of mockery and irony and dystopia dominated the scene. Utopian views fall out and some scholars such as (Popper, Talmon...) and Claeys who approved that "From the 1890s onwards the appearance of an increasing number of dystopian texts thus seemingly indicates a negative trend in the wider utopian genre as a whole. Other researchers believed that it would take dystopian actions in order to form a utopian world "the desire to create a much-improved society in which human behaviour was dramatically superior to the norm implies an intrinsic drift towards punitive methods of controlling behaviour which inexorably results in some form of police state". (Claeys, p111)

Section Three: Social Darwinism: Theoretical Perspectives

Social Darwinism is a term used in various disciplines, ranging from biology, sociology and genetics to economy, philosophy and politics. The general applications of the term indicates that it has different meanings, depending on the context in which it used, sometimes even harm.

1. Origin and Definitions of the Concept:

As the term covers various disciplines, we will rely on Halliday's (1971) definitions of the term, since he defines the concept as "that enterprise or ideology, founded in the

nineteenth century, which holds social evolution to depend upon the operation of the law of natural selection of favorable inheritable variants"(Paul crook ,38). Hence the concept of Darwinism seems to be based mainly upon the Darwinian laws of natural selection.

First, although Malthus and Spencer were as famous as Darwin at the time, Darwin's biological evolutionary theories proved to be more accessible and, consequently, more influential than the social theories of Malthus and Spencer (Dickens 2000). Darwin, in effect, had purposely written *The Origin* in comprehensible terms, as he had "in mind an untrained audience" (Dickens 2000, 11). Secondly, because his theories contradicted the Church's doctrine of the origin of man and the evolution of life, Darwin suggested theological debates, making him famous, or better known, during the night. Even the fact that Darwin's evolutionary theories were built on an undeniable amount of evidence, collected in his travels, has given them enormous reliability.

Social Darwinism therefore, was strengthened more and more by Richard Hofstadter when he introduced the term in America because "the competitive American society of the second half of the nineteenth century saw the image work in the tooth-and-claw version of Darwin's theory of natural selection "(quoted in Rogers 1972, 266). Hofstadter (quoted in Rogers, 1972) states that basically "time was ripe for Darwinism to become a social theory" (266).

2.The Survival of The Fittest:

The term survival of the fittest was adopted by British philosopher Herbert Spencer to describe the concept of natural selection Subsequently, Charles Darwin adopted the term as a synonym for natural selection in later editions of his famous work *The Origin of Species* since he considered it more appropriate .To illustrate the meaning of natural selection as well as its consequences. The survival of the stronger implies that the strong will succeed and the weak will

die. The "fittest" will succeed and will have to govern the weakest because they are the most suitable to do so. In a brutal world without social hierarchy, class and social customs, this would mean the person who is the strongest and has the longest throwing rules on all. In this chapter, I will first give an overview of the Darwinian definition of natural selection and then continue with a description of social Darwinism, the application of Darwin's ideas to human society. Social Darwinism is not important to understand the principles of natural selection, but it plays an important role in *The Hunger Games*. Therefore, we decided to include in the third chapter after the passage which is commonly about the impact of Darwinism in literature.

3. Darwinism and Natural Selection

If we want to comprehend what Darwin refers to as natural selection or the survival of the fittest, it is necessary to explain what is called struggle for existence first. According to Darwin, there is not only a struggle between plants and animals of the same species and of different species, but also a struggle of plants and animals to survive in their specific environment. The struggle between two or more organisms exists in places already inhabited by other plants or animals, while a plant in a very dry climate would experience the struggle for life against the harsh environmental conditions. The struggle for existence, however, is most severe between individuals and varieties of the same species as they are more similar in their organization and habits. That is why the presence of one species may lead to the decrease or even defeat of another under certain conditions. Although the struggle between individuals of the same species is most harsh, Darwin emphasizes the significant influence of climate on the process. atmosphere can reduce population sizes directly by making weaker individuals freeze to death or indirectly by reducing the amount of food. The most important aspect of the struggle for life, however, there is its function to limit population sizes of plants and animals and as a result prevent overpopulation .

4. Darwinism in Literature

Most of Charles Darwin's works are often assumed to have been major impact of the crisis of religious belief in Victorian England .In fact, many Victorian were anxious about the condition of their faith well before Darwin published his theory of evolution by natural selection .Between 1860 and the first World War most of writers of this period explored the spiritual, psychological, ethical and social implications of Darwin's thinking in wide range of different forms and genres, including realist novels, science fiction, poetry and personal lyrics.

At the end of this period,the catastrophe of the First World War largely darkening the more philosophical concerns raised by Darwinism, although writers continued to hypothesize on the meaning of evolution for the future of the human race. However, these anxieties back again in America in the 1920, as a revival of creationism led a number of states to pass laws forbidding the teaching of Darwinism. But in 1970 many novelists ,thinkers and dramatists have again returned to Darwinism under different circumstances of religious fundamentalism, evolutionary psychology and the ecological crises of pollution, in order to explore both the central discourse of culture and as a basic paradigm for understanding nature, including human nature .

Darwin's influence penetrates late Victorian and Edwardian fiction of all kinds, from fantasies to realist's novels. One those was Charles Kingsley plays with evolutionary theories in his children's fantasy *The Water Babies*(1862-63). Darwin's insistence that mankind evolved from like ancestors, and his admission that natural selection could lead as easily to degeneration as to higher forms of life. Samuel Butler toys with his readers in his utopian satire *Erewhon*(1872),suggesting that it follows from Darwin's theories that human beings are the means by which machines reproduce themselves and consequently evolve. In his major

novel *The Old Wives Tale* (1908), Arnold Bennett makes ironic allusions to the purpose of evolution as reproduction and the survival of the fittest.

