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HINWEIS

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I. Introduction

Young adults are in a stage of life in which they discover and question the world, find out who they are and develop their own identities. While they are influenced by their social and cultural environment and by the new media during this period, literature also has a major impact on their personality formation. Thus, young adult literature is extremely important for adolescents as they can learn serious lessons about society and discover its significant values and principles. Furthermore, this genre allows the readers to identify with the - usually juvenile - protagonist, who has to cope with situations and problems that they are familiar with. Especially dystopian young adult fiction has become increasingly popular among the teenage - but also adult - readership in recent years. Many contemporary dystopian novels for young adults, like the two trilogies selected for this thesis, feature strong and powerful heroines acting in a domain of war and violence traditionally associated with male protagonists. Since gender has been a very important category of literary analysis for more than four decades by now (cf. Showalter 1), this thesis sets out to analyze *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins and the *Divergent* trilogy by Veronica Roth in terms of their representation of gender roles. The main research question is how male and female characters are depicted in these two series and whether thereby traditional gender stereotypes are rather reinforced or challenged. In connection with this, the effects of the high levels of violence on the characters' gender portrayal will be examined. Additionally, the deeper meaning of particular frequently used metaphors and symbols will be discussed.

Both these dystopian trilogies are best-selling series that are highly successful and extremely popular. Film adaptations of all three novels of *The Hunger Games*, as well as of the first two ones of the *Divergent* series and also of the first part of *Allegiant*, have been produced. These contemporary dystopian novels are set in a near future society that is governed by a suppressive regime. Further, both trilogies feature a young female protagonist who, on the one hand, narrates the story from her personal perspective, which enables the readers of about the same age to identify with her, and who, on the other hand, fights and rebels against this suppressive governmental system, trying to change it. All this contributes to the fact that the two trilogies appeal to so many young adults, and it qualifies *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* trilogy to be compared and analyzed in terms of gender and violence.

In order to accomplish all its objectives, the thesis is structured into three main sections. The first section focuses on the theoretical background which serves as the foundation for the analysis of *The Hunger Games* trilogy and the *Divergent* trilogy. It will introduce young adult literature, dystopian literature, and gender as a general concept and as a category of literary studies. The second section comprises the thesis' main part, namely the actual analysis of the representations of gender and violence in the two trilogies. The discussions of Collins' and Roth's trilogy will succeed each other, so that each of the three novels will be considered separately. This is followed by the discussion of the symbols used in each series. The third and final section offers a short comparison of both trilogies, a summary of the aspects analyzed and a conclusion on the basis of the results. Moreover, it tries to answer the question whether Collins and Roth have accomplished to defy the traditional signification of masculinity and femininity and to reinvent the meanings of gender, or if they, after all, still support gender stereotypes.

II. Theoretical Background

For analyzing young adult dystopian fiction with regard to the research question and the objectives of this thesis it is essential to introduce the theoretical frameworks and approaches that provide helpful tools for it first. Accordingly, a discussion of young adult literature, dystopian literature, and the role of gender and violence in (young adult) literature is provided in the following.

1. Young Adult Literature

As the name already suggests, young adult literature is literature primarily “written about and for adolescents” (Garcia 5). Even though this definition seems straightforward and blatant, it is narrow and vague. Various other relatively imprecise definitions can be found in the literature. For example, Nilsen et al. refer to a very ambiguous definition of young adults, which describes them as “those who think they’re too old to be children but who others think are too young to be adults” (1). Cole describes young adult literature as “texts that bridge the gap between children’s literature and adult literature” (49). When it comes to the age group of young adults, no clear consensus exists either among researchers. For Williams, for example, young adult fiction addresses teenagers from 14 years upwards. Nilsen et al. refer to young adult literature as “anything that readers between the approximate ages of twelve and eighteen choose to read either for leisure reading or to fill school assignments”, and they also point to the fact that “not all educators define young adults the same way” (3) they do. They mention, for instance, two distinct institutions, from which one describes “young adults as those between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two” and the second one considers the age group of young adults to range from 21 to 25 (Nilsen et al. 3). The *Oxford English Dictionary*’s definition of a ‘young adult’ is “a person in his or her teens or early twenties”. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary of American English* ‘teens’ can be defined as “the years of a person’s life between the ages of thirteen and nineteen”. Hence, based on these dictionaries’ definitions, we might describe young adult literature as literature intended for readers who are between 13 and 24 years old. Obviously, researchers have not yet agreed on a prevailing definition of young adults.

Despite the challenge of defining the age range of young adults, they are the targeted readership of young adult literature. However, they are not the only ones who enjoy reading

these kinds of books. Young adult literature has increasingly become popular with adults. A study report by Bowker Market Research revealed that more than half of young adult book buyers “are 18 or older, with the largest segment aged 30 to 44”. People who are between 30 and 44 years old account for almost 30 percent of all young adult book sales (Bowker Market Research). In accordance with these findings, Garcia refers to adults as being “the primary buyers of young adult novels” and states that the young adult genre “is now being openly read by adults in far greater numbers than ever before” (17). Even though Garcia expresses his concerns that this current trend could possibly influence authors in a way that they barely consider young adults’ interests when writing (cf. 17), sales and publications of young adult novels and their popularity, both among adolescents and among adults, have been increasing in recent years (6-7). What might be accountable for this success to some extent are the characteristics of young adult fiction. In order to understand what it is that attracts people to this literary genre, some typical features are addressed below.

One of the most striking and important characteristics of young adult fiction is the use of first-person narration: “[T]his narrative perspective highlights the voice and the power of the often-disenfranchised adolescent” (Robinson 213). It is essential for appealing to juvenile readers to “write through the eyes of a young person ... [which] gives an immediacy to a story” (Nilsen et al. 28). It enables the reader to empathize with the narrator through directly experiencing and getting to know his or her emotions and thoughts. Nilsen et al. consider this to be an important feature because the “emotions being explored are important to young people” (29). Cole also regards telling a story “from the viewpoint and in the voice of a young adult” (49) as an important characteristic and stating that “young adult literature offers a window through which teens can examine their lives and the world in which they live” (61). Accordingly, texts written for young adults generally address topics that adolescents have to grapple with “such as sexuality, divorce, drugs, [and] abuse” (Cole 71). This again allows the reader to identify especially with the protagonist, but also with other characters of the story, since they “face the same kinds of challenges readers are experiencing” (Nilsen et al. 38). Nilsen et al. refer to these challenges as “the developmental tasks” which comprise, for example, the acquisition of “more mature social skills”, becoming emotionally independent “from parents and other adults”, and choosing and “preparing for an occupation” (38). These tasks can be summarized under the term of developing an own identity, surely “*the* task of adolescence” (Nilsen et al. 38). Of course, young adult fiction is not restricted to issues

juveniles are especially concerned with, it might also cover “the broader human condition beyond the problems of adolescence” (Cole 66).

Another defining trait of the genre at hand is that the story revolves around young characters “who will probably face significant difficulties and crises, and grow and develop to some degree” (Williams) and eventually “become the heroes of the story” (Nilsen et al. 30). Cole emphasizes in this context the protagonist’s “struggle to resolve conflict” (49), which is an essential requirement for “teenagers to feel proud of their accomplishments” (Nilsen et al. 31). In the past, the characters depicted in young adult fiction were mostly white and from the middle class (cf. Cole 67, Nilsen et al. 35). Since the late 1960s, however, attitudes have changed and “multicultural awareness began to develop” (Cole 67), and many writers started to focus on minorities (Nilsen et al. 35). Today, in this globalized and interconnected world, the significance of multicultural issues increases steadily and so “more and more books focus on the problems of immigrants as outsider, and the complex self-definition of teens who have more than one ethnic or racial identity” (Cole 68).

The last aspect typical of young adult literature that is mentioned is serial publication. The increasing importance and popularity of series books among young adults can be partially ascribed to the “success of J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series, Stephanie Meyers’ Twilight books, Suzanne Collins’s Hunger Games, and Rick Riordan’s myth-based books” (37). When arguing that “series books now have a new kind of prestige” (37), Nilsen et al. refer to the *VOYA* (*Voice of Youth Advocates*) magazine’s reviews of 24 books, which all received the maximum of ten points and thus “could be considered the ‘best of the best’ “ (37). The important point is that “ten of these [24] new books were parts of series or sets” (Nilsen et al. 37). Garcia sees the “major reason for the serialization of books in the post-Potter era” (7) of young adult literature in the adolescents’ demand for books to be new, “as signaled by timely design and marketing” (7), in order to engage their interest. Therefore, novels for young adults need to be published serially so that authors “stay relevant in an era of many options for young people” (Garcia 7).

Young adult literature comprises several genres, which again encompass different types of literature. Especially dystopian literature has become very popular and successful in recent years. The two trilogies that will be analyzed in this thesis, namely Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* trilogy and Veronica Roth’s *Divergent* trilogy, must also be categorized as dystopian fiction. Thus, this literary subgenre will be introduced and elaborated on in the following chapter.

2. Dystopian Literature

According to Mohr, dystopia is “a modern literary phenomenon of the twentieth century” (27) *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley, George Orwell’s *1984* and *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, can be described as “the canonized dystopian classics” (32). In recent decades, the publication of dystopian literature has increased enormously (Nikolajeva 73) and has been mesmerizing the young adult as well as the adult readership. The boom and success is an indication for the wide recognition of such texts, even though some critics have disapproved of the dark and violent stories that are displayed in them (Nilsen et al. 154-155). Hintz accounts the popularity of *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, published in 1993, as the starting point for the appreciation of “the important subgenre of utopian and dystopian writing for children and young adults” (224). Some contemporary popular dystopian novels are, for example, M. T. Anderson’s *Feed* (2002), the *Uglies* series (2005-2007) by Scott Westerfeld, *The Maze Runner* series by James Dashner (2009-2012), *Delirium* (2011) by Lauren Oliver, and of course Collins’ *The Hunger Games* (2008-2010) trilogy and Roth’s *Divergent* (2011-2013) trilogy. In addition, film adaptations of these literary works have also been very popular with a wide audience and financially successful, including the movie versions of *The Hunger Games* series, from which the much-anticipated second part of *Mockingjay*, the third novel in the trilogy, has just been released (November 2015).

For understanding the enormous popularity and success of contemporary dystopian fiction and movies, it is important to define the genre, examine its characteristics, compare and contrast young adult dystopian literature with dystopian literature written for adults only, and finally explore the reasons why this genre attracts so many, though certainly not only, young people and how it can be relevant for their lives.

2.1. Definitions and Characteristics of Dystopian Literature

As the two series that will be considered and analyzed in detail in this thesis are dystopian novels, some generic features of dystopian literature need to be addressed. Defining dystopia, and in further consequence dystopian literature, necessitates a definition of utopia as these two are, with regard to etymology and literary genre, closely related (cf. Mohr 11-12; 27; Basu, Broad, and Hintz 2; Sargent 5). Zipes points out that “an intricate link between utopia and dystopia” (xi) exists. Thomas More invented the word ‘utopia’ in his

famous work *Utopia* (1516) in which he described “nowhere, a place that has never been seen or experienced” (Zipes ix). Hertzler states that “More depicted a perfect, and perhaps unrealizable, society, located in nowhere” (1). With the invention of the word ‘utopia’ More punned on the words ‘outopia’ and ‘eutopia’, which are both derived from the “Greek noun ‘topos’ (place) and the prefixes ‘ou’ (no/not) and ‘eu’ (good)” (Mohr 11). Thus, “[t]he word *utopia* or *outopia* simply means *no* or *not place*” and ‘eutopia’ means ‘good place’ (Sargent 5). The definition of utopia is hotly disputed; for example, Sargent claims that “perfection has never been a characteristic of utopian fiction” (6), while Mohr points out that “[i]n popular usage literary utopia is naturally lumped together with other imaginations of better worlds and ideal societies” (13).

Accordingly, ‘dystopia’ means ‘bad place’ (cf. Rabkin 1) as the prefix ‘dys’ also deriving from Greek, carries the “notion of *hard, bad, unlucky*” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). While ‘utopia’ carries the meaning of “an imagined or hypothetical place, system, or state of existence in which everything is perfect, esp. in respect of social structure, laws, and politics”, ‘dystopia’, on the other hand, is “an imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). With regard to all of the above mentioned, it can be concluded that dystopia is the opposite of utopia, or as Nikolajeva phrases it: “If utopian literature depicts an ideal, albeit inaccessible, society, a dystopia is a picture of fear, a picture of a society which we would prefer to avoid, a warning” (74). Likewise, Basu, Broad and Hintz state that dystopian literature “describes non-existent societies intended to be read as ‘considerably worse’ than the reader’s own” (2). However, keeping in mind that dystopia is also a highly controversial term, they note that dystopia cannot simply be regarded as the opposite of utopia, but rather that “the dystopia often functions as a rhetorical *reductio ad absurdum* of a utopian philosophy, extending a utopia to its most extreme ends in order to caution against the destructive politics and culture of the author’s present” (2). This resonates with Mohr’s view in which “dystopia reverses, mistrusts, and parodies the ideal of a perfectly regulated utopian state” and it further “holds up a hellish mirror and describes the worst of all possible futures” (27). This means that dystopian fiction can be seen as a literary warning or a “cautionary tale” (Nikolajeva 74) and that it is designed to “warn us of society’s drift toward a particularly horrifying or sick world lying just over the horizon” (Nilsen et al. 181).

One typical characteristics of dystopian literature is the future setting of the plot, in contrast to utopia’s employment of “the dislocation of space” (Mohr 32). Dystopia describes

a near rather than a far future on purpose because the reader might virtually perceive it “as the present, something that can happen any moment, anywhere and with anyone” (Nikolajeva 74). As a consequence, it is far easier for the reader to empathize with the characters and understand the storyline. Another effect the authors are trying to achieve through constructing such an imminent scenario “by exaggerating contemporary tendencies [is] to heighten the moral pressure on readers” (Mohr 32). This again ties in with the above mentioned function of dystopia as a warning.

When it comes to space, dystopian fiction typically features societies which are separated and detached from the outer world and “the citizens are kept in ignorance about the ways and habits outside their own community” (Nikolajeva 75). Similarly, Mihailescu states that “[d]ystopias present ‘shrinking’ worlds where nothing escapes the ‘hallucinatorily’ intense force of attraction of the center” (217). Nikolajeva refers to such a world as an “enclave” (75), and this constrained space stands in contrast to utopia’s expanded space (Mohr 32).

These isolated dystopian societies are usually ruled by totalitarian governments, which are also regarded as an essential dystopian element (Nikolajeva 74). Such “rigid and repressive regimes” have total control of every domain of public and private life, and they are “often enforced through enslavement and silencing of citizens” (Basu, Broad, and Hintz 4). For keeping society under control methods like surveillance, exploitation, physical and mental enslavement, manipulation of information, restricted access to knowledge and prosperity for some privileged few, and even brainwashing and controlling people’s thoughts with the help of technology are used by governments of that kind (Mohr 33; Nikolajeva 75-83; Basu, Broad and Hintz 4). Initially, the characters of dystopian novels do not realize this social hierarchy and injustice and all the problems connected to it, and as they are also “not aware of the ‘normal’ world” (Nikolajeva 74). However, at a certain point the protagonist starts to uncover the truth and to reveal the government’s cruelties and from that moment on the dystopian hero/heroine endeavors to break away from and escape “the strangling grip of the state’s total control” (Mohr 32). Mohr further states that “[t]he crucial dystopian dramatic conflict revolves around the protagonist’s political awakening and ensuing rebellion against the totalitarian system and the state’s subsequent hunt of the rebel” (34). It can be said that dystopia’s aspiration is “sociopolitical change” (Mohr 28), and as soon as the protagonists “recognize the faults and weaknesses of his or her society” (Hintz and Ostry 9) they start to rebel against it “in order to create a better world for the future” (Bradford et al. 184).

Besides the thematic thread of totalitarian governments that oppress the general public and all the consequences that result from this, authors of dystopian fiction further address “pressing global concerns” and contemporary political and social questions” (Basu, Broad and Hintz 1-5). These include themes like liberty, personal freedom and diversity, which stand in contrast to the concepts of enforced social harmony, conformity and uniformity. Environmental destruction and other catastrophes, “such as plague, World War III, cataclysmic asteroid crashes, or even zombies” (Basu, Broad and Hintz 3), are dealt with in dystopian novels. Connected to these subject matters are the issues of power, violence, repression, and also the fear of technology.

Being different in a dystopian society is seen as “a threat or liability” (Bradford et al. 111) to the community or political system. Because of the fact that “such conformist societies embrace their uniformity out of a fear that diversity breeds conflict [...], strict policies to manage personalities, choices, and appearances” (Basu, Broad, and Hintz 3) have been initiated by the various regimes. People who might diverge from the norm, for example in terms of “ethnicity, class and gender” (Nikolajeva 79), are despised, expelled from the community if not even sentenced to death, which serves as the ultimate “punishment for nonconformity and dissidence” (Basu, Broad, Hintz 9). Age, physical fitness and agility are also criterions that can be decisive whether one can stay in a particular society, or not. As old, sick and disabled people need help from others, they have become a burden and are therefore “put to death as useless members of the community” (Hintz and Ostry 9). This determining of “who is to live and die” (Bradford et al. 111) is another common feature of dystopias, as well as the general exclusion and rejection of people from a community.

The following subsection will elaborate on features that are specifically distinctive of dystopian fiction, both for young adults, and for adults.

2.2. Dystopian Young Adult Fiction

Naturally, dystopian young adult literature shares several characteristics with the ones of young adult literature it features, for example, an adolescent as a central character through which perspective the reader experiences the story (Hintz 254; clo0701). However, some features that are especially distinctive of dystopian fiction written for young adults will be illustrated in the following.

Hintz, in order to distinguish “utopian [and dystopian] fictions for young adults from their adult counterparts” (254), identifies two significant components of utopias and dystopias for young adults, namely “the developmental narrative and a consideration of political organization” (254). These two elements are mostly interrelated as “political and social awakening is almost always combined with a depiction of the personal problems of adolescence” (Hintz 255). All the experiences and problems that are part of growing up, becoming an adult and finding an own identity are a regular feature of dystopian literature for young adults. Thus, “the romance plot [is] an important element of the YA [(young adult)] dystopian genre” (Basu, Broad and Hintz 8) as well. Hintz and Ostry claim that dystopia may function as “a powerful metaphor for adolescence” (9) because in this period of life a teenager might feel oppressed by the authorities and he or she “craves more power and control, and feels the limits on his or her freedom intensely” (10). In line with this, dystopia for young adults generally presents “an adolescent who feels out of place” (Hintz 255) in a “highly ordered, hierarchical, but dull society” (Nikolajeva 73). Due to his or her dissatisfaction, this juvenile scrutinizes the society, which was created by adults, and subsequently becomes aware of its injustice (Nikolajeva 73). As a consequence, adolescents featured in young adult dystopias start to “rebel against an oppressive adult society” (Hintz and Ostry 10) and its government.

A further aspect specific to dystopian literature for young adults is the “frequent presence of shame and confusion for the protagonist” (Hintz 255-256). Hintz ascribes this to the juveniles’ experiences of constant surveillance and close examination of their doing, physical suffering, “sexual turmoil or awakening and exposure in public roles” (256). Even though young people go through an emotional rollercoaster in adolescence they still strive for political and social change. Hintz asserts that the embarrassing experiences young adults typically go through increase the dramatic suspense and make “their political actions seem uniquely heroic” (256).

Lastly, it is also noteworthy that in dystopian young adult fiction teenagers are predominately responsible for “the formation, survival, or reform of the society” (Hintz and Ostry 1). The adults are not the ones who “save the world from destruction” (Hintz and Ostry 10) or who have to make the crucial and tough decisions, quite the contrary. The adolescents need “to overcome the problems the adult generation has created” (Bradford et al 182) and so “much of the burden for the health of their societies” (Hintz 256) is placed on them. Thereby, it is suggested that young adults have “a more unclouded perspective” (Hintz 256) and that

only they “can achieve a state of ideality that adults cannot” (Hintz and Ostry 8). At the same time, it is also highly criticized by some scholars to put young people in charge of solving society’s problems. Bradford et al., for instance, rate it as “a fragile means for ensuring a better future” (183) and Hintz and Ostry find fault with its exertion of “powerful pressure on the child itself” (8). Nevertheless, through the separation of “the child and the adult world” (Hintz and Ostry 8), which is prevalent in children’s and young adult’s literature, social criticism is possible, and that in turn is essential for utopian and dystopian literature, both thematically and structurally.

The most important and distinct features of dystopian literature written for young adults have been addressed in the above. What remains is now the question why so many young adults are attracted by this genre and what they can expect to learn and gain from it. This will be considered in the following section.

2.3. Appeal and Benefits of Dystopian Young Adult Fiction

Young offers one very obvious reason why young adults are so fond of reading dystopian literature, and that is simply “because it’s exciting”. In order to fascinate juveniles and as a consequence turn them into avid readers, a story needs to be fast paced and thrilling, or as Hughes phrases it: “there must be a gripping plot” (156). This is, of course, true of dystopias, whose typical feature is to feed the readers’ “appetite for adrenaline” (Malley qtd. in Craig).

Moreover, dystopian literature is characterized by its engagement with serious subject matters. Even though this might alienate some young readers it can also serve as an “entry point into real-world problems” (Basu, Broad and Hintz 4), which of course are closely connected to teenagers’ real lives, and consequently may encourage them “to think about social and political issues in new ways” (5). Dystopias offer on the one hand a reading pleasure in order to escape the struggles of everyday life, and, on the other hand, they also aspire to be didactic and “teach serious lessons about the issues faced by humanity” (5) in an accessible way.

What further contributes to the popularity of dystopias among young adults is that they are a hybrid genre (Hintz 254) and resort to several familiar “plots and narrative forms, including the *Bildungsroman*, the adventure story, and the romance” (Basu, Broad and Hintz

6). This use of established features and recognizable conventions makes the readers more receptive to the genre. Another aspect that helps young adults to relate to the characters, in particular to the protagonist, of dystopian novels is that dystopian literature for young adults is most commonly “written in a teenager’s perspective” (clo0701) which puts the reader close to the action and enables him or her to get to know the protagonist’s feelings and thoughts, and thus to empathize with him or her. Additionally, the issues that are addressed in dystopian fiction are familiar to the young adult readership as the characters “have to deal with recognizable concerns and problems, including friendship, family, betrayal, loss, love death and sexual awakening” (Young). The life in dystopian societies can even be compared to the “universal high school experience” (clo0701).

The last aspect contributing to the popularity of this genre among young adults that is mentioned here is the notion of hope. Lowry states that “[y]oung people handle dystopia every day ... [and] they need to see some hope for such a world” (qtd. in Zipes xi). Even though dystopian fiction often features violent and dark worlds, there must always be at least a faint glimmer of hope for a better life in the future. Young stresses that all the writers “who write for young people are reluctant to leave [their] readers without hope”. Famous dystopian texts like *Brave New World* or *1984*, for example, do not convey this idea of hope and thus they are not classified as young adult novels.

As stated above, dystopias are a “generally didactic” (Sargent 6) literary genre, and since they are specifically written for children and young adults they have the potential to “be a powerful teaching tool” (Hintz and Ostry 7). So by reading dystopian fiction young adults should also draw lessons from it, about society and its organization (7). With the “unequivocal clarity of their message” dystopias for young adults criticize, for example, a predominant culture closely linked to “violence and control [...], consumerism, and hedonistic youth culture” (Basu, Broad and Hintz 5). By revealing “the social foundations of our own world” (Hintz and Ostry 8) and its immanent deficiencies, the utopian and dystopian literary genre aims at encouraging “young people to view their society with a critical eye, sensitizing or predisposing them to political action” (7). Class systems are scrutinized in particular in these types of texts, and writers regularly depict “the brutality of class inequality taken to an extreme” (8). Through reading dystopian novels young adults should become aware of the injustice in their own societies, and also develop “a finer understanding of how the industrialized world exploits developing nations” (8). Many dystopian texts contrast democracy and totalitarianism through which juveniles are challenged to consider “the

tensions between individual freedom and the needs of society” (9). Besides learning about society young people also learn about themselves when engaging in dystopian literature. They, for instance, experience that their actions can actually induce social change and hope for improvement. As a result of dystopian characters who “embrace their ability to lead”, young adults’ “desire for agency” is awakened and they become inspired to improve and “change the world around them” (13).

3. Gender in Literature

Literature functions as an important cultural medium through which information about a culture’s principles, values, and attitudes is transmitted and provided (Tetenbaum and Pearson 381). Even in the era of television and other electronic media, storytelling and reading books still affect people’s behavior, identity, and attitudes. Mem Fox expresses this the following way: “Texts are important influences that shape us by reflecting the politics and values of our society” (Politics 656). Keeping in mind that literature has a significant “influence on the socialization process” (Kortenhaus and Demarest 220), gender, as an important aspect of cultural practices and discourse, has acted “as a category of analysis” (Showalter 1) in the field of literary studies since the 1980s. Thus, literature molds our expectations and ideas what it means to be and behave like a man or a woman: “Everything we read [...] constructs us, makes us who we are, by presenting our image of ourselves as girls and women, as boys and men” (Fox, *Men* 84). Moreover, gender representations in literature have an even greater influence on children and young adults because childhood and adolescence represent “an important time for gender-role development” (Priess and Hyde 99).

Research suggests that literature for children and young adults still highly confirms to traditional stereotypic gender roles (cf. Kortenhaus and Demarest, Tetenbaum and Pearson), even though during the twentieth century “the social power and position of women have changed and, with them, cultural ideals of gender” (Grauerholz and Pescosolido 113). Trepanier-Street and Romatowski, however, point out that “children’s gender-stereotypic views can be modified through the use of carefully selected children’s [and young adults’] literature” (155). Therefore, authors should deal with gender issues in a way that they “present an accurate representation or close approximation of the actual behavior of males and females in our society” (Kortenhaus and Demarest 231) in order to open “the doors to

full human potential” (Fox, Men 84) for children and adolescents. Mem Fox demands that “[b]oth genders have to be allowed to be as real in literature as they are in life” (Men 87).

