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*The Hunger Games Trilogy*“

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# 1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to explore the concept of kinship in the American novel series *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins. These Young Adult novels and their screen adaptations have gained immense popularity since their release. The main question of research of this diploma thesis is how kinship is represented in this series. The question of what family actually consists of arises inevitably and will also be answered. Furthermore, it shall be investigated how personal development and identity is impacted through one's nearest and dearest.

In the beginning, a theoretical background will be provided. Firstly, a definition about the genre of Young Adult Literature will be given, followed by an explanation of Dystopian Literature. After that, the concepts of transmedia storytelling, intermediality and adaptation theory will be defined. Furthermore, since the screen adaptations should not be disregarded, there will be a short elaboration and comments on the 'language' of these films. With the means of closely examining *The Hunger Games* series, the notion of kinship shall be deconstructed. In addition, this thesis seeks to shed light on familial relationships and how they affect the protagonist's lives and choices.

Furthermore, kinship presents itself as an important and constantly recurring theme in fiction. According to Kimberly Reynolds (193), "families [...] have been a constant presence in Children's Literature, but the way they have been represented has changed considerably over time in line with shifts in cultural needs and expectations about both families and children." This quote underlines what is elaborated above concerning the change that the notion of kinship has undergone. Although family as kin is an ever-present theme, especially in Children's and Young Adult fiction, its understanding and definition are not static. The relationships change simultaneously with time and culture. Additionally, Reynolds (193) also claims that "there is a tenacious loyalty to the idea of the nuclear family on the one hand, but a series of challenges and adjustments to it on the other." Therefore, a definition of kin always depends on a particular period of time throughout history.

Moreover, Hintz and Ostry (16) claim that, “in the past thirty years, the Dystopian novel has become the dominant genre model within futuristic fiction published for young readers.” Also, their film adaptations have enjoyed immense popularity on a global scale. When one thinks about the success that *The Hunger Games* series has had, this statement can be verified. To give examples, with regards to box office figures, *The Hunger Games* made a total of \$152,535,747 on its opening weekend in March 2012 in the United States (see “The Hunger Games.”, *IMDb*). This number illustrates the popularity of *The Hunger Games* quite well.

The author of *The Hunger Games* series is Suzanne Collins, a US-American novelist. Collin’s writing style is interesting, since she tells the story in present tense, making use of occasional flashbacks in order to provide the reader with more knowledge and depth of the characters. The whole story is told from Katniss’s perspective in the first person. *The Hunger Games* (released 2008) is just the name of the first book of the trilogy, but the whole series is usually summarized under this title. The second and third books are called *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010). The film adaptations of the trilogy are, however, divided into four parts, with *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay* consisting of two parts. The first film premiered in theaters in 2012. *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2* completed the series in 2015 (see “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2.”, *IMDb*).

As far as ownership of the films is concerned, the distribution rights were transferred to Lionsgate Entertainment. According to Lionsgate, this company “has generated an average of \$2 billion at the global box office” each year, “ranking among the major studio market share leaders” with “a broad portfolio of films,” among them the blockbusters *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* (“Movies.”, *Lionsgate*). *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2* was released and came to theaters in Fall 2015, concluding the series. Rumor has it that Lionsgate is thinking about development of prequels or sequels of *The Hunger Games* (see “Lionsgate Looking To Develop Hunger Games Prequels.”, *ComingSoon*), however these are just speculations and will not be verified in this thesis. Nina Jacobson produced all of the four movies in

cooperation with her company, Color Force (see “Nina Jacobson.”, *IMDb*). Gary Ross only directed the first film of the series, from then Francis Lawrence took over as a director for the other three movies (see “Francis Lawrence.”, *IMDb*). In regards to score, composer James Newton Howard was hired to take care of the film’s music together with producer T-Bone Burnett, which resulted in a promising and successful pairing, since they were responsible for the music for all four parts (see Lussier). Jennifer Lawrence contributed a song to *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1*, “The Hanging Tree,” which also hit the Billboard charts (see “The Hanging Tree.”, *IMDb*).

Although *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay* fall in the broad genre of Young Adult Literature, “multiple, sometimes contradictory narrative genres” are “folded into the truly epic scope of this series” (Pharr and Clark 9). It is a “war story that is as well an antiwar treatise, a romance that is never unreservedly romantic, a Science Fiction adventure that also serves as grim and social satire, an identity novel that is compellingly ambivalent about gender roles” and furthermore “a tragedy depicting the desperate human need for heroes and the terrible cost of heroism” (9). Suzanne Collins unites the complexity of these various narrative genres throughout the series.

Along the words of Susan Dominus, *The Hunger Games* trilogy is now part of “a kind of publishing holy trinity”, taking its place alongside J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series and Stephenie Meyers’ *Twilight* (qtd. in Pharr and Clark 10).

## 2 Theoretical background

### 2.1 Young Adult Literature

Young Adult Literature is extremely popular these days. As a result of great demand, the Young Adult Fiction sections in bookshops also tend to be enormous in size. In order to define this particular genre, one needs to look at some features and to think about the audience and whether the readers can all be attributed to the same age group.

Firstly, one needs to establish some characteristics of Young Adult Literature. According to Imogen Williams, the requirement for a literary work to be considered suitable for young adults is “an adolescent protagonist, who will probably face significant difficulties and crises, and grow and develop to some degree” (*The Guardian*). The relevance for young readers is explained appropriately through this quote, since adolescents often find themselves facing identity crises, struggling with finding out more about their personality. It can be said that “teens enjoy reading about people their own age (or a few years older)” (Cart 95). Through knowing about the struggles of their peers, whether fictional or not, young readers see that they are not alone with their problems and that there is someone who they can identify with.

Furthermore, it needs to be clarified whether there is a difference between “Teen Fiction” and “Young Adult Fiction” and their respective target groups (see I. Williams). In her article in *The Guardian*, I. Williams raises the question whether or not one can use “the labels ‘teen’ and ‘YA’ interchangeably,” coming to the conclusion that some people think that these two terms denote different age groups, while others believe that the notions ‘Teen Fiction’ and ‘Young Adult Fiction’ can be used interchangeably. The question inevitably arises of who the older, more mature audience is, or who the younger, more childlike is audience. According to the author, the ones who make a distinction claim that the term “‘teen’ covers 12-14, and ‘YA’ is aimed at about 14+” as far as the age group is concerned (see I. Williams). It is important to consider that ‘teen’ usually denotes any person between the age of 13

and 19. However, what Williams tries to achieve with her distinction is only a categorization of readership. Having established these boundaries, the next paragraph investigates the reasons for these particular distinctions.

Subsequently, it is essential to reflect on the reason why some differentiate between 'teen' and 'YA.' To give an example, "the later *Harry Potter* books, in which torture and murder come to the fore after the gentler series beginnings, would count as 'teen'", while "'YA' [...] is more likely to deal frankly with sex, tackle challenging issues and adult relationships, and feature swearing." (I. Williams). From this quote it can be deduced that, although violence and killing is not completely avoided in books for the age group of 12 to 14, there is still room for content and style usually directed at more mature readers. In consequence, although the notion 'teen' technically denotes human beings between 13 and 19 years old, 'Young Adult' has a more experienced and sophisticated connotation.

Having established the audience of Teen Fiction in contrast to Young Adult Fiction, the age of the protagonists is not hard to guess. Since readers generally like being able to identify with a character, the consumers of the literary works are very likely to be in the same age group as the main characters. In earlier works, the protagonists were between 16 and 18 years old; however, as time passed by in the real world, "an increasing number of lead characters were portrayed as 14 or even 12. Today one of the fastest-growing segments of publishing is the book market designated for readers 10-14 years old" (Cart 95). Thus, it is a necessity for the market to maintain an increased spectrum and provide reading material for younger as well as older teenagers.

Furthermore, one needs to be careful not to pigeonhole the audience. According to Meg Rosoff, "55% of YA titles are bought by adults" (qtd. in I. Williams). While it is clear that some of these purchases might be presents for adolescents (see I. Williams), one cannot exclude people who are 19+ from a potential readership. Since every person is different, his or her taste in books will be diverse as well. Whereas

one can say that there are themes and genres directed at a particular audience, it is of course permitted for a person outside the target group to read and enjoy the respective book. Moreover, this applies to both sides, since there are a lot of young readers who enjoy literary works directed at an older audience. According to Pharr and Clark (9), *The Hunger Games* series is “proof that Young Adult Literature can transcend the ‘adolescent’ label that so often limits its critical reception among scholars and mature readers.”

A perfect example for this phenomenon is the *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling. It needs to be said that maturing and developing one’s personality cannot just be restricted to children or young adults; rather, it continues throughout one’s entire life. Therefore, one of the reasons why even adults enjoy reading fiction originally designed for younger readers is that they can relate to the struggles the protagonists face. It is an invitation for adults to reflect on themselves and their behavior, confront their problems and attempt a change themselves in what bothers them. Furthermore, Gunelius (11) claims that *Harry Potter* was “a product people needed.” Although it was initially directed at children and teens, the development of the series brought about “varying demographics as a classic story of a fallible hero coming of age while fighting good versus evil” (Gunelius 27). Moreover, the story of *Harry Potter* is profound and cohesive, which is very much appreciated by adult readers. The writing style of J.K. Rowling is simple but not unpretentious. This makes the reading experience rather pleasant. Rowling knows how to captivate the reader and keep up the elements of suspense and surprise from the very first to the very last page. The magical world is not at all a childish theme; after all, to be able to perform magic and to escape reality is popular across all ages and interests. J.K. Rowling does not discriminate and welcomes every age group into her magical world.

Nevertheless, one needs to keep in mind that “the Potter and Everdeen series diverge initially in their narrative pacing, with Collins’s [sic] storyline moving with an intensity that Rowling’s work eschews” (Pharr and Clark 220). While *The Hunger Games* series takes place over a relatively short period of time in three books and

four movies, the story of *Harry Potter* evolves throughout seven books and eight film adaptations. Katniss's "struggle intensifies exponentially," whereas Harry occasionally gets his "delightful downtime" (Pharr and Clark 220). Although *The Hunger Games* and the *Harry Potter* series are quite different in their descriptive progress and development of the story, their individuality is the basis of their global success.

To sum up, as its name implies, Young Adult Literature is directed at teenagers, who are perceived as younger as far as age is concerned, and of course adolescents, who are older and more experienced. However, there are a lot of readers outside this age group who enjoy Young Adult fiction. People should not be judged on their genre preference, because in the end the purpose of fiction is to provide the reader with the possibility of escaping into another world.

## **2.2 Dystopian Literature**

In the past couple of years, Dystopian Literature experienced a remarkable upswing, with *The Hunger Games* being one of the most popular Dystopian novels of our time. This chapter provides a definition of Dystopian Literature, accompanied by the notion of 'dystopia' as such.

To start with, Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry write in their Introduction to *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults* in an extensive and comprehensible fashion about the concepts of 'utopia' and 'dystopia,' which are discussed further below. The focus on Utopian Literature and Dystopian Literature for the target audience of children and young adults presented through intense scientific engagement with this subject qualifies their work as reliable source for the following elaborations. Additionally, the findings of Lyman Tower Sargent, "one of the world's foremost scholars on Utopian Studies" and Professor Emeritus at the University of Missouri-St. Lewis (UMSL) support this paragraph ("Lyman Tower Sargent.", *UMSL*). This thesis follows his definitions.

In terms of defining 'utopia' and 'dystopia', Lyman Tower Sargent describes 'utopianism' as "social dreaming" (Hintz and Ostry 2). This means that utopia is only a dream about the perfect structure of a society, which is not achieved in the world we live in. Hintz and Ostry explain the two concepts as follows:

"Utopia" as a "non-existent society described in considerable detail" and [...] "eutopia" [sic] for those societies "that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived," with "dystopia" as considerably worse. [...] We use "utopia," a more familiar term for the reader, to signify a nonexistent society that is posited as significantly better than that of the reader. It strives toward perfection, has a delineated social system, and is described in reasonably specific detail. Dystopias are likewise precise descriptions of societies, ones in which the ideals for improvement have gone tragically amok. (Hintz and Ostry 3)

In short, in a utopian world, people lead a better life than they do now, while in a dystopia, the standard of living has decreased drastically.

At this point, one has to consider the reasons why Dystopian Literature as well as Utopian Literature is created. According to Hintz and Ostry (1), "[utopian and] dystopian writing for children and young adults has been produced for a variety of reasons, and it has a range of effects, from play and escape to sustained political reflection." One can definitely say that 'politics' is a crucial keyword, since adolescents might have one of their first encounters with politics while reading a book falling under the respective genre. Therefore, it can be claimed that one important reason for writing dystopian and utopian novels is to get young adults acquainted with the world of politics and "social organization" (Hintz and Ostry 2).

Furthermore, Hintz and Ostry (7) write about another function of this genre, besides the already mentioned reflection of society and politics: Utopian and Dystopian novels for children and young adults habitually contain "lessons to be learned." Through reading such books, "children learn more as they reread at different times in their lives" (Hintz and Ostry 7). Therefore, one can deduce that the novels also have pedagogic and didactic functions. Children and adolescents not only read for the sole purpose of entertainment, but also to take something out of the reading experience, which forms their personal character. Utopian and Dystopian Literature encourages

the readers to reflect also on themselves, their morals, and their standards with a critical eye and additionally encourages them to think about what kind of person they want to be in life. In short, through this kind of reflection, the mindset and attitude of the adolescent is shaped.

Moreover, “in many dystopias, totalitarian societies assert the power of determining who lives and who dies” and “death is the punishment for nonconformity and dissidence” (Hintz and Ostry 9). Nevertheless, by using such extreme measures, here again the reader is invited to reflect on themselves as well as their surroundings and to think about what the rights of the individuals are. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century (at least in the western world), people have fundamental human rights. Some of these rights were difficult to attain when one remembers efforts to overcome discrimination against women, people of color, non-Christians or others. However, dystopias are staged in a post-apocalyptic future and it seems that privileges are allocated rather differently than at current times, because in this fictional future some people are regarded better or having more worth than others. One can say that equality has diminished. The question inevitably arises of how and under which conditions the hierarchy is determined. Furthermore, one can discuss what exactly the rights of the individual are and who decides what kinds of people are better than others. As previously indicated, (arbitrary) decisions about people’s survival or death are being made in dystopias. Thus, it must be determined which exact criteria one has to fulfill in order to live. Additionally, there is also the question of why some – often innocent – people are regarded as a threat. However, writing about these points of discussion in an elaborated fashion would exceed the aim of this thesis. In conclusion, excessive thirst for power is presented as a threat to humanity and young adults should be made aware of this.

Having said that, there are specific target groups of utopias on the one hand and dystopias on the other hand. Hintz and Ostry (9) find out that “utopias predominate in Children’s Literature, whereas dystopias are far more common in Young Adult Literature.” Immediately, the question of why this is the case arises. Since adoles-

cents inevitably deal with the difficulties of growing up and integrating into the adult community, they might be able to better identify with the struggles one encounters in a dystopia. As previously mentioned, the social hierarchy in dystopias is demolished and equality as well as democracy are alien to the regime. Heroes and heroines of Dystopian Literature for young adults are mostly teenagers as well, who fight for their rights and rebel against the prevailing social system. Here, one can draw an analogy to adolescents in the 'real world.' As one is confronted with restrictions and rules in the path of self-discovery, identification with one character or another is very likely. As far as utopias in children's literature are concerned, Hintz and Ostry (9) state that the predominance of utopias "reflects the way in which young children are rarely depicted to themselves as suffering, especially collectively." In other words, since children are not acquainted with misery to the that extent that adolescents and adults are, they are not portrayed as if they were familiar with it. Taking into account that the target audience *The Hunger Games* is young adults, the argument that dystopias are directed at adolescents and utopias at children is valid. To conclude, the selection of the target group is a matter of the reader's ability to identify with the character.

Furthermore, Dystopian Literature for young adults also serves a pedagogical function. Hintz and Ostry (9) state that "dystopian literature [...] mingles well with the coming-of-age novel, which features a loss of innocence." Furthermore, in order to define the genre of 'dystopian writing for children and young adults,' the definition of coming-of-age literature must also be considered. This term derives from the Bildungsroman, meaning "a novel of someone's growth from childhood to maturity" ("Bildungsroman.", Lynch). Wilhem Dilthey defines the "Bildungsroman" as follows:

[The Bildungsroman] portray[s] a young man [...]: how he enters life in a happy state of naiveté seeking kindred souls, finds friendship and love, how he comes into conflict with the hard realities of the world, how he grows to maturity through diverse life-experiences, finds himself, and attains certainty about his purpose in the world. (qtd in Swales 98)

One can see in this quote that there is indeed a mix between the features of Dystopian Literature and the Bildungsroman, since the pedagogical function – also known as a learning process – is expressed in having new experiences and engaging in self-discovery.

Moreover, coping with the oppression of some kind of regime and subsequently rebelling against tyranny and the “hard realities” is also a very prominent theme in Dystopian Literature. In *The Hunger Games*, the reader accompanies the main protagonists through a couple of years, thus experiences the growth – both mentally and physically – as well as development of the characters almost firsthand. *The Hunger Games* is an excellent example of the influence of the Bildungsroman, since Katniss matures into an important female leader who is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in. She leaves her childhood behind and becomes a strong, grown-up woman.