During the twentieth century, novelists were shaped by Darwinism as the Victorian had been. Recently there has been a revival of interests fuelled both by the revival of religious fundamentalism as a political force and by the debates between leading Darwinism including Edward O. Wilson and Richard Dawkins. Darwin is everywhere in literature, particularly in fiction. But to say that his vision has helped to shape the reality of writers does not mean that writers have simply absorbed it and accepted it. It is rarely found in something as stupidly "scientific" as the Zola's manifesto "The Experimental Novel" or its large series of novels by Rougon-Macquart. Imitative efforts, such as the interesting "Esther Waters" by George Moore, are the exception. But the novel at the beginning of the century rarely fought Darwin; more often he assimilated it. Much early modernism contrasts with the positivist reduction of the world to a verifiable scientific statement.

However, early Modernist writing is permeated with Darwinist ideas of time, movement, and change, even as it struggles to recreate the classical against the whole Darwinian myth. For the classical implies insistence and origins in a golden age, while Darwinism, whatever it does elsewhere, always implies flow and origin in the most primitive forms, no gods and ideals. In Joyce's "Ulysses," the exquisitely modern classic work, the classical in its imposition on the modern is undermined. The end of the story is very Darwinian or post-Darwinian, because the narrative is never dissolved, and we stick with a naturalistic "yes" in a time flow that has remained one day in the heart of Dublin and moving away.

Some critics have focused on the literary qualities of Darwinian prose, others have wanted to turn Darwinism itself into a literary critical method. Taking a guide from Edward O. Wilson, critics such as Joseph Carroll have argued that evolutionary psychology can provide the key to literary interpretation. While a Darwinian method of literary criticism looks unlikely to succeed, however, an awareness of Darwinian themes in literature sheds light on an enormous range of texts which themselves shed light on the Darwinian condition.

Current literary theory tends to consider a text as the product of particular social conditions or, less frequently, as a network of references to other texts. Jacques Derrida, the father of deconstruction, notoriously noted that there was "nothing outside the text." Often focuses on how the identity of the writer and the reader - straight, gay, female, male, black, white, colonizer or colonized - forms a particular narrative or its interpretation.

Theorists sometimes view science simply as another form of language or judge that when scientists claim to speak by nature, they are covering their own affirmation of power. Literary Darwinism breaks with these trends. First, his goal is to study literature through biology - not politics or semiotics. Secondly, it is not taken for granted that literature possesses its truth or many truths, but that it draws its truth from the laws of nature.

Conclusion:

This chapter has clarified the transition of the literary perspective from Utopia to Dystopia, due to a different circumstance that shaped the human's philosophy. Utopia was an ideal place or state, or a visionary system of political or social perfection. On the other hand, Dystopia is a place where people lead dehumanized and often worried lives. It has also provided a deep analysis from various discourses and from different perspectives as it deals with imperialism, racism, eugenics and social inequalities during the past century and half. Besides, the Social Darwinism ideology used to justify certain political, cultural, or economic views.

Chapter Two : Contextualizing the *Hunger Games*

Introduction:

The early twenty-first century has been recognized as a golden age of Young Adult literature. Read increasingly by adults as well as teens, young adult fiction has a growing audience and thus a growing influence. The *Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins provides a totally new sort of environment and setting for children's and young adult fiction; where the fantastic and supernatural are stripped away and we find ourselves in a depressing, dystopian version of our very own future. this chapter will try to contextualize the literary genre of the novel, introducing Collins trilogy and highlighting the main theme of food and hunger.

Section One: The *Hunger Games* on the Scope

The *Hunger Games* trilogy consists of *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay* and is set in the future country of Panem, a country that arose in North America after several natural disasters and wars in our not too distant future.

1. Introducing Collins' Trilogy:

The first book, *The Hunger Games* (2008), has Katniss Everdeen sacrifice herself in place of her sister Prim who is selected for *The Hunger Games* at the outset of the novel. Katniss and a boy Peeta travel to the capitol along with the other twenty-two tributes. Katniss notices the economic stratification because she notices a material abundance while people in her district starve. A series of events leads up to *The Hunger Games*—TV interviews, fight and survival training, cosmetic makeover, sponsorship and rankings. The goal of rankings is to impress the committee of the games with a talent or skill—anything that will help them win. A ranking is assigned which is important if a tribute is to gain sponsorship.

Chapter Two : Contextualizing the *Hunger Games*

Katniss is skillful with a bow and arrow, and Peeta who is a baker can lift a lot of weight. Sponsorship means that during the games a silver parachute could fall in front of a tribute carrying vital goods for survival. This means it becomes a popularity contest for the tributes to impress the citizens of Panem during interviews, rankings, and every moment the camera is on them. Katniss eventually wins due to her survival skills acquired before The Hunger Games from illegally hunting outside her home town of District Twelve to keep her family alive. However, Katniss complicates the game: Katniss and Peeta remain alive until the end, at which point they must battle each other in order for a single victor to walk away; but, she threatens to kill herself with poisonous berries co-opting Peeta who agrees to swallow them at the same time she does.

The game master stops them before it happens, then declaring two victors to the amazement of a televised audience because it is an unprecedented event. The act of rebellion places Katniss in the all-seeing eye of President Snow who uses The Hunger Games to keep the districts obedient to his totalitarian rule. She has defied the rule of President Snow, which eventually snowballs with the help of the other districts into the collapse of his regime at the end of book three.

Book two, *Catching Fire* (2009), has a 75th edition of the games, which means previous winners are re-entered into the games, while the goal remains the same. A plot to overthrow the government was planned without Katniss knowing, to the effect that the 75th games end abruptly with the stadium exploding. Katniss and other contestants are airlifted to District Thirteen (previously thought to have been destroyed), the headquarters of the rebellion. Peeta is captured by the capitol and District Twelve is bombed to the ground.

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In book three, *Mockingjay* (2012), President Coin of District Thirteen uses Katniss in propaganda films against the capitol keeping her out of the battle for Panem. Eventually, after a filming ends, Katniss and her team fight through the capitol of Panem. Katniss watches the death of her sister in front of President Snow's mansion. She learns President Coin killed her sister to gain her allegiance. At the execution of President Snow, at which Katniss was selected to perform the execution, she instead turns her bow and arrow on President Coin, killing her and starting a riot in which President Snow is also killed. Katniss is acquitted due to mental instability and returns to District Twelve to marry Peeta and start a new life.

