



# Books or fan fiction

Gender and relationships in *The Hunger Games* fan fictions versus the  
original trilogy

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### Abstract

This thesis aims to find out how fan fictions and the original books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins differ and resemble each other when looking at the romantic relationship and use of gender between the two main characters, Katniss and Peeta. This as there was research about fan fictions, but not specifically into *The Hunger Games* in combination with the use of gender and relationships in these books. First, the different books of the trilogy and fan fictions have been studied, then the link to gender theory and character development was made. Important for Judith Butler's gender theory is that the first person and main character is a strong female, linking in with feminism and confidence. Furthermore, there are many female characters in *The Hunger Games Trilogy* and Katniss is the main character. Her strongness and determination in the fan fictions is the same as in the original books. The character development was studied with the actantial model by A.J. Greimas, finding that in all fan fictions and books Katniss was the subject. Depending on the fan fiction or book, she developed in a different way. Furthermore, the portrayal of Katniss is different than in the original books, as she ends up with different characters. Also, the pattern of experiences followed in the fan fictions are similar to the original books, as the fan fictions take place in the same time span as the original books. The main resemblance in all the texts is that there is some sort of relationship between Katniss and Peeta, even when they do not end up as a couple. The main difference is that in most fan fictions Katniss and Peeta are not a couple, in some fan fictions Peeta dies before Katniss can explore her true feelings for him. Overall, there are differences and resemblances in the romantic relationship between Peeta and Katniss, however depending on the writer's preference, the story takes a different path for them. In future research, more fan fictions could be studied as well as different sub-topics such as race.

Key words: Fan fiction, *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, gender, relationships.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The theme that will be explored during the creation of this thesis is identity. More specifically, to look at fan fiction as part of the identity assignment, as there are several young adult books that I personally have read that have fan fictions written about them. What is intriguing about fan fictions is that the characters usually are portrayed in a different way than in their original books. The characters are part of the identity formation, namely the original author formatted the story to follow a specific path for the characters. However, the author of the fan fiction may have chosen a different path for the same characters. Also, I want to explore to what extent the fan fictions are based on the original books or based on only one book in the trilogy.

### Chapter 1.1 Primary Sources

The primary sources that will be used are the books from *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins, this trilogy includes *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay*. The trilogy series of Collins follows the life of Katniss Everdeen, a 16-year old girl that lives in a dystopian future land called Panem. This country was divided by war; therefore, the country is spread out over multiple districts. The district Katniss lives in district twelve, one of the poorest. As decided by their president, President Snow, each of these districts need to send one girl and one boy tribute to the so-called Hunger Games. The Hunger Games is a tournament in which the 24 tributes fight each other until there is only one winner. In the first book, Katniss volunteers to save her sister and is sent to the Capitol, the capital of Panem, together with a boy named Peeta. Katniss has a hidden talent, namely hunting with bow and arrow, thus giving her a slight advantage in the arena. Peeta, who secretly liked Katniss before entering the arena, announces this on the last day before heading off to the arena. The rules got bent, making it possible for two people from the same district to win, as to see their

love story unfold. This change in the rules makes it possible for both of them to survive, which unsettles the president. The second book focuses on the Quarter-Quell, a special edition to these Hunger Games, and again Peeta and Katniss are sent to the arena. In the end, Katniss is saved from the Quarter-Quell and is transported to district thirteen, of which most people thought it was bombed to the ground. While Katniss is saved from the arena, Peeta was not and he is brought to the Capitol. The final book focuses on Katniss' battle to get Peeta back and to take down President Snow. In the beginning, she is only used as a motivation for the rebellious districts, while in the end she partakes in battle (Collins).

The main aspect that changes in the course of these books are the changes in characters, especially Katniss and Peeta. Where Peeta and Katniss first only have a platonical relation to save both of them, this evolves over the course of the books into friendship and romantic relationship. The books by Collins will be the starting point for the fan fictions studied about these books, to see where differences lie in the main characters and their developments.

## Chapter 1.2 Secondary Sources

The secondary sources are all divided by their respective topics, as to create a logical stream of thoughts. First, the sources will focus on what fan fictions are, character development and romantic relationships. Then, the fictional world will be explored with character focalization and the importance of dialogue. Third, gender with a focus on femininity and the role of the main character.

*Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, edited by Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse, includes different essays that explain what fan fictions are and focusses on different aspects important to fan fictions, such as characters and romantic relationships. A fan fiction is a text made by a fan of a specific book series that writes their

own version of a novel, as explained in the essay “Archontic Literature: A Definition, a History, and Several Theories of Fan Fiction” by Abigail Derecho, which is important to understand what a fan fiction is. Another important essay in this book is by Deborah Kaplan, “Construction of Fan Fiction Character Through Narrative”, as character development is one of the subtopics that I want to research. According to this essay, usually in fan fictions, characters are portrayed in a different way than in the original books. The reason for this is that the fans of the books would have preferred alternative endings for the main characters, which adds to Derecho’s text about what a fan fiction is. This aspect is important when looking into the character development, as there will be differences in the original books and the fan fictions. In order to study character development, the discourse, also called the written or spoken communication, and story must be found in the fictional text. Another important essay is “One True Pairing: The Romance of Pornography and the Pornography of Romance”, by Catherine Driscoll, as this focusses on romantic relations like the ones presented in the original trilogy and fan fictions. Driscoll states that in fan fictions, the audience or market determines the way romance and porn is added. An example of romantic relationships can be the relation between Katniss and Peeta, which might change in the fan fictions depending on the fans preference in characters and romance such as Katniss ending up in a romantic relation with another character. The book *Fanfiction and the Author* by Judith May Fathallah, focusses on her study on how fanfiction changes popular cultural media. She studied this change by looking into different theories and fanfictions (Fathallah). The studies she performed are a discourse analysis, internet studies and insider research, as she has personally made fan fictions. The fan fictions discussed by Fathallah do not include *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, as she sampled in the fan fictions available, thus creating a new angle for this research.