In addition, Hintz and Ostry, claim that ‘dystopia’ can also be seen as a metaphor for the struggle in teenage years:

Indeed, dystopia can act as a powerful metaphor for adolescence. In adolescence, authority appears oppressive, and perhaps no one feels more under surveillance than the average teenager. The teenager is on the brink of adulthood: close enough to see its privileges but unable to enjoy them. The comforts of childhood fail to satisfy. The adolescent craves more power and control, and feels the limits on his or her freedom intensely. (9-10)

With this statement they suggest what the process of growing up might feel like. One may not feel understood by the people one is surrounded by (mostly older individuals, for example parents and grandparents, as well as teachers), and, on top of that, one might not even comprehend and realize the changes that take place in- and outside of one’s body. Our heroine, Katniss Everdeen, has to deal with oppressive authorities, which are the people from the Capitol. She contradicts everything the Capitol stands for, making a conflict inevitable. Furthermore, in Katniss’s case, the “comforts of childhood” are long gone, since she has to provide for her mother and sister due to the unexpected death of her father. In addition to hardships that are imposed on Katniss, she has to face the struggles of a regular teenager.

In sum, this chapter has given detailed information on Dystopian Literature. The similarities and connections with Young Adult fiction are provided, since the challenges and struggles of an adolescent growing up are also major components of this Dystopian Literature.

### **2.3 Kinship**

In the past few centuries, especially in the last couple of decades, massive changes in family structures have been witnessed. It is important to state that this thesis focuses on culture of the Western world, because it is difficult to speak for every culture on the planet. Nowadays, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the notion of family and what is considered to be your kin might be very different to what it was in former times. The typical conservative composition of the average family, namely mother, father and children – also called the nuclear family – got broken up. At present times we are facing various differing family structures. To state some examples, there are single-parent families, households where the grandparents watch over their grandchildren constantly or occasionally, same-sex parents, foster parents, adopted children and any other constellation imaginable. Furthermore, in our contemporary world, people also often regard their close friends as family and see them as a family of choice. We can see that the concept of family and kinship is ever-changing.

It is often argued that kinship can be equalized with being blood related. A first definition is provided below:

Kin are of two basic kinds: consanguineous (sharing common ancestors) and affinal (related by marriage). In some societies other pairs of individuals also treat each other as relatives—for example, the wives of a pair of brothers, relatives by adoption, and godparents who have special kinlike relationships (fictive kin). (“Consanguinity.”, Bittles)

According to this definition, your kin are the people to whom you are related by blood and who share the same DNA as you. Nevertheless, it also says that kinship does not just stop there, but also includes in-laws and other people who are treated as family, even though there might no biological relation, for example godparents.

### 2.3.1 Kinship through time

In her article, *Contemporary adoptive kinship*, Janette Logan makes significant claims about the changing notion of kinship. She comments on kinship studies based on sociological as well as anthropological research done by other scientists, as well as adding her own remarks concerning this field of study. Thus, she provides an important resource for present-day investigations on the concept of kinship.

### 2.3.2 Traditional notion of kinship

We can distinguish between kinship in a rather conservative sense on the one hand and a progressive notion of kinship on the other hand. In her article, Janette Logan (35) claims “kinship in the traditional sense was regarded as both biological and hetero-normative, with the blood bond serving as the basis for the creation and continuation of family kinship systems.” Moreover, according to Weston (34), many people thought of biology as “a defining feature of kinship” and that “blood ties” made “certain people kin, regardless of whether those individuals display[ed] the love and enduring solidarity expected to characterize familial relations.” Thus, when talking about kinship, one can see that the biological relation was traditionally emphasized.

Furthermore, heterosexual couples were the norm in the past. Having another sexual orientation was forbidden by the church and by law, two institutions that were not separated back then. Moreover, Logan also talks about creation and maintenance of kinship by emphasizing the importance of a biological connection. Regardless of the fact that same-sex couples were not tolerated in the past anyway, their right to adopt children was nonexistent. The normal situation was that a woman and a man would get married and have many children. Overall, Logan’s argument shows that in former times, people may have been limited in their way of living and believing.

When reflecting on kinship in the past, the concept of marriage cannot be disregarded. If one thinks about the generation of our parents, grandparents and older generations, it is very likely that marriage was entered into at a very young age and probably with the first partner – or at least among the first – one has ever had. It was also common practice to stay together. While the divorce rate in Austria was rather low at 15.9% in 1960, the rate increased throughout the years, reaching a peak in 2005 when 46.4% of marriages ended in divorce. In other words, almost every second marriage was doomed to fail. Although the number decreased again, in 2014, still 42.1% of the couples in Austria decided to legally separate (see Kaindl and Schipfer). It can be concluded that in former times, the notion of kin was relatively fixed, since the likelihood of separating was not nearly as high as it is today.

According to the *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, “in preindustrial societies in the west, the dominant household form had contained an extended family, often involving three co-resident generations, and that the ‘modern’ family – characterized by a nuclear household structure, family limitation, the spacing of children, and population mobility – was brought about by industrialization” (“History of Family and Kinship.”, Hareven). The nuclear family describes “a unit consisting typically of a married man and woman with their offsprings [sic]” (Schusky 92). Since it was common that multiple generations of a family lived under one roof, there was great likelihood that the grandparents were there to support the parents by helping out with the children. Some might even argue that the family tie was stronger back then because of the close proximity; however, others claim that the quality of family connection is not related to physical closeness. Nevertheless, there were also possible downsides to living with the extended family. There might have been “a greater potential for tension and conflict” (Ember 132). Living with more people in a shared home brings about intimacy automatically, yet reduces privacy drastically. Lack of privacy could quickly result in (generational) dispute. In conclusion, in the past, kinship often included having a large biological family that lived in close proximity to each other.

### 2.3.3 Current notion of kinship

Since humanity has undergone a transformation towards more openness and tolerance for individual preferences, the traditional notion of kinship has been modified as well. We are living in an age of transformation, thus there are various kinds of changes concerning social bonds that have been taking place.

As previously indicated, it is implied in Janette Logan's claim that heterosexual parents are the norm. However, Logan (35) states that the "nature of the family" and "traditional perspectives on kinship" have been challenged and thus transformed and adjusted "driven by feminism, gay and lesbian studies, and new reproductive technologies." As a result, the range of diversity of couple constellations has become broad. According to Logan (36), "demographic, economic and cultural changes have [...] led to the recognition of the diversity of families."

It was impossible to miss when the Supreme Court of the United States legalized gay marriage nationwide in the summer of 2015. As far as the right to adopt for homosexual couples in the US is concerned, it needs to be said that "same-sex couples in all states [...] can petition for joint adoption statewide" ("LGBT Adoption Statistics.", *Lifelong Adoptions*). Consistent with "U.S. Census Bureau data, the number of children living with same-sex parents has doubled since 2000" and there is a "younger generation of gay-friendly biological parents" on the rise who have contributed to this increase ("Gay Adoption.", *Love and Pride*). There has been a change considering what features birth parents seek in adoptive parents. The aforementioned open-minded new generation does not insist on the adoptive parents being a heterosexual couple, but rather, they "consider domestic stability, relationship quality and financial security." ("Gay Adoption.", *Love and Pride*). It can be said that a paradigm shift has taken place in the field of adoption regarding the importance of sexual orientation because the stigmatization of LGBT parenting has decreased. Nevertheless, tragic events like the shooting in a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in the summer of 2016 prove that the LGBT community is not universally accepted and that homophobia is still a serious problem in the United States.

As far as the living situation of the modern young individual or family is concerned, it can be said that people's aims and goals in life have changed. While in former times it was important to settle down to family life, nowadays young people often have the urge to see the world, upgrade their education or work for some years and postpone the idea of marrying and having children. Furthermore "the extension of human lifespan" is also an indicator for the shift of priorities (Segalen 252). As already indicated, in the past, families often used to live in close proximity. However, as a result of wanting to educate oneself or striving for a successful career, one might need to relocate, meaning that one may not live where one's roots are. I would like to refrain from generalization, however, because not all people have the urge to move somewhere else for their education and occupation, or may want to marry and have children at a young age. Nevertheless, it can definitely be said that a shift from local to global thinking as well as a changing of priorities has taken place. Hence, as opposed to the past, perhaps the biological family lives far away and other people, like friends, colleagues or neighbors, are considered kin.

#### 2.3.4 Kinship and Gender

Furthermore, the role of gender in the modern dynamics of kinship needs to be examined. According to Tyson (91), "the word *gender* refers not to our anatomy but to our behavior as socially programmed men and women." Therefore, it is commonly argued that *gender* is a social construct, whereas *sex* is a biological construct. There are gender roles assigned to males and females, which tend to be victim to stereotyping. Oberhuber (10) claims that "males and females do not have the same privileges in societies all around the world and are generally treated in different ways." Furthermore, she states that "traditionally, men have more power and a higher status than women" (10), whereas "women are seen as inferior" and in a "dependent and submissive role" (11). Tyson (83) adds, that "traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective and decisive," and thus dominant. In these traditional gender roles, women are perceived as "emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing" and therefore "submissive" (83).

Furthermore, what goes hand in hand with the claims of the previous paragraph is the role of women in society. In the past, it was firmly established in people's minds that women are primarily mothers and are not allowed to have any other purpose in life – or, if they have, they should always choose motherhood over personal interest. However, as time has passed, women have wanted to be more independent. Some found their independence in pursuing a career, others in simply deciding that motherhood is just not for them. As opposed to the past, women do not necessarily have to rely financially on men anymore because they are able to work full-time themselves if they want to. In short, the predetermination to be only a mother has faded nowadays, leaving women with the freedom to choose what they want to do with their lives.

### 3 *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins

#### 3.1 *The Hunger Games* and media

This chapter seeks to address some basic definitions in the field of media, like transmedia storytelling, intermediality and adaptation theory. These concepts help with providing information on the usage of multiple media to tell one and the same story.

Firstly, *The Hunger Games* is a very good example for transmedia storytelling, because the story of Katniss Everdeen is told via multiple forms of media, through novels as well as movies. Jenkins defines transmedia storytelling as follows:

A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling each medium does what it does best – so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics; its world might be explored through game play or experienced as an amusement park attraction. (95)

In the course of writing the trilogy, Suzanne Collins created a huge post-apocalyptic world. The dimension of this world lends itself well to expanding the story across various media platforms. Since it is very common these days to adapt novels into films, *The Hunger Games* made no exception. Jenkins (95) also states that the purpose of transmedia storytelling is to create “a unified and coordinated entertainment experience.” This holds true for *The Hunger Games* since the three books were transferred into four Hollywood blockbusters and were crowned with success. Besides the entertainment factor, the financial aspect is often decisive for transmedia storytelling. Since *The Hunger Games* was booming on the book market, the trilogy had great potential for attracting many people to the movie theatres. The mixture of having good actors and monumental sets, using impressive special effects and other features of successful movie making is a promising approach to transmedia storytelling.

Therefore, novels are adapted and transformed into screenplays in order to be filmed and made into a movie. According to Voigts-Virchow (93), writing a script can be regarded as “the first step in the transition from word to audio-vision.” However, one cannot simply take a book, compose a screenplay and turn it into a Hollywood blockbuster. Moreover, “buying the rights of a given text” is an important step to consider (Voigts-Virchow 94). Furthermore, with regard to media transfer, it is important to “create adequate visual language from the script [and] to manipulate space [...] in a concrete and specific manner” (Voigts-Virchow 94). Having established that, one can see that producing a movie with a successful novel as its basis presents itself as rather challenging. By reading the novels, the audience has already created a world in their minds and often the readers have very explicit ideas of how the characters as well as their surroundings look. Thus, in order to keep the consumers happy, it is crucial to incorporate excitement and capture “special effects in visual articulation” so as to guarantee “an attractive visual film articulation” (Voigts-Virchow 94).

Moreover, the notion of intermediality needs to be discussed. In her book *Intermedialität*, Irina Rajewsky gives a definition of this concept:

Die Qualität des Intermedialen betrifft im Falle der Medienkombination die Konstellation des medialen Produkts, d.h. die Kombination bzw. das Resultat der Kombination mindestens zweier, konventionell als distinkt wahrgenommener Medien, die in ihrer Materialität präsent sind und jeweils auf ihre eigene, medienspezifische Weise zur (Bedeutungs-)Konstitution des Gesamtprodukts beitragen. “Intermedialität” stellt sich hier demnach als ein kommunikativ-semiotischer Begriff dar, der – dies ist entscheidend – auf der Addition mindestens zweier, konventionell als distinkt wahrgenommener medialer Systeme beruht. (Rajewsky 15)

In this quote, Rajewsky points out that the concept of intermediality deals with the examination of the relationship of two – or more – different kinds of media. In our particular case, we are dealing with intermediality in the sense of juxtaposing the books *The Hunger Games*, *Mockingjay* and *Catching Fire* by Suzanne Collins, on the one hand, to the four movie adaptations resulting from the success of these three books, on the other. The aforementioned media transfer is a subsection of intermediality (see Rajewsky 19). The goal of intermediality is to achieve an added

value through the combination of various forms of articulation of the same story (see Rajewsky 19), since we need to keep in mind that different media are also always intertwined.

Another important concept that cannot be disregarded is adaptation theory. Hutcheon (8) describes adaptation as “an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work” with a “creative *and* interpretive act of appropriation.” The adaptation of *The Hunger Games* novels into movies would be an example for film adaptation. It is a “derivation that is not derivative,” meaning that the films are “second without being secondary” (Hutcheon 9). It is important to realize that in this concept no judgment is passed on the superiority of the original. Rather, better or worse is just a matter of personal preference. The reasoning behind adaptation is the desire to “retell the same story over and over in different ways” (Hutcheon 9). Thus, the adaptors obtain the right to touch an original creatively and tell the same story through another medium.

Overall, the adaptation of *The Hunger Games* novels resulted in four movies, packed with action, special effects and celebrity casting. As this is a formula for success in the entertainment industry, it is not surprising that the adaptations were a huge hit internationally. Although there might still be an affinity for either the books or the movies, the story of Katniss Everdeen was effectively told via multiple forms of media.

### **3.2 Origin of *The Hunger Games* – Greek and Roman Mythology**

“Just as the town clock strikes two, the mayor steps up to the podium and begins to read. It’s the same story every year. He tells of the history of Panem, the country that rose up out of the ashes of a place that was once called North America. He lists the disasters, the droughts, the storms, the fires, the encroaching seas that swallowed up so much of the land, the brutal war for what little sustenance remained. The result was Panem, a shining Capitol ringed by

thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens. Then came the Dark Days, the uprising of the districts against the Capitol. Twelve were defeated, the thirteenth obliterated. The Treaty of Treason gave us the new laws to guarantee peace and, as our yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave us the Hunger Games.” (*The Hunger Games* 18)

According to Suzanne Collins, who is a great admirer of Greek and Roman mythology, *The Hunger Games* series is based on the Greek myth of *Theseus and the Minotaur*, which she read when she was a little girl and was shocked by its cruelty (see Margolis). This tale is about King Minos of Crete, whose wife Pasiphae got impregnated by a bull sent by Zeus. The outcome of this encounter was Minotaur, a semi-human/semi-bull creature. Minotaur was considered dangerous and a monster, thus a complex and confusing labyrinth was built for him to live in and no one was ever to get out of it alive. Furthermore, the enemies of King Minos were brought to the labyrinth and killed by the Minotaur. One day, King Minos’ son, Androgeus, decided to partake in the Panathenaic Games in Athens and was killed by the very same bull that fathered the Minotaur. As a result of Minos’ grief and anger and in order to punish Athens, he demanded seven Athenian girls and boys as tributes every year, to be released into the labyrinth as prey for the Minotaur. This went on for three years before Theseus, son of the King of Athens, Aegeus, decided to take on the Minotaur as well as the labyrinth so as to end the agony of the Athenians by killing the creature. When Theseus came to Crete, he met Ariadne, daughter of King Minos. Due to her attraction to Theseus, she gave him the advice to take a thread with him into the labyrinth and untangle it so as to find his way back. Theseus managed to kill the Minotaur and was able to find his way out of the labyrinth. Consequently, Athens no longer had to send tributes each year.<sup>1</sup>

The system of the Hunger Games works in a similar way to the quest of the Athenian children in the labyrinth:

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<sup>1</sup> For the whole story about Theseus and the Minotaur, consult: Dobyns, Stephen. “Theseus within the Labyrinth.” *Poetry* 147.5 (1986): 281-283.

The rules of the Hunger Games are simple. In punishment for the uprising, each of the twelve districts must provide one girl and one boy, called tributes, to participate. The twenty-four tributes will be imprisoned in a vast outdoor arena that could hold anything from a burning desert to a frozen wasteland. Over a period of several weeks, the competitors must fight to the death. The last tribute standing wins. (*The Hunger Games* 18)

However, Collins did not want to write a story about a labyrinth, so she “decided to write basically an updated version of the Roman gladiator games” (Margolis). Per definition, “a gladiator was a professional fighter who specialized with particular weapons and fought before the public in large purpose-built arenas throughout the Roman Empire” (Cartwright). The post apocalyptic version of this is the Hunger Games, where the fighters are not professionals, but children. However, all the tributes are trained before they go to the arena in a specific Training Center and are often particularly skilled in certain techniques. The Training Center is divided into several stations, some “teach survival skills, others fighting techniques” (*The Hunger Games* 93). The tributes are shown how to tie knots in order to build traps and how to camouflage themselves. Also, skills that are considered more valuable, “from starting fires, to knife throwing, to making shelter,” hand-to-hand combat, and identification of edible plants are taught (*The Hunger Games* 94). As mentioned above, the Gladiators often had an affinity for particular weapons and so do the tributes in the Hunger Games. Since the Hunger Games are broadcasted publicly in Panem, the tributes can be viewed in a similar way to the Gladiators in ancient Rome. It needs to be noted that, “as fights were usually to the death, gladiators had a short life expectancy” and “without doubt, gladiator spectacles were one of the most watched forms of popular entertainment in the Roman world” (Cartwright). Comparably, there is only one victor in the Hunger Games, who outlived the 23 other children, since each district needs to send two tributes. Also, the games are a well-liked spectacle in the Capitol.

