



Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

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Everything You Do:
Young Adult Fiction and Surveillance in an Age of Security

We'll be watching you everywhere you go and everything you do. You've acted like you've got something to hide, and we don't like that.

(Doctorow 46)

<Abstract>

Espionage, surveillance, and clandestine operations by secret agencies and governments were something of an East-West obsession in the second half of the twentieth century, a fact reflected in literature and film. In the twenty-first century, concerns of the Cold War and the threat of Communism have been rearticulated in the wake of 9/11. Under the rubric of 'terror' attacks, the discourses of security and surveillance are now framed within an increasingly global context. Specifically for this paper, surveillance fiction written for young people engages with the cultural and political tropes that reflect a new social order that is different from the Cold War era, with its emphasis on spies, counter espionage, brainwashing, and psychological warfare. While these tropes are still evident in much recent literature, advances in technology have transformed the means of tracking, profiling, and accumulating data on individuals' daily activities. *Little Brother*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Article 5* reflect the complex relationship between the real and the imaginary in the world of surveillance and, as this paper discusses, raise moral and ethical issues that are important questions for young people in our Age of Security.

<Key words:>

surveillance fiction; technology; security; personal liberty; moral subjects

The idea that we live under constant surveillance, that someone will always be watching everything we do, was explored by George Orwell in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) where the ever-vigilant gaze was embodied in the figure of Big Brother. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* continues to be one of the most cited examples of surveillance fiction, and a diverse range of cultural texts continues to appropriate its themes and metaphors, including the popular reality TV series, *Big Brother*. Orwell's text anticipates several aspects of the age of security, or insecurity, we are currently living through.¹ The idea of an omnipresent 'Big Brother' has become not only part of contemporary life but permeates the discourse of surveillance to which other neologisms are constantly being added. Two such terms – hypersecuritization and big data – indicate the intensity and scale of surveillance and the growing mass of information collected and used to protect (and subvert) national and international security.

Surveillance is however not simply directed at adults: young people are also the object of the electronic gaze and their everyday online activities are recorded and stored by new information technologies. In reference to the increased use of technological surveillance and disciplinary powers held by many school authorities, Michelle Fine and colleagues comment that there is a clear message that many young people who transgress school rules and security systems are 'untrustworthy, suspicious, and potential criminals' (144). This observation invites further discussion and analysis of how young people see themselves and negotiate their subjectivities within a surveillance culture. Children's writer and blogger Cory Doctorow argues that adults can assist young people in taking an agential course of action through 'network education' and by making libraries "'islands of anonymity and encryption" in which you can learn how to jailbreak every electronic device' (cited in Goldberg 27). His novel *Little Brother*, discussed later in this paper, goes some way in helping its readers do just this. The

phenomena of surveillance, security and big data are complex and have significant social impact. Therefore, it is vital that both young people and adults acquire some sense of the ubiquity of surveillance technologies in order to understand just how life chances and opportunities may be affected and the ethical implications when the rights and welfare of individuals and groups are restricted.

Young adult fiction has for some time engaged with contemporary issues and concerns with respect to surveillance, loss of personal liberty, and moral absolutism. The texts I propose to discuss, *Little Brother* (2008) by Cory Doctorow, *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins and its movie tie-in (2012), and *Article 5* (2012) by Kristen Simmons, engage readers with many of the issues that I have already outlined. All four are Young Adult fictions in which surveillance operates not only as the key thematic, but also as a *modus operandi* of the governments depicted within the fictional societies. Ostensibly, surveillance is used as a necessary strategy to protect citizens but in effect it is an insidious means to control and regulate their behaviours. The texts present this predicament to readers by way of two implicit and opposing arguments: One argues that the loss of freedom and privacy through surveillance and hypersecuritisation is justified in terms of the common good; the other argues that it is the inviolable right of the individual to assert his/her right to freedom of speech and action within the bounds of a civilised society. The tension between these different worldviews in the texts either results in individuals from a dominated group abandoning their way of thinking to become one with the other, or resisting and enacting agency to pursue their own chosen worldview. The focus texts engage with both of these worldviews and readers are witness to their moral dilemmas and consequences.