Dystopian fiction, as a modern literary genre of the twentieth century, has all possibilities, with reference to its characteristics, not to conform to gender stereotypes. Consequently, one will not expect representations of traditional gender roles in *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* trilogy either. Whether Suzanne Collins and Veronica Roth draw on stereotypical gender portrayal in their series or not is a matter of this thesis’ analysis. In order to analyze gender representations in these two trilogies appropriately, it is important to define and elaborate some concepts first, such as gender stereotypes and society’s expectations regarding gender. Judith Butler’s performative theory of gender will serve as the theoretical framework of this analysis. The final subsection will address possible aspects and categories that can be examined for an analysis of gender in young adult literature.

3.1. Defining Gender

Gender is a very substantial component of people’s life and identity. It is hard to “escape the division of gender in our daily lives” and “[e]very trip to a public toilet [demands] that we declare our gender by which door we choose” (Cranny-Francis 1). Even though it is such a “key dimension of personal life, social relations and culture” (Connell ix) there is still no general agreement among researchers with regard to its definition, how gender is constructed, and “the way it should be used by scholars and critics” (Showalter 3). Moreover, Mallan points out that it is challenging to define gender because it “has become increasingly flexible” (11). In order to understand the term ‘gender’, the most common and established definitions and its associated meanings will be outlined in the following.

When consulting the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, two distinct definitions of ‘gender’ are provided. The first one refers to ‘gender’ as a grammatical category: In languages like Latin, French, German, or English gender points to “each of the classes (typically masculine, feminine, neuter, common) of nouns and pronouns distinguished by the different inflections which they have and which they require in words syntactically associated with them”. The second definition, according to the *OED*, determines ‘gender’ as “[t]he state of being male or female as expressed by social or cultural distinctions and differences, rather than biological ones; the collective attributes or traits associated with a particular sex, or determined as a result of one's sex”.

In accordance with the first definition of gender from the *OED*, Showalter asserts that “all speech is necessarily talk about gender” (1) because in most languages gender has a grammatical function. Already on the linguistic level, it is the case for many languages that the masculine form serves as the norm and is “generic, universal, or unmarked, while the feminine form is marked by a suffix or some other variant” (1). Hence, the “binary structure of gender” (Cranny-Francis et al. 1) is created through language, which is essential for the construction of meaning, and dependent on “context for its interpretation” (Romaine 5). Along with the second definition from the *OED*, Showalter points out that especially Anglo-American feminist scholars have been using the term ‘gender’ for the “social, cultural, and psychological meaning imposed upon biological sexual identity” (1-2). For a long time, gender was seen as the direct consequence of sex, which was accounted for by “the biology-is-destiny formulation” (Butler 8). However, it is agreed among the majority of feminist scholars that the terms ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ need to be distinguished (Showalter 3), even though “in popular usage the terms are often used interchangeably” (Romaine 42). Sex is a biological notion which “is determined at birth by factors beyond our control” (1) for example chromosomes, genitalia, and secondary sexual characteristics, such as breasts or a beard. Based on these factors, sex divides humans into the “two biologically based categories – male or female” (Cranny-Francis et al. 7). Gender, on the other hand, is a social and cultural construct and “[i]ts meaning changes not only from context to context but also over time and place” (Romaine 41). Butler further adds that, therefore, “gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex” (8). Like the two categories of sex, gender can be categorized into masculine and feminine, which stand for “what it means to be a man or a woman” (Kimmel 3). This categorization again creates a binary system in which certain ways of behavior and character traits are associated with either men or women. Certainly, the meaning of gender is not universal but it varies among different contexts, places and times (Romaine 41). Therefore, gendered behavior is perceived and expected differently in various cultures because “gender means different things to different people ... [and in this way] it varies cross-culturally” (Kimmel 3).

As previously mentioned, the concept of gender is based on a dichotomy, which in turn creates hierarchies and inequalities. Therefore, “gender is not just about biological and cultural differences; it is also about power” (Romaine 9). Showalter elaborates on this notion stating that when “looking at the history of gender relations, we find sexual asymmetry, inequality, and male dominance in every known society” (4). Similar to this is Kimmel’s

view of gender as a matter of power: “Virtually every society known to us is founded upon assumptions of gender difference and the politics of gender inequality” (2). This gender difference and inequality is especially visible and promoted in patriarchal societies in which “maleness and masculinity confer a privileged position of power and authority” (Cranny-Francis et al. 14), promoting “the idea that men are superior to women” (Johnson 5) and consequently such patriarchal societies are highly criticized by feminist theorists. According to Cranny-Francis et al. “[t]his privileging of the masculine is generally the case in Western societies” (2). However, ever since feminist researchers have differentiated between “biological and social factors that shape women’s and men’s lives”, they have argued “that patriarchy and women’s oppression are rooted in society, not biology, and therefore aren’t inevitable or immutable” (Johnson 55).

Moreover, Connell highlights that the binary gender system is a notional concept which does not represent reality: “Our images of gender are often dichotomous, but the reality is not” (10). As a consequence, he objects to the general definition of gender as dichotomy based on biology and asserts that “gender must be understood as a social structure. It is not an expression of biology, nor a fixed dichotomy in human life or character. It is a pattern in our social arrangements and in the everyday activities or practices which those arrangements govern” (10). Connell concludes that “[g]ender arrangements are reproduced socially (not biologically) ... to shape individual action, so they often appear unchanging” (11).

Consistent with Connell’s understanding of gender and with the assumption that the meaning of gender varies from context to context, gender has to be considered as a process, or, as Kimmel phrases it: “gender must be seen as an ever-changing fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviors” (10). Connected to this is the social constructionist approach which “conceives of gender as a process” - this is usually “characterized as ‘doing gender’” (Shields and Diccico 495). Thus, gender is “something we do, not something we are” (Risman and Davis 738). It “emerges through social interactions as a negotiated statement of identity; ... [so] gender is not something that one achieves over the course of development, but rather it is continually practiced in social interactions” (Shields and Diccico 495). Judith Butler’s theory of gender performativity is similar to the ‘doing gender’ framework, which “has become perhaps the most common perspective in contemporary sociological research” (Risman and Davis 741). Both of these conceptions “share the focus on creation of gender by the activity of the actor” (740). Judith Butler is a highly popular post-structuralist philosopher

and queer theorist who has made very important and highly regarded contributions to the field of gender theory. This thesis' analysis of the representation of gender in the two selected trilogies is based on Butler's performative theory of gender. Hence, a detailed discussion of Butler's theoretical framework will follow in the next subsection.

3.2. Judith Butler on Gender

Judith Butler is a contemporary theorist and "one of the most prolific and influential writers in the academy today" (Kirby vii). She has remarkably contributed to gender theory, and her thought and writing had an important impact on the discipline and is still relevant today. In her work *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler outlined and coined the term 'performativity'. As this concept of performativity and Butler's views on sex and gender are central to the analysis of this thesis, they will be elaborated in the following.

Butler complies with the view of feminist theorists that the concepts of sex and gender need to be distinguished from one another and she also conforms with their denial of "causal explanations that assume that sex dictates or necessitates certain social meanings for women's experience" (Butler, *Performative Acts* 520). In other words, gender is not a direct consequence of sex, which generally refers to biological factors determined at birth, but rather a social and cultural construct. As Butler illustrates: "Originally intended to dispute the biology-is-destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex" (*Gender Trouble* 8). Butler further states that this "sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders" (9). In this context, Butler refers to Simone de Beauvoir's claim that 'woman', hence gender in general, "is an historical situation rather than a natural fact" (PA 520), whereby she "clearly underscores the distinction between sex, as biological facticity, and gender, as the cultural interpretation or signification of that facticity" (522). Butler disapproves of the acceptance of a binary gender system, and by pointing to the independence of gender from sex she determines gender as a process, as a never fixed state of being: "gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *women* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one" (GT 9). Butler supports this claim "by returning to Beauvoir's rejection of biological determinism" (Kirby 23),

indicating that “[t]here is nothing in her account that guarantees the ‘one’ who becomes a woman is necessarily female” (Butler, GT 11), referring to Beauvoir’s famous quotation “‘one is not born a woman, but, rather becomes one’ “ (qtd. in Butler, GT 11).

In contrast to traditional feminist views, Butler does not think of sex as a “natural” fact; according to her, both gender and sex are performatively constructed. As Salih points out, suggesting “that there is no body prior to cultural inscriptions will lead Butler to argue that sex as well as gender can be performatively reinscribed in ways that accentuate its factitiousness (i.e. its constructedness)” (55). Butler claims that sex is not a given fact of nature but that the production of its meaning depends on discourses within a specific cultural framework: “gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which ‘sexed nature’ or ‘a natural sex’ is produced and established as ‘prediscursive,’ prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts” (GT 10). Accordingly, “[a]ll bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence ... which means that there is no ‘natural body’ that pre-exists its cultural inscription” (Salih 55). This already alludes to Butler’s famous concept of gender performativity.

On the basis of Beauvoir’s claim that “‘one is not born a woman, but, rather becomes one’ “ (qtd. in Butler, GT 11) Butler asserts that “gender is in no way a stable identity ... [but] an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts* ... [and] through the stylization of the body” (PA 519). On the one hand, these acts through which gender is constructed constitute meaning, but through them meaning is also “performed or enacted”, and thus, these acts are similar “to performative acts within theatrical contexts” (521). Moreover, the body is very important for gender constitution because it is regarded as “an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities” and it “is not a self-identical or merely factic materiality; it is a materiality that bears meaning” (521). Butler “agrees that like gender and sex, the body is produced by discourses, and there is no ‘natural body’ that pre-exists its cultural inscription” (Mallan 14) She further argues that “[o]ne is not simply a body, but, in some very key sense, one does one’s body and, indeed, one does one’s body differently from one’s contemporaries and from one’s embodied predecessors and successors as well” (PA 521). These assertions lead to “the most influential and controversial aspect of Butler’s work” (Mallan 14), performativity: “gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed” (Butler, GT 34). Furthermore, Butler refers to Nietzsche who claims that “there is no ‘being’ behind doing, effecting, becoming; ‘the doer’

is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything” (qtd. in Butler, GT 34). Based on Nietzsche’s claim, she then draws her own conclusion: “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (Butler, GT 34). Even though Butler’s corollary “that the one doing the gender is a fiction imposed on the doing” (Mallan 14) is difficult to comprehend and also raises certain dilemmas (cf. Salih 56), Kirby tries to resolve this problematic issue:

Butler’s insistence that the subject doesn’t pre-exist these cultural regimes of identity formation is not meant to deny the subject’s existence as the embodied expression of these converging and competing demands. Butler’s understanding of the subject, identity and agency is therefore an implicated one which locates the possibility of contestation and change in the very structures through which subject formation and its corollaries are generated. (45)

However, what is most relevant for and central to this thesis’ discussion and analysis is that gender is performative, thus it is rather a “doing” than a “being”, which means that it is socially and culturally constituted through acts. Butler elaborates this notion:

Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender. (GT 45)

What is also implied in the previous quotation is that individuals do not have the freedom to choose their gender, still “there are nuanced and individual ways of doing one’s gender” (Butler, PA 525). However, the doing, the act, of gender “is clearly not a fully individual matter” because it is governed by “certain sanctions and proscriptions” (525). For Salih, this is the “ ‘script’ ... [which] is always already determined within this regulatory frame, and the subject has a limited number of ‘costumes’ from which to make a constrained choice of gender style” (56). In addition, Butler defines gender as “a strategy of survival ... with clearly punitive consequences” (PA 522). Even though there can be no real or true gender because “gender is an ‘act’ ... which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority” (528), a certain gender order seems to exist together with the “[b]elief that gender distinction is ‘natural’ “ (Collins 5). So we live in a world where “gender is stabilized, polarized, rendered discrete and intractable” and is indeed “made to comply with a model of truth and falsity” (Butler, PA 528). Thus, ideas about how people should perform their gender are forced on them “by social norms or pressure from authorities”

(Connell 6), and these “[i]deas about gender-appropriate behaviour are constantly being circulated” (5). If someone actually does not ‘do’ his or her gender right, he or she is penalized: “Performing one’s gender wrong initiates a set of punishments” (Butler, PA 528). As Collins observes: “Boys and men who depart from dominant definitions of masculinity ... are often subjects to verbal abuse and discrimination, and are sometime the targets of violence” (7). The same might apply for women as well. Nevertheless, as Butler’s definition of gender as an act implies, in ‘doing’ one’s gender, agency is possible, meaning that individuals have the capacity to act in a way that is not consistent with what so-called gender-appropriate behavior. In this way, they are enabled to challenge, defy or even reverse existing gender stereotypes.

Obviously, in every society and culture distinct expectations and stereotypical gender roles do exist, whereby people’s behavior is affected and directed. In how far *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* conform to or reverse certain stereotypes of gender will be analyzed in this thesis. Hence, some of the stereotypes and expectations which are prevalent in our Western society will be elaborated in the following section.

2.1. Stereotypical Gender Roles and Societal Expectations

First of all, the term ‘stereotype’ originally referred to the metal plates used in printing presses for printing newspapers (Cranny-Francis et al. 140). Once the metal plate, the stereotype, is poured, it “can’t be changed” (140) any more. With reference to its original meaning, Cranny-Francis et al. try to determine some characteristics of a stereotype in its present day use, namely when it is assigned to people: “It is fixed, and can’t be changed. It is used to produce multiple copies of the same thing, over and over again” (140). Generally, a stereotype is a set of preconceived and definite ideas about people, or (in most cases) about a group of people. These ideas are usually reduced to some crucial traits, they are commonly based on visual differences and appearance and they definitely do not apply to all members of a group. Cranny-Francis et al. define the term according to its functions: “A stereotype is a radically reductive way of representing whole communities of people by identifying them with a few key characteristics. Individuals from the group who don’t fit that stereotype are then said to be atypical” (141). What this definition already implies is that stereotypes do not only set one group apart from another, but they also divide “the normal from the abnormal” (141). By doing this, stereotyping is not only a way of classifying people, but also a matter of

exclusion and rejection of everyone and everything that is different, which can then quickly result in discrimination and inequality.

Stereotypes based on gender also lead to a distinction between men and women according to “a few simple characteristics or types of behaviour” (140) that are perceived to be grounded on differences in their appearance, which are regarded as natural. Therefore, gender stereotypes, too, give rise to inequalities between man and women and establish a distinct hierarchy, which then result in uneven treatment and discrimination. Based on stereotypes of that kind, men and women are expected to behave and act in a certain way, to fulfill a certain culturally predetermined role. Key summarizes these expectations in the following way: “boys do, girls are” (qtd. in Kortenhaus and Demarest 221).

The gender stereotypes that will be mentioned in the following have been established over the course of history but are still prevalent today even though women’s role in society has changed (cf. Grauerholz and Pescosolido 113 – 114; Kortenhaus and Demarest 230). These stereotypes are based on a binary gender system creating and manifesting difference and inequality in our patriarchal Western society, where masculinity is prioritized and given “a privileged position of power and authority” (Cranny-Francis et al. 14). Consequently, “[t]he culturally dependent term masculine ... [is] understood as normative and empowered, while feminine equals disempowered, oppressed, deviant and silenced” (Nikolajeva 105). Qualities that are commonly linked to masculinity are, for example, “competence, instrumentation, and achievement motivation [which] are usually considered to be highly desirable traits” (Kortenhaus and Demarest 220). So, typically “men are seen as removed, rational and authoritative” (Cranny-Francis et al. 145), but also as “aggressive, daring, ... strong, cool-headed, ... independent, active, objective, [and] dominant” (Johnson 61). In popular culture boys are, among others, mostly described as “active, loud, aggressive, unemotional, ... curious, adventurous, tough, and naturally smart” (Lehr 1).

In contrast, women in this dichotomous gender system traditionally “exhibit traits that are viewed as less desirable” and are seen as “nurturant, dependent, and submissive” (Kortenhaus and Demarest 220). Moreover, “women are, by definition, excluded from positions of power and authority” except from those positions which “support individual men or the social system as a whole” (Cranny-Francis et al. 15). So, for example, women may be authoritative as the mother at home or as a teacher. “[T]he stereotype of the nurturing mother, the happy housewife” (144) who stays in the private and domestic sphere, is still fairly common and familiar today, although it does not at all mirror the actual situation and

behavior of women in modern society. Women are further typically characterized as “unaggressive, shy, intuitive, ... weak, hysterical, erratic and lacking in self-control” (Johnson 61), but also as “sensitive, emotional and deferring” (Cranny-Francis et al. 143). In popular culture girls are often portrayed as “passive, quiet, sweet, nice, ... accommodating, beautiful, pretty, or cute” (Lehr 1). Even though women’s role in society has changed by now, women still tend to worry about the consequences of not conforming with the traditional stereotypical gender behavior. For instance, Jennifer Lawrence, the actress playing the heroine in *The Hunger Games* film series, worried about negotiating her salary, which was much lower than of every man she worked with, because she “didn’t want to seem ‘difficult’ or ‘spoiled’ “ (Lawrence).

As this thesis is concerned with young adult novels, it is important to note that research and studies on the representation of gender in children’s and adolescents’ literature reveal that an imbalance in the number of representations of males and females therein still exists, and that “they are portrayed with similar stereotypical behaviors” (Louie 142), like the abovementioned. Kortenhaus and Demarest reveal in their study that “the roles portrayed in children’s literature do not present an accurate representation or close approximation of the actual behavior of males and females in our society” (231). Having said this, *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* trilogy are both written by a female author, thus, one might expect that these two series at least challenge traditional gender stereotypes. This thesis’ aim is consequently to analyze gender representation of the two selected trilogies and to find out whether they conform or defy traditional stereotypical gender roles.

2.2. Analysis of Gender in Literature

Various different approaches for analyzing gender exist, which all provide different viewpoints on gender representations in literary texts. A common aspect of analysis applied in studies is the comparison of the number of male and female characters depicted in several literary works, in other words a frequency analysis (cf. Grauerholz and Pescosolido; Kortenhaus and Demarest). Wharton claims that when a book represents an imbalanced male/female ratio, it might be easily classified as sexist (238). Nevertheless, before one jumps to conclusions, it might also be important to consider whether the author is a man or a woman because “by convention, male authors use male protagonists while female authors use female protagonists” (Nikolajeva 106). However, Nikolajeva calls such statements “preconceived

opinions” (106), which implies that it might apply for some literary texts, but, similar to stereotypes, definitely not for all.

Tetenbaum and Pearson took a different approach to the analysis of gender representation in fiction. In particular, they analyzed male and female fictional characters going through moral dilemmas in terms of their “moral and self orientations” (Tetenbaum and Pearson 383). The two categories used for the moral orientation are a morality of justice and a morality of care, for the self orientation the category of a separate/objective self and one of a connected self are employed (cf. 384). What Tetenbaum and Pearson intended to investigate through their study is “the question whether the sex of storybook characters was independent of the moral and self orientations depicted in the stories” (385).

The last approach for an analysis of gender that will be introduced here is the one Wharton applies in her study, namely one of “two complementary discourse analysis techniques” (238). One of them is the “clause-level analysis” for which she uses the two “categories of *process* and *participant*”. ‘Process’ makes reference to “the actions, communications, states of being and so on, in which the participants engage”, and ‘participant’ makes reference to “the people, animals and other entities which feature in sentences and clauses”. This tool should provide “a detailed picture of the numerical representation of each gender and the capacity in which they are represented” (240). The second technique Wharton applies is the “macro-structural analysis” using the “Problem-Solution pattern”. This perspective highlights “patterns of interaction between gender and narrative development” (241), for instance who tends to have problems, and who is more inclined to solve them.

The approach applied in this thesis’ analysis resembles to some extent Wharton’s discourse analysis approach. In order to analyze gender representation in the two selected trilogies a close reading of all six novels will be deployed. Subsequently, similar to Wharton’s ‘clause-level analysis’, the ‘processes’, that is to say the characters’ actions, behavior, speech utterances, expressions of thoughts and so forth, will be indicated and analyzed. Further, also the characters’ appearance and visual representation will be of importance, as well as the various role(s) they take on as the plot develops. After indicating instances of that kind, a connection to gender will be established and it will be assessed whether these processes and representations challenge and defy or rather reinforce typical gender stereotypes.

In addition to the aspect of gender, both trilogies feature a high level of violence. Thus, another aim of this thesis is to examine how this represented violence is connected to gender and how it affects the portrayal of male and female characters.

3. Violence in Literature

Violence is prevalent in our lives and ubiquitously present. Franzak and Noll argue that through the constant presence and depiction of violence in the media, “violence has become the norm, filling our world with acts of disruption, oppression, and alienation that underscore our need for security” (862). Kimmel also states that “we are preoccupied with violence” (242). Therefore, “[v]iolence is difficult to escape” (Miller 87), it is a part of our reality and so it is also present in literature, likewise in young adult literature. Hence, violence also acts as a category of analysis in this thesis.

‘Violence’ is a very versatile term which can be understood and interpreted in various ways. “It functions at different levels, is perpetuated by different motivations, and is experienced in a variety of ways” (Franzak and Noll 663). The *Oxford English Dictionary* basically defines ‘violence’ as “[t]he deliberate exercise of physical force against a person, property, etc.; physically violent behaviour or treatment” or, with reference to non-physical violence as “[v]ehemence or intensity of emotion, behaviour, or language; extreme fervour; passion”. Violence as it is understood and used in this thesis follows the model by Van Soest and Bryant, who conceive violence “as a complex, multilayered social phenomenon in which conditions of oppression and aggression are present” (qtd. in Franzak and Noll 663). According to their apprehension of violence, a violent act occurs when somebody is harmed by somebody else in a physical or psychological, direct or indirect way (663). Franzak and Noll further describe the three levels underlying this model of violence: The first level is called “[i]ndividual violence”, which is easily recognizable as “individuals doing harm to others”. The second level is “[I]nstitutional violence ... which is perpetuated by social institutions like schools and the criminal justice system”. Lastly, the third level is the “[s]tructural-cultural violence”, which “is represented in world views, or ways of thinking, that accept violence as a natural part of life” (663).

Kimmel describes violence as “perhaps the most gendered behavior in our culture” (250), asserting that “[f]rom early childhood to old age, violence is the most obdurate, intractable behavioral gender difference” (243). By referring to some statistics which reveal

that the majority of crimes were predominantly committed by men, he claims that “men are overwhelmingly more violent than women” and that in our Western society an “obvious association between masculinity and violence” does exist (Kimmel 243). This association has already been referred to in the previous subchapter, stating that aggressive and violent behavior is identified as a stereotypically masculine trait. In search of an explanation for this common association, Kimmel clearly rejects biological evidence and the evolutionary theory (244). The definition of masculinity varies culturally and historically and cannot be universally valid. Moreover, it is important how masculinity is defined since this has “a significant impact on the propensity toward violence”. Kimmel therefore concludes that “societies in which gender inequality is highest are those where masculinity and femininity are seen to be polar opposites”, and so, in his opinion, “[o]ne of the most significant ‘causes’ of male violence, then, is gender inequality” (245). Of course, Kimmel does not suggest that only men are performing violent acts or committing crimes, because female violence exists as well, even though it differs greatly from the one of men. For instance, women act in a violent way most likely for the purpose of defending themselves or others, whereas men more frequently initiate acts of violence: “men’s violence may be instrumental ... or expressive of emotion, women’s violence often is the outcome of feeling trapped and helpless” (249). Kimmel points out that in order to reduce violence in our society it is important to “transform the meaning of masculinity” and, in this way, diminish gender inequality (263).

Literature in general is a very powerful medium that has significant influences on its readers, and young adult literature in particular can act as “a powerful teaching tool” (Hintz and Ostry 7). Moreover, according to Asulp, “reading literature can be an ethical as well as an intellectual process, and as such it can assist adolescents in coping with their tumultuous lives” (159). Due to the fact that violence is omnipresent in our lives, it is also featured in literature. James points out that “[v]iolence is foregrounded in post-disaster narratives, and this is especially apparent when life in the future is depicted as a competition for survival” (171), as it is the case in the two trilogies selected for this thesis. Some researchers are very critical of this “presence of violence in young adult novels” (Franzak and Noll 862), for instance Kathleen T. Isaacs voices her misgivings: “the amount of violence in books published for teens seems to be multiplying, and the descriptions include ever more disturbing detail”. Further, Isaacs wonders “where this violence, especially sexual violence, is coming from and what effect it might have on teen readers” (50). Gurdon criticizes that in contemporary young adult literature the results from physical maltreatment “are now spelled

out in stomach-clenching detail” and asserts that “books focusing on pathologies help normalize them”. This skepticism stems from the belief that novels of that kind do not depict reality because most adolescents do not experience violence in their own lives and that “[t]eir understanding of violence comes from the screen and the printed page” (Isaacs 50-51). Others, however, approve of literature that addresses controversial issues including violence and physical abuse because it mirrors teenagers’ current reality (Alsup 161). Alsup also emphasizes that “[s]tudents need to read, write, and talk about issues that are relevant and real to them and that have immediate meaning for them in their lives” (165). Williams argues that teenagers should read fiction in which violence and darkness are depicted because their reason for reading is “to be moved, to fall in love with characters, to learn, and to sometimes just explore the things” (171) that scare and fascinate them.

Another important aspect about violence in literature is that warrior women or “tough girls have not only become common characters in post-disaster texts themselves, but they often occupy central roles” (James 165), which means that gender does play an important role in connection with violence. In fact, the portrayal of strong, brave, heroic and superior girl and woman protagonists in contemporary children and young adult literature is fairly common these days (cf. Simons 156). This “valorization of the female action hero represents an attempt to construct an empowered form of femininity” and so “alternative ways of being a woman can be explored”, whereby existing gender stereotypes can be called into question. On the other hand, these narratives “can also operate to support ... [typical gender roles] by stressing the tough girl’s sexual desirability or by implying that she will never be as tough as the boys” (James 171). In popular culture violence and women are predominantly erotically associated, and the sexual attraction of female action heroes in literature is largely built on this relation.