Furthermore, Suzanne Collins stated that the message of *Theseus and the Minotaur* is that attacking and slaughtering your children is the worst thing that can possibly happen to you. This would be even worse for a parent than suffering their own brutal

death (see Margolis). Apart from this reference, there are several other similarities that can be drawn from this Greek myth to *The Hunger Games*, for example the volunteering. Katniss also volunteers to go into the arena of the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games instead of her sister Primrose, who is only 12 years old at the time, in order to spare her this vicious experience. In the Greek myth, Theseus decides on his own to go into the labyrinth so as to kill the Minotaur and save the Athenian children from a cruel death and their parents from a painful loss. A comparison can be drawn by stating that “Katniss is a futuristic Theseus” because she tries to revolt and to put an end to periodically slaughtering children from the districts (Margolis). Nevertheless, when the third Quarter Quell (the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games) comes around, Katniss is forced to go back into an altered arena, since she is the only living female victor in her district.

Furthermore, the Hunger Games go back to *Panem et Circenses*, which Plutarch explains to Katniss:

It’s a saying from thousands of years ago, written in a language called Latin about a place called Rome,” he explains. “*Panem et Circenses* translates into ‘Bread and Circuses’. The writer was saying that in return for full bellies and entertainment his people had given up their political responsibilities and therefore their power.” I think about the Capitol. The excess of food. And the ultimate entertainment. The Hunger Games. “So that’s what the districts are for. To provide the bread and circuses. (*Mockingjay* 260)

Since the citizens of the Capitol like to be entertained by the games and to stuff their bellies, the saying *Panem et Circenses* repeats itself in the post-apocalyptic time, giving Panem – the country – its name. Additionally, the people in the poorer districts are often starving, due to having no food (‘panem’ is Latin and translates to ‘bread’). Food is a representation of wealth and therefore reserved for the unbridled overconsumption in the Capitol.

Apart from *Panem et Circenses* there are other representations of Greek and Roman mythology in *The Hunger Games*. The usage of historic names for characters and old tales as a base for the development of stories can be further found in the series. The representation of Katniss can be referred back to Artemis, “Greek god-

ness of wilderness, wild animals and the hunt” (Sacks 49). Her Roman counterpart is Diana (see Smith 255). One significant parallel that can be drawn to Katniss is the importance of hunting and the sense of nature as well as of wild animals and their behavior. According to Sacks, “Artemis and Apollo grew to be skilled archers” (49). Apollo was Artemis’ twin brother. As Artemis, Katniss is often described and portrayed with arrows and a bow, which become her trademark in *The Hunger Games*. The bow is defined as being “a rarity” and constructed by her father (see *The Hunger Games* 5). Here, a connection to Katniss’s late father, who was very dear to her, can be made, since she cherishes her bows the same way she valued and loved him.

Furthermore, Sacks states that Artemis “is also the guardian of young girls, before they become women” (49). Katniss and her sister Prim have a very close relationship. When Katniss volunteers as tribute in the games instead of her younger sister Prim, she saves her from a cruel destiny. Katniss tries to do everything in her power to protect Prim; however she is “powerless against the reaping” (*The Hunger Games* 15). The reaping describes the act of pulling names of the children, who are then sent to the Hunger Games out of a pool:

The reaping system is unfair, with the poor getting the worst of it. You become eligible for the reaping the day you turn twelve. That year, your name is entered once. At thirteen, twice. And so on and so on until you reach the age of eighteen, the final year of eligibility when your name goes into the pool seven times. That’s true for every citizen in all twelve districts in the entire country of Panem. But here’s the catch. Say you are poor and starving as we were. You can opt to add your name more times in exchange for tesserae. Each tessera is worth a meager year’s supply of grain and oil for one person. You may do this for each of your family members as well. So, at the age of twelve, I had my name entered four times. (*The Hunger Games* 13)

Although Prim’s name is only placed once in the reaping pool, while Katniss’s name is included in the pool twenty times due to tesserae (see *The Hunger Games* 13), Katniss is very concerned that Prim might be chosen as tribute. Katniss feels anguish when Prim is in pain, however the older sister always tries to appear strong on the outside and to never let the agony be seen on her face (see *The Hunger Games*

15). Katniss also attempts to provide guidance for her littler sister as she grows up, like Artemis is said to have given young girls.

Furthermore, the name of Katniss's stylist Cinna might derive from Roman consul Lucius Cornelius Cinna, who was "one of the enemies of the dictator" Gaius Julius Caesar due to ongoing power struggles (Smith 206). According to Smith, "he would not join the conspirators [against Caesar, however] he approved of their act" and "the rage of the mob against him" was so great that Lucius Cornelius Cinna nearly died (206). In *The Hunger Games* and *Catching Fire*, Cinna was responsible for Katniss's and Peeta's outfits, prior to his death. For the presentation of the tributes, Cinna dressed them all in black with a cape that was on fire; in doing so, he provided Katniss with her trademark and also gave her "a great advantage" for the games, because she would remain in people's minds and not be forgotten: "Katniss. The girl who was on fire" (*The Hunger Games* 70). Making the people worship Katniss so much and mobilizing the rebels is what President Snow would like to prevent under any circumstances. He sees her as a threat that could disturb the predominance of the Capitol. Therefore, Cinna needs to be eliminated.

The Head Gamemaker of the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games was Seneca Crane. His name is likely to derive from the ancient Roman philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca, who was "among Nero's advisors after his accession," but was "compelled to commit suicide" (see "Seneca"). Seneca Crane was made responsible for the survival of both Katniss and Peeta in the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games. After they were both proclaimed victors, Seneca Crane was locked into a room with nothing in it but Nightlock – berries, that kill you instantly if eaten – as a punishment (Ross, *The Hunger Games*). Thus, the parallel to Lucius Annaeus Seneca is that both were basically forced to end their own lives as punishment.

Furthermore, to state some more examples, not only the Plutarch or President Coriolanus Snow are derived from ancient identities, but many names of people, like

Venia, Octavia and Cato, or places like Cornucopia, also have Latin meanings. In conclusion, there are plenty of references to Greek or Roman mythology.

### 3.3 Characters

This chapter contains descriptions of what I think to be the most important characters for this thesis. Of course, there are a lot more characters in the books, elaborating on all of them would go beyond the scope of this diploma thesis.

#### 3.3.1 Katniss Everdeen

Katniss Everdeen is the main female protagonist in the *Hunger Games* series. In all three books, Katniss is the first-person narrator, which means that the distance between the reader and the storyteller is very short. Readers experience all the events and conversations, as well as thoughts and feelings of Katniss, as if they were their own. The narration is in present tense with the occasional flashback in order to provide the reader with information on the events that happened in the fictional past. There is an epilogue in *Mockingjay*, in which the present is years after the last Hunger Games, in a time where “the arenas have been completely destroyed” and Katniss and Peeta play with their children in the Meadow, despite the fact that she never wanted children herself (see *The Hunger Games* 9) back when the Hunger Games were still an annual event. However, she changed her mind at some point, because she realized these horrendous competitions are not happening anymore (see *Mockingjay* 454).

Katniss Everdeen got her name from her late father, who named her after katniss roots (see *Catching Fire* 41). These plants are “tall with leaves like arrowheads” and have “blossoms with three white pedals” (*The Hunger Games* 52). The shape of this particular plant is a reference to Katniss being incredibly skilled in using bow and arrow. Katniss’s father died when she was 11 years old, leaving Mrs. Everdeen behind with their daughters Prim and Katniss (see *The Hunger Games* 5). By the time

the story begins, Katniss is 16 years old (see *The Hunger Games* 5). As far as looks are concerned, Katniss has dark hair, which is often braided, wears hunting boots and loves to wear her father's leather jacket (see *The Hunger Games* 4).

One attribute of Katniss's personality is definitely that she is very brave. For instance, Katniss and her friend Gale go hunting a lot in District 12 in order to provide their families with food and also because they enjoy nature, for the reason that it gives them a feeling of freedom and peace. However, "hunting in the woods surrounding District 12 violates at least a dozen laws and is punishable by death" (*Catching Fire* 11). Nevertheless, this threat in no way keeps the two friends from going beyond the fence. As another example, when Katniss volunteers to take Prim's place during the reaping, she is aware that she will have to go to the arena and will probably die in there. However, there is not one second where she hesitates and makes this decision instinctively. What goes hand in hand with this character trait is that she is also very protective of and loyal to the people she loves.

Moreover, Katniss trusts only a very small circle of people. She reflects on herself and the behavior of others and mostly does not do what the crowd does. As an example, in *Mockingjay* a lot of people are fooled by President Alma Coin, who was ambitious for power, cruel and on top of that responsible for the death of Katniss's beloved sister, Prim. However, Katniss was one of the few people to see what Coin's actual goal was. During the whole story, a lot of self-hatred of Katniss is perceptible, since she considers herself responsible for a lot of deaths and suffering and, as a result, she is in constant misery. When she has almost resigned at one point, she admits that she hates "almost everybody now," but mostly herself (*Mockingjay* 10). Although Katniss comes across as a strong girl from the very beginning, her experiences during the games and the rebellion toughen her up even more.

Furthermore, another character trait is Katniss's "emotional detachment from others" (Henthorne 128). Katniss finds it hard to build up trust with the people in her imme-

diate surroundings and keeps her circle small in order to avoid getting hurt or disappointed. According to Henthorne (128), “she tells herself that she cannot afford to enter relationships with other people because it is all she can do to provide for her family and, after she becomes a tribute, to keep herself alive.” Despite making friends and acquaintances throughout the story, one cannot describe Katniss as being particularly sociable.

In the movies Jennifer Lawrence plays Katniss Everdeen (see “Jennifer Lawrence.”, *IMDb*). There is a debate going on in the media on whether or not the actress’s body type is suitable for the character of Katniss. Critic Manohla Dargis from *The New York Times* does not regard Jennifer Lawrence as an accurate representation of what Katniss Everdeen is supposed to look like. Apparently, Katniss should be much skinnier due to the lack of nutritious food in District 12. The critic claimed, “a few years ago Ms. Lawrence might have looked hungry enough to play Katniss, but now [...] her seductive, womanly figure makes a bad fit for a dystopian fantasy about a people starved into submission” (Dargis). Nevertheless, Katniss spends a lot of her time in District 12 in the woods, where she is hunting, running around and climbing trees. This implies that she must have developed a certain amount of muscle on her body and does not necessarily have to look extremely thin. Then again, other yellow press journalists claim that Lawrence has “lingering baby fat” (McCarthy). However, despite the body shaming of some journalists, the physique of Jennifer Lawrence does not contradict the way of how Katniss Everdeen is supposed to look like.

### 3.3.2 Peeta Mellark

Peeta Mellark is the male tribute from District 12 in the 74<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games. His outer appearance is described as being of “medium height [...] and stocky,” having “blue eyes” and “ashy blond hair that falls in waves over his forehead” (*The Hunger Games* 25-26).

Peeta is one of the sons of the baker in District 12 and has “two older brothers” (*The Hunger Games* 26). He has always had a soft spot for Katniss. After Mr. Everdeen’s death, he saw a half-starving Katniss near his family’s bakery, where she was searching for food in the trash bins of wealthy people (see *The Hunger Games* 29). Peeta deliberately burned two breads and got hit by his mother for this move. However, he went through the punishment in order to provide Katniss, her mother and sister with some food so as to keep them from starvation. A lot of times Katniss caught him looking at her at school and could “never shake the connection between this boy, Peeta Mellark, and the bread” that gave her hope (*The Hunger Games* 32).

Furthermore, Peeta is presented as kind and sensitive throughout the whole series. During his interview with Caesar Flickerman, “the man who hosted the interviews [before the games] for more than forty years” (*The Hunger Games* 124), Peeta confesses his love for the clueless Katniss in front of everyone who is watching. Katniss is taken aback at first, because in the beginning she does not share those feelings of love – they developed and bloomed later – but at some point decides to go along with the story of the star-crossed lovers, because Haymitch, their mentor, thinks it’s a good tactic and will bring them lots of gifts from sponsors in the arena. When Peeta finds out, he is hurt and disappointed (see *The Hunger Games* 372).

Regardless of being rather sensitive, Peeta is also very strong. He used to wrestle at school and is also capable of carrying “hundred-pound bags of flour” around (*The Hunger Games* 90). Despite these skills, Peeta is always under the impression that Katniss is stronger than him and that she will be the one who survives. Due to that and his affection for her, he does everything in his power to protect Katniss in the arena and tries to make sure she stays alive.

Furthermore, Peeta is very good with words. He wins over the audience by means of his eloquence. Nevertheless, this fades temporarily when he is initially captured by the Capitol and then brainwashed as well as tortured so as to show Katniss and the

rebels how cruel Snow and his entourage are capable of being. After his rescue it takes some time to recover, however he manages in the end to get his sanity back.

Josh Hutcherson, who portrays Peeta in all four movies, differs from Peeta as far as looks are concerned (see “Josh Hutcherson.”, *IMDb*). He has straight and short blond hair. Similarly to Jennifer Lawrence, he also has to deal with a lot of demeaning comments from various online forums and the yellow press, describing him as “tiny” (see “The Height Games”) and thus not suitable for playing Peeta Mellark. However, Hutcherson is also highly praised in the media for his performance (see Sorren).

### 3.3.3 Gale Hawthorne

Gale Hawthorne is Katniss’s best friend, also from District 12, and he is “two years older” than her (*The Hunger Games* 10). Katniss describes him as being “good-looking” and “strong enough to handle the work in the mines, and he can hunt” (*The Hunger Games* 10). A particular skill of Gale’s is setting traps for animals (see *Catching Fire* 9). He and Katniss often go into the woods together. According to her, Gale is the only person she can show her true self to and whom she feels comfortable around (see *The Hunger Games* 6). The reader gets the impression quite early in the story that Gale is in love with Katniss, which he also confesses at some point; however she never reciprocates this kind of love, since she sees him as the brother that she never had. When Peeta confessed his love for Katniss and she went along with it in the arena, she knew “it was nothing but painful for Gale” (*Catching Fire* 10).

Katniss and Gale even look similar with having “straight black hair, olive skin” and “the same gray eyes” although they are not related by blood (*The Hunger Games* 8). Gale is “devoted to his family” (*The Hunger Games* 10) and, like Katniss, he is the provider of food for them. Therefore, he dares to go beyond the fence and hunt. He lives with his mother, Hazelle, and has two brothers and one sister (see *Catching Fire* 8). His father died in the same explosion that killed Katniss’s father (see *Catch-*

ing Fire 9). During the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games, Gale also provides Prim and Mrs. Everdeen with game and herbs (see *The Hunger Games* 35).

When the districts start to rebel against the Capitol, Gale is a prominent figure in the rebellion, since he cannot bare the oppression of the districts anymore and is prepared to fight. In the rediscovered District 13, Gale is considered as important contributor to the war and is trusted with designing weapons and is engaged in actual fighting. When the rebellion is over, Gale moves to District 2 in order to pursue a “fancy job” (*Mockingjay* 449).

#### 3.3.4 Primrose Everdeen

Primrose, mostly called Prim, is Katniss’s little sister. Prim is also named after a flower, namely the primrose (see *The Hunger Games* 3). She has “light hair and blue eyes,” like her mother (*The Hunger Games* 8).

At the beginning of the story, Prim is twelve years old and her name is only entered once into the pool of potential female tributes (see *The Hunger Games* 21). However, her name gets drawn, leading her older sister to volunteer in her place. Prim stays at home with their mother and tries to contribute to their survival by selling milk and cheese from her goat (see *The Hunger Games* 25).

Additionally, Prim is at an age where one’s character changes and develops quite a lot and transformation can happen also rather quickly. When Katniss gets home from the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games, not only is Katniss a changed woman, but Prim is also much more mature than in the beginning. This shows that, although she is still a child, she indeed is a survivor, whose skills should not be underestimated. It is not only the looks she got from her mother, but also the sense for the healing powers of herbs and other natural ingredients. Despite being rather young when in District 13, Prim develops into an indispensable contributor helping the sick and wounded. At

the very end of the war, Prim loses her young life in an explosion ordered by Alma Coin.

### 3.3.5 Mrs. Everdeen

Mrs. Everdeen is the mother of Katniss and Primrose Everdeen. Her late husband used to work in the mines and died during an explosion, leaving her alone with two mouths to feed. Mrs. Everdeen has “light hair and blue eyes” and is originally from “the nicer part of District 12” (*The Hunger Games* 8). Her parents had an apothecary shop in town – this is from where she got her knowledge and skills as a healer (see *The Hunger Games* 8).

Nevertheless, after the death of Mr. Everdeen, his wife gets depressed. Mrs. Everdeen becomes “a woman who sat by, blank and unreachable, while her children turned to skin and bones” (*The Hunger Games* 8). Katniss has a very difficult time forgiving her for that and for shifting all the responsibility to Katniss.

