

Identity and Resistance in the Selected Novels of Suzanne Collins, Veronica Roth, and Scott Westerfeld

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Abstract

This article undertakes a comparative reading of three landmark young adult dystopian trilogies Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008–2010), Veronica Roth's *Divergent* (2011–2013), and Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies* (2005–2007) in order to examine how these narratives construct adolescent identity and stage resistance against totalitarian orders. Drawing on Michel Foucault's theories of disciplinary power and biopolitics, Louis Althusser's account of ideological interpellation, Judith Butler's notion of performativity, and Erik Erikson's model of adolescent identity formation, the study argues that the three authors each dramatize a distinct mechanism through which the dystopian state manufactures the compliant subject: spectacle and performance in Collins, categorization and choice in Roth, and surgical or biological normalization in Westerfeld. Against these mechanisms, the protagonists Katniss Everdeen, Beatrice "Tris" Prior, and Tally Youngblood each recover a contested, unstable selfhood that becomes the ground of political resistance. Reading the trilogies through the framework of the "critical dystopia" elaborated by Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan, the article contends that these novels refuse the closed pessimism of the classical dystopia and instead preserve a utopian horizon located precisely in the adolescent capacity for self-fashioning. The comparison further shows that individual identity-recovery and collective rebellion are mutually constitutive, even as all three trilogies remain sceptical of revolution's tendency to reproduce the structures it overthrows.

Keywords: young adult dystopia; identity; resistance; biopolitics; surveillance; critical dystopia; adolescent subjectivity; Suzanne Collins; Veronica Roth; Scott Westerfeld

Introduction

The first decade and a half of the twenty-first century witnessed an unprecedented flourishing of dystopian fiction addressed to adolescent readers. What had once been a genre associated with the adult political novel the tradition of Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, and George Orwell migrated decisively into the young adult (YA) marketplace, where it acquired a new protagonist and a new set of preoccupations. At the centre of this migration stand three trilogies that between them defined the contours of the contemporary YA dystopia: Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, and *Mockingjay*; Veronica Roth's *Divergent*, *Insurgent*, and *Allegiant*; and Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies*, *Pretties*, and *Specials*. Each of these series places an adolescent almost always a young woman within a rigidly ordered society that has engineered stability at the cost of freedom, and each traces the process by which that adolescent comes to recognize, resist, and ultimately confront the order into which she has been born.

This article argues that the twin categories of *identity* and *resistance* provide the most productive lens through which to read these texts comparatively, because the two categories are, in the world of the YA dystopia, inseparable. The dystopian state in each trilogy sustains itself by controlling the formation of identity: it determines who a person may become, what she may desire, and how she may understand herself. Resistance, correspondingly, begins not with the storming of a citadel but with an interior act of self-recognition the moment at which the protagonist perceives that the self she has been given is not the self she is. Political rebellion, in these narratives, is the outward expression of a prior struggle over selfhood. To read for identity is therefore already to read for resistance, and vice versa.

The choice of these three authors is deliberate. Collins, Roth, and Westerfeld each imagine a different technology of subject-formation. Collins's Panem governs through *spectacle*: identity is a performance staged for the cameras, and the Capitol's power operates through the manipulation of image and narrative. Roth's Chicago governs through *categorization*: identity is a category one is assigned and then compelled to inhabit, and deviation from the category is pathologized as danger. Westerfeld's unnamed future city governs through *biology*: identity is literally inscribed on the brain and body by cosmetic surgery, and dissent is treated as a neurological defect to be corrected.

Setting the three side by side allows us to see the range of the genre's political imagination and to isolate what is common to its vision of the adolescent as a resisting subject. The discussion proceeds in six movements. After establishing a theoretical framework and reviewing the relevant scholarship, the article develops its comparison across four analytic axes: the construction of identity and the manufacture of the compliant subject; the apparatus of surveillance and discipline; the body as the site on which identity and resistance are contested; and the gendered dimension of adolescent agency. A concluding comparative discussion draws the strands together and situates the three trilogies within the tradition of the critical dystopia.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis that follows draws on four bodies of theory, each of which illuminates a different aspect of the relationship between identity and resistance in the dystopian text.