2. The *Hunger Games* a Young Adult Novel:

As with most books for children and young adults, the *Hunger Games* series does take up traditional topics such as the good vs. the bad, friendship, family, loyalty, and love, but in addition it arguably also offers stark criticism of our present society and of our treatment of our fellow human beings and our planet; our lack of compassion, humanity, and future orientation are central ideas here.

Collins touches upon many sensitive topics in her trilogy, such as entertainment, looks and appearances, science, environment, and warfare, areas in which there have been extreme advances and progress for better and worse. The developments in these areas, some in only the last few years, are both incredibly fantastic and at the same time terribly frightening, something Collins is making a point of in the trilogy.

the young adult dystopia differs from its adult counterpart. The children are often at odds with the adults and very often have to take the main responsibility for the dystopian world to change into a better place (Hintz and Ostry 1). Bradford et al.

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add that it is the “child protagonists who must take responsibility for the future, and (...) overcome the problems the adult generation has created” (182)

Hintz and Ostry note that “In utopian and dystopian writing for children and young adults, the stakes are high,” write (2). They, further, argue that this type of literature may be the first encounter that children have with “texts that systematically explore collective social organization.”

Tropes of bildungsroman are an important element in books for children and young adults because they very often portray and reflect the development the young readers are going through themselves. Combined with dystopia this creates a “powerful metaphor for adolescence” (Hintz and Ostry 9). In the *Hunger Games* trilogy, we discover how Katniss, the protagonist, at only eleven years took action in order to save her family from starvation and separation, thus forcing her to grow up before her time. Having this only trait and concern, she might have felt unfamiliar to many readers, but by adding the at times difficult relationship to her mother and a love plot, Collins has made Katniss a grown-up revolutionary and a teenage girl fussing about how this or that dress makes her look, and what this or that kiss meant.

Hintz and Ostry point out that the reasons for writing dystopias for children and young adults are varied and range from “play and escape to sustained political reflection” (1). They further add that this sort of writing encourages children to question the society they live in by examining “the roots of social behavior” (1). The books then become an early, and relatively mild, introduction to the political life for the young readers. By adding adventure, humor, and romance into the mix, the dystopian stories become less frightening and “real” and thus the real political message is subtly transmitted to the children. Sambell (163) writes that the purpose

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of dystopian novels for children mainly has been twofold: that of a cautionary tale of the consequences of human behavior, and that of an appeal for social change. The *Hunger Games* trilogy contains examples of all these traits, including the excitement part.

Through the main character, Katniss Everdeen, the novel illuminates how many of us have lost the basic knowledge of how to catch, forage, or even grow our own food and argues that if we regain this knowledge, we can challenge the systems of power currently working to patent and regulate one of our most basic necessities. For the “Millenials,” the generation that *The Hunger Games* is written for, this is an intricate argument in itself; however, the novel goes even further to suggest that we can undermine global exploitation by showing compassion and embracing a “dangerous unselfishness”—a simple, and in our age of cynicism and irony, increasingly radical solution. The kind of compassion *The Hunger Games* endorses is so rare in the social fabric of Collins's created society that when practiced it becomes revolutionary, starting a tidal wave of social change. Due to its critique on live TV because of their own political machinations, unfortunately for those in power this time the revolution is televised. With its critique of the global food system and its message of revolution through compassion, *The Hunger Games* is worthy of scholarly attention, for it is nothing less than a progressive environmental justice novel for the twenty-first century.

Collins's novel is a deceptively easy read, sweeping readers along with its suspenseful narrative, implanting its social and environmental message alongside an (albeit clichéd) love triangle and the protagonist's struggle to find herself.

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They do surgery in the Capitol, to make people appear younger and thinner. In District 12, looking old is something of an achievement since so many people die early. You see an elderly person, you want to congratulate them on their longevity, ask the secret of survival. A plump person is envied because they aren't scraping by like the majority of us. But here it is different. Wrinkles aren't desirable. A round belly isn't a sign of success. (125)

The social justice issues of the novel may be obvious—Panem is, after all, a dictatorship—but the way Collins weaves food justice into the story is subtle. References to food arise repeatedly but are scattered throughout the narrative, sometimes appearing only in a single sentence on subsequent pages for long stretches. Katniss is forced to hunt to support her family because her father was killed in the coalmines, and although her family received “compensation” for his death, it wasn't enough (26).

The Games are Collins's symbolization of environmental justice issues. She connects people to food in numerous ways that might be too obvious for adult readers, but which is necessary for her young audience. The Games make our economic system visible to young readers and show how the Capitol has become cannibalistic: consuming its own citizens is a cost of maintaining control. In addition, poor children are disproportionately at risk of being turned into commodity spectacle for the Capitol because poor families can trade the safety of their children for more food, known in the book as “tesserae.”). Dehumanizing the poor children of the Districts is one of the ways the Capitol justifies devouring the commodified tributes.

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Section Two: Beyond Food and Hunger

Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* trilogy is filled with food symbolism from start to finish and the examples provided above only scratch the surface. The novels are ripe with further examples that emphasize the importance of food within the society of Panem and the complex symbolism that underlies it.

1. The Power of Food :

Food is used as power to force the districts into submission, as well as a reward for those who are skilled enough to make it out of the Hunger Games alive. The name of the country itself signifies the importance that food holds in this society: *Panem* is the Latin word for bread and is often associated with the phrase *Panem et circenses*, which translates to “bread and circuses” and refers to a government using superficial means such as circuses and games to provide citizens with the necessities of life (such as bread) while distracting them from more pressing matters (Despain 70). The Romans employed such a technique through their use of gladiators and President Snow similarly uses it in his support of the Hunger Games (Anthon 52), which enables him to provide those living in the Capitol with all of the food that they need to survive while using the Games as a distraction to keep attention away from any uprisings that might be happening within the districts.