However, as time passes, Mrs. Everdeen seems to get back on track. Her skills as apothecary are in great demand. However, Prim’s death throws her off course again. When the rebellion is over and the war has been won, Mrs. Everdeen decides to work through her sorrow and helps “to start up a hospital in District Four” (*Mockingjay* 443).

### 3.3.6 Rue

Rue is the female tribute from District 11 in the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games (see *The Hunger Games* 45). She has “dark brown skin and eyes, but other than that, she’s very like Prim in size and demeanor” (*The Hunger Games* 45).

In the arena, Rue and Katniss become not only allies; rather, they genuinely like each other. However, when the girls split to carry out their plan to blow up the food supply, Rue gets killed in the woods, leaving Katniss devastated.

### 3.3.7 Haymitch Abernathy

Haymitch is one of the two winners of the Hunger Games that District 12 has had in 74 years (see *The Hunger Games* 19). He is “a paunchy, middle-aged man” and is constantly drunk (*The Hunger Games* 19) and “disgusting” (*The Hunger Games* 25). It is a regulation that the new tributes get assigned a remaining victor from their district, whose job is it to mentor the teenagers and pursue their best interest.

In the beginning, Haymitch is not regarded as being very helpful to Katniss and Peeta. His fondness for alcohol and sarcastic comments make it hard for the tributes to believe that they could ever stand a chance in the games. Nevertheless, the character traits of Haymitch should not be underestimated. It is obvious that once you participate in the Hunger Games and survive, you are a changed man or woman. Haymitch, who is actually rather intelligent, drowns his sorrows in alcohol, since he sees this as the only way to deal with his past. He has to go through detox while in District 13, since they absolutely forbid “any consumption of intoxicating beverage” and thus “Haymitch is being forced into sobriety” (*Mockingjay* 30).

Haymitch, Katniss and Peeta make a deal that they do not interfere with his drinking habits and he will “stay sober enough to help” them in the arena (*The Hunger Games* 58). He works out strategies with them and also approves of the story of the star-crossed lovers in order to find more sponsors for his tributes. Katniss has the feeling that Haymitch hates her in the beginning; however, he is one of the first to recognize her potential. He even made it happen that “for the first time in history, two tributes were allowed to win” (*Catching Fire* 12).

Haymitch won the 50<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games, when “every district was required to send twice as many tributes”, (*Catching Fire* 208). In other words, in that particular year 48 children had to go into the arena and only one of them got out alive. It was Haymitch. When the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games come up, President Snow announces, “the male and female tributes are reaped from the existing pool of victors” (*Catching Fire* 208). Haymitch’s name is drawn out of the pool on the day of the reaping, however Peeta instantly volunteers to take his place (see *Catching Fire* 224). Once again, Haymitch proves himself useful and supportive by being a mentor.

It turns out that Haymitch is involved in the rebellion and is part of the team that rescues them from the arena after Katniss blows it up (see *Catching Fire* 464). Nevertheless, Haymitch loses Katniss and Peeta’s trust after that because they were not aware of what was going on. After the rebellion was over and the war was won, Haymitch goes back to District 12 to live there and to keep an eye on Katniss because her mother decides not to come back (see *Mockingjay* 443).

### 3.3.8 President Coriolanus Snow

Coriolanus Snow is President of Panem and is also Katniss’s worst enemy. She despises him because he is cruel and ruthless. Snow lives in the Capitol and rules Panem as a dictatorship. He rose to power by poisoning everyone who stood in his way (see *Mockingjay* 200).

As far as outer appearance is concerned, he is “a small, thin man with paper-white hair” (*The Hunger Games* 71) and eyes “as unforgiving as a snake’s” (*The Hunger Games* 364). President Snow comes across as a psychopath, who plays a lot of mind games. He does not show any kind of mercy.

Snow recognizes the power Katniss has over the people from the districts very quickly. She challenges his authority during her first time in the arena, when she pretends that she and Peeta are going to kill themselves with Nightlock, the deadly ber-

ry. As a punishment for fooling the President, he decides to torture and kill innocent people and Katniss's loved ones in order for her to resign from being the Mockingjay and to stop the uprisings (see *Catching Fire* 21). He wants to have everything according to his own rules. However, this is not the only punishment; he also makes sure that Katniss has to take part in the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games, so she has to go to the arena for a second time.

In the end, President Snow dies, but not through the hands of Katniss, although she is presented with the chance.

### 3.3.9 Effie Trinket

Effie Trinket is a Capitol citizen and "District 12's escort" (see *The Hunger Games* 17) in the 74<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games. She is described as having a "scary white grin" and "pinkish hair" (*The Hunger Games* 18); however, citizens of the Capitol change their outer appearances as often as other people change their socks, meaning that she alters her looks all the time. Effie comes across as rather shallow and uninformed. Her main goal is that her assigned tributes look presentable and behave accordingly.

By the time the revolution is well underway, Effie finds herself seeking refuge in District 13, rather than staying in the Capitol. However, in this underground district, the conditions are a lot different than what Effie is used to. Thus, she has to adjust her lifestyle, which is difficult for her.

### 3.3.10 Cinna

Cinna becomes Katniss's stylist, close friend and confidant from before the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games until his passing. Although he lives in the Capitol, Katniss is "taken aback how normal he looks" as opposed to all the other stylists (*The Hunger Games* 63). Most of the stylists "are so dyed, stenciled, and surgically altered they're grotesque" (*The Hunger Games* 63). Cinna is described as having "close-cropped hair,"

which “appears to be its natural shade of brown” and being dressed in a rather simple and dark manner (*The Hunger Games* 63). He has green eyes with golden flecks in it (see *The Hunger Games* 63). Cinna does not appear to be as affected by looks and way of speaking as the rest of the Capitol.

Through his creativity and skills, Cinna transforms Katniss into the girl who is on fire: the Mockingjay, symbol of the rebellion. This important label stays with her through the rest of the story. Furthermore, Cinna makes it possible for Katniss to feel as comfortable and like herself as possible before going into the arena. He contributes a lot to building up Katniss’s confidence and showing her what she is actually capable of.

Right before Katniss’s departure into the arena for the second time, three Peacekeepers beat Cinna to death.

### 3.3.11 Plutarch Heavensbee

Plutarch Heavensbee gets promoted to Head Gamemaker for the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games, replacing the dead Seneca Crane (see *Catching Fire* 100). Katniss and Plutarch meet each other for the first time in the Capitol during the Victory Tour. He asks her to dance in order to show Katniss that he is on her side and part of the rebellion with the help of his gold chain-watch, which has a reflection of a Mockingjay on it (see *Catching Fire* 101). Additionally, by showing Katniss the watch, Plutarch tries to give her clues about the fact that the arena in the third Quarter Quell works like a clock (see *Catching Fire* 294). However, at this point Katniss is not really able to make out what this means.

Furthermore, Plutarch is also on the hovercraft that gets Katniss out of the arena in the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games (see *Catching Fire* 459). At this stage she finds out that “Plutarch Heavensbee has been, for several years, part of an undercover group aiming to overthrow the Capitol” and that it has been planned to get the tributes “out of

the arena from the moment the Quell was announced” (*Catching Fire* 464). In District 13, Plutarch is in charge of how Katniss is presented to the rest of Panem and responsible for what is going to be recorded on tape and broadcasted. After the war, Plutarch gets “appointed secretary of communications, which means he sets the programming for the airwaves” (*Mockingjay* 441).

Philip Seymour Hoffman played Plutarch Heavensbee in the series and passed away before it was finished. While shooting *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*, there was “a small amount of digital trickery” involved, “using existing footage of the actor” in order to “disguise his absence” (Lee).

### 3.3.12 President Alma Coin

President Coin appears for the first time in *Mockingjay*, as president of District 13, which people think no longer exists. District 13, however, is now an underground construction. Concerning age, Alma Coin is “fifty or so” and has “grey hair that falls in an unbroken sheet to her shoulders” (*Mockingjay* 11). President Coin’s look is very neat, her hair “uniform, so without a flaw, a wisp, even a split end” and her grey eyes are “very pale, as if almost all the colour [sic] has been sucked out of them” (*Mockingjay* 12).

President Coin is a big part of the revolution and wants to take President Snow down. However, they are not that different, since she is also very power-thirsty and wants to be the sole ruler. Alma Coin and Katniss do not get along very well because it becomes apparent that Coin would have preferred for Peeta to have been the mouthpiece of the revolution as she sees Katniss as a threat, potentially undermining her power.

In the end it turns out that President Coin is responsible for Prim’s death, which was caused by an explosion, in order to push Katniss “completely over the edge” and to get her out of the way (*Mockingjay* 421). When Katniss realizes that Alma Coin is as evil as President Snow, she kills her with her bow and arrow.



### 3.3.13 Finnick Odair

Finnick makes his first appearance in *Catching Fire*, when it turns out that the victors have to go back into the arena. He “is something of a living legend in Panem” because he won the 65<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games “when he was only fourteen” (*Catching Fire* 250). Finnick’s origin is District 4 (*Catching Fire* 251). As far as his outer appearance is concerned, he is incredibly handsome and tall as well as “athletic, with golden skin and bronze-coloured [sic] hair” and “incredible eyes” (*Catching Fire* 250). Although he has good fighting skills, his deadly weapon in the 65<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games was a trident, which he got as a gift in a parachute (see *Catching Fire* 250). The aforementioned hovercraft of Plutarch Heavensbee also rescues Finnick and brings him to District 13.

Finnick’s girlfriend, Annie Cresta, is also from District 4 and a victor of the games. Nevertheless, “she was arrested and taken to the Capitol when the arena blew up” (*Mockingjay* 67). Finnick is concerned about her wellbeing, but it is possible to rescue Annie and get her to District 13, where the two of them get married (see *Mockingjay* 264). Later, while on a mission to the Capitol, Finnick gets attacked by mutts and, in order to prevent him from getting killed cruelly, Katniss releases the Holo, a navigation device that is highly explosive, for detonation by saying “nightlock” three times (see *Mockingjay* 365).

### 3.3.14 Johanna Mason

Johanna Mason is a tribute from District 7 and also victor of the Hunger Games (see *Catching Fire* 258). Her strategy for winning was tricking her fellow tributes into thinking she is a “sniveling, cowardly fool” so that no one saw her as a threat; however, “it turned out that she could kill viciously” (*The Hunger Games* 41). When the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games come along, Johanna has to go back in the arena, since she is “the only living female victor” from District 7 (*Catching Fire* 230).

It turns out that Johanna is also inaugurated in the plan of the rebels and on a mission to keep Katniss alive during the third Quarter Quell. It is Johanna who cuts Katniss's tracker out of her forearm right before the hovercraft of Plutarch Heavensbee arrives (see *Catching Fire* 448). Johanna is taken prisoner by the Capitol, but is able to be rescued and taken to District 13. During her imprisonment, she is tortured with water, they "soaked her and then used electric shocks," leaving her traumatized and terrified of water (*Mockingjay* 296). In the course of her recovery, she insists on actively fighting in the war against the Capitol, in order to take vengeance.

## **4 The ‘Language’ of the Film Adaptations**

As previously mentioned, the examinations of the relationships are not just based on the book, they are also supported by their screen adaptations. In order to give an adequate breakdown, some concepts need to be explained.

The analysis of film works by using different “codes.” There are “narrative codes,” which deal with “story structure/composition,” and “technical codes,” which are responsible for “how the images are put together,” including “lighting,” “camera angles” or “special effects” (Ganser, *Film Analysis*). Furthermore, there are “representational codes,” which basically describe “the thinking behind the images,” like how meaning is created through “location” or “characters” or “costumes” (Ganser, *Film Analysis*). Lastly, film analysis happens through “audio codes,” which is “the way in which sound adds to the images” (Ganser, *Film Analysis*).

### **4.1 The ‘Language’ of *The Hunger Games* series**

To start with, as far as locations are concerned, the Capitol is represented as being rather sparkling and glamorous. In order to symbolize the wealthy people living there, a lot of bright colors and “powerful” music (orchestra) are used. The decoration of homes and venues can be described as reduced to a minimum in the Districts because the inhabitants are not able to afford much. Nevertheless, in the Capitol, the décor is also kept very simple, but for the reason that minimalistic design is considered chic. In addition, to signify the Capitol’s (technical) advancement, special effects are commonly utilized. For example, haptic screens are not needed anymore to project any kind of image or video; rather, the projection can take place anywhere.

As far as lighting is concerned, to represent the contrast to the Capitol, District 12 – in particular the Seam, where the poor people reside – is pictured as very dark and simple. At an advanced point in the story, the protagonists’ faces are often presented in the shadow because they are in the dark about what their future will look like. The lack of light is also a reference to the history of Panem, to “the dark days,”

meaning the time after the first rebellion when the war ended to the benefit of the Capitol, which led to the oppression of the districts and arrangement of the first Hunger Games (see *The Hunger Games* 18). Also, a reoccurring theme in the movies is highly contrasted images, representing either incredible wealth or abject poverty.

Furthermore, when the District 12 is featured as the setting, underlying music scarcely accompanies the pictures; only sometimes can viewers hear the birds chirping. This goes back to the fact that the citizens do not have a lot to laugh and, due to their poverty, their prospects in life are restricted. Furthermore, as far as music is concerned, the focus of the score is on instrumental music; hardly any songs have words in them. There are, however, a few instances where Jennifer Lawrence/Katniss sings herself, for instance 'Deep In The Meadow' for Rue on her deathbed (Ross, *The Hunger Games*). Additionally, 'The Hanging Tree' in *Mockingjay – Part 1* is also sung by Jennifer Lawrence.

Furthermore, with regards to framing, both directors – Ross and Lawrence – use decentered framing throughout the series, meaning that the head of a person is at the edge of the frame and not in the center. In my opinion, the motive behind this is to illustrate the imbalance of Panem. A clear wealth gap and Snow's totalitarianism prevent any kind of equality, indicating that the framing of the picture is adapted to the social conditions. Furthermore, both directors – Gary Ross and Francis Lawrence – like to film close-ups of their characters' faces, meaning that the "head fills the frame" (Ganser, *Film Analysis*). My personal interpretation of this is that the characters are trapped in their districts and oppressed by the Capitol with little prospect of breaking out and thus, while the protagonists are figuratively unable, the viewer is literally incapable of seeing the bigger picture.

## 5 Kinship constellations in *The Hunger Games*

This thesis seeks to question the kinship constellations in *The Hunger Games* and how they are challenged. In this chapter, the dynamics of the relationships of the protagonists will be examined. Firstly, I will explain Katniss's relationships with the male characters of the trilogy, followed by the female protagonists. In this chapter I will also discuss the contribution of *The Hunger Games* to our current definition of kinship, by commenting on relationships of 16-year-olds nowadays as opposed to the bond Katniss and Peeta have. It is a challenge to establish a universally applicable notion of kinship in *The Hunger Games*, though, as I believe their conception of kinship is a mix of the past, the present and the future.

According to Pharr and Clark (125), "relationships are the lifeblood of this novel."

They state:

From the outset, there are the familial bonds that first bring Katniss to the arena. Rather than send Prim into the Games to kill or be killed, Katniss volunteers to take her place, showing family loyalty in her action, rather than in emotional language [...] Besides blood relations, the novel also centers on surrogate families, whose members display loyalty and selfless love even at great personal risk. Haymitch the man with no wife or children of his own, acts in this capacity and becomes integral to Katniss's survival just as Katniss takes care of Rue, both by sharing food and shelter and by honoring her death [...] By including these powerful interactions between characters' families and even virtual strangers, Collins touches on values that are not inscribed with gender ideology [...] *The Hunger Games* emphasizes primal connections between people who exist outside social influence. (Pharr and Clark 125-126)

This statement shows that Suzanne Collins really put a lot of thought into how her characters come together. It is not just a story of a post apocalyptic revolution, but much more about the importance of having someone by your side who supports your decisions and finding out who to trust when you go in the wrong direction.

## 5.1 Male kinship relations in *The Hunger Games* trilogy

In this chapter I will provide information on Katniss's relationships with the important male characters in *The Hunger Games* series, which are Peeta Mellark, Gale Hawthorne, Cinna, Haymitch Abernathy, President Coriolanus Snow, Plutarch Heavensbee and Finnick Odair. My intention is to illustrate the relations Katniss has with each one of them and to emphasize the complexity of interpersonal relationships and the difficulty of building and maintaining trust in times of war and constant danger.

### 5.1.1 Katniss and Peeta Mellark

To start with, one needs to address the relationship between Katniss and Peeta. It needs to be discussed the extent to which the relationship of Katniss and Peeta as 16-year-olds challenges the relationship of a 16-year old couple in 2017. Additionally, it needs to be said that the relationship of Katniss and Peeta is one of many ups and downs. The fact that they overcome so many obstacles together makes them grow very close. Whether they are physically together or apart, there is always this deep level of intimacy that Katniss and Peeta share. This chapter seeks to shed light on the reasons why their relationship develops in a certain way.