Whether typical gender roles are challenged or reinforced by representing tough and violent heroines in *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* trilogy is a guiding research question and matter of analysis in this thesis. This will be, among other things, addressed in the following sections.

III. Analysis of two selected works of Dystopian Young Adult Fiction

This chapter comprises the main part of this thesis, which is the analysis of the two selected examples of young adult dystopian literature, namely *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* trilogies. After an introduction providing some background information and a summary of the plots these six novels will be analyzed in terms of their gender representations with particular reference to typical gender stereotypes in connection with the depicted violence, and with regard to the symbols and metaphors they employ.

With respect to the analysis of gender representations and violence, the interpretative method applied for this purpose will be similar to the previously mentioned discourse analysis by Wharton. So the characters' behavior, actions, speech acts and innate thoughts and emotions but also their physical appearance and the roles they fulfill in the two trilogies will be analyzed in relation to gender, which includes that these depictions and processes will be checked against typical gender stereotypes. Additionally, the extent to which these gender representations are affected by the high level of violence featured in both trilogies will be examined.

The two selected trilogies lend themselves to an analysis and comparison of their gender portrayal, as both *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* series feature a strong heroine who fights for justice and social change. *The Hunger Games* trilogy will be analyzed first, since it was also published first. This chronological order of analysis might also help to learn in how far Veronica Roth was influenced by Suzanne Collins's work and to find possible instances of this influence.

1. *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins

Suzanne Collins' best-selling and popular, but also highly challenged, dystopian series consists of three novels, which are titled *The Hunger Games*, published in 2008, *Catching Fire*, from 2009, and *Mockingjay*, from 2010. The first two novels were both number one of the *New York Times* bestsellers, and the entire series was also number one of the *New York Times* bestselling series (cf. Collins, suzannecollinsbooks.com). Film adaptations of all three novels already exist, and they were also highly successful. The movie *The Hunger Games* came out in 2012 and *Catching Fire* in 2013. The film version of

Mockingjay was split into two parts, of which the first one premiered in 2014 and the second part was released only recently in November 2015.

The Hunger Games trilogy is set in the state of Panem which was established in place of North America after it had been destroyed by various natural disasters. Panem is divided into twelve districts and a Capitol city, from which it is ruled and controlled by President Snow. Originally, there had been thirteen districts but because the citizens rebelled against the Capitol twelve districts were defeated and District Thirteen was destroyed. As a punishment for this past rebellion and “to demonstrate the Capitol’s absolute power” (Latham and Hollister 34) Hunger Games are held annually. For this televised event each district has to select two “tributes”, one girl and one boy between the ages of 12 and 18, who fight against each other to the death in an outdoor arena. The last surviving tribute is the victor of the Hunger Games. The plot of the series’ first novel, *The Hunger Games*, begins on the day when the participants of the 74th Hunger Games are chosen, which is also called the “reaping” day.

1.1. Plot

The Hunger Games starts out with Katniss, the narrator and protagonist, waking up in the morning of the reaping day. She introduces the reader to her little sister Prim, her mother and the part of District 12 where they live, which is called Seam. Katniss gets dressed and goes hunting into the woods for which she has to depart the district through a weak spot in the fence that surrounds all of District 12. Even though it is not allowed, she often goes hunting with her friend and hunting partner Gale in order to provide food for their families and to trade some of their spoils on the black market. They also proceed the same way on this reaping day. Back at home, Katniss and Prim each put on a nice dress and they go with their mother to the reaping ceremony on the town square. Prim is drawn as the female tribute for the 74th Hunger Games, but Katniss volunteers in order to save her sister’s life. As the male tribute for District 12 Peeta Mellark, a baker’s son, is chosen. After saying good bye to their families and friends, Katniss and Peeta are taken to the Capitol by train, where their prep teams prepare and style them for the opening ceremony right away. There, the two tributes of District 12 amaze the audience with their complementary and stunning costumes. All tributes stay at the Training Centre until the actual beginning of the Games, and there they practice different skills that they might need in order to survive the Games. On the third day of

training, the tributes have private sessions with the Gamemakers in which each tribute can demonstrate his or her best skill. After that, the Gamemakers score the tributes based on their performance in training, and Katniss receives the highest number of points of all, 11 out of 12. The following day, the tributes are presented to the audience in a televised interview, for which Katniss again wears a marvelous dress and Peeta, during his interview, confesses his longtime love for Katniss.

With the sound of a gong the Games begin and Katniss and the other tributes start to run towards the Cornucopia, “a giant golden horn shaped like a cone with a curved tail” (Collins, *HG* 172) around which useful things and supplies for the tributes are placed. Even though Haymitch, Katniss’s and Peeta’s mentor, instructed her not to go for the objects at the Cornucopia but just run and find water, Katniss wants to get a bow and arrows she has spotted. Being distracted by Peeta, she misses her chance and decides not to fetch them. Instead, she grabs an orange backpack on her way and runs towards the woods as quickly as she can because she is followed by another tribute who aims a knife at her, which luckily hits the backpack and stays there. When she looks back, she sees the other tributes fighting for the goods at the Cornucopia, some of them already lying dead on the ground.

Katniss continues to move away from the Cornucopia into the woods to get as far away as possible from her competitors. After some time she gets tired and weak, and she still has not found water. She begs Haymitch via TV to send her some, but he does not. Katniss has almost given herself up, when she finds herself lying in mud and realizes that there must be a source of water nearby. She eventually finds a small pond where she rehydrates and stays for the night. Katniss is woken by a wall of fire, created by the Gamemakers, which she escapes but her calf is severely burnt. Soon after, the Careers, that are the tributes from the wealthier Districts 1, 2 and 4, and Peeta find her but Katniss is able to escape them by climbing up a tree. Then, Katniss recognizes Rue, the female tribute from District 11, in a nearby tree who points to a tracker jacker nest high up, and so Katniss cuts it down. The tracker jackers, which are genetically modified wasps whose venom causes hallucinations or even death, attack the Careers, while Katniss escapes even though she is also stung by some of these killer wasps. It takes her a long time to recover from the hallucinations induced by the venom of the tracker jackers. Katniss then allies with Rue, who reminds her of her sister Prim. The two help each other, exchange information about life in their districts and they are pleased to have one another as allies. After they have destroyed the Careers’ supplies, Rue is stabbed with a spear by another tribute, whom Katniss kills the moment she sees him. Rue

tells Katniss that she has to win and asks her to sing. After Katniss finishes the song, Rue dies. Katniss decorates Rue's body with flowers before the hovercraft, which is an aircraft that the Capitol uses to collect the dead bodies from the arena, takes it away.

The following day, an official announcement explains a rule change which says that "both tributes from the same district will be declared winners if they are the last two alive" (HG 285). Thus, Katniss starts out looking for Peeta and finally finds him camouflaged in mud next to the stream. Peeta's leg is badly injured and so Katniss helps him into a small cave where they can hide. By acting like two "star-crossed lovers" (305), they receive some gifts from the sponsors, like food and sleep syrup. The latter one is assigned for Peeta, so that Katniss has time to go to the feast in order to get the medicine for Peeta. Katniss, slightly wounded, returns to Peeta and injects him the medicine. Both of them recover, and finally only three tributes are left. Cato, the third remaining tribute, is chased by giant wolf mutations which torture him for a long time. Katniss kills Cato to end his suffering but also the Hunger Games. After that, however, Katniss and Peeta are not announced victors, as a new announcement is made that only allows one victor. Katniss has the idea of killing themselves with poisonous berries. As soon as the Gamemakers realize what they are about to do, they are both declared winners and so they can return home together. The Capitol is very angry with Katniss because of this rebellious act. All this already leads up to the events in *Catching Fire*.

The second novel of the trilogy opens with Katniss and Peeta living in the Victors' Village. Katniss has an unexpected visitor, namely President Snow. He warns her that her threat of suicide at the end of the last Hunger Games could lead to an uprising, and that if she doesn't convince everyone in the districts, and more importantly himself, that she acted out of love, he will kill Gale. Katniss knows that the Victory Tour is her only chance to prove her love for Peeta and thereby save the lives of her loved ones. Katniss tries her best on the Victory Tour. However, in District 11, their first stop, after Katniss and Peeta have given their speeches, an old man whistles the mockingjay tune Rue whistled in the arena, and after that, all people in the crowd do a traditional gesture from District 12 to thank Katniss. Katniss and Peeta are already backstage when they witness that a Peacekeeper shoots the man who whistled. The Peacekeepers are the Capitol's security force which is used to control and repress the people in the districts. At the victors' ceremonies in the other districts, Katniss and Peeta are only allowed to deliver thank-you speeches the Capitol scripted for them, without any personal remarks. Finally, they arrive at the Capitol, where the two victors get

interviewed and Peeta acts out the marriage proposal, on which they previously decided, to Katniss. Nevertheless, President Snow is still not convinced. Back at home in District 12, they attend a big party at the mayor's home where she sees a broadcast on television about an uprising taking place in District 8. In a secret meeting in the woods, Gale confesses his love for Katniss but she cannot reciprocate his feelings. As he is about to leave disappointed, Katniss tells him about the unrest in District 8, which lets him consider that a rebellion is also possible in their own District 12. When Katniss returns from the woods she goes into town with Peeta and in the square they see Gale being brutally whipped by the new Head Peacekeeper Romulus Thread, who accused Gale of having poached the dead turkey he carried. Only through the intervention of Haymitch and a familiar Peacekeeper from the district, Thread can be convinced to stop the whipping. Haymitch, Peeta and some helpers carry Gale to Katniss's mother who does her best to heal his wounds. During that night, Katniss stays with Gale and eventually kisses him when she realizes how much she really cares for, even loves him.

On the day of Katniss's bridal photo shoot, her entire prep team has come to help her. Katniss listens to them talking about several different products they have not been able to get in the Capitol, which makes her realize that also other districts must be in rebellion. On the next evening the rules for the third Quarter Quell, the 75th Hunger Games, are announced on TV. A Quarter Quell is held every twenty-five years as "a glorified version of the Games" (Collins, *CF* 194) and for this third one "the male and female tributes will be reaped from their existing pool of victors" (196). This means that Katniss has to return to the Hunger Games, since she is the only female victor of District 12.

At the reaping, of course Katniss is chosen and Haymitch is drawn as the male participant, but Peeta volunteers for him. Immediately afterwards, they leave for the Capitol by train. On the train, they watch the reapings from the other districts to get to know their competitors. At the Capitol, they get prepared for the opening ceremonies, for which Katniss wears a black jumpsuit which transforms into the colors of fire, making her look like glowing ember. Both Peeta's and Katniss's performance upset the Gamemakers, but yet they both receive total scores for it. For the interview, President Snow wants Katniss to wear the wedding dress the people voted as their favorite. Katniss's stylist Cinna, however, has made some alterations, so that when Katniss twirls during the interview the white wedding dress burns away and reveals a black dress made of feathers. Cinna has turned her into a "mockingjay", which is not only Katniss's token but symbolizes much more. As soon as

Katniss realizes this, she starts to worry about Cinna. Peeta, in his interview, tells the audience that they are already married and that Katniss is pregnant. Hearing this news, the audience can no longer be controlled. Eventually, all twenty-four tributes stand in one conjoined line on stage, thus showing a unity to all the people in the districts, before the TV cameras are turned off.

When Katniss is dressed and ready for the Games, she steps on the metal plate and is enclosed by the glass cylinder. Before the plate rises to take her into the arena, she has to witness in horror how three Peacekeepers brutally beat up Cinna, being unable to help him. As they drag him out of the room, Katniss rises into the arena where she finds herself surrounded by water. She dives into the water when the gong sounds and swims for the Cornucopia where she meets Finnick, with whom she immediately teams up. They take some weapons and with Peeta and Mags they run into the jungle. Looking for water, Peeta gets into a force field and the electric shock stops his heart, but Finnick revives him. During the night, a poisonous fog emerges which attacks the nerves, so the four allies try to escape it. Katniss, Peeta and Finnick survive, only Mags has sacrificed herself by walking straight into the fog. They find themselves back at the beach near the Cornucopia, where they are attacked by a crowd of monkey mutations, which they luckily survive as well. Katniss, Peeta and Finnick meet and form an alliance with Johanna, Beetee and Wiress. After some time, Katniss realizes that the arena is shaped and works like a clock, meaning that every hour a particular threat occurs in a different section corresponding to its position on the clock. Later, Wiress is killed by one of the two tributes of District 1, who are then killed by the allies.

Eventually, Beetee has a plan to kill the two remaining Careers, Brutus and Enobaria from District 2. The plan is to tie a wire around the lightning tree, run this wire through the jungle into the ocean, and with the help of the tidal wave would not only electrify the water but also the damp beach. However, not everything happens according to the proposed plan, and finally, Katniss finds out Beetee's real plan, which is to blow up the force field that surrounds the arena. So she shoots an arrow with the wire wrapped around it directly into the force field at the exact moment the lightning strikes, thereby blowing up the arena. Katniss is thrown to the ground, unable to move and only moments later she is lifted up and taken away by a hovercraft. Inside, she sees Plutarch Heavensbee, the Head Gamemaker, which makes her believe that the Capitol has captured her. Then she loses consciousness.

When Katniss wakes up again, she does not understand what is going on because she hears Plutarch Heavensbee talking to Finnick and Haymitch. Haymitch explains to her that

the plan was to get them out from the arena from the time when the Quarter Quell was announced. Katniss learns that there is a rebellion going on in most districts and that she is its symbol, the mockingjay, and that they are currently on their way to District 13, which still exists. Haymitch also tells her that Peeta, along with Johanna and Enobaria, got caught by the Capitol. Hearing the truth, Katniss gets so angry that she does not want to eat or talk until Gale visits her. He tells her that Prim and her mother are alive, but that District 12 has been destroyed by the Capitol.

The trilogy's final novel, *Mockingjay*, opens with Katniss walking through the ashes of District 12, as she wants to see her destroyed former home herself. Since she has been rescued from the arena, Katniss lives in District 13 along with the survivors of District 12. District 13 is now the center of the rebellion, which is led by President Alma Coin, and life there is highly structured and regulated. When Katniss returns from her trip to District 12 she sees an interview with Peeta aired by the Capitol, which confirms that he is alive. Katniss eventually agrees to be the Mockingjay, the symbol of the rebellion, but only upon condition that Peeta and all the other tributes are granted immunity and that she gets the permission to kill Snow. As the Mockingjay, Katniss has to star in propos, short for propaganda spots, and after her first propo has been broadcasted, Peeta appears in another Capitol programming in which he warns the rebels of an attack. After that, Katniss can only briefly see how Peeta is severely beaten and tortured.

Peeta's warning helps the rebels in District 13 to evacuate everybody into the bunkers in time, where they wait for several days until the bombing is over. When they want to film another propo to show the Capitol that Katniss is still alive, she realizes that if they do so, it would only mean more torture and harm for Peeta. Thus, the rebels decide to rescue Peeta and the other captured tributes. The rescue is a success but when Peeta sees Katniss again he tries to strangle her because he has been hijacked and brainwashed by the Capitol. After his attempt to kill Katniss, Peeta is heavily guarded and the medical team of District 13 tries to help him recover. Meanwhile, a team, including Katniss and Gale, is sent to District 2 to gain control of it as this is the only district that has not joined the rebellion yet. There, they blow up the Nut, a mountain that contains the essential parts of the Capitol's military. When Katniss gives a speech to the survivors of District 2 encouraging them to join the rebellion, she is shot by someone from the crowd. Luckily, she survives thanks to her bulletproof uniform. When Katniss has rehabilitated, she visits Peeta who has become calmer but is still not able to remember everything.

Katniss undergoes training in order to go to the Capitol and finally becomes part of the rebel team Star Squad 451. One of the team's 14 members is killed by a pod, which is a trap that releases a deadly weapon when activated. After that, Coin sends Peeta as a replacement even though he is still unpredictable. While shooting a propo, the team leader Boggs dies shortly after he has hit a pod, and Peeta tries to kill Katniss. As the team further advances towards Snow's mansion, most of the squad's members die. Finally, Katniss alone moves further into the Capitol to complete her mission to kill Snow. When she arrives at Snow's mansion she sees a vast crowd of children behind the barricades that Snow uses as human shields. Katniss sees a hovercraft appearing directly above the children and it drops numerous silver parachutes, which explode as soon as the children hold them in their hands. As Katniss watches this in horror, the rebel paramedics run towards the children to help them. Katniss catches a sight of her sister Prim and starts to rush forward, calling her name, but a second wave of explosion sets off killing Prim and all the other paramedics. Katniss survives with severe burns.

The rebels have won so President Coin leads Panem now while President Snow waits for his execution. When Katniss is released from the hospital, she gets a room in the president's mansion. One day, she goes into the greenhouse, which is full of Snow's roses, and she meets Snow there because that is where he is imprisoned. Snow tells Katniss that he was not responsible for the explosions that killed the children and Prim, but that it was President Coin's order. He claims that Coin fooled them both. Katniss is not sure whether she should believe him or not. On the day of Snow's execution, President Coin calls a meeting in which the remaining victors should decide whether a final Hunger Games should be held with the tributes being children from people who held most power in the Capitol. This is the moment when Katniss realizes that nothing has changed. The majority of the victors vote in favor of the Games. Then at the execution, Katniss shoots Coin instead of Snow.

Katniss is immediately taken to her old room at the Training Center, where she is kept for several weeks. She wishes to be dead and even tries to starve herself. One day, Haymitch comes and picks her up to go home. In the hovercraft, Plutarch tells her that Snow died in the turmoil that followed Coin's assassination. Commander Paylor is now president of Panem. Further, Katniss learns that, in her trial, she was exonerated from Coin's murder, and now she returns to District 12 with Haymitch where she again lives in the Victors' Village. Her mother lives in District 4, Gale has a job in District 2. A few weeks later, Peeta also returns to District 12, and he and Katniss slowly grow back together. More than 15 years later they have

two children and Katniss ponders on the day when they will have to tell them about the Games and the role they played in them.

1.2. Gender and Violence in *The Hunger Games* trilogy

The Hunger Games trilogy is highly celebrated for its portrayal of a strong female protagonist and thus also for its defiance of the traditional significations of masculinity and femininity. Whether Collins has accomplished to challenge dominant gender stereotypes and to depict a society where “fewer differences between the roles for women and men ... than in our own world” (Miller 152) exist, will be discussed critically in this section. To keep it manageable, the analysis will primarily focus on the main characters’ representation with reference to gender and violence, as it was set out above. The three novels will be analyzed in their chronological order.

1.2.1. *The Hunger Games*

At the beginning of the novel, the reader gets to know Katniss, the protagonist, as a strong female character who demonstrates mainly traditionally masculine features. When her father died in a mine accident, she “took over as head of the family” (Collins, *HG* 31) at the age of eleven. As a result of her husband’s death, Katniss’ mother fell into a deep depression which disabled her to care for her children. Katniss clearly rejects this aspect of femininity which angers her and makes her unable to forgive her mother, because Katniss is “not the forgiving type” (10). In order to provide for her mother and her four years younger sister Prim, Katniss and her hunting partner Gale go hunting into the woods outside of District 12, even if this is forbidden. Katniss learned from her father how to hunt with a bow and arrow and to look for food and herbs in the woods. When Katniss kills an animal, she does not feel bad or guilty about it, as this is just her way of supporting her family: “I finally had to kill the lynx because he scared off game. I almost regretted it because he wasn’t bad company. But I got a decent price for his pelt” (8). Furthermore, Katniss is also not very fond of her sister’s cat called Buttercup, that she once tried to drown. However, she disapproves of Gale’s outburst of anger when talking to Madge, the mayor’s daughter, about the reaping. Katniss considers the reaping system to be unfair as well, but to her Gale’s “rages seem pointless” (16). The information provided on Katniss’s outer appearance is limited because the story is

told from her point of view. However, the reader learns that she wears hunting boots and trousers, and has a long dark braid which she hides under a cap when she goes hunting. Moreover, when she gets ready for the reaping she takes a bath and puts on “[a] soft blue thing with matching shoes”, as she describes one of her mother’s dresses. But she does not feel comfortable seeing herself in the mirror wearing that dress, which of course signifies a typically female clothing:

I can hardly recognize myself in the cracked mirror that leans against the wall.
 “You look beautiful,” says Prim in a hushed voice.
 “And nothing like myself,” I say. (17)

Moreover, during the reaping, Katniss makes every effort not to show any emotions and not to cry because she knows that each and every move of hers is televised throughout Panem, and she does not want to seem weak, “I don’t want to cry. When they televise the replay of the reapings tonight, everyone will make note of my tears, and I’ll be marked as an easy target. A weakling. I will give no one that satisfaction” (26). This also indicates that Katniss interprets the display of emotions as a sign of weakness.

All of the above mentioned representations point to characteristics that are stereotypically associated with masculinity. Through her actions and behavior, as they are represented at the very beginning of the novel, Katniss disrupts, to a certain extent, gender stereotypes that are prevalent in our contemporary Western society. Nevertheless, Katniss does not exhibit masculine features exclusively, she rather “balances traditionally masculine ... with traditionally feminine qualities” (Lem and Hassel 118). In particular, through her loving care for and protection of her sister Prim, “the only person in the world [she’s] certain [she] love[s]” (Collins, *HG* 11), Katniss exhibits behaviors which are traditionally associated with femininity. Another rather feminine trait Katniss reveals already at the beginning of the story is the confusion and uncertainty about her feelings for Gale. Although Katniss claims that her relationship with Gale is nothing but platonic and that “[t]here’s never been anything romantic between Gale and [her]” (11), the way she refers to and talks about Gale suggests the contrary. For instance, when she is in the woods waiting for Gale she says that “[t]he sight of him waiting there brings on a smile” (7), or when Gale comes to say goodbye to her before leaving for the Capitol “he opens his arms [and she doesn’t] hesitate to go into them” (44). Later on, when Katniss is already in the Training Center preparing for the Games, she mulls over Gale and her relationship with him:

Gale gave me a sense of security I'd lacked since my father's death. [...] But he turned into so much more than a hunting partner. He became my confidant, someone with whom I could share thoughts I could never voice inside the fence. In exchange, he trusted me with his. Being out in the woods with Gale ... sometimes I was actually happy. (129)

This quotation indicates that Katniss begins to realize that Gale is more than a friend, which seems “too casual a word for what Gale is to [her]” (129). Unable to express what Gale really is to her and being in an emotional turmoil, Katniss admits that she “just miss[es] him” (130). So the early portrayal of Katniss, before she enters the Hunger Games, as a strong, independent young woman, hunting, but also caring for her younger sister, reveals that she blurs traditional gender boundaries and thereby challenges gender stereotypes, which is possible because “gender is an ‘act’ “ (Butler, “PA” 528) and therefore agency is possible. Mitchell argues that Katniss “is able to unconsciously adopt multiple gender roles” (132) as opposed to merely reversing them, which would again only reinforce the binary gender system. Later, it will be shown that this unconscious performance of gender changes into a conscious one as the story develops.

In contrast to Katniss, Peeta is presented with predominantly feminine characteristics, despite being described as of “medium height, stocky build” (29), “broad-shouldered and strong” (47). The first characteristic the reader gets to know about Peeta, the baker's son, is that he is a very kind person. This is suggested when Katniss tells the story of one afternoon when she was desperately looking for food and Peeta threw two loaves of slightly burned bread to her, which saved her family and herself from starvation. Katniss could not explain why he has done that so she assumes he did it because of his “enormous kindness that would have surely resulted in a beating if discovered” (36-37). Another instance in which Peeta's kindness is shown, is when Katniss thinks about why Peeta wants to attend to and look after the alcoholic Haymitch, who has just vomited: “So I'm pondering the reason why he insists on taking care of Haymitch and all of a sudden I think, *It's because he's being kind. Just as he was kind to give me the bread*” (56). What is more, Peeta does not make any effort to hide his feelings, which is especially obvious after he has said goodbye to his family and friends, before getting on the train to the Capitol, “Peeta Mellark ... has obviously been crying, and interestingly enough, does not seem to be trying to cover it up”. Because of this, Katniss is suspicious and speculates whether it is Peeta's strategy for the Games “[t]o appear weak and frightened, to reassure the other tributes that he is no competition at all, and then come out fighting” (47). A further trait of Peeta, that is apparent before the actual Games begin, is his

aptitude for baking bread and decorating cakes, which stands in contrast to Katniss' skill of hunting and can be associated with the rather feminine nurturing virtue.

Katniss's sister Prim serves as a foil to Katniss since she is portrayed as a stereotypical feminine character. Katniss describes her sister as beautiful and tiny, with "light hair and blue eyes" (9). Her "face is as fresh as a raindrop, as lovely as the primrose for which she was named" (3) and she speaks with a soft voice and giggles occasionally. Further, Prim is characterized as vulnerable, sensitive and caring, "Sweet, tiny Prim who cried when I cried before she even knew the reason, who brushed and plaited my mother's hair before we left for school, who still polished my father's shaving mirror The community home would crush her like a bug" (31-32). Prim also has empathy with animals and is concerned about their health, for instance when Katniss shot an animal "she'd get teary and talk about how [they] might be able to heal it if [they] got it home soon enough" (40). Even though Prim seems to be a fragile girl, who needs to be protected, at the beginning, she later turns out to help and take care of the sick and wounded people.

