

THE MONOMYTHIC JOURNEY OF A NEW HEROINE IN THE HUNGER GAMES

Tatiana GOLBAN¹

Narin FİDAN²

Abstract

Suzanne Collins' novel *The Hunger Games* has as its central metaphor the monomythic journey of the hero. This research focuses on the novelist's attempt to redefine the monomyth in terms of gender, and on the ways in which Collins's retold version represents human experience in the contemporary world. This study presents Collins's protagonist, Katniss, who embarks on the traditional heroic quest and confronts multiple challenges and frustrations on her journey to success. During her heroic enterprise, Katniss turns inward, discovers and embraces her feminine nature and seeks a satisfactory life paradigm as a result of which she attains the inner integration and reconciliation of both masculine and feminine aspects of her personality; she also understands and accomplishes her purpose in life. By recognizing the mythical and archetypal situations, which are subverted or inverted in the novel, Collins revises the significance of private and public achievements in the contemporary community.

Keywords: monomyth, new heroine, archetype, journey to the self, The Hunger Games

96

AÇLIK OYUNLARI ADLI ROMANDAKI YENİ KADIN KAHRAMANIN MONOMİTİK YOLCULUĞU

Özet

Yazar Suzanne Collins'in romanı *Açlık Oyunları*'nın merkezindeki metaforda monomit yolculuğu bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırma, yazarın kahraman kavramını cinsiyet açısından yeniden tanımlamasına odaklanmış olup, aynı zamanda Collins'in monomitin yeniden anlatılmış versiyonunun günümüz dünyasındaki insan deneyimini temsil etmesine de değinmektedir. Bu çalışma, Collins'in başkahramanı olan

¹ Doç. Dr., Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi, Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü.
tgolban@nku.edu.tr

² Öğr. Gör., Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi, Sağlık Yüksekokulu. nfidan@nku.edu.tr

Katniss'in başarıya giden yolda çok sayıda engel ve hayal kırıklığı ile yüzleşmesi konusuna değinilmektedir. Katniss kendi iç dünyasına dönmeye, feminen doğasını kucaklamakta ve kişiliğinin hem maskülen hem de feminen yanlarının entegrasyonu ve uzlaşısının sonucunda tatminkar bir hayatın arayışına girmekle birlikte, aynı zamanda hayatı amacını da anlamakta ve gerçekleştirmektedir. Collins, romanda tersyüz ya da altüst edilmiş mitik ve arketipik durumları kabul etmeye birlikte, çağdaş toplumdaki özel ve genel başarıların önemini de yeniden ele almaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: monomit, yeni kadın kahraman, arketip, benliğe yolculuk, Açılık Oyunları

Introduction

Suzanne Collins's novel *The Hunger Games*, from the moment of its publication in 2008, proved to be an extraordinary success, both among young and adult readers. The fact that this novel was sold in over 38 countries and translated into 26 languages also suggests the immense impact it had for its target audience. In 2012 the novel's popularity increases once again with the release of the novel's adaptation into a movie, *The Hunger Games*, which had the one of the highest-grossing opening weekends in U.S. history. Partially, this popularity might be explained by the representation of a post-apocalyptic world in which the government oppresses its citizens, by forcing them to participate in a televised competition where adolescents battle to death. Partially, it could be related to the novel's emphasis on the impact of the media on our lives, its manipulative power through the construction of reality, as well as its marketing of the fame. However, our premise is that the novel's popularity emerges mostly from the novelist's use of the frame of the monomyth of the heroine, in which a 16-year old girl sets on a journey that has initially the only goal to survive, but in the course of the action this journey assumes another quality, as it becomes a psychic experience of the transformation of the self, since she performs an inward movement, confronts multiple challenges and frustrations and eventually succeeds by becoming an authentic being, a true heroine who understands what is her true purpose and place in life.

Although the recent literature and media abound in the representations of new heroines with exceptional bodies or even fighting abilities, Suzanne Collins's protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, becomes an extraordinary role model, a heroine for all readers, regardless of their gender. The novelist tries to redefine the concept of heroine, inviting the audience to reflect on various types of heroism while witnessing Katniss's quest for herself in the time of her tasks. In a world where the impact of violence desensitizes human being, Collins's protagonist's unique qualities of bravery, determination, compassion and vulnerability

contribute to the maintenance of humanity, an aspect which is extremely important in the contemporary world.

The Hunger Games begins with the reaping event, which takes place annually in every of the twelve districts of the post-apocalyptic Panem. The reaping consists of the random lottery, as a result of which a girl and a boy of each district is picked and forced to participate in The Hunger Games, a televised competition where children kill other children. The novel, which has an increasing consumer appeal, presents violence as a natural part of our entertainment media, as well as an accepted part of our real world. The narrative reveals the way humans who are exposed constantly to watch violent acts grow insensitive to violence, especially when media romanticizes it by idealizing and empowering it as heroic.

Katniss's progressive development, as a part of the monomythic experience, emerges through the interplay between the potential she exhibits as a personal characteristic and the networks of relations she is introduced to during The Games, as she acquires knowledge, adapts, and grows as a human being. In order to illustrate this process of individual growth of the protagonist we will use the frame of the psychotherapist and mythologist Maureen Murdock, whose model of the heroine's journey is relevant for the acquiring of the female self-awareness. Murdock's paradigm, presented in *The Heroine's Journey*, which was published in 1990, relies on Joseph Campbell's model of the hero's journey, but she tried to adapt this monomythic pattern to the needs of female psychology.