The focus texts selected for discussion are illustrative of how Young Adult fiction is responding to the so-called 'Age of Security' that has taken on a new urgency since the events of 9/11. Each text alludes to a post-9/11 surveillance culture and testifies to a new set of anxieties about how we relate the present to the past and to the near future. These temporal dimensions not only impact on how subjects view their worlds or realities, but their choices to act within those worlds. Surveillance is a thematic connection between the focus texts and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, but more significantly, all of the texts engage with an ethical issue concerned with a practical or ambivalent morality in the individual's fight for survival against corrupt and oppressive forces of the State. The focus texts make readers witness to a moral calamity, which is the trigger for the protagonists' enactment of their resistance and desire for change in the social order. My discussion focuses on two related concerns: the extent to which the texts support a transformed social order advocating new moral and ethical modes of engagement; and how individuals constitute or transform themselves into moral subjects. Before discussing the texts I want to first locate these central concerns within wider a theoretical and social context.

Agency, ethics and power in times of crisis

While we could argue that hero fiction or more broadly critical dystopian fiction has always been about youthful resourcefulness and a battle between good and evil, I suggest that the focus texts reflect a 'crisis of agency' of which Zygmunt Bauman (*Liquid Surveillance*) speaks. A crisis of agency occurs when there has been an erosion of trust, in that governmental systems no longer serve the people, and so other ways for being proactive and political need to be found. A breakdown in the trust relationship between citizens and the State is one that Orwell also pursued. Bauman's optimism for a proactive citizenship is seen by David Lyon as replacing the 'hermeneutic of suspicion'

that Lyon believes characterises our present world with a more hopeful 'hermeneutic of retrieval' because it 'reaches back in order to confront and engage with the present, while at the same time holding to a hope of what ... we cannot yet see' (*Liquid Surveillance* 146).

A similar hopefulness is also characteristic of the self-reflexive quality of much critical dystopian fiction, which Tom Moylan suggests is potentially subversive and capable of 'changing the minds of ... readers' (271). Moylan's point that fiction has the potential to change readers' way of thinking is similar to Doctorow's comment, cited at the beginning of this paper, that young people should 'learn how to jailbreak every electronic device' in order to become aware of the ways that surveillance technologies impact on their lives. Both can also be seen as supporting Lyon's 'hermeneutic of retrieval' by putting faith in the interpretive ability of readers to critique the present while holding on to a hope for the future.

The writer and philosopher Sam Harris draws attention to how taking a course of action is often complicated by moral and ethical considerations. He says that 'one difficulty we face in determining the moral valence of an event is that it often seems impossible to determine whose well-being should most concern us' (68). Who benefits and who suffers from a course of action are crucial points of tension in the focus texts. In making such decisions or choosing a course of action, the subject may believe that he/she is operating from a moral position. However, when it is the State that needs to make such choices, the consequences of those decisions or actions affect the welfare of large populations. In terms of the welfare or wellbeing of a people, we could then ask: What are the moral responsibilities of the State in times of war or when resources are scarce? We can also ask, what are the responsibilities of the individual or the collective

in the face of large-scale human suffering? These questions are core to the texts discussed in this paper.

In the focus texts, the struggles, which the young adult characters undergo against powerful forces, such as the State or persons acting on behalf of an institution or government department, are intricately tied to macro social-political-economic factors. Rather, than view these encounters as being between opposing worldviews in strictly oppositional terms, the work of Michel Foucault opens up ways for considering them dialogically. By reading the texts as dialogical encounters between opposing worldviews, we can illuminate the ethical and political positions they offer the implied readers. Dialogue here is not understood as a willingness to listen to what the other has to say, but as a two-sided encounter between opposing groups. Following Foucault's line of argument, we can see how the protagonists are not simply passive and yielding to the power and force of the other. Rather, they are active beings, capable of interpreting the world and acting upon it, to influence and transform these other forces in turn. How successful they are in achieving a transformation will be taken up in the discussion.

