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Domicide: The Destruction of Home in *The Hunger Games* and Around the Globe

Introduction

The film adaptation of Suzanne Collins' *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* (2020) released in November of 2023, creating buzz among *The Hunger Games* fans, new and old. The novel and film detail the life of tyrannical dictator President Coriolanus Snow and his rise to power in Panem, a nation that rose from the ashes of North America after a series of natural disasters and political turmoil. *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* acts as a prequel to the events of *The Hunger Games* trilogy, and it demonstrates the development of the Hunger Games as a central part of everyday life in Panem. The novel begins in the Capitol, where Snow and other elite citizens reside, are planning the 10th annual Hunger Games. However, this year is special, students of the Academy, like Snow, are expected to participate in the Games as mentors for the selected District tributes; this is an event that will change the course of Panem and the Games forever. A total of 24 tributes, two from each of the 12 districts, are torn from their homes and transferred to the Capitol, expected to fight to the death in an arena until a sole victor remains. This death game is aired live across Panem, and it is mandatory viewing for all who live in the Districts and the Capitol. The Hunger Games are the Districts' punishment for rebelling during the Dark Days. On top of this punishment, the Districts are exploited and heavily policed by the Capitol, limiting their access to resources and subjecting them to constant surveillance. Life in

Panem is grueling and unforgiving, and *The Hunger Games* has been categorized as a dystopian young adult series. In this study, I would like to challenge that dystopian assessment and offer a different perspective.

Current world events have informed the research conducted in this paper, as terrifying similarities between the fictitious country of Panem and real-life global issues have become increasingly apparent. My initial research question deliberates whether *The Hunger Games* is a dystopian novel that describes a world far in the future or a frightening reflection of our current world. While reading the prequel to the trilogy, I noticed the frequent motif of appearance. I was drawn to how Collins depicted buildings and their effect on people's emotions and sense of identity. My interest in architecture led me to the concept of domicide or "the deliberate destruction of home by human agency in pursuit of specified goals, which causes suffering to the victims" (Porteous & Smith 12). This term is coined by J. Douglas Porteous and Sandra E. Smith, who published their work *Domicide: The Global Destruction of Home* in 2001. Their research analyzes multiple instances of domicide across the globe to provide a large scope of what is considered domicide, as well as the motivations behind the crime. Porteous and Smith also make distinctions between extreme domicide and everyday domicide, the former being the destruction of home through direct violence such as bombing, and the latter being the destruction of home through policy such as forced relocation due to industrial or commercial projects. The scholars emphasize how more often than not, elites in power will enact domicide against a population, which shows the unbalanced power dynamics that are inherent to domicide. They also assert that domicide works in tandem with genocide; the compounding of these two atrocities leads to a crueler form of death and destruction. In their work, they propose a method of ending and resisting domicide; it involves more engagement and participation from affected

communities and the recognition of domicide as a serious punishable crime, as is the case with genocide.

Another pair of scholars, Bree Akesson and Andrew Basso also call for domicide to be explicitly considered a crime, as it is only vaguely referred to in international laws. In their work, *From Bureaucracy to Bullets: Extreme Domicide and the Right to Home*, they propose a set of laws called the "Convention Against Domicide," which is modeled after the "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" of 1948. In this set of laws, they recognize domicide as a crime, define what domicide entails, and list what crimes can lead to the indictment of perpetrators (Akesson & Basso 203). The scholars developed this proposition after presenting eight different case studies of domicide globally. In their findings, they developed four different ways to categorize extreme domicide based on method and magnitude: "a total destruction using direct violence, a partial destruction using direct violence, total destruction using indirect violence, and partial destruction using indirect violence" (Akesson & Basso 18). Out of their eight case studies, I focused on their studies of Syria and Palestine, both of which are total destruction, with Syria categorized as direct violence and Palestine categorized as indirect violence. At the time of their publishing in 2022, the current events unfolding in Palestine had not yet occurred; today, domicide in Palestine would be reclassified as a combination of direct and indirect violence.

Ammar Azzouz, the author of *Domicide: Architecture, War and the Destruction of Home in Syria*, presents a detailed scholarship on domicide in Syria, focusing primarily on the city of Homs. Azzouz shares multiple accounts from displaced Syrians who have suffered much from the destruction of domicide. He also offers a different perspective on domicide, one that centers the architect's role in the reconstruction of cities affected by domicide. He argues that domicide

is performed during times of war and peace and that domicide can also be enacted through slow violence, or delayed and incremental destruction (Azzouz 17 & 29). In Azzouz's scholarship, the collective loss and the emotions associated with the loss of home are at the forefront, exemplifying the ways in which a person's identity can be affected by the destruction of home.

These three works are the foundation of my study. One of the purposes of this study is to examine the ways in which domicide impacts the human psyche and experience, especially for children and young adults. To expand upon this established research, I looked at the personal accounts of people from Cambodia, Syria, and Palestine to understand the emotional impact of losing their homes and communities. This scholarship on domicide reveals that the nation in the *The Hunger Games* trilogy and prequel, Panem, also has various cases of domicide, many of which severely impact the citizen's identities and sense of belonging. Through Katniss Everdeen, the main protagonist of *The Hunger Games* trilogy; the personal experiences of domicide victims in Cambodia, Syria, and Palestine; and the scholarship analyzing the meaning of home and the effects of domicide; I have concluded that Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* is not dystopian, rather it is a representation of our current world. Millions of people have been negatively affected by domicide and its repercussions, and they will continue to be if there is not an international recognition that domicide is a severe crime. Domicide scholarship, Collins' work, and the personal accounts of domicide victims all provide a pathway to resisting the effects of domicide and explicitly declaring it as an atrocity crime.

This study primarily focuses on how children and young adults are affected by domicide. This decision stems from *The Hunger Games*' focus on youth and its categorization as a young adult series. Although not thoroughly explored in this study, there is a tremendous difference in how domicide affects women, as women across the globe have traditionally occupied a dominant

role in the home as homemaker and continue to be identified with the home in man cultures worldwide. More research needs to be conducted on the intersections between women, gender roles, and domicide; this is a rich topic that deserves its own dedicated study. This study does not intend to equate fiction with reality by drawing one-to-one comparisons. I recognize that the characters in *The Hunger Games* are fictitious while actual victims of domicide experience an atrocity that cannot be fully conveyed through words. Fiction acts as a vehicle to convey broad significant topics in a way that is more accessible to wider audiences and has the power to instill compassion and empathy in readers. Collins does not specifically address domicide by name in her work, but in this study's attempt to point out these similarities and differences between fiction and reality, we can better understand how fiction draws from real-life experiences of domicide.

In the study that follows, I begin with of *The Hunger Games* trilogy and prequel, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, and define what home is in Panem to gain a better understanding of what is included in the meaning of home. From there, I explore the conditions under which domicide occurs under, and how the motives of those in power impact the severity of domicide. I then move to analyze three case studies on Cambodia, Syria, and Palestine that highlight the similarities between how domicide impacts real victims and the characters of Collins' series. These case studies also emphasize the importance of homes to different communities, cultures, identities, and families; a broad understanding of the meaning of home underlines just how cruel domicide is. Each of these case studies examine the ways in which people resist domicide, and this resistance to domicide will be further explored in the conclusion. The order of the case studies is chronological to highlight how domicide has been used throughout time.

What is Home in Panem?

The country of Panem at the time of the 74th Hunger Games comprises twelve Districts and the Capitol. The Capitol is located in the Rocky Mountains region of the United States, and the Districts surround this central place. Each District has its own specialty: luxury items, masonry and weapons manufacturing, technology, fishing, electricity, transportation, lumber, textiles, grain, livestock, agriculture, and coal mining. Certain Districts, specifically Districts 1, 2, and 4, are known as the "Career" Districts because the children are often more prepared for the Games due to the Capitol's favoritism. The citizens of Districts 1, 2, and 4 are stronger and slightly better fed than other Districts that suffer from extreme starvation and lack of resources. Each District has varying population sizes, racial demographics, and cultural differences. Due to their specific specializations and forced isolation from one another, each District has its own customs and traditions.

District 12 is the home of our protagonist, Katniss. She resides in the Seam, a severely impoverished area of District 12, with her mother and sister, Prim. We learn that she lost her father in a tragic coal mining accident, a memory that frequently haunts her dreams. The house in which she lives is adjacent to the Meadow, a sprawling field of various plants, and the woods, where Katniss's father taught her how to hunt and shoot a bow and arrow. The deuteragonist, Peeta Mellark, lives in the merchant section of District 12. Those who live in this section have better access to food and other resources than those in the Seam, but not by much. District 12 as a whole is one of the poorest districts in Panem. Despite suffering from extreme poverty, malnutrition, and a lack of resources, the citizens of District 12 do their best with what they have. There is a black market, the Hob, which acts as a support system for many in District 12, including Katniss. The Hob was once the scene of live music and dancing before it was

outlawed, as discovered in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*; this shows how, despite their odds, the citizens of District 12 try to create a lively atmosphere and establish a community where they can.

Katniss also describes various traditions that District 12 has that exemplify their dedication to community and home-making. After Katniss volunteers for her sister during the Reaping, she watches as "the crowd touches the three middle fingers of their left hand to their lips and holds it out to [her]. It is an old and rarely used gesture of our district, occasionally seen at funerals. It means thanks, it means admiration, it means good-bye to someone you love" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 24). Katniss did not expect this gesture, and it almost moved her to tears. Although rarely used, it is still a gesture that everyone in District 12 knows, signifying its cultural significance to them and how it bonds them. The rarity in which it is used also indicates that it is special and has powerful connotations. Another District 12 tradition is the toasting, a marriage ritual where the newlyweds go to their home and "they make their first fire, toast a bit of bread, and share it" (Collins, *Catching Fire* 249). Katniss says, "Maybe it's old-fashioned, but no one really feels married in District 12 until after the toasting" (249). This ceremony brings together family and friends and marks the beginning of a new chapter in a couple's life, one they will spend together in their own home. This ritual takes place in a house signifying the centrality of the home for the District 12 citizens. The toasting tradition provides a day of celebration centered around love, family, and the home. The toasting is crucial to have, as the people of District 12 do not believe they had a proper wedding ceremony without one. Through these District customs and places of community, readers begin to understand what home means to Katniss and District 12 citizens.

In order to understand what makes a home, we must look at the varying connotations a home can have. Akesson and Basso describe home as either a castle or a cage; either can exist as a home. As a castle, the home houses group activities, the development and maintenance of identity, and a place of security. As a cage, the home can harbor unhealthy conditions, impede on privacy, and imprison those living within (6). Each of the four homes of Katniss Everdeen before her arrival to District 13–that is District 12, the woods, her house in the Seam, and her house in the Victor's Village (the neighborhood of houses in each District that the victors reside in after the Games)–can classify as either a castle, a cage, or both.

District 12 can be categorized as both a castle and a cage. It is at the mesolevel of home, emphasizing the community connotation of home rather than individual families or nation-states (Akesson & Basso 7). As a community, District 12 citizens do activities together: they are forced to consume the propaganda of the Capitol together in the town square or their homes. If people of the District do not attend the Reaping or any other mandatory activities, they will be imprisoned unless they are on death's door (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 16). These mandatory activities create a collective experience, strengthening their bond. This is an experience that goes beyond District 12, as all Districts must consume Capitol propaganda. Outside of these dreary and depressing gatherings, there is a place in District 12 that is for the community and has a more lively and comforting atmosphere: the Hob. In Katniss's lifetime, it existed as a black market where people could trade goods and eat food cooked by some of the merchants (e.g. Greasy Sae). During Lucy Gray Baird's lifetime, it is a center of live music and dancing, as Lucy Gray and other musicians of the Covey (a nomadic band) play their songs there frequently.[1] Gathering places are essential for community building and "establishing a sense of belonging"

[1] Lucy Gray Baird is introduced in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* as the District 12 tribute of the 10th Hunger Games.

(Akesson & Basso 9), which is what the Hob does for a period of time. Even Katniss, initially nervous about going to the Hob without her father, was embraced as one of their own.