Gale, Katniss's hunting partner, can be seen as a foil to Peeta because he is presented with qualities that stand in opposition to Peeta's characteristics. Gale is presented as a stereotypical masculine young man, being handsome with "straight black hair, [and] olive skin" (9), strong and the provider of his family. He is inclined to display his anger and engage in violence, especially when he voices his opposition to the political and social system in Panem, for example, when he and Katniss are talking to Madge on the day of the reaping. Another hegemonic masculine trait that Gale exhibits is his desire for having a romantic and sexual relationship with Katniss, which first becomes apparent when he voices his wish to have children with Katniss. Through Gale's representation, Peeta's character traits are highlighted and over the course of the story, both Gale and Peeta, compete for Katniss's love.

According to Miller, in Panem fewer gender inequalities exist than in our contemporary society (152). She justifies this by referring to the information that both "[m]en and women with hunched shoulders, [and] swollen knuckles" (Collins, *HG* 4) work in the mines of District 12, whereas "coal miners in our world are overwhelmingly male" (Miller 152). Furthermore, she argues that boys and girls are chosen to be tributes for the same Hunger Games and are therefore equal competitors. She contrasts this with many contemporary sports in which there is an "alteration of the game for male and female tributes" (152). What is also apparent is that the beauty standards in the Capitol are more or less the same for male and female citizens because it seems that nearly everybody applies

makeup and undergoes the same kind of cosmetic surgeries in order to correspond to the beauty norms which appear to be not gendered but are “all the same for women and men” (153). Even though Miller is right to some extent that gender inequalities do not seem to be as predominant in certain areas of Panem as they are in present-day society, the audience’s expectations, however, of how the male and female tributes should look like and behave highlight the gender inequities and thus the gender hierarchy typical of patriarchal societies. This can be very well demonstrated by referring to the remaking process Katniss has to undergo before the actual Hunger Games begin.

When Katniss, Peeta and Haymitch arrive in the Capitol, Haymitch tells them that they will be taken to the Remake Center where their prep team and stylists will alter their appearance, and he also gives them an advice, “You’re not going to like what they do to you. But no matter what it is, don’t resist” (Collins, *HG* 67). Even though Katniss does not like it, she does not object to what her prep team does during the remaking process which includes “scrubbing down [her] body with a gritty foam that has removed not only dirt but at least three layers of skin, turning [her] nails into uniform shapes, and primarily, ridding [her] body of hair” (71). However, her comment that after that process she feels “like a plucked bird, ready for roasting” indicates that she is not at all happy with what they did to her. Nevertheless, these efforts to enhance her appearance are only the first step in what Connors calls “regendering Katniss” (147). Shortly afterwards, Cinna, Katniss’s stylist, dresses her in a black costume that is complementary to what Peeta wears for the opening ceremonies. Their outfits should, on the one hand, represent the product of District 12, which is coal, and on the other hand, by setting them on fire they should “make the District Twelve tributes unforgettable” (76). What Cinna moreover intended with that burning costume is that the people watching the Hunger Games should recognize her in the arena as “the girl who was on fire” (77). When Katniss and Peeta are riding on their chariot through the Capitol, Katniss notices how the audience shouts their names, cheers for and admires them which makes it impossible for her to “suppress [her] excitement” (81). Furthermore, Katniss eventually realizes during the opening ceremonies that it does not seem absurd that she actually has a chance to survive the Games and she infers that it is important for her survival to appeal to the audience:

Cinna has given me a great advantage. No one will forget me. Not my look, not my name. Katniss. The girl who was on fire.

For the first time, I feel a flicker of hope rising up in me. Surely there must be one sponsor willing to take me on! And with a little extra help, some food, the right weapon, why should I count myself out of the Games? (81)

While Katniss feels happy and relieved that she has gained the audience's approval, she feels uncomfortable about Cinna's instruction to hold hands with Peeta as they are riding on the chariot, "I can't help feeling strange about the way Cinna has linked us together. It's not really fair to present us as a team and then lock us into the arena to kill each other" (82). Not only Cinna, but also Haymitch wants Katniss and Peeta to look as if they are friends and thus orders them to always stay together when they make a public appearance: "In public, I want you by each other's side every minute ... You will be together, you will appear amiable to each other". Yet, Katniss disapproves of this instruction because in the end she and Peeta are "going to have to knock it off and accept that [they're] bitter adversaries" (106). In the coaching session before the interview, Haymitch tries to figure out how Katniss should present herself to the audience in order to appeal to them. Haymitch suggests to her to pretend to be "that cheery, wavy girl" again that she was in the opening ceremonies. But Katniss gets angry and refuses to take up another identity only to "please people [she] hate[s]" (136). After Haymitch's harsh statement that she has got "about as much charm as a dead slug" and a few hours of trying to play some other identities, Katniss concludes that she is "no one at all" (137). Effie Trinket, who is also a member of Katniss's and Peeta's preparation team, attempts to transform Katniss into a desirable, stereotypical girl as well by putting her "in a full-length gown and high-heeled shoes" (133) in order to prepare her for the interview. But the session with Effie also frustrates Katniss so that in the evening she has to vent her spleen "by smashing dishes around [her] room" (137). When she tells Cinna about her disappointing search for an identity, he tells her to be herself because "[n]o one can help but admire [her] spirit" and advises her to answer the questions "as honestly as possible" (141) in the interview. So up to the point of the actual interview Katniss seems confused and torn between the identity she had before she became a tribute and the one she is forced into by her prep team and Haymitch. This inner turmoil is also suggested when Katniss is finally prepared for the interview by her prep team and to describe this process of remaking, she comments, "They erase my face with a layer of pale make-up and draw my features back out". After she has put on the dress Cinna has designed for her, the sight of her transformed body alienates her at first: "The creature standing before me in the full-length mirror has come from another world" (139). However, finally she seems to approve of it to some extent: "I am not pretty. I am not beautiful. I am as radiant as the sun" (140).

Following her initial refusal of and opposition to the performance of another identity, in particular the role of a stereotypical feminine character, Katniss ultimately realizes and also accepts that her performance of gender is crucial and essential for the appreciation and admiration of the audience, and thus for her survival in the arena. She does so only after Peeta's confession of his unrequited love for her during the interview. Although she knows that her performance of femininity is important for her survival, she has difficulty with the idea that this also means to perform a heterosexual relationship. This is why she becomes extremely furious about Peeta's declaration of love, so much that she attacks him and accuses him that "[h]e made [her] look weak" (157). Haymitch angrily responds to her false accusation:

"That boy just gave you something you could never achieve on your own. ... He made you look desirable! And let's face it, you can use all the help you can get in that department. You were about as romantic as dirt until he said he wanted you. Now they all do. You're all they're talking about. The star-crossed lovers from District Twelve." (158)

Even though Peeta is in general represented with qualities rather associated with females and thereby challenges stereotypical ideas of gender, by expressing his feelings for Katniss he makes her "an object of love" (159) and hence performs heterosexual masculinity. In this way, not only her prep team, Cinna and Haymitch, but also Peeta, pressure Katniss into the passive and dependent position of a stereotypical female character who submits to the "standards of beauty and behavior" (Connors 149) imposed by patriarchal society. Yet, Katniss has no choice but to act according to society's expectations if she wants to survive the Games and so she finally consents to perform stereotypical femininity according to the "star-crossed lovers" (Collins, *HG* 158) script in the arena. So by quoting Butler, it can be said that Katniss uses her conscious gender performance as "a strategy of survival" ("PA" 522).

Katniss has to alter her own, or perform another, identity, but Peeta does not have to undergo such a radical transformation before the Hunger Games because he seems to already have the qualities he is expected to have, as Haymitch points out: "He has a sort self-deprecating humour naturally" (Collins, *HG* 135). Furthermore, Collins does not make any reference to physical or behavioral alterations, or treatments Peeta has to endure in order to enhance his outer appearance. Likewise, Henthorne points out that in Panem "beauty is very different for men than it is for women ... [because] the girls' beauty routine lasts for hours, ... [whereas] the boys' routine is minimal, being limited to their faces" (52). So this indicates

that in Panem different expectations of how girls and boys should stereotypically behave and what they should look like do exist. Connors confirms this by stating that Katniss needs to look beautiful and desirable, but “the male characters in the novel earn followers as a result of their strength and physical prowess, not their ability to appear physically attractive to an audience” (150). Overall, it can be said that “females are, in fact, held accountable to a different standard than males in Panem” (147). Thereby, gender stereotypes are rather reinforced than challenged.

When the tributes finally arrive in the arena, Katniss cannot solely rely on her performance of traditional femininity in order to receive gifts from sponsors to help her survive, especially at the beginning when she is not yet reunited with Peeta. At this initial stage of the Games, she has to draw on her skills that she has acquired and exercised in the woods and in District 12 to stay alive. This includes, for example, her knowledge of the forest plants and animals, as parts of the arena are woods as well, her hunting ability, her bravery and firm intention not to show any weakness. The latter one, in particular, is evident when her leg gets severely burned by the fire the Gamemakers constructed and, knowing that she is being watched, she tells herself, “I can’t show weakness at this injury. Not if I want help. Pity does not get you aid. Admiration at your refusal to give in does” (Collins, *HG* 209). Her strength and strong will are rewarded with a sponsor’s gift, which is an ointment for her burn.

Later, when Katniss and Peeta reunify after the rule change that two tributes from the same district can be declared victors has been announced, Katniss needs to perform both traditionally masculine and feminine traits. On the one hand, Katniss saves Peeta’s life by courageously treating his wound and hiding him in a cave. By doing so, Katniss is the one who is tough, active and rational, so she exhibits characteristics which are traditionally associated with men, whereas Peeta is the one who is dependent on Katniss and therefore adopts a rather passive and feminine role. On the other hand, Katniss takes on the role of the star-crossed lover and thus she performs hegemonic femininity. When she kisses Peeta for the first time, Haymitch sends them only a bowl of soup as a reward. Being aware that Haymitch certainly watches them, Katniss pictures him telling her that he wants to see more, “ ‘You’re supposed to be in love, sweetheart. The boy’s dying. Give me something I can work with!’ “ (305). Katniss becomes conscious of the “importance of sustaining the star-crossed lovers routine” (329), which makes her give more kisses to Peeta and share personal stories of her life back in District 12. Katniss finally confesses her love for Peeta to please the watching audience, which earns them a feast and she imagines Haymitch calling out, “Yes, that’s what

I'm looking for, sweetheart" (355). At the end of the Hunger Games, Katniss and Peeta enact a pretended suicide out of love which ensures them their survival by "pitting the audience's voyeuristic thirst for a televised romantic climax against the Capitol's need to assert dominion" (DeaVault 196). So by performing hegemonic femininity Katniss puts herself into a position of power and authority over the Capitol and the Gamemakers, which is typically attributed to hegemonic masculinity. Only through Katniss's combination and adherence "to both masculine and feminine qualities" (Lem and Hassel 122), she and Peeta are able to survive the Games. This "blending [of] gendered characteristics, and crossing gendered divisions" (126) can be interpreted as Collins' creative attempt to challenge the binary gender system in Panem's patriarchal society, but also in contemporary Western society.

With regard to violence, it is obvious that violent activities are predominant in *The Hunger Games*, as "[t]he real sport of the Hunger Games is watching the tributes kill one another" (207). Especially the beginning of the Hunger Games appears to be really cruel when the tributes fight at the Cornucopia, ending in a bloodbath. Katniss and Peeta also engage in violent acts but only in order to save or protect somebody they care for. They do not simply resort to violence just because it gives them pleasure, but because they do care. Peeta, in particular, according to its rather feminized representation of being kind and loving, is not prone to aggression or violence. He only kills the girl tribute from District 8 deliberately when he has teamed up with the Career tributes so that they do not immediately suspect that he only formed this alliance in order to prevent them from killing Katniss. Katniss herself can hardly believe it when she realizes that it is Peeta's prior aim to protect her when he saves her from an attack by the Careers:

"What are you still doing here?" he hisses at me. I stare uncomprehendingly as a trickle of water drips off a sting under his ear. ... "Are you mad?" He's prodding me with the shaft of the spear now. "Get up! Get up!" I rise, but he's still pushing at me. What? What is going on? He shoves me away from him hard. "Run!" he screams. "Run!" ... I'm able to form only one thought: *Peeta Mellark just saved my life.* (226-7)

Peeta's second kill is unintentional because Foxface, the female tribute from District 5, eats the berries Peeta has collected. Unfortunately, these berries, called nightlock, are poisonous and thus Foxface dies after eating them. When Katniss tells Peeta that he has killed her, he asks her in a confused way, "How could I have killed her?" (374).

Katniss, on the other hand, engages in many more acts of violence, which is also consistent with her gender representation, displaying qualities like the ability to hunt, being

strong-minded and not being used to display emotions. Even though Katniss is more inclined to perform violence and kills several tributes in the Games, she never does so without reason or with bad intentions. When she is still in District 12, Katniss kills animals in the woods in order to support her family she genuinely cares for. Then, in the arena, she instantly kills the tribute who has thrown a spear at Rue the moment she spotted him. Rue is her ally whom she is really fond of because she reminds her of her sister Prim. After Rue has died, Katniss tells the reader that she cannot hate the tribute who killed Rue, and points out, “It’s the Capitol I hate, for doing this to all of us. ... Rue’s death has forced me to confront my own fury against the cruelty, the injustice they inflict upon us. But here, even more strongly than at home” (276). This quote illustrates that Katniss actually rejects any kind of violence that is used against somebody else, especially the one that is imposed on them by the Capitol. A further instance when Katniss kills another tribute and severely harms several others is when she drops the tracker-jacker nest down on the Career tributes. She regards this to be her “sole option [she has] left” (217), enabling her to escape and to survive. Moreover, Katniss also kills Cato, who is the last tribute left except for her and Peeta. After Katniss throws an arrow in his hand, Cato falls off the Cornucopia to the ground where the mutts, the mutated wolves, slowly kill him. No matter how cruel this might be, only by throwing this arrow into Cato’s hand Katniss can save Peeta’s and her own life. All in all, it can be concluded that Katniss does not act out violence or kill when she does not have an actual reason to do so, which is usually when she has to save or protect somebody she genuinely cares about. More than anything else she rejects the fact that the Capitol forces the tributes to commit violence and to kill each other.

1.2.2. *Catching Fire*

The second novel in the trilogy, *Catching Fire*, starts out about half a year after the previous Hunger Games, more specifically on the day when the Victory Tour begins. Katniss and Peeta have returned to District 12 and because they were not filmed and broadcasted throughout Panem anymore, they “assumed the cool relationship [they’ve] had ever since” (Collins, *CF* 28). At the same time, Katniss is quite happy and relieved when she sees Gale for the first time after the Games:

Then I looked up and there he was, three metres away, just watching me. Without even thinking, I jumped up and threw my arms around him, making some weird sound

that combined laughing, choking and crying. He was holding me so tightly that I couldn't see his face, but it was a really long time before he let me go (29)

During this first meeting Gale even kissed Katniss, which really confused her. Next time they met, however, both pretended that “the kiss had never happened” and Katniss had given up hope “of resuming [their] old, uncomplicated friendship” (31). To make matters worse, President Snow knows about their kiss. When he visits Katniss on the day of the Victory Tour's start, Snow threatens Katniss to kill Gale if she does not convince the people in Panem and also himself that she loves Peeta and that her “trick with the berries . . . [was] an act of love” (24). So again, Katniss and Peeta have to perform their love relationship in order to save Gale's life and also because “[t]he audience will be expecting the pair of lovebirds who won the Hunger Games” (17). Again, Katniss is left in an emotional turmoil. When Katniss confides everything about Snow's threat to Haymitch, she realizes that in the end she will have to marry Peeta if she wants to save those she loves and cares for, because their performance of love will not be limited to the Victory Tour, as Haymitch explains to her, “You and Peeta, you'll be mentors now, every year from here on out. And every year they'll revisit the romance . . . , and you'll never, ever be able to do anything but live happily ever after with that boy” (50). From this moment on, she apprehends that even after the Games and the Victory Tour are over, she has to maintain her performance of heterosexual femininity, and she won't be able to lead a self-determined life in future. This moment of awareness is indicated in the following quote: “I will never have a life with Gale, even if I want to. I will never be allowed to live alone. I will have to be for ever in love with Peeta. The Capitol will insist on it” (50). Thereby, Katniss is again put into a passive, dependent and submissive role, in order to appeal to the audience and more importantly to convince President Snow. Katniss abandons the idea of an independent and autonomous future life in which she can make her own decisions, for saving her own life and the life of her loved ones. She states that “there's only one future, if I want to keep those I love alive and stay alive myself. I'll have to marry Peeta” (50).

For her performance of her love relationship with Peeta on the Victory Tour, Katniss once more needs to be prepared and beautified. Cinna's approach this time is to let Katniss appear “girlish, not sexy” (43), indicating that he wants her to seem innocent which should help her to convince the audience and Snow that by pulling out the berries she did not mean to oppose the Capitol. When Katniss is ready to get prepared and styled by her prep team, she notices that Peeta and his team are not present. Hence she asks Effie, “ ‘Doesn't he need

prepping?’ ”, and Effie responds, “ ‘Not the way you do’ “ (54). This clearly shows that there are different beauty standards for boys and girls, or men and women, as it was already suggested in *The Hunger Games*. Katniss considers this unequal treatment and the applied doubled standard as unfair, and she also remembers that this has been the case in the arena:

What does this mean? It means I get to spend the morning having the hair ripped off my body while Peeta sleeps in. I hadn't thought about it much, but in the arena at least some of the boys got to keep their body hair whereas none of the girls did. I can remember Peeta's now, as I bathed him by the stream. ... Only his face remained completely smooth. (54)

However, once it is certain that Katniss is going back into the arena, participating as a tribute in the Quarter Quell, the strategy and concept of how to represent Katniss in public shifts considerably. It can be argued that Cinna has initiated this transformation of her look because he, like Katniss, is aware that at least in some districts uprisings have already started and because she was not successful in convincing Snow of her love for Peeta. Furthermore, when Katniss meets Bonnie and Will in the woods, she even wonders if she is “the face of the hoped-for rebellion” and if the mockingjay, her token of her district in the Games, has indeed “become a symbol of resistance” (169). Having said this, Cinna has to have at least a vague idea of all these developments when he turns Katniss into a mockingjay for the final interview before the Quarter Quell. The change in Katniss's representation starts in a way that she is no longer portrayed as girlish and innocent because, as Cinna remarks, Katniss's “days of pink lipstick and ribbons are behind” (233) her. He determines to present her as rather strong, superior and threatening. Thus, the make-up she wears for the opening ceremonies features “dramatic highlights and dark shadows [with] [h]igh arching eyebrows, sharp cheekbones, smouldering eyes, deep purple lips” (232). Her costume is completely black and she wears a crown that is “made of heavy black metal, not gold”. When Cinna turns on the lights of Katniss's clothing it starts to illuminate and she feels like “a glowing ember”, and looking at herself in the mirror she sees “some unearthly being who looks like she might make her home in the volcano that destroyed so many in Haymitch's Quell. ... Katniss, the girl on fire .. is as deadly as fire itself” (233). To emphasize this strong and powerful look, Cinna gives Katniss instructions how to act when she is on the chariot riding through the Capitol, “[T]his time, no waving, no smiling. I just want you to look straight ahead, as if the entire audience is beneath your notice” (234). Obviously, Katniss has succeeded in making the intended impression with her costume and make-up, as Finnick's comment illustrates: “ ‘You're absolutely terrifying me in that get-up. What happened to the

pretty little-girl dresses?’ ” (236). Katniss really takes pleasure in being presented to the audience like that, and when she sees herself and Peeta on the screens she points out, “[W]e are not just beautiful, we are dark and powerful. No, more. We star-crossed lovers from District 12 ... do not seek the fan’s favour, grace them with our smiles, or catch their kisses. We are unforgiving”. She especially appreciates it because she does not have to pretend or perform an identity anymore that is unlike her own, and she loves “[g]etting to be [herself] at last” (240). Katniss’s representation of being strong and powerful culminates when her wedding dress, which President Snow ordered her to wear for the interview, is consumed by fire and leaves Katniss in a black dress with feathers and wings, embodying a mockingjay. Katniss notices that Caesar Flickerman, the interviewer, recognizes the mockingjay and she assumes that he is aware that it has “come to symbolize so much more” (285) and is not just her token. Notwithstanding, due to the change in the form of her public representation, Katniss is portrayed with rather masculine traits, which are, for example, strength, power and rebelliousness.

With regard to Katniss’s emotional state, however, she predominantly displays feminine characteristics, as for instance her insecurity about her feelings for both Peeta and Gale, and thus her incapacity to decide for one or the other. It seems quite complicated to trace Katniss’s emotional ups and downs and her conflict of feelings, and she also does not demonstrate a preference for either one of them. Principally, Katniss and Peeta spend the nights together because he can calm her down and comfort her when she has a nightmare. Moreover, she really seems to enjoy his company and likes to have him near her. However, on one occasion Katniss remarks that she “never know[s] when [he’s] having a nightmare” and so she is not able to put him at ease. To this, Peeta responds, “ ‘It’s not necessary. My nightmares are usually about losing you, ... I’m OK once I realize you’re here.’ “. This response makes Katniss feel uncomfortable and “awful, as if [she has] been using him in some terrible way”, although “he’s not pressing [her] to reply in kind, to make any declaration of love”. Afterwards, she even states that she feels “immoral about him being ... in [her] bed” (98), which already points to her purity. That is explicitly mentioned later in the novel when Peeta reveals to Katniss that this is the reason why some tributes have made fun of her (cf. 243-4). To make matters more complex, Gale confesses his love to her but Katniss does not feel the same way, or at least she does not want to admit it. Still, when Gale is in a critical condition after he has been whipped by Thread and needs to be cared for, Katniss decides for him and even kisses him in a moment when she is overwhelmed with emotions:

After a while, my fingers find his face. I touch parts of him I have never had cause to touch before. His heavy, dark eyebrows, the curve of his cheek, the line of his nose, the hollow at the base of his neck. I trace the outline of stubble on his jaw and finally work my way to his lips. Soft and full, slightly chapped. His breath warms my chilled skin. ... Gale is mine. I am his. Anything else is unthinkable. (133-4)

Shortly afterwards, she feels uneasy about it, is unsure about what it means when she says “I love Gale”, and she even hopes that he does not remember the following day. If he does so, “everything will just get more complicated and I really can’t think about kissing when I’ve got a rebellion to incite” (142). Immediately after these thoughts crossed her mind, Katniss asks for Peeta, suggesting a possible preference for Peeta. During the time of Katniss’s recovery from her injured foot, after jumping over the district’s fence, Peeta cares for and regularly visits her. They also start to spend time together working on the family book of herbs and other plants and they seem to enjoy “the first time [they’ve] ever done anything normal together” (183). Katniss even catches herself closely watching and observing Peeta:

I like to watch his hands as he works, making a blank page bloom with strokes of ink, adding touches of colour to our previously black and yellowish book. His face takes on a special look when he concentrates. ... I also become a little fixated on his eyelashes, which ordinarily you don’t notice much because they’re so blond. But up close, in the sunlight slanting in from the window they’re a light golden colour and so long I don’t see how they keep from getting all tangled up when he blinks. (183)

After the Quarter Quell has been announced, Peeta and Katniss are on the train on their way into the Capitol because they will again participate as tributes in the Hunger Games, this time being a Quarter Quell. Only then, Katniss does not feel guilty or bad anymore when she and Peeta embrace each other because she is sure that she will never see Gale again, “He pulls me in close and buries his face in my hair. ... It feels so good, so impossibly good, that I know I will not be the first to let go. And why should I? I have said goodbye to Gale” (218). Likewise, in the Training Center they are eager to “spend every possible minute of the rest of [their lives]” (275) with each other and so they also spend most of the nights together in Katniss’s room. Moreover, they spend a whole day on the rooftop enjoying each other’s company. Even when Peeta points out “his undying love” for Katniss, she feels “so warm and relaxed” instead of “guilty and awful” since she is sure about her impending death in the arena and thus she does not worry “about a future [she’ll] never have” (277). So only because Katniss is sure that she will never see Gale anymore, which was not her decision but just happened to be, she can fully devote herself to Peeta. This again emphasizes Katniss’s insecurity about her feelings and her inability to autonomously choose either Peeta or Gale.

Peeta is for the greater part represented with stereotypically female characteristics. For instance, he is desperately in love with Katniss and he does not disguise his feelings. Quite the contrary, he even admits to her that he “was jealous of [Gale] before [he] even officially met [her]” (58) and also apologizes for holding it against her that her love was merely an act in the Games. Still, Peeta was certainly hurt when Katniss confessed this to him because now, being on the Victory Tour, he calls himself “wounded” (59) as he suggests to her to only be friends. Additionally, Peeta is extremely disappointed when Katniss suggests acting out the marriage proposal in public, which she does not understand because she “thought that he wanted it, anyway”. Haymitch explains to her that he did not want it “like this ...[h]e wanted it to be real” (84) and not performed. This again shows the difference between Katniss and Peeta, as she thinks rather rationally and he is more emotionally driven. Even if Peeta would prefer it to be real, he still plays his role in the star-crossed lovers script. Beyond that, he carries the performance of their heterosexual love relationship to excess by announcing that Katniss is pregnant, and thereby performs masculinity. Peeta can also be very strong and determined, two typically masculine traits, when necessary. This is the case after the rules for the Quarter Quell has been announced and Peeta wants that the victor is again from District 12, which in other words means that Katniss has to win because he is willing to die for her. After Peeta announces that they are going to train like Careers, “[h]e sweeps out of the room, slamming the front door” (207). In order to save Katniss’s life, Peeta has to be strong and tough during the time of training before the Quarter Quell begins. Katniss describes him as “a very demanding trainer, always pushing, always insisting Haymitch and [her] run faster, eat more, know [their] enemy better” (218).

