

Welcome to the Arena: Deconstructing the Female Character in Dystopian Literature

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Abstract

This research is designed to examine and rewrite Erika Gottlieb's theory of "the eternal feminine of the romantic cosmos." This theory was first presented in her research in *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trial*, and outlines the parameters by which the female character is viewed, and in turn, written in dystopian fiction. The theory often works in a mocking tone, stating that the female character only has two jobs within a story. One is to work as the "trigger" for events in the story, either directly or indirectly; and afterwards to step aside and let the hero take over and follow through with the events of the story. The primary intent of this research is to rewrite Gottlieb's theory by using modern day examples to reshape and re-form it. The eternal feminine will work as a lens to view the female characters in dystopian literature, looking at examples in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, and a dystopic *Garden of Eden*. These examples will be used to establish the older version of the female characters, one where they were written to the exact boundaries of the eternal feminine. The theory will then be applied to Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games* series and will focus primarily on Katniss Everdeen. The research follows her journey through the entire series and uses it to explore and reshape the eternal feminine. By using Katniss Everdeen, the eternal feminine is rewritten into something that allows for female characters that are more dynamic and able to take the role of hero themselves. This rewriting will also allow room for more growth and examine the changing state of dystopian literature, so that it can, in fact, be eternal.

Keywords: dystopia, literary tropes, eternal feminine of the romantic cosmos

1. Introduction

At its most basic definition a(n) utopia can be defined as "an imagined or hypothetical place, system, or state of existence in which everything is perfect" ("utopia"). However, from the moment Thomas More coined the term in his 1516 work *Utopia*, the opposite of the utopian idea has also existed. This is the dystopia, "an imaginary place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible" ("dystopia"). Dystopias can be further defined as society characterized by human misery, squalor, oppression, disease, and overcrowding. Although many speculate that More intended his utopic work to be a commentary on the society of his time, in contemporary literature the best way to find political or social commentary is to browse through the vast amounts of dystopian literature available. This literature is a now familiar literary genre, containing famous novels such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*, or well-known short stories such as Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron." Dystopian literature has developed in many different ways, but the two most common are the one that fits into Jasperse's definition and the one that paints itself as a thinly disguised utopia. Regardless of whether a dystopia is outright obvious or hiding in a thinly disguised veil of a utopia, what makes for a good story in dystopian literature are the heroes who elicit some sort of social change. These heroes are generally male, in a somewhat prominent

position in society, and meet an end between different shades of success and failure—think Winston in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or Guy Montag in Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*. It can even be said that the biblical Adam plays the hero role in a dystopic view of the Garden of Eden. These characters are the everyday man, who from the very start of the story generally question their society. The characters are written as such to show they have initiative, and it is with this initiative they usually elicit change. However, the other similarity between these male characters is a female character, usually written in to provide these male characters with initiative to affect a change in their dystopic surroundings. The female character does so by guiding or triggering the hero figure’s will to elicit change. In Erika Gotteleib’s book *Dystopian Fiction East and West: Universe of Terror and Trail*, she mentions the idea of this female character in her chapter “Nineteenth-Century Precursors of the Dystopian Vision.” The chapter primarily focuses on the Hungarian work *The Tragedy of Man*, and follows Adam’s journey away from paradise and back again. Throughout the work, however, Eve remains a present figure. She works as what Gotteleib terms as “the eternal feminine of the romantic cosmos”, which from this point on will be termed at the eternal feminine. This eternal feminine is a theory, one that lays out the parameters for how a female character is both viewed and written in dystopian literature, primarily as a character who is a mere “counterpoint to the protagonist’s dehumanized world of dystopia.” This theme of the eternal feminine, Gotteleib notes, is repeated in works by Orwell, Huxley, and many other dystopian authors (Gotteleib 48). The theory, as a whole, is written in a very mocking and perhaps satirical manner. It outlines the female character as nothing more than someone who assists the hero in whatever way he needs; this can include anything from an active partner in rebellion to a sexual partner. Regardless of how the female character assists the male character, the theme is always the same—she remains nothing more than a counterpoint in the story. Therefore, a question arises: can the often mocked and satirical idea of the eternal feminine be redefined in positive terms? The answer to this question is a definite yes. The role of the female character has changed quite a bit since Gotteleib first coined the eternal feminine, and even further still since the works she examined were first published. This new role for the female character is one that does not find itself under the typical constraints of the eternal feminine of the romantic cosmos. The way the literature itself is being presented has changed as well. With new popularity and the integration of dystopia into the genre of young adult literature, the female character has transformed from a counterpoint for the protagonist, to the protagonist herself.