The woods on the outskirts of District 12 is an example of a castle. Although the woods are not structured as a typical house, Akesson and Basso point out that there is no mutually agreed upon definition of home and what rights to home entail (7). However, their proposal of the different facets of what makes a home applies to the woods and what it means to Katniss's identity. They cite Dutch sociologist Jan Willem Duyvendak to start defining home: the three main components of a home are familiarity, haven, and heaven (7). The first is one's knowledge of a place; the second indicates "physical and material safety, security, predictability, and privacy relating to the house as a structure"; and the third is symbolic of "a collective identity" where connection and community can exist (7). With these concepts as the positive definition of home, we can see elements of this in Katniss's feelings about District 12 as a whole, not just her individual houses in the Seam and the Victor's Village. More than anything, home to her resides in the woods outside of the fences surrounding Twelve. Katniss is familiar with the woods as her father taught her how to hunt when she was young, and she continued to hunt there as she got older to put food on the table. There is a sense of safety and security in the woods due to the abundance of food and other resources, which reassures Katniss and her hunting partner, Gale Hawthorne, that they can increase their access to food, even if only by a little. With the ability to extract resources from the woods, Katniss states, "The woods became our savior" (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 51), signifying that it became their haven. Outside of food accessibility, the woods help the pair develop and safeguard their identities. Katniss learns to be self-reliant and sharpens her survival skills in the woods, which helps her tremendously as a player in the 74th Hunger Games. Before the intrusion of President Snow's spying, the privacy the woods provided

gave both Katniss and Gale a safe place to be themselves. Katniss explains, “The woods have always been our place of safety, our place beyond the reach of the Capitol, where we’re free to say what we feel, be who we are” (Collins, *Catching Fire* 24). They would often rant and rave against the Capitol’s wrongdoings in the woods because anti-Capitol rhetoric in the confines of District 12 would have gotten them killed. According to the typology Duyvendak proposes, the woods of District 12 fit the criteria of what a home is, meaning we must think outside of typical structures of houses to define what home is. In *Mockingjay*, Katniss frequently refers to the entire District 12 as her home, which signifies that homelands can also be considered homes, meaning that the destruction of home extends outside of the physical structure of a house. While the woods were not destroyed during the bombing of District 12, if it were, it would have been another victim of domicide.

Katniss’s house in the Seam serves as a castle to her. This is the home where she grew up, and it holds her childhood memories. Her home in the Seam reminds her of her father and the days they would hunt together, which molded Katniss into the person she is and are some of the memories she cherishes. The house in the Seam is where she would return for years with the food she spent hours each day finding, signifying that this house is home to the family for whom she works diligently to provide. It is the house she prefers over the one in the Victor’s Village, even though the house in the Victor’s Village is more luxurious than the worn-down one in the Seam. Katniss explains that after moving with her family to the Victor’s Village, she is “the only one who uses the squat little place where [she] was raised. To [her], it’s [her] real home” (6). Her home in the Seam is reminiscent of her life before the Games, before the trauma and incessant nightmares. The decrepit house in the Seam brings her a level of comfort that the house in the

Victor's Village does not. This is the home she feels safe and secure in, which contrasts with her negative experiences with the house in the Victor's Village.

The house in the Victor's Village is a cage for Katniss because it is suffocating due to its lack of safety and privacy. She believed that after the Games, she would be free from the Capitol's shackles and would be able to live out her days with her family in the new home. This ideal is far from reality, as she will have to continue participating in the Games through propaganda-filled victory tours, and the Capitol will surveil her at all times due to her defiance (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 357-359 & 370). This surveillance is announced by President Snow, when he visits her home in the beginning of *Catching Fire* and reveals to her his knowledge about her outings to the woods with Gale. The surveillance of Katniss is increased after the governance of District 12 becomes stricter, as two Peacekeepers abruptly visit her house in Victor's Village, expecting to catch her with food she hunted (hunting and escaping the fence is outlawed in Panem). In addition to the lack of privacy, the house in Victor's Village is suffocating because it feels unsafe. While living in Victor's Village, Katniss learns that she will return to the arena for the 75th Hunger Games, as that year's tributes will be reaped from the existing pool of victors. As the only living female victor in District 12, she is forced back into the trauma-inducing world of nightmares (Collins, *Catching Fire* 172-175). In *Domicide: Architecture, War and the Destruction of Home in Syria*, Ammar Azzouz explains, "When our present is filled with uncertainty, chaos and loss, we tend to look at our past home as if it is a place of security, identity, sanctuary and tranquillity" (80). This is exactly what Katniss does the moment she learns she is going back into the arena: "My body reacts before my mind does and I'm running out the door, across the lawns of the Victor's Village [...] Where to go? The woods, of course" (174). Due to the solace and safety she associates with the woods and the trauma she

associates with the Victor's Village house, Katniss longs for a place where she doesn't feel trapped, which has historically been the woods for her. Her instinctive reaction to return to the woods is very telling that she does not find comfort in Victor's Village. Her discomfort with this house is further intensified when she returns to a decimated District 12 in *Mockingjay* and finds on her bedroom dresser a vase with a fresh white rose, symbolizing President Snow. Katniss automatically gags and immediately leaves the house (Collins, *Mockingjay* 14). A home that is a castle is supposed to be a place of security, but the Victor's Village house continuously proves to be a cage. This makes the destruction of District 12 significantly more sinister, as the Victor's Village houses were the only buildings unscathed (3). This was a deliberate choice by President Snow, who aims to destroy all homes that provide Katniss and others around Panem with a sense of safety, comfort, community, and identity.

Conditions and Motives for Domicide to Occur

Biases

We must take into consideration the motives of political actors that authorize a domicide attack. The definition of domicide reveals one motive, the "pursuit of specified goals." Akesson and Basso clarify these goals as "designed to alleviate or destroy real or constructed grievances, establish a homogenous community, and produce a utopian society in the view of people in power" (48). In the numerous cases of domicide across the globe, one or multiple of these goals can exist in the minds of the perpetrators simultaneously. In the mind of President Snow, the goals surrounding grievances and a utopian society are at the top of his list. These grievances are intergroup grievances, which "are the ways in which perpetrators of domicide understand perceived injustices against another group before, during, and after enacting domicide" (Akesson

& Basso 41). Anti-District rhetoric has always been taught to Snow by his grandmother, and throughout his development in *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, readers are privy to how his hateful sentiments solidify. In addition to painting them as animalistic, Snow's grandmother would always emphasize their subaltern status; she repeatedly remarked how Lucy Gray was District, and she would never fit in as a Capitol citizen (Collins, *The Ballad of Songbirds* 77). Snow also adopts this line of thinking, as he views the citizens of Panem as inferior, especially the District citizens. This is highlighted in his view of Lucy Gray; he sees her as a weakling and the worst of the pick. He initially abhors the fact that he got a girl from District 12 as he believes it is unbefitting for a Snow (21-22). Eventually, he does see her as extraordinary and genuinely wants to help her, but his narcissistic desires often undercut that compassion for her. Snow's opinion of her changes drastically once she realizes it was him who killed Sejanus Plinth, his rebellious peer at the Academy whose family is originally from District 2. He begins to see her as cold-blooded and conniving, deciding that she was his idea of "District" all along (499-503). Snow lets this realization motivate him to return to his life in the Capitol, where there's the "Snow penthouse, with its marble floors and crystal chandeliers. His home. His rightful home" (496). President Snow uses his intergroup grievances (disdain for and superiority complex over District citizens) to justify committing domicide against the Districts and maintaining his power.

Snow realizes the purpose of the Games after participating in them as a mentor and because of his Peacekeeper job in District 12. The purpose of the Hunger Games is to exert control over Panem because without control chaos would ensue. He saw what humans are capable of when in a state of fear; Dr. Gaul even pointed out how his status, his manners, and his usual self disappeared when he was in a desperate situation (243). In Dr. Gaul's words, "'That's mankind in its natural state'" (243). To Snow, Panem would live in anarchy if there were no

Games. This kind of disorder is too reminiscent of the pandemonium he experienced as a child during the First Rebellion, and this is a time of his life he refuses to go back to. In other words, to prevent that chaos from returning, he exerts brutal control over the Districts with the Games and the rigid restrictions placed on citizens' lives. This is to create his utopian society that privileges the Capitol over the Districts. As a child during the war, he was subjected to frequent food shortages, not enough money, and under the constant threat of being bombed. Snow completely reverses this for himself and Capitol citizens for decades; the Capitol has an overabundance of food, significant wealth, and a strong security system. The life he did not have as a child and adolescent is what he obtains for himself during his rise to power, creating a utopian society that ultimately benefits him most of all. This utopian society is achieved through the political, social, and economic make-up of Panem, which allows for Snow to terrorize the Districts with his domicidal policies.

Population Differences

One crucial condition for domicide to occur is the distribution of a heterogeneous population (Akesson & Basso 41). The stark distinctions between Capitol and District citizens are evident in *The Hunger Games*. Capitol citizens have different cultural practices than those in the Districts, and these differences the Districts have are distorted to be seen as backward or barbaric. A prime example of this is the remarks President Snow's grandmother makes about how blood-thirsty District citizens are, as they only "[drink] water because it [doesn't] rain blood" (Collins, *The Ballad of Songbirds* 77). This image stuck with Snow, influencing his perception of the Districts and encouraging him to see them as beneath him. He fears being sent "to some horrid backwater district where the people were hardly better than animals" (36). While

living in District 12 as a Peacekeeper, he initially agreed to live out his life with Lucy Gray. However, as time went on, he realized how disgusted he felt when he was "Digging for worms being at the mercy of the weather. Elemental. Like an animal" (495). By describing Lucy Gray's life in this manner, he attributes this way of life to all District citizens. This perception of the Districts as animalistic in the eyes of the Capitol is significant for recognizing the ways in which the political actors of the Capitol are directed by their prejudices. This is also amplified by the ways in which Snow bolsters his own self-worth. While disparaging the Districts, he says, "He knew this would be easier if he wasn't such an exceptional person. The best and the brightest humanity had to offer. The youngest to pass the officer candidate test. If he'd been useless and stupid, the loss of civilization would not have hollowed out his insides in this manner" (495). Snow's narcissism does not allow him to see past his own vanity, and this bias informs his decisions to commit domicide against the Districts.

Akesson and Basso state that there is another goal for those who commit domicide, which is the creation of a homogenous society. President Snow does not want a completely homogenous society because he abhors the Districts, but he still wants to keep them under his subjugation. He realizes the benefits of having the Districts because the entire Capitol lifestyle would crumble without them, as all of its wealth and entertainment is extracted from the Districts. Akesson and Basso also make the claim that "a homogenous neighborhood or community is almost guaranteed to not be the site of domicide, as domicide requires specific targets based on identifiable difference" (41). In the case of *The Hunger Games*, many of the Districts, individually, are homogenous; the citizens look similar and share similar cultural circumstances and socioeconomic statuses. According to Akesson and Basso's assertion, this homogeneity should exempt them from being victims of domicide. However, this is not the case,

as evidenced by the Capitol's frequent deprivation and destruction of the Districts. Various Districts during the uprisings are obstructed from receiving resources: based on the account of Bonnie and Twill, District 8 refugees that Katniss meets in the woods, "there was a lockdown. No food, no coal, everyone forbidden to leave their homes" (Collins, *Catching Fire* 145). This lockdown followed the bombing of rebel strongholds in District 8 (145). District 8, like District 12 and District 13, experiences two main methods of domicide: extreme and everyday. Although the Districts are homogeneous individually, the population becomes heterogeneous when the Capitol is factored in, making all of the Districts prime targets for the Capitol's domicidal aggression. Snow's image of a utopian society allows for a heterogeneity to exist because he needs a population that he can continue to exploit. This dangerous mixture of exploitation and destruction traps the Districts in a cycle of slow violence, one that is expressed with different methods of domicide: extreme and everyday.

How Motive Influences the Extremity of Domicide

Akesson and Basso emphasize the importance of the motives behind domicide, and how those motives "directly impact the number of homes destroyed and the potential ferocity of violence that may precede or follow domicide." These motives can be used for political reasons, oppression, and genocide (45). As seen by the total destruction of District 12 and District 13 (90% of the population in 12 is murdered and both are left as smoldering wastelands), the Capitol's hatred for the Districts is evident in the severity of the decimation. This destruction is to make an example of the Districts by acting as if Districts 12 and 13 never existed, which demonstrates the power of the Capitol; it is so powerful that it can alter how the Districts are remembered. Memoricide, or "the loss of individual feelings about a place that could otherwise

disappear forever" is one of the potential consequences of domicide (Porteous & Smith 223). In their analysis of the role of memory in domicide, Porteous and Smith state:

> Memory cannot be utterly expunged while there are rememberers who can pass on stories to future generations, but it can be mortally wounded when these stories cannot be backed up by accessible documents or physical structures on the ground. Those whose task is to destroy memory, then, will take to expunge such physical structures (198).

The Capitol completely expunged the surface level of District 13. District 13 was always known to be an uninhabitable wasteland with demolished buildings and where chemical toxins would extinguish any chance at life. The memory of District 13 was significantly altered, as the majority of those living in the twelve Districts never knew that District 13 housed nuclear weapons because they were thought to be graphite miners. The existence of human life underground in District 13 was not widely known because of the consistent propaganda that shows nothing but desolation and destruction (Collins, *Mockingjay* 17). The lies told about District 13 are another political tactic the Capitol uses to maintain power over Panem and contributes to their direct and indirect methods of domicide. It is essential to see how these methods of domicide are perpetrated in reality; this will be explored in the following case studies.