As far as the relationships of teenagers in a dystopian world are concerned, Katniss and Peeta show us that falling in and out of love is not easy given the circumstances. The fundamental difference between the contemporary Western world and Panem is that in the latter, the 16-year-olds have to live under oppression and constant fear. I am aware that one should refrain from generalization, since there are cultural and individual differences. Nevertheless, I am referring to an average teenager. On the one hand, the 16-year-olds in the districts of Panem have to live under oppression and constant fear when their familiar environment suddenly becomes a warzone. They are still confronted with the reaping and might even have younger siblings whom they have to worry about. Additionally, some might not be members of wealthy families, implying that food might be short and the living conditions barely

tolerable. Katniss Everdeen is a prime example for a poor teenager in District 12. As a half-orphan with no money and being the sole provider of the family, she carries a lot of weight on her shoulders for a 16-year-old girl. Although Peeta is from the wealthy part of District 12, being drawn as tribute is always a potential threat. Living under terror and tyranny has a large influence on the teenagers' behavior and advancement in maturity. On the other hand, although terror attacks are definitely an issue in 2016, the threat for teenagers in western war-free countries is not omnipresent. Furthermore, the danger of involuntarily being sent into deathly games is something that adolescents in our current times only know from fiction. The 16-year-old I am using as means of comparison is still in school, or at the very beginning of their working career, and likely to live with their parents, who provide for them financially.

Furthermore, teenagers in a post-apocalyptic dystopian society do not have many reasons to laugh. Therefore, building trust and a relationship with someone is not as easy as it is today, where the Internet connects us all. It has never been easier to connect with someone; young adults simply have to take out their phones and immediately have access to the whole world. Additionally, the priorities of 16-year-olds in 2016 are rather different compared to Katniss and her peers. Our contemporary young adults have completely other things to worry about than adolescents in Panem, where death and destruction are on every day's agenda.

Peeta gives Katniss something that they do not experience very often within the poor families of District 12: hope. Peeta arousing hope in Katniss is a golden thread throughout the story. It starts when Peeta – the son of a baker – burns bread deliberately in order to prevent Katniss and her family from starvation. Peeta takes the blame for the burned bread and gets beaten by his mother (see *The Hunger Games* 32). Although they do not know each other at that point, Peeta's feelings for Katniss are already very strong, despite the fact that she wants "to have as little as possible to do with the baker's son" (*The Hunger Games* 49). Furthermore, throughout the games and the rebellion, it is again Peeta's presence that encourages Katniss to

hope and fight for a better and peaceful future. To state an example, Katniss suffers from very bad nightmares due to the events in the games and after. It helps her a lot when Peeta comes to her bed and comforts her (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*).

While Katniss is gifted with hope, Peeta regards her as his only reason to fight for his life, since his relationship with his family is not particularly strong. Even Peeta's mother believes that Katniss will win the games (see *The Hunger Games* 90). Despite him coming from a well-situated family, he sees Katniss, the love of his life, as being closest to him (see *Catching Fire* 423). It is important to Peeta that she is alive and well and it seems as if he cannot fully be himself and function completely while Katniss is not around.

Furthermore, Peeta's kindness impresses Katniss from the very beginning (see *The Hunger Games* 49). Nevertheless, it takes quite some time for her to realize that she is actually truly in love with Peeta. When they both get reaped, no good emotions are triggered in Katniss because he reminds her of almost dying in the rain, before Peeta saved Katniss and her family from starving (Ross, *The Hunger Games*). In the arena, their love starts out as being just an act. In order to make the people from the Capitol like them and to get more sponsors, they enact the story of the star-crossed lovers (see *The Hunger Games* 92), "the tragic lovers plot à la *Romeo and Juliet*" (Pharr and Clark 126). The relationship of Katniss and Peeta displays various similarities to the one of Juliet Capulet and Romeo Montague:

Peeta and Katniss are from different parts of town, from families that don't associate with each other. The teenagers' inability to play out their relationship according to their own desires due to powers outside their control duplicates some of the plot structure of Shakespeare's play, which also uses poison in the end to bring out a dramatic climax. (Pharr and Clark 126)

However, Katniss and Peeta are not aware in the beginning that the act of the star-crossed lovers is what will consequently save them in the end. While Peeta loves Katniss deeply, her feelings develop at a slower pace and it takes her until the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games to comprehend that she has a strong affection for her fellow tribute

(see *Catching Fire* 427). Peeta is very hurt when he finds out about Katniss's love act during the games. Despite being victors of the Hunger Games, their relationship definitely experienced a crack, also illustrated by the usage of darker, neutral colors in *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (Lawrence).

When Peeta is taken prisoner from the Capitol, Katniss is devastated. She knows that he gets tortured and abused just because of her. President Snow is aware that by this time Katniss is sincerely in love with Peeta, and the President will not recoil from doing "whatever it takes to break" (*Mockingjay* 177) Katniss. Snow pulls out all the stops to show her who is more powerful and that she needs to back down.

Nevertheless, despite getting hijacked in the Capitol and being told that Katniss is evil and a mutt, Peeta's love is so strong that he dares to speak to her directly through television, although he is not supposed to do so. Additionally, Peeta realizes early that Katniss is a piece in Coin's games in the same way as Snow's:

He looks directly into the camera, right into my eyes. "Don't be a fool, Katniss. Think for yourself. They've turned you into a weapon that could be instrumental in the destruction of humanity. If you've got any real influence, use it to put the brakes on this thing. Use it to stop the war before it's too late Ask yourself, do you really know what's going on? And if you don't...find out." (*Mockingjay* 134)

Although Peeta gets brainwashed, Katniss knows that he speaks the truth. She trusts his judgment. It is partly attributable to Peeta's words and his pursuit of peace that Katniss shoots Alma Coin in the end.

Furthermore, one needs to raise the question as to whether or not Katniss is the more dominant part in the relationship with Peeta. Katniss and Peeta are an example of breaking traditional gender roles in a relationship between a man and a woman. Peeta is kind and likes to express his feelings creatively through art, while Katniss is considered to be more of a warrior and survivor. In this dynamic, the traditional gender roles are mixed up, since Peeta's traits are traditionally considered to be more female and Katniss mannerisms are associated with male behavior (see

Pharr and Clark 130) and “just as Katniss’s masculinity is expressed in her status as hunter, so Peeta’s femininity is expressed in his role as baker” (Pharr and Clark 132).

Since their gender roles are not strictly divided, the dominance in their relationship is rather balanced and switches from one to the other according to the situation. Katniss is “at ease in a masculine position as provider” and “cannot entirely divest herself of the nurturing feminine role into which society posits her” (Pharr and Clark 193). At some points, “Katniss cannot help but be her protective, parental self” and at other occasions she is her exaggerated, love-struck girly self” – then “the roles change, and Peeta becomes the caretaker of a wounded and exhausted Katniss” (Pharr and Clark 133).

Historically speaking, women were more devout and domestic (see Tyson 83). These traits are, however, just the opposite of Katniss’s character. Although she cooks food for her family, which was regarded as a woman’s duty for a rather long time, she cannot be considered Peeta’s “little wifey.” In conjunction with that, especially the ending of the very last movie is too cheesy and somewhat ridiculous. In her flowery dress, holding a baby in her arms, Katniss looks quite domesticated. Maybe I am blinded by Katniss, the Mockingjay, but seeing her as a mother is not quite suitable. As far as the composition is concerned, the light is brighter than throughout the four movies, and so are the colors (see Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*). Although, such an uplifting scene is normally quite fitting for a happy ending, the realization was relatively cringe-worthy. It needs to be established why viewers may find it so strange to see Katniss as a mother. In many instances in the books and movies, she mentions that she never wants children herself, for the reason that there is so much suffering in District 12 and she finds it irresponsible to bring children into such a world. Because “children from the districts are sent to the Capitol for televised slaughter,” Katniss “views motherhood as the ultimate form of powerlessness” (Pharr and Clark 193). Collins put a lot of work into painting the character of Katniss as strong, independent and progressive. The stereotype of the

woman as “birthing machine” and weak is eluded. However, Collins tries to break open the image of Katniss, the warrior, through a two-page epilogue. In my opinion, Collins does not succeed in transforming Katniss’s character in only two pages and I also do not see the point in wanting to do so. Also, at the end of *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2* (Lawrence), one can see Jennifer Lawrence holding a bundle – apparently a baby – which looks rather awkward. Throughout the story, Katniss fulfills some kind mother role for Prim, which is incorporated into the story from the very beginning and is thus authentic. Collins tried to overthrow her picture of Katniss at the very end and thus challenge the impression that Katniss and Peeta are never going to be parents. However, in my opinion, a lack of authenticity is the major problem of the epilogue.

Overall, both have to endure a lot, regardless of being so young. Katniss helps Peeta to slowly recover from the Capitol’s torture. Also, she needs him in her life, as Katniss “will be damaged beyond repair if Peeta dies” (*Catching Fire* 425). When she returns to District 12 after the war, only Peeta is able to help her move on after Prim’s death. Only Peeta can give her “the promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses” (*Mockingjay* 453). Eventually, many years later, Katniss and Peeta start a family. Although, the healing process has progressed, the past events still haunt them.

### 5.1.2 Katniss and Peeta vs. Gale

Subsequently, one needs to ask the question of how Gale fits in this already confusing relationship. Since the dilemma of love triangles is as old as humanity itself, one can elaborate on what the idea of a love triangle actually denotes and which factors make the already difficult situation in *The Hunger Games* extra complicated. The story of the love triangle is a common theme in Young Adult literature. The *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer was incredibly hyped and extremely successful, both the books as well as the movie adaptations. *The Hunger Games* and also *Twilight* prove

that the recipe for a successful Young Adult novel consists of love, action and a little magic.

According to Johnson (6) one can make a distinction in the concept of the love triangle, since "there is the *rivalrous triangle*, where the lover is competing with a rival for the love of the beloved, and the *split-object triangle*, where a lover has split their attention between two love objects." Starting with the *rivalrous triangle*, the two rivals in this case are Peeta and Gale, who are competing for the love of their peer Katniss Everdeen. As far as the *split-object triangle* is concerned, throughout the story Katniss has developed feelings for both Peeta and Gale, before she comes to a decision in the end.

It needs to be added at this point that, in my mind, there is no fixed opinion or universally acknowledged truth concerning who loved whom first, why and at what exact time. I have discussed this matter with a colleague, who firmly believed that Katniss never really loved Peeta, but was always more fond of Gale. The reason for this is that, according to my colleague, Katniss and Gale are simply meant to be because of their similar background and upbringing. Nonetheless, as with some other globally successful love triangle stories, the audience is divided into teams, supporting the character whom they like best. While in *The Hunger Games* series the readers can either be "Team Peeta" or "Team Gale," there are other world famous teams, for example "Team Edward" and "Team Jacob" in the *Twilight* series. Thus, the opinions on the decisions on partners a certain character in a certain story makes, are very likely to be subjective.

### 5.1.3 Katniss and Gale Hawthorne

At the moment the reader is invited to enter the story, Katniss and Gale have been friends for a couple of years. At this point, he is "the only person" she can be truly herself around (*The Hunger Games* 6). Katniss and Gale connect on a completely different level than she and Peeta. One can argue that Katniss has a somewhat

brotherly relationship to Gale, since they have known each other for quite some time.

The love for nature and passion for hunting strongly ties them together. Furthermore, they are also both heads of their families and responsible for feeding their closest relatives at such a young age because both their fathers died in the same mining accident (see *Catching Fire* 9). Coming from similar backgrounds, they understand each other's hardships and difficulties very well. Also, Katniss and Gale feel comfortable exchanging about their hopes and fears, since no judgment is passed when they are out and about together.

It took quite some time for Katniss and Gale "to even become friends" and to "begin helping each other out" (*The Hunger Games* 10), nevertheless they have grown really close. All the people living in the Seam think that Katniss and Gale will end up together one day. However, it seems that the affection is coming more from Gale's side than from Katniss's. She does love him, yet not romantically, rather, more in a sisterly fashion. Since Katniss is in her teenager years, love is already a very confusing topic for her. There are some instances where they kiss (see Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*); however, this does not trigger the same emotions in Katniss as when she kisses Peeta:

What I need to survive is not Gale's fire, kindled with rage and hatred. I have plenty of fire myself. What I need is the dandelion in the spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that. (*Mockingjay* 453)

Gale does not really stand a chance with Katniss. After the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games, he is often referred to as Katniss's cousin (see *Catching Fire* 14), with whom she is really close, so as to distract the people from the fact that the romance between Katniss and Peeta might not be real. Also, Gale is often jealous of Peeta because he already feels that he cannot give Katniss what she needs.

Furthermore, the families of Katniss and Gale are very close and support each other. Gale provides game for Prim and Mrs. Everdeen while Katniss is in the arena. This comes close to a contemporary notion of kinship, in which one does not have to be related by blood to be considered family. Although they are not biologically related, they help each other out unconditionally and without expecting anything in return, as siblings or even cousins often do.

However, after the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games, the relationship of Katniss and Gale is forever changed. In the movie – similar to Peeta – the colors used when they are talking are rather dark, meaning that their friendship has definitely suffered (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). Nonetheless, although they are not in the best place when Katniss gets back, she makes a sacrifice and throws herself between the leash and Gale when he gets whipped at the square (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). This action illustrates their deep bond since they help each other out in both good times and bad.

Furthermore, when Katniss comes to District 13, she and Gale get to spend more time with each other again and it seems as if their relationship recovers. Also, they get to fight side by side in the war against the Capitol. Nevertheless, it is not until after Coin's parachutes kill Prim – Gale might have been the designer of this bomb, together with Beetee – that Katniss realizes that he and she have different beliefs and ethical standards after all. As quoted above, Gale and Katniss are both quite the warriors, but she needs just the opposite in her life. In the end, their friendship fades. The difficulties they have to face during the Hunger Games and the rebellion shapes their characters in different directions.

Overall, I would consider Katniss and Gale to be family, sharing a similar bond like brother and sister or cousins. Due to given circumstances, they have drifted apart. Nevertheless, there will always be a bond between them attributable to their close friendship in a bygone era. Katniss and Gale are an example for the contrasting development of personality, illustrating the fragility of friendship.

#### 5.1.4 Katniss and Cinna

The character of Cinna is different to most other citizens of the Capitol, almost “normal” (*The Hunger Games* 63), which makes it easier for Katniss to find common ground with him. As her stylist, Cinna is one of the first people Katniss meets on her journey to the Capitol and pretty much the only one she liked right away. It is Cinna who creates the Mockingjay, an “indelible icon” (Pharr and Clark 194), because he is aware of Katniss’s potential to win over the masses and to mobilize them. He has so much faith in her that he believes it is only Katniss who can get the whole rebellion going. The fact that Cinna specifically asks for being the stylist of District 12 (see *The Hunger Games* 64) suggests that he already must have known that Katniss had it in her, before even seeing the girl in person.

Even though they do not know each other well, mutual trust is built almost instantly. Katniss sees Cinna not only as her stylist but also as her mentor to whom she looks up, although this post is officially assigned to Haymitch. Nevertheless, Cinna is much more empathetic than Haymitch and is thus able to understand Katniss’s emotions better. Due to her struggle with her actual mentor, she appreciates and values Cinna’s advice and opinion and follows his instructions. Cinna also contributed to the story of the star-crossed lovers by making Katniss and Peeta hold hands during the opening ceremony (see *The Hunger Games* 69). This is a gesture Katniss and Peeta would not have thought of, but it represents a feeling of unity even though they are to fight against each other in the arena. Through this act, Cinna wants to show the Capitol that the era of agitation is coming to an end. However, it is not until later in the story that Katniss realizes that Cinna has been a rebel all along.

One can ask the question whether it is suitable for a 16-year-old to be friends with a man well beyond her age. It needs to be said that there is never anything sexual or any sexual tension between Katniss and Cinna. There are even speculations in the fanbase as to whether Cinna might be homosexual because of his interest and sense for fashion and styling. Nevertheless, this assumption is never verified. Furthermore, Cinna might not even be significantly older than Katniss, since his age is

never given. It is also hard to define how old he is, since I believe that Suzanne Collins deliberately paints the character of Cinna as ageless. To my mind, the reason for this could be a message to young adults, trying to point out that even if it is the case that your family does not understand what you are going through at the moment, there are people outside the circle of your close relatives, who will comprehend your feelings and are here to help. Such persons could be your peers or people you trust who are older than you, for example, teachers. Surely, the vanity in the Capitol is grand and people are trying to avoid looking old at all costs; nevertheless I believe that this is only a profound reason why Cinna is designed youthfully, yet maturely. In our contemporary world, such an intimate friendship between a 16-year-old girl and an older man would be viewed with suspicion, but perfectly normal if the relationship were interpreted as student and teacher or mentor.

Furthermore, it is interesting that although everyone in the Capitol loves to gossip and spread rumors, there has never been a story known to the reader that Katniss and Cinna might be having a love affair. In contrast to our contemporary time, an age in which gossiping has never been easier due to global interconnection, it is likely that some rumors are already widespread. Since *The Hunger Games* has an enormous fan community, one does not have to dig deep into the Internet to find a vast amount of fan fiction about a love affair between Katniss and Cinna.

Moreover, the question of the more dominant part of the relationship between Cinna and Katniss can be answered rather easily. It is one of the few constellations in the whole series where the relationship is relatively balanced. It is based on mutual respect and trust, as well as (platonic) love. They share the same enemies, but also get along very well on an emotional level. Cinna appreciates Katniss and treats her as equal and not condescendingly, despite him being from the Capitol. When Cinna is killed, Katniss is devastated. He gives all his power and skills in order to transform Katniss into the Mockingjay because Katniss succeeds in giving him hope, for he longs for a free Panem. Cinna is willing to sacrifice so much, even his own life, for a girl he spends only a short amount of time with and he is probably aware that the

Capitol will murder him due to his closeness to Katniss and because of the obvious signals he sends with his costumes.

