The Hunger Games: Creation of "Real" Reality

Prša, Irena

Master's thesis / Diplomski rad

2021

Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj: **University of Zadar / Sveučilište u Zadru**

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:162:760337

Rights / Prava: In copyright/Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.

Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2025-03-03**

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku
Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: znanstveni
(dvopredmetni)

Irena Prša

The Hunger Games:

Creation of "Real" Reality

Diplomski rad

Zadar, 2021.

Sveučilište u Zadru

Odjel za anglistiku
Diplomski sveučilišni studij engleskog jezika i književnosti; smjer: znanstveni (dvopredmetni)

The Hunger Games:

Creation of "Real" Reality

Diplomski rad

Studentica: Mentor:

Irena Prša   Izv. prof. dr. sc. Marko Lukić

Zadar, 2021.

Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

Ja, **Irena Prša**, ovime izjavljujem da je moj **diplomski** rad pod naslovom **The Hunger Games: Creation of "Real" Reality** rezultat mojega vlastitog rada, da se temelji na mojim istraživanjima te da se oslanja na izvore i radove navedene u bilješkama i popisu literature. Ni jedan dio mojega rada nije napisan na nedopušten način, odnosno nije prepisan iz necitiranih redova i ne krši bilo čija autorska prava.

Izjavljujem da ni jedan dio ovoga rada nije iskorišten u kojem drugom radu pri bilo kojoj drugoj visokoškolskoj, znanstvenoj, obrazovnoj ili inoj ustanovi.

Sadržaj mojega rada u potpunosti odgovara sadržaju obranjenoga i nakon obrane uređenoga rada.

Zadar, 9. ruj. 2021.

Table of contents

Introduction

Hunger Games is a dystopian novel series written by Suzanne Collins (b. 1962.) in the span of three years, and includes novels: *The Hunger Games* (2008.), *Catching Fire* (2009.) and *Mockingjay* (2010.). Her motivation for writing these novels is explained in an interview where she states that the idea came from switching through TV channels one night, where one channel had a reality tv competition on, and the other one scenes from the Iraq war, which became fused into one in her tired mind (Armitstead). She also pointed that she was an army child who was afraid of news reports from Vietnam, because her father was participating in the war, and spent her early years travelling to various locations and battlefields, which he explained from a historical perspective. This sum of circumstances led to the creation of the extravagant and brutal world of Panem, futuristic remains of what used to be North America, and the land where Hunger Games reality tv show takes place. In the same interview, the author gives an explanation that the arena of Hunger Games was modelled after the Roman Gladiator arenas[1], and the idea of sending children to battle came from Theseus and the Minotaur.

The Hunger Games trilogy fits in the literary category of dystopian literature, and more closely, young adult dystopian literature, which became extremely popular in the 21st century, and for better understanding of the context, I will elaborate what these categories represent.

Dystopian literature is in the shortest possible definition, the opposite of utopian literature; "specifically that literature which situates itself in direct opposition to utopian thought, warning against the potential negative consequences of arrant utopianism" (Booker 3). Dystopia represents a world where the environment is harsh, people are without hope for a better tomorrow, repressed or barely surviving using scarce resources available and technology and science are used against the human race.

---

[1] This notion is visible from the name of the country, *Panem*, from Latin expression panem et circenses – „bread and circuses : sustenance and entertainment provided by government to appease public discontent" and encompasses the message of the trilogy itself. ("Panem et Circenses").

Specific traits of young adult dystopian literature, according to Balaka Basu, Katherine R. Broad and Carrie Hintz (3-5) are listed in the following paragraphs and the plot of the Hunger Games trilogy conforms to all of them.

These traits are:

1. threat of environmental destruction and, 2. post-apocalyptic dystopia (plagues, WWIII, zombies – world changing events); it is not clear what had happened to North America in the novels, but the natural resources are scarce, each district has its own sector of production, and the Capitol has the right to most of those products, leading to extreme class division and poverty in the districts.

3. conformist societies – void of personality, color, pleasure which embrace uniformity because they are afraid that diversity creates conflict; the upper-class of Capitol and the city are extravagant as can be, but when we get introduced to the rebels and the population of District 13 who managed to survive underground, we see a society which massively emphasizes equality. Everybody wears the same grey uniform, eat the same portion of tasteless food etc. in an attempt to portray their culture and their cause as righteous.

4. repressive regimes enforced through enslavement and silencing of citizens through various methods, physical and psychological – representing authoritative stance of adults towards young people; young people (under 18) are the contestants of the Hunger Games, the adults from the districts work in inhumane conditions, technology is used for manipulation and tortute, the Capitol has Peacekeepers (police/military) who act as executors of punishments at their own judgement and there are actual slaves with cut-out tongues, called Avoxes.

5. many feature an awakening connected to the notion of lasting conspiracy and information availability; Katniss comes to a revelation that much information is being withheld from the residents of districts and her actions inspire other to rebel and start a war.

These novels can, of course, fit into different literary genres, such as Sci-Fi, drama, adventure etc, but these specific traits are what connects them in the genre of dystopian literature.

However, in this paper, I will put an accent on the notion of reality tv and the creation of scripted "reality" which serves a purpose of changing representation, inscribing new meanings and attitudes and ultimately changes social and cultural environment for participants and the audience or creates the **"real" reality** we are living in.

The topic of creation of reality in *The Hunger Games* novel can be approached from different theoretical standpoints - philosophical, theological, anthropological, historical – or even as an interdisciplinary research. However, in this thesis the focus will be on the notions of creating reality through performance, creation of communitas and propaganda, ie. it will be examined from an anthropological perspective. Economic, cultural and historical examples will help to illustrate the past and current social frames that inspired Suzane Collins to write the novels, ie. they will serve to portray how socio-cultural circumstances shape literature, and in this case, how they serve as inspiration for dystopian literature.

The primary sources for writing this paper are the novels that make the Hungers Games trilogy. In-depth reading of this body of fiction will ensure detection of accentuated themes regarding the creation of reality in the imaginary world of Panem.

Said themes will then be analyzed based on the theories of Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner and Richard Schechner who paved the way for a discipline called Performance studies. These authors and their works make the secondary sources for this thesis and the analysis will provide a theoretical frame for the themes and present how the cultural patterns of the society transmit into fiction.

 I will explore the evolution of the reality format, from the "Tabloid TV" to reality television and beyond, proposing that the format is most recently developing greatly on the web, especially social media. Parallel with the current relevant occurrences, new occupations which arise from reality shaping, new forms of propaganda and a greater shift to virtual reality, will be drawn. The initial idea of this M.A. final is to investigate how modern technology and media shape and reshape representations of reality and with what agenda. In a narrower sense, this final thesis will deal with different representations of reality with an emphasis on the

audience that absorbs it (consumers) and through which channels, and the influence it has on their/our lives.