In each text, the agential actions of the young protagonists are future-oriented in their desire to retrieve a past that has been lost in the present crisis. From the protagonists' viewpoint, power is metonymically expressed as the Capitol in *The Hunger Games*, Department of Homeland Security in *Little Brother*, and the Federal Bureau of Reformation in *Article 5*. The converse is also true: the protagonists are viewed by the State or its enforcers as 'other' because of their difference and actions, which are contrary to the collective ethics and ideologies of the State. In their part of the dialogical encounter, the State too wishes to influence and transform the others (protagonists) to their world.

From a literary perspective, the texts employ othering as a narrative strategy.

This is a common device for creating dramatic tension and is central to the basic good-versus-evil plotline that is familiar to the humanist approach common to children's literature. In the humanist (literary) tradition, power is construed as an external force that acts upon the protagonist, and thereby limits his/her potential to be a fully self-determining autonomous being. However, literature for young people is largely focused on the protagonist achieving an agential subjectivity whereby they defeat external forces and lay claim to a self that is more self-determining.²

Michel Foucault offers an alternative conception of power that is more positive than humanist accounts by seeing power as a more open-ended interplay of forces (*Power/Knowledge*). Foucault's ideas of power relations and ethics provide us with a useful means for interpreting the relationships between characters, and how they each draw on strategies for compliance and agency in their bid to survive and deal with the crisis that affects their world. Foucault considers subjects not in a metaphysical sense but as embodied beings, capable of acting upon the world, having the ability to influence and transform other forces. His view of power at the 'extremities' is different from the notion of legitimated or sanctioned forms of power and authority held by the State as a central locus. In this sense, power invests itself in institutions, and becomes embodied in techniques, where it becomes 'capillary-like', in that it 'reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (*Power/Knowledge* 39).

However, Foucault's work too has limits, especially in a world that has now more electronic connections than it did thirty years ago when he was alive. Lyon, in conversation with Bauman, makes the point that there is a power differential operating in society in that surveillance practices based on information processing track the details of our daily lives making our actions transparent, but the activities of those who

conduct these surveillances become less easy to discern (*Liquid Surveillance* 12). At the heart of this power differential is the question of ethics, a question that both Bauman and Foucault consider with respect to the lived encounter with the other.

Dare to be free: *Little Brother*

When the information revolution first began in the 1960s, young adult fiction responded with stories that explored the issue of vulnerability and loss of privacy or personal freedom.³ Many recent texts, such as *Little Brother*, are in step with the changes in technological developments and an increasingly regulated environment. Despite the exponential increase in the collection of big data there is also a decentralisation of data processing, where the shift is from the computer to the user. User-control is a key feature of *Little Brother*, which demonstrates an inherent paradox: while savvy users gain control over communication and information systems, many remain clueless as to their loss of privacy in that their personal information can be readily known and used by unknown sources. *Little Brother* reflects the new 'ambient intelligence' (Aml) environment that recent advances in microelectronics and wireless communications are making possible. As Maya Gadzheva explains, an Aml environment:

implies a seamless environment of smart networked devices that is aware of the human presence and together with the ever-enhancing data mining capabilities gives the possibility for personal data to be invisibly captured, analyzed, and exchanged among countless sensors, processors, databases, and devices to provide personalized and contextualized information services.

(Gadzheva 60–1)

In forging the links between secrecy, security, and government, *Little Brother* raises issues about the broader implications of information control, surveillance, and privacy.

Paradoxically, it recuperates surveillance through a diffusion or democratisation of surveillance systems in an attempt to redistribute power from a central control to subversive counterforces. This power at the extremities illustrates Foucault's conceptualisation of power as a productive force.