Murdock's alternative to Campbell's monomyth tries to accommodate the female's experience of coming of age. She, like Campbell, presents the rites of passage through the metaphor of quest, but her method focuses primarily on the heroine's journey of growth and healing, which becomes accomplished only through the quester's psychic connection to her community. When referring to female quest Murdock presents it as a "quest to fully embrace their feminine nature, learning how to value themselves as women and to heal the deep wound of the feminine" (Murdock, 2013, p. 3). Rather than offering a narrative of acts of bravery or strength, she sees this paradigmatic journey mostly as a therapeutic act, which is needed mostly by girls who become women.

The focus of the heroine's journey is actually on a process in which the female seeks for her inner needs and their answers, and balances them with the masculine qualities. According to Murdock, "[t]he heroine must become a spiritual warrior. This demands that she learn[s] the delicate art of balance and have the patience for the slow, subtle integration of the feminine and masculine aspects of herself" (Murdock, 2013, p. 11). She also believes that a

woman must have the strength to live in uncertain circumstances, and in order to do this she must listen to her inner voice recalling wisdom and patience. In doing so, she learns how to keep her feminine self and integrate with the masculine aspects of the self. According to Murdock, a woman must keep in mind that if she does not neglect these aspects and victories, she contributes to the development of her personality during her journey, and by keeping them alive, she will be capable of gathering people and become a leader.

Murdock states that “[o]n a cultural level, the established order is one of deeply entrenched patriarchal values, those of dominance and control by the stronger, more vocal, and more powerful male population” (Murdock, 2013, p. 20). In her interviews and psychologic analyses, she finds out that women, although successful in business, feel deprived in terms of full recognition and acceptance in male dominated societies, and, therefore, are not contented with the role they are expected to play in life. In modern societies, in order to be recognized by the male dominated society women are “encouraged (...) to live through others rather than find their own fulfilment” (Murdock, 2013, p. 23).

According to Murdock, “[t]he heroine’s journey is a continuous cycle of development, growth, and learning” (Murdock, 2013, p. 4). Considering this, it is clear that the heroine’s monomyth, similar to the hero monomyth, is cyclic rather than linear, and may be experienced perpetually in a lifetime. Murdock states that “The heroine’s journey begins with “Separation from the feminine” and ends with “Integration of masculine and feminine” (Murdock, 2013, p. 5). It is interesting to mention that the emphasis is made on the balance attained as a result of this integration.

For the purpose of our research, the Table representing Murdock’s stages of The Heroine’s Journey is necessary in order to observe clearly the trajectory performed by the heroine. It must be noted that this pattern is originally designed in a cyclic scheme, but is transformed into a table for this study.

Table 1

The Heroine’s Journey

Separation from the Feminine
Identification with the Masculine and Gathering of Allies
Road of Trials Meeting the Ogres and Dragons
The Illusory Boon of Success
Awakening of Feelings of Spiritual Aridity: Death
Initiation and Descent to the Goddess
Urgent Yearning to Reconnect with the Feminine
Healing the Mother/Daughter Split

Healing the Wounded Masculine Integration of Masculine and Feminine

(Murdock, 2013, p. 5)

Although we focus on the stages offered by Maureen Murdock's pattern of *The Heroine's Journey*, we have found a very useful guide in Valerie Estelle Frankel's paradigm for the heroine presented in her book *From Girl to Goddess*. Therefore, in our analysis of the journey taken by protagonist Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games*, we will refer to both Murdock's and Frankel's patterns in order to have a better understanding of the spiritual awakening of the protagonist.

The Monomythic Journey

Separtion from the Feminine

Murdock's pattern of the heroine's journey begins with the *Separation from the Feminine*, which is clearly reflected in Suzanne Collins's novel. It represents the separation from the personal mother, and therefore is a fearful process for a daughter, since this separation signifies the withdrawal from the person who is actually the same to herself. As Murdock claims, the heroine "experiences a fear of loss, characterized by anxiety, which is caused by the feeling of being alone, separate, and different from the same-sex parent, who in most cases has been her primary relationship. The separation from the mother is more complex for a daughter than a son", since the bond between mother and daughter is much stronger (Murdock, 2013, p. 17).

Katniss does not correspond to the traditional feminine aspects of existence, which are expressed generally in terms of passivity, powerlessness, or dependence. From the beginning of the novel Katniss is described as a young girl who hunts in the woods with a bow and arrow, and with a physical agility which is trained by her father during her childhood, rather than being initiated into some domestic activities by her mother.