This research will focus primarily on the character Katniss Everdeen in Suzanne’s Collin’s *The Hunger Games Series*, and how she redefines the idea of the eternal feminine. The first novel of the series, *The Hunger Games*, is written from the first-person narrative of Katniss and tells the story of Panem, a near future totalitarian state divided into twelve districts whose resources work to provide for and sustain the controlling Capitol. As penance for rebellions of the past, each district must offer up one boy and one girl, known as tributes, to fight in an arena for the entertainment of the Capitol in an event called “The Hunger Games.” Katniss Everdeen, sixteen years old and full of resentment for her government, volunteers to take her younger sister’s place after she is chosen as tribute. As a foil to Katniss, Peeta Mellark is the chosen boy of the district, the male character who is not the hero, but instead provides a counterpoint for the female heroine. As the novel unfolds it is Peeta who cries in fear after being chosen as tribute, Peeta who professes his love for Katniss, and Peeta who is injured and needs to be saved. Peeta takes on the role typically found in the idea of the eternal feminine, while Katniss is the strong-willed survivalist, a role reserved for the male protagonist. However, at the end of the novel, when given the ultimatum of killing each other, Katniss is the one who offers the poisonous berries, intended for the double suicide, to Peeta. The gamemakers stop them, though, and Katniss and Peeta both leave the games alive. Despite the charade of victory, the act of offering the berries is seen as an act of rebellion by the Capitol, with Katniss as the prime instigator. When Katniss offered the berries, just as Eve offered the fruit to Adam in the Garden of Eden, she ignited a rebellion in the twelve districts. Through the offering of the berries, referred to here as the “trigger,” is an act typical of the eternal feminine. The story that follows in the remaining two novels of the series rewrites Katniss as a hero, and into a new form of the eternal feminine of the romantic cosmos.

2. The Old Eternal Feminine

To understand Katniss, however, one must understand her predecessors. These predecessors generally fall into Gotteleib’s standards for the eternal feminine, however, it is from their plights that Katniss is able to develop. The first look of the eternal feminine is found in Eve in the Garden of Eden. The conventional view is that the Garden of Eden is the original utopia, a home for Adam and Eve to inhabit that is plentiful in both life and sustainability. The only rule, it seems, is that Adam and Eve never eat the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Despite