Cinna's designs are adored in the Capitol (see *Catching Fire* 205) and he takes the liberty of making the girl on fire omnipresent. His intention is to make Katniss look if everything were beneath her, in order to illustrate her power (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). However, the Capitol suspects that he might be up to something. Thus he gets heavily beaten up before Katniss's eyes right before she leaves for the arena a second time (see *Catching Fire* 317). It is made sure that Katniss sees this act of violence as a warning: if you mess with the Capitol, they will torture and brutally kill all the people dear to you in order to "break you" (*Mockingjay* 177).

Cinna's legacy lives on after his passing. He has designed outfits specifically for Katniss to have in District 13 and throughout the war, for example her wedding dress that transforms into the Mockingjay uniform (see *Catching Fire* 303). Katniss feels a huge amount of gratitude towards Cinna and is very thankful for his actions and behavior. Altogether, even though they do not have the privilege of knowing each other for a very long time, there is definitely a deep, affectionate friendship between Katniss and Cinna, connecting them even when they are apart.

#### 5.1.5 Katniss and Haymitch Abernathy

Haymitch is Katniss's as well as Peeta's mentor during the 74<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games. As the only remaining victor from District 12, he gets assigned to the tributes. The three of them are basically forced to spend a lot of their time together, during which Haymitch is supposed to prepare Katniss and Peeta in all conscience for the upcoming games. However, Katniss's hopes are not high since her mentor is an alcoholic and does not offer a lot of support in the beginning. Thus, one can say that the trio does not exactly get off to a good start.

Shortly after arriving in the Capitol for the first time, Katniss's opinion of Haymitch is not the best:

I realize I detest Haymitch. No wonder the District 12 tributes never stand a chance. It isn't just that we've been underfed and lack training. Some of our tributes have still been strong enough to make a go of it. But we rarely get sponsors and he's a big part of the reason why. The rich people who back tributes [...] expect someone classier than Haymitch to deal with. (*The Hunger Games* 56)

Although Katniss has never been to the arena, she judges Haymitch for his behavior and blames him for the deaths of the other tributes. Haymitch is not very motivated in the beginning to provide any assistance to the tributes. However, after a (physical) argument he has with Katniss and Peeta, he realizes that those two are different and that he is confronted with "a pair of fighters" (*The Hunger Games* 57). After this clash, the situation changes. Haymitch starts to give them advice on how to act in front of the other tributes and potential sponsors.

Katniss's state of mind also transforms, since she realizes that Haymitch is the only one in her environment who truly understands what it means having to go into the arena. His living environment is always shown as quite dark, reflecting the damage the Hunger Games have left on his soul (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). Haymitch comprehends the physical and mental cruelty the Capitol forces upon the tributes. Two weeks after he was declared victor of the second Quarter Quell, the Capitol killed Haymitch's family and girlfriend (see *Mockingjay* 202). Apparently, it has always been the way to go for the Capitol to punish those who are a potential threat to them. Although it is rather hard for Katniss and Haymitch to get along at first, their experience connects them on a different level.

Furthermore, as far as the balance of their relationship is concerned, Katniss and Haymitch are an excellent example for unbalanced dominance in *The Hunger Games* series. Both are very stubborn characters and they often have clashes of interest and fight all the time. For the one thing, while you would expect that Haymitch, as Katniss's mentor, would at least try to provide guidance for the young girl, he actually does not really care about Katniss and her well being in the begin-

ning. Further, Katniss struggles to accept him as her mentor, because she resents his behavior, for he is constantly intoxicated and not really helpful to her and Peeta. It can be said that there is no mutual respect between the Katniss and Haymitch in the beginning. Both believe they are superior to the other and are therefore unreceptive to any advice or criticism.

As far as kinship is concerned, Haymitch and Katniss are not related by blood. Nevertheless, to me, he comes across like a distant uncle, who is the black sheep of the family that nobody likes to deal with. With Haymitch being Katniss's mentor, they spend a lot of time together, whether they like it or not. In this way, the mutual feeling of trust is eventually established; however, this process takes quite some time and is not everlasting.

The relationship between Katniss and Haymitch is definitely very special, since it goes through several stages of ups and downs. It starts out with the two not liking each other and then the development towards mutual respect and friendship. Nevertheless, when Haymitch leaves Katniss in the dark about her being part of the plans of the rebels, she is very disturbed by it and feels sold out. Their relationship definitely experiences a crack from which it is hard to recover. After the war is won, both go back to District 12. Katniss suspects that someone made it Haymitch's duty to return to their district in order to look after Katniss, since Mrs. Everdeen moves to District 4. However, Haymitch never visits and Katniss reckons that he again drowns his sorrows in alcohol.

Furthermore, the question of whether their "friendship" is suitable does not really arise, as opposed to the appropriateness of Katniss's and Cinna's relationship. Haymitch rather holds the position of an unwanted teacher that does not earn Katniss's respect. Simultaneously, Haymitch does not take Katniss and her willingness to fight seriously and gives her a hard time at first. Inevitably, one should ask for the reasons why it is so hard for Katniss and Haymitch to find common ground, despite the fact that both are or were tributes and victors. To my mind, it is their simi-

larities that make them drift apart. Although they share valuable character traits like common sense and intelligence, it is not possible for Katniss and Haymitch to bond under normal circumstances: Katniss is facing death and Haymitch is still struggling with his past, in which he had to take part in the Hunger Games. He is frustrated because history repeats itself every year and Katniss, likewise, is quite upset because she does not get any support from the one person who is supposed to help her. Nonetheless, as time passes, they overcome their difficulties because both of them realize that fighting will not take them far and the input and presence of the other is vital. Haymitch treats Katniss with tough love, for the reason that everyone praises her to the skies and he is the one to keep her down-to-earth. Although they fight a lot, he trusts in her abilities.

In summation, despite being rather close once and Haymitch knowing Katniss so well, hurtful events affect their relationship, which is unlikely to be fixed due to the lack of effort from both sides.

#### 5.1.6 Katniss and President Coriolanus Snow

Katniss Everdeen and President Snow have a rather weird but very interesting relationship, which is dominated by fear and loathing. Through his creepy behavior and tendency to kill mercilessly, he provokes feelings of terror in Katniss and causes so many of her nightmares. President Snow “despises” Katniss for she outwits “his sadistic Hunger Games” and makes “the Capitol look foolish” and thus subverts his power and “control” (*Catching Fire* 22). Snow rules Panem as a dictator. In the movies he often speaks from his balcony or a podium to the people, painting him superior to the others (see Ross, *The Hunger Games*).

Even before their first meeting, Katniss feels a lot of hatred for the president. She cannot comprehend how someone can be so bloodthirsty and play cruel games with innocent children. Snow enjoys his power, therefore he is furious – although he would never let that show on the outside – when the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games do not go

according to plan and two winners are presented. Katniss is aware that Snow is “un-forgiving” and she is “to be punished” after the games (*The Hunger Games* 364).

Furthermore, President Snow is one of the first ones to recognize that the whole love story between the tributes of District 12 is an act (at first) and that Katniss is in fact lying to the Capitol. Also, due to Katniss’s behavior in the arena, the mood in the districts points in the direction of uprisings, which Snow wants to prevent at all costs. This is when he decides to creep Katniss out even more and pays her a visit in her home, telling her that she is “in serious trouble” and under constant surveillance (*Catching Fire* 21). Through his calm and eerie manner, Snow conveys the message that he is aware that Katniss is acting. The President demands that she needs to convince him that the love between her and Peeta is real, otherwise everyone she loves is “doomed” (*Catching Fire* 37). This message leaves Katniss quite alarmed and filled with more hatred than ever before.

Moreover, the louder the uprisings get, the more hardships are imposed on Katniss by Snow. Not only does she have to go back in the arena for a second time, but also Peeta, whom she truthfully loves at this point in the story, is captured and tortured by the Capitol, receiving lifelong damage. Snow will not and does not recoil from doing “whatever it takes to break” (*Mockingjay* 177) Katniss. He is a tyrant and avid for power and despises Katniss for her ability to mobilize people and giving them hope. Naturally she hates Snow as a result of all the suffering that he causes and the mind games that he plays.

After the revolt, Katniss is allowed to finally kill Snow, whom she regards the root of all evil. When they talk one last time before the execution, Snow enlightens her that Coin is actually responsible for the parachutes and Prim’s death, leaving Katniss more confused than ever. Although she is about to reach her goal of avenging all the deaths and trying to end her agony, she leaves Snow to his fate and kills Coin instead, because after putting in some thought, she regards the leader of District 13 to be a bigger threat to the whole of Panem.

Katniss and President Snow despise each other so much, but yet they need the other to be a part of their games. Snow often has the chance to kill Katniss during the Hunger Games and make it look like an accident and not his fault; nevertheless, he is also aware that the people in the Capitol love Katniss Everdeen so much that he would be showered with hate and anger if something happened to her. Moreover, I believe that despite all the hatred, Snow enjoys Katniss's presence. He knows that she is a smart girl and likes to give her a hard time. It almost seems like as if Katniss is there for Snow's amusement. In my opinion, this could also be a reason why he did not kill Katniss in the first place. Even though Snow is rather scary and responsible for quite a number of deaths, you cannot really hate his character from the bottom of your heart. While Snow is a bad and cruel person indeed, he is not dishonest. He reminds Katniss that they "had an agreement not to lie to each other" (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*). While Alma Coin is evil, a liar and effectively the "real enemy" (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1*), President Snow at least tells the truth to Katniss's face.

All in all, the relationship between Snow and Katniss is filled with a lot of loathing and despair – two enemies who desperately try to finish the other off in order to reach their wildly differing goals.

#### 5.1.7 Katniss and Plutarch Heavensbee

Katniss and Plutarch talk to each other for the first time at the party for the victors of the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games in the President's mansion. He tries to give her hints on the appearance of the arena, which he designed as the new Head Gamemaker. Nevertheless, at this point Katniss is not aware of Plutarch's actual intentions and views him like any other person on President Snow's side:

I don't want to dance with Plutarch Heavensbee. I don't want to feel his hands, one resting against mine, one resting on my hip. I'm not used to being touched, except by Peeta or my family, and I rank Gamemakers somewhere below maggots in terms of creatures I want in contact with my skin. But he seems to sense this and holds me almost at arm's length as we turn on the floor. (*Catching Fire* 100)

Katniss only dances with Plutarch out of obligation to be polite; nevertheless, she is somewhat disgusted to be in the hands of a person who wants to kill her. However, Plutarch shows signs of empathy and keeps appropriate distance between their bodies. Katniss is confused, yet also rather intrigued by his strange, "almost clandestine" (*Catching Fire* 102) behavior. At this point, Katniss and the reader do not know about Plutarch's intentions, ranking him very low on the scale of likeable characters. In *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (Lawrence), the camera is often below him, creating an angle that makes the viewer inferior to him. This can be interpreted in a way that he knows more about what is going on than the viewer and also the other protagonists.

However, Plutarch's emotions towards Katniss are very different. He knows she is very important as a symbol for the rebellion, but also likes her on a personal level and, in contrast to others, does not really have a problem with her straightforward nature. Plutarch is also aware of the fact that it would be unwise and suspicious if he tried to give her more clues before the games or if he tried to spend more time with her. Therefore, he played the role of the professional Head Gamemaker, working on her rescue in the background.

Katniss's view on Plutarch changes drastically when she finally understands his odd behavior at the party and finds out that the arena works like a clock (see *Catching Fire* 392). In District 13, he explains his act:

"I was even worried you might mention my indiscretion with the watch during the Games." He pulls out his pocket watch and runs his thumb across the crystal, lighting up the Mockingjay. "Of course, when I showed you this, I was merely tipping you off about the arena. As a mentor. I thought it might be a first step towards gaining your trust." (*Catching Fire* 465)

When everything is explained to Katniss after the rescue, she is far from trusting Plutarch and the other rebels. No one told her that she is not only part of the Capitol's, but apparently also part of the rebel's games. Nonetheless, Plutarch puts in some effort in order to make Katniss trust him. To give an example, when Katniss presents her conditions to be the Mockingjay to Coin, Plutarch supports her claims. He also hands Cinna's sketchbook to her so as to show Katniss that the stylist, and dear friend of Katniss, approves of the rebel's actions (see *Mockingjay* 51). When Plutarch takes "full responsibility" (*Mockingjay* 59) to release Katniss's prep team from their punishment, he takes one step towards gaining Katniss's trust. Nevertheless, in Katniss's view, Plutarch can never cast off his position as Head Gamemaker, because in District 13, he also works out plans and delegates the rebellion. Due to that, Katniss is not sure whether Plutarch really meets her on her level.

Furthermore, the question of whether Plutarch could also be regarded as a second mentor for Katniss can be asked. In my mind, he does not fulfill the informal requirements for being a proper mentor, who provides guidance and support. His advice is quite valuable; however, for being a mentor, their relationship lacks brutal honesty concerning Katniss's character and choice of actions, like what she gets from Haymitch. Also, they never develop the particular kind of closeness one would share with a mentor. Furthermore, due to this lack of intimacy, I would also not classify them as friends, but rather colleagues or allies. Katniss does not really develop the kind of carefree trust towards Plutarch, like the kind one would have with a true friend.

During the process of reflection after reading the novels and watching the films, I came to the conclusion that Katniss only trusts Plutarch to a certain degree, due to his past as Head Gamemaker and his weakness for sensation on camera. To sum up their relationship, Katniss and Plutarch are never really friends. Nevertheless, there is a positive outcome of their interesting relationship: they can be considered allies, since they are dedicated to the same thing, namely, ending the oppression of the districts.

### 5.1.8 Katniss and Finnick Odair

The first time that Katniss and Finnick get together is in the Capitol before the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games. Katniss and Finnick know exactly what it means to put their life on the line solely for the purpose of the Capitol's entertainment. Furthermore, both are aware of what it feels like having to be nice and thankful towards the people who enjoy watching them suffer. Thus, one can say that they have already established a bond even before meeting each other for the first time.

In the beginning Katniss thinks of Finnick as being very arrogant and patronizing. Also she believes that the other tribute tries to intimidate her by offering her a sugar cube (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). However, at the very beginning of the third Quarter Quell, when Finnick shows Katniss the golden bracelet belonging to Haymitch, he reveals himself to Katniss as an ally chosen by her mentor, Haymitch (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). From this moment onwards they fight side by side.

At this point, one can ask the question why Finnick does not take part in the love triangle and why Katniss does not fall for him, although he would fit in regarding the age group. I believe the reason for this is rather simple. Finnick is presented to Katniss as a person whose character traits she does not quite admire. Also, there is no need for another potential love interest for Katniss, for the reason that she already has enough boy trouble with Peeta and Gale. Additionally, although Finnick is worshipped by all the people in the Capitol and considered incredibly handsome and charming, he is simply not Katniss's type. Finnick flirts with her, but Katniss does not go along with it and is somewhat suspicious what his intentions are. Here again, this is an illustration that Katniss is not your average 16-year-old because she does not go along with the crowd and drool over him, like teenagers nowadays fancy Justin Bieber. Even when Katniss and Finnick get to know each other better, there are never any romantic sparks between the two. On top of that, another reason for Finnick not to be a part of the – already quite complicated – love triangle going on between Katniss, Peeta and Gale is that Finnick is never romantically interested in

Katniss – or any other woman for that matter. Despite the fact that the Capitol forced him to prostitute himself, his heart only belongs to Annie, the only girl he is truly interested in. Here again, the amount of fan fiction circulating in the World Wide Web that contain a love story between Katniss and Finnick are hard to keep track of.

Furthermore, one needs to think about what importance the friendship between these two tributes has for the story in *The Hunger Games*. Their relationship is imperative for Katniss and Finnick since the existence of the one keeps the other going. One could argue that they constantly show the other that there are reasons worth suffering for and that all their pain and every obstacle they have to overcome during this horrible time is going to be worth it in the end, when they are reunited with their special loved ones. Basically, I would say that if were not for Finnick's physical support and mental aid, Katniss would have given up a long time ago and vice versa.

Moreover, Katniss's and Finnick's loved ones – Peeta and Annie – are captured and tortured in the Capitol when the former are rescued from the arena. Both Katniss and Finnick struggle to deal with this issue. Katniss is filled with self-hatred and loathes almost all the people around her and Finnick "can't focus on anything in 13 because he's trying so hard to see what's happening in the Capitol to Annie, the mad girl from his district who's the only person on earth he loves" (*Mockingjay* 13). The Capitol follows the same strategy for Annie and Peeta. These two are arrested and tortured because Snow and his companions do "whatever it takes to break" Katniss and Finnick and will not recoil from going all the way (*Mockingjay* 177).

Although Finnick is aware of Katniss being a construct in the rebellion, she "had to forgive Finnick for his role in the conspiracy" because they can relate to what the other is going through. Katniss and Finnick are a perfect example of misjudgment of the other due to lack of knowledge and the missing ability to read the other person's mind. While Katniss thinks of Finnick as a playboy and the Capitol's darling at first, she gets to know the real him over time. Moreover, through Katniss's reaction to Finnick rescuing Peeta in the arena, Finnick realizes that Katniss is truly in love with

Peeta and one gets the feeling that Finnick respects her for that because he comprehends those feelings (see *Mockingjay* 182).