In order to gain more information about character focalization, *Character Focalization in Children's Novels* by Don K. Philpot is used, as he describes character focalization as “a novel-length structure that focuses on the perceptions of a fictional world individual” (12). He studied several children's novels on the emotions and created a heuristic, or hands-on, approach to find the patterns in the novels. The chapters in a novel are designed to create a pattern in the experiences and emotions of the main character (Philpot), which makes it important to seek these patterns in the research on *The Hunger Games Trilogy* as well as in the fan fictions so these can be compared. According to Bronwen Thomas in *Fictional Dialogue: Speech and Conversation in the Modern and Postmodern Novel*, it is important to understand that characters and their use of dialogue gives the reader more information about their lives. Thus, when reading *The Hunger Games Trilogy* or the fan fictions, the parts of conversation should reveal more about Katniss that was not known by the reader beforehand. Also, the relation between speech and thought is important, as a character first has the internal dialogue before having a conversation (Thomas). The internal dialogue in *The Hunger Games Trilogy* and the fan fictions can also give more information about Katniss' feelings and stream of thoughts, thus making it important for her character development.

In *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, the main character is a woman, therefore making the text *The Hunger Games: transmedia, gender and possibility* by David Baker and Elena Schak interesting as it looks into gender. They analyzed that there are many female roles in the books, and that these characters communicate despite differences in race and age (Baker and Schak). It is important to find out if there are indeed many female characters and if this remains the same in the chosen fan fictions. As there are multiple races mentioned in the book, the main character is a white female, thus making ethnicity a possibly interesting angle to look into. In *The Hunger Games: Performing Not-performing to Authenticate Femininity*

*and Whiteness* by Rachel Dubrofsky and Emily Ryalls, they looked into this whiteness that is present in the trilogy of Collins and film series made of the trilogy. Her behavior and what she does or does not do is connected to character. The whiteness of Katniss should therefore also be taken into account when researching the fan fictions, because it can be questioned if she treats the other people in the fan fictions the same as in the original books. It also looks into Katniss her disinterest in her femininity, which can be connected to Judith Butler's gender theory that will later be used in this research. In *Female Focalizers and Masculine Ideals: Gender as Performance in Twilight and The Hunger Games*, Lykke Guanio-Uluru explores how the roles of the female main characters stand with the ideal of main characters. According to Guanio-Uluru, people usually prefer to have a male character to be the main character, but in *The Hunger Games*, this is not the case. This therefore has an effect on the reader, as the opening chapter in the book focuses on how Katniss is perceived equal by her hunting partner. Again, this ties in with the Gender Theory by Judith Butler that will be used to analyze the books and fan fictions.

After reading all these previous studies, it can be concluded that there is a gap in studying *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins and fan fictions written about this trilogy on the resemblances and differences in these texts. The focus will be on the romantic relationship and the use of gender in regard to the main characters Katniss and Peeta.

### Chapter 1.3 Research Question

The main research question is: In what ways do the main characters, Katniss and Peeta, in the three chosen fan fictions and the books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins (2008-2010) resemble and differ across the two types of texts, regarding their romantic relationship and the use of gender? This research question was chosen, as Katniss and Peeta their relationship in the books by Suzanne Collins change from a faulty so-

called 'star-crossed lovers' relationship, into a real friendship and later romantic relation. Therefore, it is interesting to see how their relationship is used and possibly altered in fan fictions of this book series.

This research question leads to two sub-questions in order to answer the main research question. The first sub question is: How is the gender of Katniss, the main character, an important influence on the original story as well as on the fan fictions? This will be answered using gender theory by Judith Butler, as Katniss is the primary character and female, which can have influence on the story. Judith Butler's gender theory essays are used to determine how Katniss and her femaleness influence the story, in both the original trilogy as well as in the fan fictions. Judith Butler's gender theory essay "Gender Trouble" focusses on the natural coherence between gender, namely a masculine man is a heterosexual man as this is how gender was traditionally seen. Butler also says in this essay that the performance of gender is not voluntary, it is desired and produced by the discourse, or conceptual idea, it was created for. Furthermore, Butler expands on feminism by saying that the common characteristics of woman should not try to define woman, but the focus should be on providing how power functions and shapes womanhood in society and the feminist movement. This essay broke the supposed links between sex and gender as how they were seen previously. In "Performative Acts & Gender Constitution" a follow up on "Gender Trouble", Butler expands on the idea that a female performs under the subordinate of men, meaning the woman has to follow the ideas and rules set by men. This also adds to the social expectations and taboos, as it was not accepted for a boy to wear pink, as blue is the typical boy color and pink the typical girl color. Butler: 'Gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanctions and taboos' (520). These social expectations lead to gender oppression and gender resistance, as people strayed from this idea. Butler argues that there are no natural gender roles as identity is constructed through time, history

and acts of the body. The binary restriction of gender, the idea that there are only two genders, is something that will take a while to change. These ideas by Butler will be searched for when looking at *The Hunger Games Trilogy* and the chosen fan fictions to study the gender.

The second sub-question is: How do the main characters change in the original books and the fan fictions? To answer this question character development is studied, which looks into the discourse and the story. The discourse is how the story is told and fan fictions are this same story retold in a different way, making the discourse changed. The character development is further explored by using Algirdas Julien Greimas' actantial model, which is set out to analyze the plot of the story. In *Structural Semantics: An attempt at a method*, Algirdas Julien Greimas explains the actantial model. The actantial model is a plot model that looks into the structure of the story. There is always a subject, the person who the story is about. There is a sender, a person who sends out a desired object for the receiver to receive. The helpers and opponents try to help or sabotage the subject from receiving the object (Greimas). These two theories will be elaborated on and used in relation to *The Hunger Games Trilogy* and the chosen fan fictions in chapter 2.

