



A Postcolonial Appraisal of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* in the Light of Bhabha's Ideas

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Abstract

The present paper has tried to apply Bhabha's significant notions such as mimicry, ambivalence and stereotype to Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*. Bhabha believes that in the interaction of the colonizer and the colonized both cultures are affected and neither culture can claim to have a pure and fixed status. In the process of interaction, the identity of both colonizer and the colonized undergoes serious changes. The colonizer stereotypes the colonized, regarding them as the inferior, thoughtless beings. The colonized seeing them in power internalize what they say, perceiving themselves as backward and the colonizer as superior, sophisticated beings. As they consider the colonizer as the sophisticated, powerful culture, they try to imitate them (this is actually what the colonizer wants) which are not the exact copy but the parody of them, causing crack in the dominance of the colonizer. In this interaction, not only the colonized's identity but also the colonizer's alters. This is in fact what happens in Collins' *The Hunger Games*. The characters in the novel when encountering the colonizer's culture change their identity and become who they want them to be; however, the characters also through some resistance make the colonizer to follow what they assign for them. Moreover, during the course of the novel, the characters find an ambivalent character as a result of experiencing unhomeliness. This ambivalence makes them have a double consciousness, to be attracted toward the colonized culture and at the same time repulsed it.

Keywords: Identity, Ambivalence, Mimicry, Stereotype, Unhomeliness

1. Introduction

This paper is the study of Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* through the application of Bhabha's notions such as suppression, mimicry, stereotype and ambivalence to it. As a prominent postcolonial figure, Bhabha has contemplated over the formation of identity in the colonizing circumstances. He discusses on what happens to the colonizer and the colonized while interacting each other, arguing that both the colonizer and the colonized influence one another during which their identity is formed, fragmented and alienated. The researcher has tried to make use of the framework of Bhabha's concept of identity through utilizing his identity-related terms such as stereotype, ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity to illustrate the identity-development of the characters of the novel mentioned (*The Hunger Games*). *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2001) talks about Bhabha so: "a prominent figure in postcolonial studies, Homi K. Bhabha has infused thinking about nationality, ethnicity, and politics with poststructuralist theories of identity and indeterminacy" (p. 2377). His complicated and abstract style has made him a leading character in the world of post-colonial criticism. Bhabha acquired most of his theoretical ideas under the influence of Lacan, Derrida and Foucault.

Suzanne Collins was born in 1964 and she currently lives in Connecticut with her family. Since 1991, Suzanne Collins has been busy writing for children's television. She has worked on the staffs of several Nickelodeon shows, including the Emmy-nominated hit *Clarissa Explains it All* and *The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo*. For preschool viewers, she penned multiple stories for the Emmy-nominated *Little Bear* and *Oswald*. She also co-wrote the critically acclaimed Rankin/Bass Christmas special, *Santa, Baby!* Most recently she was the Head Writer for Scholastic Entertainment's *Clifford's Puppy Days*. After writing the fantasy series *The Underland Chronicles*, Suzanne Collins departed from the world of fantasy and stepped into a harsh, dystopian creation in *The Hunger Games*. *The Hunger Games* (2008) is the first novel in a projected trilogy, and introduces readers to a futuristic dystopian society where an overpowering government controls the lives and resources in twelve different districts. The most outstanding novel under focus in this study is *The Hunger Games*. Since the novel is a recently published one on which no thesis has been written, it is fair enough to give a short summary of the novel.

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. Each year, the districts are forced by the Capitol to send one boy and one girl between the ages of

twelve and eighteen to participate in the Hunger Games, a brutal and terrifying fight to the death – televised for all of Panem to see. Survival is second nature for sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who struggles to feed her mother and younger sister by secretly hunting and gathering beyond the fences of District 12. When Katniss steps in to take the place of her sister in the Hunger Games, she knows it may be her death sentence. If she is to survive, she must weigh survival against humanity and life against love. This moving novel explains the way the colonized districts under the yoke of the dominant colonizer acts and how the colonized group suffers in order to provide joy for the colonizer. The identity of both the colonizer and the colonized in this novel change as a result of interaction with each other, though for one group (the colonized) this interaction is mandatory.