The friendship between Katniss and Finnick meets a tragic end when mutts attack them in the Capitol. Katniss has to make the hard but necessary decision to relieve Finnick from his pain and to release the Holo for explosion, resulting in Finnick's immediate death. All in all, mutual understanding and appreciation is what forms the bond between the girl from District 12 and the boy from District 4. They go from being allies in the arena to real friends after the games, and both owe a great deal of their sanity to the other.

## **5.2 Female kinship relations in *The Hunger Games* trilogy**

In this chapter, I will shed light on the family dynamics that are at work in the Everdeen family, consisting of Katniss, Prim and their mother. It needs to be examined, whether Katniss's patterns of young adult behavior can be related and traced back to early experiences in her family. Furthermore, one can discuss how these patterns of behavior and family dynamics operate and what they reveal. Although Katniss is biologically the child of Mrs. Everdeen and is Prim's sister, one can examine what actions may suggest otherwise and highlight the importance of sisterhood in this story. Furthermore, other influence on Katniss of other important female characters of the story – Rue, Effie Trinket, Alma Coing and Johanna Mason – will be examined in this chapter about female kinship relations.

As already indicated, one cannot define Katniss's gender as being entirely female, although her anatomy suggests it. This chapter also seeks to examine the impact of her "othered" (Pharr and Clark 193) gender on the relationships between her and other female characters in the story, for example being a substitute for both mother and father for Prim.

### 5.2.1 Katniss and Prim

Katniss openly shows the whole of Panem that Prim means more to her than anything else when she volunteers for her twelve-year-old sister as tribute for the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games (see *The Hunger Games* 22). Katniss proclaims that she will do everything in her power to protect Prim (see *The Hunger Games* 15) because the little girl “is the only person in the world” Katniss is certain she loves (*The Hunger Games* 10). On the note of protection, Katniss buys the Mockingjay pin for Prim as a lucky charm, which Prim hands back to her big sister before her departure to the Capitol (see Ross, *The Hunger Games*). At this point, Katniss has no idea that the random pick of the charm turns out to be the symbol of a consequential rebellion.

Prim is very scared when she gets called out, but it seems that she is even more hysterical when Katniss volunteers for her, meaning the certain death of her beloved sister. The one is not willing to let the other go. The importance of sisterhood is a central theme in *The Hunger Games* series.

The death of Mr. Everdeen throws Mrs. Everdeen off track and she starts to suffer from serious depression and cuts herself off from the ones surrounding her. Katniss is only in her early teenager years, yet she has no choice but to take over responsibility over the whole family. She buys “food at the market” and prepares it and also tries to maintain a “presentable” look for Prim and herself (*The Hunger Games* 27). Thus, one can say that the feelings that Katniss has towards her sister are also of a motherly nature. Despite these maternal feelings, the sisters see each other on an equal level. To state an example, Katniss kneels down in front of Prim in order to be able to talk to her eye to eye (see Ross, *The Hunger Games*). During the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games, Katniss misses Prim a lot. She is very worried about whether Prim is well and able to prevent starvation. Although Gale reassures her that he will look after them, Katniss is never really at ease.

Having to deal with war and violence at such a young age makes Prim grow up a lot faster than normal. She is very mature for such a young girl and Katniss admires her calm, kind and thoughtful demeanor. After Gale gets whipped by the Peacekeeper and brought back to the Everdeens' house, it is Prim who takes control of the situation, showing that she is not the little girl anymore that Katniss left behind, but a responsible and respectable young adult. Prim becomes part of the medical team in District 13 and is trained to be a doctor (see *Mockingjay* 174). Due to the circumstances, she has to grow up quickly; however Katniss would have wished another life for her – a life in which Prim would be able to enjoy her childhood without poverty and without having to live in constant fear.

When Prim gets killed, Katniss is so devastated that she enters a trance-like condition and does not even speak for a while, not realizing how many hours or days go by (see *Mockingjay* 412). Her whole world crashes when she has to see her little sister, whom she loves most besides Peeta, die. Although Katniss has to endure a lot of suffering along the way, it is Prim's death that throws her completely off course. The intimacy these two girls share consists of so much love as well as trust and can never be replaced.

Furthermore, one can ask the questions of how the relationship between siblings is classified. Also, why does the bond between Katniss and her sister have such a long-lasting impact on Katniss? It needs to be said that the relationship between siblings is quite different to the relationship between a child and a parent. According to Whiteman et al. (124), "sibling relationships are often the longest-lasting relationship in individuals' lives." At least the younger siblings usually know their brothers and sisters since day one, giving them the chance to build a relationship with each other from the very beginning. Also, you are not only related by blood, your brothers and sisters often are your first and dearest friends since you spend a great amount of your time together while growing up. Furthermore, "siblings, serve as companions, confidants and role models in childhood and adolescence" (Whiteman et al. 124). There is an unintentional allocation of roles in a lot of families: younger siblings tend

to copy and imitate their older siblings. Prim adores and idolizes Katniss. She admires her strength and independence, turns to her older sister when she knows that Mrs. Everdeen is not capable of taking care of both sisters and simply finds comfort in her presence. Vice versa, older siblings often take on the role of the protector. Katniss does not blink an eye before deciding to volunteer for Prim in the Hunger Games and never regrets her decision. Whatever it takes, she would always come to Prim's defense.

Moreover, "the relationship partner serves as a source of emotional security" (Whiteman et al. 125). When Prim dies, Katniss's world is shattered. Her mental health is at stake because her sister was Katniss's light in the dark, who always managed to cheer her older sister up, regardless of how bad their situation was. Although death and destruction are the order of the day, Prim gives Katniss stability and hope. After Prim's passing, Katniss's most trusted confidant is gone and with her goes Katniss's emotional security.

All in all, for Prim, Katniss is her hero, a sister, and a substitute for their mother, the one to whom she looks up all her life. When Prim passes away, Katniss loses more than her sister. She loses the one person who gave her faith so many times. Through being present in Katniss's mind a lot throughout the games and the war, Prim encourages Katniss to keep going.

### 5.2.2 Katniss and Mrs. Everdeen

As opposed to Katniss's sisterly bond to Prim, the relationship to their mother cannot be described as particularly close and relaxed.

Due to the sudden and unexpected death of her husband, Mrs. Everdeen falls into depression and lives almost trance-like, forgetting to take care of her little children. Naturally she grieves, but she is not able to pull herself together and get back on track. The family receives "a small amount of money as compensation" and Mrs.

Everdeen is “expected to get a job,” yet she does not show the slightest effort to do so (*The Hunger Games* 27), leaving Katniss with those responsibilities and thus upsetting her daughter a lot.

When Katniss thinks back to the time right after her father’s passing, she states that handling this situation was a challenge that her mother was not strong enough to face. One could argue that Katniss sees herself superior to her mother, who is often presented as sitting down while Katniss is standing next to her (Ross, *The Hunger Games*). The mother’s abandonment of her two girls is not easily (if at all) forgiven by Katniss, although she tries to let go for the sake of her father (see *The Hunger Games* 8). The love Mrs. Everdeen shared with her late husband is what Katniss tries to think of when all she “can see is the woman who sat by, blank and unreachable, while her children turned to skin and bones” (*The Hunger Games* 8). With Prim being the younger one and therefore not under much pressure to take the lead, the little girl does not develop such hard feelings towards her mother. However, Katniss feels differently. She hates her mother for her “weakness, for her neglect, for the months” of abandonment, making Katniss take “a step back” from Mrs. Everdeen and putting up “a wall to protect” herself from ever needing anything from her mother (*The Hunger Games* 53). Katniss refuses any aid from her mother and for some time she is so furious that she “wouldn’t allow her to do anything” for her (*The Hunger Games* 15).

One can say that Katniss has to deal with the loss of both of her parents although her mother is still alive:

I suppose now that my mother was locked in some dark world of sadness, but at the time, all I knew was that I had lost not only a father, but a mother as well. At eleven years old, with Prim just seven, I took over as head of the family. There was no choice. I bought our food at the market and cooked it as best I could and tried to keep Prim and myself looking presentable. (*The Hunger Games* 27)

Due to her depression, Mrs. Everdeen is not able to look after her children anymore, although she still loves them very much. Katniss is basically forced to fulfill the mother-, as well as the father-role for her younger sister, of whom she is very protec-

tive. After volunteering for Prim at the reaping, Katniss yells at Mrs. Everdeen that she must not leave again and abandon Prim (see *The Hunger Games* 37), which is her biggest fear. I believe that Katniss is even more scared of the potential scenario of Mrs. Everdeen neglecting Prim during Katniss's absence than of the torture she is going to face in the games.

Nevertheless, one needs to take into account that Katniss passes a lot of negative judgment on her mother and never actually tries to understand what is going on beneath the surface. When Mr. Everdeen died tragically, Mrs. Everdeen is not only faced with losing her beloved husband and coping with the grief, but also with the very difficult challenge of bringing up her daughters all by herself, having little means and little money. One could argue that Katniss takes the "easy" way out, by simply blaming their mother for her hardships. Nevertheless, one could also claim that Katniss is being equally selfish, because she expects from her mother to handle the situation in another way and yet, against common belief, mothers are not super humans and not insensitive to intense pain. Rather, they are not just mothers but still their own person, which Katniss does not take into consideration. Katniss lacks respect for her mother because she feels neglected; nevertheless there are always two sides to a story and Katniss just sees her own. Although I understand Katniss's anger to a certain degree, I believe that Katniss is quite egoistical herself and very hard on her mother. Depression is a serious issue, which Katniss somehow underestimates and ignores. On top of that, I also sincerely believe that Katniss not only has to forgive her mother for not being there for her daughters, but Katniss also has to forgive herself for her behavior towards her mother and for not showing some empathy. I believe that, although Katniss is perhaps not aware of it, without her mother's depression and distance, Katniss probably would not have had the strength acquired to be the Mockingjay and to fight for her life in the arena.

Although the relationship between Mrs. Everdeen and Katniss seems to get a little bit better when they are reunited in District 13, they are not likely to share a very deep bond in the future. Even though Katniss attempts to forgive her mother, they deal with grief in a different way.

To sum up, Mrs. Everdeen and Katniss are never going to have a mother-daughter relationship that is considered normal. It is always Katniss who seems to be the grown-up and her mother the one who needs to be taken care of. Katniss states a couple of times that it is hard for her to forgive and forget the obstacles she has to overcome due to her mother's despair. Mrs. Everdeen stays in District 4 after the rebellion because between "Prim and the ashes, the place is too painful to bear" (*Mockingjay* 443) and she "buries her grief in her work" (*Mockingjay* 411). I would say that the deaths in the family and the war are making them only drift apart further instead of binding them together. Mrs. Everdeen's actions force Katniss into becoming the tough person that she is as a young adult.

### 5.2.3 Katniss and Rue

Rue – the female tribute of District 11 – is Katniss's first ally in the Hunger Games. Katniss claims afterwards that Rue was not just her ally, but also her friend (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). This girl reminds Katniss a lot of Prim, her beloved sister (see *The Hunger Games* 45). Katniss sees Rue in the Training Center before the games, however they do not speak to each other at that time. When they first meet in the arena, the little girl helped Katniss out, since the Careers – tributes who train in their districts beforehand and then volunteer at the reaping in search of honor and fame – lay in wait for Katniss (see *The Hunger Games* 184). Due to Rue's useful hint, Katniss's life is saved and thus she wants her for an ally "because she's a survivor, and I trust her, and why not admit it? She reminds me of Prim" (*The Hunger Games* 201). Analogous to Prim, Rue also trusts Katniss one hundred percent and naturally neither of them wanted the other dead (*The Hunger Games* 208).

The more time they spend together, the more of a sisterly bond they form. For example, Katniss states, “I poke Rue in the belly, just like I would Prim” (*The Hunger Games* 211). That Katniss sees Prim in Rue a lot of times gives her feelings of comfort and security as well as some sort of closeness to her family at home in District 12.

Likewise, Rue looks up to Katniss and confides in her. When Katniss makes the decision to destroy the Careers’ food, which is gathered onto one large pile near the Cornucopia, Rue joins the plan and they assign each other separate functions, which requires them to split up and meet afterwards at a certain point. That is when “unexpectedly, Rue throws her arms around” Katniss, who embraces the hug (*The Hunger Games* 213). Showing affection and concern amongst the rivaling tributes is definitely not the norm in the arena. The highest degree of liking is probably forming an alliance in order to murder other tributes and stay alive yourself for as long as possible. Usually, trust is not common among the allies. Due to this crucial difference, Katniss and Rue may not be considered as typical alliances in the Hunger Games. They have a rather amiable relationship.

Furthermore, when thinking about Rue and what evil could happen to her in the arena, Prim is very often present in Katniss’s mind. She develops a kind of sisterly responsibility towards Rue. Katniss cannot help it but trying to ensure that Rue will not be slaughtered cruelly by any of the other tributes. What is more, she even provides her with food and balm for her wounds and in this way prolongs the little girl’s life.

In spite of Katniss’s endeavors, a spear pierces Rue’s body immediately after the food supply of the Careers gets blasted. Rue does not survive this incident. Attributable to Rue’s passion for music, which “she loves most in the world” (*The Hunger Games* 211), Katniss sings a song on the deathbed of the little girl, just as she does for Prim at home (Ross, *The Hunger Games*). From this quote one can deduce that Rue’s death affects Katniss deeply, otherwise she would not have chosen to honor Rue and her life by singing:

Sing. My throat is tight with tears, hoarse from smoke and fatigue. But if this is Prim', I mean, Rue's last request, I have to at least try. The song that comes to me is a simple lullaby, one we sing fretful, hungry babies to sleep with. [...] But the words are easy and soothing, promising tomorrow will be more hopeful than this awful piece of time we call today. (*The Hunger Games* 234)

In conclusion, the relationship between Rue and Katniss is very close and trusting. Despite the fact that they did not know each other long or well, there are several instances where Katniss sees Rue as her little sister, whom she really loves and cares about. One can claim that, although Rue might be considered to be a minor character in the first part of the series, her impact is enormous and stretches throughout the whole story.

#### 5.2.4 Katniss and Effie Trinket

Katniss and Effie meet each other for the first time at the reaping for the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games in District 12, when Effie pulls Prim's name out of the pot and Katniss consequently volunteers for her little sister (see *The Hunger Games* 17). At that time, Katniss is only a tribute for Effie, and Katniss regards the latter as being only a shallow citizen from the Capitol who happens to be her escort – two worlds are clashing together.

However, it does not take long for Katniss to realize that Effie does not know any better. Being brought up in the Capitol, Effie only is aware of this lifestyle. She is carried away by enthusiasm for the glitz and glam as well as entertainment of the games and thus often forgets to view the tributes as actual humans. Nonetheless, after getting to know her fosterlings a little bit, Effie cannot help herself and takes Katniss and Peeta into her heart. Also, Katniss does not want to upset Effie on purpose because she knows that Effie does not mean any harm. There is one incident where Katniss loses her temper with Effie; however, this is not solely Effie's fault, but rather, in part because Katniss is under a lot of pressure. This happens while they are on the victory tour after the 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games. Katniss yells at Effie because

the chaperone goes on about the importance of their schedule, while Katniss has a lot of other things on her mind (see *Catching Fire* 61). Nevertheless, Katniss regrets her reaction instantly and apologizes right after and Effie forgives the outburst (see *Catching Fire* 65).

With regards to kinship, one can ask the question whether Effie is like a substitute for a mother for Katniss during her time in the Capitol. One can argue that Effie is what comes closest to it because she has, what she thinks is, Katniss's best interests in mind. To give an example of motherly feelings, other than the act of caring is that Effie never restrains from reprimanding Katniss and Peeta (and even Haymitch for that matter) when they do not sport good manners (see *The Hunger Games* 46). Being brought up in the Capitol, it is her priority to be good-looking and well-mannered. Therefore, it is not surprising that – at least in the beginning – Effie also wants to present *herself* well through the appropriate behavior of Katniss and Peeta. Their relationship is rather superficial at first, but it undergoes a drastic development resulting in genuine care for each other.

Regarding the question of what characterizes the relationship between Effie and Katniss the most, the answer is loyalty. Although the two women come from different backgrounds, they would never stab each other in the back. On the contrary, Effie and Katniss look out for each other and lift each other up. Effie eventually comes to District 13, which is a big adjustment and very demanding for her (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 2*). However, she knows that Katniss needs her help and support and thus overcomes her pride. Although the rebels often sneer at Effie, Katniss never does so.

Furthermore, throughout the movies, Effie starts referring to herself and Katniss as a team, also including Peeta and Haymitch (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). This moves her position away from the Capitol and brings her nearer to Katniss and the citizens of District 12. At the reaping before the third Quarter Quell, Effie appears to be a changed woman who struggles to keep it together (Lawrence,

*The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*). This is attributable to Katniss being no longer just a tribute for her – the girl from District 12 is more like her friend, whom she wishes no evil. She also wants to show their special bond to the whole of Panem, stating that she connects with Katniss by wearing her hair golden, the same color as Katniss's Mockingjay pin, and by giving Peeta and Haymitch a golden bracelet.

Overall, Effie's priorities have shifted from just being the chaperone to being an actual friend, proving her loyalty. Although Katniss and Effie come from two different worlds and have quite different character traits, they manage to build a close relationship and to learn from each other.