Gale embodies the stereotypical masculine character in *Catching Fire*. In contrast to Katniss, he advocates a rebellion when she tells him about the uprising in District 8, and supports the idea of “join[ing] the fight” (114) against the Capitol. Katniss also describes him as courageous and states that “[h]e was born a rebel” (135). When it comes to his relationship with Katniss, he feels betrayed and threatened by the upcoming wedding with Peeta, as Katniss observes, “His temper can’t quite mask the hurt, the sense of betrayal he feels at my engagement to Peeta” (107). Gale, however, confesses his love to Katniss which makes her feel pressured into also making a declaration of love, but the only answer she can give is “ ‘I know.’ “ (111). Gale’s reaction of being disappointed and upset shows that he, in a way, demands the same feelings from Katniss which means that he wants her to choose him over Peeta. Even though Katniss assures him that her relationship with Peeta is “just part of the

act” (108), Gale implicitly urges her to reciprocate his feelings through his confession of love. Thereby, Gale intends to control Katniss or, as Henthorne phrases it, “to prove his power over her” (58) and in this way he clearly aims to confirm his stereotypical masculinity.

Regarding violence, Collins has focused in *Catching Fire* more on, as Troyer calls it, “dominant violence” (99) which the Capitol resorts to in order to maintain control over the districts’ people, and not so much on the violent acts the individual characters perform to harm or kill each other. One of the first of several instances in which dominant violence is used happens in District 11 when the old man who whistled the mockingjay tune to Katniss is killed by Peacekeepers. Another instance that illustrates the Capitol’s cruelty is Gale’s whipping, which Katniss describes the moment she sees it, “Gale’s wrists are bound to a wooden post. ... He slumps unconscious on his knees, held up only by the ropes at his wrists. What used to be his back is a raw, bloody slab of meat” (Collins, *CF* 113). The last incident that will be mentioned here is the cruel scene when Cinna is brutally battered by three Peacekeepers before Katniss’s eyes. But Katniss is unable to help and rescue him because she is trapped in the glass cylinder in which she will be raised into the arena. However, before this happens, she has to witness the Capitol’s brutality towards Cinna:

Suddenly the door behind him bursts open and three Peacekeepers spring into the room. Two pin Cinna’s arm behind him and cuff him while the third hits him in the temple with such force he’s knocked to his knees. But they keep hitting him with metal-studded gloves, opening gashes on his face and body. I’m screaming my head off, banging on the unyielding glass, trying to reach him. The Peacekeepers ignore me completely as they drag Cinna’s limp body from the room. All that’s left are the smears of blood on the floor. (296)

Katniss is appalled by the violence the Capitol uses against the citizens so that she, before entering the arena, decides to fight the Capitol in a rebellion. The arena, which is constructed like a clock, is full of terrible threats as well. Due to the arena’s design Katniss asserts that “[e]ach hour begins a new horror” (365), for example, a poisonous fog, mutations of monkeys, blood rain or jabberjays imitating the tributes’ friends and family members. Here, too, the focus is on the violence used by the Capitol against the tributes.

As a response to the Capitol’s dominant violence, there is Katniss who in *Catching Fire* starts to embody the so-called “resistant or revolutionary violence” (Troyer 100). Katniss is, of course, a strong female protagonist and thus can be seen as a representation of “an empowered form of femininity” (James 171) and also as an attempt to challenge gender stereotypes. However, through Katniss’s transformation described above, her sexual

attraction is highlighted and thereby traditional gender roles are supported. Katniss has become the face of the rebellion because of her new style of outfit and make-up, which both stress her sexual desirability. Cinna abandoned the girlish way of presenting her to the audience so that it can be inferred that he chooses sexy instead. So he supports rather than challenges typical gender roles by “stressing the tough girl’s sexual desirability” (171). James calls this “the eroticised association between violence and women that is prevalent in popular culture” (171) and hence underlines Kimmel’s assertion that violence is “perhaps the most gendered behavior in our culture” (250).

1.2.3. *Mockingjay*

In the trilogy’s last novel Katniss again takes on a “role they designed for [her]. The symbol of the revolution. The Mockingjay” (Collins, *MJ* 11). After she has decided to become the Mockingjay, “the actual leader, the face, the voice, the embodiment of the revolution” (12), Katniss is worried that the rebels will kill Peeta because he is regarded a traitor by many rebels of District 13 after he has called for a ceasefire. But her sister Prim reminds her of how important she actually is for the rebellion and that “[i]mportant people usually get what they want” (38). So Katniss presents some conditions she has to President Coin and some other Capitol rebels, for example being allowed to go hunting with Gale and the immunity of Peeta and the other victors captured by the Capitol. After the rebels accept Katniss’s conditions, President Coins presents them to the residents of District 13 and adds her demands on Katniss, which basically says that she has to follow the rebels’ rules and comply with her mission. If Katniss “step[s] out of line [they’re] all dead” (65).

Since Katniss, as the Mockingjay, is again broadcasted on TV, her “prep team has to make [her] pretty and *then* damage, burn and scar [her] in a more attractive way”, even though Katniss believed that as a rebel she would “get to look more like [herself]” (67). When Katniss watches her first video tape she does not even recognize herself: “I watch the woman on the screen. Her body seems larger in stature, more imposing than mine. Her face smudged but sexy. Her brows black and drawn in an angle of defiance. [...] I do not know who this person is” (79). This clearly shows that the rebels intend to present Katniss as a strong, rebellious and erotically attractive woman. Like in *Catching Fire*, this representation stresses her sexual appeal and hence traditional gender stereotypes are supported. Everyone in the film studio, however, is excited about her appearance and the effect she has, but when

she tries to say the line they prepared for her, she cannot deliver a convincing performance. Haymitch comments on her attempted act, “ ‘And that, my friends, is how a revolution dies.’ “ (80). Even though Katniss is enraged about this comment she knows that Haymitch’s criticism is true and understands that she has some constraints, “I can’t pull it off. I can’t stand in a television studio wearing a costume and make-up in a cloud of fake smoke and rally the districts to victory. It’s amazing, really, how long I have survived the cameras. The credit for that, of course, goes to Peeta. Alone, I can’t be the Mockingjay” (81). For one thing, Katniss appreciates that she can only play her part successfully in “real-life circumstances” (85) and not in scripted scenes, and for another thing, Katniss realizes that in order to perform convincingly in front of the cameras she needs Peeta, she cannot do that only by herself. With regard to the first point, Haymitch is also aware of the fact that Katniss can only perform plausibly if “no one [tells] her what to do or say” (84) so therefore he convinces the rebels to send her into real combat. Additionally, another rebel suggests to remove Katniss’s heavy make-up and adds, “She’s still a girl and you make her look thirty-five. Feels wrong. Like something the Capitol would do” (84). After Katniss washes the make-up off her face and reveals the scar on her arm where Johanna removed the tracker, she looks in the mirror and seems pleased that she recognizes herself again, “The person in the mirror looks ragged, with her uneven skin and tired eyes, but she looks like me” (87). Clearly, Katniss does not feel comfortable when she is beautified and she prefers to look like herself, without highlighting or feigning her feminine attributes. Moreover, Katniss is put in an armor which consists of a helmet, a bulletproof vest, an earpiece for communicating and a gas mask, and it is all meant to keep her safe in the combat. This special equipment and fighting in a war is stereotypically associated with men and directly links to Katniss’s ability as a hunter. In this way, Katniss is predominantly represented with traditional masculine qualities when she is sent into the war zone. There, in District 8, Katniss witnesses the destruction of a provisionally established hospital for war wounded. She becomes so furious about this cruel attack that the accompanying film team manages to get a very powerful shot for the propos.

When Katniss and her team are back in District 13 she is shocked about how Peeta’s condition and appearance is getting worse every time she sees him in a TV broadcast, and she starts to figure out that Snow uses him against her with the objective to break her. This is only possible because Katniss still loves Peeta, or at least deeply cares about him. Finnick tells Katniss that it is clearly recognizable that she loves Peeta, “I’m not saying in what way.

Maybe you don't know yourself. But anyone paying attention could see how much you care about him" (174). Following that, Katniss remembers President Snow's visit when he asked her to convince him, "to erase any doubts of [her] love for Peeta. ... And in doing so, [she] gave him the weapon he needed to break [her]" (175). As already mentioned above, Katniss knows that it is difficult for her to be the Mockingjay without Peeta, but now with the awareness that "everything [she] say[s] will be directly taken out on Peeta [and] [r]esult in his torture" (182) it is virtually impossible for her to play that role. When they are trying to shoot another propo above ground in District 13 Katniss suffers a mental breakdown during her conversation with Haymitch:

"All I can think of is – what he's going to do to Peeta – because I'm the Mockingjay!" ...

"I know." Haymitch's arm tightens around me.

"Did you see? How weird he acted? What are they – doing to him?" I'm gasping for air between sobs, but I manage one last phrase. "It's my fault!" And then I cross some line into hysteria and there's a needle in my arm and the world slips away. (183)

Katniss is not only broken because of her love for Peeta, she is also completely overcome with hysteria. So her heterosexual love for Peeta, which she previously only pretended, seems to have come true. Furthermore, she is completely overcome with hysteria, and being hysterical, emotional and lacking in self-control is traditionally associated with weakness in our contemporary Western society, and all of these traits are stereotypically attributed to women. Therefore, Katniss is depicted with traditional feminine characteristics as well.

As soon as the rebels realize that Katniss "cannot perform her heroics while Peeta is still in pain" (Broad 122), they send a rescue team into the Capitol that is "going to try to get Peeta out" (Collins, *CF* 183). When Katniss is told that Peeta is back in District 13, alive and safe, she is really happy and excited to see him: "I'm light-headed with giddiness. What will I say? Oh, who cares what I say? Peeta will be ecstatic no matter what I do. He'll probably be kissing me anyway" (197). However, at their first encounter Peeta tries to choke Katniss because, as she afterwards learns, he has been hijacked by the Capitol which means that he has been tortured and has undergone "a type of fear conditioning" (201). As a result of this, Peeta sees Katniss "as life-threatening [so that] he might try to kill her" (203). Katniss does not want to believe that Peeta forgot that he loves her, but it is even worse than that because he thinks that she is a mutt. Katniss is completely devastated, "Not only does he hate me and want to kill me, he no longer believes I'm human. It was less painful being strangled" (213). Since Katniss cannot stand seeing Peeta not being himself anymore she needs to get away

from him in order to be able to perform her role, “If you want me to be the Mockingjay, you’ll have to send me away” (214).

Concerning the love triangle, Katniss is still not able to make a decision between Peeta and Gale. On the one hand, she genuinely cares about Peeta and she can’t stand it when he is in pain. After Peeta has been hijacked, Gale even points out to Katniss that he will never have a chance if Peeta does not recover, “I’ll never compete with that. No matter how much pain I’m in. ... You’ll never be able to let him go. You’ll always feel wrong about being with me”. On the other hand, when Katniss and Gale are in District 2 together, Katniss believes that she has lost Peeta forever, “that he’ll never come back to [her]” (221), and so she kisses Gale because she is “so desperately lonely [she] can’t stand it” (222). Nevertheless, Gale rejects her by stating that “it’s like kissing someone who’s drunk. It doesn’t count” (222) because Katniss does not know what is going on in her head in this moment. By this he infers that she is still confused, unsure and torn between the two of them. Thus, she is unable to exclusively decide for him, which seems to be extremely important for Gale. Additionally, by the time they are in the Capitol, Peeta still can’t remember many things but also misremembers certain events. So the members of the squad help him to bring back his memories with “a game called ‘Real or Not Real’ “ (305). By Peeta’s use of this game the reader learns that Katniss still cares about Peeta and still tries to protect him, even though he has tried to kill her:

“You’re still trying to protect me. Real or not real,” he whispers.
“Real,” I answer. (340-1)

When they are hiding in Tigris’s basement, Katniss overhears a conversation between Gale and Peeta. They are debating on whom of the two of them Katniss loves but they eventually agree that “it’s Katniss’s problem. Who to choose” (371). But it happens differently. In the end, Katniss herself does not get a chance to choose either of them. It seems that it simply happens to be that she ends up with Peeta in District 12. Certainly, there is also no reference to somebody who has decided that Gale goes to District 2 and Peeta can stay with Katniss, but from the moment on she tells Haymitch that she “want[s] to be surprised” (427) of who else, except her mother, won’t be in District 12 it is clear that she was not involved in that decision. Her fate is decided by somebody else, and as before she “yields to others to make decisions for her” (Broad 125), like, for example, her appearance as the Mockingjay or her feigned relationship with Peeta. For Broad, this “resolution of the triangle ... is entirely passive” because “in the end, the men make the choice for [Katniss]”

(124). The epilogue provides a vision into the future, where Katniss and Peeta's children run around and "play in the Meadow" (Collins, *MJ* 437). Even though she starts to go hunting again when she is back in District 12, the strong and independent Katniss from the beginning is finally relegated to the domestic sphere and also excluded from power and authority, since there is no reference to her being involved in the government or any other political affairs. In this regard, Broad refers to O'Keefe's term of the " 'cop out pattern' in which 'heroines ultimately [give] up their independent vision and [subside] ... into traditional behavior' " (125). Broad even goes further and argues that "Katniss is hardly a feminist figurehead" because "she is a passive heroine, manipulated into outfits, relationships, arenas and TV shoots, trying to figure out what everyone wants from her while asserting little of her own needs and goals" (125).

All in all it can be said that Katniss exhibits again, like in the first two novels, a mixture of feminine and masculine traits, through which the binary gender system is challenged. Collins's intention might have been to argue that "rigid gender norms don't work" (Gilbert-Hickey 101), which, however, can be doubted as Katniss ends up in a passive, dependent and stereotypically feminine position. On top of that, she finally is represented as "a hopeless, shell-shocked lunatic" (425) who needs continuous treatment by psychiatrist. Troyer considers this to be "the effects of violence", more specifically he regards this to be the "severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)" (102).

Katniss's rejection of the Capitol's violence, hence of male, dominant violence, also persists in *Mockingjay*. Nevertheless, Katniss has to discern that the commission of cruelties of this type is not restricted to the Capitol but that "this sort of thing goes on in [District] 13 as well" (Collins, *MJ* 56). The instance when she realizes this for the first time is when she, Plutarch and Gale release her prep team from the confinement, but also from punishment and torture, in District 13. Venia, Flavius and Octavia are frightened and have open sores on their wrists from the handcuffs when they are found and rescued. At the sight of "a metal grate over a circular opening in the floor ... [Katniss's] stomach contracts when [she] think[s] of why a room would need a drain" (56). Another situation in which President Coin makes use of violence is when she orders the dropping of the silver parachutes in front of Snow's mansion, which explode and kill all the children there, including Katniss's sister Prim. At first Katniss goes into hysterics because she is uncertain about whether she should believe Snow that the parachutes were not his order. When President Coin finally suggests to have one final Hunger Games, she is aware that Coin is as cruel as Snow. An event in which the

Capitol, that is President Snow, acts out violence is the bombing of the provisional hospital in District 8. Before that, Katniss has visited this hospital and has seen all the wounded people there, which adds to her shock and lack of understanding of why someone would “target people who are already dying” (110). Only a few moments after she has witnessed the attack her shock “begins to give way to fury” (111) and thus the camera team is able to shoot a very powerful propaganda spot.

Katniss does not only reject dominant violence, acted out by one of the two governments, but she also has objections to Gale’s suggestion of blowing up the Nut, the mountain in District 2 where most of the Capitol’s military resources are located. Gale’s proneness to violence is in accordance with his general representation of stereotypical masculine traits. Katniss is bewildered by Gale’s intention to condemn everybody inside the Nut to death, “Gale has no interest in preserving the lives of those in the Nut. No interest in caging the prey for later use. This is one of his death traps” (227). However, Katniss is unable to express her disapproval of this plan and wishes that Peeta would be with her because “he would be able to articulate why it is wrong to be exchanging fire when people, any people, are trying to claw their way out of the mountain” (236).

After the rebels have won and Coin is Panem’s new president, Katniss knows that the violence and terror will continue in the same way as it happened under President Snow, “Nothing has changed. Nothing will ever change now” (417). This is the moment when she determines to finally end the cycle of violence. But this is only possible because she agrees to have one final Hunger Games and thereby pretends to be on Coin’s side. As a result, Coin does not hide somewhere at Snow’s supposed assassination, which gives Katniss the chance to kill Coin instead of Snow. So, Katniss’s last act of violence is meant to end all the violence hereafter. And once more, Katniss does have a valid reason for engaging in a violent act. Despite, or probably because of, Katniss aversion to the use of violence, “her final act of aggression is ... to condemn ... the system of violence itself” (Troyer 103). This very act comprises both femininity and masculinity, since she is motivated by the “ ‘feminine’ care ethic” (Gilbert-Hickey 104) to end the violence for all the people of Panem through a stereotypical masculine act of violence. In short, Katniss thereby displays, like partly throughout all three novels, feminine and masculine characteristics.

1.3. Symbolism in *The Hunger Games* trilogy

The Hunger Games trilogy is full of metaphors and symbols that are “crafted as tools of destruction and empowerment, oppression and emancipation” (Olthouse 42). Moreover, a majority of the characters’ names are also very significant and carry a deeper, symbolic meaning, and they have its origin in nature, history or literature. Due to this omnipresence of symbols and metaphors and in order to promote a deeper understanding of them, a selection of the most substantial ones will be elaborated on in the following.

The most prominent symbol that is present throughout the whole trilogy is the one of the Mockingjay. Initially, a mockingjay refers to the hybrid bird species that developed from a “crossbreeding between mockingbirds and jabberjays” (51). The jabberjays were originally created by the Capitol to record conversations between the rebels during the Dark Days and then repeat them in the Capitol. But when the rebels began to feed them wrong messages, the Capitol simply left the jabberbays behind in the woods, where they “mated with female mockingbirds, creating an entirely new species” (Collins, *CF* 105), the mockingjays. In *The Hunger Games*, a mockingjay merely serves as Katniss’s token of her district, which she wears on a pin in the arena. As the story progresses, the image of the mockingjay has taken on greater significance, and Katniss realizes in *Catching Fire* that she is “the mockingjay. The one that survived despite the Capitol’s plans. The symbol of the rebellion” (434). Collins herself further elaborates this in an interview:

Now the thing about the mockingjays is that they were never meant to be created. They were not part of the Capitol’s design. So here’s this creature that the Capitol never meant to exist, and through the will of survival, this creature exists. ...

Symbolically, I suppose, Katniss is something like a mockingjay in and of herself. She is a girl who should never have existed. (Margolis 26)

In the 74th Hunger Games Katniss’s ally Rue tells her that she makes use of the mockingjays’ ability to convey messages at home in her district. She does “a special little song” which “the mockingjays spread ... around the orchard” (Collins, *HG* 248) whereby the other workers know that it is the end of the workday. Rue also warns Katniss that the mockingjays “can be dangerous, though, if you get too near their nests” (248). In connection with this, Olthouse asserts that the metaphor of the mockingjay precisely describes Katniss: “She’s a messenger, a symbol of hope. Yet she’s also a fighter, battling at first to protect the ones she loves but ultimately to protect all of the innocents and the future generations of Panem” (51). As soon as Katniss deliberately takes on the role of the Mockingjay, the symbol

for the rebellion, she chooses to not only guard and defend her loved ones but all the innocent people of Panem.

Food, in particular bread, is another conspicuous symbol that appears in *The Hunger Games* trilogy. Bread is not merely an article of food to satisfy hunger and nourish people. In general, it is also seen as “the source of life, [and it] is one of the most potent symbols in the Bible and world myth” (Frankel 64). In *The Hunger Games* trilogy, however, it signifies much more than this. There, bread “is the comfort of home. The warmth of love. A marker of class. A means of communication. A test. A gift. Above all, bread in these texts serves as a signifier of rebellion” (Gilbert-Hickey 96). In the state of Panem, hunger is one of the Capitol’s means to keep the citizens in the districts under control. Due to the shortage of food, Katniss goes hunting in the woods outside of District 12, which is actually illegal but she is determined to support her family. So this gathering of food is already her first step “toward an individual rebellion against class norms” (97). Throughout the trilogy, many instances can be found where bread points to a rebellion against the Capitol. For example, when Haymitch is told that Katniss has shot an arrow in the direction of the Gamemakers because she was angry that they did not pay attention to her, he says, “ ‘Well, that’s that,’ ... [and] [t]hen he butters a roll” (Collins, *HG* 123). Another instance of this occurs when Peeta announces in the interview before the Quarter Quell that he and Katniss are already married because they did the marriage ritual of District 12, which involves the toasting of bread. By this, Peeta on the one hand tries to win the favor of the Capitol citizens, but on the other hand this is an act of rebellion itself because through their participation in the Quarter Quell the Capitol actually denies them the opportunity to get married. Katniss herself does not only revolt against the Capitol, she also opposes President Coin and her military and authoritarian way of governing District 13, especially the rigorous rationing of food. Her defiance of Coin starts after she has found her prep team confined and mistreated for stealing a slice of bread in District 13. This reminds her very much of how Gale has been punished for the turkey back in District 12, already indicating that President Coin is not so different from President Snow. Thereupon, Katniss signifies the beginning of her rebellion against Coin by stating that she is “defending anyone who’s treated like that for taking a slice of bread” (Collins, *MJ* 61).

Bread does not only signify rebellion in *The Hunger Games*, it is also a way of communicating especially “between those outside of the Hunger Games arena and those within”. For example, the people of District 11, which is Rue’s district, send Katniss a loaf of bread as a thank you “for honoring the death of their tribute” (Gilbert-Hickey 98). Katniss

instantly knows that the bread is from District 11, so she gives thanks to the people there out loud because she “want[s] them to know [she] know[s] where it came from. That the full value of their gift has been recognized” (Collins, *MJ* 279). Haymitch as well uses food to send messages to Katniss. In *The Hunger Games*, for instance, Haymitch wants Katniss to sustain the performance of the love relationship with Peeta, and Katniss soon realizes that “[o]ne kiss equals one pot of broth” (Collins, *HG* 305). Likewise, in the Quarter Quell arena, Haymitch sends a loaf of bread after Katniss has formed an alliance with Finnick and so she remembers “how Haymitch’s gifts are often timed to send a message, [she] make[s] a note to [her]self. *Be friends with Finnick. You’ll get food*” (Collins, *CF* 355). In addition to that, the rebels also send bread rolls in order to inform the tributes in the arena about the place and time of rescue. After the rescue, Katniss finally gets to know all the details: “The bread we received in the arena was code for the time of the rescue. The district where the bread originated indicated the day. Three. The number of rolls the hour. Twenty four” (432).

While in most of Panem’s districts food, or rather the lack of food, is used to disempower and control the people, in the Capitol the purpose of the excess of food is to appease the citizens there. This refers to the Roman ideology of “*Panem et Circenses* [that] translates into ‘Bread and Circuses’”. So the people in the Capitol, “in return for full bellies and entertainment, ... had given up their political responsibilities and therefore their power”. After this is explained to Katniss, she understands that the districts’ function is “[t]o provide the bread and circuses” (Collins, *MJ* 249). In consideration of all this, bread can be both, “a pacifier, and a weapon” (Gilbert-Hickey 103).

Since Katniss is called “the girl who was on fire” (Collins, *HG* 77), fire is also an important symbol in this trilogy. Cinna, Katniss’s stylist, is the first one to call her that way as he is the one who designs the flaming costumes with the intention to “reflect the strength and defiance in Katniss’s heart” (Frankel 66). Cinna sees it as his “job to make the District Twelve tributes unforgettable” (Collins, *HG* 76) and with the help of the costumes he wants Katniss to be recognized by the audience when she is in the arena. Fire is, however, interpreted in different ways by different people in specific situations so that the associated meanings of fire in *The Hunger Games* are paradoxical. On the one hand, Katniss as “the girl who was on fire”, it signifies hope of a better future society for the people of Panem, and so fire can be seen as “life sustaining” (Olthouse 43). On the other hand, fire itself can be dangerous as you can get injured by serious burns, similarly to “the revolutionary ideas that Katniss inspires [which] result in the deaths of many of Panem’s citizens” (43). Moreover,

the audience sees Katniss through her representations with fire as strong, defiant and desirable, but the Capitol, especially President Snow, views her as a threat. Due to that, the Capitol tries to make her look weak in the arena when they direct a “wall of fire” (Collins, *HG* 200) against her. By transforming the fire into a threat for Katniss, the Capitol tries to “co-opt this metaphor” and attempts “to make a joke of her” (Olthouse 43).

Finally, fire becomes a symbol for the rebellion as well, especially after Katniss has accepted the role of the Mockingjay, when she tries to shoot down Capitol bombers with fire and explosive arrows in District 8. After that she is shocked about the fact that innocent and already wounded people have been targeted, and so she sends a message to the Capitol, “Fire is catching! ... And if we burn, you burn with us!” (Collins, *MJ* 111). Thereby, Katniss suggests that the fire, thus the rebellion, is by then spreading out all over Panem and that they, the rebels, will fight back. So, in this way, Katniss “becomes the leader for the rebels, surrounded by the flames of war” (Frankel 67).

