

## The Influence of Id, Ego, and Superego on Love and Sacrifice in Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark's Relationship in *The Hunger Games*

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| Article Info                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <p><i>Article History:</i><br/>Received<br/>22 June 2026<br/>Approved<br/>06 July 2026<br/>Published<br/>31 July 2026</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Freudian psychoanalysis, id, ego, superego, love, sacrifice, <i>The Hunger Games</i></p> | <p>This study examines the influence of Sigmund Freud's personality structures—the id, ego, and superego—on the portrayal of love and sacrifice in the relationship between Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark in Suzanne Collins' <i>The Hunger Games</i>. Previous studies have primarily examined the novel from the perspectives of dystopia, survival, trauma, romance, and socio-political criticism, with limited attention to the psychological mechanisms underlying the characters' emotional development and sacrificial behavior. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, this study analyzes dialogues, narration, and character actions through close reading and document analysis based on Freud's psychoanalytic theory. The findings reveal that love develops gradually through emotional attachment, mutual care, trust, and shared experiences under extreme survival conditions. Acts of sacrifice are shaped by the dynamic interaction of instinctive emotional drives (id), reality-oriented judgments (ego), and moral responsibility (superego), rather than by a single personality structure acting independently. These findings extend previous psychoanalytic interpretations of <i>The Hunger Games</i> by demonstrating that love and sacrifice are psychological outcomes of the interaction among Freud's personality structures. Consequently, this study contributes to literary psychoanalysis by providing a deeper understanding of the psychological processes underlying emotional relationships and moral decision-making in dystopian literature.</p> |

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### INTRODUCTION

*The Hunger Games* is a novel which shows how sacrifice and love can become psychological survival strategies in extreme situations. The characters must make choices based on moral dilemmas, emotional relationships, and the logic of survival. Under these circumstances, love is no longer merely a romantic feeling and instead becomes an emotional motivation that shapes strategy, moral decisions, and acts of compassion. To put it another way, this novel shows how intense pressure may influence people's perceptions of and expressions of love, leading to

sacrifice as a direct result of the emotional bond created during a struggle for survival.

Freud's structural psychoanalytic model provides a suitable analytical framework for delving deeper into the complexities of this interaction. This theory allows us to understand how love and sacrifice are depicted in the relationship between Katniss and Peeta, using the concepts of the id, ego, and superego. Freud (in Strachey: 2024) conclude if Id is the unconscious and impulsive part of the psyche that functions on the “pleasure principle”, superego represents the moral aspects and disregarding situational nuances in determining right and wrong. An ego seeks to

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p-ISSN: 2252-6323  
e-ISSN: 2721-4540

balance id and superego. This is crucial for understanding how love and sacrifice can influence between their moral principles, such as survival instincts and rational decision-making. As a result, this method offers a more comprehensive explanation of how love and sacrifice are constructed and developed under extreme conditions.

The novel is set in the dystopian and authoritarian nation of Panem, where the Capitol enforces its power through the annual Hunger Games, a televised competition in which selected tributes must fight until only one survivor remains. The story focuses on Katniss Everdeen, a daughter of a miner, and Peeta, the son of a baker. Katniss and Peeta are selected as representatives of their district through a lottery system. Each district sends two delegates to compete against members from other districts, and both become district representatives to take part in the competition. Each district in Panem is required by the Capitol to choose a pair of one male and one female, to contest until only one is left. (Hardian, 2025; Ningsi et al., 2022; Ardi & Hidayat, 2018). The characters are forced to deal with threats, fear, and manipulation because to the intense competition atmosphere.

The main female character, Katniss, is a woman who is accustomed to a life full of hardship and suffering since her father died and is often seen repressing her feelings to survive. In a previous study on the impact of long-term emotional neglect, Berzenski (in Abdulsamad: 2025) noted that children who suffer from this issue frequently grow up avoiding emotional contact and suppressing their emotions. Peeta, on the other hand tends to lead a typical life yet frequently demonstrates empathy and self-assurance. In addition to being a struggle for survival, Katniss and Peeta's actions serve as a symbol of opposition to the repressive Capitol system (Kincir, 2023; Gradesaver, 2008; Collins, 2008). Throughout the story, Katniss and Peeta's disparate lives highlight intricate psychological conflicts that affect how their relationships and sacrifices are portrayed.

Katniss and Peeta's personality are shaped by the conditions of survival in *The Hunger Games*, which puts them under emotional strain to make choices. Katniss endured a difficult childhood, with her father's tragic death deeply

affecting her mother. The emotional absence of a mother can leave a child feeling neglected and abandoned, even when the mother is physically present (Abdulsamad, 2025; Crittenden & Claussen, 2000). Freud also explained that when a person experiences very strong emotions in the past, such as loss or other traumatic things, they may bury these feelings deep in the subconscious as a way to protect themselves from emotional distress. While Peeta has a personality based on empathy and moral principles, Katniss's acts show a struggle between impulse, moral obligation, and reason. Peeta is depicted as a physically strong man but he avoids violence except in self-defense, and he also refuses to obey to the Capitol (Abdirizak, 2025; Miller, 2012).