2. Bhabha's Methodology

The gist of Bhabha's theoretical framework is epitomized in his book *Location of Culture* in which he discusses the concepts such as mimicry, ambivalence, hybridity and identity. In his works and theories, Bhabha is under the influence of a wide range of theorists from political to literary ones such as Lacan, Freud, Bakhtin, Derrida, etc. Bhabha believes that in the encounter of the colonizer and the colonized both cultures are affected, neither culture is pure. Bhabha believes that in the encounter between the colonizer and its colonized subject is a phenomenon that affects both. Berten (2001) explains this encounter and colonialism as an “affective experience of marginality” that brings fragmentation and indeterminacy for the subject of colonization (p. 210). Colonizer thinks that through suppression and giving specific way of behavior, they can dominate the colonized, deterring uprising. However, the colonizer is also affected in this interaction and the colonized as well inject some of their conventions and manners to them. Bhabha with the help of some terms such as mimicry, stereotype, ambivalence and unhomeliness argues that the identity of both colonizer and the colonized is changed during their encounter. Mimicry is a rife term used in his studies in which he defines it as a condition, when colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to mimic the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer’s cultural habits, assumptions and values. The colonized consider the colonizer as superior one and thus try to imitate them which make the colonizer frightened as they see themselves parodied, contributing to a crack in their domination over the colonized. Bhabha (2006) considers mimicry not “a slavish imitation” or adaptation in the shape of a superior, dominant culture, but an “exaggerated copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas” (Huddart p. 40). The other term, which Bhabha has talked about, is ambivalence, which simply means the simultaneous attraction and repulsion each side of the interaction has toward the other side. There are some circumstances when either the colonizer or the colonized are attracted toward the other culture, being an object, person or behavior. This simultaneous absorption and repugnance toward the other culture is called ambivalence. This ambivalence in identity or cultural disparity creates a disruptive condition and political resistance towards colonial power, which in Moore-Gilbert (1997) term becomes “resistance from within” (p. 130). Stereotyping is the identity that the dominant culture gives usually to the suppressed one calling them inferior, thoughtless, indolent beings, with which the colonized themselves are complicit and internalize it as true, considering themselves as the inferior culture and the colonizer as the sophisticated and superior one. In the process of identity creation, the colonizer considers themselves as superior and the native people as inferior, giving them the identity that they are just-“indolent, thoughtless, sexually, immoral, unreliable and demented” (Bressler, 2007, p. 140). On the contrary, their own culture, “colonizer's, is civilized, sophisticated, or as postcolonial critics put it, *metropolitan*” (Tyson, 2006, p. 419). Unhomeliness or double consciousness is the feeling the colonized find when they are caught between two cultures assuming none of them as their own culture. They do not know to which culture they belong; to the colonizer, which is the superior one with high technology and dominant language or to their own culture that without the colonizer's culture has no power. Therefore, he becomes a psychological refugee, finding their identity floating. In order to clarify what Bhabha means by the feeling of unhomeliness, let's regard the definition given in the *Critical Theory Today* (2006) by Lois Tyson: “This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives, is referred to by Homi Bhabha and others as *unhomeliness*” (p. 421). All the terms which have been explained through the eye of Bhabha, are to emphasize the fact that in the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized, the identity of both groups undergo a change. Neither culture can claim to remain pure and fixed since they are interacting with each other, creating a space in which their identity would be molded.

3. Domination of Capitol's Ideology and Acknowledgment of People

The Capitol has kept its ideology so dominant on the people that the colonized have to follow what they say. People's children are to be sent to the Capitol to be killed but they have to celebrate this event, which is the ideology of the Capitol. The people of the district are frightened by the thought of their children to be sent in the hunger games but this day, called reaping, should be celebrated by them: “After the reaping, everyone is supposed to celebrate. And a lot of people do, out of relief that their children have been spared for another year. But at least two families will pull their shutters, lock their doors, and try to figure out how they will survive the painful weeks to come (Collins, p. 10, 2008). We see people who are celebrating the night in which their children are chosen to go to the hunger games where the risk