Cambodia

Introduction

The Khmer Rouge reign began in 1975, or "Year Zero" as declared by the organization when it took over the central government of Cambodia. This organization was a communist party that formed in the 1950s with the support of Vietnamese communists; by the 1970s, the party became unique under the leadership of Pol Pot because of its rejection of colonialism, which

caused it to cut relations with Vietnam (Lee 22). From 1975 to 1979, it followed its adopted communist ideology to transform the country into a "collective cooperative system" that was ethnically pure and without money or religion (21). These aspects of society were seen as "a hindrance to the social transformation" (24). The banning of religion (including texts, symbols, holidays, and rituals), had "a deep psychological impact" on many Cambodian people, engendering "a serious moral dilemma between a commitment to their fundamental religious principles and the desire for survival" (25). Various temples and other landmarks that were part of communities were desecrated.

The cultural and structural demolition of Cambodian society created a chaotic system of governance that sent the country into political, social, and economic decline. The Khmer Rouge often recruited young children because they were easy to manipulate. Many of these indoctrinated children would round up groups of people in collective labor areas to work long, excruciating hours to produce agricultural outputs expected by the Khmer Rouge leadership. Many Cambodians died from hunger, malnutrition, and overwork under these conditions, as the labor was too extreme, and there was never enough food distributed to sustain people (23). Fear was also used as a tool of control. People were not allowed to question the Khmer Rouge's leadership; those who did were often caught by intelligence agents (*chhlop*) and then subjected to brutal interrogations and executions (23-24). These executions often took place in fields, which were then named the "Killing Fields" (27). Distrust was sown among communities and even families, breaking down people's familial and communal bonds. 1.7 million people died under the regime of the Khmer Rouge (Yimsut xxiii).

These were the conditions that Cambodian author, Ronnie Yimsut, recalls in his memoir, *Facing the Khmer Rouge: A Cambodian Journey*. As a young boy, he was forced to grow up too

soon under the Khmer Rouge regime. He suffered through various atrocities, including the murder of his family members and friends, and the destruction of and forced displacement from his home. His treacherous journey to escape Cambodia landed him in a Thai jail and then at the Aranya Prathet Refugee Camp with three of his friends: Moeun, Doeum, and Sek. One of his cousins (Ang Khen) sponsored him to immigrate to the United States, specifically to Washington D.C. (Yimsut xxv). While in the U.S., Yimsut grapples with his identity and separation from home. He eventually moves to Oregon and builds his life there, and he learns that two of his siblings and their families are alive. He and his wife, Thavy, do their best to send them money to sponsor their immigration to the United States. Yimsut and his siblings are eventually reunited, and he returns to Cambodia to face his past trauma.

Through Yimsut's account, the meaning of home in Cambodia encompasses family, community, and the environment. In his and Katniss's experience with home, the importance of home in childhood is emphasized. Their narratives also give insight into how perpetrators of domicide use prejudice and discrimination as a justification for their crimes. People in Cambodia and Panem also found ways to quietly and outwardly resist the effects of domicide, revealing how crucial community is to protest.

Ronnie Yimsut's Portrait of Home

> Our house in Siem Reap was built of solid hardwood felled from the nearby forest. The orange clay tiles on our roof were handmade by local artisans [...] The tile roof kept us cool despite the tropical sun. I was born here, and so were most of my siblings. For as long as I could remember, my parents had been building a new house on the outskirts of the city, but as far as I was concerned, this house by the river would always be home (4).

Yimsut regards his childhood house by the river in Siem Reap as home because this is where the majority of his immediate family was born and has resided for years. The house's structure is made from materials from the broader community, which extends his idea of home outside his physical house; it includes the forest and the nearby river. Home is not only the physical dwelling; it is the greater area outside of it, as well as the people inside the house and the community that make the home.

Katniss also has a connection to the broader community outside her physical house: the forest and the Meadow that have provided her family with food to eat; the Hob, with its community of merchants and traders that accepted her as a young girl. Katniss found her sense of home beyond the walls of her house in the Seam, extending throughout District 12. As Yimsut describes, his sense of home is connected to the forest and the local artisans because they helped contribute to the building that is the house. Both Yimsut and Katniss have developed ties to their houses and communities, which are intertwined and enhance their sense of belonging.

Akesson and Basso emphasize that the right to home "highlight[s] both the place of home (e.g., the physical structure) and the people who contribute to the meaning of home (e.g., family, community, etc.)" (25). From this perspective, family plays an important role in establishing a home. Yimsut's memoir highlights how essential family and community are to parts of his home life in Cambodia, as he recounts his fondest memories about his family and community. He recalls how his family traditions were established in Siem Reap:

> For generations, my grandparents and great-grandparents had farmed, fished, and administered towns and districts in this part of Cambodia [...] my father wanted us kids to experience farming traditions, so he and my mother took us to the family farm in the Bakong district every planting and harvesting season (3).

As exemplified by Yimsut's family, there is an importance placed on maintaining traditional ties to the land. Maintaining these traditions helps foster identity and familial bonds, as Yimsut's

family has a history of being farmers and fishers, which bonded them together. Their home in Siem Reap is central to this as it provides a place to practice these traditions. Since Yimsut's connection to this land has existed for generations, the tie to it is even more significant, which makes the Khmer Rouge's destruction of it even worse.

Yimsut also specifies another tradition: the raising of chickens. "For generations, we'd kept this line of chickens going, enjoying their high-protein, duck-sized eggs. These hens were a family heirloom" (5). These hens are part of his home life because they provide the family with sustenance and a sense of pride. This sense of pride is conveyed through the diction of "family heirloom." Family heirlooms are considered part of the home, so the chickens also have a place in Yimsut's right-to-home. This makes the loss of two of them during his family's forced relocation and his frantic search for them devastating to read. He notes the last hen is "the only living memento of [his] life at home with [his] parents and siblings. She was the one thing [he] had that was never nationalized by Angkar" (84). Yimsut never found his hen. The chickens were a huge part of his childhood at home, so their loss is too much to bear. The chickens were some of the last ties he had to his former home, which shows how their loss contributes to the act of domicide. In *The Hunger Games*, the Everdeens also have a valuable connection with an animal: Prim's goat, Lady. After buying the injured goat off the hands of the Goat Man in District 12, Katniss gave the goat to Prim as a birthday gift (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 272). The goat immediately became a part of the family. Prim and her mother nursed the goat back to health, and Katniss recalls how "'Prim insisted on sleeping with Lady on a blanket next to the fire. And just before they drifted off, the goat licked her cheek, like it was giving her a good night kiss or something'" (272-273). Katniss also explains how valuable Lady is to their survival, as Prim would not need to take out tessarae (a year's supply worth of oil and grain for one person

in exchange for another name entry into the Reaping) if she sells goat milk and cheese (13 & 35). Lady has a significant role in the Everdeens' lives, as the hens do to Yimsut's family, so when Katniss returns to District 12 after the bombing and cannot find Lady anywhere, it is assumed that the goat died during the attack. Katniss remarks how unfortunate this is, demonstrating that Lady was a treasured part of their family (Collins, *Mockingjay* 13-14). Both Yimsut and Katniss lost beloved animals that made their home life more lively and sustainable, signifying that the right to home extends beyond a physical building.

Yimsut continues to explain how the community of Siem Reap fits into his broader understanding of family and home. He states that "Bonfires, festivals, and celebrations beckoned, but [his] favorite activity was the family picnics, which we had at every opportunity" (Yimsut 4). The community he lived in provided him with opportunities to spend time with his family and neighbors, activities which he enjoyed and left lasting impressions on him. Yimsut paints his community in a warm light, signifying how at home he felt during his childhood. One of his favorite activities he remembers of home in Cambodia is the family picnics. He often helped his mother cook food for the family, so it can be inferred that preparing for the picnics was another way for him to build a bond with his mother (6). The frequency with which his family picnics occurred demonstrates how tight-knit his family was, which makes the brutal murder of them even more heart-wrenching. Under their rule, the Khmer Rouge outlawed the preparation of your own food, which would prohibit a gathering like a family picnic. The opportunity to cook with his mother and eat a meal with his family, one of Yimsut's favorite memories of his home in Cambodia, was stolen from him. Another activity he enjoyed doing for his family and community is tending to the house garden. He sees his mother selling a neighbor custard apples and jasmine buds, and he says, "They're from our garden, I thought to myself, proud that my

help tending the plants had brought in some family income" (2). There is a sense of pride that Yimsut developed from tending to his family's garden. This pride is tied to the home, as the garden adds a pleasant atmosphere to the home and assists the family and the community. The chores Yimsut completed around the house demonstrate how the home shapes a person's character; Yimsut attributes his work ethic to his upbringing and his responsibilities at home and in his community. He describes how he and the other kids in the area would participate in community clean-ups because "We knew that strong communities made a strong nation, and all the kids took their jobs seriously" (6). Through Yimsut's account, we learn that some Cambodian communities thrived off mutual respect for each other and the land. This relationship existed to form strong communities and a greater sense of national identity. Their pride and faith in community are what helped many Cambodians endure the brutality of the Khmer Rouge regime, which was bent on destroying these "strong social, psychological, and emotional attachments" to the land, home, and community (Akesson & Basso 8).

Yimsut's memoir emphasizes how his idea of home is strongly influenced by his childhood experiences, further indicating that the home is a formative part of a person's life. Akesson and Basso explain "the home is something children are familiar with, is a central place in their lives, and serves as a part of their identity" (9). Through his account, we see how Yimsut's childhood exemplifies this idea. After his return to Cambodia, he states that "Siem Reap looked just the way it had when I was a little boy [...] Memories brought on tears. The sights, sounds, and smells were just as I remembered. I was truly back in time" (172). Home can bring on various memories that are connected to a person's childhood. These memories are tied to strong emotions that impact their psyche. Domicide attempts to destroy those memories, but the interaction with these memories can keep a person's sense of home alive. Yimsut's return

home brought a wave of nostalgia, and he "remembered with fondness how often [he] had played in the rain, once upon a time in Cambodia–some three decades ago" (186). Despite the passing of time, a person's homeland will always be a part of their memory and their identity. This is why the memory of home is so intertwined with a person's identity; home is often associated with childhood because of the attachments that childhood forms with a home. This is exactly what domicide seeks to destroy; however, a person's sense of home will never fully be forgotten because of the continued remembrance of and attachment to these memories. On the plane to Cambodia, Yimsut describes the feelings that he and other Cambodians shared: "For the many overseas Khmer on the plane, it must have been their first trip home, too. Excitement was clear in their eyes and voices. I also sensed their apprehension. Like lost children, we were afraid yet happy to return home" (168). The separation from home for many Cambodian refugees has been excruciating, as their connection to their former houses, language, communities, and culture were severed under the brutal control of the Khmer Rouge. The excitement to return home bubbles under the surface because an opportunity to reestablish those connections is possible. The apprehension is also just as prevalent, as the knowledge that their homeland is not exactly what it once was is also apparent. These emotions existing simultaneously demonstrate how strong a connection to home is and how the home will always be connected to childhood, as in Yimsut's words, lost children just want to return home.

Although the childhood memory of home helps keep a person's sense of it alive, domicide strives to crush this by replacing fond memories of home with terrifying ones. This terror is what has driven many Cambodians away and what has kept them away for years. Yimsut explains that although he has some positive associations with Cambodia, his "memories of this place can drive [him] away at the same time" (199). His feelings of nostalgia are

inseparable from his home and his identity; however, due to the destruction that the Khmer Rouge enacted upon his homeland, he also has negative connotations associated with Cambodia. This cognitive dissonance partially destroys the safe and secure feeling that home in Cambodia once had for Yimsut. He states that after fourteen years have passed, "Cambodia was still the source of [his] darkest fears. It was the place of [his] darkest nightmares" (168). Despite being separated from Cambodia for a long period of time, his homeland still haunts him. Instead of the Angkar (Khmer word for "organization"; interchangeable with Khmer Rouge) solely haunting him, Cambodia as a whole haunts him, demonstrating how the Angkar's domicidal actions have tainted his homeland. Through direct and indirect violence, the Khmer Rouge's methods of domicide have severely altered the land and the people's connection to it.