Previous studies on *The Hunger Games* mostly concentrated on major topics like power, dystopia, sociopolitical criticism, and survival tactics. Nevertheless, research employing this method typically just looks at the internal problems of certain individuals, such as Peeta Mellark or Katniss Everdeen, without going further into the psychological connections between them. As a result, not much study has looked at how Freudian personality structures interact not only within each character but also affect Katniss and Peeta's friendship, which develops under pressure and necessitates morally challenging decisions and repressed emotions.

Furthermore, most previous research has focused on survival and political symbolism rather than the psychological processes that contribute to the two characters' acts of love and sacrifice. Consequently, there is a lack of research specifically examining how Katniss and Peeta's interactions influence how they understand love, cope with social pressures, and make sacrificial decisions for each other. This gap provides a crucial foundation for this study, which aims to expand the novel's psychoanalytic analysis. This study argues that love and sacrifice in *The Hunger Games* are not merely emotional responses or survival strategies but psychological outcomes produced through the dynamic interaction of the id, ego, and superego, which collectively shape the characters' emotional development, moral judgment, and decision-making under extreme survival conditions.

## METHODS

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach within the framework of literary psychoanalysis to examine the influence of Freud's personality structures on love and sacrifice in the relationship between Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark in *The Hunger Games*. The qualitative approach was selected because it provides the interpretation of psychological phenomena, emotional conflicts, and interpersonal relationships as represented in literary texts (Eatough & Tomkins, 2022). The descriptive method was used to identify and explain psychological manifestations reflected in the character's behavior and decision-making processes. Using Freud's structural model of personality, this study analyzes how the id, ego, and superego interact in shaping emotional responses, expressions of love, and acts of sacrifice under the bad situations portrayed in the novel. Through this approach, the research seeks to reveal the psychological dynamics underlying the relationship between Katniss and Peeta.

### Data Source

The data in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary data source is the novel *The Hunger Games* written by Suzanne Collins. The data include narration, dialogues, monologues, and character actions related to the psychological conditions of Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark, particularly those reflecting id, ego, superego on love and sacrifice. Secondary data sources consist of books, academic journals, articles, and other scholarly references related to psychoanalytic theory, especially Freud's structural model of personality. Additional references discussing literary psychology, character analysis, love, sacrifice, and previous studies on *The Hunger Games* are also used to support the analysis.

### Theoretical Framework

This study applies the psychoanalytic theory by Sigmund Freud, specifically Freud's structural model of personality consisting of the id, ego, and superego. Id represents instinctive desires and unconscious impulses, ego serves as a rational

mediator between desires and reality, and superego reflects moral values and social norms. In literary studies, this theory is useful for analyzing how fictional characters express emotions, respond to stress, and make decisions based on internal psychological processes. This framework is used to examine how the interaction of these three personality structures influences Katniss and Peeta's emotional decisions, expressions of love, and sacrificial actions throughout the novel.

### Data Analysis

Several stages were employed in collecting and analyzing the data. First, the researcher carefully read *The Hunger Games* and selected relevant data in the form of dialogues, narrations, thoughts, and actions that reflected the psychological structures of id, ego, and superego. The data were collected through document analysis and close reading of *The Hunger Games*. Second, the selected data were classified according to the dominant personality structure demonstrated by the characters. The selected excerpts were then categorized according to their relevance to the research objectives. The data were classified based on the dominant personality structure reflected in each passage and interpreted using Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Third, each datum was interpreted using Freud's psychoanalytic theory to examine how the id, ego, and superego influenced the characters' emotions, motivations, decisions, and behaviors. Fourth, the researcher analyzed the interaction among these psychological structures to understand how they contributed to the development of love and acts of sacrifice within the relationship between Katniss and Peeta. Finally, the findings were organized and discussed to reveal the role of the three personality structures in shaping the characters' responses and relationship.

To strengthen the credibility of the analysis, the interpretations were grounded in textual evidence from the novel and examined in relation to established psychoanalytic concepts and relevant literature in the field of literary psychology. This approach helped ensure that the findings were supported by both the primary text and the theoretical framework employed in the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. The Portrayal of Love in Katniss and Peeta's Relationship

The findings reveal that love in Katniss and Peeta's relationship is portrayed as a gradual emotional development rather than an immediate romantic attachment. Their primary desire is to live and return to their districts unharmed as soon as they are elected as district representatives. But as time goes on, each of them starts to express affection, building their relationship. Peeta is portrayed as someone who continuously expresses his love and concern for Katniss. However, Katniss prefers to repress her emotions and has a pragmatic view of human relationships. One of the earliest indications of the emotional bond between Katniss and Peeta is reflected in the bread incident. When Katniss was experiencing severe starvation and hopelessness following her father's death and her mother's emotional withdrawal, Peeta secretly gave her bread despite the risk of punishment. For Katniss, this act represented more than simple kindness; it became a symbol of hope and survival during one of the most difficult periods of her life. As Katniss recalls, the bread gave her the strength to continue living and searching for food for her family:

“To this day, I can never shake the connection between this boy, Peeta Mellark, and the bread that gave me hope, and the dandelion that reminded me that I was not doomed.” (Collins, 2008, p.21)