According to Murdock, "[the heroine] first hungers to lose her feminine self and to merge with the masculine, and once she has done this, she begins to realize that this is neither the answer nor the end" (Murdock, 2013, p. 8). This hunger to lose her femininity is reflected in the physical description of Katniss, a fact which divulges her indifference to or ignorance of her feminine side. Her attitude is not even close to the one of a young girl. Her repressed femininity is obvious in her appearance, as she is more boyish with boots, trousers and a cap hiding her braided hair, characteristics that are quite different from those of either her mother or sister. In her quest for the self, Katniss is seeking a proper feminine role model that cannot

be supplied by her depressed and reduced to powerlessness mother. In her search for her own identity she innately relies on some archetypal feminine models of independence. Her physical description strikes by its similarity to the woman archetype represented by the goddess Artemis, who is revealed by Jean Shinoda Bolen as “Goddess of the Hunt (...) armed with a silver bow, a quiver of arrows on her back” (Bolen, 2004, p. 46). This archetype is also known as the father’s daughter, since in order to be successful in life she is highly dependent on the approval of her father.

Although we see in the further parts of the novel that Katniss changes her appearance for the televised interviews, it is not done on her own choice, but it is imposed by her mentors and stylists. Her physical appearance is also different from her mother and sister. She describes them as “with their light hair and blue eyes (...) out of place” (Collins, 2009, p. 9). This description strengthens the difference between them and thus places Katniss outside her female family bonds. However, this self-exclusion does not disturb Katniss.

The psychological separation from the feminine is reflected by Katniss’s explicit feelings towards her mother, as anger and hatred. The prospective heroine despises her mother due to her weakness and lack of purpose in life which arises after her husband’s death in an explosion in the mines. The mother gives up looking after her children, loses the connection with real life, and is described by Katniss as “blank and unreachable, while her children turned to skin and bones” (Collins, 2009, p. 9). In the absence of a strong mother, Katniss emerges as unforgiving and unhappy at home, and she seeks a way for her personal fulfilment which will correspond to her innate need for independence and accomplishment. Her sacrificial act of volunteering for The Games instead of her sister Prim is a way of her seeking authority and independence, traits that are usually indicating the “identification with the masculine”, but her initial goal to survive in the arena and return home to care for her family reveal her unawareness of the value of the feminine side of herself.

Identification with the Masculine and Gathering of the Allies

The second stage in the journey of the heroine, *Identification with the Masculine and Gathering of the Allies*, is of essential importance for Katniss’s inner development, since she is a girl who is much more pleased with the masculine traits of her character. In her willingness to depart from the feminine aspects of herself, she is inclined to identify and connect with a role model that will correspond to a paternal figure. In this respect, Linda Leonard claims that “[t]he father also projects ideals for his daughter. He provides a model for authority, responsibility, decision making, objectivity, order, and discipline” (Leonard, 1982,

p.11). Katniss assimilates and validates these masculine features that are of vital importance especially during the survival in The Games, which develop within kill-or-be-killed and winner-take-all expectation.

In the process of self-discovery the positive aspects of identification with the masculine should be taken into consideration. Katniss's identification with such positive paternal qualities as decision-making, discipline, courage, and self-esteem confer her necessary strength, which is necessary for her continuation of her journey. Murdock states that, “[t]his is an important period in the development of a woman’s ego. Our heroine looks for role models who can show her the steps along the way. These male allies may take the form of a father, boyfriend, teacher, manager, or coach” (Murdock, 2013, p. 36).

Katniss gains the necessary wisdom to gather some allies, which although not perfect role models, at certain moments of her quest become her mentors and guides, and eventually contribute to her success. Her first ally is most probably her father, since he was the one who had taught Katniss to use a bow and arrow for hunting, an ability which helps her both to provide food for the family after his death, and also during the fight she has to experience later in The Hunger Games. The abilities of whistling or singing in the woods are also learned from her father, skills which would help her in the arena for the secret communication with her allies. Katniss is definitely her father’s daughter, as besides his teaching her everything about the woods and methods of survival, much of her strength is gained by the spiritual guidance her father offered to her. He tells her once that “[a]s long as you can find yourself, you’ll never starve” and his words reveal the importance of his daughter’s spiritual awakening (Collins, 2009, p. 52).

The second ally is Gale, whom she describes as her brother, even though Gale has no familial ties with her. She cares about him, as he is her hunting companion who both helps her hunting and also improving skills while coping with various circumstances in the woods, such as building traps and snares after her father’s death. The strong attachment between Katniss and Gale started with their fathers’ death in the same mining accident, and the two of them develop a caretaking bond, they both learn the meaning of friendship and reliance on each other. Without any hesitations Katniss entrusts her family to Gale while heading off to the arena, and she is assured that her mother and sister are fed and looked after well. However, although Gale plays an important role in her character’s development, Katniss clearly reveals her negligence of her feminine aspirations, such as having a marriage or having children. Gale’s offer to “[l]eave the district. Run off. Live in the woods” is perceived by Katniss as

illogical or even absurd, a fact that reveals her refusal of identifying with the very natural position of a beloved person (Collins, 2009, p. 10). This fraternal alliance between Gale and Katniss can be considered what Donald Kalsched (1996) names as archetypal self-care system, which emerged as a result of their early physical and emotional hunger and misfortunes. They need each other to cope with the traumatic events of their lives and they mostly become companions in caring for others.