2. Reality Tv and Reality Shaping

Plot of the Hunger Games trilogy revolves around Katniss Everdeen who is the narrator of the story. Through this character we are introduced into the land of Panem, a totalitarian dystopian society that followed what used to be North America in the present day. In the trilogy, we do not get the backstory of the country's creation in detail, but we do know that it was a totalitarian state ruled from the Capitol (capital city) and consisted of 13 districts which rebelled against the government. Following the unsuccessful rebellion, led by District 13 which had nuclear weapons, comes the age of what is referred to as Dark Days – severe oppression from the Capitol over the remaining districts (District 13 is considered to be defeated, a dangerous area where nothing remains but ruins), constant surveillance and punishments by the Peacekeepers (government's police-military institution) and most importantly, the creation of the Hunger Games – reality tv show which takes 2 children from each district each year to remind their residents of the consequences of rebellion. After participating in the Hunger Games, Katniss comes out as a victor, alongside her on-screen romance partner – Peeta Melark. Her defiance of playing by the Capitol rules by wanting to commit a double suicide when her and her peer from district 12 remained as last contestants and survivors, made the Gamemakers (producers and directors) take an unpreceded action and let them both live. This action is seen by the residents as a power-shifting move which starts restlessness in the districts. Katniss is seen as an idol by the districts and a threat by the Capitol. In an attempt to regain power, she is selected again for the Hunger Games special edition next year, where only victors participate and after a coup to get her out of that show and that arena by the rebels, she becomes the face of the rebellion, although her primal motivation is saving Peeta who remained captive to the Capitol. After realizing the impact she holds, she uses it to her advantage and ends the rebellion

on her own terms[2]. We see in the final book that the social order is somewhat restored, now as a republic and that Katniss has continued with her life marked and traumatized by the events that changed her reality and who she is/was.

In the novel, Hunger Games is a Tv show, reality program, which is the main source of „entertainment" for all districts, except for Capitol, which has its fair share of indulgence, based on their wealth, but more on economic discrepancy between these social "classes" will be written later in the paper. This reality tv that we see in the novel has many connections with reality tv in the modern day (24h cameras, contestants, winners, celebrity status), except for a brutal twist of children participating in murderous behavior and exposed to violence. The phrase "Reality Tv" has a discrepancy of its own – can televised content, which is in its core a one-way communication medium and scripted, cut and produced, represent reality? There are many approaches to defining reality and none of the definitions agree completely – we can study it from a perspective of physics, language, mathematics, religion, etc. In the context of relativity theory, for example, reality is „ all that exists 'at present'. It is accepted that the 'past' does not exist anymore (it has been real in the past), while the 'future' does not yet exists (it is a potentiality for possible realities to come)" (Aerts 1)". Even if we take this definition, that reality is everything that happens in the present moment, then reality tv is sure to be true to its name, especially in live coverage or 24-hour surveillance circumstances. However, there is an interesting distinction that Francis Howe Johnson (2-3) writes about and is regarding the personal and collective reality. Individual observance of the world, as he claims, can be opposed to what the collective agreement of the reality is. This can be applied to, for example, contestants in these shows. Each of them can have their own perception of what they must do in order to win (or whatever their motivation for participating is) and the perception of broadcaster of what they want for the show and finally, of viewers who decide what to think of

---

[2] "Katniss, I don't think you understand how important you are to the cause. Important people usually get what they want. If you want to keep Peeta safe from the rebels, you can." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 30)

this environment and people portrayed. Conveying the participant's internal reality will most certainly differ from what the external perception is. Main reason for this is that people are at least set in an environment which will provoke reactions that would not normally occur - for example Arena in the Hunger Games and forcing contestants to face each other is no different that isolating contestants in a Big Brother house, detaching them from their ordinary lives and circumstances to provoke desired behavior and extract desired reaction from the audience.

Hunger Games can be seen as a critique of the culture and society living in North America, i.e. the way it deteriorated into the world and social structure of Panem. Two prominent aspects in which the Hunger Games relate to 21st century societies (especially the so-called first world countries) are the cultural and economic aspect of entertainment industry. Obviously, each culture carries its own marks and features that differentiate them (national, racial, linguistic, gender-related) but here, we will observe them in the context of globalization and pop-culture.

Reality television shows had an immense success with the audience and became a world-wide entertainment format in the end of the 20th and beginning of 21st century. According to Les Brown, one of the first examples of reality tv (which started as a radio show in 1947.) is Candid Camera, a show which used „ a hidden camera to catch the reactions of ordinary people to unusual situations" (91). The genre further developed into following the lives of ordinary people, such as police officers and reenactments of real-life situations using people that are not actors, by the so-called „Tabloid TV" which is „a genre of TV that became the program wave of the early 1990s following upon the success of Fox Network's A Current Affair. Reality-based, frequently playing upon sensational stories, lurid crimes, sex and celebrities (…) (547) We can see how sensationalism plays a great part in the creation of this format, and as Richard Schehner notices, real-life sensational stories precede and serve as inspiration, or at least "rival" the televised content (e.g., expedition to save a doctor from Antarctica in 2001., which he refers to as "real-life" Survivor) (*Performance Studies: An introduction* 127).

Brown's encyclopedia was published in the early 1990s, before the explosion of reality tv format that happened in the late 90's and the beginning of the 21st century, with shows such

as Survivor (1997) or Big Brother (1999). Schechner, on the other hand, did witness this phenomenon before publishing his 3rd edition of Performance studies and did include thoughts on the creation of such formats and the thin line between real and staged.

He had also explored the position of reality Tv in the context of performance studies, and how television started playing with the notion of reality first through films (e.g. The Truman Show or The Blair Witch Project) and then reality tv. The difference between these types of movies and reality tv is that the movies are „fictions about dissolving the differences between the real and the fictional" while reality tv presents itself as authentic and completely raw reality (*Performance Studies: An introduction* 126).

Suzanne Collins took the reality tv show format and placed it in her novels as a tool for entertainment, propaganda, and oppression. She described shaping of reality through various themes, which will now be analyzed in the theoretical framework of Performance studies, and more precisely through theories of performativity, liminality and creation of communitas.

3. "I've Been Right Not to Cry"[3] - Performativity

First theme that became obvious in the in-depth reading of the Hunger Games trilogy is the awareness of cameras which is present in all three novels and relates to the characters being aware that they are being taped and acting accordingly, i.e., this awareness makes them switch from their real personality to their „performing personality" although the premise of reality TV is that the people portrayed are their true self. This happens on an individual level, as well as a part of an arrangement between characters. For example, there are numerous instances where Katniss has an internal debate of what she must look like to the audience and cameras and tries to correct her facial expressions and uses gestures that will convey otherwise:

"I've been right not to cry. The station is swarming with reporters with their insectlike cameras trained directly on my face. But I've had a lot of practice at wiping my face clean of emotions and I do this now. I catch a glimpse of myself on the television screen on the wall that's airing my arrival live and feel gratified that I appear almost bored. Peeta Mellark, on the

---

[3](Collins, *The Hunger Games* 40)

other hand, has obviously been crying and interestingly enough does not seem to be trying to cover it up. I immediately wonder if this will be his strategy in the Games. To appear weak and frightened" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 40)

" I'm glad for the solitude, even though it's an illusion, because I'm probably on-screen right now." (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 152)

" I'm glad for the cameras now. I want sponsors to see I can hunt, that I'm a good bet." (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 164)

The entire love story of Katniss and Peeta was fabricated for the cameras, at least from her perspective, in order to keep them both alive and she constantly reminds herself how she should and shouldn't behave around him not to draw suspicion of the audience in her feelings. Their mentor, Haymitch, is experienced in manipulation of presented content and advises them to behave accordingly:

"Great job, you two. Just keep it up in the district until the cameras are gone. We should be okay." (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 371)

However, the love story turns out to be a real one in the end, so we do have another example of how these "artificial" conditions of the show change the reality of characters or blur the line between the categories of "performance" and "reality". This goes to such extents, that in the end of the first book, Katniss takes off her dress, removes makeup, all of the signs she was a televised persona and after being stripped of those symbols she can't decide who she really is – she feels as she has transformed back into herself and suddenly even the proximity of Peeta makes her feel strange because he does not belong in her "real" life (371). Camera awareness is not only presented in the conditions of the reality show, but also incorporated in the novels as a part of everyday life as well and applicable to everybody, even the most powerful man in the country:

"Do you think it's true?" I ask. "That Snow will let refugees into the mansion?" "I think he has to now, at least for the cameras, " says Gale." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 241)