of death is high but they follow the rules and instructions of the Capitol that they should celebrate it as the day they all should be glad. Just the two families whose children are not chosen are upset with whom no one feels sympathized. Even people are convinced they have to celebrate this day so that they wear their best clothes; even Katniss's mother wears her best dress to accord with what the Capitol has asked: "My mother wears a fine dress from her apothecary days. Prim is in my first reaping outfit, a skirt and ruffled blouse. ... To my surprise, my mother has laid out one of her own lovely dresses for me. A soft blue thing with matching shoes" (Collins, p. 14-15, 2008). We see how influential their ideology has been that even Katniss's mother follows their instruction and is wearing her best clothes as they are going to a big celebration. Moreover, even the daughter of the mayor is wearing her best outfits to be looked nice in the day of reaping. As she says: "well, if I end up going to the Capitol, I want to look nice, don't I?" (Collins, p. 12, 2008). However as she is the daughter of Mayor, a rich and powerful person, her chance of her name being drawn is very slim compared to those of other people living in the district. There is a rule set up by the Capitol that every person from age twelve becomes eligible for the reaping and that year their name is entered once until the age eighteen that their name should be entered seven times, each year once. Nevertheless, there is an exception that if the poor people of the district want more food and stuff, they can choose to have their name entered more times in exchange for food for each year. As a case in point, Katniss until now that she is sixteen, her name has been entered twenty times. As Gresh (2001) explains: "in the world of *The Hunger Games*, food is carefully rationed by the government, with people getting basically less than is needed to survive ... To get more grains children have to throw their names into the reaping lottery multiple times" (p. 22). Here then Gale and Katniss cannot blame Mayor's daughter since this is the rule that has been set up by the government. As Gale believes, they do this to cause disputes and resentment between people, separating them from each other so that they could not rebel against it. "The implication is that some people in district 12 have plenty to eat while others starve, hence causing strife inside the community" (Gresh, p. 49, 2011). Then their anger about Mayor's daughter is unreasonable. "A way to plant hatred between the starving workers of the Seam and those who can generally count on supper and thereby ensure we will never trust one another. It's to the Capitol's advantage to have us divided among ourselves"-(Collins, p14, 2008). As Gale argues, the Capitol by setting this rule intends to keep people apart from each other. The Capitol is doing this to plant hatred among different strata of society, keeping them preoccupied with their own daily life, not letting them rebel against it.

4. Mimicry as Threat and Influence

In the interaction between the two cultures of colonized and the colonizer, the colonized come to imitate the colonizer as they see them in power; they imitate them in dress, speech, behavior and lifestyle. This imitation, which is not the exact copy of the colonizer, fears the colonizer since it is the mockery of their way of behavior, making a crack in the colonizer's control over the behavior of the colonized. As Ashcroft states, mimicry is a crucial term in "Homi Bhabha's view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse." For Bhabha (2000), "mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as almost the same, but not quite" (p. 140). "It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (*Location of Culture*, Bhabha, p 63). This mimicry turns the handle against the colonial power causing the colonized to find an opportunity to rebel and resist.

4.1. Characters' Mimicking the Capitol

In the story, we see different characters try to imitate the Capitol's behavior. At the beginning of the novel, we see that Gale and Katniss are in the woods imitating the accent of the colonizer, Effie Trinket, the escort of the Capitol. As Katniss says:

His expression brightens at the treat. "Thank you, Prim. We'll have a real feast." Suddenly he falls into a Capitol accent as he mimics Effie Trinket ... The sweet tartness explodes across my tongue. "___ be *ever* in your favor!" I finish with equal verve. We have to joke about it because the alternative is to be scared out of your wits. Besides, the Capitol accent is so affected, almost anything sounds funny in it. (Collins, p. 7-8, 2008)

Katniss also begins to mimic their accent, which seems to be funny for her. It shows on the other hand, how influential the accent of the Capitol is to them that they come to imitate it, seeing themselves as inferior and Capitol as superior. In addition, in the other part, Katniss questions the way Capitol's people speak. She is obsessed with this. She considers them as the superior one and she cannot stand mimicking them and she imitates their accent and mocks at it. Although she is mocking them and mimicking their accent, she is obsessed with their way of speaking. On the other hand, she is making fun of their language, which causes the Capitol to fear as she is imitating them but in a funny way, which may cause a crack in their dominance and authority. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (2000) states: "The desire to emerge as "authentic" through mimicry-through a process of writing and repetition- is the final irony of partial representation" (LC, p. 88, 2000). When Katniss is on the train heading Capitol, she suddenly sees Madge's golden pin resembling a golden bird. It is the mocking-jay. Katniss explains the story of mocking-jay that during the rebellion of the districts, Capitol used it as weapon during the war against them:

During the rebellion, the Capitol bred a series of genetically altered animals as weapons. The common term for them was mutation, or sometimes mutts for short. One was a special bird called jabberjay that had the ability to memorize and repeat whole human conversations. They were homing birds, exclusively male, that were released into regions where the Capitol's enemies were known to be hiding. After the birds gathered words, they'd fly back to centers to be recorded. (Collins, p. 42, 2008)

The Capitol generated genetically altered animal called mutations. The bird which was called jabberjay had the ability to repeat and memorize the whole human conversations. They were released by the Capitol to where the enemies of the Capitol were known to be hiding. After the bird gathered the information, they got back to Capitol repeating what they had heard. However as the time went by, people understood it and gave the wrong words and information to the birds. This mimicry, which the Capitol used against the people were used against them in the war: "They are funny birds and something of a slap in the face to the Capitol ... It took people awhile to realize what was going on in the districts, how private conversations were being transmitted. Then, of course, the rebels fed the Capitol endless lies, and the joke was on it. So, the centers were shut down and the birds were abandoned to die off in the wild" (Collins, p. 42, 2008). As we see, this mimicry feared the Capitol. First, they employed it to be used against people but in the end, it was utilized against them. Of course, after this jabberjays mated with female mocking bird, they created a new species that could replicate both bird whistle and human songs.

When they are preparing Katniss for the game, they start doing make-up on her, she likes the make-up as she looks very gorgeous in her new form as she is attracted toward her looks and says: "I force my lips up into a smile to show how grateful I am. "Thank you", I say sweetly". We do not have much cause to look nice in District Twelve" (Collins, p. 62, 2008). In order to look nice she has to look like people in the Capitol since they do not have such things in district 12. It shows how influential the Capitol is in dominating their technologies and behavior on them and she is attracted toward it and wants to imitate it. Moreover, when she is in the Capitol and she is given good food and perfect make-up and she observes the lifestyle of the Capitol people, she is attracted toward them, wishing to stay there as they have a perfect life and because in their own district they do not have such thing as the Capitol has kept them poor. As Lois H. Gresh (2011) says: "there is a huge disparity between the people in the Capitol, who have too much to eat who focus on what they look like, and spend money on plastic surgeries and style, versus everyone else-the starving, the hounded, the impoverish, and those lacking even basic human comforts" (p. 11). These are the differences that make Katniss draw toward the Capitol and instead of gathering woods, she wishes to have a place like what people of the Capitol have as her mind is preoccupied with the thought of staying there: "What must it be like, I wonder, to live in a world where food appears at the press of a button?... What do they do all day, these people in the Capitol, besides decorating their bodies and waiting around for a new shipment of tributes to roll in and die for their entertainment?" (Collins, p 65, 2008). As we see here. Katniss by looking at the amenity of life in the Capitol wants to stay there and live there in the perfect condition or this is at least what she is obsessed with in the Capitol. She wants to mimic their lifestyle and way of living as she sees them powerful and advanced in their way of living. She wants to mimic them.

5. Stereotyping as Capitol's Ideology

This concept is one of the most prevalent notions in Bhabha's studies. To him, the colonizer often defines the colonized as a fixed, unchanged, indolent and thoughtlessly inferior being, compared to the colonizer who is the civilized and sophisticated one. According to David Huddart (2006) in his *Homi K. Bhabha* (2006), "the colonizer circulates stereotypes about the laziness or stupidity of the colonized population" (p. 35). Colonizer gives this idea to the colonized with which the colonized themselves cooperate and thereby internalize it as their identity, regarding the colonizer as superior one and themselves as inferior one. Of course, the colonizer stereotypes the colonized to prevent them from any rebellion and resistance against them.