1. Disciplinary Power and Biopolitics

Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* provides the indispensable account of how modern power produces docile subjects. For Foucault, power in the modern era is not principally repressive but productive: it does not merely forbid but shapes, trains, and normalizes. The disciplinary institutions of modernity the school, the barracks, the prison, the clinic operate through surveillance, examination, and the internalization of the disciplinary gaze. Foucault's emblem for this arrangement is Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, the prison in which inmates, uncertain whether they are being watched at any given moment, come to police themselves. Power thereby becomes invisible and continuous; it settles into the body of the subject as habit. In his later work Foucault names the management of populations of birth, health, longevity, and the biological life of the species *biopower*. The dystopian state is, in these terms, a laboratory of biopower: it does not simply command its citizens but calibrates their very capacity to think, feel, and desire.

Crucially, Foucault insists that "where there is power, there is resistance." Resistance is not exterior to power but is generated at every point where power is exercised. This proposition is central to the present argument, because it explains why, in each trilogy, the very mechanisms designed to produce compliance become the occasions of revolt. The arena that is meant to terrorize the districts produces the Mockingjay; the aptitude test meant to sort citizens produces the Divergent; the operation meant to pacify the population produces the resister who has learned to recognize her own manipulation.

2. Interpellation and Ideology

Louis Althusser's essay on ideology supplements Foucault by describing how individuals are recruited into their social roles. For Althusser, ideology "interpellates" or hails individuals as subjects; the process by which a person recognizes herself in the identity offered by the social order is the very mechanism of ideological subjection. The Ideological State Apparatuses family, school, religion, media do the daily work of reproducing the conditions of production by manufacturing subjects who freely accept their place. In the YA dystopia this apparatus is dramatized with unusual clarity: the Choosing Ceremony in *Divergent*, the Reaping in *The Hunger Games*, and the surgical rite of passage in *Uglies* are all interpellative rituals that hail the adolescent into a prescribed identity. Resistance, from this angle, is the refusal of the hail the failure or the deliberate declining to recognize oneself in the name the system calls out.

3. Performativity and the Constructed Self

Judith Butler's theory of performativity, developed in relation to gender but applicable more broadly, holds that identity is not the expression of a pre-existing essence but the sedimented effect of repeated acts. The self is produced through performance rather than merely revealed by it. This insight bears directly on Collins, whose entire narrative turns on the gap between Katniss's performed identities the tribute, the star-crossed lover, the Mockingjay and the question of whether any authentic self subtends them. Butler's framework allows us to see that the dystopian subject's resistance need not take the form of recovering a hidden true self; it can consist instead in seizing control of the performance, in becoming the author rather than the object of one's own representation.

4. Adolescent Identity and the Critical Dystopia

Erik Erikson's developmental psychology identifies adolescence as the life stage governed by the crisis of "identity versus role confusion," in which the young person must synthesize a coherent sense of self from the competing demands of body, society, and desire. The YA dystopia literalizes and politicizes this crisis: the protagonist's ordinary adolescent task of self-definition is raised to the level of a life-or-death confrontation with the state. This convergence of the developmental and the political explains the genre's peculiar power for its intended readership.

Finally, the framework of the *critical dystopia*, elaborated by Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan, distinguishes the contemporary dystopia from its classical predecessors. Where the classical dystopia (*Nineteen Eighty-Four* being the paradigm) ends in the defeat of the protagonist and the closure of hope, the critical dystopia preserves a "utopian enclave" or horizon within the text a space from which change remains imaginable. The adolescent protagonist, poised between the given world and the world she might make, is the ideal vehicle for this open-ended hope. All three trilogies examined here are critical rather than classical dystopias, and the difference is decisive for their treatment of resistance.

Review of Literature

Scholarship on YA dystopian fiction expanded rapidly in tandem with the popularity of the novels themselves. Foundational to the field is the collection edited by Carrie Hintz and Elaine Ostry, *Utopian and Dystopian Writing for Children and Young Adults* (2003), which established that dystopian writing for the young is not merely a diluted version of adult dystopia but a distinct mode with its own pedagogical and political ambitions. The single most

important critical intervention for the contemporary wave is *Contemporary Dystopian Fiction for Young Adults: Brave New Teenagers* (2013), edited by Balaka Basu, Katherine Broad, and Carrie Hintz, which reads the post-millennial boom against the anxieties of a generation shaped by terrorism, surveillance, environmental crisis, and consumer culture.