the perception of the garden narrative as a utopia, many of its traits resemble that of the thinly disguised dystopia. Adam and Eve seem to live in paradise, but this paradise is defined by their ignorance—an ignorance that is defined by their lack of knowledge of good and evil. The one thing that would cure this ignorance is also the one thing that God denies to them. In Dmitri M. Sliviniak's article, "The Garden of Double Messages: Deconstructing Hierarchical Opposition in the Garden Story", he notes that when Adam and Eve taste the fruit, they gain the knowledge the name of the tree suggests, and this knowledge "could not be neutral" (Sliviniak 443). From this moment on they have the knowledge to determine what is both good and evil themselves, rather than let God determine it for them. Sliviniak says that Adam and Eve "wanted to know what was good and bad and thus turned a good situation into a bad one" (443). In viewing the Garden narrative through a dystopic lens, this is the moment that Adam and Eve begin to see through the utopic veil. However, it cannot be forgotten that Eve is the one who first committed the act of eating the fruit and shared her sin with Adam. In this way, Eve is the original incarnation of the eternal feminine. God designed Eve to be a companion for Adam and "mother of all living" (*The King James Bible*, Gen. 3.20). Through her creation and existence, Eve fits into Gottlieb's first criteria for the eternal feminine, by being a counterpoint to the male Adam. Her second job as the eternal feminine is to work as the "trigger", which she does by allowing the snake to seduce her into taking the fruit and then offering the fruit to Adam. The blame for this transgression goes not to Adam for he "was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1st Tim. 2.14). Sliviniak states that Eve will always be responsible for original sin while Adam, "frees himself due to manipulation where the Woman and the Serpent take part, [and] begins to fulfill his true destination" (447-48). Eve performs her role as the trigger and gives Adam a new purpose and destiny, and then simply moves into the background. Her only destiny is become the bearer of Adam's children. This theme, or tradition, of portraying the female character as merely a counterpoint and "trigger" is repeated throughout literature, most prominently in dystopian literature.

Another work that precedes Katniss and establishes boundaries for the female character through the eternal feminine is George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Orwell's narrative takes place in the world of Oceania, a totalitarian superstate where the watchful eyes of Big Brother are always upon you. Every aspect of life is under near-constant surveillance and "thoughtcrime"—thoughts against Big Brother—are crimes punishable by death. Oceania is defined by the dystopic principles of "war is peace, slavery is freedom, and ignorance is strength" (Orwell 4). The story is told through the third person narrative of Winston Smith, the everyman and a member of the secondary Outer Party. In the beginning of the novel, Winston already feels bitterness towards Big Brother and members of the Inner Party. This hatred is only magnified when Winston begins his affair with the female character, Julia. While the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is much harsher than the Garden narrative, Winston and Julia follow a story very reflective of Adam. When Winston first encounters Julia he fantasizes killing her, urges borne from sexual frustration. When Julia slips him a note confessing her love, they meet in secret and begin a sexual relationship. Julia is intelligent and boisterous, unlike many of the females of the Outer Party. She entices Winston with tales of her small rebellious acts against Big Brother and tells him "I'm good at spotting people who don't belong, as soon as I saw you I knew you were against them" (34).

In Naomi Jacob's work, "Dissent, Assent, and the Body in Nineteen Eighty-Four", she says that from this point on Winston and Julia "follow a largely clichéd romance as star-crossed lovers, who set up a monogamous love-nest complete with domestic trappings and quickly lose their sexual urgency" (Jacobs 9). It is from here that they begin their downfall, and while Winston is the 'hero' of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the ending is not a happy one. For a moment, Julia is significant to the narrative but after their first encounter she steps back and becomes merely a sexual object for Winston, in which every encounter fuels his hatred of Big Brother more. In their first encounter Julia is performing both duties of the eternal feminine, both triggering Winston to instigate more acts of rebellions while establishing herself as a counterpoint and sexual partner. Jacobs tells us that Julia's exploits were small acts, "a private rebellion with no ramifications beyond pleasure" (9). However, after being triggered by Julia, Winston begins a series of acts of rebellion that both grow larger and more in depth, both by disregarding his duties on his job and taking more risks to meet with Julia. He is heroic for a moment before being captured by the Inner Party spy, O'Brian. Both Winston and Julia are captured, tortured and released back into society, fully dedicated to Big Brother. They have a final interaction, one that is cold and distant, in which they both admit to betraying each other, before saying goodbye forever. Regardless of the hero's downfall that plays out in the narrative, this downfall only happens because of Julia's actions. Had Julia not initiated a relationship with Winston, he would not have begun actively rebelling against Big Brother. Because Julia demonstrated the criteria of Gottlieb's eternal feminine, the story allowed for Winston's hero journey, if but briefly.