5.1. Capitol's Stereotyping People

Katniss, in one part of the play, is talking about how the Capitol has made them suppressed by taking their children from them, forcing them to slay one another in the hunger games while the Capitol is watching them in order to remind them that this is the way that every rebellion would be responded. To make it more humiliating, the Capitol has made them to regard the hunger games a festival and sport to be celebrated, in which the last person remaining in the hunger games will be the champion receiving gifts and foods from the Capitol:

To make it humiliating as well as torturous' the Capitol requires us to treat the Hunger Games as a festivity, a sporting event pitting every district against the others. The last tribute alive receives a life of ease back home, and their district will be showered with prizes, largely consisting of food. All year, the Capitol will show the winning district gifts of grain and oil and even delicacies like sugar while the rest of us battle starvation. (Collins, p. 19, 2008)

This is the identity that the Capitol has given them and they have to follow it. The Capitol has stereotyped them by imposing a fixed identity on them as being always inferior. They should respect the reaping as a national day celebrating and having fun. As Mayor at the beginning argues how stereotyped they have become, he sums up the idea "It is both a time for repentance and a time for thanks" (Collins, p. 19, 2008).

When Katniss is on the train moving toward the Capitol, the last person to whom she pays visit is Gale with whom she feels comfortable. Gale admires her that she knows how to kill as a hunter but Katniss answers "not people" (Collins, p. 46, 2008), because this is the identity that the Capitol has given her to make her and the people of the other districts like themselves cruel and vicious and enjoy killing each other. However, Katniss does not want to become like them and follow their way. She does not want to acknowledge the identity as a killer that the Capitol has given them, making them similar to animals: "You know how to kill." "Not people," I say. "How different can it be, really?" says Gale grimly. The awful thing is that if I can forget they're people, it will be no different at all" (Collins, p. 40, 2008).

As explained before, when Effie Trinket wants people to applaud Katniss, who has become a volunteer for the game instead of her sister, no one reacts to show their appreciation to what he says. Here one of the people of the Capitol calls them backward and idiot: "one says that District 12 has always been a bit backward" (Collins, p. 46, 2008). It shows how Capitol regards them as inferior and looks down on the people of the other districts, regarding themselves as superior.

It seems that when they are on the train the relationship has been reversed, instead of the colonized serving the colonized, it is the colonizer serving the colonized. On the surface, it seems that they are stereotyping them and what they say should be followed. By this, they have stereotyped them giving them their identity as inferior but at the same time, considering this phenomenon, we see that it is the Capitol that are being inferior serving them and it has become reversed. "All right," I say. "I can send one of the Capitol people to help you." There's any number on the train. Cooking for us. Waiting on us. Guarding us. Taking care of us is their job" (Collins, p. 49, 2008).

6. Unhomeliness or Double Consciousness

The colonized identity, when interacting with the colonizer's culture as the superior one, are divided between two cultures; that of colonized and that of the colonizers. Confronted with the culture of the colonizer in the process of colonization, the colonized subject gets confused as to find his own worldview. This state of confusion is what Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture* (2000) (13-22), calls "unhomeliness". They do not know to which culture they belong. Neither one is their home. They are caught between two cultures and it seems that they are abandoned by two cultures. They have become a psychological refugee since they cannot say to which culture they belong as their cultures have been blended. This feeling of unhomeliness produces an unstable sense of self because their identity has undergone a drastic change -as being exposed to the dominant culture.

6.1. Katniss's Imagining Home

When Katniss is on the train heading the Capitol, she is imagining her home where her sister, Prim, and mother are spending their lives. This imagining makes her feel lonelier. She thinks about the way she has been spending her morning with Gale in the wood. But it is now like nightmare to her and she wishes to go to sleep and with her waking up she may find herself in her districts: "Imagining my home makes me ache with loneliness. This day has been endless. Could Gale and I have been eating blackberries only this morning? It seems like a lifetime ago. Like a long dream that deteriorated into a nightmare. Maybe, if I go to sleep, I will wake up back in District 12, where I belong" (Collins, p. 54, 2008). As we see she has found an unstable identity; neither belong to her culture as she is away from home, feeling lonely and nor to the culture imposed on him. She is just relieving herself of imagining home so as to feel home again. However, she is living in betweenness of two cultures, wishing to belong to home in her dreams. She tries to forget that she is on the train. She wants to feel that she is home with her mother and with Gale in the jungle. This sense of unhomeliness makes her sad and a psychological refugee. And the only thing that relieves her is imagining home as her birthplace: "the only thing I feel is a desire to be somewhere else. So I let the train rock me into oblivion" (Collins, p. 54, 2008).