The Destroyed Cambodian Home

Akesson and Basso emphasize two methods of biological destruction: direct killing and indirect killing. In their explanation of indirect killing, they state that it "requires the denial of the essentials of life: food, water, clothing, shelter, and medical care," and that this is best seen in the Cambodian killing fields (31). For this biological destruction to occur, domicide is "employed as a method to aid in atrocity perpetration" as "it is necessary to first forcibly remove home occupants—and in some cases, destroy their homes—before atrocities can be inflicted on them" (31). The Angkar denied various resources to Cambodians often based on their allegiance to the Khmer Rouge, these differences existing as "mith thmey" and "mith chass." Mith thmey means "'new comrades,' people who'd lived in government-controlled areas during the war" and mith chass means "'old comrades' [people] who had supported the Khmer Rouge in the war and now ruled" (Yimsut 62 & 70). Mith thmey were treated unfairly and forced into labor camps because

they “were enemies who must be taught” and needed to be “guarded closely at all times,” whereas the mith chass “were free and lived in their own villages” (64-65). These disparities reflect those of Panem: Capitol citizens often look down upon District citizens, and District citizens are policed in ways that Capitol citizens are not, as every district is crawling with authoritarian Peacekeepers. This also demonstrates how the mith thmey experienced domicide in ways that the mith chass did not, as the former was forced to relocate and faced travel restrictions, while the latter did not have the same fate. In line with indirect killing, a soldier tells Yimsut, “‘We’ll starve you to sickness and work you to death. If you live, you’ll die’” (64). This kind of rhetoric highlights how the Khmer Rouge did not have the mith thmey’s best interest at heart. They were more concerned with fulfilling their ideology rather than the well-being of their fellow countrymen. Katniss also expresses similar sentiments about Panem in this way, as she says, “‘District Twelve. Where you can starve to death in safety,’” and she then worries about said safety because, like in the Khmer Rouge’s Cambodia, speaking out against the ruling authority could get you killed (6). Both Yimsut and Katniss are living under oppressive regimes that have abused their ideologies to maintain power and privilege certain groups over others.

The Khmer Rouge’s implementation of an agrarian utopia based on the tenets of communism rationalized their motives for domicide. In the name of safeguarding Cambodian sovereignty from Vietnamese aggression, the Angkar forcibly relocated millions of Cambodians and destroyed both the physical and social meanings of home. They defended this through “common good” rhetoric. Yimsut recalls a soldier saying, “‘You must obey Angkar without hesitation. Angkar will build a great society for you and your children. Your sacrifice will be rewarded’” (65). Before Pol Pot, the leader of the Khmer Rouge, died in 1998, he said that his conscience was clear. He “refused to take blame for his evil work. He and many other Khmer

Rouge leaders like him blamed the death of millions, including this survivor's family [Yimsut], on others–namely 'Vietnamese, KGB, and CIA agents.' He honestly believed what he did was for the good of Cambodia!" (Yimsut 215). Pol Pot's deflection of blame is reflective of this "common good" rhetoric that perpetrators of domicide utilize. Despite the millions of Cambodians whom he displaced and killed, and the damage that he inflicted upon the land, he claimed that he was well-intentioned. This is a similar excuse that President Snow uses; he consistently argues that he is building a utopian society that follows order, and it is the districts' duty to sacrifice their children for that order to exist and as atonement for their past "crimes" of rebellion. Both of these dictators resort to "common good" rhetoric to forcibly wipe their conscience clear.

These utopian societies engage in the brutal suppression and destruction of people and their homes. War is brought to the front door of ordinary citizens' homes. Yimsut recalls when his home was placed in the middle of a battlefield:

> I woke up to the flash of light and the sound of a 55-mm howitzer shell land close by. For a moment, I thought it was either a nightmare or thunder and lightning, but then I was certain it was not. I could identify the artillery sounds. The house shook; tiles flew from the roof and broke on the ground [...] We scrambled even as lights and sounds terrified, as bullets streamed red, and orange tracers cut across the darkness and rain. Some hit our wooden walls and roof; others zipped by with a shirring noise. The shells and bullets came from the city, perhaps from my own father and brothers (24).

Being a victim of domicide is a terrifying experience. One's family is put in extreme danger, and one's home, a place of protection, solace, and comfort, is damaged by violent forces. It is a nightmarish occurrence that changes a person's life trajectory and their identity. The grief that ensues after a person's home is deliberately destroyed is heavy. Yimsut remembers, "[He] was stunned to see the roof tiles scattered on the ground and the bullet holes on the south wall of our

beautiful, hand-built wooden home. There was the hole that Norane [his older brother] had reported—'big enough to drive a car through'" (30). Yimsut's home is not just a building; it holds memories, dreams, traditions, and culture. This act of destruction exemplifies how domicide works not only to ruin a physical building but all the connotations associated with it as well. To achieve maximum damage in Cambodian communities, "The attacks came without warning. Shells exploded in the crowded streets or marketplace" (39). Acts of domicide are often committed without warning to catch the victims off guard, which amplifies the amount of suffering. The Khmer Rouge did not care about their countrymen's suffering, as many saw people like the mith thmey as inferior to them. The bombing of District 12 mirrors this, as no warning was issued to the citizens as bombs rained down upon them. Snow considered a warning to be unnecessary because he believed those of District 12 were beneath him and wanted to cause as much damage and suffering as possible. Yimsut also explains how the various refugee camps and hideouts that exist along the Cambodian-Thailand border are frequently subject to attacks by the Khmer Rouge and other antagonists, which included Vietnamese and American forces at different stages of the civil war and Khmer Rouge regime. For years, Cambodians experienced varying levels of extreme domicide by being bombed by Khmer Rouge and foreign forces. Extreme domicide was partnered with everyday domicide, exacerbating the suffering of the Cambodian people.

Experiencing extreme and everyday domicide became a repeated occurrence for Yimsut, his family, and other Cambodians living under the Khmer Rouge. Yimsut recalls, "Escaping the shelling became routine, and we always slept inside our trench instead of the house" (39). Due to the shelling, Yimsut's sense of home is interrupted. He and his family cannot reside in their home because it is unsafe and could lead to their deaths. As this escape became routine, it signifies that

Yimsut, his family, and all other Cambodians affected by the shellings are in a perpetual state of displacement. This displacement is an act of extreme domicide by the hands of the Khmer Rouge. Everyday domicide is inflicted on Cambodians through forced relocations for the purpose of "power [and] profit" (Porteous & Smith 107). Yimsut describes the recurrent relocations he experienced:

> As it turned out, we had to move our hut four times during our stay in Tapang, sometimes only about 600 feet away, and always for no good reason. Each time we moved we had to rebuild the house. Angkar seemed to enjoy keeping us off-balance all the time. It must have been part of their strategy (73).

The strategic displacement of millions of Cambodians ensured that a sense of security would not be prevalent in their lives. Without a place to call home, connections to identity and community were shattered, which was beneficial to the Khmer Rouge, especially when they needed children as soldiers; if the child did not have a sound connection to their home and their community, they were easy to manipulate and less likely to rebel against their Angkar superiors. This secured more power and influence for the Khmer Rouge.

Despite this power and influence, it was not used to benefit the country, and the Khmer Rouge left Cambodia in a political and socio-economic tailspin. While reflecting on his return to Cambodia, Yimsut states this about the country's changes: "They had no school, no clean water, nothing but the little rice they grew in this poor region. Their Angkar's Great Leap Forward had reduced them to a pathetic rubble" (175). The drastic changes that the Khmer Rouge put in place severely affected the Cambodian population; by outlawing various aspects of their lives and severely altering the government structure, the Cambodian political sphere and its socio-economics have not been able to recover. The phrase "reduced them to a pathetic rubble" has diction that alludes to the concept of domicide: the Khmer Rouge's goals destroyed their

homeland and caused unnecessary suffering in the process, suffering that has outlived the wars and the regime.

This suffering has translated into shame surrounding a person's identity and homeland, highlighting the negative effects that domicide has on a person's psyche. Yimsut laments, "Still, my anger and shame wouldn't leave me. When I first stepped onto Thai soil, I had blocked anything Khmer from my mind. I felt deep shame for being Khmer. I had nobody, no home, no family, no relatives, and no country to call my own. I was a nobody" (131). Porteous and Smith claim in their study that "The wilful destruction of a loved home can thus be one of the deepest wounds to one's identity and self-esteem" (5). The cruel psychological torment that domicide has on people is evident here in Yimsut's sense of self. The shame he feels surrounding his identity and where he is from is due to the domicidal actions of the Khmer Rouge: in destroying homes, they fractured people's sense of self, as the pillars of their identities (home, family, and community) could no longer serve as a strong foundation for them. This feeling was not unique to Yimsut. He admits,

> The other Khmer students and I never talked about Cambodia or about life in the old country. I think we all wanted to forget that. There was too much shame, hatred, fear. We focused on what we could do this afternoon, where to go tomorrow. We concentrated on being as American as possible, as soon as possible. We wanted to complete the course and move on (148).

Domicide causes some people to forget who they are and where they come from because of how intense the trauma of losing a home is. In forgetting who they are, because it is too painful to remember, they in turn may forget their traditions, their culture, and their homeland. Some may want to replace who they once were with a new identity in order to be whole again. In doing this, what Porteous and Smith call "memoricide," or the loss of individual feelings about a place that

could otherwise disappear forever," takes hold of someone (223). Although the risk of memoricide is apparent, Yimsut did not let himself succumb to it. He says,

> A phantom government run by shadowy figures destroyed my village, abolished property, freedom, money, homes, schools, temples, and families. Children became slave laborers toiling till they died. Laughter and family meals were gone. Boy soldiers gave us torture, starvation, illness, disease, and death. In less than three years, I became an orphan, sick, emaciated, with only my memories and my promises. How can I forget? I thought to myself. I'm back as I had promised, I said to the dead, and these people are my witnesses (202).

Yimsut details the crimes that the Khmer Rouge had committed against the Cambodian land, people, and communities. They robbed children of their homes, youth, and familial bonds. They displaced and destroyed families. The center of family and community, the home, lost meaning to many. Through the constant confrontation with these traumatic memories, however, is how Yimsut resists domicide. He refuses to forget his homeland, his family, and all those affected by the various methods and magnitudes of domicide in Cambodia.

Resisting Domicide in Cambodia

There are multiple ways in which people in Cambodia have resisted extreme and everyday domicide. These methods maintain mutual connection to the community and the land. One way in which community was kept alive was through trading. Yimsut reveals, "Everyone knew that trading was illegal. We traded in secret, knowing that to be caught was to be executed. The traders worked for Angkar; some were even Angkar soldiers or relatives. When they cheated us there was nothing we could do." He adds, "The rules against trading for food remained, but they were quietly ignored" (80-81). Cambodians quietly rebelled against the suffocating restrictions of the Khmer Rouge by maintaining community. The Hob of District 12 reflects this need to keep community alive, as it was the site of black market trade that helped many in

District 12 survive, even the Peacekeepers, who also largely ignored and contributed to the citizens' offense and disobedience, according to Panem law (Collins 5-6 &11). Both those in Cambodia and District 12 did what they could to help each other survive, which resists the destructive and isolating nature of domicide.

Other ways to resist domicide are through personal healing and community service, as readers see in Yimsut's journey. He returns to Cambodia and volunteers for CANDO, or the Cambodian-American National Development Organization, to help "with the [new Cambodian] elections, in human resource development, technology transfer, and with human rights" (179). This experience supported Yimsut in his healing journey immensely, as he "reconcile[d] with [his] past [and] found peace [through] helping those less fortunate" (197). He exclaims that he "regained [his] identity as a Khmer" and recognizes that "Cambodia will always be a part of [him and he] will always be a part of Cambodia" (197). A consequence of domicide is the destruction of one's sense of self and connection to their homeland; however, as Yimsut proves, there are ways to prevent this. He healed his connection to his homeland by buying and developing a plot of land there. Yimsut acknowledges,

> Besides the $23,000 I have thus far invested to develop it, I also developed emotional ties. The property is now the envy of the neighborhood, and it is priceless as far as I am concerned. I don't intend to sell anytime soon. The farm is my personal pride and joy, a symbol of my return to Cambodia–even if it is only for brief visits now and then (209).

By returning to Cambodia and investing in a plot of land there, Yimsut has been able reclaim Cambodia as a place he can proudly call home. The farm he has grown with his own hands became something to be proud of; this shows growth because before, being Cambodian engulfed him in shame. Yimsut has healed his relationship with his homeland, and he encourages others to do the same and to confront institutions that perpetuate extreme violence and discrimination.

Although he escaped from Cambodia due to necessity, he still recognizes Cambodia as his home, and that his "soul and spirit have always been with [his] Cambodia" (218).

Syria

Introduction

Akesson and Basso have described the conflict in Syria as "one of the worst humanitarian crises in modern history. Approximately 10 percent of Syria's population has been disabled or killed, and over half has been either displaced internally and forced to leave and resettle in other countries" (155). A series of conflicts are occurring simultaneously in Syria which has caused this crisis: "the civil war, the Islamic State insurgency, the Kurdish fight for autonomy, and the large displacement of Syrians both within Syria and outside of Syria's borders" (198). Various domestic and foreign actors are at war in Syria, leaving many innocent Syrians without homes and killing thousands of others.

The Syrian War has many political actors involved, one of them being the current president, Bashar al-Assad. The Assads have been in power since the 1970s, when Assad's father, Hafez al-Assad gained power due to an internal coup (Khaddour & Mazur). The Assads are also part of "the Muslim minority group known as the Alwaites, who make up about 12 percent of the population" (Akesson & Basso 156). During Hafez al-Assad's rule, he set up a "single-party police state" and censured all dissent, and enforced it through his intelligence group, *mukhabarat*. To maintain power for decades, he appealed to various groups that were satisfied for the short term, but his main support base was "senior army officers and the bourgeoisie" (Hensman). His death in 2000 brought his son, Bashar al-Assad to power. Many expected a positive change with the new president, but these hopes did not come true.