To find the relationship patterns in Katniss and Peeta's relationship, the books as well as the three fan fictions are studied. Collins' books are the primary sources and will be available as books during the research. The fan fictions are written by individuals who put them online for others to read. The website [fanfiction.org](http://fanfiction.org) has a collection of fan fictions, thus can provide the necessary materials. In this case, three fan fictions were chosen, each of the fan fiction takes place in the timeline of one of the books of the original trilogy. The secondary sources are the sources discussed in chapter 1.1, these were all found either in the University Library or in the online Library.

## Chapter 1.4 Research Type

The research is an intertextual research, as both the original text as well as fan fictions were studied. According to Martin, “Intertextuality is a mosaic of quotations; any text is an absorption of another text” (148). In this case, the intertextuality is how the original trilogy is used in or has inspired the chosen fan fictions. Intertextuality can look into different factors, such as religion, gender and technology (Albay & Serbes). The specific type of intertextuality studied is called creative retelling intertextuality, as the story is generally the same but altered in a new and exciting way. A fan fiction is therefore a retell of a story as how the fans would have liked. As the focus of this research is on the relationship between Katniss and Peeta, the intertextuality will be studied based on gender theory and character development.

As different texts were studied, it falls under qualitative research, as all information studied was first-hand information. According to Fossey et al in "Understanding and evaluating qualitative research", Qualitative research should be underlined with pre-existing knowledge and should give the reader a clear path into what the research is about. Furthermore, Fossey et al distinguish three areas of research, namely language that is a way to see processes of communication between different groups, the interpretation of subjective meanings in situations and to build theory from discovered patterns in the data. Pattern thematic data, structuring the data by a certain topic, in this case the theme gender and character development, was used to structure the information derived from the texts. It can also be seen as content analysis, as this is often used with written communication, and focusses on the concepts studied.

In order to answer the research question: In what ways do the main characters, Katniss and Peeta, in the three chosen fan fictions and the books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins (2008-2010) resemble and differ across the two types of texts, regarding their romantic relationship and the use of gender, two subtopics were set. The first

subtopic are the resemblances and differences in the use of gender which could be found through gender theory and determining how this influenced the plot. The second subtopic are the differences and resemblances in the romantic relationship, these have been found with the use of character development, as how Katniss develops can change the dynamic between her and Peeta.

First, the different books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* were read to gain knowledge on the original books. Then, three fan fictions were chosen from fanfiction.org and read in order to find the differences and similarities. Last, the books and fan fictions were studied based on gender theory by Judith Butler and character development with the use of the actantial model by A.J. Greimas. These two theories were used as they were not commonly used in other literature about fan fictions but were interesting to study the books and fan fictions on these two aspects. For the first sub question: How is the gender of Katniss, the main character, an important influence on the original story as well as on the fan fictions, Butler was used as her gender theory focusses on the differences in gender and the influence gender has on a story. The gender theory is studied on the case of feminism, as the main character is female as well as the social expectations of the two standard genders, male and female. The gender theory is discussed as how gender is presented in the original trilogy and how this changed or remained the same in the chosen fan fictions. The second sub question: How do the main characters change in the original books and the fan fictions, focusses on the character development with the use of Greimas' actantial model. This model is used to determine the main characters, motives and outcomes for each of the books and the fan fictions, to see the similarities and differences.

The outcome of the study could have been different based on the fan fictions that were chosen, these were selected because of the variation in length and the timeline in the original trilogy. The first fan fiction takes place in the end of the first book, the second fan

fiction takes place in the final book of the trilogy and the third fan fiction starts in the end of the first book and extends to the end of the second book. As the original books come in a trilogy, three fan fictions as the sample seemed natural. Furthermore, as the different fan fictions take place in different times in the timeline of the original trilogy, there were different lengths and timespans in which the resemblances and differences in relationship and the use of gender could take place. The three fan fictions that were chosen were made by three different authors, as to have more broad view of the fan fictions. This as fan fictions from the same author might have similar scenarios or ideas that they expanded on, making it more subjective.

#### Chapter 1.5 Document Lay-out

The next chapters of this thesis will lay out the actual research, therefore the structure of the thesis will be the introduction, results and conclusions. In this introduction, the research topic, questions, literature review and important theories were laid out. In the results chapter, the methods are put into action to get the answers to the research questions. This means that the different fan fictions are read and studied on their intertextuality in regard to the original books, with a focus on gender studies and character development. The conclusions are based on the results in the second chapter and will not have any new information. Possibly, there will be an extra chapter, namely the discussion. This as the information gathered during the research might have to be placed in a certain perspective in order to be usable.

## Chapter 2: Results

In this chapter, the books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins as well as the fanfictions will be studied, especially regarding the relationship between the main characters Katniss and Peeta. First, the books of *The Hunger Games* will be analyzed based on their relationship and how this relationship changes from the first book to the last book of the trilogy. Then the three chosen fan fictions will be studied regarding the relationship, these can be either fragments of books or the ending of the final book. The reason for this is that there are not many fan fictions written that include the complete trilogy. As explained in the first chapter, according to Derecho, a fan fiction is a text made by a fan of a specific book series that writes their own version of a novel. After the books and fan fictions are described, the two sub-questions will come into place, as these focus on gender theory and the character development.

### Chapter 2.1 *The Hunger Games Trilogy*

In *The Hunger Games*, the original book of the trilogy, we first learn about Katniss and the hardship she went through when her father passed away in an accident. Her mother could not cope with these feelings and therefore left her children to fend for themselves. Katniss wanted to desperately protect her little sister and therefore took up hunting, trading and cooking. She knew Peeta as a classmate, but since he was a baker's son from the better part of town and Katniss preferring to be on her own, they rarely interacted. The first time Katniss remembers them interacting is when she was hungry and trying to find food in the rain. She checked the trash of the bakery and was scared away by the baker's wife. Peeta saw this and after some bread was burned, he gave this secretly to Katniss. When they are both chosen for the Hunger Games, she feels in debt because of this. Their tactic during training is to come off as friends and therefore start to bond. During the final night before the actual



games, an interview evening is held. During Peeta's interview he confesses that he has a crush on Katniss, confusing everyone including Katniss. She is angry that he did not tell her before, because she felt it made her look weak. During the games, they both went their own ways and created alliances. When running into each other, Peeta urged Katniss to quickly run away and she thinks this will be the last she sees of him. Then, the game makers change the rules so two tributes of the same district can win together, which leads to Katniss trying to find Peeta. When she finds him, he is close to dying and she tries to nurse him back to health. Even though she is not sure if she likes him romantically, she does this as it contributes to their so-called 'star-crossed lovers' romance. In the end when just Peeta and Katniss are still standing, the game makers try to change the rules once again. They refuse to fight each other and try to commit suicide together, leaving the game makers to step in. After being patched up after the games, she is told her only way to keep her family and friends safe is to keep on pretending to be madly in love with Peeta.