The theme of performativity is one of the most prominent ones in the Hunger Games trilogy and serves to shape and manipulate reality. In anthropology and other social and

humanistic studies there has been a great influence of the field called Performance studies that is in its essence interdisciplinary and stems from the ideas of Arnold Van Gennep, Victor Turner and Richard Shechner as well as many other notable authors and academics. As far as performance and performative behavior is concerned, Richard Schechner presents an authority with his elaborate ideas and theories. He labels performativity as taking actions as opposed to simply being:

"Being" is existence itself. "Doing" is the activity of all that exists (…) "Being" may be active or static, linear or circular, expanding or contracting, material or spiritual. Being is a philosophical category pointing to whatever people theorize is the "ultimate reality." "Doing" and "showing doing" are actions. Doing and showing doing are always in flux" (*Performance Studies: An introduction* 28)

He sees performance as everything we do, as „twice-behaved behavior" which rests on previously learned patterns – for each action we do we follow a pattern which leads us to the desired outcome (*Performance Studies: An introduction* 35, 52). Some of them are fairly automatic – such as brushing teeth or getting ready, our own private rituals – and some are extremely elaborate, such as religious rituals, rites of passage, theatrical performances, political discourse etc. In the novels of the trilogy, this can be seen in the narratives constructed for the cameras - by Katniss alone, her with Peeta and other characters. She is aware that she must perform and step out from her real character, for the competition and being the rebel leader alike, which leads to her questioning her identity as whole – she cannot distinguish who she is anymore. She even uses these false narratives to identify what is real and what is not:

"I wait for him to mention the baby, to play to the cameras, but he doesn't. And that's how I know that none of this is part of the Games. That he is telling me the truth about what he feels." (Collins, *Catching Fire* 100)

Schechner proceeds to explain the appeal and success of reality tv through the example of the show Survivor and concerning performance and reality he says that "what Survivor contestants are enacting is not improvised theatre, exactly; nor is it real life, exactly."(*Performance Studies: An introduction* 127). This inbetween space can be understood

in the context of liminality as proposed by Arthur van Gennep and Victor Turner and transformation and transportation notion that relate to rituals, and social dramas as connections between performance and rituals. The liminal, inbetween space of performance is presented in the following chapter.

4. "I Begin Transforming Back into Myself"[4] - Liminality

Liminality was first proposed by Arthur van Gennep in 1908 (3) and further elaborated by Victor Turner in the 1960s (*The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* 95). It refers to the three-part process (the preliminal, liminal, and postliminal) of performing where limen, space between, or a threshold which represents the middle part of a ritual or performance, is the action or doing that happens as opposed to simply being or existing (Schechner, *Performance Studies: An introduction* 66-67). For this process, it is characteristic that an individual or a group is stepping out of their normal, everyday circumstances, entering the liminal phase and, after the performance is done, exit as either transformed or transported. The difference between transportation and transformation is in the state that a person or a group is after the performance – if the change that happened in the liminal phase is permanent, transformation happened. If the change is temporary and subject(s) return to their previous identities unchanged, transportation is what occurred (Schechner, *Performance Studies: An introduction* 72-73). This is precisely what we can note in Katniss' character – she went through a performance which she considered to be just for the cameras, but the experience left her transformed, her identity and reality changed in this process. If it were a transportation, she would have been able to return to her previous life after the cameras shut off, as a professional actor does, for instance – steps into a role and out of it.

Another important distinction that Turner made is between liminal and liminoid, where liminal activities are required and more characteristic of rituals and pre-modern cultures, whereas liminal activities are not and are characteristic of modern and post-modern societies and the entertainment and artistic performances (Schechner, *Performance Studies: An*

---

[4] (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 370)

introduction 67). We can take for an example, American Idol or any other singing competition reality show, where unknow individuals enter the competition, go through the liminal stage while its being filmed, and if they win, they emerge as singing popstars with more or less success, but their reality and identity is changed and transformed.

Everything written in the previous paragraphs is conveniently compressed in the following illustration by Victor Turner:
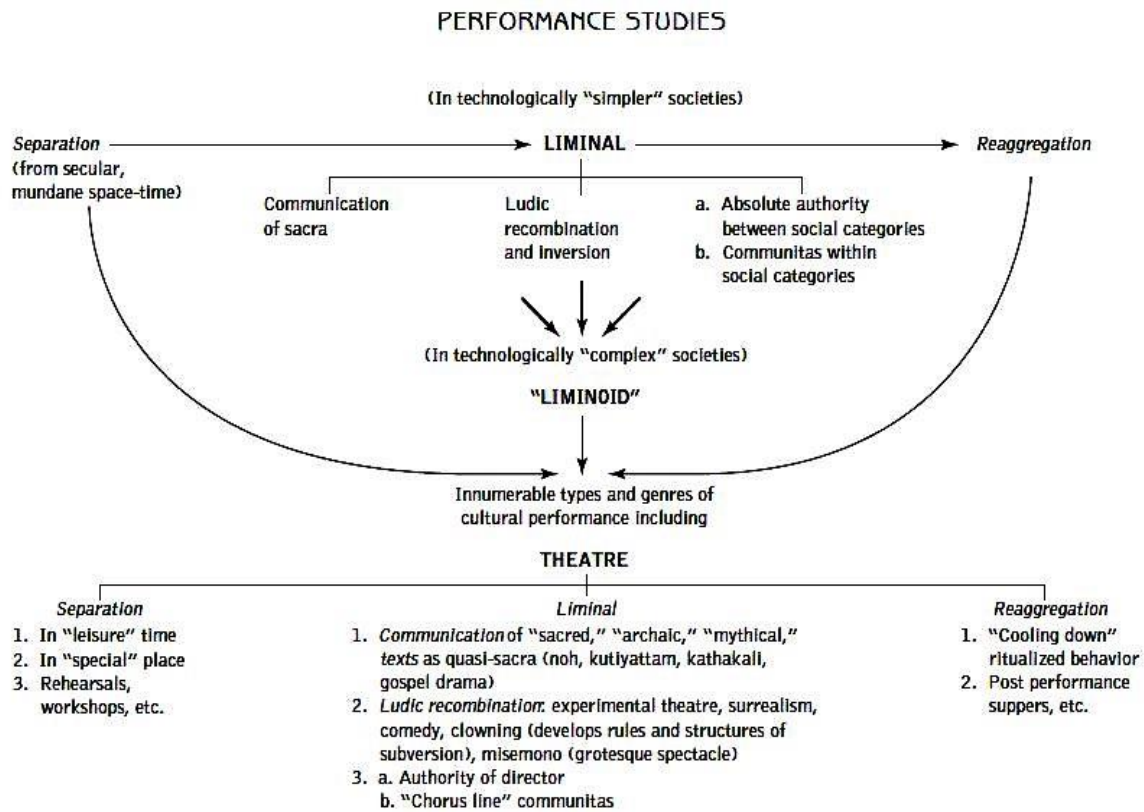
PERFORMANCE STUDIES

(In technologically "simpler" societies)

Separation — LIMINAL — Reaggregation
(from secular, mundane space-time)

Communication of sacra

Ludic recombination and Inversion

a. Absolute authority between social categories
b. Communitas within social categories

(In technologically "complex" societies)

"LIMINOID"

Innumerable types and genres of cultural performance including

THEATRE

Separation	Liminal	Reaggregation
1. In "leisure" time 2. In "special" place 3. Rehearsals, workshops, etc.	1. *Communication* of "sacred," "archaic," "mythical," *texts* as quasi-sacra (noh, kutiyattam, kathakali, gospel drama) 2. *Ludic recombination:* experimental theatre, surrealism, comedy, clowning (develops rules and structures of subversion), misemono (grotesque spectacle) 3. a. Authority of director b. "Chorus line" communitas	1. "Cooling down" ritualized behavior 2. Post performance suppers, etc.