In the Capitol when their game of fire is finished, they, Peeta and Katniss, go to their training centre, which Katniss describes as home/prison: "the ride lasts about twenty minutes and ends up at the City Circle, where they will welcome us, play the anthem, and escort us into the Training Center, which will be our home/prison until the Games begin" (Collins, p. 69, 2008). Here the feeling of unhomeliness is quite clear. Katniss does not know if the place they have come to is their prison or their home. It is supposed to be their new home as they are treating them as prestigious persons, respecting them but at the same time it is like a prison for them because there is no way out and they have not stayed there on their own will. She does not know to which definition, home or prison, she should give the priority. During the course of the novel, we see that Katniss is deliberately reminding herself of her hometown to forget the worse situation she is in the Capitol. She relocates her memories of the time she was with her father, mother, and Gale

to alleviate the pain of being away from hometown. She neither belongs to the Capitol's culture when she has been brought to fight and nor to her own hometown's culture as she is away from it. "My mind wanders to my mother and Prim. They must be up. My mother getting their breakfast of mush. Prim milking her goat before school. Just two mornings ago, I was home. Can that be right? Yes, just two. And now how empty the house feels, even from a distance. What did they say last night about my fiery debut at, the Games?" (Collins, p. 87, 2008). In order to escape the disastrous situation of the Capitol where they have to kill one another, she imagines the time she was with the family in district 12. She has found a floating identity and does not know to which culture she belongs; to the culture where they have given her new identity as a killer and through makeup has changed her appearance or to the culture of their home as she does not know whether she is in prison or home.

We see how unstable she has become, to be always imagining home but she is caught between two cultures, her culture and that of the colonizer's, Capitol. She cannot realize to which culture she belongs. However, this feeling of unhomeliness does not escape from her. It has made her unstable and tired of this feeling and wants to experience the feeling of her being with the family soon. She has found a dangling stance in both cultures; one in her dream and the other in the culture in which she should kill. There is a conversation between Peeta and Katniss clarifying her statue: "I want to go home, Peeta," I say plaintively, like a small child. "You will. I promise," he says, and bends over to give "I want to go home now," I say. "Tell you what. You go back to sleep and dream of home. And you'll be there for react before you know it" he says (Collins, p. 294, 2008). These were cases in point how hard she tries to feel home again. But she is caught between two cultures and has found a double consciousness, feeling unhomeliness.

7. Ambivalence as Attraction and Repulsion

Ambivalence is referred to an idea when two opposing feelings and actions happen simultaneously. This feeling is that of attraction and repulsion to an object or a person at the same time. What is meant by this is that the colonized is at the same time attracted toward the colonizer and repulsed from them as they have been suppressed and lost their freedom. Moreover, ambivalence denotes that in the interaction between the colonizer and the colonized complicity and resistance accompanies each other.

7.1. Ambivalence toward the Amenity of the Capitol

This concept is best depicted when Katniss is in the Capitol and is taken into a room for make-up. The person who comes to do it is Cinna, a young man sent from the Capitol. When she looks at him, she does not see anything abnormal about him as it was used to be in the Capitol. There is metallic gold eyeliner that has been applied on his eyes that attracts Katniss' attention. Although she does not feel comfortable of being in the Capitol and she detests them, she is drawn to him and his looks. As she says: "despite my disgust with the Capitol and their hideous fashions, I can't help thinking how attractive it looks" (Collins, p. 63, 2008). She is both attracted toward the Capitol and at the same time-it is disgusting for her. This feeling of ambivalence in the character of Katniss is what Bhabha believes that happens when colonizer and the colonized are interacting with the each other. Although she hates the Capitol and its people as they are suppressing them, making them slaughtering one another, she is simultaneously attracted to Cinna, a man from the Capitol.