The year 2011 marked the rise of the Arab Spring, a protest movement across multiple Arab countries that called for the removal of their leaders and the installation of a democracy. Assad's military suppressed these protests immediately with "violent government crackdowns [that] quickly escalated to a scorched earth policy, whereby Assad's government and his allies 'wiped neighborhoods off the map' and displaced millions of Syrians" (Akesson & Basso 172).

Syrian homes have become battlefields where various groups are vying for power, foreign and domestic (163). Innocent civilians are caught in this web, and they experience a combination of direct and indirect violence against them and their homes. With the direct violence method of domicide, "the Assad regime—with military support from countries such as Russia—used brute force such as aerial bombs to completely destroy homes, villages, and communities" (155). The indirect violence method is through bureaucracy, which includes Law 10, which made it so that property owners had to register their property by May 10, 2018; if they did not do so, their homes would be claimed and "auctioned off for potential (re)development" (166). When this law was passed, Syrians only had a month to complete this process.

Azzouz's scholarship expands on this dynamic version of domicide by examining the ways in which domicide is used during war and peace times in Syria. He does this to show the "disorienting experience [that many Syrian residents have] in their own city, with a sense of loss and exile even for those who have stayed in their own homes" (Azzouz 26). Azzouz shows the human cost of domicide, which he has personally experienced, and how painful it is to be in a cycle of loss and destruction (xi). This case study of domicide in Syria brings attention to the human experience with home and how those in power destroy homes with the purpose of severing the connection between people and their homes. Similarities between experiencing domicide in Collins' *The Hunger Games* series and in Syria are also evident.

The Syrian Home as Lived and Researched by Ammar Azzouz

> A house holds too many memories. It's the special place where you keep your belongings. … A picture hung on a wall. Family visits in a special part of the house. A fight with your parents in a corridor. So many unforgettable and beautiful memories. Even if some were painful, they're beautiful and won't happen again (Akesson & Basso 158).

For Syrian resident Shoud al-Jadou, the home is central to a person's memory and a large part of one's upbringing. A kaleidoscope of experiences can exist in one building, reflecting the dwellers' traditions and cultural practices. These traditions and practices include "raising children, sharing family meals, celebrating holidays" (157). These beautiful and painful memories of home and family, supplemented by the memories created by the people and cherished objects within the home, impact a person's childhood and form their growing identity. In Syria specifically, "The home also serves as a central organizing structure for the extended family units, facilitating the family's socialization beyond the home" (157). The function of the Syrian home is not only for protection against the outside world but also serves as a central unit of gathering where several generations live together and create social bonds (156). Akesson and Basso cite Syrian-Canadian researcher, Maissaa Almustafa, who asserts, "'The house is related to home for sure, but at the same time, when I talk about home … it's actually beyond the physical building. It's about community, it's about the relationship, it's about the social structure that you are surrounded with'" (157). We see Katniss also express this sentiment in her connection with her family, the Hob, and the entirety of District 12. She forms connections with her fellow neighbors and always provides for her family. A house offers a place for community, but it is the community that makes a home.

Azzouz highlights the story of Hanan, a Syrian Palestinian architect whose family has experienced domicide and displacement in both Syria and Palestine. This is Hanan's description of home:

> See, it is not only about our house itself, but also about the small garden we had in the entrance of our building. It is about the small tailor shop on the ground floor, it is the teachers who used to give private lessons to students, and you would see the street full of their noise and laughter. It is about the small steps by the entrance door, where my sister used to sit with her friends after school. It is about me opening the window to say good morning to our neighbour (Azzouz 67).

Many elements of home that Hanan describes are not related to the house's physical structure; the meaning of home extends beyond physicality to include a person's family, neighborhood, and broader community. When a person thinks of home, the physical environment and the memories of people attached to it come to mind. This is evident in Katniss's own experience with home. Toward the end of *Mockingjay*, she returns to District 12 after the Capitol has been defeated, reeling from the loss of her sister in the rebel bombing of the Capitol. She wakes up to the sound of Peeta's shovel planting primroses on the side of the house. He says, "'I went to the woods this morning and dug these up. For her'" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 383). These primroses are the flowers her younger sister, Prim, was named after. Although no longer physically present, Prim is still associated with the home. The presence of the primroses offers Katniss comfort, adding liveliness to the house, reminding her of the familial bonds that were strengthened there. The meaning of home can be imbued into the people and objects inside and outside of the physical building.

When faced with the threat of extreme domicide, the physical home and the majority of its belongings must be left behind. Leaving behind prized possessions is agonizing for many because of the attachments formed to them and their associations with home. In their state of

urgency, victims of domicide make quick decisions on what to bring with them–if they're able to–that will remind them of home, preserving that attachment. Azzouz spoke with a woman named Nataly who informed him that her family had changed homes five times within seven years due to the chaos in Homs (57-58). While rushing to escape to safety, Nataly's family took "some clothes, money, passports, some of [Nataly's] artwork, gold and jewellery, letters, certifications and small bag of souvenirs" (58). Nataly and her family were "keen to keep a memory of [their] home, even in that moment of chaos" (58). This avid desire to preserve an aspect of home is also seen in Collins' *Mockingjay*. After the recent destruction of District 12, Katniss visits to comprehend the severity of the ruin. With the possibility of another attack from the Capitol, she goes to her house in Victor's Village to retrieve her father's old hunting jacket. She initially brought it to Victor's Village "from the old house, thinking its presence might be of comfort to [her] mother and sister" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 14). She is grateful for her previous decision because if she did not move the jacket, "it'd be ash now" (14). The urge to retrieve the jacket surpasses the fear of violence due to its memory of home. The jacket keeps the memory of Katniss's father alive and provides a connection to their former house in the Seam, demonstrating how a person's belongings can symbolize the meaning of home. In another instance of extreme domicide, the citizens of District 13, the place of refuge for many who have escaped the other districts, are forced to evacuate their homes (individual compartments) due to an imminent nuclear attack from the Capitol's forces. As they retreat further underground, Katniss and her mother realize in horror that Prim has gone back to their old compartment to rescue her cat, Buttercup, who has been her companion for years (Katniss brought Buttercup to District 13, along with her father's jacket, when she visited the ruins of District 12). Prim says to a frantic Katniss that she "couldn't leave him behind [...] Not twice" (144). The regret Prim feels

for leaving Buttercup behind is palpable, signifying that people's connections to their homes include pets and other treasured possessions. She risked her life, undeterred by the incoming bombs, to save her cat, one of the few connections to District 12 she had left. The actions of Nataly and Katniss and their respective family members reveal how people will compromise their safety by spending extra time to save items that are precious to them and their memory of home. This further supports the notion that the meaning of home is also ingrained in people and possessions.

The Destroyed Syrian Home

According to Azzouz, "The destruction of people's homes has been seen as a tool for punishment, displacement and violence against those who oppose the regime or sympathize with the uprising" (19). Akesson and Basso's case study of domicide in Syria supports this assertion; they cite a 2014 Human Rights Watch report on demolished neighborhoods in Damascus and Hama that found "in pro-Assad areas, there had not been similar demolitions [compared anti-Assad areas]" (164). There is a level of discrimination lying at the heart of which neighborhoods are destroyed and which are not. This exemplifies how domicide is a deliberate choice, one often fueled by political motives. This level of intention is also seen in *Mockingjay*, as President Snow does not commit the same level of domicide against District 2 due to their obedience and their weapons manufacturing capabilities, which is "the heart of the Capitol's military" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 192-194). For political reasons, President Snow spares District 2, demonstrating how domicide is a calculated act meant to benefit those in power. Akesson and Basso also point to "a pro-Assad governor in a Damascus suburb [who] explained that this instance of large-scale domicide [the demolition of neighborhoods in Tadamoun and Qaboun]

was necessary to drive out opposition fighters" (164). This statement further proves that domicide is used for political purposes: the force that utilizes domicide as a tool of war does so to gain an advantage over its enemy. Domicide used with the intention of driving out opposition fighters is seen in all Districts except for Two (before its surrender), especially in Districts 8, 11, 12, and 13. The discriminatory use of domicide is also justified through "common good" rhetoric, which includes terms such as the "'War on Terror'" or "'modernization', 'development' or even 'reconstruction'" (Azzouz 15). As evident by the Assad government's decisions, the targeting of specific groups specifies their enemy, one that is scapegoated and faces destruction and suffering, justified through an argument for "public interest." President Snow makes an example out of District 12 and 13 to vilify them, garner public support, and "send a message to the rebels" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 272). Through his manipulative rhetoric and domicidal policies, he has made District 12 and 13 "synonymous with urban decay, destruction and ruins" like the Assad government has to the city of Homs (Azzouz 15).

Space is further weaponized in Syria and the Districts through conflict infrastructure, which builds physical divides and intensifies social tensions. Cities and neighborhoods in Syria are physically restructured with "[w]alls, fences, buffer zones, cement blocks and barriers [that] had been added to break up the built environment, to divide communities and to control access through checkpoints" (Azzouz 50). In District 11, its design displays a similar sight:

> a fence rises up before us. Towering at least thirty-five feet in the air and topped with wicked coils of barbed wire, it makes ours back in District 12 look childish. My eyes quickly inspect the base, which is lined with enormous metal plates. There would be no burrowing under those, no escaping to hunt. Then I see the watchtowers, placed evenly apart, manned with armed guards, so out of place among the fields of wildflowers around them (Collins, *Catching Fire* 55).

District 11, which is home to a large population, is supposed to be considered home, a safe space where one can develop their identity and nurture their family. The weaponization of this space is an act of domicide because it makes home into a cage, a term Akesson and Basso utilize when describing their use of the term in relation to home (7). A home becomes a cage when the environment outside of it is violent; this violence prohibits people from building community with their neighbors and extending the meaning of home outside of the individual dwelling. This destroys a sense of community and, therefore, home. As seen in Syria, this weaponization of space "cemented the pre-war intangible divisions that separated people from each other through sectarian or social lines" (Azzouz 50). The opportunity to build community is crushed by the physical barriers that exacerbate the distrust among the diverse groups that reside in Syria.

In *Mockingjay*, Capitol citizens are also victims of extreme domicide, revealing how perpetrators of domicide take advantage of space, even at the cost of their own people and supporters. This is necessary to point out, as Capitol civilians are faced with forced evacuations and their homes turn into battlefields. The Capitol becomes the front line when Katniss and her team move in on President Snow during their mission in *Mockingjay*. To protect himself and his allies, President Snow has worked with the Gamemakers to create pods, or obstacles that are "designed to either trap you or kill you," which are peppered throughout the Capitol. Katniss and Finnick, a victor and rebel from District 4, recognize very quickly that this setup is reminiscent of the arenas, places of bloodshed and slaughter (Collins, *Mockingjay* 250-251). The renovation of the Capitol to model a dangerous arena is an act of domicide: the Capitol civilians living in these areas were forced out of their homes and these homes are damaged by the traps and man-made horrors that lie within the pods. It turns the place of home, one meant to provide security and safety, into a place of death and destruction. President Snow has murdered his own

citizens' way of life by moving the conflict to everyday spaces. In creating this hazardous space, he eventually orders "part of his mansion [to be] readied to receive [fleeing] citizens" (334). This creates the perfect opportunity for President Alma Coin, the leader of District 13 and the rebellion, to allegedly send in rebel forces to bomb the crowd of refugee children in front of Snow's mansion and the rebel medics who went to provide aid, one of the medics being Katniss's sister (345-347). Prim dies in the bombing, and Snow tells Katniss the bombing "was a masterful move on Coin's part. The idea that I was bombing our own helpless children instantly snapped whatever frail allegiance my people still felt to me" (357). Katniss is bothered by and mulls over Snow's allegation that Coin ordered the bombing of the refugee camp and concludes Coin is just another Snow. With a sudden change in aim, Katniss shoots an arrow through Coin during Snow's public execution (360 & 372). Katniss recognized that both Snow and Coin are power-hungry opportunists who have committed domicidal acts against homes and refugee camps. They both weaponize space for personal benefit.