In *Catching Fire*, Katniss and Peeta have ignored each other since returning from the Hunger Games. Katniss is reminded by the president, President Snow, that she should be madly in love in front of the cameras or her family and friend Gale might be in an 'accident'. During the victory tour, Katniss must try to convince the people in the other districts that she did everything in the games out of love and not out of defiance against the president. Once the cameras arrive to feature Katniss and Peeta's victory tour, they are suddenly pretending to be madly in love again. This very much confuses Peeta, as he likes her more than he lets her know. Katniss lets him know what might happen to their families if they are not convincing enough and this helps them grow together. They also find out that both of them have nightmares since the games and sleep together, just like in the games, to fight off these bad dreams. They did not meet their goal, resulting in Snow to plot for a way to get rid of her. This year there is a special edition of the Hunger Games called the Quarter-Quell. During this

Quarter-Quell the tributes that can be chosen must be victors of the previous games. Katniss' name is drawn and Peeta volunteers to go in with her again. During this interview round, Peeta says that Katniss is pregnant, which is a way to get out of the games. In the arena, Katniss and Peeta immediately pair up and keep the pregnancy cover up. During the games, Katniss starts to think her feelings for Peeta are real and she has less problems with showing her affection. There was a plot to break out Katniss and some other tributes, in which Peeta and Katniss unknowingly help. Katniss is taken out of the arena and transported to the thought to be non-existent district thirteen. Peeta was not rescued and he was taken captured by the Capitol and the president.

The last book, *Mockingjay*, focusses on Katniss her transformation in a martyr for the war. Katniss receives a special suit and weapons to create promotion material for the districts that are rebelling against the Capitol. She does not know what to do, since Peeta is still trapped inside the Capitol. She sometimes sees short videos of him on state television, however it only hurts her more than it reassures her. After the president bombed district thirteen to try to kill them, there is a rescue mission set up to retrieve Peeta. Upon his return, Katniss is very excited to see him and Peeta tries to strangle her. Katniss and the rebels find out they hijacked Peeta, meaning they sedated him while seeing happy moments of him and Katniss to change this memory in a scary one. This resulted in Peeta strangling her, as he is now scared of her and wants her dead. This shifts their relationship, as now Katniss loves Peeta more than the other way around. They are not allowed to see each other for a while, so the medics can try to recreate his memories. Katniss cannot bear this process and decides she wants to be in the actual battle. After a lot of training, she gets send off to the Capitol. She shoots some promotion materials in the first days. Peeta has also started his training and is sent to Katniss to help in these promotions. Katniss and her crew try to answer all Peeta's questions regarding his district, his games and Katniss. They end up infiltrating in the Capitol

and the main battle, which is won by the rebels. After this, Katniss returns home to district twelve to start at life again. After a while, Peeta also returns and they slowly start to grow back together. They create a family and continue to help each other with their nightmares and problems caused by the games and the war.

Fathallah studied fan fiction and popular culture media, according to her, the use of film increases a books popularity. In the case of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, the books were made into film, resulting in an even bigger popularity of the series and making more people interested in the book series.

## Chapter 2.2 Fan Fictions

The first fan fiction that was studied is called *Hunger Games: Alternative Ending* by Joshymomo11. This fan fiction creates a different ending of the Hunger Games of Peeta and Katniss. When Katniss and Peeta are the only two left, but since being from the same district they could both win the Hunger Games, they are told that the rules are changed back. This leads them to a choice of who should win. Katniss thinks she should win, as she needs to protect her family, and therefore strings her bow and aims for Peeta. They discuss why they should be the winner, but then Katniss says I am sorry and releases the arrow. Only after doing this, she realizes what she has done and starts to feel guilty. In the text it is not specified if she feels guilty because she loved him back or if she feels guilty because of how the people in her district react. This fan fiction is only one chapter, as the main difference from the original ending is that Peeta is killed by Katniss rather than both of them winning.

The second fan fiction is called *Alternative Ending Mockingjay* by Flameofthesoul and focuses on the ending of the war. In this version, Katniss still helped to take the old regime down but is confused about her feelings. In the original books, she was also not sure about her feelings as she liked both Peeta and her best friend Gale. In this version, she

chooses Gale over Peeta. This led her to break Peeta's heart and therefore also ruin the friendship that they have together. Even though Peeta did suspect this, he still was not prepared to hear it from Katniss. This fan fiction was two chapters, the first one focusing on Katniss admitting her love for Gale and the second chapter focusing on Katniss breaking up with Peeta.

The third fan fiction focusses on the ending of the Hunger Games of Peeta and Katniss and the second book *Catching Fire*. This fan fiction is called *An Alternative Universe (Hunger Games)* by MissCarrie14 and includes 20 chapters. In this version, again Peeta and Katniss end up needing to kill each other after the game makers change the rules back. Peeta starts to tell Katniss how much she means to him and how she deserves to go home. Katniss replies by saying she loves him too, however Peeta takes poisonous berries and dies instantly. She fulfills her winner duties by talking about Peeta and going on the victory tour through the different districts. Katniss thinks that she might explore her feelings for her best friend Gale, but he already started dating someone else. While she still mourns Peeta, she starts to date Thomas, the son of her mentor Haymitch. Katniss is now a mentor too and Haymitch and her go back to the Capitol for the games. Also, after the games there is no breaking out the tributes and no war, instead Katniss decides to just live her life and to see what might happen in the future.