Figure 1 The relationship between liminal, liminoid and theatre. Borrowed from Performance Studies: An Introduction (Schechner 70)

5. "This Capitol Audience Is Mine"[5] - Communitas

Two more themes spotted in the comprehensive research of the trilogy are the desirable traits of a televised persona, and the codependent relationship between the audience and the celebrities. Both lead us into the second theoretical frame. Even though the children that are participating in the Hunger Games are there to be brutally killed by their rivals or die another

---

[5] (Collins, *Catching Fire* 71)

horrible death, they are not allowed to enter looking like themselves. They have an army of stylist and preparation teams that will make them look as appealing as possible:

"Well, you're not entirely hopeless. Seem fit. And once the stylists get hold of you, you'll be attractive enough." Peeta and I don't question this. The Hunger Games aren't a beauty contest, but the best-looking tributes always seem to pull more sponsors." (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 57)

„Cinna has given me a great advantage. No one will forget me. Not my look, not my name. Katniss. The girl who was on fire." (70-71)

„"I don't care if she blew up the blasted Justice Building! Look at her cheek! Think that will be camera ready in a week?" Haymitch snarls." (Collins, *Catching Fire* 31)

The fashion trends stem from the Capitol and its extravagant residents which are in high contrast to the poor, malnourished and ill-looking residents of districts. Since the Hunger Games show is for the Capitol audience's entertainment, the contestants must look appealing to them. The best-looking candidates also attract the highest number of sponsors which aids them in the arena when they are desperate for something that will keep them alive. Besides beauty, ability is another way to show that they are worthy of sponsors, but it sums up to being "special" enough for people to like them. Constructing a dramatic story around the characters also works, as can be seen from the main characters instance. The only thing that is not an option is being plain and boring, because that will not provide sponsors, victory, and subsequent riches. More on the economic aspects of this type of television program follows in the next chapter.

While in the arena, contestant must do everything they can to become as likeable as possible in order to survive, because the audience holds the power that can change their future and lives. Katniss did perform in order to appeal to the audience, which held the power to change her reality in a time of need, but once she reached celebrity status, the same audience became influenced by her:

""No, this year I'm just winging it. The funny thing is, I'm not nervous at all." And I'm not. However much President Snow may hate me, this Capitol audience is mine. (Collins, *Catching Fire* 71)

„Apparently my mockingjay pin has spawned a new fashion sensation, because several people come up to show me their accessories. My bird has been replicated on belt buckles, embroidered into silk lapels, even tattooed in intimate places. Everyone wants to wear the winner's token." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 23)

Transformation into "celebrities", means that the audience wants to know all there is about them and their lives[6]. The audience wants to know the „real" them, what they are like outside of the camera eye, making them loose even more privacy.

Liminality has been explained in the context of characters' performance in the Hunger Games, but it can also be applied to societies and we can now explore how the society of Panem entered the liminal process and how the role of the audience affects social dramas and creation of communitas. Primarily, we must define what *communitas* is. According to Victor Turner, the man who coined the term, communitas "tends to characterize relationships between those jointly undergoing ritual transition (…) (It) is spontaneous, immediate and concrete." (*Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* 274) To put it more simply, it is the sense of community and unity among the audience or participants of a performance that arises in the liminal stage. Although we see that it refers to ritual transitions, it can be extended to performances that are not exclusively ritualistic in nature. Richard Shechner writes about the differences of rituals and performances and claims that one of the main distinctions is precisely in the audience. He divides audience into two categories: integral and accidental. The integral audience is characteristic for ritual performances, it is part of the community participating in the ritual and is, more often than not, obliged to participate. On the other hand, accidental audience appears in aesthetic performances, it is separated from the performer, comes at their own free will and most often, pays for being in the audience. There is a possibility for shifting between these two categories and the shift

---

[6] "They want to know about you, Katniss." "But I don't want them to! They're already taking my future! They can't have the things that mattered to me in the past!" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 117)

depends on whether the audience will separate or form a community as the performance or ritual evolves (*Performance Studies: An Introduction* 81; *Performance Theory* 218-222).

These two categories of audience connect to types of communitas. Following Turner's theory (*Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 70) while people are in the liminal state, they are free of demands of everyday life (structure) and this can happen either in a planned environment or spontaneously. Planned situations form this social „anti-structure" that is called normative communitas and in unplanned situations, it is called spontaneous communitas.

The fandom concept that happened with Katniss in the novels turns the power relations around when she gains "celebrity" influence. For the people of Capitol, who were in a power position, who watch the show for entertainment purposes, who are accidental audience and formed the spontaneous communitas around her character, this means that she became a fashion icon, a trendsetter with her appearance and "mockingjay" aesthetic. For the residents of the remaining districts, however, watching Hunger Games is mandatory viewing and a symbol of oppression. This means that they are obliged to watch (participate) and form the integral audience. The communitas that formed among them is normative, where Katniss became the symbol of the revolution due to her actions and imagery that was artificially constructed for the cameras. She holds the power to move crowds, even into a war and her televised performance is what ignited the spark for the social change in Panem.

Social drama of Panem can also be seen in this three-phase order and the first "stage", the preliminal, was the „spark" that Katniss lit among the citizens with her apparent defiance against the Capitol. Her actions, as a celebrity and an idol, led to people questioning the power they hold and how they can change their reality, if they could mimic her actions and start a revolution that would change the social order that was in place and in which they were oppressed. The communitas, that feeling of unity in the liminal phase, that was created among the districts' citizens led to social changes and them shaping the reality into a desired one in the postliminal phase. John MacAloon notices a similar influence of athletes and the audience on one another in the Olympic Games – the celebrity status is imposed on athletes by the viewers and countries as whole (242 – 263), This status is giving athletes sponsorships, wealth, fame

and influence, but their success and results are shared, because they serve as a symbol representing the country and the nation and as an extension, they become a personification of the power and reputation that country holds. This is characteristic of many, if not all competitive sports on an international level, not just the Olympic Games.

After exploring the effect of the relationship between performers and the audience, I will continue into examining what lies behind the success of reality tv, what is actually the appeal of such format, the motivation to watch it and the economic aspect that is interwoven in the creation and placement of reality tv.

6. "I Wonder Will She Enjoy Watching Me Die"[7] – What Lies Behind the Success of Reality Tv?

If we want to measure the success of reality tv format, we can just take a look at the Realitytvworld's list of all reality shows, which contains 1448. titles[8], just in the USA (Realitytvworld). This website has been following news from reality shows since 2000., which is roughly the time when the format became extremely successful. But, what is the secret behind its success and what is the motivation of viewers who religiously invest themselves in the "real" lives of people participating? Richard Schechner proposes that what the viewers get is "the thrill of the real, sexiness, typecasting, unpredictability, and via the amateur status of the contestants – the "that could be me!" factor" (*Performance Studies: An introduction* 127). This factor along with „real-time" streaming creates a voyeurism stance in the viewer, which is connected to the desire for the seemingly luxurious life that is subsequent for the most prominent participants – the adoration, fame and wealth. But if we apply this to the Hunger Games reality show – not many people want to be in the place of the contestants, apart from the so-called Career tributes, which see it as a privilege. The audience from Capitol does not even perceive tributes as humans, just an on-screen entertainment[9]. The audience from the districts is obliged to watch,

---

[7] (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 85)

[8] Including various season of the same shows .

