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Sacrifice in Literature

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Birds in Flight:
Sacrifice and Martyrdom in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* Series

Suzanne Collins has produced a cultural sensation with her series of a dystopian America broken into 12 districts and governed by a cosmopolitan metropolis. Annually, the governing city called the Capital, chooses 24 children between the ages of 12-18, to participate in a competition called the Hunger Games in which there is only one survivor. The Games are a hybrid of ancient Rome's spectacles and modern reality TV shows. They are a ritualistic televised production which spans weeks annually. It begins with the reaping, the yearly process of choosing one boy and one girl, called tributes, by lot from the 12 districts.

Collins' series includes three young adult novels titled: *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, and *Mockingjay*. The main character is Katniss Everdeen a sixteen-year old female from the poverty stricken District 12 located in what was America's Appalachian region, in the land of Panem. The books chronicle Katniss's experience in the hunger games arena and the resulting revolution that occurs. Collins weaves her narrative innovatively, incorporating aspects consistent with theories of human sacrifice and the cultures that utilize it. She also presents Katniss as a consistent, brave, proactive, loving, and pragmatic female character who willingly offers herself as a sacrifice and potential martyr throughout the series. However, the true martyr of the series surprisingly, is Rue, a slight vulnerable girl who captures Katniss' heart, and whose death is memorialized in a manner consistent with the making of a martyr.