The story begins when high-school senior Marcus Yallow decides to cut school to go downtown to play the Alternate Reality Game *Harajuku Fun Madness*. Marcus's handle is w1n5t0n, pronounced 'Winston', an obvious homage to Winston Smith, the autonomous moral agent in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. (He changes it to M1k3y when he organises a covert internet resistance force against the Department of Homeland Security.) To leave school undetected, Marcus has to negotiate the school's surveillance system – the gait-recognition cameras have replaced the face-recognition cameras, which were ruled unconstitutional. As Marcus explains: 'Gait-recognition software takes pictures of your motion, tries to isolate you in the pics as a silhouette, and then tries to match the silhouette to a database to see if it knows who you are. It's a biometric identifier, like fingerprints or retina-scans' (Doctorow 10). This instance of information sharing through the text is the kind of 'network education' that Doctorow (cited earlier) sees as important for enabling young people to be more in control and aware of the forces that impact on their lives.

In successfully circumventing the school's surveillance mechanisms, Marcus enacts Doctorow's ideal jailbreaker of electronic systems noted at the beginning of this paper. However, the day takes an unexpected turn when terrorists blow up the Bay Bridge, causing major death and destruction, and turning San Francisco into chaos: an event that resonates with the attack on the World Trade Centre and the subsequent chaos in New York City that resulted, and the hypersecurity measures that have followed.

Little Brother illustrates how surveillance technologies can affect individuals' privacy, freedom and behaviour. It shows how human beings can succumb to external forces and become passive victims; or, alternatively, in some cases, how they can become active bodies who are resistant and struggle against the limits and oppressions imposed on them, and who believe in the possibility of reversal or transformation of the social order (*History of Sexuality* 95–6). This impulse to resist, fight back, and overcome is the driving motivation behind Marcus's actions after he is detained in the aftermath of the bombing. Marcus finds that his carefree life as a teenager has been abruptly replaced by a restrained existence where he is under constant surveillance. Trust in the government has been eroded and the ensuing crisis in personal agency means that normal social relations are severely constrained. Georg Simmel made the early observation that 'all relationships of people to each other rest, as a matter of course, upon the precondition that they know something about each other' (441). *Little Brother* provides a chilling account of how a society has moved to a point where *knowing about each other* has become both beneficial and dangerous.

A common argument for adopting technological developments stresses the benefits for economic growth, security, individual and social safety. However, the diegetic and extradiegetic narrators of *Little Brother* argue the other side, giving voice to growing concerns such as profiling, surveillance, tracking, identity theft, and so on, urging readers to take action. Integral to taking action is knowing how to circumvent, deactivate, and protect user identity. The information supplied by the first-person narrator (Marcus/M1k3y) on hacking, using illegal web servers, spamming, cryptography, and arphid cloning is rationalised in terms of an individual's right to privacy, their right to know, and other constitutional rights such as – 'Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The right of people to throw off their oppressors' (Doctorow

201). The repeated invocation of the US Declaration of Independence throughout the text can be read as a totalising conception of ideal human existence, and the account of technological sabotage by both the State and Marcus is intended to awaken readers from any self-deceptive dreams of an ideal existence in a democratic society.

What *Little Brother* attempts to do is to break the ties between surveillance and a central authority and in so doing redraw the moral boundaries that might lead to the organisation of a post-panoptical society. The ethical purchase of this text resides in its emplotment of the connectivity facilitated by surveillance and counter surveillance circuits. In response to the terrorist attack, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) becomes a force to combat terrorism and ‘protect’ the people of San Francisco. However, in waging its own war on terror with increased homeland security, the DHS takes on the tactics of the terrorists in the protection and security of the citizens. During his detention by the DHS after the attack on the Bay Bridge, Marcus is interrogated as a suspected Al Qaeda terrorist. His history as an internet-savvy user, with an anti-authoritarian attitude, is used as grounds for suspicion:

[Marcus]: ‘You think I’m a terrorist? I’m seventeen years old!’

[DHS officer]: ‘Just the right age – Al Qaeda loves recruiting impressionistic, idealistic kids. We googled you, you know. You’ve posted a lot of very ugly stuff on the public Internet’.