Naming this competition the “Hunger Games” also raises the question of how food and hunger fit into the equation. The Capitol continues to thrive while the districts starve, despite that, a majority of the nation's production and agriculture is conducted by said districts. While tributes for the Games seem to be chosen at random during the reaping, a deeper analysis of the selection process reveals that such is not the case. Every citizen of the districts between the ages twelve and

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eighteen have their name entered into the reaping once, but these same citizens can enter their name a second time in exchange for a “tessera”: a small supply of oil and grain that will sustain one person for a single year. Poorer citizens have little choice but to take this option and enter their names more frequently into the reaping than others, potentially trading food for their lives. Faced with starvation, citizens have two choices: increase their likelihood of being chosen for the Games or die. In Panem, it is clear that food symbolizes life, as those citizens with access to food are less likely to be chosen for the Games and therefore less likely to put their lives in jeopardy.

In addition to being represented in the name Panem, bread serves as a key symbol in the novels by representing hope and change. Immediately in the opening scene, Katniss’ close friend Gale brings a loaf of bread to her in the forest on the day of the reaping and wishes her a “Happy Hunger Games!” (Collins, *Hunger Games* 7). This signifies the hope that they share to remain safe from the Games, even though both of them carry increased odds of being chosen as tributes, each having already accepted multiple tesserae. Furthermore, this gesture foreshadows the choice that Katniss will make that changes the path of her life forever by volunteering to take the place of her sister, whose name is drawn during the reaping as a tribute. Thus, Katniss is made the female tribute from District 12 and Peeta Melark, the son of a baker, is selected to be the male tribute. It is also at this moment that Katniss recognizes Peeta from a key moment in her childhood.

After Katniss’ father died, her family came dangerously close to starvation. In a final act of desperation, Katniss went to the town bakery and searched its dumpster for any bread or food that might have been thrown out; however, she was unsuccessful in her search. Peeta saw Katniss in her search and purposefully burnt a

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batch of bread, earning him a beating from his mother. When told to feed the burnt bread to the pigs, Peeta quickly went outside and threw it to Katniss (Collins, *Hunger Games* 30). Bread once again represents hope as it renews Katniss' strength and gives her the opportunity to feed her family a decent meal—something that they had not had in a long time. Bread also represents change because it is at this moment that Katniss realizes she must do as her father taught her and hunt for food in the forest in order to provide for her family, thus changing her role from daughter to the provider.

Bread continues to play a prominent symbolic role as the Games begin, particularly when Rue, the female tribute of District 11 and Katniss' ally, is stabbed in her stomach by a spear. As Rue slowly dies, Katniss stays by her side, sings to her, and surrounds her body with flowers (Collins, *Hunger Games* 234). In an act of gratitude, District 11 sends Katniss a loaf of bread (238)—which is significant because districts only ever send food to their own tributes during the Games, making this the first time that a district sent any item at all to a tribute from a competing district. This bread represents the changing political atmosphere in Panem. Prior to this moment, the Capitol had maintained its power by pitting the districts against one another and minimizing communication between them in order to prevent another uprising. District 11's act of sending bread to Katniss shows that the districts may begin to work together towards a common goal in the near future. It further represents hope by renewing Katniss' spirits and motivating her to carry on and win the Games.

This bread symbolism persists not only through *The Hunger Games* but also in its sequel *Catching Fire*. In this second novel, the districts attempt to rescue the tributes from the arena and start a rebellion against the Capitol. A code is developed

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to inform the tributes of the rescue plan and signal when it would take place: bread from District 3 is sent to the tributes, indicating that the rescue would happen on the third day of the Games, and twenty-four rolls of bread are sent, informing them that it would happen during the twenty-fourth hour of the day (Collins, *Catching Fire* 385). In this case, bread signifies the hope that the victors have of being rescued, as well as their hope for a successful rebellion against the Capitol. It also represents the moment where life in Panem completely changes. At the moment indicated by the bread code, the rebellion against the Capitol officially begins and everyone is forced to pick a side. This conflict culminates in the bombing of District 12, turning the district into a wasteland and forcing its people to migrate to neighboring districts.

Bread is the most significant and prominent example of food symbolism that appears in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, but there are many more examples. Immediately after being chosen for the Games, Katniss and Peeta board a train that takes them to the Capitol. On the train, they are fed a multi-course meal, which they can barely keep down after eating out of pure excess. Coming from the impoverished District 12, Peeta and Katniss are in awe of the amount of food on the train (Collins, *Hunger Games* 45).

This multi-course meal represents the overindulgence, excessiveness, and ignorance of the Capitol. While the districts are starving and barely making ends meet, the citizens of the Capitol indulge in multiple courses per meal and consume more food than a single citizen of the districts eats in an entire week.

The overindulgence and ignorance of the Capitol are further emphasized in *Catching Fire* when Peeta and Katniss attend President Snow's banquet. There is an excessive amount of food at this banquet and two citizens of the Capitol urge

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Peeta to keep eating. Peeta responds by saying he wishes he could but is too full to try all of the food. They laugh and offer Peeta a drink that will make him throw up so that he can make room for more, explaining, “Everyone does it, or else how would you have any fun at a feast?” (Collins, *Catching Fire* 79). While the citizens of the districts starve, the citizens of the Capitol are shown to intentionally throw up the food that they eat, all for the sake of “fun.”

2.The Significance of the Dinner Table :

The dinner table is also viewed as a neutral territory throughout the novels and is often a place where matters which may be difficult to talk about are confronted and discussed. Similar to how food symbolism is deployed in contemporary Italian cinema, as in the case of the 1992 film *Benvenuti al Nord*, the dinner table is perceived in the novels as a safe place where characters can voice anything that they need to say (Lobalsamo, “Movies”). This is seen at multiple instances in the novels, such as when Katniss and Peeta’s trainer Haymitch decides to tell Katniss that Peeta has asked him to be trained separately (Collins, *Hunger Games* 113). Haymitch chooses to tell Katniss about Peeta’s request while they are seated at the dinner table because the neutrality of the dinner table provides the environment that he needs to break the difficult news to her, which he knows will cause her to feel a strong sense of betrayal.