All of the fan fictions have a different ending than the original trilogy, as in none of the fan fictions Katniss and Peeta end up together as a couple. They are also spread over different periods of the original timeline, as they all focus on a different book of the trilogy.

### Chapter 2.3 Gender Theory

This sub chapter will look into the gender theory by Judith Butler. Gender theory looks into the influence of gender on language, society and science. In the case of *The*

*Hunger Games Trilogy* and the chosen fan fictions, mainly language will be looked into.

Judith Butler is influential in the cultural studies since she transformed understandings on the topics she discussed, mainly the gender roles and gender identity. She was ahead of her time and therefore is still being used today in contemporary debates, as her ideas still apply to the current society.

As mentioned before, according to Judith Butler, with influence from Jacques Lacan, sexual difference is undeniable. This means that there is always a stereotype when it comes to different genders, which comes with a natural coherence in gender. Gender is performed and not done voluntary, so a man must be heterosexual and masculine, as this is what the discourse provides. In her essay “Gender Trouble” Butler looks into feminism, as feminists should focus on how power functions shape our understandings in society (Butler). In the case of Katniss in *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Katniss is a very strong, independent woman. So, when reading the books, she is a character with a lot of power, leading the reader to understand woman can also have plenty of power. This breaks the traditional role between sex and gender, as the male character should have been the strong character in traditional gender discourse. In her essay “Performative Acts & Gender Constitution” she argues that the performance of gender actually creates gender, especially in scripts (Butler). This means that because people want to believe in different genders, there are different genders. One should look at what someone does regardless of their gender. In texts and scripts, there are usually the two standard genders, male and female, in which the female has to follow the male due to social expectations. Butler also mentions that due to the social expectations, genders can feel oppressed and feel resistance against the normal patterns. In the case of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, these two standard genders are represented. Whereas normally the focus would lay on the male gender, the main character in *The Hunger Games Trilogy* is female, however the gender is not oppressed as otherwise the main character would not have been female. She

furthermore also does not meet the social expectations, as she feels uncomfortable in the dresses she wears in the Capitol, which would be a social expectation for a female. She prefers the hunting clothes, which can be seen as a masculine outfit.

When looking at Katniss and Peeta, Katniss is the main protagonist and strong and Peeta is the more emotional person and weaker character, which does not fit in the natural gender roles. In the original books, Katniss thinks she needs to be strong at all times and that Peeta makes her look weak with his declaration of love. Where Katniss feels she must be strong in the original books, the different fan fictions can have different approaches. In the first fan fiction, Katniss kills Peeta to end the games. At first, she feels empowered as she wins, but shortly after she starts to regret this and starts to feel emotional. In regard to the original books, she is still strong and Peeta still makes her weaker due to her emotions about him. The second fan fiction focuses on Katniss choosing her friend Gale over Peeta. She is even stronger than in the original books, as she forgives Gale for possibly killing her sister and choosing to start a relationship with him. The third fan fiction leaves Katniss as a mentor in the Hunger Games and she needs to make tactical choices. Every choice she makes, she does with a specific reason, making her strong in a new way. She also starts a new romantic relationship, however she still thinks about Peeta and her feelings for him, making her strong enough to reminisce back to him.

In regard to the secondary sources, Schak said that in *The Hunger Games Trilogy* there are a lot of female roles, the most important female being Katniss. In the chosen fan fictions, there are mainly the same characters mentioned as in the original books, not just the same female characters. Furthermore, all fan fictions have Katniss as their main character. Schak also talks about how race can influence a character, Katniss is described as olive-skinned and green-eyed in the original trilogy. In the fan fictions, this is not explicitly mentioned, making it impossible to see if this has influence on her personality. Katniss'

whiteness, as explained by Dubrofsky and Ryalls, is, as mentioned before, not explicitly mentioned in the fan fictions. Not mentioning her whiteness makes it possible to leave her ethnicity open for interpretations. When looking at her whiteness and her behavior, in general she treats the characters the same as in the original trilogy. Katniss is empathic and makes her choices based on her rationality and the situation, not based on race or prejudice. An example for this is that she apologized before shooting Peeta with the arrow in *Hunger Games: Alternative Ending*. She weighs her options and makes her decision to shoot based on this. Duborfsky and Ryalls also focus on her femininity, which is in the case of Katniss her disinterest in her femininity. As mentioned before, Katniss does not meet the social expectations of a female, as she does not like to wear dresses and make-up, she rather wears jeans and her dad's old hunting clothes. The role of the female character is important when looking at *The Hunger Games Trilogy* according to Guanio-Uluru. Katniss is still the same strong girl as how she is portrayed in the original trilogy, this as she makes her own choices in all of the fan fictions and comes out stronger than she was before. For instance, she finds new love in *An Alternative Universe (Hunger Games)* by choosing her own path. Readers usually prefer male protagonists, which is not the case in *The Hunger Games*, in this case Katniss is the stronger character instead of Peeta (Guanio-Uluru).

#### Chapter 2.4 Character Development

This sub chapter looks into character development in the books and fan fictions. Character development is the process of how a character grows over the time of a story, in this case it will focus on how Katniss grows into her relationship with Peeta.

As mentioned in the first chapter, Kaplan looked into character development. According to her, to find character development one must look into the discourse and the story. In this case, the discourse is the narrative presentation or how the story is told. In the

case of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, the story is told from Katniss her point of view, making it a first-person narrative. The story is the chronological order of events that can be altered in chronology for a narrative. *The Hunger Games Trilogy* is not fully chronological, as the reader uncovers more about Katniss while reading the books. The discourse of the story is the manipulation story, the way how we get to know things in the story. Thus, the events of the story line are altered by the discourse, as the writer decided what the reader learns at what time. An example for this in relation to *The Hunger Games* is that we first meet Peeta as Katniss' fellow tribute and later find out how they met and why Katniss does not know if she should trust Peeta. The character development is how the characters evolve over a period of time, in the case of Katniss she learns over the course of the three books that she loves Peeta. Their relationship develops from distant acquaintances from school, to friends due into lovers. To find the purpose of the story, the actantial model can be used.