(Doctorow 41)

The exchange between Marcus and the DHS officer underscores two concerns of the Age of Security – dangerous bodies and securitisation. *Little Brother* illustrates Foucault’s notion of governmentality: a neologism that combines government and

rationality. Governmentality is a form of power whereby governments are able to rationalise certain rules, practices, and techniques through their various agencies, in this text the DHS. The interrogation of Marcus also highlights the fact that after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, dangerous bodies are not only those that constitute a threat from the outside, but also those on the inside that are seen as vehicles for enemies of the State. The DHS combines extreme disciplinary measures (extraordinary rendition, waterboarding, detention) with an aggressive hypersecuritisation to ensure that the body under surveillance – the perceived dangerous body – is watched, tracked, profiled, and contained.

A surveilled body can also be a resistant body. This double condition occurs in the way that Marcus and his band of young hackers, the 'Xnetters', manifest their otherness by resisting and transgressing the DHS's surveillance and oppressive controls. They do this by using illegal, covert communication technologies to circumvent the government's systems. This dialogical encounter is illustrated when Marcus uses the ParanoidXbox operating system to encrypt documents and communications. He also jams the tracking systems for commuters. By demonstrating this capacity to act, Marcus and the Xnetters actively challenge the hegemonic domination of the DHS. Their challenge through the 'web of trust' and T-shirt statement ('Don't trust anyone **over** 25') is a direct result of the crisis of agency whereby they no longer trust in the government (and adults generally). It is also an attempt to make it possible for their otherness to reassert itself in a form of resistance and transgression. From a Foucauldian perspective, Marcus represents a non-normative idea of freedom: a freedom which can only come with transgression.

The message that *Little Brother* delivers is that everyone should be technologically savvy to ensure their privacy and freedom. Knowing how to use

technology is a source of empowerment for Marcus: 'The best part of all of this is how it made me *feel*: in control ..., if you used it right, it could give you power and privacy' (80). This point is emphasised in the Afterword written by Andrew 'bunnie' Huang, an American hacker who exhorts readers to find their inner M1k3y and 'step out the door and dare to be free' (365).

Surviving the panoptic gaze: *The Hunger Games*

Unlike *Little Brother*, which is set in a time that is contemporaneous to the reader's, *The Hunger Games* presents a social order that is located in the future, but reaches back into a distant past, recalling the 'bread and circuses' of the Roman Republic. As its title implies, *The Hunger Games* plays with two key ideas – survival and entertainment. The two ideas are played out when twelve girls and twelve boys are compelled to fight to the death in a vast outdoor arena. The twenty-four so-called 'tributes' ⁴ are drawn from the lottery pool and when her sister's name is called, Katniss volunteers to be her replacement. The other tribute from her District is Peeta Mellark.

Young people become eligible for 'reaping' when they turn twelve. As its name suggests, reaping is a time of harvesting the young to participate in the Games where they must kill one another until there is a victor. The agricultural metaphor serves as both an enticement and a reminder of the past: the enticement is that the winner earns bountiful food for the people of their District, as well as personal wealth; the reminder is that the Dark Days of the uprising of the districts against the Capitol must never be repeated. The reaping is punishment for the uprising.

The Hunger Games extends Orwell's account of constant visual scrutiny by fusing it with the contemporary adulation of celebrity. The spectacle of killing is mandatory televised viewing for the people of Panem: 'the country that rose up from the ashes of a

place that was once called North America' (Collins 21). The country of Panem is a closed world with no apparent outside communications, despite state of the art technology in the Capitol, the governing city. The technologically-sophisticated Capitol with its video surveillance, smart technologies and tracking devices is a marked contrast to the more agrarian-style, non-technological existence that many districts of Panem endure.

The Games are a moral paradox. During their pre-games preparation, the tributes receive an excessive amount of attention, false love, and praise by their trainers and groomers. However these gestures of adulation are short-lived as the purpose of the games is to kill or be killed. The pre-games' preparations are a form of acculturation whereby the tributes undergo training and regulation in order to tame any resistance and to receive instructions as to how they must perform. The tributes are like elite sport players or celebrities who are marketable assets exploited as commodities. However, despite the sinister agenda of the Games and the power that the Capitol holds over the population, Katniss refuses to become a passive subject. Rather, she is an agential subject who outwardly appears to play along with the ludic framework of the Games, while inwardly retains a moral subjectivity. Katniss realises that to survive the games she must learn how to play to the camera, pretending to be the kind of personality that the audience wishes her to be, while all the time keeping a wary eye on her opponents. Katniss's strategies can be likened to the 'practices of the self', that Foucault sees as techniques that permit individuals to effect, by their own means, ways of conducting, modifying, and transforming themselves to achieve a certain kind of existence (*Sexuality and Solitude* 10).