The food symbolism continues through the use of apples in the novels, which represents the forbidden nature of various places and objects. Apples are first seen during Katniss’ private skill performance for the Game makers. In this scene, Katniss picks up a bow—something that she is normally extremely skilled with—but the composition of the bow is different from what she is used to and the difference causes her to completely miss the target. The Game makers laugh and

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proceed to ignore Katniss by talking amongst themselves. After becoming accustomed to the new bow Katniss manages to hit a bullseye, but the Game makers fail to notice and instead focus their attention on a roasted pig that was brought into their private area. Katniss is furious and fires an arrow at the apple in the pig's mouth, pinning it to the wall (Collins, *Hunger Games* 102). The pig represents the greed and ignorance of the Game makers that feast while a young girl's life hangs in the balance, behaving as though her life does not matter. The pinned apple represents the forbidden nature of the area into which Katniss launches an arrow and those individuals that she challenges. No glass is needed to protect the Game makers from arrows because the tributes know their place and would never harm them out of fear for what might happen to themselves, their families, and their districts. Katniss defies this power hierarchy by deliberately firing an arrow into the Game makers' lounge.

Apples make a further appearance in the novels when Katniss sabotages a stockpile of supplies left by the Careers: tributes from richer districts who were trained to fight in the Games from a young age. In this scene, the Careers build a pyramid of supplies and surround the area with mines so that anyone who tries to steal or sabotage the stockpile risks tripping a mine and being killed. At the top of the pyramid is a sack of apples, representing the forbidden nature of these supplies (Collins, *Hunger Games* 218). Similar to the story of Adam and Eve, the supplies are there for the taking to any willing victim but stealing anything from the stockpile could cost that person his or her life. Again, Katniss challenges this forbidden nature and uses her bow to fire an arrow at the pyramid and tear a hole in the sack, causing the apples to fall to the ground and trigger the mines, thereby destroying the supplies (220).

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A final example of food symbolism in The *Hunger Games* trilogy is the use of berries to symbolize sacrifice. At the beginning of the first novel when Gale brings Katniss a loaf of bread, the two friends also eat berries together (Collins, *Hunger Games* 8). The berries foreshadow the sacrifice that Katniss will make by volunteering as tribute in place of her sister. Berries are seen again when Katniss uses them to mask the taste of the sleeping potion she gives to the wounded Peeta. Despite promising him that she would not go out on her own to get more supplies after he is wounded, Katniss deceives Peeta and uses the sleeping potion to buy herself enough time to find a way to help him. She states, “Even as he fades away, I can see in his eyes what I’ve done is unforgivable” (277). The berries signify the continuous sacrifices that Katniss makes in order to save her loved ones. Only by betraying Peeta’s trust does she gain the time she needs to look for the supplies to save him.

Berries make a final appearance in *The Hunger Games* when Peeta and Katniss are the only tributes left and realize that only one of them can survive. Katniss pulls out a handful of night lock berries from her pocket and states, “Yes, they have to have a victor. Without a victor, the whole thing would blow up in the Game makers’ faces” (Collins, *Hunger Games* 344). Katniss proposes that she and Peeta use the berries to kill themselves at the exact same time, thus preventing the Capitol from having a victor and rendering the Hunger Games useless. The berries represent the willingness of Katniss and Peeta to make the ultimate sacrifice and give up their lives in exchange for the repercussions and possible rebellion that their actions could incite against the Capitol.

Lastly, the Cornucopia, which is placed in the middle of the group of tributes at the start of every Hunger Games, plays an extremely important role in both the

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plot and symbolism of the story. When the Games first begin, all of the supplies and weapons that are made available to the tributes are placed in the Cornucopia. Tributes must decide whether to run toward the Cornucopia and gather as many weapons and supplies as they can or take shelter in the surrounding forest. The first option provides them with the tools that they will need to survive the Games, but this is bought at an increased risk of being killed in the open by other tributes. The second option offers safety from being killed in the opening minutes of the Games but contributes to a greater chance of dying from a lack of supplies later on. Cornucopias traditionally serve as symbols of endless nourishment, most commonly associated with produce (Leeming 13).

Suzanne Collins utilizes this symbol in a similar fashion, but rather than with food, she associates the Cornucopia in *The Hunger Games* with weapons. This symbolically compares the tributes' need for weapons in the Games to the role that food plays as a source of nourishment in everyday life. Furthermore, this Cornucopia reinforces the control that the Capitol has over all forms of nourishment within the districts as it is the Game makers who decide what is placed inside for the tributes. Olindo Guerrini states, "A great artist is one who can make a reader savor the words on a page" (qt. in Lobalsamo, "Art").

Conclusion:

Overall, Collins masterfully has written a successful young adult novel where she employs the use of food symbolism to develop her characters and the world of Panem to heights that are only achievable by the greatest of writers.

Chapter Three : Discussing Dystopian & Darwinian Features in the *Hunger Games*(2008)

Introduction:

The *Hunger Games* is classified into the category of science fiction. Apocalyptic novels usually talk about made up or futuristic settings, futuristic technology, parallel worlds, space topics, and sometimes these novels have weird elements as well. This chapter will provide a short synopsis of the novel used in this dissertation as a case of study and explore some elements of this dystopian fiction which were highly emerged. Then, it demonstrates the survival in this dystopian novel whether it is a Social Darwinist scope or not?

Section One: The Novel's Background

The *Hunger Games*, a popular young adult fiction novel by Suzanne Collins, was first published in 2008. By the release of the second and third books in the series (*Catching Fire* in 2009 and *Mockingjay* in 2010), the public was hooked, and a movie based on the first novel opened in theaters in March 2012.