How is this weaponization of space experienced by those who have lost their home? Azzouz emphasizes, "It is not only the loss of the physical architecture, but a sense of disorientation when the people around us keep moving, and when the sense of community and neighbourhood gets destroyed" (77). Already having lost her physical house, Katniss's world stops when she loses her sister, a member of her home, the girl she fought so hard to protect. Her sense of community is destroyed, as the bond she established with Prim is severed. This is coupled with another effect of domicide: "the eradication of the conditions of possibility and existence for their personal identities" (19). With the loss of her house and her sister, Katniss loses herself. She reflects on who is now: "A badly burned girl with no wings. With no fire. And no sister" (Collins, *Mockingjay* 350). Katniss's fiery personality and desire for freedom are two

main components of her identity, both of which she believes have disappeared after her sister's death. She is confused about who she is and how to move on with her life without her sister and home. Those who suffer from domicide in Syria experience this disorienting feeling. In his interview and conversations with Omama Zankawan, a London-based Syrian originally from Homs, Azzouz learns about her and her family's story. Zankawan's family "changed ten houses in eight years," which is significantly disorienting, as a sense of home is constantly uprooted (Azzouz 56). In approximately two years, they lost two homes, and "after that, [her mother] decided she does not want to furnish any house, she doesn't want to buy any luxurious things because she was afraid it might be destroyed again" (61). Her mother's fear of attachment brought on by domicide prohibits her from expressing her personality and identity in her choice of furnishings. An extraordinary part of owning a home is the ability to make it your own by adding your personality and identity to every room. Domicide ruined this experience for Zankawan's mother because it eradicated the possibility for her to express herself through a home. This pain is amplified when the Zankawans lose their dream home; Zankawan's mother grieves, "'I feel like I lost a piece of me because I lost my house'" (62). This feeling of a lost attachment and sense of identity is disorienting, causing a type of dispossession that is beyond repair. Domicide forcibly alters a person's relationship with their environment, and it is often deleterious to a person's sense of self, community, and purpose. Zankawan having to watch her mother in anguish over the loss of their home is excruciating, as she sees how her mother's dreams are crushed. She and her family ache for their former home, as it exists solely in their memory now (63).

Resisting Domicide in Syria

Memory is one of the best tools people have to resist the effects of domicide because it can be used to "recover their past, but also for imagining and shaping the future reconstruction of our ruined cities" (Azzouz 84). Azzouz asserts, "The protection of memory should be central to the struggle of Syria and Syrians when both tangible and intangible history has been wilfully targeted and contested. This centralization of memory should also influence the future reconstruction process to capture the rhythms of longing for erased pasts" (137). With the memory of home, Syrians can try to rebuild their communities in ways that are authentic to how they were before their destruction. There is a fear surrounding reconstruction and its authenticity because it "can be the new form of domicide that might destroy more than the war itself" (98). As a form of domicide, "reconstruction might lead to the loss of a city's cultural heritage sites and to the radical transformation in the way people orient themselves, experience and navigate their built environments" as "layers of memory and identity" could be removed (98-99). It is important that Syrian civilians are involved in the reconstruction process because community engagement will prevent the impact of more devastation on them and their homes (Porteous & Smith 211). Although the citizens of District 12 decided to completely renovate the land and transition from coal mining to the manufacturing of medicines (a change in their District's identity), they made this choice collectively (Collins 388). Collins illustrates how this reconstruction of District 12 is a group effort involving the entire community. The citizens of District 12 have acknowledged that despite "whatever has happened, this is [their] home" (388). A say in how this home is rebuilt is therefore necessary. Collins shows how healing it is to contribute to the reconstruction of one's community. Azzouz cites multiple accounts of how Syrian youth are involved in this process, demonstrating their dedication to creating a brighter

future. Many expressed to Azzouz "how good they feel because they can contribute to the recovery of their own city, how they feel their voice matters, how they feel a sense of meaning and purpose" (71). One of the young architects even "feels her team at the charity is like a family for her as most of her friends and relatives have left Homs" (71). Community involvement in rebuilding Syrian neighborhoods reestablishes a sense of community and teaches young people valuable lessons on how the meaning of home spans the entire community. These lessons about home are important, and Syrian youth's interpretation of home provides insight into how their identities are shaped by home and its destruction.

Azzouz exclaims, "I believe that through arts and culture and through the work of artists, we can tell an alternative story about the Syrian struggle" (89). In his work, he draws attention to the various mediums artists have used to convey the Syrian experience with home and domicide (drawings, maps, paintings, and murals). I would like to highlight a different medium: poetry. I will introduce two poems written by two young Syrians who have experienced the pain and suffering of losing their homes, and point out similarities between their experiences with each other and with characters of *The Hunger Games* series. With these poems and these comparisons, I hope to amplify Syrian voices, provide another perspective to promote empathy, and emphasize the youth's unique experiences with home and domicide.

The first poem, "Refugee," is by Abdullah Kasem Al Yatim, a young Syrian refugee. His poem won the Malaysia Migrant & Refugee Poetry Competition in 2019, and in 2021, a Malaysian artist named Sharon Chin illustrated his poem for World Refugee Day. Yatim's poem captures his traumatic experience with domicide and displacement.

> I was forced to leave my country; they said it is for safety.
> I went quickly to pick a flower of jasmine.
> Collected soil as much as a bottle of water,
> and hid olive tree leaf in my little pocket

I went out of my sweet house and forget [sic] to take
my memories and hopes, instead of that
I took a song named ”All Arab countries are my home.”

I walked confidently and sang, “All Arab countries are my home.”
I was surprised by my new identity.
They called me a damned Syrian refugee

They violated my rights and stole my childhood
In addition, put me in a small tent far away from the worlds
My heart has broke and my soul was in pain
I treat myself with the smell of Jasmine.

Yesterday I was a happy child cheering, “All Arab countries are my home.”
However, today I have became a refugee who was expelled from places.

Yatim was forced to leave his country, home, family, community, and culture. Like many forced to leave their homes, he brings items with him that are mementos of home: jasmine flowers, soil, and olive tree leaves. These items bring him comfort while he is mourning the loss of his home. Although he takes these with him, he forgets to take his memories and hopes, which shows how domicide works to destroy memory and optimism. He explicitly states how this act of domicide “violated [his] rights and [stole] his childhood,” indicating the lasting effects that domicide will have on his psyche and personhood. Katniss has similar emotions; although she brings back possessions from District 12, she still feels empty and lost, grappling with her new title of refugee in District 13. She states that “inwardly [she’s] such a wasteland” (Collins 366). Like her home, family, and sense of community, domicide destroyed her identity, showing the drastic effects this crime has on people, especially young people who are still developing. Yatim and Katniss both reveal how domicide does not only ravage the land, but the hearts and minds of victims as well.

The second poem is by Nidaa Aljabbarin, a Syrian refugee who attends Syracuse University as a biology major. Her poem, "The Day I Left" was published in Ahmed Badr's poetry collection, *While the Earth Sleeps We Travel.* Aljabbarin's poem recalls the last day she and her family were in their home.

> *Ya beet jede, tha'a al maftah, wa bouabak tebki ala elrah*
> Oh grandfather, our house key is lost, and the doors cry for those who left.
>
> I wake up, and my eyes immediately forget the taste of a good sleep.
> I look around wondering what there is left to see.
> I see my grandfather, the vessel, and the house key.
>
> I look at the vessel, not understanding what I see. I see my grandfather's eyes as he prepares to face his fears. Fears that we're all leaving, like drops of tears.
>
> I walk out of the house not knowing why I must leave. Everyone holds my hands, giving me something I need. Then my grandfather asks me,
> "Where is the house key?"
>
> I don't know, *jede*.
> Will we be back to use this key again?
> Will the doors be there to greet us?
> I set foot in the street, knowing what my body needs.
> My thoughts fight among themselves, bleeding into tears.
>
> I don't recognize the look in my grandfather's eyes
> He looks as if he is about to face his worst fear.
> The fear turns into a teardrop.
> He takes his glasses off, but the tear is stubborn
> It refuses to leave his face.
>
> *Ya beet jede, tha'a al maftah, wa bouabak tebki ala elrah.*
> Oh grandfather, our house key is lost, and the doors cry for those who left (Aljabbarin).

Aljabbarin is forced to leave her home in Syria, her family frantically taking what they can. The disorientation she feels is evident in her confusion about why they must leave. She does not understand why this is happening to her family and her home. Although she does not want to

leave, her body instinctively moves her, trying to guide her to safety, which goes against her desire to stay. While her thoughts are "fight[ing] among themselves," she attempts to interpret the fear in her grandfather's eyes. Throughout the poem, Aljabbarin is unsure of their predicament and if they will return, but she seems hopeful; on the contrary, her grandfather knows their fate. The fear he has of losing their home turns into acceptance, and that acceptance brings on tears. They will lose their home, and the likelihood of return is despairingly low. Domicide impacts more than buildings. It damages memories, identities, and generations worth of traditions and heirlooms. It stokes fear and associates home with terror. One of the last things Katniss sees in the Victor's Village house before she leaves is a vase, like Aljabbarin. Katniss did not understand what she was seeing at first, but she spots a white rose that reeks of perfume among the dead flowers. Fear instantly rushes through her because she knows what this rose symbolizes: President Snow. The fear of domicide drives Katniss, like Aljabbarin's family, out of their homes.

The horrendous experiences of domicide and displacement that Katniss, Yatim, Aljabarrin, and millions of Syrians endure illustrate that home is no longer a place of security, identity, and community; instead, it harbors fear and destruction. Azzouz emphasizes, however, that "memory is used more and more to make sense of who we are and where we are heading" (83). The memories of their homes and their destruction are forever immortalized in the words of refugees. Telling their stories keeps their homes alive and acts as a form of resistance to the ongoing effects of domicide.

Palestine

Introduction

For decades, Palestinians have struggled for statehood against the expansion of Israel, and they are forced to "negotiate everyday boundaries, borders, and barriers within their own homeland" (Akesson & Basso 107). After the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, the Israeli military has increased its domicidal bombardment of Palestinian territory, which includes "public infrastructure, civilian homes, and education and health centres, [and the] United Nations Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) facilities" (United Nations, "General Assembly). Since then, destruction of Gaza and the West Bank has continuously increased despite its violation of international laws and calls for a cease-fire. To understand how Palestine and Israel have reached this point, it is necessary to look back at their relations in the twentieth century.

Anti-Jewish sentiment in Europe increased significantly in the twentieth century with the rise of Nazism and nationalism, increasing the desire for an independent Jewish state, which had its roots in the nineteeth-century Zionist movement. After debates over where to establish this new state, Zionists, supporters of an independent Jewish nation, agreed upon Palestine, as this region has religious significance to Jewish people (Beinin & Hajjar). Palestine at this time was under British Mandate due to the events of World War I that split the Ottoman Empire into various spheres of influence (Gelvin). Zionists made multiple efforts to get the British government's support of an independent Jewish state, and it resulted in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which granted that "a national home for the Jewish people" could be established in Palestine ("Part I"). With the permission of the British government, Jewish immigration from Europe to Palestine increased, causing tension among Jewish and Palestinian peoples. It is

important to note that not all Jewish people supported the Zionist movement; many "regarded themselves as nationals of their countries" and did not see a need for an independent Jewish state ("Part I"). Despite these disagreements, the Zionist movement picked up steam due largely to Nazism and the Holocaust.

As encroachment on Palestinian land became more frequent due increased Jewish migration from Europe, Palestinians revolted for their independence against both the British and Zionists. The Arab Revolt (1936-1939) was a bloody clash between these groups, and the revolt was crushed by British and Zionist forces (Beinin & Hajjar). The defeat of Palestinians during this revolt did not stop their quest for independence, resulting in further clashes with the rising population of Zionists. During the 1940s, World War II and the Holocaust caused more Jewish people to find refuge in Palestine, bringing both Palestine and the Zionist forces to a major turning point.

As the British government did not know how to answer the question of Palestine, it turned the issue over to the United Nations in 1947. Debates over Palestinian and Jewish statehood took place; various representatives argued over the necessity to resolve the issue of Jewish homelessness and the protection of Palestinian land. A call for a two-state system was made, and the territory was divided among Arab and Jewish states with a larger portion given to a smaller Jewish population, while Jerusalem was to remain under international control ("Part II"). Due to this new distribution of land, tensions boiled over when the British Mandate ended in 1948. Zionists declared the State of Israel independent, and Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq all invaded Israel, resulting in the first Arab-Israeli War. During all of this chaos, 750,000 Palestinians were violently exiled from their homes which were then destroyed or occupied. This episode is known to Palestinians as the Nakba, or the catastrophe. The war ended when armistice

agreements were signed in 1949. The country was divided into three parts: Israel, the West Bank (controlled by Jordan), and Gaza (controlled by Egypt) (Beinin & Hajjar). Palestinians were devastated by the loss of their homes.

Due to conflicts between Israel and the new Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which was founded in 1964 with the aim of reestablishing Palestinian nationhood, another war broke out: the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 "brought immediate and direct repercussions on the Palestine question. Israel occupied the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as well as territories beyond to control far more than the area claimed by the World Zionist Organization in 1919, except for the East Bank of the Jordan" ("Part II"). This caused a second wave of destruction of Palestinian homes and displacement of Palestinian people. The PLO became a major actor in Palestinian military and politics as a result of this war (Beinin & Hajjar). The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 led to a mutual understanding between the PLO and Israeli government. Israeli forces partially withdrew, Israel's right to exist was recognized, and Palestine would self-govern the West Bank and Gaza ("The Oslo Accords"). However, "[a]fter an armed takeover of Gaza by Hamas in 2007, Israel imposed a blockade" leading to another deadly clash in 2008 ("History of the Question of Palestine"). Hamas and Israel have been clashing since, resulting in massive casualties and the destruction of Palestinian land.