The eternal feminine not only appears in characters such as Eve and Julia, who knowingly meet the criteria but also in characters who unknowingly fit into the criteria as well. It is a repetitive pattern in writing female characters, rather

than a pattern of character actions but Katniss both unknowingly and knowingly works for and against the eternal feminine. However, she was preceded in this way by Clarisse in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. Clarisse is the rather whimsical and short-lived character who triggers much of the main character's change in the novel. *Fahrenheit 451* takes place in a futuristic United States where books are outlawed and burned if found. The main character, Guy Montag, is a firefighter whose job is to burn contraband books. The society is dystopic in that it hides knowledge and discourages new learning and Clarisse, though quite young and presented as mentally unstable, sees through this. Clarisse holds knowledge in the highest esteem and tells Guy, "it's a lot of funnels and a lot of water poured down the spout and out the bottom, and them telling us it's wine when it's not" when regarding education (Bradbury 27). Despite thoughts such as this, Clarisse is not actively rebelling against the society she lives in. Instead, she is questioning out of mere curiosity and innocence, and this is when she unknowingly triggers Guy Montag. After his interaction with Clarisse he begins to question everyone around him and steals books in secret, rather than burning them. Soon after Guy is inspired by Clarisse, she is killed, or so he is told. Clarisse performs her role as the eternal feminine, to trigger Guy Montag into initiating change, and then she disappears. It is perhaps the most extreme example of the eternal feminine, for in this case Clarisse is not even allowed to be a counterpoint to Montag. The remainder of the narrative follows Montag and his hero's journey as he actively rebels against his society. However, Guy never would have had the initiative or thought about the flaws in his society had he not encountered Clarisse.

Despite Eve's story following exactly into the criteria of the eternal feminine, the theory was identified long after the Bible's origins. Gotteleib's theory works as an observance of what is happening most commonly with female characters in dystopian literature and is a theme that is repeated and revived. The female character is contained and restricted when written as the eternal feminine even though she is vital to the narrative without being a major positive influence in the novel. The female character is the trigger of events in that the entirety of the plot usually develops around the actions she encourages the male character to perform. However, it is too often after she serves this purpose she is simply kept around to be a counterpoint to the male character, or completely disappears. This is why an examination of female characters in new forms of dystopian literature needs to be observed. Rather than using these characters to discredit Gotteleib's theory of the eternal feminine, they should instead be used to rewrite the theory into something that can be easily reshaped and allows for a more significant set of female characters. This is where Katniss Everdeen comes in, for while she has the traits of the eternal feminine she also has the potential to rewrite the theory that makes allowance for more contemporary characters. She does so in three distinct ways, by first being a trigger, then as a resistor, and finally as a hero, and all of these allow Katniss to take her own hero's journey.

3. Katniss and Gender Rebellion

Katniss Everdeen is first introduced as a character who already redefines the gender stereotypes of characterization. In the first novel, the readers are introduced to a teenage girl who defies both gender stereotypes and expectations. Throughout the first novel, and the series as a whole, Katniss is able to use this defiance to her advantage, and use gender as a way to maneuver through her dystopic world. In Ellyn Lem's and Holly Hassel's article, "'Killer' Katniss and 'Lover Boy' Peeta: Suzanne Collin's Defiance of Gender-Genred Reading", they observe that Katniss is unique to dystopian literature because she "is a female character with traditionally masculine qualities and traditionally female qualities" which allows her to "capitalize on patriarchal values that traditionally privilege masculine characteristics while leveraging other, gender-appropriate qualities" (Hassel and Lem 118). Katniss defies gender segregation even before the games and the events of the first novel take place. After her father's death, and dealing with an overly distraught mother, Katniss takes on the role as household provider. She hunts, barter, and even fights for the sake of her family--all actions that paint her in a light that is typically male. In the games Katniss uses these skills for survival while also perpetuating a fake romance with Peeta in order to gain the attention of sponsors, people of the Capitol who can provide different forms of assistance for tributes in the arena. The actions Katniss takes in order to achieve her own and Peeta's survival are all very analytical and somewhat manipulative, characteristics that female characters are not typically granted in a positive light. Hassel and Lem state that in this way "Collins has proved in both narrative forms that to write against the grain of gender expectations is not only possible but also necessary" (120). In using Katniss to rewrite the eternal feminine, the literature is able to add another layer of subversiveness to the dystopian novel, one that sheds light on new forms of female characters and allows them to break boundaries.