.1The Synopsis of *The Hunger Games*(2008):

The *Hunger Games* comments on complex themes that describe social and political issues familiar to our culture today as well as prescribe possibilities for our future. The *Hunger Games* begins with Katniss Everdeen (age sixteen) and her sister Primrose (age twelve) preparing for the reaping. The reaping is an event that happens each year, in which one boy and one girl from each of Panem's twelve districts are chosen, by random lottery, to participate in the Hunger Games. All children, ages twelve to eighteen, must enter their name, and the entire population is required to witness the drawing; not attending is punishable by death. The chosen tributes are sent to an outdoor arena in the Capitol to fight to the death and the Games are

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televised throughout the country (Panem). The last survivor returns home as Victor of the Hunger Games.

Katniss is a tribute from District 12, and the novel follows her as she travels to the Capitol, trains in various skill sets (like archery, camouflage, and combat), and participates in various media events, along with her fellow tributes. The actual Games begin about halfway through the novel, during which Katniss must, along with the other tributes, fight for her life. The movie, *The Hunger Games* (March 2012), closely follows the basic plot of the first novel by the same name and has become a *The Hunger Games*, through the next two books, and on to the last moment of her story.

In this review, Margaret Skinner and Kailyn McCord explore some of the central themes of the first novel, as well as the movie adaptation. Margaret is a Jungian analyst and the mother of Kailyn, who is a literature enthusiast and writer.

The *Hunger Games* trilogy consists of *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay* setting in the future country of Panem which supposed to be in North America with a futuristic visualization, in which we find a new world, with new territories and totalitarian political system. Collins has invented a new setting which contains, technology, names, animals, and plants. The book shows several signs of dystopia; the poor suffer from famine and there are significant gaps between the rich and the poor. The story epitomizes the yearly traditional competition that has been in Panem for approximately 74 years. These were established by the president of Panem, organized as kind of punishment for the Districts that to overthrow the Capitol. In the competition, a draw randomly selects one girl and one boy aged between 12 and 18 years from each District. They engage

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each other in a combat that is televised in a live manner to the entire country. The champion is the person that is left alive at the end of the match.

Section two: The Dystopian World of the *Hunger Games*

The dystopian world is characterized by the dictatorship in Suzanne Collins' trilogy the *Hunger Games* where children murder each other.

1.Dystopia in the *Hunger Games*:

A dystopia is the exact contradictory of the term utopia which stands for a peaceful, beautiful and calm world as we had explained it in the first chapter. Moreover, as Spisak notes:

dystopias are characterized as a society that is a counter-utopia, a repressed, controlled, restricted system with multiple social controls put into place via government, military, or a powerful authority figure. Issues of surveillance and invasive technologies are often key (Spisak, 55).

This shows us how the term of dystopia contains the sense of the very shocking world and the struggle of an unhappy society. To be precise, there are various elements can be found in *The Hunger Games*. According to Spivak:

a setting so vividly and clearly described that it becomes almost a character in itself; individuals or forces in charge who have a legitimate reason for being as they are; protagonists who are shaped by their environment and situations; and a conclusion that reflects the almost always dire circumstances (56).

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There are also additional elements, including themes and motifs which are frequently established in a dystopian novel as well as in the novel of *The Hunger Games* such as society, politics and class, identity, gender, nature, technology, violence, war, love, survival, competition, individuality, fight, death, victory, wealth, entertainment, appearance, power, versions of reality, sacrifice, etc. As Katniss did in the novel:

protagonists....come to recognize the truth about the societies they live in, they often feel alone, separated from family and friends who do not share the same realizations. As a result, one of the conflicts they face is deciding whom they can trust with their understandings of their society's flaws and with their plans to take a corrective action(Scholes and Ostenson 15).

In the story we clearly notice that Katniss was not alone, on the whole everyone around her believes that their life has to be this way, they knew that the Games are a way to humiliate them as a society, to punish them. The above passage which taken from the novel confirms that:

look how we take your children and sacrifice them and there's nothing you can do. If you lift a finger, we will destroy every last one of you. Just as we did in District Thirteen (Collins 19).

Consequently, we have to explore the other themes and elements relating to this novel which are dealing with society, power, politics and the place where the story was turned. This further defines the dystopian phase of *The Hunger Games*.

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2.Society, Power& Politics:

The social atmosphere that was described by the protagonist Katniss Everdeen was made up of a ruling group which was based in the Capitol while the rest of the country's population lived in thirteen districts. The governor of the country was known as President Snow. He ruled Panem with an iron hand. The Hunger Games were practiced under his guidance as for the eventual entertainment for his citizens. The games were introduced 74 years before Katniss's story. They resulted in a form of punishment for some districts that had attempted the overthrow of the Capitol but had failed. This indicated that totalitarianism did not start with President Snow. It had been existing for nearly a century 1 (Arrow, 2012).

The power of the totalitarian government was also clearly obvious in the manner in which the gladiators of the Hunger Games were chosen. The people had no authority to decide their future. It was either them or their children who were expected to participate in the same. At the starting of the games, Katniss showed that there were about twenty men and women who were wearing best clothes. They were acting like game makers and controlled the games. This was another method for the rulers to show their power. The citizens were treated as law rank of the state even in the tragic game that they were expected to participate automatically. There was no regard for the desires of the people.

The political scene of the US generally characterized by democracy and freedom. However, in *The Hunger Games* which set in this land is a real contradiction in which we found a tyrannical government that has the rule over Panem. They manipulating citizens on their system by controlling the living

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condition such as food and energy. This passage evidently proves this "District Twelve. Where you can starve to death in safety"(Collins 7).

Panem was the place where the story was turned which is supposed to be in North America. According to the quotation that we have taken from the novel which confirms that "was built in a place once called the Rockies" (Collins 42). In the novel, we find out that the country is divided into 12 districts and the capitol was the center of the control.

Section Three: The Darwinian World of The *Hunger Games*

Maybe we are witnessing the evolution of the human race.