The gendered dimension of the genre has attracted particular attention. The collection *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* (2014), edited by Sara Day, Miranda Green-Barteet, and Amy Montz, argues that the female protagonist is the defining feature of the contemporary YA dystopia and interrogates both the emancipatory promise and the recuperative limits of these figures. Green-Barteet's reading of Katniss and Tris as "rebellious subjectivities" who come to knowledge of themselves through resistance is especially pertinent to the present study. Melissa Ames has situated the genre historically, arguing that the post-9/11 surge in dystopian YA reflects and channels the political anxieties of its adolescent readers, offering an apparently apolitical entertainment that is in fact saturated with political meaning.

On the individual authors, the criticism is uneven. Collins has generated by far the largest body of scholarship, with sustained attention to the trilogy's critique of reality television, its representation of trauma, and its ambivalent politics of revolution. Roth's series has been read chiefly through the lens of identity categorization and the neuroscience of choice, while Westerfeld's *Uglies* has been examined as a critique of consumer beauty culture and of the medicalization of conformity. What the existing scholarship has less often attempted is a sustained three-way comparison organized around the joined categories of identity and resistance. This article addresses that gap by reading the three trilogies together as variations on a single problem: how the adolescent self is manufactured, and how it may be reclaimed.

Methodology and Scope

The study employs the methods of comparative close reading and thematic textual analysis, situating its readings within the theoretical frameworks outlined above. The primary corpus comprises the three trilogies in full: Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), and *Mockingjay* (2010); Roth's *Divergent* (2011), *Insurgent* (2012), and *Allegiant* (2013); and Westerfeld's *Uglies* (2005), *Pretties* (2006), and *Specials* (2007). Westerfeld's later companion novel *Extras* (2007) is treated as ancillary, since its protagonist and setting depart from the core trilogy. The analysis is organized thematically rather than text-by-text, so that each analytic section moves across all three authors to draw out convergences and divergences. The aim is not exhaustive plot summary but the isolation of the mechanisms by which each imagined society produces identity and the forms of resistance each provokes.

The Manufacture of the Compliant Subject

Each trilogy opens by establishing the specific technology through which its society produces obedient citizens. These technologies differ so sharply that they may be taken as the defining signature of each author's dystopian imagination.

1. Collins: Identity as Spectacle and Performance

In Collins's Panem, power operates through spectacle. The Hunger Games are, before they are anything else, a television programme: an annual broadcast in which two children from each of the twelve districts are compelled to kill one another for the entertainment of the Capitol and the intimidation of the districts. The regime's control over identity is therefore inseparable from its control over image. When Katniss Everdeen volunteers to take her sister's place, she enters a machinery of representation that immediately begins to remake her. She is styled, coached, scored, and narrativized; her handlers manufacture the persona of "the girl on fire," and the Capitol's audience is invited to fall in love with a fiction assembled from her body and her grief.

The central drama of Katniss's selfhood is the widening gap between her performed identities and any interior self that might be said to be authentically hers. The romance with Peeta Mellark, initially a survival strategy scripted for the cameras, becomes so thoroughly entangled with genuine feeling that Katniss herself cannot finally distinguish the performance from the reality a confusion the novels refuse to resolve. Read through Butler, Katniss illustrates the proposition that identity is constituted in performance: there is no stable Katniss behind the roles, only a subject continually produced by the roles she is made to play. Her resistance, correspondingly, does not consist in casting off performance to reveal a true self. It consists in wresting authorship of the performance away from the Capitol in turning the spectacle against its makers.

The berries at the close of the first novel exemplify this. Threatened with a rigged finale in which one of the two surviving tributes must kill the other, Katniss proposes a joint suicide that would leave the Games without a victor and thereby expose the Capitol's dependence on the spectacle it controls. The gesture is legible only because it is broadcast; it is an act of resistance staged in the very medium of the regime's power. From this point Katniss becomes the Mockingjay, the symbol of rebellion but the third novel, *Mockingjay*, insists with painful clarity that this symbol too is a manufactured performance, now produced by the rebel leadership of District 13 rather than by the Capitol. Collins's most unsettling insight is that revolution has its own propaganda machine, and that the resisting subject may find her image expropriated by the side she fights for.

2. Roth: Identity as Category and Choice

Roth's Chicago governs through categorization. Its citizens are divided into five factions Abnegation, the selfless; Erudite, the intelligent; Dauntless, the brave; Amity, the peaceful; and Candor, the honest each organized around a single valorized virtue. At sixteen, every adolescent takes an aptitude test and then, at the Choosing Ceremony, selects

the faction in which she will spend her life, under the governing maxim “faction before blood.” The system presents itself as a technology for eliminating conflict by assigning each person a fixed and legible identity. It is, in Althusser’s terms, a spectacular apparatus of interpellation: the ceremony hails each adolescent into a single category and demands that she recognize herself wholly within it.