Many of the characters’ typical features are reflected in their names and their derivation. In District 12 a lot of names are derived from nature, for example Katniss, Primrose and Gale, which highlights their relationship with nature and their natural beauty, but also links them to the “simplicity and bounty of the country” (Frankel 11). Katniss is named for the plant of the same name. The katniss plant grows in ponds in the woods and is described, by Katniss herself, as “[t]all with leaves like arrowheads. Blossoms with three white petals” (Collins, *HG* 60). Not only does the shape of the katniss plant’s leaves link to Katniss’s hunting with bow and arrow, but also its German name, which is ‘Pfeilkraut’. The roots of it are very nourishing and “as good as any potato”. Katniss’s father once even said to her, “As long as you can find yourself, you’ll never starve” (60). The plant’s property of being highly nutritious certainly points to Katniss’ role as the family’s provider. Frankel specifies this, “Her entire life is devoted to nourishing, first as a hunter/gatherer, and then as the wealthy Victor of the games” (13). Katniss’s sister Primrose, Prim for short, is named after the primrose flower, which “is pretty and sweet smelling but won’t feed people” (54). The features of primroses are in line with Katniss’s description of Prim as “sweet [and] tiny” (Collins, *HG* 31) and “as lovely as the primrose for which she was named (3). The primrose is moreover well known “for its medicinal uses” (Hardy), which very well corresponds to Prim’s wish to become a doctor. Prim already helps her mother treating and healing people in District 12, and when they are in District 13 she “help[s] out in the hospital [and she is] ... taking the medic courses”. She even thinks that “they’re going to train [her] to be a doctor”

(Collins, *MJ* 167). Hardy also points out that primroses are also used in cosmetics, for example in creams, for smoother skin. Therefore, she infers that “[g]entle Prim is both a healer and a softening agent herself, rounding off Katniss’s rough edges and inspiring affection in everyone who knows her” (Hardy). Finally, Gale is also named for a plant, the sweet or myrica gale. This is “a bushy shrub with bitter-tasting leaves”, which is applicable “for many rural uses just as Gale himself is an excellent trapper, hunter, and gatherer” (Frankel 17). Moreover, ‘gale’ can also refer to “a wind of considerable strength” (*Oxford English Dictionary*) that can do a lot of damage. With reference to Gale being “born a rebel” (Collins, *CF* 135) and his desire for a revolution, he is inclined to accept losses in order to overthrow the Capitol. With his cruelty and violence also turned against innocent citizens, which Katniss disapproves of, “he harms both sides in the war” (Frankel 18).

Peeta is obviously not named for a plant, but his name is a homophone of ‘pita’, which is “a flat, hollow, slightly leavened bread originally common in Middle Eastern Countries” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In fact, “the flat, dense loaves” (Collins, *HG* 8) of bread people make of the small amount of grain they get in District 12 “might even resemble pita bread” (Frankel 15). Thus, there is a connection between Peeta’s name and his family’s business, the bakery. Moreover, Katniss calls him “the boy with the bread” (Collins, *HG* 107) after he secretly gave her two loaves of bread, which “gave [her] hope” (37), when she was starving.

In contrast to District 12, where a lot of names are derived from nature, “the Capitol is full of Roman names, echoing their obsession with heedless luxury” (Frankel 11), for example Claudius Templesmith, Plutarch Heavensbee or Coriolanus Snow. It would go beyond the constraints of this thesis to discuss the origin of each of these names individually, but they all point to their extravagant lifestyle in the Capitol, which resembles the one of classical Rome, consisting of an “excess of food” and “the ultimate entertainment” known as “*Panem et Circenses*” (Collins, *MJ* 249). Another reference to the Roman way of life or Rome itself, is the name of the state in *The Hunger Games*, namely ‘Panem’. Frankel suggests that Collins thereby “stresses how her world mirrors ancient Rome – the Capitol kept overfed and swaddled in luxuries, while the outlying districts scream for revolution” (82).

In conclusion, in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, there is a pervasive abundance of symbols and metaphors, which are of considerable significance and carry a deeper meaning. The discussion of the small selection of the most frequent and important ones above should

shed light on the deeper symbolic meanings and provide a clearer understanding of the characters' motives and causes, and of the story itself.

2. The *Divergent* trilogy by Veronica Roth

Veronica Roth's *Divergent* series is a very popular and highly praised dystopian trilogy for young adults. It consists of *Divergent*, Roth's debut novel of 2011, *Insurgent*, published in 2012, and *Allegiant*, released in 2013. Both *Divergent* and *Insurgent* reached number one on the *New York Times* list of bestselling young adult books, and the whole series was number one of the *New York Times* list of bestselling children's series for a long time. Similar to the *Hunger Games* trilogy, film adaptations of *Divergent* and *Insurgent* have been released in 2014 and 2015 respectively, which were both box office successes. *Allegiant*, in the manner of the *Hunger Games*' final novel, was split into a two-part film version, from which the first part, called *The Divergent Series: Allegiant*, was recently released in March 2016. Unfortunately, it was not as successful as the series' two previous movies on its debut (cf. Child). *Divergent* and *Insurgent* are written from the heroine's perspective, but in contrast to *The Hunger Games* trilogy, the final novel of the *Divergent* trilogy is not only written from the female protagonist's but also from the male main character's perspective.

The *Divergent* trilogy is set in a post-apocalyptic Chicago and its society is divided into five factions, namely Candor, Erudite, Amity, Dauntless, and Abnegation. Each of these factions values one main virtue the highest. That is honesty for Candor, intelligence for Erudite, peacefulness for Amity, bravery for Dauntless, and selflessness for Abnegation. People from each faction also contribute "to a different sector of society" according to each faction's disposition: Abnegation provides "selfless leaders in government", Candor people are "trustworthy and sound leaders in law", "intelligent teachers and researchers" are from Erudite, the Amity faction supplies "understanding counselors and caretakers", and the Dauntless members are designated for protecting the society "from threats both within and without" (Roth, *Div* 43). The factions' purpose is to avoid war and to create "a better society and a better world" (44).

Each year, the 16-year-old members of each faction have to take an aptitude test to determine the faction for which each is best suited. After receiving the test's results, it is up to the adolescents to choose whether to stay with their family's faction or to transfer into a

new one. In each faction, the 16-year-olds have to undergo an initiation process which they have to successfully complete in order to become full members of the respective faction. Those who fail to pass initiation become factionless and thus have to live in poverty and are excluded from society. While the majority of the test takers fit perfectly into one of the five factions, there are also some who receive inconclusive results of their aptitude tests and thus are suitable for more than one faction. These people are called “Divergents” and they are warned to never share their test results because “[d]ivergence is extremely dangerous” (23). If authorities find out about Divergent people, they will kill them because they are able to be aware of and manipulate simulations and thus they cannot be controlled like the rest of the residents. The trilogy starts with Beatrice Prior, the protagonist, taking the aptitude test and finding out that she has an aptitude for three different factions, making her a Divergent.

2.1. Plot

Divergent starts out on the day of the aptitude test. Beatrice Prior, the narrator and protagonist, is a born Abnegation as her brother Caleb who “is not quite a year older than” (Roth, *Div* 5) she is, which is why they both take the test on the same day. Beatrice’s test results are inconclusive since she is suited for three factions, which are Abnegation, Erudite and Dauntless, which means that she is Divergent. Tori, the Dauntless woman who administered Beatrice’s test, cautions her against telling somebody about her test results. On the following day, on which the Choosing Ceremony takes place, Beatrice decides that she is “not selfless enough” (43) to stay in Abnegation and thus chooses to transfer to Dauntless. Caleb switches to Erudite, so their parents are left behind alone in Abnegation. Right after the ceremony, Beatrice and all the other Dauntless members set out for the Dauntless compound by train. This is when Beatrice has to prove her bravery for the first time by jumping on and off a moving train and by jumping off a building not knowing what is at the bottom.

Having arrived in the Dauntless area, Beatrice renames her Tris as this “new place, [and] a new name” (60) allow her to start a new life and adopt a new identity. She quickly becomes friends with three other transfers, namely Christina and Al, who are originally from Candor, and Al, who was Erudite before. However, she is in constant conflict with three other transfers, namely Peter, Drew, and Molly. Dauntless initiation is divided into three stages, and after each one the initiates are ranked, and at the end of this process only the top ten will be allowed to stay and become Dauntless members while the rest of them will become

factionless. The first stage of initiation is meant to prepare the initiates physically and thus it consists of learning, from their instructor Four and one of the Dauntless leaders Eric, how to shoot a gun and handle knives, and how to fight. For the Dauntless traditional game capture the flag, Tris is in Four's team. She has the idea of climbing the Ferris wheel in order to see where the other, Eric's, team is and so both, Tris and Four, go up the wheel. On the wheel, they are very close together and this is the first time Tris realizes that she is attracted to Four.

On Visiting Day, Tris's mother comes to visit her. Due to her broad knowledge of the Dauntless compound and of the initiation process Tris finds out that her "mother was Dauntless" (188). After her mother asks Tris to visit her brother Caleb in Erudite and "tell him to research the simulation serum" (187) because she herself cannot do so, Tris comes to know that people from Abnegation are no longer allowed in the Erudite compound. Moreover, Tris discovers that the Erudite arouse opposition to Abnegation in various reports, especially criticizing Abnegation's leader Marcus very harshly for abusing his son, and also denigrating Tris' parents because both of their children transferred into another faction.

Even though Tris is skinny and not very strong at the beginning of the initiation process, she grows stronger through training and finally manages to finish stage one in sixth place. Peter, one of Tris's cruel enemies, is ranked second but he is not satisfied with this place. He is eager for being the best of all initiates and so he stabs Edward, who is ranked first, in the eye. As a result, Edward leaves initiation.

In the second stage of initiation, the initiates need to face their deepest fears in simulations. When under a simulation Tris is aware of it and she is also able to manipulate it due to her Divergence. The other initiates who are not Divergent are not aware that they are under a simulation. Four oversees these simulations and that is why he learns that Tris is Divergent. Because Tris performs well in her simulations and knows how to control her fears she is ranked first. Tris now poses a threat to Peter and Drew, who attack her with Al's help, but Four manages to save her before she is being killed. Initiation's third and final stage consists of going through a fear landscape in which all the initiates, whether Divergent or not, are aware that they are in a simulation. This stage's focus is on preparing the initiates mentally because they are required "to combine the physical abilities [they] learned in stage one with the emotional mastery [they] learned in stage two" (297). During this stage, the affection between Tris and Four grows, so much that he even lets her into his fear landscape in which Tris finds out that he only has four fears, hence his name. Four also reveals to her his real name, Tobias Eaton, and that his father Marcus abused him when he was a child.

After that, they kiss for the first time and thus start a secret relationship. Meanwhile, the discrepancies between the Erudite and the Abnegation increase, and Tobias informs Tris that the Erudite are planning to use the Dauntless to start a war against Abnegation.

On initiation day, Tris successfully completes her final test and conquers seven fears in her fear landscape in a short amount of time, which is why she is ranked first and thus becomes a member of Dauntless. Right after the test, Tris and all the other Dauntless members are injected a supposed “tracking device that will be activated only if [somebody is] reported missing” (398). In fact, everyone is injected with a simulation serum which activates a simulation in the night after the test. Now Tris knows how Erudite intended to use Dauntless members for the war. Every Dauntless wakes up as a sleepwalking, brain-dead soldier. The simulation, however, does not work on Tris and Tobias because they are Divergent. But in order to not draw attention to them, they at first pretend to be sleepwalking as well, like the others. Having arrived at the Abnegation compound Tris and Four try to escape, but they get caught and are taken to Erudite headquarters. There, Four is used for testing a serum which manipulates him and makes “him confuse enemy with friend” (434). Tris, however, is sentenced to death because she is injured and thus is not of much use for Jeanine, the Erudite leader. So the next morning, Tris awakes being captured in a glass tank which slowly fills with water, like the one in her fear simulations. Tris almost drowns but her mother rescues her by breaking the tank. On their escape, Tris finds out that her mother is Divergent as well, but while Tris can escape her mother is killed. Tris resorts to the safe house where her brother Caleb, her father and Marcus Eaton, Four’s father, among several other Abnegation members are. In order to shut down the simulation Tris, her father, Caleb and Marcus decide to go to the Dauntless control room. On their way there they encounter Peter, whom they take with them as he knows the way to the control room, and Tris’s father is killed. Tris, even though she is shocked by her father’s death, manages to reach the control room where she finds Four, who is still under the control of the serum, monitoring the simulation. Due to the serum, Four sees Tris as an enemy and starts to attack her, but Tris is determined to not kill him. By hearing Tris’s voice, Four is able to fight the simulation and to finally free himself from it. After he has realized what is going on, he shuts down the simulation and frees all the Dauntless from being mind controlled. Tris and Four meet Caleb, Marcus and Peter downstairs and they all take a train to Amity headquarters.

The trilogy’s second novel, *Insurgent*, opens with Tris, Four, Caleb, Peter and Marcus arriving at the Amity compound, where some surviving Abnegation members have found

shelter. There, Tris listens in on a conversation between Marcus and Johanna Reyes, the representative of Amity, in which Marcus reveals that the Erudite attacked Abnegation because Jeanine wanted to steal some very important information and most of the Abnegation leaders died in their attempt to protect it. Soon after, some Erudite and Dauntless traitors arrive at the Amity compound to look for all the refugees. Tris and all the people from the other factions try to pretend to be Amity in order to not be recognized by the Erudite, but Four's tattoo reveals his real identity and after a short fight Tris, Four, Caleb and Susan succeed in escaping by train. On the train, however, they are confronted with a group of factionless including Edward, a former Dauntless initiate. After Four tells the factionless his real name, Tobias Eaton, they stop fighting the four fugitives and take them to factionless headquarters where they meet the factionless leader Evelyn, Four's mother. Tris eavesdrops on Evelyn telling Four about the factionless' plan to overthrow the Erudite government and subsequently to establish a society without factions. For this to be successful, Evelyn asks for Four's help to persuade the Dauntless to join and support the factionless' plan. After a short stay in the factionless headquarters, Tris and Four set out for the Candor headquarters, where the remaining loyal Dauntless are.

Having arrived at Candor, Tris and Four are arrested because they are accused of having run the simulation for the attack on Abnegation. For their interrogation they are both injected a truth serum, and under its influence they affirm that they actually stopped the simulation. Four also reveals that he chose Dauntless in order to protect himself from his abusive father, and Tris admits that she shot Will. Four and Tris are acquitted of their charge, but Four and especially Christina are angry with Tris because they did not know that she was the one who killed Will. Soon after, Dauntless traitors, with their leader Eric, attack the Candor trying to search out all Divergent people. During this invasion many people are injected a new simulation serum, which enables Jeanine to expose them to a simulation at any time. Tris and Uriah are revealed as being Divergent and while being held captive, Tris manages to injure Eric. Finally, the loyal Dauntless manage to save all the captured Divergent but one and to chase the traitors away. After the attack, Jack Kang, the representative of Candor, wants to negotiate a peace agreement with Erudite. But the Erudite only require from Candor to release Eric, and to hand over the Divergent and all the names "of those who were not injected with the simulation serum" (Roth, *Ins* 254) to them. After this, the Dauntless know they won't be safe in Candor headquarters, so they elect Four, Tori and Harrison as

their new leaders, execute Eric for all his committed crimes and finally return to Dauntless headquarters.

Since the Dauntless are not able to attack Dauntless traitors and Erudite on their own, Tris and Four meet Evelyn, the factionless leader, to agree on an alliance with the factionless to destroy Erudite and to form a new government afterwards. Nevertheless, Tris is still very suspicious of Evelyn. During the night, Erudite makes use of another simulation which prompts Dauntless members to jump off a building's roof every two days until one Divergent surrenders to the Erudite. Tris wants to stop all this and so, even though Four begs her not to deliver herself, she goes to the Erudite headquarters. There, she endures all the testing by Jeanine, who tries to design a simulation that also affects the Divergent. After going through a simulation, Tris finds out that her brother Caleb betrayed her as he is now working for Jeanine. Tris also encounters Four, who also came to Erudite, but not to die but to examine Erudite headquarters and find its central control rooms so that the Dauntless and factionless know what to destroy first when they invade. Further, Four encourages Tris to stay strong because she will be rescued in two weeks, which is when her execution is scheduled. However, Jeanine is not successful in developing a simulation to control Tris, so her execution will take place the following day. Peter is the one who injects the death serum, which he replaced with a paralytic serum before the execution started. So all the people in the execution room believe that Tris is dead, but she actually is only paralyzed, and so Peter, Tris and Four flee from the Erudite compound heading for Abnegation headquarters. There, all the factionless and Dauntless have assembled to work out a plan for their invasion of Erudite and for bringing down the government. After a conversation with Marcus, Tris understands that it is more important to save the information which was stolen from Abnegation by the Erudite before the factionless destroy it. However, Tris feels bad for lying to Four and "working with the father he despises" (425).

At first, Tris, Christina and Marcus visit the Amity to inform them about all the events and to ask them for help. The majority of the Amity people do not want to get involved, but Johanna and some other Amity decide to depart from their faction. Disguised in Erudite clothes, Tris and the others enter the Erudite headquarters to find and save this important information. Tris infers that Jeanine must keep it on her private computer in her laboratory. When Tris goes through a doorway, she first has to master a simulation, which is part of the security system, and she can then enter the laboratory. There, she finds Tori threatening Jeanine with a gun. Tris tries to stop Tori from shooting by explaining that they need Jeanine

to get access to the information on her computer. Even though Tris manages to get hold of Tori's gun, Tori pulls a knife out of her boot and stabs Jeanine, who dies only a moment later. Tori considers Tris a traitor and so she has to join all the other traitors in the main lobby on the bottom floor. While Evelyn is giving her speech announcing that a new society without factions will be established, Tris is looking around the room realizing that the factionless have all the weapons. In the middle of Evelyn's speech Four, Marcus and Caleb come into the room. Four has forced Caleb to "disarm the security system for Jeanine's laboratory" (508) and so he could access the information, which is the video that starts playing in the same moment. It features a woman named Amanda Ritter. She explains that this society with the faction structure has been created in isolation from the rest of the world, hoping that its members will change and discover morality again. These people will then have a more flexible mind than the others and they should be called Divergent. When there is a large number of Divergent people in this society, the gates should be unlocked and they then should help the people outside. She finally adds that she will also join this society, changing her name into Edith Prior.

At the beginning of *Allegiant*, Tris, Christina and Cara are imprisoned, being charged with being a traitor due to their participation in Marcus' mission. In her trial, however, Tris is able to resist the truth serum and lies. Consequently, all three of them are released. Now, after Jeanine has been killed and the video of Edith Prior has revealed the truth about the city, the factionless leader Evelyn Johnson governs the city as a tyrant, introducing strict rules and forcing everybody to live without factions. Tris, Tobias, Christina and Uriah meet secretly with the Allegiant, a group of rebels who want to reintroduce the factions and find out what is outside the city. Cara and Johanna are the leaders of the Allegiant, of which Zeke and Tori are members as well. In this meeting they decide that a small group of them will leave the city to explore what is beyond its limits. Tobias, Tris, Christina, Uriah, Cara and Peter set out for the world outside, and Caleb joins them since Tobias got him out of prison and thereby saved him from his execution. On their way out, Tori gets shot by a factionless woman. When the group is out of the city, they meet Zoe and Amar. Tobias knows the latter one, who was his instructor during his initiation and was thought to be dead. Zoe and Amar tell Tris and the others that they work for the same organization as Edith Prior did, and so they take the group to their headquarter, which is the Bureau of Genetic Welfare. There, the leader David tries to explain them the truth about their city, called Chicago: Many years ago, the government of the United States attempted to correct genes which were believed to cause

certain “undesirable qualities” which “ultimately contribute to a broken society” (Roth, *All* 121). That is when they started an experiment, manipulating genes of selected people. But instead of corrected genes, these alterations resulted in damaged ones, which lead to the so-called “Purity War” (123). After this disastrous war, the Bureau of Genetic Welfare was founded for the purpose of restoring “humanity to its genetically pure state” (124). For that reason, the Bureau created experiments for which they modified the people’s genes and situated them in cities cut off from the outside world. The scientists hoped that they would produce more and more people with healed genes, who are called Divergent, and later also pass on their genes outside of their city.

Tris’s and Tobias’s genes are tested and it is revealed that Tris is truly Divergent but Tobias is not, meaning that his “genes are still damaged” (176). This revelation makes Tobias believe that he is a ‘damaged’ person, which Tris is unable to understand. David gives Tris her mother’s journal, through which she finds out that her mother had been in the Bureau before she participated in the experiment, so she was not born in the city. Further, her mother was supposed to choose Erudite in order fulfill her mission to stop the killing of the Divergent, but she then chose Abnegation instead because she fell in love with Tris’s father. In the meantime, Nita, who is also genetically damaged, asks Tobias to join her rebellion against the Bureau. She tells him that the Bureau is lying about genetic damage being society’s problem and thus genetically damaged people should not be treated differently than somebody with pure genes. Nita’s plan, as she tells Tobias and Tris, is to steal the memory serum so that the Bureau cannot erase the memory of the people in the experiments. In fact, it is the death serum that Nita wants to steal, which she might use to kill the leaders and all the other genetically pure in the Bureau. Tris knows that Nita is lying about her planned attack, so she does not participate in it. Tobias, however, does and it results in total chaos and many injured people. Uriah is severely injured and fell into a coma, and Nita is taken into custody.

Tris and her companions have found out that the attack simulation, which was used for the attack on Abnegation, has been developed in the Bureau and not by Erudite in the city. This means that the leaders of the Bureau are responsible for many deaths and a lot of destruction. For that reason, Tris and the other sympathizers plan to expose them to truth serum, so that the people in the compound know what their leaders have done. But they later change their plan. Tobias tells them that the Allegiant have started to attack the factionless and raided some weapons storehouses. Moreover, David informs the other council members, Tris being one of them, that Evelyn has found a secret stock of death serum which she will

use in case the Allegiant attack their headquarters. Therefore, in order to save the experiment, the council members decide to reset the memories of the people in Chicago.

Tris and her friends decide to get the memory serum from the Weapons Lab before David does, and reset everyone in the Bureau. Getting into the Weapons Lab is problematic though, because David is the only one in the compound who knows the pass code and if they blow up the doors, a lethal dose of death serum will be sprayed on the person entering the room. Caleb, who still feels guilty about betraying Tris, volunteers for this suicide mission. Tobias decides to go into the city to inject one of his parents with memory serum to stop the conflict there. Christina and Amar also go into the city to inoculate Uriah's and Christina's family against the memory serum. Peter joins Tobias on his way to Evelyn, with whom he reconciles, without making her drink the serum. After that, Peter takes the serum because he wants to forget all the evil deeds he has done. After that, they meet Marcus and Johanna to agree on a treaty and thus to end the conflict. Meanwhile, at the Bureau, Tris accompanies Caleb on his way to the Weapons Lab, but they are followed by some guards and so Tris decides to complete this mission by herself as she might be able to resist the death serum. She blows up the doorway and notices how the serum is sprayed on her. She is actually able to survive it, but in the room David awaits and shoots her. Tris, before she passes away, releases the memory serum. When Tobias, Peter, Christina and Amar return to the Bureau, they receive the message of Tris's death. Tobias is devastated, so much that he even wants to take the memory serum himself, hoping to "become someone new" (504). Christina can convince him not to do so, telling him that Tris "wouldn't want [him] to erase her from [his] memory" (506).

Two and a half years later, Tobias, Christina and the others who have survived live in the new Chicago and even Evelyn has just returned to the city. It is in a lasting state of peace and all the people are allowed to enter and leave it whenever they want. Going down the zip line from the Hancock building, Tobias spreads Tris's ashes. Tobias knows that "[l]ife damages us, everyone" but after all he has gone through, he acknowledges that "[w]e can be mended" (526).

2.2. Gender and Violence in the *Divergent* trilogy

The *Divergent* trilogy also features a strong heroine who rebels against the constraints of her highly structured society and "think[s] little of the gendered stereotypes that limit their

real-life counterparts on a daily basis” (Green-Barteet 35). In the following, the characters’ gender representations, combined with the striking level of violence, will be examined, whereby the focus will be on the main characters. Thus, it will be shown if Roth has succeeded in creating a dystopian society “in which gendered stereotypes seemingly matter little” (43) and thereby has managed to challenge the stereotypical beliefs of what it means to be a man and a woman nowadays. The three novels will be analyzed in succession according to their chronological order.

2.2.1. *Divergent*

The sixteen-year-old protagonist Beatrice Prior, later only called Tris, is at the beginning of the series’ first novel represented as “a little girl” who is physically weak and has a small frame. When she looks at her reflection in the mirror, which Abnegation people are only allowed to do every third month, she describes herself as having “a narrow face, wide, round eyes, and a long, thin nose” (Roth, *Div 2*). She has grown up in her parents’ faction Abnegation in which people are supposed to wear “gray clothes [and a] plain hairstyle” (6) and they all live in simple houses of “the same size and shape” (27). All this should help the Abnegation “forget [themselves] and ... protect [them] from vanity, greed, and envy, which are just forms of selfishness” (28). However, on the day of the Choosing Ceremony, when all the sixteen-year-olds have to choose the faction they want to belong to for the rest of their lives, Beatrice decides that she is “not selfless enough” (43) to choose Abnegation. Instead, she chooses Dauntless, the faction in which people most value bravery. By leaving Abnegation and thus also her family, Beatrice makes an independent decision, marking her first step into adulthood. For the first time in her life she is not told what to do because her aptitude test result is inconclusive as she shows aptitude for three factions, which makes her Divergent. Therefore, Beatrice has to know who she is and what her desires are “in order to choose the faction to which she believes she belongs”. So, by choosing Dauntless, she “demonstrate[s] some level of self-awareness” and her choice can be seen as “her first significant act of rebellion” (Green-Barteet 44).

Having arrived in the Dauntless compound, Beatrice proves to be brave and daring when she is the first one to jump from the building’s roof, not knowing what is at the bottom. When she is on firm ground again, Four welcomes her and she decides to take the chance to become a new person, which is why she chooses to name herself “Tris”. She thinks, “A new

place, a new name. I can be remade here” (Roth, *Div* 60). Frankel notes that “[n]aming oneself is a sign of character and strength, declaring who one wishes to be and what impact she wishes to make on the world” (*Choosing* 59). Hence, Tris exhibits fortitude, determination and strength, personality traits which are predominantly associated with masculinity, already before the actual initiation process has started. Through Dauntless initiation, Tris acquires even more stereotypical masculine characteristics. She gets stronger, braver, and more self-confident, and also develops the ability to take control of her life.