[9] „but it's something of a revelation that those in the Capitol feel anything at all about us. They certainly don't have a problem watching children murdered every year. But maybe they know too much about the victors, especially the ones who've been celebrities for ages, to forget we're human beings. It's more like watching your own friends die. More like the Games are for those of us in the districts" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 58).

but are terrified of the idea that they might be the ones who will participate – not even the privileged life they would get as victors and that would save them from poverty is a motive enough (seen from the lack of volunteering tributes). The appeal of the Hunger Games might be in the voyeurism of pain, which can be seen as either enjoying watching other people suffering or being intrigued by it, if not enjoying. Pain creates the necessary sensationalism that attracts viewers.

When observing modern day reality tv, we can also note that a lot of them provoke negative emotions from contestants (for example, being isolated with strangers in Big Brother which leads to tensions; being emotionally rejected in The Bachelor/The Bachelorette; being physically hurt in Survivor; reliving psychological trauma in the Biggest Loser etc.). There was a social experiment in 2017., an announcement of a Russian reality show, called Game2:The Winter, where even rape and murder will be allowed (Lee). This can be seen as the direct opposite, i.e. the factor "I am glad that is not me" which makes the audience feel better about themselves, beside the fact that it creates drama and shock-value. Les Brown also states that the criticism of the reality tv ancestor, tabloid TV, is based on "its pandering appeal to voyeurism and downscale tastes" (548). Previously we have seen that Katniss decides not to attract viewers by showing her pain, while Peeta chooses a different tactic, showing his emotions. The reason for this is that she sees it as appearing weak and considers that it will not provide sponsors, which leads us into the next element of reality tv success, and that is the economic aspect.

The premise is that because the viewers are invested in the shows and the participants, they will spend money on them. In the novels that means that sponsors will provide tributes with food, medicine, and other necessities, as well as spend money on fashionable items related to them. In reality tv shows this means the audience will also create a market for the producers and broadcasters, be it through televoting, buying merchandize, product placement or sponsorships. This market that is created is a combination of both the voyeurism factor and communitas factor. Voyeurism represents eg. the "that could be me if I buy this to be more similar to them" or "if I vote for this person, I am participating as well/have control over the outcome". The communitas factor means that the fandom (audience) that participates in these

activities creates a community which shares interests, a sub-culture of sorts. Richard Schechner claims that the reality tv, with its non-stop coverage plays to the market directly, especially with 24-hour web streams (*Performance Studies: An introduction* 128). He also proposes that the slogan for the show Survivor, which is "Outwit. Outplay. Outlast." can be seen as a metaphor for the capitalist market (*Performance Studies: An introduction* 126). We witness these examples every day, especially in the 21st century. For example, the worldwide phenomenon of the Kardashian-Jenner family, which started with a tabloid "scandal" revolving around Kim Kardashian and followed with a reality show about their everyday life, exploded into entrepreneurial moves by different family members. Their business ideas, presented through the show and with other successful marketing strategies made them one of the most influential names in the modern capitalism, and their businesses granted them spots on the Forbes lists of world's wealthiest individuals (Berg; "Kylie Jenner."). This is probably one of the most prominent pop-culture examples of changing reality through this television genre.

However, reality shows are profitable for the creators and broadcasters, which is one of the main reasons this genre still exists and thrives. Les Brown notes with tabloid tv that:

"By relying on actual situations, and in some cases featuring people who had been involved in those situations rather than actors, the shows manage to avoid the high costs of conventional prime-time entertainment. By some estimates, tabloid shows reduce per-program costs by as much as half." (547)

If we take into consideration that in reality tv, contestants are never actors (at least before they get reoccurring roles as celebrities) Brown's claim translates as even more true.

Guy Debord writes about the creation of reality and the capitalist mode and connects them under the umbrella term spectacle, calling it "society's real unreality". He states that life of societies is an accumulation of spectacles, meaning that what happened in real life becomes just a representation. It is not added to society, it stems from it and creates its real unreality and masks the class division on which the capitalist mode of production is based creating an unreal unity, he claims (12–13, 46). Although the world of Panem is not a capitalist society, we can see that the creation of unreal unity is forced upon the citizens of districts through the spectacle

of Hunger Games, which they are the audience for, same as the privileged residents of Capitol. Debord states also that spectacle in all its manifestations (news, propaganda, advertising and consumption of entertainment) sums up society's model (12–13, 46). Again, this is evident in the society of Panem, due to the fact that for the privileged audience in Capitol, they are never participants, and it is entertainment, while for the districts' citizens it is the consumption of terror that they live under. Another example we can note is that, after the rebels succeded in overthrowing president Snow and the government, the idea of president Coin was to create a new reality show – Hunger Games featuring Capitol children[10] – a spectacle in which the new social order would be confirmed.

Moving into the next chapter, I will further explore what effect spectacle, especially propaganda, has on the society and an individual and how it is used in altering reality.

7. "Real or Not Real"?[11] Propaganda, (Ab)Use of Technology and Science, and Paranoia

Suzanne Collins writes the Hunger Games trilogy with intricate details dedicated to the power of "the screen"[12] (production, editing[13] and broadcasting). She builds this atmosphere by describing TV broadcasting as the only media outlet, a one-way communication method that is easily manipulated to suit the agenda of those in power positions (i.e. the Capitol). Even with highly advanced technology, the only other mean of communication is a telephone, and even that is reserved for districts' majors and other high Capitol officials (Capitol residents and victors also have it in their homes, but it is insinuated they are monitored).

Representation of characters was already discussed in the context of their appearance and performance to appeal to the audience, but a great emphasis is placed on what is considered

---

[10] (Collins, *Mockingjay* 266)

[11] (Collins, *Mockingjay* 196)

[12] "You're going to be as useful to the war effort as possible, " Plutarch says. "And it's been decided that you are of most value on television. Just look at the effect Katniss had running around in that Mockingjay suit. Turned the whole rebellion around. Do you notice how she's the only one not complaining? It's because she understands the power of that screen." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 186)

[13] "Is Claudius Templesmith with us?" I ask. This gives Plutarch a good laugh. "Only his voice. But that's ours for the taking. We didn't even have to do any special editing. He said that actual line in your first Games." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 82)

„camera appropriate" throughout the books. For example, when Katniss has a conversation with Rue, a contestant from another district, she is sure they are not being aired because Capitol censors information and does not allow districts to have insight into what happens in other areas of the country: „I wonder if the Gamemakers are blocking out our conversation, because even though the information seems harmless, they don't want people in different districts to know about one another." (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 203)

Power of the screen is further described by Collins through several other notions and concepts. First, the notion of live coverage of the events that contributes to the feeling of reality and conveying the truth. Secondly, televised program being edited and highly controlled, eg. using the same old shot of District 13 that is supposedly ruined and editing false "live" coverage; attempt to stop broadcasting live transmission when victors from all districts hold hands; Katniss discovering that majors have a special news program broadcasted to them exclusively with information from other districts etc. Third concept is turning individuals' lives into mass entertainment, e.g. wedding that is arranged to happen between Katniss and Peeta, with audience participating in every detail, even choosing the wedding dress. Finally, when the revolution sets, we see a war on two fronts – one on the battlefield, and the other on screen, using technology to conquer broadcasting infrastructure and fighting for which propaganda will be pushed.[14]

Propaganda can be defined as "the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people's beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols (…) Deliberateness and a relatively heavy emphasis on manipulation distinguish propaganda from casual conversation or the free and easy exchange of ideas."(Smith).