In another part, Katniss and Peeta are given food. Although Peeta is hating Capitol, loathing them, he confesses that their food is delicious and fine. Katniss here argues that it seems that Peeta is a happy tribute, not someone hating the Capitol: Peeta says-"I'd go home now if they let me. But you have to admit, the food's prime". Katniss interprets: He's covered again. If that's all you'd heard it would just sound like the words of a scared tribute, not someone contemplating the unquestionable goodness of the Capitol"(Collins, p. 83-84, 2008). As we see this feeling of ambivalence is targeted not just a person but it might be a reaction that the colonized might have toward an object or an action. Here the food is that object to which Peeta shows his enthusiasm. He both despises the Capitol and loves and admires their food.

In another occasion, when Katniss is anxious about her interview, both Cinna and Haymitch are talking to him that she should be herself and that she is very bright and gorgeous that everyone is admiring, her and Cinna argues that her beauty could help her win over the citizens of the Capitol and would make them to admire her: Cinna says: "I don't find you so. The prep team adores you. You even won over the the Gamemakers. And as for the citizens of the Capitol, well, they can't stop talking about you. No one can help but admire your spirit" (Collins, p. 121, 2008). We see here that Katniss is both cooperating with the Capitol and at the same time is winning over them by looking so nice, raising their admiration toward herself, thereby resisting them. She is both resisting them as she is a girl that Capitol despises and belittles but at the same time, by her looks, she is drawing their attention and admiration which causes her to resist and win over them.

7.2. Katniss's Ambivalence toward Peeta

Katniss is more ambivalent about her relationship with Peeta. She is in doubt if she loves him or not or it is just because of the pressure imposed on her in the hunger games. She does not know what her feeling is. She loves him but at the same time she does not, and thinks that her love is not a true love and is due to the hunger games:

Already thinking ahead of me in the Games again and well aware of the danger we're in? Or . . . already desperately in love? I don't know. I haven't even begun to separate out my feelings about Peeta. It's too complicated. What I did as part of the Games. As opposed to what I did out of anger at the Capitol. Or because of how it would be viewed back in District 12. Or simply because it was the only decent thing to do. Or what I did because I cared about him. These are questions to be unraveled back home, in the peace and quiet of the woods, when no one is watching. Not here with every eye upon me. But I won't have that luxury for -ho knows how long. And right now, the most dangerous part of the Hunger Games is about to begin. (Collins, p. 358-359, 2008)

She has a double feeling toward Peeta. She is not sure if her feeling toward him is a crush or just a temporary feeling during the hunger games to save themselves. As Gresh (2011) explains about the ambivalence of Katniss: it" totally confuses her. She swings back and forth about Peeta, whether she trusts him and whether she loves or fears him" (p. 153). She is ambivalent about it. She is both attracted toward him and represses her feelings.

8. Characters' Maintenance of Identity

From the beginning Katniss shows her identity firm and not malleable, even when she has volunteered for her sister and is on the train, she does not cry and in front of the cameras she does not show herself weak, but she acts as if she is bored and upset of leaving her family: "I've been right not to cry. The station is swarming with reporters with their cameras trained directly on my face. But I've had a lot of practice at wiping my face clean of emotions. I catch a glimpse of myself on the television screen ... Feel gratified that I appear almost bored" (Collins, p. 40, 2008). She hides her emotion to look strong and fearless in front of the cameras televising her picture to the Capitol and the other districts. She does not want to have her face and appearance changed. Even when she is given make-up she is not satisfied and does not feel comfortable with it. She wants to own her own identity, which she had back in the district 12, not the one being manipulated by the Capitol through make-up for their use. In one scene of the story when Katniss takes showers and washes her make-up she is very glad and believes that she is herself again and she resembles the one she was before. She is herself, looking like she is heading for the woods in her district: "this is the first time since the morning of the reaping that I resemble myself. No fancy hair and clothes, no flaming capes. Just me. Looking like I could be headed for the woods. It calms me" (Collins, p. 86-87, 2008)

She is most obsessed and stressed when she is in the interview and does not know how to respond and react toward the questions which are going to be asked. She relieves herself by saying: "*Be honest*, I think. *Be honest*" (Collins, p. 127, 2008). This makes her happy, that she is herself, honest and is speaking her tongue. And moreover, when she is finished with the fire game as the opening ceremony, she goes back to her room, taking shower, leaving the remaining make up on her face, feeling as if she is again herself: "I take a shower and scrub the gold paint, the makeup, and the scent of beauty from my body. All that remains of the design-team's efforts are the flames on my nails. I decide to keep them as reminder of who I am to the audience" (Collins, p. 139, 2008).