A further element of *The Hunger Games* that ties in with its celebrity culture analogy is how aesthetics is used for political effect. Walter Benjamin combined two antithetical notions 'aesthetics' and 'politics' in reference to twentieth-century fascism.

As he put it: 'the logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life' (*The Work of Art* 234). The Third Reich's reliance on ritual, spectacle, and symbol embodies an aesthetisation of politics, which the film version of *The Hunger Games* recreates with spectacular effect in its staging of the Games, including the familiar red banners decorating the Capitol building, the bird insignia, and the mass rally to receive the leader. However, the surface effects of the mass spectacles that occur throughout the Games conceal an ideology of masculinist/State power that is instrumental in ensuring the political submission of the people of Panem and the absolute leadership of President Snow. Benjamin's critique of fascist aestheticisation of power includes the notion of aura, which he defines as the 'unique phenomenon of distance, however close it may be' (222-3). In the pre-games address (depicted in Fig. 1), the position of President Snow on the elevated stage, his charismatic address and gestures, and the luminous glow of his white hair give him that auratic authority.

<near here: Figure 1 *The Hunger Games*. (Film, directed by Gary Ross. USA: Lionsgate, 2012.)>

Katniss also develops her own auratic authority. She undergoes an aesthetisation process, which is part of the imposed process of transformation that the groomers are instructed to perform on the tributes to make them attractive to the sponsors and the audience. The film vividly conveys this aesthetisation as we witness the sartorial transformation of Katniss from appearing in dull, nondescript clothes when she volunteers to be a substitute tribute to her appearance during the opening ceremony of the Games where she is coiffed, groomed, and dressed in a stunning outfit that emits flames to the delight of an ecstatic audience.

The lurid spectacle of the games, the rivalry between contestants, and the televising of intimate moments of human emotion between Katniss and Peeta, and another tribute, Rue carry familiar resonances in our world of reality TV. The viewing audience responds to the alternating highs and lows by voting on whether or not they will send silver parachutes of food, weapons, or medicine to assist their District's contestants. Through these combined instances, the text reflects contemporary Western society's appetite for voyeuristic entertainment that may be degrading and embarrassing for the participants, but offers a perverse pleasure for viewers.

The games of the Roman Republic often lasted for days or weeks, taking place in large amphitheatres.³ While the time period for the Games in the text is indeterminate, the outdoor arena in which they take place is under constant video surveillance. The surveillance is reminiscent of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, which Foucault drew on to theorise surveillance in disciplinary societies. The film version of *The Hunger Games* shows vividly how the solid architecture of the panopticon can be replaced by the fluidity of electronic technologies. The controllers operate a sophisticated interactive geomap console of the Games arena (Fig. 2) that allows them to monitor and regulate the contestants' movements, opportunities, and challenges. The controllers can also introduce unexpected threats or obstacles, often in response to a sympathetic or antagonistic response by the sponsors or audience.

<Near here: Figure 2 *The Hunger Games*. (Film, directed by Gary Ross. USA: Lionsgate, 2012.)>

The Capitol's domination and insistence on certain forms of compliance as absolute seek to overcome or dissuade resistance and otherness, and thereby preclude

the possibility of different ways of being and acting in Panem.⁵ The situation in which the Capitol attempts to impose forms of compliance on the citizens is a particular kind of dialogue which is reciprocated by Katniss who is capable of resisting and transgressing the imposed limits. For Katniss, resistance and deception are the covert means necessary for survival. Prior to the Games, Katniss had developed a number of techniques that proved essential for her survival in the Games: she hunted without detection in the forbidden woods, carefully hid her weapons the way her father had taught her, and bought and sold on the black market. She also learnt the value of strategic self-control:

So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts. Do my work quietly in school. Make only polite talk in the public market. Discuss little more than trades in the Hob, which is the black market where I make most of my money.