It can be used in politics, advertisements i.e., marketing, or for religious purposes, for instance. Propaganda in Panem serves mainly in political purposes, to secure the totalitarian social order and a comparison can be drawn with the Nazi propaganda, i.e., the establishment

---

[14] "Our plan is to launch an Airtime Assault, " says Plutarch. "To make a series of what we call propos — which is short for 'propaganda spots' — featuring you, and broadcast them to the entire population of Panem." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 37)

and the life of the Third Reich. Without entering the complexity of the Nazi party and their modus operandi, I will just draw a parallel between these two for two reasons that David Welch and Aristotle Kallis mention in their respective researches of the Nazi propaganda. Welch proposes that the success of propaganda depends on whether the audience already has attitudes and beliefs that allow its manipulation (4-5), i.e., that it builds on existing attitudes, and secondly, does not serve just lies, but the parts of the truth that suit its agenda. The Capitol audience is privileged and wants to keep that order, while the districts population lives in fear caused by the last rebellion that things could be much worse than sacrificing 2 children each year. Once these attitudes change (Capitol audience finds compassion for Katniss and Peeta, and districts find hope in better social order), Capitol's propaganda ceases to have effect and is replaced by rebels' propaganda.

Kallis notes a similar thing, that the flow of information in crucial in propaganda, i.e., which information will be given, and which withheld as well as that the production of mass information cannot be divided from mass entertainment, because the cultural symbols are still transmitted, even in leisure form (2-3). This is seen in the novels through the reality spectacle, while the Nazis used media outlets such as newspapers, cinema and radio, the latter still being relatively new for mass consumption.

Developing and advanced science and technology (e.g., commercial radio for Nazis) plays a great part in propaganda placement and there are various examples in the trilogy where Collins plays with this concept. Booker (7) places science in the context of utopia and dystopia, stating that the effects of science can only be seen in the future, and in dystopian literature, such as Collins' trilogy, it is used for grim purposes, not the advancement of humanity.

The Hunger Games feature examples of using technology and science for creation of deadly weapons and means of intimidation and torture. Genetic engineering[15] is one of the most

---

[15] „But these are the Hunger Games, and ordinary isn't the norm. More likely they will be one of the Capitol's muttations, tracker jackers. Like the jabberjays, these killer wasps were spawned in a lab and strategically placed, like land mines, around the districts during the war (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 185)
„It wasn't real, I tell myself. The same way the muttation wolves last year weren't really the dead tributes. It's just a sadistic trick of the Gamemakers."(Collins, *Catching Fire* 96)

prominent abuses of technology and science in the Hunger Games arena and Panem government control, e.g., creations such as killer monkeys, tracker jackers (killer bee-like creatures and mockingjays (birds used as means of espionage). Another one is the creation of artificial natural occurrences[16] – forest fires, dry rivers, temperature manipulation, blood rains etc. Medical and pharmaceutical technologies are painted as a class-dividing factor, e.g., in the Capitol, everything is available, from medicine to plastic surgery, while the districts have no such luxury[17]. Drug abuse is described as a coping mechanism and, in the case of Peeta, tool for torture[18].

These technologies are the creation of intelligent individuals employed by the Capitol. In the reality show they are called the Gamemakers and represent directors, producers, screenplay writers, basically puppet-masters of the contestants in the arena. They have a dual task – to amuse the Capitol audience and to intimidate the audience from the districts. Being brutal in that task is not only allowed, but desirable due to brutality equaling spectacle[19]. Similarly to the role of Gamemakers, Edward L. Bernays writes about a small group of people, in relation to propaganda, who control the „public mind" and „understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses" (10).

For contestants, and Katniss and Peeta for sure, the Gamemakers control seems as they are pawns in this sick intention, being made into monsters they are not, being used and their futures taken away from them. Their reality quickly changes when they do not obey the rules and do not play the part the Capitol and Gamemakers had planned for them (in the arena and outside of it). In the case of Katniss, this extends into her being used as the face of the rebellion and her realization that even as a rebel, she cannot be herself, but must look the part:

---

[16] "This was no tribute's campfire gone out of control, no accidental occurrence. The flames that bear down on me have an unnatural height, a uniformity that marks them as human-made, machine-made, Gamemaker-made" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 172)
[17] Katniss' mother is a healer who works solely with herbs and other available natural remedies.
[18] „Also, the drugs they use to control my pain and mood sometimes make me see things. I guess." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 7-8)
[19] But something has happened to the monkeys. They are withdrawing, backing up trees, fading into the jungle, as if some unheard voice calls them away. A Gamemaker's voice, telling them this is enough (Collins, *Catching Fire* 88)

„Cleaning me up is just a preliminary step to determining my new look. With my acid-damaged hair, sunburned skin, and ugly scars, the prep team has to make me pretty and then damage, burn, and scar me in a more attractive way (…) Only that was different, since I was a contestant. As a rebel, I thought I'd get to look more like myself. But it seems a televised rebel has her own standards to live up to." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 48)

The fact that Capitol and rebels hold such power over her life, reality and future leads her to conclude that the Games never really end. This is shown by the Victors tour that follows victory, which extends into mentoring new contestants, her fear of having children[20] because they may end up in the Games as many victors' children have (again, spectacle factor), using television to remind everybody that the Games are constantly present (electricity is always on when there is Games related program and it is mandatory watching[21]). Everything that is mentioned combined represents the use of television as a means of holding power through reenactments of trauma the Games cause, with just a little hope to hold citizens and glorifying victory in as the only way of a better life.

The sense of omnipresence of the Hunger Games and the eye of the camera[22] leads into the theme of paranoia and questioning/losing sanity caused by this television show. First, we are presented with the concept of Katniss' realization that she feels extremely lonely in the arena, although she knows she's not alone – the cameras are on her and if she's being aired, many are watching her. Secondly, her teaming up with Rue gives her the sense of a companion, showing meaning of real human interaction. And once out of the arena, with friends and family, she cannot shake the feeling of constantly being watched, of Capitol having an eye on her, prying into her private space. The notion of constant surveillance plays on the idea of Panopticum. Marita Strurken and Lisa Cartwright (96-100) build up on theories of Focault, who

---

[20] „Victors' children have been in the ring before. It always causes a lot of excitement and generates talk about how the odds are not in that family's favor. But it happens too frequently to just be about odds. Gale's convinced the Capitol does it on purpose, rigs the drawings to add extra drama. Given all the trouble I've caused, I've probably guaranteed any child of mine a spot in the Games." (Collins, *Catching Fire* 13)

[21] „Electricity in District 12 comes and goes, usually we only have it a few hours a day. Often the evenings are spent in candlelight. The only time you can count on it is when they're airing the Games or some important government message on television that it's mandatory to watch" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 80)

[22] „I've never seen tributes on the Training Center roof before. But that doesn't mean we're not being taped. "Do you think they're watching us now?" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 80-81)

claims that totalitarian societies have means of torture that keep the society in check, while modern societies count on their citizens to self- regulate. This is only possible because of the the notion of panopticism. Panopticism is adopted from a prison system in which the panopticum is a circular guard tower that has view of every prison cell, while the prisoners do not know if the guard is in the tower or not but behave as they are being monitored. The same is applied for modern societies via various means, e.g. CCTV cameras. In the novels[23], Katniss' feeling of being constantly watched, not knowing how to behave – to perform for the all-seeing eye or be her true self – switching between her real and performative character in the arena and her real-life circumstances leads to her being paranoid and outright questioning what is real and what is not, i.e. she begins losing sanity. First example is the therapy method of establishing everything she knows to be true and building up on that. But the best example is given when a game is constructed for Peeta after his memories have been tampered with by the Capitol (which relates to the abuse of medical technology and drugs again) called Real or not real and later on we see Katniss using the same method[24] – recollecting a memory and trying to decide if it had really happened or not in order to determine her sanity and the blurred line between real and imaginary or artificially constructed.