Beatrice Prior’s crisis is that she cannot be so categorized. Her aptitude test is inconclusive; she is *Divergent*, exhibiting equal aptitude for several factions and, more dangerously, an awareness and self-control that the system cannot regulate. Divergence is precisely the refusal or the constitutional inability to be reduced to one identity. It is treated by the regime not as richness but as threat, because a subject who exceeds her category is a subject the apparatus cannot predict or control. Tris’s very being is thus an act of resistance before she performs any deliberately rebellious act; her identity is her defiance.

The trilogy develops this into an explicit critique of the fantasy of the unitary self. The faction system’s promise that a person can be defined by a single trait is revealed as both false and coercive. To be *Divergent* is to insist that the self is plural, that a person can be brave and selfless and honest at once, and that the demand to choose one virtue and suppress the rest is a form of violence. Roth’s later revelation that the factions are themselves an experiment designed by an external authority to breed “genetically pure” subjects extends the critique: categorization is exposed as a technology of biopolitical management, and *Divergence* as the sign of the human that exceeds the experiment. Tris’s resistance is, at bottom, the resistance of the whole and irreducible person to the machinery that would sort her.

3. *Westerfeld: Identity as Surgery and Biology*

Westerfeld’s society perfects the dystopian control of identity by relocating it from the social to the biological. In the cities of *Uglies*, every citizen undergoes, on her sixteenth birthday, an operation that transforms her from an “ugly” into a “pretty” a surgical remaking of the face and body to conform to an engineered standard of beauty. The population accepts this rite eagerly, having been taught from childhood to loathe their unaltered faces and to long for the operation as the threshold of adult life and pleasure. Here the apparatus of interpellation has been driven so deep that it operates on the level of desire itself: the citizens want what the regime wants for them.

The novels’ central revelation is that the operation does more than beautify. Along with the cosmetic surgery, the procedure inflicts tiny lesions on the brain that induce docility, incuriosity, and contentment the “bubbleheaded” passivity that makes the pretty population governable. Identity, in Westerfeld’s vision, is literally a neurological artifact of state medicine. The self one has after the operation is not the self one was before; the operation manufactures a new subject by editing the brain. This is biopower in its most literal form: the state does not persuade its citizens to be docile but surgically installs docility in their tissue.

Tally Youngblood’s trajectory dramatizes resistance at each successive layer of this control. As an ugly she longs for the operation and is recruited to betray the resistance settlement known as the Smoke in exchange for it. As she comes to understand what the operation does, she volunteers to be turned pretty as a test subject for a cure, retaining precariously the memory of her resolve. When she is made a Special, endowed with enhanced abilities and a new form of engineered arrogance, she must once again fight her way back to autonomous selfhood. Westerfeld thus stages resistance not as a single awakening but as a repeated labour, because the technology of control keeps reconstituting the self it governs. Tally’s recurring achievement is to “stay bubbly” to preserve, against the pressure of her own edited brain, the capacity for independent thought.

Surveillance, Discipline, and the Panoptic Gaze

If the manufacture of identity is the first pillar of dystopian control, surveillance is the second. Each trilogy elaborates a distinctive version of the Foucauldian Panopticon, and in each the protagonist’s resistance requires her to negotiate the condition of being perpetually watched.

In Collins, surveillance and spectacle fuse. The arena of the Hunger Games is a total surveillance environment: cameras track every tribute, the Gamemakers alter the terrain at will, and there is no space of privacy in which the self might be unobserved. But the panoptic gaze in Collins is doubled, for the same cameras that surveil the tributes broadcast them to a watching nation. This doubling is the source of Katniss’s peculiar agency. Because she is always being watched, every gesture she makes is potentially a message; the totality of surveillance that is meant to dominate her also gives her a stage. When she decorates the body of the murdered child Rue with flowers, or raises the three-finger salute of District 12, she converts the instrument of her subjection into a medium of protest. The panoptic gaze cuts both ways: the watched can address the watchers.