From a psychoanalytic perspective, emotionally significant experiences may leave lasting impressions on an individual's unconscious mind and influence later emotional responses. In Katniss's case, the bread incident appears to create an unconscious emotional attachment to Peeta, as she repeatedly associates him with safety, compassion, and hope. Although Katniss often suppresses her emotions and initially denies romantic feelings toward Peeta, the memory of his kindness continues to affect her perceptions and decisions throughout the Games. This suggests that her emotional connection to Peeta existed long before they became tributes and gradually developed through subsequent experiences in the arena. Furthermore, the bread incident indicates that love in their relationship does not emerge

suddenly under the pressure of the Hunger Games. Instead, it develops from earlier emotional experiences that shape Katniss's psychological responses to Peeta. Therefore, the relationship between Katniss and Peeta can be interpreted as a gradual emotional development rooted in unconscious attachment, shared experiences, and mutual care rather than merely a survival strategy orchestrated by Haymitch.

When Katniss and Peeta are chosen to serve as district representatives, their bond grows even stronger and they communicate frequently. But Katniss's affection for Peeta grows more slowly than Peeta's. At times, Peeta expresses his affection for Katniss by asking her to the rooftop, and Peeta's gesture of placing his jacket around Katniss's shoulders represents one of the early manifestations of affection and care in their relationship:

“Peeta takes off his jacket and wraps it around my shoulders. I start to take a step back, but then I let him, deciding for a moment to accept both his jacket and his kindness. A friend would do that, right?” (Collins, 2008, p.54).

In the harsh environment of the Hunger Games, where survival often encourages selfishness and distrust, Peeta's willingness to prioritize Katniss's comfort demonstrates a form of selfless concern that contrasts with the brutality of the arena. Significantly, Katniss initially interprets this act as something that “a friend would do,” indicating her difficulty in recognizing or accepting deeper emotional intimacy. Her hesitation reflects her emotionally guarded nature, which has developed as a result of past trauma and years of prioritizing survival over personal relationships. Nevertheless, her decision to accept both “his jacket and his kindness” suggests the gradual emergence of trust and emotional openness toward Peeta. Therefore, this scene portrays love not as an immediate romantic attachment, but as a slowly developing emotional bond characterized by care, protection, and the willingness to place another person's well-being above one's own comfort. In front of Haymitch, Peeta also publicly compliments Katniss's archery prowess and frequently consumes the squirrel that she sells to her father:

“My father buys her squirrels. He always

comments on how the arrows never pierce the body. She hits every one in the eye. It's the same with the rabbits she sells the butcher. She can even bring down deer." (Collins, 2008, p.59)

Peeta's detailed description of Katniss's hunting abilities reveals that his feelings toward her existed long before they became tributes in the Hunger Games. His ability to recall specific details, such as Katniss's accuracy in hitting animals "in the eye," suggests that he has paid close attention to her for many years. This attentiveness indicates admiration and emotional investment rather than mere casual observation. In addition, Peeta's familiarity with Katniss's daily activities demonstrates that his affection is rooted in genuine appreciation of her abilities, resilience, and character rather than being solely a strategy for survival within the arena. From the perspective of the portrayal of love, this scene illustrates that love in Katniss and Peeta's relationship develops gradually through long-standing admiration and emotional attachment. Peeta's memories show that his feelings are authentic and predate the Games, thereby challenging Katniss's assumption that his expressions of affection are merely part of Haymitch's survival strategy. Furthermore, Peeta's admiration for Katniss's strength and self-sufficiency suggests that love in the novel is portrayed not only as romantic attraction but also as deep respect and appreciation for another person's qualities.

Katniss realized that he was trying to protect her when he loudly shouted that he wanted to go, and Peeta's statement can be interpreted as a strategic attempt to divert attention away from Katniss and protect her from potential threats. Rather than merely demonstrating affection, this action reflects Peeta's willingness to sacrifice his own position in order to increase Katniss's chances of survival. Thus, love in their relationship is portrayed not only through emotional expression but also through conscious acts of self-sacrifice.

Haymitch's strategy influences the development of Katniss and Peeta's relationship during the Games. By instructing them to remain together in public and encouraging the image of a romantic couple, Haymitch transforms their relationship into a survival strategy designed to attract sponsors and public sympathy. Although Peeta appears sincere in expressing his feelings, Katniss initially approaches this strategy

pragmatically, viewing their public displays of affection primarily as a means of increasing their chances of survival. Peeta freely said that he liked Katniss in the pre-games interview. Peeta stated that getting the woman he desired would not be possible even if he won, and Peeta explained the reason, "*Because... because... she came here with me*" (Collins, 2008, p. 85) where "she" refers to Katniss as his partner. Consequently, the boundary between genuine emotion and strategic performance becomes increasingly difficult for Katniss to distinguish.