In conclusion, propaganda has the power to change realities, but it does not operate on its own. Many factors need to influence society and an individual for attitudes to be shifted to a whole new ideology. The advantage of propaganda in reality tv is based on the presumption that the content broadcasted is „real" and the factor that participants are not celebrities, as well as idolizing them becomes a powerful tool to influence masses. In the following chapter I will explore the evolution of the reality format, i.e. the shift it made towards the internet as a channel

---

[23] "I don't know if it's the pods, or the fear, or watching Boggs die, but I feel the arena all around me. It's as if I've never left, really." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 210)
"It's possible I could hoard my pills and then knock myself off with a lethal dose, except that I'm sure I'm being watched round the clock. For all I know, I'm on live television at this very moment while commentators try to analyze what could possibly have motivated me to kill Coin. The surveillance makes almost any suicide attempt impossible. Taking my life is the Capitol's privilege. Again." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 270-271)
[24] "Real or not real? I am on fire. The balls of flame that erupted from the parachutes shot over the barricades, through the snowy air, and landed in the crowd." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 251)

for creating and publishing content. Furthermore, we will see how that format changes in a mainly two-way communication channel.

8. From Reality Tv to Reality Web?

In the previous chapters we have seen how reality tv and participants of such shows can alter realities for individuals and societies, and it mostly concerns the influence that participants have on the general audience and can change their habits, especially consumer habits through transmission of cultural symbols and product placement (sponsorships). The Hunger Games portray this to a greater extent, presumably what would happen if reality tv had even more of an influence on the audience sparking social changes i.e., they present a dystopian stance. Even though the audience have some input into the creation of reality tv shows (e.g. televoting), in the 21st century we witness an even greater input when it comes to web.

The reason for this is the movement from one-way communication where the active participants place their agenda or at least heavily script and edit content (television) to a two-way communication (web) where the audience holds more power. Schechner in *Performance Studies: An Introduction* presents websites as more open and free space which contains less taboos (128). 24/7 web transmission can be seen in some reality TV shows, and Schechner sees "the month-long broadcast of the ongoing lives of the Loud family of southern California in 1971." (128) as the forefather of the genre (128). He also gives an example of JenniCam which was "the creation of Jennifer Ringley who in 1996 at the age of 20 decided to install a camera in her dorm room at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania." (128) She filmed her life and answered e-mails from viewers. For Schechner, this can be seen as the idea behind Youtube (128-129), a website where anyone can post whatever they like and receive feedback from viewers. Not only Youtube, but the appearance of other social media brought about the most changes in this aspect. The role of the audience became even more prominent. The possibility of liking, sharing, and engaging with content made possible several social changes, only some of which are:

- outbreak of new occupations – observing life of individuals who have qualities that appeal to the audience and that audience engaging with them led to the construction of "influencer" careers – people who may become celebrities simply due the number of followers who like and engage in their lives as portrayed (performed) on social media and are therefore given sponsorships and a way to make a living through placing products and services (enticing their followers to buy things that their idol uses). This does not differ much from the influence that celebrities (actors, musicians, athletes) had on the audience before, as trendsetters, but it does differ in the previously mentioned "that could be me" factor because anybody (regardless of talent and physical ability, for example) can start an online platform and create content.

- new marketing strategies – influencers also gave companies another way of placing their products directly to the market, and arguably even a more successful one. The reason for that is that the audience is already filtered by their interests. For example, a company that sells fitness equipment will reach out to influencers who are fitness instructors, fitness models, etc. to promote their products to followers who have already chosen to follow such content.

- appearance of cancel-culture – feeling of proximity to influencers and celebrities through the web and especially social media, enabled by means of leaving direct comments on the things they post or even sending direct messages (and them responding) also created a new concept called cancel-culture. What it represents is the judgment of celebrities' action and if it does not agree with the mass audience attitudes, they are at risk of getting canceled, ie. their careers ruined. The fact that they rely on their following and that the audience can share information faster than ever can lead to them losing their source of income. Some of the recent instances include, for example: beauty youtuber James Charles who lost a number of his followers due to allegations of inappropriate sexual behavior with minors(O'Connor and Haylock); rapper Eminem being a "cancel" target on social media TikTok, due to lyrics in one of his song which speaks of domestic violence (Rolli) and even the former president of USA, Donald Trump, who was blocked altogether from social media after election results, for inciting violence among his supporters, as the platforms reported (Denham).

- social movements originating on the web – the example of Donald Trump portrays exactly how some social movements can transfer from online communities into real life. The event that he was blocked for was the riot that entered the US Capitol Building in January 2021. (Tan and Jamison). Another prominent example are viral footages of police body-cams and videos of passer-byes which feature police officers using unnecessary force on people of color, especially Afro-Americans, which took the Black Lives Matter social movement from social media and internet in general to the streets of USA, sparking violent riots and encounters of police and protestors, as well as vandalism on private and public properties (Taylor). The fact that the protests are also called the George Floyd protests, by the man who died due to police brutality, shows how the imagery of one man can personify a whole social movement. There is a similar instance in *Mockingjay* novel, regarding Katniss:

""Dead or alive, Katniss Everdeen will remain the face of this rebellion. If ever you waver in your resolve, think of the Mockingjay, and in her you will find the strength you need to rid Panem of its oppressors." (Collins, *Mockingjay* 212).

- expansion of categories that take place in the virtual reality – with technological advances and information systems that are available nowadays, there are more and more aspects of "offline" lives that can be transferred onto the web. Most recently, the pandemic of Covid-19 (2020-2021), showed that in order to decrease risk of contagion, many occupations, wherever it was possible were encouraged to start working online (Swartz and Owens), with the exception of social category "essential workers" (emergency workers).

Reality tv pushed boundaries in its own right, but reality web builds up on that and pushes them even more in all of the categories mentioned in this paper. It plays on the notion of performativity by individuals who chose to depict their lives online; we can observe new special forms of communitas created among supporters and followers, and social drama that stems from those communities; voyeurism that is not bound to cinema or television, but fits in the palm of a hand and the audience can participate whenever and wherever they like, and; propaganda that is highly efficient because the audience it has influence on, whose attitudes it can affect, groups itself to be targeted.

9. Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented in previous chapters and the hypothesis that reality television format (and most recently, similar online content) have a great role in the creation of "real reality", I will present their connection. Once again, by "real reality", I am implying the social and cultural patterns of behaviors that have been influenced by the said format (or to which that format assigned new meanings and values).

The theoretical frame in this paper is divided into categories of performativity, liminality and communitas. Performativity refers to actions and "doing" that shapes representation; the process of liminality describes both the performative process and creation of communitas which is important for the unity among the audience and emergence of fandom subcultures, as well as creating social dramas, i.e. changes in the society. However, the process of liminality can be applied to reality itself.