In Roth, surveillance is internalized and chemical. The Erudite faction’s instruments of control are the simulation serums that allow the regime to enter and manipulate the mind directly, culminating in the mass mind-control attack that turns the Dauntless into an army of unwitting executioners. The disciplinary gaze here penetrates the interior; the self is surveilled from within. Divergence is defined precisely as the capacity to remain aware inside the simulation to know that one is being watched and manipulated and to retain the power to refuse. Tris’s resistance is thus a resistance to the colonization of consciousness itself, a defence of the last interior space in which an autonomous self might survive.

In Westerfeld, surveillance is ambient and technological. The cities are saturated with monitoring; interface rings, city interfaces, and the ever-watchful Specials track the movements and even the words of the population. The resistance settlement of the Smoke defines itself by its escape from this net, its return to an unmonitored life beyond the reach of the city’s sensors. Yet Westerfeld complicates the simple opposition of surveillance and freedom, for the novels are alert to the way the resisters, too, come to police one another, and to the seductions of the enhanced

perception that the Special operation confers. To be a Special is to become an instrument of surveillance; Tally's final refusal is a refusal to be the eye of the system.

The Body as the Site of Identity and Resistance

In all three trilogies the body is the primary surface on which power is inscribed and, correspondingly, the primary site of resistance. The dystopian state reaches its citizens through their bodies starving them, marking them, training them, cutting them and the reclamation of the body is inseparable from the reclamation of the self.

Collins grounds her dystopia in the politics of hunger. The very name of the Games invokes deprivation, and Katniss's pre-Games identity is defined by her role as the hunter who keeps her family from starvation. The districts are disciplined through want, their bodies rendered docile by the daily struggle for food, while the Capitol's citizens are marked by grotesque excess and cosmetic alteration. Katniss's body bears the history of this violence: the burns, the scars, the hearing loss, and finally the trauma that the third novel refuses to sentimentalize. The body in Collins is the ledger on which the regime's cruelty is recorded, and Katniss's survival is a bodily resistance before it is a political one.

Roth locates the body's meaning in the marks of faction. The Dauntless inscribe their identity through tattoos, piercings, and the physical ordeals of initiation; the transfer of a body from one faction's regime of dress and comportment to another's is the visible sign of a transfer of self. Tris's changing body trained, tattooed, wounded charts her movement away from the self-effacing bodily discipline of Abnegation toward a self she chooses. Yet Roth also insists on the body's vulnerability to the regime's serums, which act on the body to seize the mind, so that the defence of bodily autonomy becomes the defence of mental autonomy.

Westerfeld makes the body the explicit centre of his critique. The entire apparatus of his dystopia is a technology of the body: the operation that reshapes the face and installs docility, the successive surgeries that make one pretty and then special. The regime governs by persuading its citizens to hate their own unaltered bodies and to surrender them to the surgeon. Resistance in Westerfeld therefore takes the form of a refusal of surgical normalization the choice, made by the resisters of the Smoke, to keep the faces they were born with, and the harder choice to keep the minds those faces house. The scar that the resisters bear is the mark of the self that declined to be corrected.

Gender, Agency, and the Female Rebel

That all three trilogies place a young woman at the centre of their resistance is not incidental but constitutive of the contemporary YA dystopia. Katniss, Tris, and Tally revise the conventions of the genre by installing female agency where the classical dystopia and the adventure tradition alike had assumed a male protagonist. Each is an active subject a hunter, a soldier, a saboteur rather than the object of rescue, and each drives the plot of rebellion through her own choices.

The scholarship gathered in *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction* has, however, complicated any simple celebration of these figures. The female rebel of the YA dystopia is caught in a tension between her political agency and the romance plots in which she is entangled, and critics have debated whether the love triangles that structure these narratives recuperate the protagonist into conventional femininity or whether they represent a further sphere in which she exercises choice. Katniss's relationships with Peeta and Gale, Tris's with Tobias, Tally's with David and Zane each raises the question of whether desire is a domain of autonomy or a mechanism of containment. The most persuasive readings decline to resolve the tension, arguing that the coexistence of political and romantic plots reflects the genre's realistic sense that the adolescent self is formed on both terrains at once.

What is clear is that the resistance staged by these protagonists is inseparable from their status as young women confronting a state that seeks to determine their bodies and their futures. The reproductive futurity that the dystopian regime attempts to control Panem's children delivered to the arena, Roth's citizens bred for genetic purity, Westerfeld's adolescents surgically prepared for docile adulthood is resisted by protagonists who insist on authoring their own becoming. The female rebel of the YA dystopia claims the right of self-definition against a power that would define her, and in this claim the personal and the political are one.