In the first stage of initiation, the initiates learn to shoot a gun and how to fight in a hand-to-hand combat. Even though Tris thinks that her “family would never approve of [her] firing a gun” (Roth, *Div* 78), she is determined to successfully accomplish the task, which is why she does not surrender and keeps trying. When she finally manages to shoot a bullet into the target, she realizes that she relishes shooting a gun and takes pleasure in it: “It takes me five rounds to hit the middle of the target and when I do, a rush of energy goes through me. I am awake, my eyes wide open, my hands warm. ... There is power in controlling something that can do so much damage – in controlling something, period” (79). When Tris practices some punches during the first fighting training session, she really exerts herself, but “[t]he punching bag stings [her] hands and feet, turning [her] skin red, and barely moves no matter how hard [she] hit[s] it”. This is due to her physical weakness and lack of muscles. When Four watches her desperately trying to bring the punching bag to bounce back and forth, he points out to her that because of her small and lean frame her movements are not very powerful. So he gives her an advice, “You don’t have much muscle, ... which means you’re better off using your knees and elbows. You can put more power behind them” (84). From this moment on, Four acts as Tris’ instructor and mentor, “training her to be a tough, powerful fighter” (Frankel, *Choosing* 62). In the course of the initiation process, Tris learns to bear or even ignore pain and her body grows stronger and more powerful. She realizes her physical transformation for the first time when she tries to put on some pants, but she is unable to pull it over her thighs because “[a] bulge of muscle is stopping the fabric” (Roth, *Div* 167). Looking into the mirror, she notices the change from “the smallest initiate” (72) to having a rather masculine shaped body with more muscles than ever before:

I see muscles that I couldn’t see before in my arms, legs, and stomach. I pinch my side, where a layer of fat used to hint at curves to come. Nothing. Dauntless initiation has stolen whatever softness my body had. Is that good, or bad?

At least I am stronger than I was. (167-8)

However, not only Tris's body changes, but also does her mindset and attitude. She becomes, for example, more daring and willing to take risks, which becomes especially apparent when she slides down the zip line. At first she is wary about doing this "little initiation ritual" (210), but when she is finally sliding down she really enjoys the feeling of being "without weight" (221), as she describes it. When she arrives safely on the ground again, a Dauntless member says to her, "Pretty sure we can't call you 'Stiff' anymore" (224) which indicates that she is now brave and daring enough to become a full member of Dauntless. The nickname 'stiff' referred to the reserved, distant and seemingly weak behavior typical for Abnegation. Moreover, Tris becomes more defensive, aggressive and increasingly prone to violence. The first instance in which she is represented that way is after some other initiates harass and mock her because of her small body. She resists her first desire to cry which is immediately followed by a feeling of "something hot and violent writhing in [her] stomach" combined with the urge "to hurt them" (170). In her fight against Molly, who was one of the initiates that intimidated her, Tris takes out all her anger on her by brutally beating her up, kicking her with her foot even though Molly already lies on the ground. By stating "I wish I could say I felt guilty for what I did. I don't" (174), Tris highlights the intensity of her anger and rage, which lead her to act in such a cruel way.

After she has faced one of her fears for the first time in a simulation, she feels desperate and weak and can't help crying. However, Tris seems to associate the display of emotions and tears with being vulnerable, so when Four wants to take her back to the dormitory, she points out to him that she does not want to show weakness in front of the other initiates: "I lift my head and glare at him, though I can't see him through the blur of tears. 'They can't see me ... not like this...'" (236). Even though, Tris thinks that she has failed in her first attempt to face and control her fear, she is still better than the other initiates because she "got out [of the simulation] three times faster" (238). So, as the initiation process progresses, Tris grows mentally strong which is very well depicted through her improvement in fighting her fears in her fear landscape. Through Dauntless initiation, Tris turns into "a female whose attributes and behaviors are traditionally coded masculine" (Frankel, *Choosing* 80). Some of the features she begins to embody are, for instance, being aggressive, active, daring, independent, strong and powerful. When Tris is ranked first of all initiates after stage two, the others, who have underestimated her at first probably because of her small figure, feel jealous and are threatened by her strength. This is especially true for Peter, Drew and Al, who try to scare or even kill her by hanging her over the chasm. But Four comes just in time

to save her. After that, Four wants to make sure that Tris is safe and is not attacked anymore for the moment, so he suggests that she should pretend to be weak and vulnerable. He explains, “The others won’t be as jealous if you show some vulnerability. Even if it isn’t real” (Roth, *Div* 285). In order to protect herself, Tris assumes the role of a weak and dependent girl, but she does not want to “let it become true” (290). Her pretense of weakness does not make her feel comfortable, quite the contrary, she does not at all feel like herself but like “wearing someone else’s skin”. By making herself look away from Peeta, “[i]t brings a bitter taste to [her] mouth to show him that he scares [her] (292). Another instance in which the image of a weak and “foolish girl” (363) helps to protect and save Tris, is when she is welcomed back to Dauntless headquarters by Eric, after visiting her brother Caleb in Erudite. Eric wants to punish her for betraying Dauntless but Four defends Tris, and tells Eric that she tried to kiss him but he “rejected her, and she went running off like a five-year-old” (364). This seems to convince Eric and so he lets her go. The mere fact that Tris has to pretend to be weak and tries to convince others that she is not a “silly girl” (367) clearly points to her strength and confidence. Tris herself is fully aware that she is not as fragile and vulnerable as other people might think, and she makes this point clear to Four, “I might not need you to help me. ... I’m not weak, you know. I can do this on my own” (313). At another point, Tris and Christina have a conversation which also indicates that Tris does not embody a stereotypical naive and childish girl:

“Can you be a girl for a few seconds?”
 “I’m always a girl.” I frown.
 “You know what I mean. Like a silly, annoying girl.”
 I twirl my hair around my finger. “Kay.” (369)

In this dialogue, Tris is clearly mocking stereotypical femininity by which she underlines “Christina’s point that she doesn’t know how to be a girl” (Frankel, *Choosing* 79), at least not a passive and dependent one, as women are often portrayed and expected to be.

All of the above presented accounts of Tris’s portrayal reveal stereotypical masculine characteristics. Through the transformation she undergoes, physically as well as mentally, Tris does not conform to the traditional gender role of the woman which was designed by and still dominates our contemporary Western society. Tris, however, also exhibits traditional feminine traits, and thereby she blurs established gender boundaries, like she, as a Divergent, embraces the virtues of different factions. Shortly after Tris has arrived in the Dauntless compound, she begins to explore her body and appearance, embracing her feminine side. This was not allowed in Abnegation, the faction she was born into, because people there reject

vanity. In order to not draw attention to their body, Abnegation members wear grey, baggy clothes. In *Dauntless*, Tris now starts to change her appearance by wearing a dress, letting Christina apply some makeup, wearing her hair loose and getting some tattoos. Tris, however, does not think that she can be beautified or, in other words, feminized. When Christina is about to apply the eyeliner to Tris's eyelashes, Tris tells her, "You aren't going to be able to make me pretty, you know," (Roth, *Div* 86-7). Christina simply replies, "Who cares about pretty? I'm going for noticeable". Tris's new style is not meant to objectify her or make her desirable, it should merely emphasize her new identity she has taken on in *Dauntless*. Looking in the mirror, she notes, "This is someone whose eyes claim mine and don't release me; this is Tris" (87).

Another feminine associated quality Tris embodies is that she still feels the urge to selflessly help and protect the most helpless and innocent people, even though she has already transferred to *Dauntless*. This is shown, for instance, when Tris takes Al's place in front of the target as Four throws some knives at it, or in Four's fear landscape, when she hits his "dad with a belt to protect [him]" (336). The virtues of selflessness and the protection of others is highly valued in Abnegation, but it was also originally highly regarded by the *Dauntless*, as it is written down in the *Dauntless* manifesto: "We believe in ordinary acts of bravery, in the courage that drives one person to stand up for another" (206). By defending and caring for others, Tris exhibits behaviors that are traditionally associated with femininity. She combines these with the rather masculine quality of bravery, which becomes apparent when Four tells her, "[I]t's when you're acting selflessly that you are at your bravest" (311).

Moreover, Tris's initial insecurity about her feelings for Four and her later fear of intimacy and affection represent her in a rather weak and passive way, whereby she displays stereotypical feminine characteristics. Every time she is around Four, Tris is nervous and distracted. However, she does not realize that she is attracted to him until they climb up the Ferris wheel together, "It's him. Something about him makes me feel like I am about to fall. Or turn liquid. Or burst into flames" (143). Moreover, after their first kiss, she feels "silly and light" (339). Having grown up in Abnegation, Tris is not used to and not comfortable with public display of affection, as she demonstrates at the very beginning, "A kiss is not something you do in public" (82). Tris becomes aware of her fear of intimacy when she encounters Four wanting to sleep with her in her fear landscape. At first she is unsure about whether to tell him about it or not, but she finally decides to do so:

“You were an obstacle in my fear landscape.” My lower lip wobbles. “Did you know that?”

“What?” ... “You’re *afraid* of me?”

“Not you,” I say. I bite my lip to keep it still. “Being with you ... with anyone. I’ve never been involved with someone before, and ... you’re older, and I don’t know what your expectations are, and ...” (402)

This quotation illustrates that Tris is wary of affection, but also that her confusion and uncertainty might stem from her assumption that Four already has experience with having sex. But Four immediately assures Tris that she is wrong.

The characteristics Four is portrayed with are similar to the ones of Tris. First of all, he is Divergent, like Tris, and thus he embodies virtues from different factions as well. Being a Dauntless member, he is brave and also strong, both physically and mentally. With regard to his physical strength, Tris is frequently referring to his muscles when she sees or touches him. However, there is not much information provided on his outer appearance, despite what Tris perceives when she sees him for the first time: “He has a spare upper lip and fuller lower lip. His eyes are so deep-set that his eyelashes touch the skin under his eyebrows, and they are dark blue, a dreaming, sleeping, waiting color” (59). As their instructor, Four scares Christina and intimidates Tris, but when he touches Tris to give her an advice during training she notes that she is not “afraid that he would hurt [her]”. Tris describes him as “quiet, and remarkably self-possessed” (85), as “smart and brave” (289) and as not as ruthless and cruel as Eric. Most of these traits are predominantly associated with stereotypical masculinity. At the same time, Four also exhibits some feminine features as, for example, he cares for and wants to protect Tris, even if this means to insult her in a cruel way in front of the other initiates so that they do not become suspicious about their secret relationship. Four tries to justify his action to Tris, “I was protecting you this morning. How do you think Peter and his idiot friends would have reacted if they discovered that you and I were ... [...] You would never win. They would always call your ranking a result of my favoritism rather than your skill” (366). Moreover, Four is also able to show some weakness in front of Tris, as he cannot hold back his tears and starts to cry after he has almost killed Tris and successfully fought the simulation that made him monitor the attack simulation. Both, Tris, by calling Four her boyfriend, and Four, by confessing his love for Tris, acknowledge their heterosexual relationship. Thereby, however, Four is not performing heterosexual masculinity and therefore Tris is not put into a passive and dependent position, but both are equal partners, valuing each other for their strength and bravery. Roth comments, “The word I would come up with for how Four feels about Tris is primarily ‘respect.’ He respects her so much that

sometimes he thinks that she's invulnerable. I think he creates that independence in her as much as she does" (Codinha). The following dialogue between the two illustrates how perfectly Tris and Four resemble and mirror each other:

"You nearly died today," he says. "I almost shot you. Why didn't you shoot me, Tris?"
 "I couldn't do that," I say. "It would have been like shooting myself." (486)

In Roth's dystopian Chicago, inequalities based on gender do not seem to be prevalent, as Green-Barteet notes that "Tris's society is structured in such a way that adherence to faction mores privileges any emphasis on gender norms" (43). So, men and women in the factions have to live up to the same standards, have to wear the same clothes and are expected to be able to perform the same tasks. Male and female citizens are treated fairly equally in this dystopian society and they do not have to come up to different expectations of how they should behave or look like. Green-Barteet even argues that the "gender roles are more fluid" in the *Divergent* trilogy and that Tris is "less concerned with differences between masculine and feminine roles than are real-life young adult women" (35). This contention can be supported by pointing out that the initiates' rank and status in Dauntless do not depend on their gender, but it is rather determined by their abilities and performance during the initiation process. Tris, for example, despite her small figure, demonstrates great bravery and mental strength and therefore she finally is ranked first. Al, on the other hand, who is "the largest and broadest of all the initiates" (Roth, *Div* 74) is not brave and strong enough to reach a high rank. He does not like to hurt people, which is why he surrenders in every fight, and he is crying in bed during the night. He finally kills himself because he cannot stand the guilt of almost killing Tris. With that said, it can be argued that in the Chicago presented in *Divergent* gender inequities and therefore gender hierarchies are not as dominant as they are in our contemporary society.

Violence, aggression and cruelty are a major issue in *Divergent*. As soon as Tris enters the Dauntless compound, she learns how to shoot a gun, throw knives and how to fight and defend herself. The Dauntless have to provide the city of Chicago "with protection from threats both within and without" (43). Both Tris and Four resort to violence in the course of the story. As Four is Tris's instructor, he provides her with guidance on how to use her small body in the most effective way in a fight. Nevertheless, Tris loses a few fights at the beginning of training, but after a few initiates harass her because of her small frame, she is really furious and angry. Thus, in the subsequent scheduled fight her opponent is Molly, on

whom Tris takes out all her anger, kicking her with her foot even though her opponent is already lying on the floor. She just notes that her “father would not approve of [her] kicking someone when she’s down” (173), but she does not at all feel guilty about it. However, when Tris has to kill her friend Will, who is under the influence of the attack serum and thus points a gun at her, her feelings are quite the reverse. She is overwhelmed with guilt and remorse, and she “feel[s] dead too” (446). After Tris gets almost killed by Peter, Drew and Al, Four saves her and brutally beats up Drew so that he even has to take him to hospital. The other two, Peter and Al, could escape, and Four tells Tris to “ruin them” when she “see[s] an opportunity” (287) to do so. Four does not seem to regret what he has done to Drew, and there is also no indication of him feeling any guilt.

Tris and Four do not only act violently in real life, but they are also required to do so in their fear landscape. Tris, in her simulation, shoots at some crows and at the scarred man who tries to take her. But most importantly, Tris has to shoot herself in order to spare her family’s life. In his fear landscape, Four has to shoot an innocent woman and defend himself against his violent father by fighting back. So, for Tris and Four, and for all Dauntless members alike, violence and fighting is part of their Dauntless life and it is not something they reject, unless it is inflicted on innocent people, which perfectly conforms with their above described gender representation.

The incident in which the Erudite, lead by Jeanine Matthews, force the Dauntless to invade the Abnegation compound and kill the people there, can be described as “dominant violence” (Troyer 99). Thereby, Jeanine wants to bring down the Abnegation government in order to become the city’s leader herself. During this attack, Dauntless members are controlled by the serum, thus “they don’t know that they’re killing people” (Roth, *Div* 452). Jeanine is even so cruel to let Tris be executed by drowning her because she is “of [not] much use to her” (432), but Tris’s mother is able to save her in time. Unfortunately, Tris’s parents are victims of Jeanine’s attack on Abnegation. Tris and Four reject this form of violence calling it “terrible, evil [and] incredible” (479), and Tris realizes that they have to hurry to stop the simulation because “every second they waste means another Abnegation dead and another Dauntless made into a murderer” (466).

2.2.2. *Insurgent*

At the beginning of the trilogy's second novel, *Four*, or Tobias as he will be referred to in the following, Tris, Marcus, Peter, and Caleb are on their way to the Amity compound. Tris has a hard time trying to deal with the latest traumatic experiences, including the attack on Abnegation, killing Will and her parents' death. Because she "is torn with guilt over Will's death" (Frankel, *Choosing* 68), Tris constantly has to suffer nightmares. She also does not know how to tell Tobias or Christina that she killed Will and "[j]ust the thought of saying the words out loud makes [her] feel so heavy" (Roth, *Ins* 11). She finally brings herself to confess this evil deed when she was injected with the truth serum, under which she was aware, so she deliberately decided to do so.

Due to her trauma, Tris has several moments of weakness at Amity. One of these, for example, is when she has another bad dream about Will. After waking up she goes into Tobias's room where she lies down beside him in his bed. There, she cannot hold back her tears and she apologizes to him for being "such a mess" (49). Tobias, however, is very understanding and sympathetic so he lets her cry for some time, comforting her until she calms down. This gives Tris a feeling of safety and ease, not thinking of all the trouble that awaits them:

I wrap my arm around his waist and take a deep breath of his shoulder. He smells like sweat and fresh air and mint, from the salve he sometimes uses to relax his sore muscles. He smells safe, too, like sunlit walks in the orchard and silent breakfasts in the dining hall. And in the moments before I drift off to sleep, I almost forget about our war-torn city and all the conflict that will come to find us soon, if we don't find it first. (50-51)

Another occasion in which Tris appears to have a fragile mental state is when she, for the first time after her parents died, looks into a mirror. She is unable to see herself in it but memories of her mother are evoked in her, and she is again close to tears. She decides that she cannot "look the same, when she's gone and everything is different" (16), so she takes the scissors from a sewing kit and cuts her hair at the level of her chin. Lastly, Tris displays weakness and insecurity whenever she is unable to shoot a gun because she is afraid of it and it brings back the memories of shooting Will. Even merely holding a gun makes her feel uncomfortable. In the Amity compound, for example, a Dauntless aims a gun at Tris but she is unable to defend herself, so Caleb seizes her gun and shoots at him. Shortly after that, Tobias furiously confronts her, "You froze! Someone was about to kill you and you just sat there! ... I thought I could rely on you at least to save your own life!" (85). From Tobias's reaction Tris

concludes that “[h]e still believes that [she is] strong” (85), however she was unable to act like it. Through this way of presenting her as vulnerable, unstable and insecure stereotypical gender roles that are prevalent in contemporary Western society are reinforced.

From the moment on in which she determines to “find out what’s going on” (118), to discover the truth, she starts to become sure of herself again and to regain her awareness of who she is: “I am Divergent, so I am not nobody, there’s no such thing as ‘safe,’ and I have other things on my mind than playing house with Tobias” (120). This implies that instead of a traditional heterosexual relationship, which includes stereotypical gender roles, with Tobias, Tris rather chooses to act independently and to pursue her own objectives. This enables “her to develop into [an] autonomous individual” (Green-Barteet 46), making her own conscious decisions rather than passively joining and assenting to the masses. When she is talking to Tobias about her determination to reveal the truth, she further describes herself, “I am not the kind of person who just sits back and lets other people take all the risks” (Roth, *Ins* 248). With these “other things” (120) she refers to the information the Erudite stole from Abnegation, and she considers this to be important because “[t]he truth has a way of changing a person’s plans” (32). With this new targeted objective in mind, the “desire to learn the reason for the attack” (Green-Barteet 46), she performs several rebellious acts. One of these is, for example, her confession of being Divergent. She admits her Divergence even though she knows that it is dangerous because being Divergent is seen as a threat in this society. Her revelation can be seen as a rebellion against the rigid faction system, which in fact allows the citizens of Chicago to only endeavor the virtues of their chosen faction. Another revolting act is her defiance of the other Dauntless who, together with the factionless, have planned to attack Erudite and bring down the government. Tris and her friends, however, have their own agenda trying to save the important information before the others destroy everything in the Erudite headquarters. Fernando, one of their sympathizers from Amity, calls them “Insurgent” which should describe people “who [act] in opposition to the established authority, who [are] not necessarily regarded as ... belligerent” (Roth, *Ins* 458). Tris’s “most rebellious act” (Green-Barteet 46) is probably her betrayal of Tobias when she aligns with and helps Marcus, Tobias’s father. Tris feels compelled to try to rescue the data her “mother really was willing to die for” (Roth, *Ins* 416). Even though she knows that this is the only right choice, she feels bad about having to lie to Tobias and to defy him: “He kisses me, and I feel like I am crumbling again, beginning with the deepest parts of me. He thinks I will be here, but I will be working against him, working with the father he despises. This lie – this lie

is the worst I have ever told. I will never be able to take it back” (424-425). As Green-Barteet argues, through her defiance of Tobias, Tris jeopardizes their relationship and also risks her own life, but she also “claims her individual power” and thus “solidifies her subject position” (47). She finally manages to become a fully autonomous subject, who makes decisions of her own accord independent from everybody else. Even Jeanine, who wanted to develop a serum “that cannot be thwarted by the Divergent mind”, fails to control her, since she is “one of the strongest Divergent” (Roth, *Ins* 328). Jeanine tries several simulations on Tris, who is able to fight all of them, though. So in the end, Jeanine is frustrated about not being able to gain control over Tris and find out what it is that makes her so strong. Tris knows that she is stronger and more powerful than Jeanine, and thus tells her, “Pain can’t make me tell you. Truth serum can’t make me tell you. Simulations can’t make me tell you. I’m immune to all three. ... You will never be able to control me” (374-375). This, again, highlights Tris’s strength and independence.

Jeanine is, to some extent, a foil character to Tris as she is presented as a cruel, evil leader who is willing to kill innocent people only to gain power and control over the city or, as she formulates it, to keep it “safe from the people who intend to plunge it into hell” (374). She is so eager to find out the reason for the Divergents’s immunity to simulations that she would stop at nothing no matter how terrible her measures are, “though she’s not emotionally invested in the cruelty” (Frankel 69). Tris further elaborates on that:

I used to think that cruelty required malice, but that is not true. Jeanine has no reason to act out of malice. But she is cruel because she doesn’t care what she does, as long as it fascinates her. I may as well be a puzzle or a broken machine she wants to fix. She will break open my skull just to see the inner workings of my brain; (Roth, *Ins* 329)

One instance that illustrates Jeanine’s cruelty is when she forces some Dauntless members to throw themselves from a building’s roof by putting them under a simulation, only to induce one of the Divergent people to surrender him- or herself to Erudite. Jeanine also sends a message through one of the Dauntless before they step off the edge: “This is not a negotiation. It is a warning Every two days until one of you delivers yourself to Erudite headquarters, this will happen again” (299). In contrast to Jeanine, Tris is constantly desperate to save and protect the innocent, which is a goal that she is not always able to accomplish. For instance, she and Christina can only save two out of the three Dauntless who stand on the roof and are about to kill themselves. Tris needs to decide on one person whom

she can rescue, which leads to Marlene's death and this results in Tris leaving the roof devastated and outraged:

The doors [from the elevator] close and as I drop to the earth, just as Marlene did after I decided not to save her, I scream, my hands tearing at my clothes. My throat is raw after just a few seconds, and there are scratches on my arms where I missed the fabric, but I keep screaming.

The elevator stops with a *ding*. The doors open.

I straighten my shirt, smooth my hair down, and walk out. (300-301)

This caring for and struggling to protect others is a traditional feminine trait, which also applies for her devastation after she fails to save a life. Her devotion to sacrifice her own life in order to save the rest of her community is also evident when she delivers herself to Erudite. She refers, "I came here so that no one else would die. I came here to protect as many people as I could" (337). What the above cited quotation also shows, however, is that she is only capable of expressing her feelings when she is alone and can be sure that nobody sees her. As soon as she steps out of the elevator, she adjusts her appearance and pretends that nothing has happened. Through her refusal of displaying weakness, which is rather a way of behavior that is stereotypically coded weak, in front of others, Tris exhibits a masculine characteristic. Another instance in which this is apparent, is when Tris is in Tobias's old house in the Abnegation compound, after she has been rescued from her execution. There, before she goes out of the bathroom, she squeezes her "cheeks hard to bring blood to the surface of [her] skin" because she does not "want to look weak and exhausted in front of everyone" (401-402).

All in all, it can be said that Tris becomes more determined, more self-conscious and independent as the story unfolds. Towards the end of the events in *Insurgent*, Tris grows even stronger when she is not acting reckless anymore, but logically thinks about the consequences. She has a reason and a purpose to sacrifice herself and to endanger her relationship with Tobias for the greater good. Tobias finally also acknowledges this growth of her character and who she is. Tris gradually acquires more character traits of, what Simons calls, the "archetypical boy hero" (145), namely masculine associated features. At the same time, however, she also displays feminine qualities as it is argued above. Once more, Tris is represented as fluid character in terms of gender.

At the beginning of *Insurgent*, when Tris, Tobias and the others are still in the Amity compound, Tobias is represented as an understanding, caring, sensitive and loving partner for Tris. On the other hand, Tris also refers to him as being strong, handsome and wearing "his

pride in his posture, in the way his eyes claim everything they land on” (Roth, *Ins* 80). Here, like in *Divergent*, Tobias blurs the boundaries of stereotypical gender roles. However, when they are no longer in the safe environment of Amity and they get from one conflict into the next, Tobias’s masculine features of being strong, callous and brutal are foregrounded. When Tobias aspires to become a Dauntless leader, for instance, he needs to demonstrate his strength and toughness because these are traits a Dauntless leader is required to embody. However, after the Candor made him “spill [his] life story” (239), everyone knows that he is afraid of his abusive father and so many Dauntless in the Candor compound consider him a coward. That is why Tobias sees himself forced to brutally beat up Marcus in the cafeteria in front of everyone else. When Tris asks him for the reason for this aggressive act, he simply says, “I needed to prove the Dauntless that I am not a coward” (247). In other words, Tobias had to prove his masculinity, his ability to lead a faction. Moreover, Tris also highlights Tobias’s strength when she says that “he’s strong, steady, [and] unstoppable” (312), or when he encourages her to stay strong and presses her to survive her imprisonment in Erudite, she reflects, “He never coddles me. I wish that, just this once, he would coddle me” (364). Even though Tobias’s masculine characteristics are given prominence in *Insurgent*, he is afraid of losing Tris because she is constantly willing to recklessly risk her life. That is why he is always caring for her, trying to protect her and to help her make the right decisions, and thereby, he exhibits a feminine associated trait. Generally speaking, Tobias incorporates typical masculine and feminine features, so the gender role he represents is rather fluid than stable.