When in the arena four of the fighters have remained Katniss is so much obsessed with the thought of winning it. She is thinking that if she wins it, what would happen to her. Is she going to be a drunk like Haymitch? She does not want to end up like him:

For the first time, I allow myself to truly think about the possibility that I might make it home. To fame. To wealth. To my own house in the Victor's Village. My mother and Prim would live there with me. No more fear of hunger. A new kind of freedom. But then ...what? What would my life be like on a daily basis? Most of it has been consumed with the acquisition of food. Take that away and I'm not really sure who I am, what my identity is. The idea scares me some- I think of Haymitch, with all his money what did his life become? He lives alone, no wife or children, most of his waking hours drunk. I don't want to end up like that. (Collins, p. 310-311, 2008).

She would like to be like herself; she does not want to have her life and identity changed as she is out of the arena. The interesting scene is when she is arguing it with herself that she hates changing her identity, as they want her to. It is when she has won the game and is on the way back home and is far from the Capitol. It seems that she believes that she is happy that she is going to be herself again as she is without make-up and she is like when she was with Gale in the woods. She changes her clothes to the simple and plain shirt and pant:

with the Capitol growing farther away every second, I begin to think of home. Of Prim and my mother. Of Gale. I excuse myself to change out of my dress and into a plain shirt and pants. As I slowly thoroughly wash the make-up from my face and put my hair in its braid, I begin transforming back into myself. Katniss

Everdeen. A girl who lives in the Seam. Hunts in the woods. Trades in the Hob. I stare in the mirror as I try to remember who I am and who I am not. (Collins, p. 370-371, 2008)

After changing her clothes to the simple one, she feels that she is herself again. She is free from any changes in identity and appearance as she had to in the Capitol. She knows who she is now just a girl from district 12 as she was before but with more experience. Now, when she looks at her face in the mirror, she realizes that she is again- who she is without a tinge of contamination left from the Capitol.

Katniss is not the only character who wants to be herself and keeps her identity as she is. Peeta as the other character accompanying Katniss in the game also wants to be as he is and rejects any identity imposed on him. When Peeta is in the arena fighting, he thinks that he does not want to change by this game and by the identity given to him as the killer. He wants his identity as he is. He is resisting them that they are making a monster out of him: "I want to die as myself. Does that make any sense? He asks. I shake my head. How could he die as anyone but himself? "I don't want them to change me in there. Turn me into some kind of monster that I'm not" (Collins, p. 141, 2008). Peeta also strongly insists on keeping his identity during the hunger games and if he is to die, he prefers to die as himself.

9. Conclusion

During the course of the novel, *The Hunger Games*, we see that the two main characters, Peeta and Katniss, are chosen to be sent to the Capitol to kill the other tributes from the other districts. Katniss and Peeta, as the colonized people, are also attracted toward the way the people of the Capitol live and behave that they try to imitate their accent and their behavior. It shows that although they try to keep their identity but they also are imitating their manners and way of life as the superior one. Moreover, the feeling of ambivalence is vivid in their behavior toward the Capitol. They are both attracted toward them and at the same time repulsed them. And although the Capitol has stereotyped the people of their districts calling them backward and barbarian with which most of the people cooperate and internalize this given identity, the characters resist against this kind of stereotyping by reversing the idea, making the Capitol need them, serving them, and follow what they assign for them through their resistance. They now set rules for them to follow; otherwise, their whole plan would go up into the air. In addition, as the characters are in the Capitol interacting with the Capitol's culture, they find themselves experiencing the feeling of unhomeliness. They are caught between the two cultures in which neither culture can give them the feeling of being home, thus finding an unstable identity. However, as they win the game and are coming back home, they try to keep their own identity uncontaminated, which is a futile attempt since wherever they go, the dominance of the colonizer is felt.

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