Although Katniss and Peeta spend much of the early stages of the Games apart, their emotional connection continues to influence Katniss's thoughts and decisions. She thinks about Peeta on the first day of the Games, she also wants to know if he made it through the first day in the arena (Collins, 2008 p. 102). This concern suggests that their relationship extends beyond a temporary alliance formed for strategic purposes. Despite her pragmatic nature and strong survival instincts, Katniss remains emotionally invested in Peeta's well-being, indicating the gradual emergence of genuine emotional attachment. Furthermore, Katniss acknowledges her reluctance to kill Peeta because she believes that Peeta lacks the confidence she needs to live, Katniss is concerned for him and does not want to kill him in order to win (Collins, 2008 p. 102). This statement reflects a significant shift in her perception of Peeta. Rather than viewing him solely as a competitor, Katniss begins to see him as someone she values and wishes to protect. Her unwillingness to consider sacrificing Peeta for her own victory demonstrates that emotional attachment increasingly challenges the survival-oriented mindset imposed by the Games. Therefore, this scene portrays love as a gradual emotional development in which care, compassion, and personal attachment become increasingly influential, even under extreme circumstances:

"My father knew and he taught me some before he was blown to bits in a mine explosion. There was nothing even to bury. I was eleven then. Five years later, I still wake up screaming for him to run." (Collins, 2008, p.3)

From the data above we can know that because of their different backgrounds, Katniss and Peeta show love in different ways. Katniss is used

to repressing her feelings and putting her mother's and sister's needs first, especially after her father passed away tragically as a miner when she was just 11 years old. Katniss's traumatic childhood experiences significantly influence the way she expresses and interprets emotions. Following her father's death and her mother's emotional withdrawal, Katniss develops a pragmatic outlook on relationships and tends to suppress personal feelings in order to prioritize survival. Consequently, although her emotional attachment to Peeta gradually develops throughout the Games, she often struggles to distinguish genuine affection from actions motivated by survival needs. This emotional restraint contributes to her uncertainty regarding the true nature of her feelings toward Peeta. Consistent with the discussion presented in the Introduction, the present findings support Berzenski's argument (as cited in Abdulsamad, 2025) that childhood trauma is associated with emotional suppression and avoidance of emotional intimacy, as reflected in Katniss's emotional development. Similarly, Katniss's father's death and her mother's emotional withdrawal contribute to her emotionally guarded nature and delay the development of romantic attachment. However, while previous studies primarily emphasize the influence of trauma on emotional behavior, the present study further reveals that love and sacrifice in Katniss and Peeta's relationship are shaped not only by traumatic experiences but also by the dynamic interaction among Freud's personality structures. Thus, this study extends existing interpretations by demonstrating that the portrayal of love and sacrifice in *The Hunger Games* emerges through the continuous negotiation among instinctive desires, moral values, and reality-based considerations under extreme survival conditions.

Previous studies have also highlighted Peeta's compassionate and nonviolent nature. Abdirizak (2025) and Miller (2012) argue that although Peeta is physically strong, he avoids violence except in situations of self-defense and consistently resists complying with the Capitol's expectations. These findings are consistent with the present study, which demonstrates that Peeta's expressions of love are closely associated with care, protection, and self-sacrifice rather than aggression or self-interest. Throughout the novel, Peeta

repeatedly prioritizes Katniss's well-being over his own survival, suggesting that his affection is rooted in genuine compassion and moral commitment. However, while previous studies primarily emphasize Peeta's resistance to violence, the present study further reveals that such behavior is shaped by the dynamic interaction among Freud's personality structures. Thus, Peeta's acts of love and sacrifice can be understood not merely as personal traits, but as psychological outcomes emerging from the negotiation between instinctive desires, moral values, and reality-based considerations.

After being apart and living alone for a few days, their bond grows when they reunite in the arena. Katniss is emotionally affected by Peeta's injuries; she decides to stay with him just to take care of him and make sure he recovers because she cannot abandon her lover to die. "... suddenly, out of nowhere, I'm scared he's going to die." (Collins, 2008, p.169). Katniss's actions show that Peeta's presence has an emotional worth that transcends her own interests, which runs counter to her basic logic in a circumstance where resources are scarce and personal safety is the first priority. Katniss's fear of losing Peeta suggests a significant change in her emotional development. Earlier in the novel, Katniss primarily prioritizes survival and often suppresses personal feelings. However, her reaction to Peeta's condition indicates that their relationship has evolved beyond a strategic alliance. Although Katniss remains uncertain about the nature of her feelings, her concern for Peeta demonstrates the gradual emergence of emotional attachment:

"His hand brushes the loose strands of my hair off my forehead. Unlike the staged kisses and caresses so far, his gesture seems natural and comforting. I don't want him to stop and he doesn't. He's still stroking my hair when I feel asleep." (Collins, 2008, p.172)

This scene marks a development in Katniss and Peeta's relationship. Unlike the earlier displays of affection that Katniss perceives as part of their survival strategy, Peeta's gesture appears "natural and comforting," leading her to recognize the sincerity of his affection. Katniss's desire for Peeta not to stop stroking her hair further indicates her growing emotional openness and trust, which contrast with her typically guarded personality.

Therefore, this scene portrays love as a gradual emotional process characterized by genuine care, emotional intimacy, and the development of mutual trust.