#### 5.2.5 Katniss and Alma Coin

Katniss is not aware of Alma Coin's – and of course District 13's – existence until she is rescued from the arena at the end of the 75<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games. The relationship between Katniss and Alma Coin cannot be described as particularly easy-going or likeable but rather uncomfortable. Coin would have preferred for Peeta to be the Mockingjay (see *Mockingjay* 12), for he is an excellent speaker and, due to his kindness, he has a better connection to the people than Katniss. Basically, Coin wants a person who does not rebel against her views in the way Katniss does. Furthermore, Alma Coin does not refrain from playing her little games. She acts like Katniss is her friend, whom she respects and values, for example by sitting down with her and listening to Katniss's thoughts (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1*). However, Katniss is just an essential piece in Coin's route to dominance. Already in the beginning one can sense that they are not really fond of each other, but tolerate one another for their own purposes.

Coin is the leader of the rebellion of the districts. Her plan is to take down Snow, free the districts and hold elections for a new president. Nevertheless, it does not take long for Katniss to realize that Coin acts in a similar way that Snow already does:

Another force to contend with. Another power player who has decided to use me as a piece in her games, although things never seem to go according to plan. First there were the Gamemakers, making me their star [...] Then President Snow, trying to use me to put out the flames of rebellion, only to have my every move become inflammatory [...] And now Coin, with her fistful of precious nukes and her well-oiled machine of a district, find it's even harder to groom a Mockingjay than to catch one. But she has been the quickest to determine that I have an agenda of my own and am therefore not to be trusted. She has been the first to publicly brand me as a threat. (*Mockingjay* 70)

Moreover, Coin attempts to make it clear to Katniss that if she “step[s] out the line” and follow her instructions, like most of the others, the consequences will be fatal. However, Katniss agrees to be the Mockingjay, after struggling with “battle fatigue” (see HeyUGuys). Nevertheless, she always strives after making decisions on her own and refuses to act a certain way. Needless to say, Coin is upset about Katniss's behavior, since Coin would rather have it the way she dictates it and put a good face on the matter.

Their relationship reaches an all time low when President Snow of all people tells Katniss that the parachutes that exploded in the Capitol and killed many people – Prim being among them – were actually sent by Coin and not the Capitol (see *Mockingjay* 418). At this point, Katniss knows for sure that Alma Coin is equally psychopathic as President Snow and decides to avenge the death of her sister. Katniss wants to kill herself with the help of Nightlock after she shoots Coin, however Peeta prevents her suicide (see *Mockingjay* 436).

The question of why the relationship between Katniss and Coin is so toxic and not more relaxed if they pursue the same goal anyway needs to be asked. To my mind, this is because both women are following the same goal, but for widely different reasons. Katniss cannot identify with Coin's thirst for power and that Coin would walk over dead bodies to reach her goal. She is to be blamed for a number of deaths without ever making her hands dirty. This has fooled many people into believing that she practices selflessness on a high level and has everyone's best interests in mind. Next to Katniss, there are only a handful of people who are suspicious of Coin's ac-

tions, Haymitch being among them. He must have sensed that Coin is up to no good, since he keeps reminding Katniss to “remember who the real enemy is” (Lawrence, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1*). Haymitch meant Alma Coin all along but wanted Katniss to figure it out herself. By creating such an antagonist and constructing such a relationship with the main protagonist, I believe that Collins intends to convey the message that even though humans make mistakes and trust the wrong people, you can grow from such actions. There is an opportunity to learn from every relationship, even if it is toxic.

In the end, the relationship between Katniss and Alma Coin develops from bad to worse. Coin, on the one hand, is annoyed by Katniss and her attitude and also knows that the people in the other districts would choose Katniss anytime as a leader over her. Katniss, on the other hand, has also had a problem with Coin’s dictatorship-like regime and is appalled by her cruelty. Thus, she decides to kill Coin instead of President Snow, in order to take revenge for the tragic passing of Prim and to prevent the people of Panem from another tyrannical and ruthless president.

#### 5.2.6 Katniss and Johanna Mason

Katniss and Johanna meet each other for the first time right before the third Quarter Quell, when they are already in the Capitol. At that time and also in the arena, Johanna cannot hide her feelings of contempt and jealousy. This is due to Katniss being the center of attention and the chosen Mockingjay. In order to overcome these feelings of being in the background, Johanna has the urge to strip down naked at any given opportunity so as to draw the focus on her. Also, she wants to intimidate Katniss, whose character is considered rather “pure” (*Catching Fire* 260). The two girls definitely have a rough start.

It is obvious that the two of them would not have chosen the other as an ally in the arena voluntarily. However, when Johanna rescues Beetee and Wiress from the blood rain and joins the trio consisting of Katniss, Peeta and Finnick, the two girls

are forced to working together. It is not until later that Katniss realizes Johanna saved Beetee and Wiress for her sake. Even though, they are allies now, the air between them is still filled with loathing and Katniss wonders “if this is what it’s like to have an older sister who really hates you” (*Catching Fire* 390). It almost goes without saying that at this point Johanna is “naturally opposed to liking anything” Katniss suggests (*Catching Fire* 394). Although siblings are prone to fighting, I would not regard their relationship as being sisterly because they are not far from literally finishing each other off. Katniss is aware that Johanna would gladly “rip her throat out” and she herself “could easily kill [Johanna] if it came down to protecting Peeta” (*Catching Fire* 397). Nevertheless, they are allies now and despite all the hatred, I have the feeling that there is a little mutual respect, because both are aware of the other girl’s fighting skills.

What Katniss does not know yet, is that Johanna is inaugurated in the plan of the rebels. She fulfills her duty of keeping the Mockingjay alive. Despite the relationship between Johanna and Katniss being not sisterly or even friendly in the beginning, there is still the feeling of loyalty. The fact that both are fighting for the greater good – stopping the Hunger Games and the oppression of the districts – and not for exiting the arena as a winner, brings them closer.

Their whole relationship changes, however, when both of the girls are in District 13. Katniss and Johanna start sharing more of their feelings as well as stories of their past. Feelings of hatred and loathing also seem to fade gradually. There is a “slight but significant shift” in their relationship, because they are not “actually friends, but possibly the word *allies* would be more accurate” (*Mockingjay* 275). Although both of them are still bruised and battered, they motivate and encourage each other to train hard, because they want to be part of fighting in the Capitol. One cannot deny that they do indeed start looking out for each other. When Katniss and Johanna start sharing a compartment in District 13, they really get to know each other’s fears and understand their actions.

Here again, one can ask the question of what kind of message Suzanne Collins wants to get across with the relationship of Katniss and Johanna. I believe she wants to tell the reader that you should always try to see the good in people and to never judge a book by its cover. Johanna acts in a certain way because her soul is deeply damaged and this is her method of coping with her pain. The character of Johanna is quite similar to Haymitch, who also lost his family through the hands of the Capitol. Extreme situations bring out the worst (but sometimes also the best) in people. Therefore, Johanna cannot help but to project all her hate onto Katniss and tease her all the time. Moreover, Johanna's eccentric nature already points to the fact that she must have suffered in the past. However, only her actions make the damage that the Games and torture from the Capitol has caused quite clear. Nevertheless, in the course of the story, the reader finds out more and more about the real Johanna and she becomes quite a likeable character after all, when her genuine nature comes to the surface. Thus, I believe that Collins wants to subtly get the message across that you should always try to understand the background of a person as a base for their decisions. In my opinion, it is very important for young adults to respect and accept others for who they are, especially in our contemporary world with numerous social media channels available at all times and the anonymity of the internet on top of that. Furthermore, the relationship between Katniss and Johanna illustrates the importance of forgiving. It is essential for adolescents to understand significance of giving second chances, for life is short. Especially, when being confronted with death a lot of the time, like Katniss and Johanna are, one should stay away from holding grudge for one's own salvation.

In conclusion, the relationship between them has undergone a dramatic change. From two girls who detest each other, they turn into allies and finally friends. Since Johanna does not have family anymore back in District 7, Katniss is the closest thing she has to family now, although they are not related by blood, again indicating that your kin does not necessarily include biological relation.

## 6 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter I want to provide an outlook on future development of the most important concepts of this thesis, like kinship and relationships, prospects on Young Adult and (Young Adult) Dystopian Literature and its occurrence in various forms of media.

Overall, with regard to kinship constellations and the challenge thereof in our contemporary world, one can say that they are challenged and changed constantly and there will never be a point in time when relationships cease to be altered. Nevertheless, I believe that our interpersonal relations – regardless of being biologically related or connected through friendship or acquaintance – shape our character and the paths we chose along the way majorly.

As far as relationships in *The Hunger Games* series are concerned, through the multitude of deaths throughout the series, the amount of actual blood relations gets decimated. Because of that, the closest relationships one has are often with people who are not one's biological family. Furthermore, leading figures in one's inner circle might be replaced by others outside the family. *The Hunger Games* series illustrates nicely a modern day – or rather future – perspective on kinship.

Furthermore, it needs to be added that, while *The Hunger Games* series might be dominating the genre of Dystopian movies, it is by far not the only story available on the current market. In the new millennium, these movies have enjoyed great popularity all around the globe. The *Divergent* series is a worthy successor to *The Hunger Games*; nevertheless, to my mind the story around Katniss Everdeen has been slightly more hyped and adored. There is still one movie to come in the *Divergent* series. It is the second part of the last book, *Allegiant*. This film is called *Ascendant* and is expected to open in 2017. Apparently *Ascendant* is not going to be released in the cinema, but only as television series. To this date, there has not been an official comment concerning this topic. Due to the success of the novels *Divergent*, *In-*

*surgent* and *Allegiant*, Veronica Roth wrote a fourth book in this series called *Four*. This book tells the story of Tobias 'Four' Eaton, Tris's partner in crime.

Although some Dystopian films, like *The Hunger Games* or *Divergent* have been very popular beforehand, there are also movie adaptations of novels that have not been that famous everywhere, for example *The Maze Runner*. While the former were extremely well known in Austria, the latter was a little less popular. There is a significant difference between *The Hunger Games* series and the *Divergent* series on the one hand, and *The Maze Runner* on the other. While the first two have a female lead character, Katniss Everdeen and Tris Prior, *The Maze Runner's* main protagonist is a boy named Thomas. Be that as it may, in my opinion *The Maze Runner* is equally captivating and suitable for girls, even though the characters are almost exclusively teenage boys.

I believe that, being motivated by curiosity, it is likely that some people felt motivated to read the other books once they saw the first part in the movie theater. In my opinion, the latest Young Adult Dystopian fiction boom has inspired people to read again. On top of that, authors and publishers can profit a lot off of trilogies, since they might get three times the success and financial benefit. The demand for Young Adult Dystopian fiction is still quite high, and, if done right, they can be quite lucrative.

Furthermore, one needs to ask the question what kind of Young Adult Dystopian novels are available in the Germanic world, written by German-speaking authors. However, there might not be as many top sellers that are known around the globe when compared to trilogies from the Anglophone world. To state an example, the *Ruby Red* trilogy written by famous German author Kerstin Gier is also quite popular outside the borders of Germany and is internationally successful. I, for my part, read it in German as well as in English. It needs to be stated that the novels are rather authentic in English as well, since the story is set in London and the characters are all British anyway. All three parts – *Ruby Red*, *Sapphire Blue* and *Emerald Green* –

have been adapted into movies. Here again, the reoccurring theme is the main female protagonist.

Subsequently, some thought could be put into the fact that there are quite a number of lead characters that are girls in these Young Adult Dystopian novels. Despite the authors of *The Hunger Games* series, *Divergent* series and *Ruby Red* series being women themselves, I believe by choosing strong, smart and adventurous female characters, they want to convey a certain message. I believe that these women want to get across that boys and older male readers need to understand that it should be logical and natural to respect women and to treat them equally, for I believe that in 2017 the notion of the weaker sex is a thing of the past. Additionally, young girls should be encouraged to stand up for what they believe in and that they can be whoever they choose to be in life.

Furthermore, in the age of Netflix and the ever-growing possibilities of the World Wide Web, one needs to pose the question whether Dystopia as a genre also entered the universe of TV shows. There is quite a large number of series available for adults, for example *The Walking Dead* or *The 100*. People seem to enjoy a little bit of Science Fiction or Fantasy. Also, the concept of the unknown and the idea that there might be something beyond our everyday life and exceeding the scope of our imagination could be the motivation to watch such TV shows. Although there are several other Dystopian television series, most of them are produced and intended for adults. In my opinion, there is still potential for the development of Young Adult Dystopian TV shows.

Needless to say, there has not been one, but two incredible highlights for *Harry Potter* worshippers in the year 2016. The first one was the premiere and release of the script of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, a stage play based on a story written by J.K. Rowling, produced in London. The play is about Harry's son Albus and his adventures as a teenager at Hogwarts. This story was highly anticipated by *Harry Potter* followers around the globe. The screenplay, which was also released in book

form, enjoyed great popularity. In my opinion, this proves that, although the last book in the *Harry Potter* series, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, is already ten years old, the phenomenon of the boy who lived is as popular as ever. Rumor has it that *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* is going to be adapted for Broadway, but there has not been an official statement yet.

The second climax in 2016 concerning the *Harry Potter* universe was the release of the movie *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Basically, this film is a prequel to *Harry Potter*, also written by J.K. Rowling and set in the United States of America. It takes place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a time long before Harry Potter was born and his magical journey started. Nevertheless, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* is still connected to the wizarding world we got to know through *Harry Potter*. To give an example, while in the *Harry Potter* series there is often talk about Gellert Grindelwald, he has never been seen or actively participated in the story. This is different in *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, since this character has an active role. There is talk about whether there are going to be even four or five *Fantastic Beasts* movies, even though three screenplays were originally planned.

Young Adult literature is quite diverse and over time, there various subgenres have also been developed. Nevertheless, an author who has coined the landscape of Young Adult Literature over the past couple of years is John Green. His novel *The Fault in our Stars* – and subsequently also the movie – was groundbreaking for its global success. The famous story about terminally ill teenagers – the complex characters Hazel and Augustus – falling in love is extremely popular with adults as well because it is sophisticated and touching. It shows the importance and power of interpersonal relations and their healing power for the soul.

Having said all that, I dare to put forth the prognosis that the hype and demand for Young Adult Dystopian, Fantasy and Science-Fiction literature is not going to stop in the near future. These genres – or a mixture of them – are as popular as they have

been in the new millennium. Additionally, I firmly believe that the next globally successful trilogy, which will capture us all once again, is just around the corner.

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## **8 Appendix**

### **8.1 English Abstract**

This thesis seeks to explore the concept of kinship in the American novel series *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins. This Young Adult trilogy has gained vast popularity since its release. The main question of research of this diploma thesis is how kinship is represented throughout the storyline. By deconstructing kinship, the question of what family actually consists of arises inevitably. Furthermore, it shall be investigated how personal development and identity is impacted through ones nearest and dearest.

In order to give a brief insight, *The Hunger Games* and the world that evolved with it was created in the past couple of years. It started out as a book, however one did not need to wait long for the eagerly anticipated movies. This trilogy is set in, what was North America before the apocalypse, a country called Panem. Panem consists of the main city, the Capitol, and twelve other districts. Each district sends out two teenagers per year in order to compete in the Hunger Games, which is a deathly event created as a punishment for the revolution of the districts and to entertain the people of the Capitol. Katniss Everdeen from District 12 is one of those unlucky adolescent competitors to leave their family and fight for their lives.

With the means of closely examining *The Hunger Games* and the characters in the story, the notion of kinship shall be deconstructed. In addition, this thesis seeks to shed light on domestic relations and how they affect the protagonist's lives and choices.

### **8.2 German Abstract**

Diese Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit verwandtschaftlichen Verhältnissen in der amerikanischen Romanreihe *Die Tribute von Panem* von Suzanne Collins. Diese Jugendliteratur-Serie erfreut sich immenser Popularität seit ihrer Veröffentlichung.

Die primäre Forschungsfrage dieser Arbeit ist, wie diverse Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse im Laufe der ganzen Geschichte dargestellt werden. Im Zuge der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema Verwandtschaft - beziehungsweise Blutsverwandtschaft - ergibt sich unweigerlich die Frage nach der eigentlichen Definition einer Familie. Des Weiteren sollen der Einfluss von Familie und Verwandtschaft auf persönliche Entwicklung und Entfaltung der eigenen Identität untersucht werden.

Um einen kurzen Überblick zu geben, *Die Tribute von Panem* Serie und die Welt, die mit diesen Büchern erschaffen wurde, entstand in den letzten paar Jahren. Während alles in Buchform begann, ließen die erfolgreichen Filme nicht lange auf sich warten. Die Trilogie spielt in Panem, einem Land im postapokalyptischen Nordamerika. Das Kapitol ist die Hauptstadt Panems, umgeben von 12 Distrikten. Jedes der Distrikte ist verpflichtet, pro Jahr zwei Jugendliche – Tribute – zu entsenden, welche dann in den tödlichen Hungerspielen um ihr Leben kämpfen müssen. Die Hungerspiele dienen dazu, die Distrikte zu bestrafen und im Zaum zu halten, um eine neuerliche Revolution gegen das Kapitol zu verhindern. Des Weiteren werden die Hungerspiele von den reichen und oberflächlichen Einwohnern des Kapitols als reiner Unterhaltungszweck gesehen. Katniss Everdeen aus dem Distrikt 12 ist eine der unglücklichen Mitbewerber in den Hungerspielen. Sie muss ihre Familie zurücklassen und um ihr Leben bangen.

Im Zuge der genauen Begutachtung der Charaktere in *Die Tribute von Panem*, sollen Verwandtschaftsverhältnisse und deren verschieden starker Einfluss auf das Leben der Protagonisten veranschaulicht werden.