When observing the decades-long occupation of Palestine, it is important to amplify the voices of Palestinian people. Real people behind these statistics have experienced the continued loss of home on a grand scale. In this study of how domicide has transformed Palestine, I will highlight how Palestinians perceive their homeland in relation to family, identity, and cultural practices, as well as how these perceptions are affected by domicide. Resistance movements among the youth through clothing, art, music, and social media are also featured to demonstrate

how the resilience of Palestinians transcends borders, languages, and time. The similarities between domicide in Collins' *The Hunger Games* series and in the Palestinian context are also explored.

The Land is Home

Abdullah Abdulkader Jaber Nashwan, a displaced Palestinian resident exclaims, "Palestine is my soul… it is all I dream and think about. Palestine is my whole life [...] Palestine is heaven" ("Exhibit" 1:01-1:58). Despite the Israeli military's encroachment on the Al-Dawayima village and the massacre of hundreds of its inhabitants, he refuses to forget his life and his home in Al-Dawayima. Millions of Palestinians' sense of home is connected to their ancestral villages that are occupied by Israel (Porteous & Smith 92). In the Arabic language, the word *dar* "implies a structure" and "the commonly used *watan* refers to a land area or territory and has now come to mean homeland" (Porteous & Smith 92). The meaning of home to Palestinians encompasses so much more than an individual house; the land and the community that resides on it are also included. Another term for home in Arabic is *beit*, which "denot[es] the physical structure of a house, [and] implies a place of security and permanence" (Akesson & Basso 108). Even when abandoned, the *beit* "still belongs to the family" and will always stand as a place dedicated to family and memory (Akesson & Basso 108). The Palestinian home, therefore, transcends time and cannot be taken away because the meaning of home is imbued in the land and the family unit. The language that is used to describe home also indicates its complexities, signifying that one specific meaning of home does not accurately depict it. For some, as Nashwan says, home is heaven. Akesson and Basso explain that this symbolic

association of home as heaven emphasizes "a collective identity" that connects "others through shared history and the creation of community" (7).

Land to Palestinians is associated with the meaning of home due to its ties to family, community, security, and livelihood. Emotional attachments to the land are significant, as evident by artist Dalia Elcharbini, whose work is exhibited at the Museum of the Palestinian People in Washington, DC. Three of her paintings are "varnished with sand, crushed stone from the soil of Jerusalem and small pieces of olive tree bark from the Al Baddawi tree" (Asma-Sadeque). She expresses her emotional connection to the land in her art by incorporating tangible elements of the land. Elcharbini's art demonstrates how the land spans across time for Palestinians and even space. She said that when she received the sand and stone from Palestine, she teared up because "'that was literally the closest [she's] ever felt to [her] homeland'" (Asma-Sadeque). The Palestinian meaning of home includes the land itself. This is further supported by an unnamed Palestinian woman featured in a video titled "Vows to my Homeland," which is shown in the United Nations' "Palestine - a land with People" virtual exhibit. She says, "I would take its soil and hold it close to my heart. The soil! If they would let me in, I would take a little soil and bring it back here to plant an olive tree in it" ("Vows" 1:00-1:09). Part of the Palestinian home is the soil; the land that provides a foundation for their homes and sustains their livelihoods. This land, as conveyed by the unnamed woman, has deep, emotional significance. Over time, specific parts of the land have become associated with Palestinian communities (and subsequently the Palestinian home) because of cultural emphasis on communal ties with people and the land. One of these symbols is the olive tree.

In his exploration of Palestinians' sense of belonging to a place, Nasser Abufarha explains, "symbols play a dominant role in unifying Palestinian identity by unifying the

Palestinian experience across conditions of exile, fragmentation, and isolation" (344). As seen in Elcharbini's emotional response to the sand and stone, land is a symbolic representation of home and acts as a reaffirmation of identity to those who are living in the diaspora. Through his research, Abufarha found multiple symbols of Palestinian land that resonate with Palestinians' meaning of home, encompassing culture, family, and identity; these symbols include the *saber* (cactus), *al-burtuqal* (the orange), *al-zaytuna* (the olive tree), and the poppy. In this study, the olive tree and its symbolic meanings will be the primary focus. Olive growing has a long history in Palestine and has played a "significant part of the economy and everyday life" since the Bronze Age (Simaan 511). Abufarha relays how "[t]he olive harvest is a communal affair" because family and friends "gather and help each other in the harvest," bringing a "sense of joy and security" to Palestinian village communities, especially to those in the West Bank who rely on the olive trees economically (354-355). Olives and olive oil are necessities in the Palestinian diet, and homes are "traditionally well stocked with enough olive oil and wheat for the year until the next harvest season" (Abufarha 354). There are olive *qattayen,* or "terraces," which are "hand-built terraces of stacked stones that encircle the mountains and hills," and these are maintained by Palestinian farmers, becoming "central to [their] daily activities and social life" (354). Olive trees for Palestinians are a labor of love that unites family and friends, showing their dedication to the well-being of their homeland, their families, and their communities. Therefore, olive trees symbolize "traditions, community, connection with past Palestinian life in Palestine, and an example of the persistence of Palestinian life as un-ruined nationhood" all of which fall under the meaning of home (355). Olive trees signify a connection with past Palestinian life because of "the old age of the tree itself"; these trees have an "ancient presence in Palestine" and have "passed on through the generations," making them a "dominant Palestinian national

symbol" (355-356). Olive trees represent the Palestinian home because of its connection to land, family, identity, and community. In a different study, Juman Simaan highlights the personal accounts of Palestinians who convey this strong connection of home and olive trees.

In "Olive growing in Palestine: A decolonial ethnographic study of collective daily-forms-of-resistance," Simaan interviews four olive-growing families from the West Bank to foreground their relationship with the environment and their experiences with Israeli occupation. In this study, Simaan has found that olive trees provide sustenance, promote familial and communal bonds, and represent identities and values. Abu-Nedal, a member of an interviewed family asserts, "'The olive is the only tree that lives on, and is a symbol for our identity. It protects the land and the soil and it means the land has owners'" (Simaan 517). Abu-Nedal echoes Abufarha's findings of olive trees as markers of time and identity, and he affirms that the Palestinian people are inextricably linked to the land. Their culture and identity is tied to the olive trees; Nedal recalls, "*We were brought up to see our grandparents grow olives. When the first rain came people knew it was olive harvest season. A beautiful season with memories of everyone helping and sharing food*" (517). This memory of family and community is inseparable from olive trees, which highlights their importance to Palestinians and their memories of home. The destruction of these trees is an act of domicide; the Israeli occupation and demolition of homes "is further intensified by cutting down the trees and transporting uprooted trees for transplanting in Israeli towns" (Abufarha 358-359). In uprooting these olive trees, Israeli forces are uprooting Palestinian homes, families, livelihoods, and cultural practices. This act of domicide intends to erase Palestinians' connection with their land like it never existed. However, many Palestinians do not let this destruction debilitate them, and they continue

to maintain or plant new olive trees. Olive trees over time have become a symbol of resilience and resistance, much like other symbols that will be explored in this case study.

The Key is All That's Left: The Occupation and Bombing of Palestine

When Israeli forces invaded the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, "colony-building has encroached further into fertile land" since (Simaan 512). In an interview with another family, Simaan learns that their "land was under threat of confiscation; hundreds of their trees had been uprooted and their solar panels and wells were destroyed by the IDF" (519). In partnership with destruction, Israel enacts strict limitations on Palestinians' movement with checkpoints and physical dividers (in violation of border agreements), "engender[ing] total control on Palestinian lives" (Akesson & Basso 112). As further punishment for violent unrest, "Israel has also cut off electricity and water and halted shipments of food, medical supplies, and building materials to Palestinian territories" (112). This specific tactic parallels the events of Collins' *Catching Fire*, as the rebellion in District 8 forced a lockdown, and there was "No food, no coal, [and] everyone [was] forbidden to leave their homes [...] the whole district was on the brink of starvation" (145). This type of punishment occurred in District 12 as well, as food became scarce due to limited supply and shipments that arrived intentionally "spoiled and defiled by rodents" (Collins, *Catching Fire* 130). The ruling forces in both Palestine and Panem use restrictions to brutally control the population. The difference, however, is the motive; the Capitol wants to quell the uprising and return to the status quo, while the goal of the Israeli government is to completely colonize the remainder of Palestinian land. Over 100,000 homes in Palestine have been demolished since 1948, and "99 percent of these cases are considered to be in gross violation of international law" (Akesson & Basso 196). The purpose of these demolitions is "to make life so

miserable for Palestinians so that they are driven to leave the country or to drive Palestinians off their land" (118), On November 3, 2020, Israeli forces "destroy[ed] seventy Palestinian structures in Area C" (which is 61 percent of the land in the West Bank determined by the Oslo Accords), and two weeks later 1.200 housing units were belt in the Israeli Givat Hamatos settlement that permanently severs Bethlehem from Jerusalem, "block[ing] the Palestinian goal of claiming East Jerusalem as their future capital" (Akesson & Basso 196-197). The militarization of towns and villages and the introduction of permanent Israeli settlements demonstrates the violent extent of Israeli colonization and how it will continue. With the backing of global powers like the United States, the Israeli government can extend its colonial reach across occupied territories like the West Bank because "'Israeli civilian settlements [are not] inconsistent with international law'" according to Mike Pompeo, former U.S. Secretary of State, in 2019 (Akesson & Basso 197). This support from foreign powers authorizes Israel to continue its domicidal actions, much of which has become more aggressive within the past year.

The response to the atrocities committed by Hamas and other military groups "continues to be disproportionate and indiscriminate" says Ambassador Cheikh Niang, the Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, on May 17, 2024 ("The Nakba of 1948" 0:46-0:49). Niang reports that in Gaza, "almost 40,000 Palestinians have been killed and almost 80,000 injured, the vast majority of whom women and children. That is 1 in every 25 Gazans killed" (1:23-1:37). These statistics are appalling; tens of thousands of civilians have been murdered indiscriminately, most of which have been women and children. Niang continues, "Seventy percent of all buildings have been destroyed, schools and universities in rubble, hospitals are not functioning [...] Palestinian land and buildings are expropriated. Palestinians are beaten and killed with impunity" (1:47-2:26). The domicide

committed by Israeli forces is of varying methods and magnitudes and used in conjunction with genocide. The destruction and expropriation of Palestinian homes is deliberate; in the words of Martin Griffiths, the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "To call it 'a mistake' is a message that means nothing for those killed, those grieving, and those trying to save lives" ("Statement on Gaza"). Domicide is not a mistake, and in the Palestinian context, "The Nakba of 1948 and today's Nakba in Gaza are not two separate, distinct events [it is repetition]" ("The Nakba of 1948" 2:43-2:49). The Israeli government is choosing to repeat the Nakba, demonstrating that it "is an ongoing process which has affected the Palestinian people over generations" (3:25-3:28).

The impact that domicide and genocide have had on generations of Palestinians is tremendous and it is apparent in the psychological state of many Palestinians. In the study, "Is silence about trauma harmful for children? Transgenerational communication in Palestinian families," the researchers found that "a variety of emotions, including shame, guilt, rage, sorrow, disgust, and fear" were expressed by parents, and their "stories about destroyed or confiscated homes, olive groves, and fruit orchards [...] were told simultaneously with the loss of human dignity" (Dalgaard et al. 412). The negative effects of domicide are conveyed through the emotions of many Palestinians, and many have a fractured sense of identity living under Israeli occupation. Children are also significantly affected by this atrocity: children whose homes were destroyed showed a range of mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, psychotic thoughts, and violent behavior" (Akesson & Basso 118). "[C]hildren in occupied Palestine experience trauma embedded within the fabric of daily life" (Barron & Abdallah 106), which also reflects the nature of living as a child in Panem. In Katniss's case, she struggles with a wide

range of mental issues, especially after seeing the ruins of District 12 first hand. She often has nightmares and is usually withdrawn, "wander[ing] around [District] 13 or fall[ing] asleep somewhere hidden," revealing her struggles with depression (Collins, *Mockingjay* 18). However, after hearing Peeta call for a ceasefire, a spark of determination courses through her. She remembers "the corpse-littered wasteland of [her] home" and all the other traumatic events she's experienced at the hands of the Capitol. Due to this realization, she decides she "is going to be the Mockingjay" (30-31). This kind of resilience against powerful elites is seen among Palestinians and how it is conveyed generationally. Researchers have suggested that "rather than solely transmitting trauma and negative family experiences, parents also communicate resilience, strength, optimal identity formation, and high moral values to their children" (Dalgaard et al. 419). Palestinians are not passive victims of domicide and genocide; many actively resist Israel by maintaining their familial and communal ties to the land and their homes. This is best seen in the tradition of saving the keys to their homes.