Katniss develops some other relationships that contribute to the cultivation of a sense of herself. One of these figures and allies is Haymitch, who is a former victor of the Hunger Games, and also her mentor for the coming Games in the arena. His being always apathetic and drunk creates a negative impression at first. However, he is the one who guides her during her journey in the arena, where she faces fatal fights, and also he finds sponsors for keeping her alive until the end of the Games. He is not a father-like figure despite his age, but his symbolical presence triggers Katniss's spiritual awareness. He represents somehow the reflection of her probable psychological state of being in case of her possible victory in The Games. The experience of so many deaths in the arena makes him incapable of living a happy life after the return home. He is in a way the proof that the victory in The Hunger Games is completely illusory, for although it brings him fortune and wealth, it takes away his innocence and hope. Haymitch represents the lost masculine soul, which Katniss helps him to regain during her journey. By identifying with him and by understanding the mental state and the reason of Haymitch's becoming a totally indifferent person she become able to contribute to his recovery. Witnessing in Haymitch what she could become as a prospective victor in The Games, Katniss understands that the true victory is not the one carried by someone on an individual level in such a despotic environment. She acknowledges that in a constantly threatened environment the meaning of victory is somewhere else.

Her other masculine ally is Cinna, her stylist, who takes the responsibility for her outlook and image. He helps Katniss not only with the costumes he designs, but also with the hidden messages within the eye-catching costumes. He is the one who at the very beginning designs a costume which will make her unforgettable and describes her as "the girl who was on fire" (Collins, 2009, p. 67). Cinna is the silent helper and ally at the backstage, who reveals the anger and protest in the inner world of the prospective heroine. Cinna manages to create an ideal heroine prior to her acknowledgement of her actual power and strength. For Katniss, Cinna symbolically represents the repressed feeling of rebellion against being silenced. His cleverly designed costumes are, in a way, the silent victory screams of a coming heroine, who

looks naive and strong, feminine and ordinarily masculine, as well as fragile and undefeatable. However, the most notable Cinna's contribution to Katniss's development consists of her exposure to her own authenticity. His constant remark of "be yourself" sounds like a call to her sincerity, which in the case of the constant surveillance gains a new quality. Her lack of ability for deception and performance make her gain sympathy when the stakes are high, i.e. to survive during The Games.

Katniss's awakening to her sexuality takes place through her acknowledgement of other male figures, which are encountered by her during her physical and spiritual journey. Her constant focus on caring for others has led to her complete negligence of her personal needs, an aspect that allows an undeveloped sense of the self. Therefore, Peeta, one of her strongest allies during her journey, becomes of essential importance for Katniss's discovery of new aspects of herself. Peeta is her secret admirer who has never had the chance or courage to confess his feelings. In one of the days of anger and despair Peeta secretly throws two loaves of burned bread towards Katniss's feet, instead of giving them to the pigs as his mother commands. Peeta's act breaks this chain of desperation, allowing a little hope to blossom for Katniss, because the next day she describes the feeling "as if spring had come overnight" (Collins, 2009, p. 33), and when she sees him at school, she also sees "the first dandelion of the year" (Collins, 2009, p. 33), which represents the coming spring, in other words, hope that spiritual and physical regeneration is possible.

Road of Trials: Meeting the Ogres and Dragons

The next stage in the heroine's development starts with the travel by train to Panem, the capital city where the Arena is established for The Hunger Games. According to Murdock, "[a]long the way she meets ogres who trick her into going down dead ends, adversaries who challenge her cunning and resolve, and obstacles which she must avoid, circumscribe, or overcome. She needs a lamp, a lot of thread, and all of her wits about her to make this journey" (Murdock, 2013, p. 46).

In this road of trials there will be many obstacles either psychological or physical that must be confronted and defeated by the heroine. Starting with the psychological obstacles, Katniss faces fears concerning her ability to keep the promise of coming back home she made to Prim, her sister, uncertainty about the love Peeta announces for her, reluctance about Haymitch's guidance because of his confusing attitudes, and loss of confidence due to the powerful rivals she has to fight against in order to stay alive. Another psychological obstacle is that, since there can only be one victor, she also has to kill Peeta, who previously, in a way

saved her life by giving the loaves of bread to her, and gave her hope that there is much more she can do in order to survive. These psychological obstacles are also the results of the transformation from a child to a young girl, when she must learn her own worth and also her authority in her environment.

This road of trial is a complete challenge for Katniss because this is the first time she separates from home and leaves her known environment. However, this is neither hopeful nor a self-determined journey. Instead, as a caregiver, Katniss separates from her familiar zone in order to protect Prim. Even though she knows hunting and is psychologically stronger than her sister or even her mother, Katniss is supposed to kill people in order to stay alive and become a victor. The ogres and dragons she has to fight with can be interpreted as the inner conflicts she experiences about killing people. Now she must separate psychologically from her former way of perceiving life and norms and assume a different worldview and purpose in life.

The physical obstacles are also experienced by the heroine. Frankel claims that competing girls “must never show fear or emotion, never risk being called “hysterical” or “shrewish”. Getting “tied down” will end their careers, and so they must choose strength or femininity, never both” (Frankel, 2010, p. 20). Besides Katniss’s confrontation with her own nature she is frustrated, since she is not prepared for such a fight-to-death situation, nor is she trained for such a journey, where the stake is her own survival. The conditions in the arena change for every Hunger Games, and this makes it more fearful since nobody knows what new will be designed to make The Games more brutal. The artificially created “tracker jackers” (Collins, 2009, p. 184) like killer wasps, or wolf-like creatures created in labs, serve as ogres and dragons for the tributes, as they are sent from the Capitol to increase the excitement for the spectators. Eventually, when the game is set on the rule that there will be only one victor after killing all the other rival tributes, all tributes, including her partner, represent kind of ogres or dragons, or in other words, obstacles that stand between the victory and Katniss. The greatest challenge for Katniss consists now of sorting out her own complex emotions in the world of discarded rules and “seek into the darkness of her unexplored soul” (Frankel, 2010, p. 20) and discover the lost part of herself that should come to her rescue.