Katniss's decision to risk her own safety in order to obtain medicine for Peeta illustrates how affection can motivate self-sacrificial behavior. Despite understanding the dangers involved, she chooses to place Peeta's well-being above her personal safety. This action suggests that emotional attachment has become an important factor influencing her decisions within the arena. The decision to consume the nightlock berries represents the culmination of Katniss and Peeta's emotional development throughout the Games. At this point, both characters are unwilling to sacrifice one another for personal victory. Peeta makes the ultimate sacrifice for Katniss when she declares that there must be a winner and that only one of them will survive (Collins, 2008, p.224) He thinks Katniss deserves to win more than Peeta and that if she does, her life will be better. Katniss also wants Peeta to live since she doesn't want to witness his death. Their decision suggests that their relationship has evolved beyond a strategic alliance into a meaningful emotional bond. Rather than accepting survival at the cost of losing each other, they choose to remain together, highlighting how love becomes more significant than individual success.

Katniss frequently sees sick people in a variety of situations coming her home, but she finds it difficult to deal with them. She declares, *"I want to run away. Disappear into the woods like I did that day they brought the burn victim to our house..."* (Collins, 2008, p.166) after seeing Peeta's leg wound. Although Katniss believes she has the strength to see such a thing, she decides to confront her fears in order to save Peeta. Her behavior demonstrates that their relationship has evolved into an emotional connection that fosters an ability to make sacrifices for one another's protection, surpassing the necessity for survival.

The culmination of Katniss and Peeta's emotional development is reflected in the nightlock berry incident. When the Capitol revokes the rule allowing two victors from the same district, both characters are once again forced to confront the possibility of sacrificing one another in order to survive. However, rather than accepting individual

victory, Katniss proposes that they consume the poisonous nightlock berries together. This decision suggests that their relationship has evolved beyond a strategic alliance formed for survival purposes. Throughout the Games, Katniss repeatedly questions the authenticity of her feelings and often interprets their interactions as part of Haymitch's strategy. Nevertheless, her refusal to imagine a future without Peeta indicates that her emotional attachment has become genuine and psychologically significant. Likewise, Peeta's willingness to die alongside Katniss further demonstrates the depth of his affection and commitment. From a psychoanalytic perspective, emotionally meaningful relationships may gradually reshape an individual's priorities and emotional responses. The nightlock berry incident demonstrates that both Katniss and Peeta ultimately value their emotional bond above individual victory. Therefore, love in their relationship is portrayed as a gradual emotional development characterized by mutual care, emotional dependence, and the willingness to sacrifice personal interests for one another.

Therefore, the novel portrays love as a complex psychological process shaped by survival, trauma, and mutual care. Throughout the Games, Katniss and Peeta's relationship developed, although in the end, Katniss was still unsure of her feelings for Peeta. Without really questioning whether Peeta's affections for her were sincere, Katniss persisted in thinking that Peeta was using Haymitch's tactic to obtain sympathy and support. Peeta understood, according to Haymitch, even before Katniss revealed it was all a ruse. The confusion between Katniss and Peeta was mostly caused by Haymitch. Katniss believed Haymitch when he said that Peeta understood without any obvious explanation. Katniss's amorous actions throughout the Games were always determined by Haymitch's desired perception of their passion. Katniss told Haymitch about her love story with Peeta during the last interview, but she questioned whether she had been telling the truth when she heard Haymitch sigh with relief. This demonstrated that Katniss continued to cooperate with Haymitch.

Katniss reflects on her feelings toward Peeta and realizes that she cannot yet distinguish whether her actions were motivated by genuine

affection, survival, defiance against the Capitol, concern for public perception, or moral obligation. She admits that her feelings are "*too complicated*" to understand at that moment (Collins, 2008, p. 232). Katniss's reflection reveals the complexity of her emotional development throughout the Hunger Games. Unlike Peeta, who openly expresses his feelings, Katniss struggles to distinguish the motives behind her actions toward him. Her uncertainty about whether her behavior is driven by love, anger toward the Capitol, social expectations, moral obligation, or survival strategy demonstrates the psychological complexity of her relationship with Peeta. This internal conflict suggests that Katniss's feelings do not emerge as immediate romantic affection but develop gradually through a series of shared experiences and life-threatening situations. Furthermore, Katniss's inability to "separate out" her feelings indicates that her emotional attachment to Peeta has become deeply intertwined with her experiences in the arena. Although she initially perceives many of her actions as part of Haymitch's strategy, her acknowledgment that some of her actions may have been motivated because she "cared about him" suggests the gradual recognition of genuine affection. Thus, this scene portrays love as a complex and evolving emotional process rather than a simple or straightforward emotion.

From the perspective of love and sacrifice, Katniss's reflection also illustrates that acts of sacrifice can stem from multiple psychological motivations simultaneously. Her willingness to protect and care for Peeta cannot be attributed solely to strategic considerations or external expectations. Instead, her actions increasingly reflect authentic emotional attachment, indicating that love in their relationship develops through the interaction of personal feelings, moral considerations, and the extreme circumstances of survival.