Algridas Julien Greimas is a literary scientist that focusses on semiotics, the study of signs in processes. A sign communicates a meaning of the sign, which is not the sign itself. This means that a sign such as a simply drawn heart can just mean heart but can also mean love or a human heart, depending on how the sign is interpreted. In *Structural Semantics: An attempt at a method*, Algridas Julien Greimas explains the actantial model. The actantial model is a plot model that looks into the structure of the story. There is always a subject, the person who the story is about. There is a sender, a person who sends out a desired object for the receiver to receive. The helpers and opponents try to help or sabotage the subject from receiving the object (Greimas).

In the case of the first book of *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, Katniss is the main character, thus the subject. The object is the winning or surviving of the Hunger Games. The helper is Peeta, as he helps Katniss to win the Hunger Games. All the other tributes are the opponents, as they also try to win the games. The game makers and the president are the



sender, as they created the contest. The receivers are both Katniss and Peeta, as they both survive the games.

When looking at the first fan fiction, only Katniss is the receiver as she kills Peeta to end the games. The actantial model therefore looks almost the same. In the second fan fiction, Peeta, Katniss and Gale all survive the war, making them all receivers. This actantial model looks slightly different, as this fan fiction focuses on the final book of the original trilogy. The third fan fiction again has only Katniss as the receiver, as Peeta died and she starts a romantic relationship aside from the characters in the original books.

For all the books and fan fictions, a separate actantial model has been made. These can be found in appendices 1 through 7. Overall, Katniss is always the subject and the receiver, as she is the main character and gains the desired product. President Snow is always the sender, as he thought of the Hunger Games and is in charge of the country.

In regard to the secondary sources, according to Kaplan, usually in fan fictions the characters are portrayed in a different way than in the original books. In this case, Katniss is indeed portrayed differently, as she ends up with different people as her boyfriend and she chose to kill Peeta in one of the alternative endings. For instance, in *An Alternative Universe (Hunger Games)* she ends up with Thomas, whereas in *Alternative Ending Mockingjay* she ends up with Gale. Driscoll focusses on romantic relationships, in the case of Katniss and Peeta, their relationship differs per fan fiction. In some of the fan fictions they remain friends, even if he is dead, but in none of the versions studied they end up together as a couple. Even though Katniss and Peeta are not in a romantic relationship in the fan fictions, there is some kind of relationship. As mentioned before, they are friends in *Alternative Ending Mockingjay*, which is on its own a relationship. Regarding Philpot's character focalization, it can be said that in the fan fictions there is indeed a pattern in the experiences and emotions. Even though the fan fictions take place over different time spans of the original books, they do match up

with the original books by Collins. For instance, *Mockingjay* and *Alternative Ending Mockingjay* both take place in the final chapters of *Mockingjay* and therefore have many similarities in the experiences. In both texts, Katniss just took Snow's regime down and is preparing to execute Snow. Thomas explained that the use of dialogue is very important for the reader to receive more information about the lives of the main character. In this case, we indeed learn more about Katniss and her romantic interests by reading the different fan fictions. For instance, in *An Alternative Universe (Hunger Games)* she shifts her romantic interest from Peeta to Gale and later to Thomas, as Peeta is dead and Gale is dating someone else.

#### Chapter 2.5 Chapter Conclusion

The different fan fictions studied all have different endings than the original books, either because of the relations formed or deaths of characters. Depending on Peeta's ending in the fan fictions, Katniss her ending is altered, as these characters are connected. This altering of Katniss' ending has to do with character development, as her character depends on others and certain events. However, in all books and fan fictions there is some sort of relationship between Katniss and Peeta. Furthermore, when looking at gender studies, Katniss remains the same strong female character as she is in the original books. This change in relationship will be used in the next chapter, the conclusion.

### Chapter 3: Conclusion

In this chapter the results from chapter two will be used to answer the main research question, as well as concluding the first chapter. The main research question is: In what ways do the main characters, Katniss and Peeta, in the three chosen fan fictions and the books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins (2008-2010) resemble and differ from each other, regarding their romantic relationship and the use of gender?

The first chapter lays out the topic of fan fiction, which is defined by Derecho as a text made by a fan of a specific book series that writes their own version of a novel. The primary sources used are the books of *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins and the secondary sources helped to define and narrow down the research question. When researching, it was found that there was already knowledge about fan fictions, but not specifically on gender and the character development in *The Hunger Games Trilogy*. Therefore, the research question and aim of research were set on the resemblances and differences in the romantic relationship between Katniss and Peeta and the use of gender in *The Hunger Games Trilogy* and fan fictions made about this book series. Two sub-questions are used, namely how is the gender of Katniss, the main character, an important influence on the original story as well as on the fan fictions and how do the main characters change in the original books and the fan fictions? The use of gender is defined by Butler's gender theory and the character development is looked at with the use of Greimas' actantial model.

When looking at the first sub-question, Katniss' gender has an important influence on the story, in both the original trilogy as well as in the fan fictions. Most important in gender theory by Butler is the focus on feminism and the use of the two standard genders. Regarding feminism, Katniss is a very strong and independent woman in all the texts, so she can be seen as a feminist that does not need the male gender. There is also the focus on the two standard genders, namely male and female, making the division between Katniss and Peeta. Even

though traditionally the male is perceived as the stronger character, in this case the female, Katniss, is the stronger one out of the two. Thus, the fact that Katniss is a female has an importance to the story since the emphasis is on her being the stronger gender.

The second sub-question focused on the change in the main characters in the original trilogy as well as in the fan fictions, with the help of the actantial model by A.J. Greimas. Over the time span of the original trilogy, Katniss learns that she loves Peeta romantically. In the different fan fictions, there is always some relationship between them, maybe not always romantically. In the fan fictions, the characters are portrayed differently than in the original books, based on the preference of the authors. The actantial model helped to see the purpose of the story and uncover relationships between events. Thus, the main characters changed between the original trilogy and the fan fictions, as their ending changed.