Finding the Boon of Success

Finding the Boon of Success is the stage where the prospective heroine tries to do everything she thinks is necessary to get the boon, which is the ultimate goal she sets for herself. Murdock interprets this stage as following:

Finding the inner boon of success requires the sacrifice of false notions of the heroic. When a woman can find the courage to be limited and to realize that she is enough exactly the way she is, then she discovers one of the true treasures of the heroine's journey. This woman can detach herself from the whims of the ego and touch into the deeper forces that are the source of her life. She can say, "I am not all things . . . and I am enough." She becomes real, open, vulnerable, and receptive to a true spiritual awakening. (Murdock, 2013, p. 69)

The victory in The Hunger Games can become the *boon* for Katniss, although she acknowledges how hard it is to attain it due to the strong rival tributes and unknown dangers in the arena she will experience. According to Murdock, the boon is usually illusory and the prospective heroine frequently feels she is insufficient to accomplish the tasks and to get the boon. Whenever the prospective heroine feels self-deficiency, she begins a new adventure that should lead her to the accomplishment of the missing part on her way to the boon.

For Katniss, who must prove herself as a heroic figure, initially there are several possible boons. These are finding food and hunting for the family, protecting Prim from the dangers of the outer world by preventing her from entering the reaping for any *tesserae*, or her own entering the reaping frequently to get grain and oil to avoid starvation at home. These are the targets Katniss sets for herself for the sake of memory of her father, even though he is dead. As she tries to identify with her father she becomes the protector of the family. Her objective is to become an ideal *daughter of the father* even after losing him in the mine explosion. Consequently, for Katniss the achievement of this boon would equal to the integration of the missing parts of her soul, rather than attaining a concrete prize. In fact, the actual prize in this struggle consists in her ability to integrate all fragmented parts of her own self into a powerful whole. This task is a very difficult one, as on the reaping day for the tributes of the 74th Hunger Games, Katniss realizes that whatever she does to attain her goals is just not enough, because Prim's name is drawn for The Games, so she decides to volunteer instead of her sister. The fact that she describes her sister as a 'duckling' reveals that she sees her sister as naive, vulnerable, in need of protection, an easy prey rather than a hunter.

Now the prospective heroine conflicts with herself, since she realizes the impossibility of finding the boon, because there is always something going on in her life that tricks or prevents her from reaching her target. This causes the feeling that she is never enough to gain approval in the outer world. The difficulty of the next task consists in the awareness of the need to kill the other tributes, an act which is against her nature of a caregiver. Katniss acknowledges that in order to attain the boon, as well as her identity, she must grow self-sufficient and especially self-reliant. Although extremely painful, this moment is of essential

importance in the development of the heroine, as she cultivates a capacity for self-reflection and becomes able of taking initiatives which will correspond to her system of values.

Awakening of Feelings of Spiritual Aridity: Death

The fifth stage, *Awakening of Feelings of Spiritual Aridity: Death*, is the stage where the prospective heroine feels that she is not enough either as a female or a male. She feels inadequacy because physically she is a female without respective feelings, at the same time acting as a male in the outer world, because of the need to succeed in society. This represents the period, which announces that she is at a dead-end in her journey, and she feels stuck in her confusion. Murdock presents this stage as follows:

At some point [the prospective heroine] will come to realize that to survive and to live a healthy, satisfying life, she will have to make some changes. The assumptions she made about the rewards of the heroic journey have been wrong. Yes, she gained success, independence, and autonomy, but she may have lost a piece of her heart and soul in the process. (Murdock, 2013, p. 74)

Murdock's explanation of this stage in her book merges with *The Initiation and Descent to the Goddess*. She also states that, "[w]hen a woman makes her descent she may feel stripped bare, dismembered, (...) [and] experiences a loss of identity, a falling away of the perimeters of a known role" (Murdock, 2013, p. 90).

We can see this stage represented in two moments in the novel. Katniss gradually loses her typical characteristic obedience and silence, or naivety towards the cruelty in life during the Hunger Games. Although silence and obedience might be considered exceptional qualities of a heroine in a conventional environment, Katniss develops some other virtues after acknowledging the vicious treatment of humans in the Capitol. In this regard Frankel mentions that "[w]hile silence teaches discipline and patience, the heroine must absorb her adversary's voice in order to ascend". (Frankel, 2010, p. 22) The new heroic qualities are sought by the protagonist who makes an inward movement in order to discover her Self and transform both spiritually and psychologically.

The first change of identity is when Katniss realizes that she will not act according to the rules of the Hunger Games. She discovers that her voice is a source of her power, and in this transformation process she becomes "the one who gives orders and decides fates" (Frankel p. 22). Katniss imposes her own rules, as an individual, when Rue dies. Her sign of woe and farewell to the dead little girl symbolically represents the death of innocent and obedient Katniss who has always played the roles set for her.