Both, Tobias and Tris are aggressive and act violently by hurting or even killing other people at times. They do so, however, with different intentions. Tris, for example, stabs Eric with a knife in Candor headquarters during the attack by the Erudite and the Dauntless traitors. Shortly before that, Eric coldly shot the Divergent boy sitting next to her and this induced Tris to perform her act of violence so that nobody else can be shot anymore. Thus, Tris’s intention of thrusting Eric with the knife is to save first of all the Divergent but also all the other people in Candor headquarters. Thus, Tris acts selflessly and brave in order to defend and protect the others, and she does not give priority to her own benefit or survival. Thereby, she combines the rather masculine trait of being aggressive and violent with the typical feminine quality of caring for and protecting others. In contrast to Tris, Tobias brutally beats up his father not because he thereby wants to save or protect somebody, but because he does not want to be called a coward anymore. Thus, his violent and brutal act is

selfish, only serving his own purpose of regaining the Dauntless' respect. In addition, when Tris stops Tobias from hitting Marcus with a belt, she notices in his look that he coldly and deliberately planned this:

I expect to see a wild look in his eyes, but when he looks at me, I do not. His face is not flushed and his breaths are steady. This was not an act performed in the heat of passion.

It was a calculated act. (241)

Through this representation of violence, Tobias's masculine characteristics of being aggressive, cold and blatant are emphasized.

Representations of “dominant violence” (Troyer 99) can also be found in *Insurgent*. One instance, in which this is the case, is when the Erudite and the Dauntless traitors invade and attack Candor headquarters. There, they shoot the people with a needle that injects them with a transmitter and they release a gas, which is “an aerosol version of the liquid that alters the brain”, and so Jeanine “put[s] everyone to sleep to find out who the Divergent [are]” (209). Since this attempt to ascertain the Divergent and take two of them back to Erudite headquarters, Jeanine runs a simulation on three Dauntless members, who were injected with the transmitter during the attack, and tells them to kill themselves. Jeanine sends a message through one of these simulation-induced Dauntless, threatening the Divergent that this will happen every second day until one Divergent surrenders to Erudite. Here, the Erudite leader uses violence and cruelty to gain power and control. Because Tris is appalled by Jeanine's inhuman measures, she delivers herself to the Erudite to end this terror and she thereby saves the other Dauntless' lives.

2.2.3. *Allegiant*

In the trilogy's last novel, *Allegiant*, Tris's development from a small, little girl to a warrior culminates. Tobias refers to her short hair, which is, in his opinion, more suitable for her, “I was happy when she cut it, because it was hair for a warrior and not a girl, and I knew that was what she would need” (Roth, *All* 5). Since Dauntless initiation, she constantly became stronger, more prone to violence, and more self-assured. She now knows how to leverage her image of being a war-like fighter to accomplish her objectives, for example, when she is protecting a Candor boy from being harassed by some factionless people, she says, “I had to hurt a lot of people to get through Dauntless initiation, and I'll do it to you too,

if I have to” (48). Tobias, as well, thinks that Tris is “a strong person” (29) and he still respects her for that. When the two are together, though, Tris allows herself to be “strong and weak at once ... at least for a little while” (32), enjoying to exchange kisses and caresses with him.

After they left their city and everything they knew behind them and went beyond the fence, they reach the Bureau of Genetic Welfare. There, even though Tris finds herself in a new, unknown place, she realizes that she is finally sure of herself, knowing at least a few things, “I know that I’m not alone, that I have friends, that I’m in love. I know where I came from. I know that I don’t want to die, and for me, that’s something – more than I could have said a few weeks ago” (137). Later on she also becomes aware of who she has become because of Tobias, “Then I thought of how strong I have become, how secure I feel with the person I now am, and how all along the way he has told me that I am brave, I am respected, I am loved and worth loving” (371-372). Tris has finally gained a sense of her identity, of who she really is. Despite her general growing self-assurance, Tris also becomes more confident with a gun in her hands. In the beginning, when they are just about to leave the city, she shoots the woman who killed Tori, so she is at least able to shoot a gun again when somebody else threatens to kill her, and she does not only freeze and panic like she did at the beginning of *Insurgent*. Even though, she still does not feel comfortable when holding a gun, as she later points out after she has returned to the Bureau from her trip with Amar to the fringe, “I used to think that my discomfort would go away with time, but now I’m not so sure. Maybe it never will, and maybe that’s all right” (367). But when they teach Caleb how to shoot a gun, Tris is very successful when she shoots at the target and it seems that her uneasiness has disappeared, as Tobias describes this scene:

When I first saw her shoot during Dauntless training, she looked awkward, birdlike. But her thin, fragile form has become slim but muscular, and when she holds the gun, it looks easy. She squints one eye a little, shifts her weight, and fires. Her bullet strays from the target’s center, but only by inches. Obviously impressed, Caleb raises his eyebrows.

“Don’t look so surprised!” Tris says.

“Sorry,” he says. “I just ... you used to be so clumsy, remember? I don’t know how I missed that you weren’t like that anymore.” (423-424)

Here, Tobias notices the changes of Tris’s body, which has grown stronger and more muscular. Additionally, when he is at first unsure whether to tell Tris about Nita’s plan to attack the Bureau or not, and finally concludes to be honest with her, he thereby acknowledges Tris’s mental strength as well, and thinks, “She doesn’t need my protection.

She's strong enough on her own" (253). However, he likewise observes that not only Dauntless initiation, but also all the recent experiences have had a formative influence on her appearance, "She looks older to me than she ever has, stern and tough and worn by time" (383). Moreover, during the first few days in the Bureau, Tris feels very nervous and uneasy because they have no task or function to perform, they have nothing to do at all except for waiting "for something to happen" (202). But Tris needs to be active and to pursue an aim because she is "used to having something to do, something to fight, all the time" (203), which is why she has a hard time to calm down and relax. She cannot passively watch everybody else taking action. In general, Tris's transformation into a strong, tough, and self-confident warrior, who has overcome her fear of shooting a gun and cannot stay passive, illustrates the masculine associated characteristics she embodies. On the other hand, she still features certain typical feminine traits, which will be elaborated on in the following.

One stereotypical feminine quality Tris has, is her gentle and soft side, which Tobias has ignored, or at least not recognized, for a long time, "Sometimes I still forget to look for the gentler parts of her. For so long all I saw was the strength, standing out like the wiry muscles in her arms or the black ink marking her collarbone with flight" (173). One occasion in which Tris exhibits this characteristic of being gentle is when Nita tells her story of why she came into the Bureau compound and what happened in her former city. Tris shows empathy for Nita and says sorry for all she has gone through.

Another feminine associated feature Tris exhibits on many occasions is her care for and protection of other people. When Tris finds out that the Bureau's government plans to erase the memories of the people in Chicago only to stop the revolution in there and to save the experiments, Tris becomes very angry and is eager to save the people from being reset. She feels the urge to care for and protect other people. Moreover, in order to fight the social injustice between the genetically damaged and the genetically pure people, she wants to reset the memory of the people of the Bureau compound in order to "erase the phrase 'genetically damaged' from everyone's vocabulary" (397). Tris is also horrified and confused when she witnesses in what conditions the poor people in the fringe have to live and she does not understand why the people from the government do not help them. What she does understand, though, from this moment on, is why her "mother joined Abnegation when she was supposed to join Erudite. ... But she chose the faction where she could help the helpless, and dedicated most of her life to making sure the factionless were provided for" (348). Tris does not only care for the innocent and helpless, but she also cares for and worries about

Tobias. This is especially apparent when Tris sees him again in the hospital after the demonstration in the Erudite headquarters, in which the faction balls have been destroyed. Tobias's hands are full of Edward's blood when Tris runs toward him, "her dark eyes wide with fear", and asks him if he is hurt. Tobias concludes that "she must love [him], to worry about [him]" (39). Another instance, in which it is evident that Tris cares for Tobias, is when she is relieved that he is well after they have managed to get out of the city:

We pull up close, and I see him. Tobias sits on the hood of the truck, his arm soaked with blood. ... Before Johanna has stopped the truck completely, I open the door and get out, running toward him. Tobias stands up, ignoring Cara's orders to stay put, and we collide, his uninjured arm wrapping around my back and lifting me off my feet.

All the knots of tension inside me come apart at once. I feel, just for a moment like I am remade, like I am brand-new. (95-96).

Tris's last heroic act of sacrificing herself for her brother is also an act of care and love. Thereby, she first and foremost saves her brother, whom she really loves even after his betrayal, and to give her life for him is "the ultimate way for [her] to show [she loves him]" (448). Nevertheless, through her sacrifice, Tris does not only save Caleb's life, but also the memories, thus the identities and lives, from the people in Chicago. Frankel calls this "a classic end to the heroine's journey, tale of self-sacrifice, salvation, and redemption" (77). Roth has deliberately chosen this fate for Tris, as she tries to explain:

She loved and gave her life for Caleb even after he betrayed her, the same way her parents loved and gave their lives for her after she left them for Dauntless. ... I thought about reaching out with my authorial hand and snatching her from that awful situation. I thought about it and I agonized over it. But to me, that felt dishonest and emotionally manipulative. This was the end she had chosen, and I felt she had earned an ending that was as powerful as she was. (Roth, "About the End of Allegiant")

With Tobias it seems that he becomes more unsteady and unsure of himself, the stronger and more self-assured Tris becomes. At the beginning of *Allegiant*, he is still the strong, self-possessed and brave Tobias, who is willing to resort to violence and likes to be in power, as he confesses, "I do like to hit people – I like the explosion of power and energy, and the feeling that I am untouchable because I can hurt people" (Roth, *All* 79). Besides that, he also wants to be perceived as strong and determined, as someone who possesses rather masculine traits. This is indicated by Cara's remark when Tobias and the others enter the Bureau for the first time, " 'You know, it would be perfectly logical for you to be panicking right now,' she says. 'No need to continually insist upon your unshakable masculinity.' " (115). But even though he notes that he has "discarded any kind of softness as useless" (244),

he is overwhelmed with all the new impressions of the new world outside of the city and at one point all this is “too much for [him] to bear” (110). Then, from the moment on in which he learns that he is, according to the people of the Bureau, genetically damaged and not pure, Divergent as Tris, he begins to doubt himself, becomes insecure and confused, and even feels to “have lost control of what [he has] become” (318). He begins to believe that there is “something wrong with [him]” (176), even though Tris tries to convince him that “[t]his doesn’t change anything about [him]” (177). But Tris also criticizes him for having cooperated with Evelyn because he was “desperate for a parent”, and now he works together with Nita because he is “desperate not to be damaged”. Tobias, however, does not want to accept this criticism and notes only to himself, “I am not a desperate, unsteady child who throws his trust around. I am not damaged” (274). When Tobias realizes that in the attack Nita has planned Uriah has been seriously injured, he is so devastated that he even gives in to tears.

When Tris talks to Amar on their trip to the fringe, they agree that Tobias would be a good leader if he “wasn’t so plagued with self-doubt” (354). Amar also tells Tris that she is good for Tobias because without her he “is a much different person. He’s ... obsessive, explosive, insecure” (357). So, Tobias also grew stronger and more self-confident through Tris, like she did through him. However, the reader learns that he feels intimidated by Tris’s strength now that he no longer occupies the powerful position of a Dauntless instructor, “I have always been in a position of strength myself, not threatened by her. Now that I have lost that position, I can feel the tug toward resentment, as strong and sure as a hand around my arm” (332). In the end, when he finds out that Tris is dead, he is devastated and shocked, and the only thing he can do is to cry.

In the epilogue, the reader finally learns that Tobias has managed to be strong and brave without Tris, as she once said that he is strong enough that he “would move on, and do what [he has] to” (Roth, *Ins* 312). He has finally regained his strength to move on and start a new life in the city, living there with his mother and working for one of the “city’s representatives in government: Johanna Reyes” (Roth, *All* 517). In the last novel, Tobias is represented with a majority of feminine traits, assuming a rather weak position with a fragile mental state. But in the end, he is able to regain his strength and to take up a powerful, political position, while, at the same time, he rejects violence because he “had enough ... to last [him] a lifetime” (519) and tries to come to terms with his grief for Tris. Thus, he again blurs the boundaries of typical gender roles.

Violence is also present in *Allegiant*, but in contrast to the series' first two novels, Tobias does not resort to or use violence, and in the end he even expresses his rejection of it. This is completely consistent with his representation in terms gender, since he is mostly represented with stereotypical feminine characteristics, of which one is being unaggressive and not acting violently. Tris, however, is growing stronger and tougher in the course of the novel, thus she also displays masculine characteristics, including the commitment of violent acts. Even other people perceive her as "not that easy to beat" (48) and they know that she is prone to use violence. This is indicated when she is able to drive away some factionless, who are assaulting a Candor boy, by only threatening them to hurt them. Another instance, in which she actually uses physical violence against somebody else, is when she shoots the woman who shot Tori only a moment before that. In these two situations, Tris resorts to violence in order save and defend somebody else or herself. When she beats up Caleb, though, she only does so because she is so furious with him about his betrayal: "I thought I was beyond this kind of anger, but as he stumbles back with his hands on his face, I pursue him, grabbing the front of his shirt and slamming him against the stone sculpture and screaming that he is a coward and a traitor and that I will kill him, I will kill him" (278). Here, Tris has flown into a rage and she acts so aggressively and violently because of her hurt feelings, and not because she wants to care for and protect somebody else.

Even though David's and the other council members' intention to use the memory serum to reset the whole population in Chicago is not an act of physical violence, but it is still a very cruel thing to do because it would erase the people's memory and thus also their identity. Tris is appalled by this form of dominant violence, and so she tries to get hold of the memory serum to reset the people in the Bureau. To Tobias's objection that thereby they would just do the same thing the Bureau has planned, to erase the memory of people against their will, Tris replies, "I think they're lucky I'm not going to kill them" (384). In her attempt to get the memory serum from the Weapons Lab, Tris does resist the death serum but she is shot by David, who is desperate to maintain his control and power. However Tris is able to release the memory serum before she drifts away, erasing the memory of all the people in the Bureau, and so the people in Chicago, but also everywhere else, are liberated from the Bureau's control and dominant violence.

2.3. Symbolism in the *Divergent* trilogy

Veronica Roth has included many symbols in the *Divergent* trilogy and some characters' names also carry a deeper meaning. Thus, in order to develop a deeper understanding of and to provide an insight into the world of *Divergent*, some selected symbols will be analyzed and expanded on in this sub-chapter.

The first symbol the reader encounters on the first page of *Divergent* is the mirror. In Abnegation, Tris is only allowed to look at her reflection in the mirror once every third month, since the people living in this faction reject vanity and self-indulgence. This is what the mirror symbolizes, for Tris, but also for all Abnegation people. On the same day, Tris encounters a mirror again, in the room where she takes the aptitude test: "Mirrors cover the inner walls of the room. I can see my reflection from all angles" (Roth, *Div* 11). Frankel points out that this room is "a chamber of literal self-reflection, in which Tris reveals who she is" (*Choosing* 43). According to Walker, it was once universally believed that "one's reflection is a vital part of one's soul, mirrors and other reflective surfaces were long regarded as soul-catchers or doorways to the other world spirits" (145). In this sense, when Tris looks into the mirror she is staring "at her own soul, as she prepares to embark on her journey" (Frankel, *Choosing* 43).

Another symbol, which Tris also comes across in the room where she takes the aptitude test is the hawk. She sees it tattooed on Tori's neck, "a black-and-white hawk with a red eye" (Roth, *Div* 11). Tris asks Tori why she chose to have a tattoo of a hawk and she tells her that it symbolizes the sun. Further, she explains that when she "got this, [she] figured if [she] always had the sun on [her, she] wouldn't be afraid of the dark" (12). Frankel concludes that Tori is "a sun goddess of power and light, protecting and guiding Tris with enlightenment" (*Choosing* 44). Tris is so fascinated by Tori's hawk "representing a fear she overcame" that she later, in the Dauntless compound, also decides to get a tattoo of three ravens, "[o]ne for each member of the family [she] left behind". She comments, "Maybe there is a way to honor my old life as I embrace my new one" (Roth, *Div* 90). Ravens, in general, represent "death and dark times" and maybe Tris already sensed "the darkness that's coming" (Frankel, *Choosing* 46). Tris encounters a flock of crows, and ravens are a species of crows, in her fear landscape where they are attacking her and "pecking at [her] shoulders" (Roth, *Div* 233). At first only one crow, but then hundreds of them hit Tris with their beaks making her scream and sob. However, Tobias points out to her that she might not be really

afraid of crows because “fears are rarely what they appear to in the simulation” (239). Tris presumes that what she really fears is “terror and helplessness” (251). Thus, it can be assumed that the crows represent Tris’s family and her friends, and she is afraid that something terrible happens to them but she will be unable to help them. This assumption can be based on the connection between Tris’s dream about her mother cooking a crow, and when she wakes up she has to find out that Al has killed himself. In connection with this, Frankel states, “If a dead crow represents the first of her friends to die, then the crows indeed are loved ones and dark omens combined” (*Choosing* 47).

Water is also a very commonly occurring symbol in the trilogy. On the one hand, it is the substance that represents the Erudite faction, and on the other it occurs in Tris’s fear landscape when she is about to drown in a huge tank of water. But here again, Tris’s true fear is not “drowning but losing control”. When she is tied to a stake and Peter wants to burn her in the simulation, Tris wishes for rain to put out the fire, and so she uses the symbol of Erudite and Jeanine, who is the enemy, to save her. According to Frankel, this symbolizes “the transformation she will one day bring to the fire of the Erudite war” (45). Later in *Allegiant*, water is again used as a symbol. The tank of water in the Bureau of Genetic Welfare only releases one drop of water at a time and it drops on a “huge slab of dark stone, square and rough” (Roth, *All* 145). The stone represents a big problem, and the drops of water stand for the human potential to solve it, as Zoe explains to Tris, “[I]f they are persistent enough, even tiny drops of water, over time, can change the rock forever. And it will never change back” (146). But Tris does not approve of that stance on change:

I imagine the wave of water colliding with the rock and spilling over the tile floor, collecting around my shoes. Doing a little at once can fix something, eventually, but I feel like when you believe that something is truly a problem, you throw everything you have at it, because you just can’t help yourself. (147)

Frankel adds that “this is the type of action she takes before the book’s end”, saving the world with her final heroic act. Because “[t]here’s no need for gradual change” (Frankel, *Choosing* 45) anymore, they are removing the sculpture, the “symbol of change” (Roth, *All* 498).

Regarding the protagonists’ names, Beatrice signifies “blessing” or also “traveler”. According to Frankel, this meaning is quite suitable for Beatrice because she is a “blessed traveler who saves her city by journeying from her home to a new faction, ... preserving life wherever she goes” (*Choosing* 49). However, the name Tris can be considered even more important, as this is the one she chooses after entering the Dauntless compound. The ‘tri’ in

Tris is “the Latin root for three and also for complex” which precisely corresponds to her result of the aptitude test, which revealed that she is qualified for three different factions, which makes her a Divergent. What is more is that most Divergent only show an aptitude for two factions, but Tris is “especially divergent, three-part, and complicated”. Moreover Frankel points out that the number three is a female symbol because “all symbols of the trinity ... date back to the triple goddess” (48). Tobias is a Hebrew name for “God is good”. It can be interpreted as a “Biblical name of proper behavior, given to the perfect young Abnegation boy he was supposed to be” (49). Against this, Roth confesses that she “choose[s] names mostly based on how they feel to [her], and Abnegation names tend to feel stuffy or old-fashioned (Beatrice, Tobias, Susan, Marcus)” (Baird-Hardy). Four, however, is definitely the name he was given by his instructor Amar because this represents the number of his fears. Frankel refers to the number four as “a male symbol as the patriarchy divided the world into square maps and crossroads” (*Choosing* 49). She finally notes that “[i]f one adds the female three and male four, this equals the number of Tris’s seven fears” (50).

IV. Conclusion

This diploma thesis has provided and accounted for an analysis of how the main characters of *The Hunger Games* and the *Divergent* trilogy are portrayed with regard to gender and violence. In addition, the most prevalent and important symbols and metaphors have been discussed as well.

In *The Hunger Games* series, Katniss is presented with a great number of traditional masculine characteristics at the beginning, for example she possesses the attributes of being strong and tough, is able to hunt and occupies the role of the family's breadwinner. By contrast, Peeta exhibits a majority of feminine traits, for instance his talent for baking and decorating cakes or his emotionality. Through the remaking process, however, Katniss's feminine traits are emphasized or rather imposed on her, and together with Peeta she needs to act out their love relationship. Thereby, it becomes apparent that gender and the differences between men and women seem to be very important for Panem's society as the audience expects her to look beautiful, be dressed up and wear make-up. Furthermore, Katniss is considerably insecure about her feelings for Peeta and Gale as she is emotionally torn between the two and unable to decide for one of them. In the arena, she resorts to her hunting ability and occupies a rather strong and active role again. Thus, in the course of the plot Katniss blurs, through representing feminine and masculine attributes, the categories of the stereotypical gender roles. Nevertheless, the epilogue reveals that Katniss is, in the end, placed in the domestic sphere, designated for a life as Peeta's wife and their children's mother. The strong and independent Katniss from the beginning of the trilogy finally ends up in a passive and dependent position, which must have been decided by somebody else because she does not even get a chance to choose her own fate by herself.

In contrast, in the *Divergent* trilogy Tris develops from a physically weak, little girl, who is told by the faction's conventions what to do and how to act, into an autonomous, independent subject, making her own decisions. She also commits herself to the relationship with Tobias, in which both of them are equal warrior partners, and this shows that Tris is not in such an emotional turmoil as Katniss, who is unable to decide for one boyfriend, and emphasizes her self-consciousness she has developed in the course of the story. What is more is that Tris, in the end, chooses her own fate by sacrificing her life in order to save all the others, dying a heroic death. In general, it can be said that both Tris and Tobias blur the traditional gender categories by embodying character traits that men are usually presented

with but also some that are typical for women's representations. Even though Tris and Tobias are mainly coded masculine, through having to fight and being strong, they also exhibit some features that are stereotypically seen as feminine. In the world of Roth's Chicago, gender seems to matter less than in Collins' Panem, as, for example, Tris is not expected to look beautiful, wear dresses or perform a heterosexual relationship in order to appeal to somebody else and to be able to survive. Moreover, differences between men and women and their, traditionally, expected roles in society are not as explicitly emphasized as in *The Hunger Games* trilogy.

All in all, by directly comparing the gender representations of both series, it has to be concluded that Veronica Roth, with the portrayal of the *Divergent* series' two protagonists, has successfully accomplished to defy the stereotypical notions of gender roles that are prevalent in our contemporary society nowadays. Suzanne Collins, on the other hand, frequently supports these stereotypes even though the heroine is also represented as strong and active, at least in the beginning. Through occasionally reversing the gender roles, and then inverting them again by emphasizing Katniss's femininity and Peeta's masculinity, *The Hunger Games* series rather perpetuates and reinforces than challenges the dominant stereotypical gender roles.

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Abstract

A recent trend in the realm of young adult literature is the considerable growth of dystopian fiction for young adults being published and its increasing popularity among its readers. The genre of dystopian writing places its plot and characters in a, mostly near, future setting where society is governed and controlled by a repressive state authority in many cases. Contemporary dystopian novels for young adults often feature heroines who fight and rebel against a suppressive governmental system after realizing its deficiencies. Thus the protagonists of these young adult texts are represented as strong women acting in a domain that has traditionally been associated with men, namely one of war and violence.

This diploma thesis aims at analyzing *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins and the *Divergent* trilogy by Veronica Roth, which both present young female protagonists who fight the system and try to change their societies, with regard to their representation of gender roles. The objective of this analysis is to find out whether Collins and Roth have accomplished to challenge and defy stereotypical gender roles with these two famous literary works. Further, it examines the effect the striking levels of violence in young adult dystopian novels have, particularly in the six selected for this thesis, on the one hand on the characters in the stories but on the other hand also on the readers. Moreover, what these two trilogies have in common is the use of metaphors and symbols whose deeper meaning and power in *The Hunger Games* trilogy and the *Divergent* trilogy is of further relevancy for this thesis.

German Abstract

Eine jüngste Entwicklung im Bereich der Jugendliteratur ist der beträchtliche Anstieg der Veröffentlichungen dystopischer Erzählliteratur die sich an Jugendliche richtet und ihre zunehmende Beliebtheit bei den Lesern. Die Handlung dystopischer Literatur findet in einer, oft nahen, Zukunft statt, in einer Gesellschaft die in vielen Fällen durch eine totalitäre Staatsgewalt beherrscht und kontrolliert wird. In zeitgenössischen dystopischen Romanen für Heranwachsende kommen oft Heldinnen vor die gegen ein unterdrückendes Regierungssystem kämpfen und rebellieren, nachdem sie dessen Mängel erkannt haben. Daher sind die Protagonistinnen solcher Jugendromane als starke Frauen dargestellt, die in einem Bereich tätig sind der traditionell mit Männern in Verbindung gebracht wird, nämlich Krieg und Gewalt.

Diese Diplomarbeit analysiert die *Hunger Games* Trilogie von Suzanne Collins und die *Divergent* Trilogie von Veronica Roth im Hinblick auf die Darstellung der Geschlechterrollen. Beide Autorinnen bilden eine junge, weibliche Protagonistin ab, die das System bekämpft und versucht ihre Gesellschaft zu verändern. Das Ziel dieser Analyse ist es, herauszufinden ob Collins und Roth es in diesen beiden berühmten literarischen Werken geschafft haben, die stereotypen Geschlechterrollen kritisch zu hinterfragen und sich über diese hinwegzusetzen. Darüber hinaus untersucht diese Arbeit den Effekt den das beachtlich hohe Maß an Gewalt in Jugendromanen hat, einerseits auf die Charaktere in den Geschichten und andererseits auch auf die Leser. Der Fokus hierbei liegt natürlich auf den sechs für diese Arbeit ausgewählten Romanen. Des Weiteren haben diese beiden Trilogien die Verwendung von Metaphern und Symbolen gemein. Deren tieferer Sinn und Macht in der *Hunger Games* Trilogie und der *Divergent* Trilogie ist von zusätzlicher Bedeutung in dieser Diplomarbeit.