Plutarch Heavensbee, in *Mockingjay*

The *Hunger Games* trilogy is a real representation of Social Darwinism as it makes the reader visualize the idea of dog-eat-dog of Darwinian competition.

1. Competition & Survival and Adaptation:

The story about the Games of assassination. Each year, twenty-four competitors are placed in the natural landscape, where they clash the elements, animals, plants, and killing each other until only one champion who survive with his life. In this vein "survival of the fittest" is a faithful interpretation of this novel which has a major impact from the pioneering theorist of evolution Charles Darwin.

In the *Hunger Games*, the idea of competition goes hand in glove with the theory of survival of the fittest. In a dystopian society, each individual seeks his own benefit and to do so he will inter in a competitive process with other individuals who aim at the same objective. The one who succeeds in the competition claims himself

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as a survivor. the idea of competition changes into cooperation among the Characters due to their mutual goal.

In the games, there are 24 gladiators meet in the natural landscape between man and man, and girl and monster. Each district must provide two representatives, selected from a group of 12 to 18-year-olds as a charming entertainment to the people of the Capitol, they must fight to the death, until the last survivor, who is free to return to his district.

In the story, the protagonist Katniss Everdeen is placed in the natural landscape and thus she was obliged to adopt herself during the games. In particular, those circumstances are in fact fascinated in the Origin of Species by Charles Darwin. Consequently, let's look at how Darwin himself explain this :

As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected. (4)

The first thing that we have recognized is that this struggle that holds the concepts of competition for gaining resources and survivability. This is an idea is familiar to the people of Panem. When Katniss went into the capitol to participate in games she was surprised from publicity and how easy was to get food:

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What must it be like, I wonder, to live in a world where food appears at the press of a button? How would I spend the hours I now commit to combing the woods for sustenance if it were so easy to come by? (5)

Darwin also explains certain situation when there is no enough income, it would shape the lives of most individual lives. He argued that animal populations tend to get bigger until they can't be supported by the resources available, making nutrition the major issue for every individual.

Since Katniss lives in District 12, her life mostly shaped by the search for food, nevertheless she has significant advantages over other people of that district. Her hunting and her courage were demonstrated in her willingness to go past into the woods. That's why she and her family have survived rather than killing away after her father's death.

Her exceptional capacity strongly linked to the second major section of Darwin's theory. Individuals vary and some of these variations, such as Katniss's skills, are advantageous According to Darwin's theory, Katniss thus has a better chance of surviving and will be (naturally selected) which means she'll survive while other children dry up away and have nothing to eat. The scientific term for this concept is fitness: an individual's chances of surviving.

Darwin's brightness, in fact, showed in his understanding of this whole system. As he pointed out in the quote above which is about profitable variation "the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life." basically, we have to say that variations have to be useful for the environment in which the individual finds himself

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or herself. If the environment changes, the fitness of an individual will make a difference.

Katniss is a fine example of this point. On the one hand, she was extremely well adapted for hunting in the woods outside District 12 in addition to the arena. On the other side, she was not very well equipped for the political games of the Capitol. Peeta always knows exactly how to create a center of attention to the audience, unlike Katniss. From the standpoint of Darwin's theory, it's just as "natural" for Katniss to fail in one environment.

2. Altruism, Individuality vs Society

Darwin wrote about the scientific understanding of genes in which he notices that parents passed their behavior to their children. More simply, he clarifies that kindness, for instance, is related to genes. He illustrated this by ants and bees where most of the members of one community are genetically related. This means that even if the individual making the sacrifice and die, a number of his or her close relatives may live as a direct result of its actions. Applying this understanding in *The Hunger Games*, we uncover that the idea of "Altruism" is highly presented in the story. Katniss's decision to sacrifice herself for Prim who could live to have children. When she sacrifices herself for Prim, she does not want a moment to think, she just does it, acting with the instinctual manner and before that, her participation in the games was for the sake of her family is a clear representation of unselfishness.

In the community, where survival of fittest is the dominant rule, generally individuals are supposed to be responsible, and they control their destinies. The only way for individuals to improve themselves in a society based on competition. Every

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effort an individual does is rewarded, either psychologically or materialistically. In this perspective, *The Hunger Games* is a great representation of society vs the individual. The society in the story is manipulated and corrupted in the district 12. They failed to change their lives and accept it as it is. However, an individual named Katniss Everdeen shows her independence and individuality by taking a stand to this. She was contrasting her community. Katniss takes her chance by competing in the games and breaking the rules. She creates a revolution to stop the tyranny of the Capitol and set people of the districts free. By her noble actions, she is making people of the next generations out of the Games.

Conclusion

To conclude with this chapter, *The Hunger Games* is a pure apocalyptic novel as it contains the aspects of the dystopian world such as dictatorship, contemporary culture. By exploring the ideas of competition, survival, and adaptation from the Darwinian perspective and consequently we confirm that the novel is a fine model of social Darwinism throughout the different phases of the story. Suzanne Collins artfully made the notion of "natural selection" a crucial instrument to establish her story especially, by engaging the protagonist Katniss Everdeen with incredible abilities that allow her to survive at the end of the games.

General Conclusion

Throughout this study, we have tried to give a general overview of the dystopian literature. As the genre grows in popularity, many apocalyptic novels become a fertile ground of literary criticism. One of the most significant works was Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* which presented a dystopian world characterized by tyranny and oppression. The story about a competition of assassination, organized in a dystopian setting where the only one who could survive his life, only the skilled warrior, this fighter is the protagonist "Katniss Everdeen". Collins has effectively adopted the social Darwinism in her story and creates a philosophical dimension where "survival of the fittest by natural selection" is the most important notion in the novel.

The shift of the literary perspective from Utopia to Dystopia, owing to a different circumstance that shaped the human philosophy. Utopia was an ideal place or state, or a visionary system of political or social perfection. A dystopia is a place where people lead dehumanized and often worried lives. Most of the dystopian writers employ the dystopian genre to make us aware of human dignity and criticized modern technologies that can lead to our depression. For theme .genetic, war, propaganda is among the crucial issues that affected the human mind.