(Collins 7)

During the games, Katniss plays along with the pretence that she and Peeta are star-crossed lovers thereby courting the sympathy of the audience. However, this pretence proves to be an ethical challenge for her. For Foucault 'there is no moral conduct that does not call for oneself as an ethical subject' (*The Use of Pleasures* 28) and Katniss takes up a moral subjectivity despite the danger it poses to her personal safety. Clare O'Farrell explains Foucault's ethical project as being 'centred on trying to make people aware of the limits of the systems in which they are operating and to lower their threshold of acceptance in relation to entrenched forms of injustice and exercises of power' (116). This reasoning operates in *The Hunger Games* (and the other texts) as Katniss is acutely aware of the limits of the system of government in Panem and the 'ethics of care'⁶ she demonstrates throughout the Games to injured tributes (Peeta and

Rue) is a moral action that is at odds with the immoral rules of the Games. Nevertheless, she does not adopt a position of moral absolutism as she finds that she must also kill other tributes or be killed.

Surveillance technologies, along with the power brokers of the Capitol who use them, perform as the insidious antagonists in this story. The contrast between old and new technologies in *The Hunger Games* brings into sharp relief Lyon's point regarding the potential for a hermeneutic of retrieval. Katniss does not achieve a transformation of the social order of Panem but she does successfully undergo a self-transformation that ensures her survival and a precarious freedom. The Capitol's power to implement a surveillant culture through its fluid panoptic gaze fails to strip Katniss of her agency and capacity for embodying a moral and empathic subjectivity. The impoverished agrarian lifestyle of the citizens is the other part of the dialogue. The vivid contrast between the two offers a schematic alignment of evil with technological advance. This invites speculation if a hermeneutic of retrieval can also be seen as operating in this text as an unspoken nostalgia for an imagined past where there was a technological simplicity but a more harmonious co-existence.

Lateral surveillance and the rhetoric of unity: *Article 5*

The final text, *Article 5*, takes its readers to a time in the future, a time when war has destroyed most of America. Technology has now come full circle, moving from the kind of ubiquitous computing and mass consumerism that typically are experienced by countries such as the USA to an almost pre-technological and war-ravaged state. Like *Little Brother*, *Article 5* takes up the discourse of a vulnerability that has slipped into American consciousness since the attacks of September 11, 2001 and resulted in increased anxieties and security precautions. While *Little Brother* illustrated how

Marcus and his activist group successfully used integrated mobile media to subvert the State's surveillance practices, the protagonists in *Article 5* lack any sophisticated technology. Nevertheless, they also perform practices of self-regulation to transform themselves in order to survive and thus attain a certain level of freedom. This desire for freedom is a common feature across the focus texts.

In the extended state of emergency that is enforced throughout the United States in *Article 5*, the American government has the power and authority to enforce compliance with its Moral Statutes. Article 5 of the US Constitution describes the process whereby the Constitution can be altered, a fact that lends an air of assumed realism or mimetic possibility to the fictive world of the text. In the post-apocalyptic world of *Article 5* there is no space for dialogue or compromise, and transgression is dealt with severely. It is a world where the continuing war (with an unnamed enemy) has destroyed the way of life and infrastructure that American citizens once enjoyed. Homes are no longer filled with the spoils of a consumer culture – television, computers, smart products and services – and 'new' technologies are now memories of an almost forgotten past. The focalising character, Ember Miller, reflects on the difference that this change had made:

Without a car or a television, we'd been isolated in our neighborhood. The FBR had shut down the local newspaper on account of the scarcity of resources, and had blocked the Internet to stifle rebellion, so we couldn't even see pictures of how our town [Louisville] had changed.