The second moment is when, though awkward with romance, she decides to act as “star-crossed lovers”, together with Peeta in order to survive and also to show the Capitol that they are not just pieces owned by the Capitol, but that they are individuals, as Peeta said at the Games Headquarters the night before they were sent to the Arena. Although uncomfortable at first to lose her known role, Katniss must act boldly to make the “journey through the forest of the self, the underworld and beyond”, to comprehend it in order to be able to rule over it. (Frankel, 2010, p. 22)

The Initiation and Descent to the Goddess

In the sixth stage, *The Initiation and Descent to the Goddess*, the prospective heroine experiences a great confusion and depression. This is the stage where she does not move upwards but tries to reach her inner Self by digging downwards to the underworld, until she finds a soothing feeling of who she really is and what is her true purpose in life. This is an initiation process for the prospective heroine, who is in search for the reintegration of her soul with the once abandoned feminine qualities. Murdock states that, although painful, “[t]he descent is a compulsion; we all try to avoid it but at some point in our lives we journey to our depths” (Murdock, 2013, p. 91).

Katniss’s confession of her true feelings about her mother’s weakness at the time where she most needs her reveals that for her, everything related to femininity symbolizes deficiency, weakness and vulnerability. Therefore, Katniss refuses to become weak like her mother, or naive like her sister. The abandonment of the feminine at first seems logical because the exterior world she must explore is not a place for weaklings, and therefore she prefers the identification with her father, who symbolizes power, authority and initiative.

During the journey, at this stage, before Katniss is sent to the Arena, she is taken to the Remake Centre, where she is transformed into a beautiful and desirable young girl for the interview which aims to find sponsors. Katniss’s expressions of disorientation and bewilderment reveal that she is uncomfortable with this superficial transformation. As she refuses so far to validate the value of the feminine aspects, she feels inadequate and overwhelmed by her own body and appearance. Her earlier image of herself served as a kind of refuge for the young girl, where she felt most comfortable. However, the proximity to death in The Games makes Katniss acknowledge the necessity and the value of her transformation. Although for the spectators of The Games this transformation assumes a kind of extreme-make-over frame, extremely popular among consumer audience, Katniss’s metamorphoses is mostly of psychological and spiritual nature. Only after “the heroine’s

descent into death, where she must confront her mortality and gain wisdom from the experience”, she becomes able to recognize and accept the feminine (Frankel, 2010, p. 30).

During The Hunger Games Katniss acknowledges within her a hidden feminine side, a nurturer and a protector, and she acts motherly when she meets Rue, the 12-year-old girl from District 11, who reminds her very much of her sister, Prim. Both Prim’s and Rue’s names can stand as symbols for innocence, hope, and femininity, since both names also signify names of delicate flowers. The difference between the attitudes towards both girls is that for Prim, Katniss is more like a father, whereas for Rue she becomes a mother, who cares for her in the arena, feeds her, and shows her woe upon her death. Katniss’s ability to feel compassion is what makes her heroic at this stage of her journey. This becomes the source of her strength in resisting the rules and creating new system of values in the arena.

Urgent Yearning to Reconnect with the Feminine

The seventh stage *Urgent Yearning to Reconnect with the Feminine* is reflected through the growth of the relationship between Katniss and Peeta. Murdock claims that, “[t]here is a desire to develop those parts of herself that have gone underground while on the heroic quest: her body, her emotions, her spirit, her creative wisdom” (Murdock, 2013, p. 110). Katniss’s attitude towards Peeta also changes gradually. She is initially reluctant to admit him as an ally, primarily due to her strong unwillingness to trust anyone during The Games, since everyone becomes her rival in this survival project. She is also uncomfortable with the idea of romance, as she constantly suppresses her feminine self, for any intimacy may make her seem weak. Peeta’s public declaration of the crush he feels for Katniss, attracts Katniss’s anger, because she imagines that romance will make her even more vulnerable than she is. She also struggles against the challenge of trust, something new for her, used on self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

Peeta contributes to Katniss’s release of her feminine aspects, as she learns to rely on him for a new kind of survival. Katniss’s awakening is triggered by Peeta’s confession: “I don’t want them to change me in there. Turn me into some kind of monster that I’m not. (...) Only I keep wishing I could think of a way to ... to show the Capitol they don’t own me. That I’m more than just a piece in their Games” (Collins, 2009, pp 140-1). His confession functions as a kind of revelation for Katniss, since for the first time in her life she acknowledges the need of being true to oneself. The true survival becomes understood in terms of the survival of an identity, as this should be the primary goal for an individual life. Katniss’s awareness is visible in her words: “I bit my lip feeling inferior. While I’ve been

ruminating on the availability of trees, Peeta has been struggling with how to maintain his identity. His purity of self" (Collins, 2009, p. 140).

While releasing her emotions and her creative wisdom Katniss develops a hunger for a chance to live her own life, be herself, long for someone, fight for freedom and sustain valuable connections to the ones loved. The bond with Peeta contributes to the healing within her own self.