If we observe reality in the same frame, as a liminal process, we can see how the construction of reality happens in the three stages, just as was already presented for performativity, communitas and social dramas:

Liminality	Reality
Phase 1 (preliminal):	Reality
Phase 2 (liminal, where the change happens)	Scripted/performed reality
Phase 3 (postliminal)	Transformed or transported reality (depends if the change is temporary or permanent)

If this is then applied to the investigated topics, i.e., reality format (televised and online) and the Hunger Games dystopian depiction of the same theme, it sums up and gives a conclusion of the entire thesis and can be seen in the illustration below:

Reality	Reality format	Dystopian depiction of reality format in the Hunger Games trilogy
Reality	Real-life contestants (anonymous, mostly middle to upper-middle class), live coverage of events, live social media coverage	Real-life contestants from the lower class of society, oppression, live coverage of events
Scripted/performed reality	Artificial conditions, notion of panopticism and camera awareness, acting (performing accordingly) to appeal to the audience, program editing	Gamemakers creating brutal artificial conditions, contestants performing to appeal to sponsors, program editing (censorship)
Transformed or transported reality (depends if the change is temporary or permanent)	Celebrity status (identity change – shift to upper class), product placement, sponsorships, relationships between contestants, change of social order – new occupations, "cancel-culture", social movements	Celebrity status (Victors – shift to upper class), relationships between contestants, change of social order - revolution

The Hunger Games trilogy gives a literary dystopian representation of reality television format which is important to note due to television being a one-way communication channel. When in hands of the ruling class and with no opposition, it represents a powerful medium for propaganda that controls the social order in place. However, Collins' novels do not touch upon

the evolution of this format, i.e., its online successor, which has proven to be a powerful two-way communication medium that still can serve to push propaganda (social and individual) but is also more easily deconstructed. The reason for that lies in accessibility of technological and scientific breakthroughs (smartphones, internet connection, social media, and web content access) to the general audience, even those in the lower economic classes of society. Creation of reality format does not solely lie in the hands of broadcasting television companies and is therefore less easy to manipulate. What were once pure consumers of the content are now active participants that contribute, more than ever, to the creation of "real", offline, off-television reality they live in.

Works Cited

Aerts, Diederik. "Relativity Theory: What Is Reality?" *Foundations of Physics*, vol. 26, no. 12, 1996. *Crossref*, doi:10.1007/bf02282126.

Armitstead, Claire. "Suzanne Collins: Hunger Games Author Who Found Rich Pickings in Dystopia." *The Guardian*, 22 Feb. 2018, www.theguardian.com/books/2012/apr/27/suzanne-collins-hunger-games-profile.

Basu, Balaka, et al. *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers (Children's Literature and Culture)*. 1st ed., Routledge, 2013.

Berg, Madeline. "Kim Kardashian West Is Officially A Billionaire." *Forbes*, 6 Apr. 2021, www.forbes.com/sites/maddieberg/2021/04/06/kim-kardashian-west-is-officially-a-billionaire/?sh=f3baea321bba.

Bernays, Edward. *Propaganda*. New York, Horace Liveright INC, 1928.

Booker, Keith. *Dystopian Literature: A Theory and Research Guide*. First Edition, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1994.

Brown, Les. *Les Brown's Encyclopedia of Television*. 3rd ed., Detroit, Gale Research, 1992.

Collins, Suzanne. *Catching Fire (Hunger Games Trilogy, Book 2)*. Kindle ed., Scholastic Inc., 2010.

---. *Mockingjay (Hunger Games Trilogy, Book 3)*. 1st ed., Kindle ed., Scholastic Inc., 2010.

---. *The Hunger Games (Hunger Games Trilogy, Book 1)*. Reprint, Kindle ed., Scholastic Press, 2009.

Denham, Hannah. "These Are the Platforms That Have Banned Trump and His Allies." *Washington Post*, 15 Jan. 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/01/11/trump-banned-social-media.

Gennep, Arnold van. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Johnson, Francis Howe. *What Is Reality? An Inquiry As To The Reasonableness Of Natural Religion, And The Naturalness Of Revealed Religion (1891)*. Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1891.

Kallis, Aristotle A. *Nazi Propaganda and the Second World War*. 2005th ed., Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

"Kylie Jenner." *Forbes*, 2020, www.forbes.com/profile/kylie-jenner/?sh=25ebd76355b5.

Lee, Matthew. "Stranger than Fiction: The Extreme State of Reality TV." *Delayed Gratification*, 23 Mar. 2017, www.slow-journalism.com/from-the-archive/stranger-than-fiction-the-extreme-state-of-reality-tv.

MacAloon, John J. "Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle in Modern Societies." Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle, John J. MacAloon, ed.: 241–80. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984.

O'Connor, Florence and Zoe Haylock. "A Complete Timeline of the James Charles Allegations and Controversies." *Vulture*, 12 May 2021, www.vulture.com/2021/05/james-charles-allegations-controversies-timeline.html.

"Panem et Circenses." *The Merriam-Webster.Com Dictionary*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/panem%20et%20circenses. Accessed 30 July 2021.

Realitytvworld. "All Reality TV Shows Index @ Reality TV World - News, Information, Episode Summaries, Message Boards, Chat and Games for Unscripted Television Programs." 2021, www.realitytvworld.com/realitytvworld/allshows.shtml.

Rolli, Bryan. "Gen Z Wants To Cancel Eminem. His Millennial Fans Should Be Proud." *Forbes*, 12 Mar. 2021, www.forbes.com/sites/bryanrolli/2021/03/12/gen-z-wants-to-cancel-eminem-his-millennial-fans-should-be-proud.

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Theory*. London: Routledge, 2003.

 --- *PERFORMANCE STUDIES: An introduction*. New York: Routledge. 2013

Smith, Bruce Lannes. "Propaganda". Encyclopedia Britannica, 24 Jan. 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/propaganda. Accessed 26 July 2021.

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking - An Introduction to Visual Culture*. 2017. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Swartz, Jon, and Jeremy Owens. "Zoom Earnings Roared to Nearly $1 Billion in 2020, and the Stock Is Rising Again." *MarketWatch*, 2 Mar. 2021, www.marketwatch.com/story/zoom-earnings-roared-to-nearly-1-billion-in-2020-and-the-stock-is-rising-again-11614633824.

Tan, Rebecca and Peter Jamison. "Trump Supporters Storm U.S. Capitol, with One Woman Killed and Tear Gas Fired." *Washington Post*, 7 Jan. 2021, www.washingtonpost.com/local/trump-supporters-storm-capitol-dc/2021/01/06/58afc0b8-504b-11eb-83e3-322644d82356_story.html.

Taylor, Derrick Bryson. "A Timeline of the George Floyd Protests." *The New York Times*, 28 Mar. 2021, www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.html.

Turner, Victor. *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974.

---*The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969.

Welch, David. *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002.

10. Summary

The Hunger Games: Creation of "Real" Reality

This thesis focuses on literary representation of reality tv phenomenon in The Hunger Games trilogy by Suzanne Collins, a dystopian young adult work of fiction. The trilogy is analyzed for themes that concern manipulation and representations of reality. Found themes are then incorporated into a theoretical framework of performance studies, with an anthropological observance of how they represent changing realities for individuals and societies, both in the analyzed novels and modern societies. The thesis ends with questioning the position of newer forms of reality format, namely the Internet, and its global usage that also contributes to shifting representations of reality and creating social dramas to a greater extent due to it being a two-way communication method.

Key terms: The Hunger Games, reality TV, creation of reality, performance studies, liminality

11. Sažetak

Igre gladi: Kreiranje „stvarne" stvarnosti

Ovaj diplomski rad u fokusu ima književni prikaz fenomena reality televizije u trilogiji Igre gladi, djela autorice Suzanne Collins koje pripada kategoriji distopijske literature za adolescente. Trilogija je analizirana u potrazi za temama koje se tiču manipulacije i različitih reprezentacija stvarnosti. Pronađene teme su potom inkorporirane u teorijski okvir studija performansa, odnosno izvedbe, s antropološkom pozicijom u istraživanju načina na koji predstavljaju promjene u stvarnosti za individualce i društva, u analiziranim knjigama i u modernim društvima. Rad završava s propitkivanjem pozicije novijih formi reality formata, naročito interneta i njegove globalne upotrebe koja pridonosi promjenama u prikazima stvarnosti i kreaciji društvenih drama na novoj, većoj, razini zbog činjenice da se radi o dvosmjernoj metodi komunikacije.

Ključne riječi: The Hunger Games, reality TV, kreiranje realnosti, izvedbeni studiji, liminalnost