Social Darwinism is an application of the theory of natural selection to social, political, and economic concerns. In its simplest form, Social Darwinism pursues the basic idea of "the strong survive". More simply, the strong survive and those best suited to survival will live longer than the weak. According to Social Darwinism, those societies with strength (economic, physical, technological) flourish and those without are, they could be dominated and controlled. In this vein, there is an interdisciplinary relationship between social Darwinism and dystopian fiction in terms of themes and motifs. Hence, it is clear that *The Hunger Games* comprises the Darwinian scope.

General Conclusion

As it has been hypothesized, the novel, indeed, Katniss Everdeen from a Darwinian perspective is a naturally selected in which she was victorious in many situations during the games, thanks to her profitable abilities.

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APPENDICES

A. Biography of the Author



Suzanne Collins (born August 10, 1962) is an American television writer and novelist, best known as the author of The New York Times best selling series The Underland Chronicles and The Hunger Games trilogy (which consists of The Hunger Games, Catching Fire, and Mockingjay). She is the daughter of a U.S. Air Force officer who served in the Vietnam War. As the daughter of a military officer, she and her family were constantly moving.

She spent her childhood in the eastern U.S. Collins graduated from the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham in 1980 as a Theater Arts major. She graduated from Indiana University in 1985 with a double major in theater and telecommunications. In 1989, Collins earned her M.F.A. in dramatic writing from the New York University Tisch School of the Arts.

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Suzanne Collins' Career

Collins' career began in 1991 as a writer for children's television shows. She worked on several television shows for Nickelodeon, including *Clarissa Explains It All*, *The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo*, *Little Bear*, and *Oswald*. She was also the head writer for Scholastic Entertainment's *Clifford's Puppy Days*. She received a Writers Guild of America nomination in animation for co-writing the critically acclaimed Christmas special, *Santa, Baby!* After meeting children's author James Proimos while working on the Kids' WB show *Generation O!*, Collins was inspired to write children's books herself. Her inspiration for *Gregor the Overlander*, the first book of The New York Times best selling series *The Underland Chronicles*, came from *Alice in Wonderland*, when she was thinking about how one was more likely to fall down a manhole than a rabbit hole, and would find something other than a tea party. Between 2003 and 2007 she wrote the five books of the *Underland Chronicles*: *Gregor the Overlander*, *Gregor and the Prophecy of Bane*, *Gregor and the Curse of the Warmbloods*, *Gregor and the Marks of Secret*, and *Gregor and the Code of Claw*. During that time, Collins also wrote a rhyming picture book, *When Charlie McButton Lost Power* (2005), illustrated by Mike Lester.

In September 2008, Scholastic Press released *The Hunger Games*, the first book of a trilogy by Collins. *The Hunger Games* was partly inspired by the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Another inspiration was her father's career in the Air Force, which allowed her to have better understanding of poverty, starvation, and the effects of war. The trilogy's second book, *Catching Fire*, was released in September 2009, and its third book, *Mockingjay*, was released on August 24, 2010. Within 14 months, 1.5 million copies of the

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first two Hunger Games books were printed in North America alone. The Hunger Games has been on The New York Times Best Seller list for more than 60 weeks in a row.

Summary of the Novel

After winning the 74th Hunger Games in the previous novel, Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark return home to District 12, the poorest sector in the country of Panem. But on the day that Katniss and Peeta are to start a "Victory Tour" of the country, President Snow visits unexpectedly and tells Katniss that he is angry with her for breaking the rules at the end of the last Hunger Games, which permitted both Peeta and Katniss to win. Snow tells Katniss that when she defied the Capitol, she inspired rebellion in the districts.

The first stop on the Victory Tour is District 11, the home of Katniss's deceased friend and ally in the Hunger Games, Rue. During the ceremony, Katniss delivers a speech thanking the people of District 11 for their participants in the Games. When she finishes, an old man whistles the tune that Katniss used in the arena to tell Rue that she was safe. The song acts as a signal and everyone salutes Katniss, using the same gesture that she used to say farewell to Rue. To the horror of Katniss, the old man and two others are killed.

Katniss and Peeta travel to the rest of the twelve districts and the Capitol. Hoping to placate the growing rebellion and settle the dispute between Katniss and President Snow, Peeta proposes to Katniss during an interview. Despite this, Katniss learns that their attempt to avert revolt in the districts has failed.

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Shortly after returning to District 12, Katniss discovers on the mayor's television that District 8 has had an uprising, and she fears that what she has done to placate the crowds is not enough as there may be uprisings in other districts as well. She then meets two runaways from District 8, Bonnie and Twill. They explain their theory which contradicts what the other districts have been led to believe: District 13 was not completely wiped out by the Capitol, and that its residents survive in underground shelters.

Later, it is announced that, for the 75th Hunger Games, 24 victors from previous years will be forced to compete once again. This is the third occurrence of the "Quarter Quell": an event that occurs every 25th year of the Games and allows the Capitol to introduce a twist. Knowing that she and Peeta will both be competing in the Games a second time, Katniss decides that she will devote herself to ensuring that Peeta becomes the Quarter Quell's victor and convinces her mentor to try and help her. Likewise, Peeta is devoted to protecting her, but both Katniss and her mentor are determined that only Peeta reaches back home safely.

During the Games, set in a jungle with a saltwater lake, Katniss and Peeta join up with two other previous victors: Finnick Odair, a 24-year-old man who survived the Games at the age of 14, and Mags, Finnick's 80-year-old mentor, both from District 4. The party encounters poisonous fog in which Peeta comes into contact with the gas and cannot walk. Mags sacrifices herself in order to save Peeta and dies in the poisonous fog. After Mags's death, Katniss, Peeta and Finnick join forces with Johanna Mason, a sarcastic and often cruel victor from District 7, and Beetee and Wiress, an older couple from District 3.

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