As they discuss their future after the Games, Peeta asks Katniss what will remain of their relationship once they return to District 12. Katniss admits that she is unable to answer because she becomes increasingly confused as they get closer to home. Peeta responds with visible disappointment, revealing the emotional pain caused by Katniss's uncertainty (Collins, 2008, p. 242). Katniss's tendency to repress emotions continues to shape

her perception of Peeta throughout the Games. Katniss remains uncertain about the authenticity of her feelings for Peeta. This uncertainty is largely influenced by Haymitch's strategy, which requires their relationship to be publicly performed for survival purposes. As a result, Katniss struggles to differentiate between actions motivated by genuine affection and those performed as part of the Games. Her confusion at the end of the novel suggests that the relationship has evolved emotionally, even though she has not yet fully understood the nature of her feelings. However, Peeta was unaware of this until Katniss disclosed that Haymitch had been controlling his behavior in the arena. Peeta was taken aback by Katniss's reply since he had not anticipated a concealed return of his sentiments. Katniss was confused by his inquiry because she didn't feel like she could respond at the moment.

Overall, these findings suggest that love in Katniss and Peeta's relationship is portrayed as a gradual emotional development rather than an immediate romantic attachment. While Peeta openly expresses affection from the beginning, Katniss's feelings emerge more slowly due to her traumatic experiences and emotional restraint. While the previous discussion illustrates the portrayal of love in Katniss and Peeta's relationship, understanding why the characters express love and engage in acts of sacrifice requires further psychological analysis. To address the question, the following sections examine how Freud's personality structures and their interaction influence the characters' emotional responses and behavioral decisions throughout the novel.

## **2. The Influence of the Id, Ego and Superego on Love and Sacrifice**

### **2.1 The Influence of Id**

Consistent with Freud's concept of the id, several actions performed by Katniss and Peeta reflect instinctive emotional needs that emerge under extreme conditions. In the context of the Games, the desire for emotional attachment and protection becomes increasingly important despite the constant struggle for survival. One of the evidences of the influence of the id is seen during the interview session where Peeta revealed that he has a deep love affair on Katniss for a long time.

The statement was made on impulse of the moment without taking seriously one's own interests or the opinions of others. Peeta responded, "*It was my idea, Haymitch just helped me with it.*" (Collins, 2008, p. 88) to Katniss' statement that Haymitch had pressured her to do it. This indicates that if Peeta's confession of feelings was only motivated by his desire, he wanted to make it public prior to the start of the Games because it did not ensure his safety in the arena:

"Whatever. But I bet he's smart enough to know a bluff when he sees it. Besides you didn't say you loved me, so what does it matter?" (Collins, 2008, p.89)

Peeta's confession may be interpreted as an expression of the id because it prioritizes the fulfillment of emotional desires over practical consequences. In the context of the Hunger Games, publicly admitting his feelings could reduce his chances of survival and expose him to emotional rejection. Nevertheless, Peeta chooses to reveal his feelings, suggesting that his unconscious desire for emotional expression outweighs considerations of personal safety. This behavior reflects Freud's pleasure principle, in which the id seeks immediate gratification of emotional needs without fully considering external realities.

The id's influence manifests in a more complicated way in Katniss because she's main need at the start of the novel is survival. As a person who had to care for her family and suffer a tough childhood, Katniss's innate desire to survive grows stronger. Her choices throughout the Games, which were more focused on self-preservation, demonstrate this. But as Katniss gets to know Peeta, repressed emotions start to surface. These emotions are evident when Katniss witnesses Peeta's severe injuries. Despite being aware of the dangers, Katniss chooses to keep attempting to heal Peeta.

Faced with Peeta's serious injury, Katniss initially feels the urge to escape from the situation, admitting that she "*want[s] to run away*" (Collins, 2008, p. 166). However, instead of giving in to that impulse, she attempts to remain calm and care for him despite feeling unprepared. Katniss's decision to remain with Peeta despite her fear of his injuries may also reflect the influence of the id. Initially, Katniss's dominant instinct is self-preservation;

however, her growing emotional attachment to Peeta creates a competing instinctive need for closeness and protection. Her refusal to abandon him suggests that emotional attachment has become sufficiently powerful to challenge her survival-oriented impulses. Thus, the scene illustrates how the id not only manifests through biological survival instincts but also through unconscious emotional needs for attachment and security. As previously discussed in the nightlock berry incident, Katniss and Peeta refuse to be separated despite the possibility of individual survival. From a Freudian perspective, this behavior may reflect the influence of the id, as their instinctive need for emotional attachment and fear of losing one another temporarily outweigh the instinct for individual victory. The incident suggests that emotional needs can become as powerful as biological survival instincts under extreme circumstances. Katniss said that if Peeta dies, Katniss will prevail, but she won't actually return home; instead, she will live out the rest of her days in the arena, contemplating her path home.