Healing the Mother/Daughter Split

In the eighth stage, *Healing the Mother/Daughter Split*, the wounded relationship with the mother, or with the self, must be healed for the heroine in order to move forward in her journey. The previous stages have set out the acknowledgement of the missing part of the self, and it is now the right time to heal this split, by understanding that these motherly qualities can never be rejected, as they are necessary for the completion of the self. In order to heal this split, the prospective heroine has to revitalize the qualities that she inherited from the mother and also from the ancestral times.

For Katniss, the healing of the mother/daughter split signifies the acceptance of maternal within herself. Usually, when a girl is not loved or protected by a mother in her childhood, as it should be, she creates an idealized image of motherhood within herself, in that she takes the role of a nurturer and a healer, or a protector of either a child or a partner. In case of Katniss, she develops motherly feelings when she feels responsible for Rue, the girl from District 11. She learns to collect plants that can be used for healing, like her mother. She also discovers the happiness of finding a little girl to protect, to share her food, her bed, and her heart with, and this is similar to a mother/daughter relationship. Katniss imagines what she would do if only they survived. She even considers her death just to keep Rue alive. This is a kind of sacrifice that can be done by mothers in order to protect one's child. Moreover, When Rue dies Katniss stays with her, singing to her till the moment of child's separation from life. Dubrofsky and Ryalls notice the "tenderness [which] is particularly remarkable since Katniss prioritizes honouring Rue over protecting herself" (Dubrofsky, Ryalls, 2014, p.402).

The wild flowers which Katniss uses to adorn Rue's body and the kiss of the child's forehead are exceptional moments for Katniss, as acting motherly in such a traumatic moment releases the humaneness, compassion and what is mostly valuable, her creative wisdom. As Frankel claims, "[f]lowers are delicate fertility symbols, while forest and potions bear the dark mystery of the unconscious" (Frankel, 2010, p. 51). In a way, the sense of loss triggers in

Katniss the deep feminine, interconnectivity and also flexibility. Relying on her intuition and her nature of a woman/mother Katniss turns to the surveillance cameras and makes a hand gesture that starts being acknowledged by everyone as a symbol of ethical, virtuous. The sign of respect used in her district, made by Katniss to reveal her devotion for Rue, manages to connect all districts of the Capitol and inspires all to rebel against their oppressors. By the wisdom of the unconscious, which could be discovered by one only in the realm of the feminine, Katniss's character emerges as someone with exceptional integrity and humanity, able to risk her life for the sake of the ones she loves.

Healing the Wounded Masculine

The next stage of the heroine's journey, called *Healing the Wounded Masculine* is the step where the heroine tries to create a balance between the feminine and the masculine aspects of the self, which are the essential to attain the wholeness. After the stage called *The Illusionary Boon of Success*, in the course of the following four stages, the heroine is more focused on the once rejected feminine within the self, and most probably has lost the control of the masculine part of the self.

Murdock explains that “[t]he masculine is (...) not a gender. The challenge for the heroine is not one of conquest but one of acceptance, of accepting her nameless, unloved parts that have become tyrannical because she has left them unchecked” (Murdock, 2013, p. 156). In this stage Katniss, makes a plan with the poisonous berries that is hard to apply, and needs cooperation with Peeta in order to trick the Gamemakers, and thus to ruin the tyrannical plan of the authorities. This attempt involves a great risk, since it may result in the death of both Katniss and Peeta and it requires total trust and reliability from both. This moment could be considered Katniss's acceptance of her animus, since as Frankel claims, “for the woman, the animus offers a source of rules, logic and order, an objectivity that strengthens her through her tasks. Often, she must quest for him, entering a growing awareness of her own explored masculine side” (Frankel, 2010, p. 76). This is projected through Katniss seeking Peeta and her effort of keeping him alive, in order to have a chance to go back home after the rules of The Games have changed. Katniss gains strength from learning that there is a hope to become a victor without the need to kill Peeta and therefore, to attain personal and spiritual fulfilment.

The acceptance of the masculine is represented in two ways. The first refers to the physical and literal healing of Peeta, a process which transforms Katniss into a sensitive and caring woman. During his healing process, Katniss experiences confusion about getting close

to him, because this is a new and strange feeling for her, but later on, after taking her time to explore her own emotions, she feels comfortable to have him in her life. Frankel states that, “[n]ature offers healing and comfort, disguise and sustenance. Thus buried in the sheltering femininity of the dark forest, [the heroine] regains a fragment of herself” (Frankel, 2010, p. 100). Without being sexually objectified, Katniss becomes able to find room for her emotional attachment to Peeta, which is necessary for her journey to her wholeness.

The other healing process is the spiritual one, in which Katniss becomes aware that the strength, courage, insistence and objectivity, which are considered to be qualities of the masculine, should be kept under control in order to be able to defeat the authorities and become victor. In the case of Katniss, her gradual process of becoming a heroine, her inner conflicts on the way to victory about being a whole, or being herself without losing control of her feelings is made possible. Murdock states that, “the task of the contemporary heroine [is to] (...) bring that wisdom back to share with the world” (Murdock, 2013, p. 168).