While Katniss works well in rewriting the female character in dystopian literature by breaking down the typical gendered norms, she also breaks down guidelines by still embracing her feminine qualities. She is a highly nurturing

individual, as seen through her need to mother her younger sister, Prim. This need to mother and protect is the direct cause of why Katniss volunteers as tribute so willingly after Prim's name is drawn. In the first novel, Katniss encounters Rue, the youngest tribute in the games, who reminds her of Prim. Katniss takes on the role of provider for Rue and swears to protect her. Even after Rue's death, Katniss's grief and decorating of Rue's body with flowers, is seen as a caring quality that is thought of as inherently female. In her presentation before the games Katniss is made to look more beautiful, stripped of all hair and dirt, and dressed in extravagant costumes by her stylist Cinna. All of these actions are done to make her more female for the Capitol audience, and while Katniss feels like a showpiece on display she also embraces the female role she is given. For the most part, she embraces this glamor to appease the audience but she also embraces it for her own vanity. Katniss grew up in the poorest district of Panem, in a world that is hardly glamorous, and while she is generally put off by that glamor she also finds that a small part of her embraces it and finds herself unlike her usual self, instead like a "silly girl spinning in a sparkling dress" (*Hunger Games* 136). Katniss is able to embrace these feminine qualities and put on a show for the Capitol, in order to achieve her own survival, flawlessly. In Amy L. Montz's "Costuming the Resistance : The Female Spectacle of Rebellion", she states that "as Katniss becomes a Capitol favorite in the games, she does so as the District 12 girl who saves her sister and as Peeta's conflicted lover; most importantly, she does so as the silly, sparkling girl aligned with fire" (Montz 143). This strengthens Katniss as a character, for she is using the feminine traits as a mask to gain her own survival.

Katniss even finds herself in a love triangle throughout the series, a plot point that is often seen in literature meant for the female audience. Her two potential lovers, Gale--her best friend and fierce advocate of rebellion, and Peeta--extremely loyal and often the voice of reason, try to pull her deeper into romance yet she resists them both. While she admits that she cares for them both, and sometimes acts on this--in innately female actions--she also understands there are more important things to worry about than trivial romance. A recurring theme throughout the novels is Katniss often being pushed in one direction or another, making choices she would rather not make, in order to insure her own safety and the safety of those around her. With the romance, she is able to push it aside because it does not directly affect her state of survival, and therefore it is not an issue she finds herself dwelling on. It is in this ability to choose, however, that makes Katniss more subversive, for she is not stuck in the confines of merely acting upon a choices that will align her with one set gender. She is able to slip into the roles needed for survival, and even if some of these roles are worn like masks, they are still roles Katniss proves she can fit into. In his New York Times article, "A Radical Female from Dystopia", Manohla Dargis asks, "Is killing masculine...is nurturing feminine...Katniss nurtures and she kills, and she does both extremely well" (Dargis and Scott 2012). In using Katniss and her ability to fluidly embrace roles both masculine and feminine, the eternal feminine is something that is still relevant and present but is rewritten into something newer, and perhaps, more powerful. Katniss functions as both a survivalist and a nurturer, she exists in a state where she can actively take on roles both male and female, and she makes active choices when faced with confrontation, and she also takes on the role as the trigger. In the past the terms of the eternal feminine were set, she was someone who worked as the counterpoint to the male the character, who triggered or guided change but never followed through. The follow through of events belonged exclusively to the male hero. Katniss, unlike the females of the past, follows through with the events that she triggered. Although it takes a while for Katniss to do so; her journey--from trigger to hero herself--it what allows her to rewrite the eternal feminine of the romantic cosmos.