Overall, the evidence indicates that the id influences the development of love and sacrifice in Katniss and Peeta's relationship. Instinctive emotional needs, fear of separation, and the desire for emotional attachment repeatedly motivate both characters' decisions. These findings suggest that, under extreme circumstances, unconscious emotional impulses can become as influential as the instinct for survival. Therefore, the analysis shows that the id contributes substantially to shaping acts of love and self-sacrifice in the novel. Although instinctive emotional impulses play an important role in shaping the characters' behavior, these impulses are not expressed without consideration of external realities. Therefore, the following section examines the role of the ego in mediating emotional needs and practical circumstances

## 2.2 The Influence of Ego

Freud's concept of the ego can be observed in the ways Katniss and Peeta adjust their emotional responses to the realities of the arena. Rather than acting solely on instinct or moral considerations, both characters frequently make decisions based on practical circumstances in order

to maximize their chances of survival. An example of ego influence is Katniss's decision to follow Haymitch's tactic and pretend to be in a romantic relationship with Peeta in front of the crowd. Although Katniss does not initially recognize or fully understand her feelings for Peeta, she realizes that publicly displaying affection can increase sponsor support and improve their chances of survival. Rather than acting solely on emotional impulses or moral principles, Katniss adapts her behavior to the realities of the arena. This adaptation reflects Freud's reality principle, demonstrating how the ego transforms emotional experiences into practical strategies while still allowing emotional attachment to develop gradually. Katniss claimed that she followed her instincts and that it was the first time she had ever kissed a man. Based on the kiss, she was able to know that Peeta had a fever. (Collins, 2008, p.169)

Another example of the ego's influence is evident when Peeta is seriously injured and depends entirely on Katniss for survival. Faced with this situation, Katniss must negotiate between her emotional attachment to Peeta and the harsh realities of the arena. On the one hand, allowing Peeta to die would increase her chances of becoming the sole victor. On the other hand, abandoning him would not only conflict with her growing emotional attachment and sense of gratitude for his previous sacrifices, but could also jeopardize sponsor support that is essential for survival. Rather than acting solely on self-preservation or emotional impulse, Katniss chooses to care for Peeta while simultaneously recognizing the strategic advantages of maintaining their relationship. From a Freudian perspective, this decision illustrates the operation of the ego through the reality principle. The ego mediates between Katniss's instinctive desire to survive, her emotional concern for Peeta, and the external demands imposed by the Games. By deciding to protect and care for Peeta, Katniss demonstrates that acts of love and sacrifice are not merely impulsive emotional responses but are also shaped by rational consideration and adaptation to external circumstances. Therefore, her sacrifice emerges as the result of the ego's ability to reconcile emotional needs with the realities of survival.

In spite of Katniss, Peeta is also influenced by ego. In order to prevent Katniss from being

discovered by rival competitors, Peeta chose to let Katniss make her way ahead of the other Careers rather than follow her and survive together. Peeta saw that he had little chance of succeeding on his own in the setting of ego. As a result, he made a decision that increased Katniss's chances of survival. In this case, Peeta would live longer if he joined the Careers. In addition, he could keep an eye on other rivals' whereabouts to avoid putting Katniss in risk. Additionally, the fact that Peeta offered Katniss bread when they were young shows the impact of ego on how their relationship developed. Because his mother would reprimand him if he just gave Katniss the bread, Peeta's ego searched for a means to assist her without being seen. He therefore purposefully allowed the bread to burn and become unsellable so that he could give it to Katniss. Using this, Peeta gave it to Katniss in secret.

The previously discussed nightlock berry incident also illustrates the mediating role of the ego. Faced with the conflicting demands of survival, emotional attachment, and the Capitol's regulations, Katniss identifies an alternative course of action by proposing joint suicide. This decision demonstrates the ego's operation through the reality principle, as it seeks a practical solution that allows both characters to preserve their emotional bond while simultaneously resisting external constraints. The analysis reveals that the ego plays a crucial role in regulating emotional attachment within the harsh realities of the Games. Rather than acting solely on instinctive desires or moral considerations, Katniss and Peeta frequently adapt their behavior according to practical circumstances and survival demands. Consequently, many acts of love and sacrifice in the novel emerge through rational adjustment and strategic decision-making. These findings demonstrate that the ego functions as an essential mediator between emotional needs and external realities. Beyond reality-based considerations, the characters' decisions are also influenced by moral principles and ethical values. Consequently, the next section discusses the role of the superego in shaping acts of love and sacrifice.

### ***2.3 The Influence of the Superego***

The influence of the superego is evident in several decisions made by Katniss and Peeta, particularly when moral principles guide their

actions despite the life-threatening conditions of the Games. One of the many choices and deeds in this book that are impacted by the superego is before the Hunger Games started, Peeta told Katniss that he did not want the Hunger Games to make him a cruel person. Even though he was in a setting where players had to kill each other, Peeta wanted to continue trying to be himself and not be swayed by the games that compel people to be the cruellest versions of themselves. This statement demonstrates the powerful effect of the superego because Peeta considered about his moral principles in addition to survival tactics. Even in the face of tremendous pressure, the superego drove him to preserve his individuality and humanity. Peeta's preference to uphold moral values over sacrificing others for his own gain has an impact on his relationship with Katniss as well. When he did it, it is the first instance of the superego's influence. When Peeta witnesses Katniss hungry as a kid, he feels compelled to follow his conscience and assist her despite the possibility of receiving a punishment from his mother. Peeta considers ways to help Katniss because he doesn't want to allow others to go hungry.

Consistent with his earlier actions, Peeta repeatedly prioritizes Katniss's safety over his own survival. From a Freudian perspective, this behavior may reflect the influence of the superego, as his decisions are guided not only by personal desires but also by moral responsibility and compassion. Because his decisions are guided by moral values rather than self-interest. In a competition designed to encourage violence and self-preservation, Peeta consistently prioritizes Katniss's well-being over his own survival. His actions suggest that ethical principles, compassion, and responsibility toward others remain stronger than his instinctive desire to survive. Consequently, love in Peeta's case is expressed not merely as emotional attachment but also as a moral commitment grounded in the superego.