On her journey, Katniss gradually becomes stronger in terms of both self-confidence and determination in the process of bringing about a heroine out of an ordinary girl. Healing the wounded masculine involves the control of strong feelings of the masculine powers within the heroine. Katniss recalls all her experiences and learnt skills within this process and shares them silently through the live screening with the people living in hopelessness and despair. The uprise is not evident to the Gamemakers, but is given with symbols, such as the mockingjays used as a means of communication with both Rue, and Peeta, the woe sign following Rue’s death, the bread, sent as a gift by District 11 for the gratitude of what Katniss did for Rue, the roleplay of star-crossed lovers, and the play with the poisonous berries. These are steps of the awakening of the leading qualities within Katniss that reflect her power as a heroine.

Integration of Masculine and Feminine

In the last stage, called *Integration of Masculine and Feminine*, Katniss has to use her power of healing that is attributed to the feminine since the primordial times. According to Murdock, this stage is defined as ‘sacred marriage’, and that it is only “complete when a woman joins the two aspects of her nature” (Murdock, 2013, p. 168). According to Frankel, with the completion of these stages a girl becomes a goddess. This is the *apotheosis*, in which the heroine becomes the “Mistress of both Worlds” (Frankel, 2010, p. 166).

Frankel also states that “the final stage of the journey is understanding - both understanding the nature of the world and understanding the mortality that awaits us all. The

mistress of both worlds comprehends the delicate balance between innocence and experience, death and life" (Frankel, 2010, p. 170). In the case of Katniss, this balance is attained when she eschews aggressiveness, which is a masculine quality, and embraces the feminine quality of maternal instinct. When all the Career Tributes are forced to kill each other, Katniss prefers to escape in order to survive, motivated by her strong desire to live for the sake of her sister. When she must kill, Katniss is motivated by her concern for the others. The killing of Cato emerges mostly as an act of "compassion, to spare him unnecessary suffering", and it surprises everyone, especially in the context of the famous ruthlessness exhibited by him throughout The Games (Dubrofsky, Ryalls, 2014, p. 406). This moment explicitly reveals Katniss's understanding of innocence and experience, that leads her instinctively to the creative wisdom, necessary to outwit the Gamemakers, when after the rules have changed again and she should fight against Peeta she suggests suicide, so that "the whole thing would blow up in the Gamemakers' faces" (Collins, 2009, p. 338). Relying on her instinct, she takes an initiative that destroys all the plans of the Capitol, so they are forced to declare both Katniss and Peeta as winners of the 74th Hunger Games.

With this move, Katniss becomes a symbol of resistance towards the rules of the Capitol, and also becomes the new heroine, who gives hope to the whole nation that for a long time did not have anything to hold on to. Katniss, as a heroine, is now more experienced than she was when she started the journey, is wiser, and knows now the balance between life and death, between being inexperienced and wise, between being subdued and having rights to express herself, between hopelessness and hope, and she knows that she has the power to change things in a society, and can be accomplished if "the odds be in her favour" (Collins, 2009, p. 10).

Conclusion

The first book of the trilogy by Suzanne Collins, called *The Hunger Games*, focuses on Katniss, the main character of the three books, who performs a journey, and as a result of it transforms from an ordinary girl into a heroine, and changes the destiny of a whole nation.

Collins's protagonist, Katniss, makes a leap from other heroines of the 21st century popular culture with the consumer appeal, by standing simultaneously strong and vulnerable to her audience/reader and by her ability to accomplish her tasks without conforming to some of stereotypical gender expectations of her environment. Although the motif of the love triangle is introduced into the narrative, the novel's major focus is on her blossoming, as an individual and as a member of a network, where she becomes a symbol of rebellion. Katniss

elicits sympathy, since she is a lovable warrior who has the courage to challenge the brutal regime of Panem. However, she becomes a heroic figure not as a result of her fighting skills, but as a result of the moral dilemmas, her suffering, her compassion, and her responses to extremely violent acts in which she is forced to participate. The novel's narrative also centres on Katniss's capacity of maintaining her humanness and remain emotionally whole in an environment where violence and insensitivity is done by adults and children especially against children.

We can consider that Katniss makes a leap from many other heroines of the preceding generations especially by promoting humaneness as a special talent or unique ability which should be possessed by a heroine. With her charisma, Katniss connects to the people and places she encounters during her journey. Her unique ability that places her above the average persons also consists in her assertion of her own personhood, although she is under constant gaze of the cameras, and apparently has little control over the events around her. Mostly, Katniss manages to become a heroine for all readers by her strong determination to exert the freedom to be a person first and then to transform into a symbol of freedom for all.

References

- Bolen, J. S. (2004). *Goddesses in Everywoman, Powerful Archetypes in Women's Lives*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.
- Collins, S. (2009). *The Hunger Games*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- Dubrofsky, R. E., & Ryalls, E. D. (2014). The Hunger Games: Performing Not-performing to Authenticate Femininity and Whiteness. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 31:5, s. 395-409.
- Frankel, V. E. (2010). *From Girl to Goddess: The Heroine's Journey Through Myth and Legends*. North Carolina: McFarland&Company, Inc.
- Kalshed, D. (1996). *The Inner World of Trauma: Archetypal Defence of the Personal*. London: Routledge.
- Leonard, L. (1982). *The Wounded Woman: Healing the Father-Daughter Relationship*. Ohio: Ohio University Press.
- Murdock, M. (2013). *The Heroine's Journey*. Boston: Shambala Publications, Inc.