According the Museum of Palestinian People, "Keys like these are powerful symbols of the Nakba – the terrible last turning in the locks of front doors across Palestine as hundreds of thousands fled or were displaced in 1947 and 1948" ("Keys & the Right of Return"). While these keys hold negative connotations of domicide and displacement, they also provide a source of comfort and belonging (Barron & Abdallah 108). According to Hussein Abu Amsha, a displaced Palestinian whose home was destroyed, "The key represents the homeland for all of us. We cannot live without a homeland there is no other refuge. We hope to be able to go back even if it's just to a tent on top of our house. That's where our homeland is" ("Keys to Lost Homes"). This desire to return to the home and homeland is represented by these keys, and it inspires hope among Palestinians that one day they will be able to return to their land. This motivation

encourages many Palestinians to keep resisting Israeli acts of domicide and genocide. Resistance materializes in many different ways, whether it is through the maintenance of olive trees and keys, or through clothing, music, and activism, which will be explored in the next section.

Resistance: A Real-life Mockingjay and the Impact of Music and Media

"Our mockingjay is back! Thank you for your post!" reads a comment by user @/_sumiali01 on an Instagram post by Palestinian-Dutch model, Bella Hadid. Hadid's response is to the October 7 Hamas attack and the subsequent bombing campaign of Palestinian homes in Gaza. Part of her statement reads:

> My heart is bleeding with pain from the trauma I am seeing unfold, as well as the generational trauma of my Palestinian blood. Seeing the aftermath from the airstrikes in Gaza, I mourn with all the mothers who have lost children and the children who cry alone, all the lost fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties, friends that will never again walk this earth. [...]
> I believe deep in my heart, that no child, no people anywhere, should be taken away from their family either temporarily or indefinitely. That goes for Israeli and Palestinian people alike. [...]
> My father was born in Nazareth in the year of the Nakba (the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians in 1948). Nine days after he was born, he, in his mothers arms, along with his family were expelled from their home of Palestine, becoming refugees, away from a place they once called home. My grandparents, Never being allowed to return. My family witnessed 75 years of violence against Palestinian people [...] The pain of that is unimaginable [...]
> Wars have laws - and they must be upheld, no matter what.
> We need to keep pressure on our leaders, wherever we are, not to forget the urgent needs of the people of Gaza, and to ensure that innocent Palestinian civilians are not the forgotten casualties of this war.
> I stand with humanity, knowing that peace and safety belong to us all (Hadid).

As a descendant of a Palestinian father and a family directly impacted by the Nakba, Bella Hadid has a strong tie to Palestine, even though she was born in the United States. No matter which country exiled Palestinians go to for safety, Palestine remains the one true home, and this sense

of home and identity is passed down through the generations. Across Hadid's Instagram page, whether on her main feed or her stories, she regularly posts about Palestine and the atrocities occurring there. Her posts spread awareness and call on people to take action either politically or economically (voting, rallying, donating, and so on). Hadid's activism is revered by many commenters who support a future Palestine that is free from Israeli oppression and aggression. She uses her platform not only to mobilize others but also to preserve her family's memory, identity, and connection to the Palestinian land. The preservation of memory is one of the best ways to combat the motives of Israeli domicide and genocide. The attachment to home will never be forgotten and keeps the home alive.

Hadid has also shown resistance through clothing, along with many Palestinians and non-Palestinian allies who wear the keffiyeh, a traditional garment that embodies aspects of Palestinian land and culture. Linah Mohammad, a producer at the media organization, NPR (National Public Radio), states, "Some say patterns on the keffiyeh symbolize different aspects of Palestinian life: the bold black stripes on the edges symbolize the historical trade routes that used to go through Palestine; the fishnet-like design represents the Palestinians' ties to the Mediterranean Sea; and the curvy lines resemble olive trees, a major point of pride for Palestinians" (Mohammad). Mohammad emphasizes that although none of these claims are backed by historical evidence, the different meanings have been accepted by Palestinians throughout the diaspora in the last decade. The various patterns represent multiple aspects of the Palestinian homeland, making the keffiyeh a symbol of home; the politicization of it acts as a form of resistance against forces that attempt to destroy the Palestinian homeland. In a recent Instagram post, Hadid wore a red keffiyeh dress made by designer duo Michael and Hushi in 2001. In this post, she reveals her pride in being Palestinian and explains the significance of the

keffiyeh to Palestinian culture and resilience (Hadid). Hadid wears a part of home on her as a form of resistance, which mirrors Katniss's mockingjay dress in *Catching Fire*. During the interviews before the 75th Hunger Games, Katniss is wearing a wedding dress that was to be worn at her and Peeta's Capitol wedding; however, due to the Reaping, they are players in the Games again, signifying the cancellation of their public wedding. She spins around in the wedding dress, and the dress goes up in flames, revealing a dress resembling a mockingjay. Her stylist, Cinna, purposefully made these alterations as an act of defiance against the Capitol (Collins, *Catching Fire* 252-253). Katniss narrates how the mockingjay has "come to symbolize so much more. That what will be seen as a flashy costume change in the Capitol is resonating in an entirely different way throughout the districts" (253).

Mockingjays are important symbols of home to Katniss and others around the Districts. Rue, Katniss's 12-year-old ally in the 74th Hunger Games, tells her that back home, she sings to the mockingjays and the birds sing that tune around the orchards to let the people know that the work day is over (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 212). Mockingjays are also a memory of District 12 for Katniss: her father would sing to them often; Madge, the mayor's daughter, gave her a gold pin of a mockingjay as a token to remember home; and they remind her of the woods she deeply loves (38 & 44). Even Lucy Gray Baird, the 10th Hunger Games victor from District 12, sings to them to escape a young Coriolanus Snow, who tries to kill her (Collins, *The Ballad of Songbirds* 504). Mockingjays throughout the series have shown to be a memory of home, used for safety, and to resist the Capitol. The nature of the birds' creation itself resists the Capitol, as their genetically modified jabberjays, male birds who could mimic human speech, continued to live on and mate with female mockingbirds, creating an entirely new species of animal (Collins, *The Hunger Games* 43). President Snow himself abhors them; in *The Ballad of Songbirds and*

Snakes, “Coriolanus noticed the absence of jabberjays [...] This elimination of the Capitol birds from the equation deeply disturbed him. Here they were, multiplying like rabbits, completely unchecked. Unauthorized. Co-opting Capitol technology. He didn’t like it one bit” (Collins 439). The mockingjays were never meant to exist, but through the jabberjays' own will to live, they resisted the Capitol’s elimination and passed their genes to a new species. This determination to live despite all odds is what unites the Districts: the image of the mockingjay as a representation of home and rebellion against the Capitol’s destruction of it. This is why its meaning of home and resistance is important to the Districts when they see Katniss’s dress; like the red keffiyeh dress Hadid wore, both of these articles of clothing serve as a memory of home and what they’re fighting for. The appropriation and misrepresentation of these two symbols are also similar. For the mockingjay, the symbol has become “all the rage in the Capitol” (Collins, *Catching Fire* 91), which demonstrates the average Capitol citizen’s blatant ignorance of its revolutionary connotation and connection to the Districts’ meaning of home. Connotations of the keffiyeh in the West “interweaves the fabric with terrorism by way of anti-Arab racism, or leaches the item of all political symbolism rendering it as nothing more than a fashionable accessory for the hip” (Renfro 575). This association with terrorism stems from prejudice that is commonplace in Western media. It is evident that in both cases, there are people who overlook the political, social, and cultural symbolism of the mockingjay and keffiyeh. Those, like Hadid, who understand the keffiyeh’s importance will continue to wear it as a representation of their culture or in solidarity with Palestinians, like many people across the globe.

As Hadid does, there are many other Palestinians who resist Israeli occupation through different mediums, most notably through music. In Sunaina Maira’s study, “‘We Ain’t Missing’: Palestinian Hip Hop—A Transnational Youth Movement” (2008), she argues that young

Palestinians and Palestinian Americans have used the hip-hop genre to express political messages "outside of the realm of formal politics or official political organizations" (164). She interviews various hip-hop artists, including Iron Sheik, whose song "Olive Trees" includes the lyrics "They exiled us and stole our homes / Now all we have is old keys and new poems" (Maira 168). This is a direct reference to two symbols representing home in the Palestinian mind, olive trees and old keys. By making this song, Iron Sheik draws attention to the meaning of home to Palestinians and how Israel's destruction of it has left deep, emotional scars on the Palestinian diaspora. Maira says, "Hip hop becomes a tool not only for documenting but also for analyzing the conditions of growing up Arab in the diaspora and an archive of the historical memories and collective experiences of Arab and Palestinian youth" (167). A collective experience across the Arab and Palestinian diasporas is the stereotype of Arabs as "terrorists," which is used as Israel's justification for not "accept[ing] legitimate grievances of an occupied people" (Renfro 575-576). The Israeli government uses the "common good" rhetoric that acts as a motive for many in power to commit and justify domicidal acts. Another hip hop artist, a group named DAM (Da Arabian MCs), makes note of this in their song, "Meen Erhabi" or, "Who's the Terrorist?":

> How am I a terrorist
> When you've taken my land?
> You're the terrorist!
> You've taken everything I own while I'm living in my homeland (Maira 177).

DAM highlights the hypocrisy of the Israeli government, and points out "that there is no neutral arbiter of justice in a state where discrimination is built into citizenship and the law itself" (Maira 178). Palestinian hip-hop brings attention to these contradictions as a means of revealing the inequality and destruction that Palestinians face, as their right to home and identity are frequently stolen from them. Today, 15-year-old MC Abdul, a rapper from Gaza, has 1.4 million followers

on Instagram, and spreads “peace, love & unity through music.” In an excerpt from his song “Palestine (Freeverse),” which samples Eminem’s 2002 song, “Cleanin’ Out my Closet,” MC Abdul speaks on the horrors of Israeli occupation:

> Palestine's been occupied for decades
> Been our home for centuries
> This land is generations
> All my family’s memories
> To play and grow and nurture
> The symbol of peace
> The olive trees guarantee that our people could eat
> Living with limitations
> Pushed down by the occupation
> Want to see the pain?
> Take a look at the people’s faces
> Imagine being kicked out of the only house you ever known
> We're praying for our souls
> While they're preying on our homes (Al-Shantti).

This song has gone viral on social media, garnering over 6 million views on Instagram. In the video that accompanies it, MC Abdul walks through a section of Gaza that has been demolished, the ruins of buildings strewn everywhere. It is important to many Palestinians, like MC Abdul, to spread awareness of what actually occurs on the ground in Palestine. Preserving the memory of the people and of the land will be a testament to the injustices Palestinians have faced. Through direct and indirect violence, Israeli forces have committed acts of domicide against Palestinians and have been for over 75 years. Palestinians across different generations have spoken out against the destruction of their homes; in the twenty-first century, social media and music have proven to be effective in garnering support for the Palestinian cause, as thousands of people have expressed their solidarity with Palestinians and their homeland.

Conclusion

By drawing comparisons between Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* series and three different case studies of countries that have been impacted by domicide, or the purposeful destruction of home, this study has shown how Collins' depiction of the dystopian Panem is not dissimilar from our own reality. The parallels between fiction and real life are frightening, and *The Hunger Games* should be perceived less as a series for entertainment and more as a reminder of the horrors we face today. Before conducting this research, I was unaware of domicide as a thoroughly researched concept. I did not know the destruction of home had a name and an entire typology dedicated to it. Researching the different magnitudes and methods that shape domicide broadened my understanding of how homes and communities are destroyed. The lasting effects domicide leaves on the land and a person's sense of identity, community, and culture are evidence of what happens when power is left unchecked, when we as a global society do not hold people in power accountable and to a high moral standard. Domicide takes many forms due to its varying methods and magnitudes of destruction, so it can be difficult to classify. It is crucial, however, that domicide is recognized explicitly as an international crime with its own dedicated set of laws. This crime has a unique effect on people as it works to alter their memories and their perceptions of home. Multiple scholars have shown how domicide works in tandem with genocide, demonstrating its extreme cruelty, which further supports why it should be considered a crime. People who have experienced domicide have explained its heart-wrenching outcomes, but they have also shown their resilience. We've explored various ways in which victims of domicide reclaim the narrative and resist the destruction of their homes and communities. This is often achieved through memory; although domicide works to destroy homes from the ground up, a person's memory is not that easily erased. Through symbols,

heirlooms, and other keepsakes, victims of domicide prove that their homes existed and that their meaning is not forgotten. This communal resistance against domicide is necessary to lessen its effects and prevent its perpetuation.

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