Katniss's decision to seek medical assistance for Peeta may also reflect the influence of the superego. Rather than abandoning him to increase her own chances of survival, she chooses to care for him because doing otherwise would conflict with her moral values and sense of compassion. This decision indicates how ethical considerations

can shape behavior even under life-threatening circumstances. The nightlock berry incident, discussed earlier, may also be interpreted as evidence of the superego's influence. Although the rules of the Games require one tribute to eliminate the other, neither Katniss nor Peeta is willing to kill the person they care about. Their refusal to secure victory through violence suggests that moral values and compassion remain influential despite the life-threatening circumstances imposed by the Capitol. In addition to protesting the Capitol's system that compels participants to kill one another and transforms them into mutants after death, Katniss and Peeta refuse to kill each other because it is not justified by their morals. As a result, they choose to oppose it rather than comply or keep quiet.

Overall, the love and sacrifice in Katniss and Peeta's relationship result from the dynamic interaction among Freud's personality structures rather than from a single psychological structure operating independently. Throughout the novel, instinctive desires, moral values, and reality-based considerations continuously interact to shape emotional responses and behavioral decisions. Therefore, the question is answered by demonstrating that acts of love and sacrifice emerge through the negotiation and interaction among the id, ego, and superego under extreme circumstances. However, the id, ego, and superego do not operate independently. Instead, these personality structures continuously interact and negotiate with one another, ultimately shaping the characters' emotional and behavioral responses. The following section examines this dynamic interaction in greater detail.

#### ***2.4 The Interaction of the Id, Ego, and Superego in Shaping Love and Sacrifice***

The acts of love and sacrifice that Katniss and Peeta undertake in the novel *The Hunger Games* are the outcome of discussions between their moral principles and compassion for others, the actual circumstances of their predicament, and their urge to survive. Nearly every choice and action they make throughout the story is influenced by these three elements. Several examples of incidents in *The Hunger Games* show how the three personality structures' interactions have an impact. Negotiations between each personality structure, disputes between personality structures, and the

dominance of one personality structure are some examples of this interaction. One instance of how the three personality structures interact is when Peeta gave bread to a starved Katniss when she was a child. That incident further illustrates the interaction among Freud's personality structures. As previously discussed, Peeta's action creates the foundation of his emotional relationship with Katniss. From a psychoanalytic perspective, his immediate desire to help Katniss reflects the influence of the id, whereas his compassion and sense of responsibility indicate the operation of the superego. The ego mediates these competing demands by enabling Peeta to find a realistic way to help Katniss while minimizing direct conflict with external authority. Therefore, the incident demonstrates that acts of love and sacrifice emerge from the dynamic interaction among instinctive desires, moral values, and reality-based considerations.

Katniss is more affected by the clash between personalities in *The Hunger Games*, and she frequently feels confused about her relationship with Peeta throughout the story. She seeks emotional intimacy, safety, and security from someone due to her id. As previously discussed, Haymitch's survival strategy contributes to Katniss's uncertainty regarding her relationship with Peeta. While her emotional needs encourage intimacy, her awareness that many of their public interactions are strategically motivated leads her to question the authenticity of her own feelings. The ego then attempts to strike a balance between these two needs by continuing to act as Peeta's partner in order to survive while constantly assessing Katniss's actual emotions. Because the decisions made in this situation are grounded in reality, the ego appears to play a more prominent role in this situation than the id or superego. Since survival is actually more crucial than anything else in the arena, Katniss modifies her conduct to fit the circumstances because she is aware of the arena's conditions and the necessity of sponsorship. Even though Katniss is still unsure of her true feelings at the end of the story, her emotions have given her growth that she is unaware of. However, this will create a new conflict because Peeta is aware that Katniss has been acting in this way for survival and Haymitch's encouragement.

The nightlock berry incident provides one of the examples of the interaction among Freud's personality structures. Katniss's desire to survive reflects the influence of the id, whereas her unwillingness to kill Peeta demonstrates the operation of the superego through moral responsibility and emotional commitment. Faced with these competing demands and the constraints imposed by the Capitol, the ego mediates by proposing an alternative solution through the threat of joint suicide. Therefore, the decision emerges not from a single psychological structure but from the dynamic interaction among instinctive desires, moral values, and reality-based considerations.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that love in the relationship between Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark develops gradually through emotional attachment, mutual care, and sacrifice rather than as an immediate romantic response. The findings further reveal that love and sacrifice are shaped by the dynamic interaction of Freud's personality structures, in which the id generates emotional attachment, the ego balances emotional impulses with survival realities, and the superego guides moral responsibility and compassion. Rather than functioning independently, these structures collectively influence the characters' emotional development and decision-making. Consequently, this study extends psychoanalytic interpretations of *The Hunger Games* by demonstrating that love and sacrifice are psychological outcomes produced through the interaction of Freud's personality structures under extreme survival conditions, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of emotional relationships and moral decision-making in dystopian literature.

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