With regard to resemblance, in all of the chosen fan fictions there was some sort of romantic relationship between Katniss and Peeta. In the first fan fiction, Katniss kills Peeta to win the Hunger Games, but realizes shortly after that she loves Peeta. In the second fan fiction, both Peeta and Katniss take part in the war and Katniss was still wondering about her feelings for Peeta. Even though she chooses Gale in the end, she knows she also likes Peeta and her decision will hurt him. In the third fan fiction, Peeta commits suicide after confessing his love for Katniss. Everything Katniss does afterwards she thinks about Peeta and she even feels guilty when she starts to develop feelings for another boy. Another resemblance is that in all fan fictions, Katniss is still the main character and portrayed as a strong female, which ties in with the gender theory. In Butler's gender theory, Katniss is the stronger character, over Peeta who is a male. This is not conventional, as usually a male protagonist is preferred according to Guanio-Uluru, since these are perceived as the stronger character.

Regarding differences, there are a couple of striking differences. Most importantly, in all the chosen fan fictions, Peeta and Katniss are not together as a couple. This is because the

writers of the fan fictions preferred an alternative ending, as discussed by Kaplan. In some fan fictions, Peeta dies and in others Katniss forms a couple with Gale or Thomas. Another difference is that the fan fictions are generally shorter than the books. The fan fictions rewrite a couple of chapters or fit an entire book in a couple of chapters. Due to this difference, there is less time for character development. The portrayal of Katniss is also a difference, as in all the fan fictions this portrayal is altered to fit the storyline.

For future research it might be interesting to have a look into more different fan fictions. Due to time restrictions when writing this thesis, only three fan fictions were studied, whereas there are many more fan fictions available on fanfiction.org. As the fan fictions studied all had different lengths, it might be interesting to see if there is a correlation in differences and length. Also, in this thesis the focus was on gender and the romantic relationship between Katniss and Peeta, as there was no specific research about to be found. However, there are more characters in the books that can be analyzed as well as more relationships between these characters. Interesting characters may be family members of Katniss or for instance Gale, her best friend. Also, the focus was on the female gender, as the main character Katniss is a female, but there are also many male characters mentioned in the books. Other than gender, race could be an interesting topic to look into, as there are different races mentioned in the series and now the focus is on two 'white' characters.

So, there are some differences and resemblances in the fan fictions versus the original *The Hunger Games Trilogy*. In general, there is always some sort of relationship between Katniss and Peeta in the fan fictions, however this relationship is not always romantic. This is because the fans who write the fan fictions preferred a different ending in regard to the relationship between Katniss and Peeta. Katniss is always portrayed as a strong female character, making her the stronger character out of the two.

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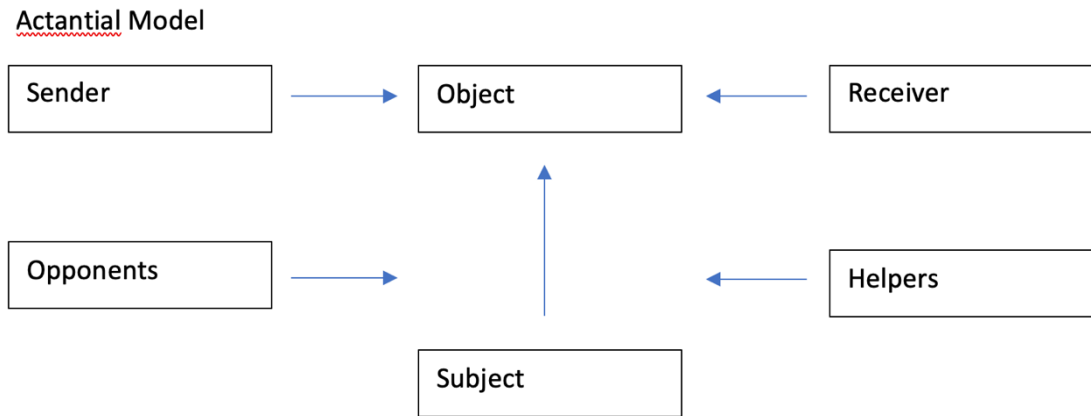
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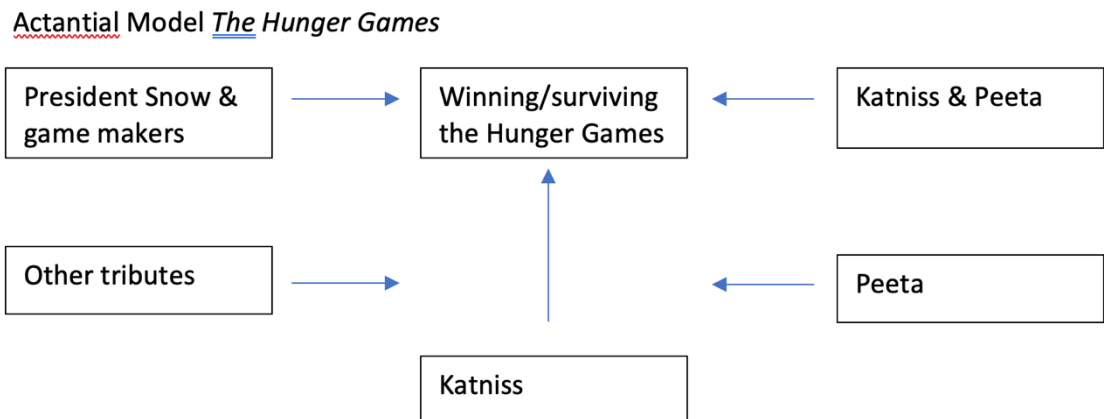