4. Rewriting the Eternal Feminine through Katniss

In the first novel of the series, *The Hunger Games*, Katniss performs the role of the role of eternal feminine by triggering the events that set the premise for the series. She does so by attempting suicide in the arena rather than being a pawn in the games and killing Peeta. Although the suicide does not succeed, her choice to attempt it was the trigger that sets off rebellion in Panem. However, in *The Hunger Games* Katniss works as a trigger in two ways, and she does unknowingly both times; first as a nurturer and second as survivalist. The initial trigger of events is when Katniss takes Prim's place as tribute; she acted without thought, merely on the urge to protect her sister. In the introduction to the book, *Of Bread, Blood, and The Hunger Games*, Mary F. Pharr and Leisa A. Clark say that "Katniss has always lived in a space between ordinary and the extraordinary...she enters another level of hell when she chooses to take her sister's place in the Games" (Clark and Pharr 12). By doing so she triggers her own journey and forced, in this case, to follow through with the events she had caused. Even though her volunteering forced her into the games, and into the "hero's" follow through, Katniss is not actively defying the criteria of the eternal feminine at this point. Her breaking of norms does not happen until she enters the arena and begins to show her survivalist skills. Katniss is

instead joined by fellow tribute Peeta Mellark, who has the potential to become the hero of the story, which would allow Katniss to step back into the typical female role of counterpoint. In the events leading up to the games, Peeta is charismatic and clever while Katniss fumbles during interviews and is easily angered in practice. Once they enter the arena, however, Katniss begins to show her strengths. As said before, during the first novel it is Peeta who needs to be rescued and taken care of--and Katniss falls into the role of Peeta's hero easily enough. In this case Peeta works as a counterpoint to Katniss rather than she to him, and this is when Katniss begins to rewrite the eternal feminine. Then, at the end of the games, Katniss offers the berries to Peeta rather than kill him. This too, she does without thinking, acting on her survivalist's nature. This survival is not in living, but in the survival of self, for she would rather die than become the killer the Capitol intends her to be. By offering the berries, Katniss becomes a trigger again, and ignites a rebellion where she must rewrite the eternal feminine, and much like in the arena, she must follow through and become the hero because of her choices.

In the second novel of the series, *Catching Fire*, Katniss is immediately presented with the opportunity to become the hero but instead strays away from the repercussions of her actions. In this way Katniss works as a resistor, for she believes that because she did not intentionally rebel against the Capitol then she should have no role in the rebellion. She wants only to keep her family and friends safe. In *Catching Fire*, Katniss is threatened by both President Snow and outside forces; all around her the carefully knit world of Panem is falling apart because of the influences of her choices in the arena. When the next Hunger Games are announced, tributes are chosen from the pools of remaining victors, and Katniss and Peeta are thrown back into the games. Again, Katniss resists the hero's role, this time out of fear. Pharr and Clark note that "she is the classic reluctant hero from science fiction" because "Katniss was always more comfortable with the idea with her role as survivor rather than hero" (12). Katniss spends much of *Catching Fire* in feeble attempts to show the general public she was a girl cross in love for Peeta, not a girl who intended rebellion against the Capitol.