Comparative Discussion

Set side by side, the three trilogies reveal both a common structure and instructive differences. The common structure is the movement from imposed identity through interior recognition to political resistance. In each, an adolescent begins within an order that has assigned her a self; each comes, through a precipitating crisis, to recognize the assigned self as a fabrication; and each translates that recognition into revolt. The dystopian state is defeated, in each case, not first on the battlefield but in the moment the protagonist ceases to recognize herself in the identity the state has offered the moment she declines Althusser's hail.

The differences lie in the technology of control and, correspondingly, in the character of resistance. Collins's spectacular regime is resisted by a counter-performance: because power operates through image, resistance seizes the image. Katniss fights by becoming a symbol, and the danger she faces is the expropriation of that symbol by the revolution itself. Roth's categorizing regime is resisted by the assertion of plurality: because power operates by sorting people into single identities, resistance consists in being irreducibly several. Tris fights by being Divergent, and her triumph is the vindication of the whole self against the machinery of sorting. Westerfeld's biological regime is resisted by the defence of the unedited mind: because power operates by surgically installing docility, resistance consists in preserving the capacity for independent thought against one's own altered brain. Tally fights by "staying bubbly," and her struggle must be repeated at every new layer of enhancement.

A further convergence deserves emphasis. All three trilogies are, in Baccolini and Moylan's sense, critical rather than classical dystopias, and all three temper the triumph of resistance with a sober awareness of its costs and dangers. Collins is the most explicit: *Mockingjay* refuses to let the revolution be clean, exposing the rebel leader Coin as a tyrant-in-waiting and leaving Katniss traumatized rather than vindicated. Roth kills her protagonist, insisting that resistance may demand the ultimate sacrifice and refusing the consolation of a heroine's survival. Westerfeld ends not with the abolition of the system but with Tally's self-appointment as its permanent adversary, a check installed against the return of control. In none of the three does resistance deliver a finished utopia. What each preserves instead is the utopian horizon the demonstrated fact that the given order is not the only possible order, and that the adolescent capacity for self-fashioning is the seed from which a different world might grow.

This shared refusal of easy triumph is the mature political achievement of the contemporary YA dystopia. The genre does not flatter its readers with the fantasy that rebellion is simple or its outcome guaranteed. It insists instead that identity must be continually defended, that resistance reproduces the temptations of the power it opposes, and that the work of becoming a self is never finished. In dramatizing these truths through the figure of the adolescent, Collins, Roth, and Westerfeld transform the ordinary crisis of growing up into a parable of freedom.

Conclusion

This article has argued that identity and resistance constitute the joined thematic core of the three defining trilogies of the contemporary young adult dystopia, and that the two categories are, in these texts, inseparable. Each author imagines a distinct technology by which the dystopian state manufactures the compliant subject spectacle in Collins, categorization in Roth, surgery in Westerfeld and against each technology the protagonist recovers a contested selfhood that becomes the ground of political revolt. Read through Foucault's account of disciplinary power and resistance, Althusser's theory of interpellation, Butler's notion of performativity, and the framework of the critical dystopia, the three trilogies emerge as sophisticated meditations on the making and unmaking of the self under power.

The comparison yields a threefold conclusion. First, in the YA dystopia political resistance originates in an interior act of self-recognition; the refusal of the state's hail precedes and enables the storming of its citadels. Second, the character of resistance is determined by the character of control, so that the counter-performance of Katniss, the plural selfhood of Tris, and the defended mind of Tally are each precisely fitted to the regime each opposes. Third, all three trilogies are critical dystopias that decline the consolation of easy victory, tempering the triumph of resistance with an awareness of its costs and preserving hope not as an achieved utopia but as an open horizon. In transposing the developmental crisis of adolescence into the register of political struggle, Collins, Roth, and Westerfeld have given their readers not an escape from the world but a rehearsal of the difficult, unfinished, and indispensable labour of becoming free.

Further research might extend this comparative frame to the wider field of the post-millennial YA dystopia to the work of Lois Lowry, James Dashner, Marie Lu, and others in order to test whether the tripartite typology of control proposed here (spectacular, categorical, biological) exhausts the genre's political imagination or whether other technologies of the manufactured self remain to be described. Such work would further illuminate why a generation of readers found, in stories of adolescents resisting the states that made them, so exact a mirror of their own condition.

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