Appendices

Appendix 1: Actantial Model

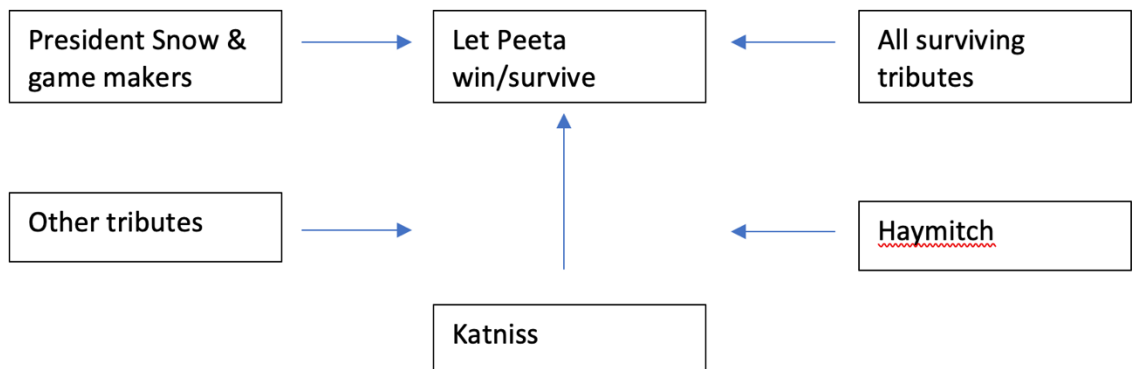


Appendix 2: Actantial Model *The Hunger Games*



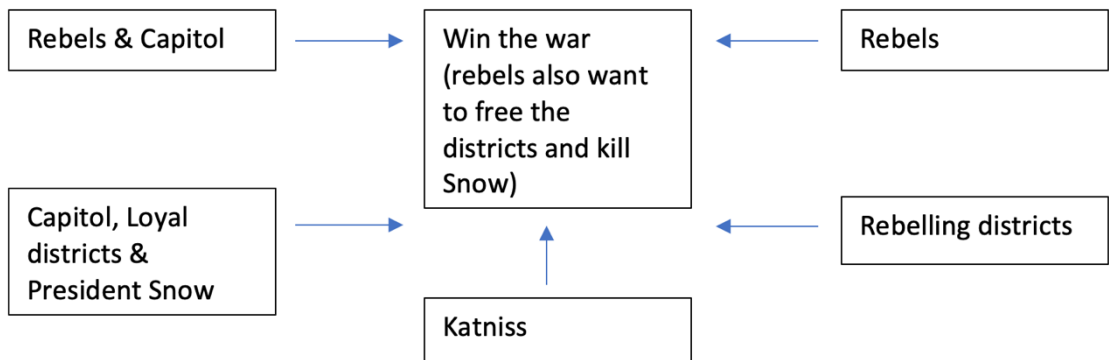
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Actantial Model *Catching Fire*



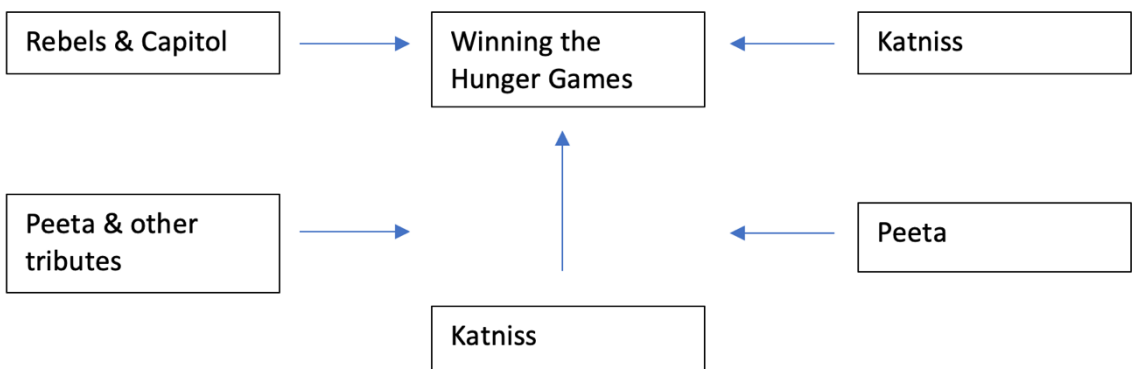
Appendix 4: Actantial Model *Mockingjay*

Actantial Model *Mockingjay*



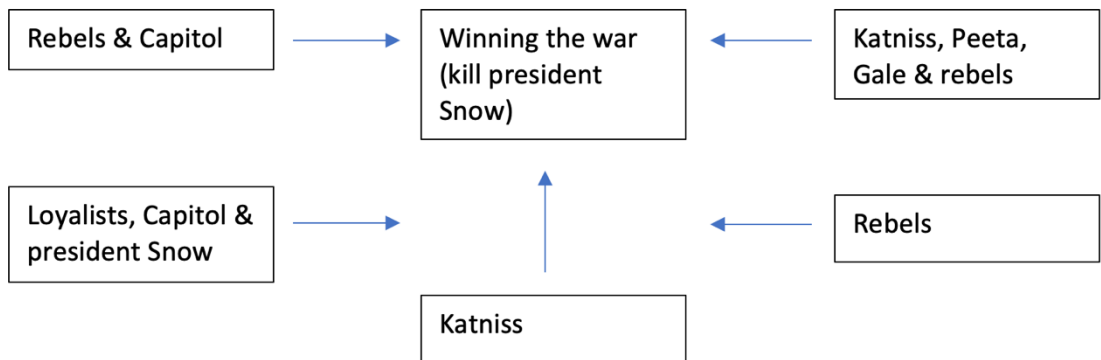
Appendix 5: Actantial Model Fan Fiction 1 *Hunger Games Alternative Ending*

Actantial Model fan fiction 1: *Hunger Games Alternative Ending*



Appendix 6: Actantial Model Fan Fiction 2 *Alternative Ending Mockingjay*

Actantial Model fan fiction 2: *Alternative Ending Mockingjay*



Appendix 7: Actantial Model Fan Fiction 3 *An Alternate Universe (Hunger Games)*

Actantial Model fan fiction 3: *An Alternate Universe (Hunger Games)*