In Valarie Frankel's work "Reflection in a Plastic Mirror" she says that these attempts become a charade for safety, one where Katniss lets everyone, besides her own self, determine who she is, "her romance with Peeta [and everything else] is owned and managed by the public" (Frankel 54). At the end of *Catching Fire* Katniss is rescued and taken to the secret District 13, and it is here that she once again lets others define her rather than herself. Much of the first half of the third novel of the series, *Mockingjay*, revolves around Katniss being remade again, this time into the fictional "Mockingjay, a television personality...[who] films on sound stage, a faux bloody bandage on her arm" (57). District 13 is the opposite of the Capitol in every way, embracing everything utilitarian. They attempt to control Katniss just as carefully as they control everything else in their world. For a while Katniss lets them, playing the Mockingjay role just as she weakly as she attempted to play the star-crossed lover. As Frankel notes, Katniss begins to understand more as "she is forced to consider how much of her persona is real and how is fashioned by her handlers" (57). By letting the Capitol, and then District 13, control her she gave up her agency and resisted the role of hero, and her ability to rewrite the eternal feminine. However, it seems to feed into the trope of a hero's journey, all the different masks Katniss was putting on for those around her, were merely buying time until she came into her true self.

Finally, Katniss begins to embrace the role of the hero and actively begins to shape her own self. In doing so she regains her agency and her ability of choice, while also beginning to rewrite the eternal feminine as someone who exercises her agency. The second half of *Mockingjay* revolves around Katniss striking a deal with District 13's leader, President Coin. The deal involves rescue of Peeta, who was captured by the Capitol at the end of *Catching Fire*, allowance for combat, and that she herself is allowed to kill President Snow. In return Katniss will act as the Mockingjay, but in her own terms. With this deal set, District 13 is able to deliver Mockingjay propaganda that incites more rebellion and turns the entirety of Panem into a warring zone against the Capitol. With clearance for combat, Katniss is fully involved in the war that is happening around her. It both horrifies her and ignites new hatred against the Capitol, her rebellion finally one that she does knowingly. She acts not with nurturing or survivalism, but instead with genuine emotion that she had determined and made for herself. As the events of *Mockingjay* continue, Peeta is returned to her, now a brainwashed object for the Capitol, and District 13 and the other rebelling districts eventually overthrow the Capitol's regime. However, there are many deaths during the war, including Prim. It is unclear whether Prim was killed because actions by the Capitol or District 13 and afterwards Katniss falls into a deep depression. Panem is in political shambles and Katniss is brought in to finish the deal and kill President Snow. However, instead of killing Snow, Katniss kills President Coin instead. In Guy Risko's "Katniss Everdeen's Liminal Choices and the Foundations of Revolutionary Ethics", he says that from the moment Katniss made the choice to take Prim's place as tribute "she stood as a non-exceptional figure of law who could clearly see its failures and limits" (Risko 83). This view of the law and its failures and limits continue throughout the series, and although Katniss plays a huge role in what happens politically in the world around her, she never actively makes a choice to change anything until she

makes the choice to kill President Coin. It is in this way that Katniss rewrites the eternal feminine and finally follows through with the choices she made in the first novel, and it is in this way that Katniss becomes a hero.

5. Conclusion

The intention of this research was not to make the theory of the eternal feminine null but instead show that this idea that is often seen as satire can be rewritten in a positive light. As said before, Gottlieb's theory was an observance of what was happening with female characters in dystopian literature. However, since that time the state of the female character in dystopian literature has changed and the way the literature is presented has changed as well. Dystopian literature has now become a huge genre in the young adult market and female characters like Katniss are now becoming a recurring trend. The theory cannot last or be valid if its criteria for female characters is so limiting. The theory must change as the literature changes. The female character now has the ability to be both a trigger and a follow through. She also still has the ability to step back and let the male hero be the follow through. The rewriting of the eternal feminine of the romantic cosmos comes not from setting up new criteria but instead demonstrating that the eternal feminine can be defined as a female character in dystopian literature who has choice. The choices she makes and the plot of her story have no effect over her validity as the eternal feminine, for it is given to her with her choice. She is defined as the eternal feminine not by the world in which she exists, much less the male character(s)---she is defined only by herself. From the nature of dystopia it can be surmised that dystopian literature will continue to grow and be rewritten as the world changes, and the eternal feminine of the romantic cosmos, in being eternal, can be rewritten with it.

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