(Simmons 27)

While concerns and hopes in the extratextual world of today are often about the kind of world we are creating, or wish to create, with new technologies and the

associated social practices they engender, *Article 5* considers not the ubiquity of the world of information technology, but the diminished access by the populace, with almost total control in the hands of the State. In this depressed social order most citizens live in extreme poverty, many sheltering in abandoned cars, or foraging for food in the wastelands on the outskirts of what were once flourishing towns. In light of the previous discussion of *Little Brother*, *Article 5* offers a scenario whereby the vision of an Aml environment has been destroyed along with other basic human rights and necessities for living. President Scarboro rules this totalitarian State and his branch of the military known as the Federal Bureau of Reformation (FBR), euphemistically called the Moral Militia (MM), has the responsibility 'to enforce compliance with the Moral Statutes, to halt the chaos that had reigned during the five years that America had been mercilessly attacked' (Simmons 12).

To ensure totalitarian control, the FBR employs a false rhetoric of unity: *One Whole Country, One Whole Family*. This is an attempt to ensure that there is no opposition to their worldview. The domination of the rhetorical or figural over literal and genuine modes of communication is supported by visual signifiers which carry their own unified aesthetic. Benjamin's aestheticisation of politics mentioned in relation to *The Hunger Games* also emerges in this text with the MM's embodiment of a regressive ideology, especially towards women, and its oppressive actions, which are symptomatic of political absolutism. The MM's uniforms combine a tripartite symbolic representation of Nazi uniform aesthetic, American patriotism, and religious iconography. The following observation of the uniforms by Ember is reminiscent of Benjamin's idea of the aura of objects such as clothing which stands in a metonymic relation to the person who wears them and their authority. Ember makes the following observation when MM

soldiers arrive at her home and take away her mother for violating Article 5 (in this text it refers to children conceived out of wedlock):

They were in full uniform: navy blue flak jackets with large wooden buttons, and matching pants that bloused into shiny boots. The most recognized insignia in the country, the American flag flying over a cross, was painted on their breast pockets, just above the initials FBR. Each of them had a standard-issue black baton, a radio, and a gun on his belt. (Simmons 15)

The first warning that something traumatic was going to happen was when Ember noticed two cars parked outside her home – a blue van and an old police cruiser – each displaying the FBR emblem, sunrise logos, and inscription – *One Whole Country, One Whole Family*. Ember's struggles of resistance prove futile and result in her also being removed from her home and taken to a Girls' Reformatory and Rehabilitation Center in a remote location.

The antagonistic world of the novel is characterised by the dialogical tension between the State and the embattled citizens. For the State, their ideological position demands total control and domination. In this context of extremism, the State operates through intimidation and force, seeking subordination and compliance. The totalising thought and action by the State disavows any dissidence. Ostensibly this closed system of rule is intended to provide a sense of security and stability after the war. By using the metaphors of 'wholeness' and 'family' the State constructs an image of itself as a unified (not fragmented) body politic that controls and regulates its citizens. However, despite its force and power there are individuals and groups (such as the Resistance) who are not passive, impotent, and completely at the mercy of the FBR. Similarities can be drawn between the resistance in this text and Katniss's covert violation of the dictates of the

Capitol in *The Hunger Games* and Marcus/M1k3y's subversive Internet actions against the DHS in *Little Brother*.

Despite its limited technological environment *Article 5* nevertheless encapsulates the lateral surveillance that governments of many countries are encouraging. For instance, in 2010, the US Department of Homeland Security, which featured as an antagonist in *Little Brother*, unveiled a new anti-terrorism initiative called 'If You See Something, Say Something' campaign. With this campaign and its legal amendments, the DHS encourages and facilitates a new vigilance in peer-to-peer monitoring making it easy and natural for ordinary citizens to be the 'eyes and ears' that watch and listen to their neighbours, family members, and fellow shoppers, travellers, and sports fans (Reeves 236). Lateral surveillance is not new. The East German state security agency known as the Stasi spied on millions of people in the forty years before the fall of the Berlin Wall. It also encouraged family, couples, and friends to spy on each other, resulting in millions of index cards and screeds of documents (Mayer-Schonberger & Cukier 150).

What *Article 5* demonstrates is how lateral surveillance intensifies in times of crisis, especially crises over domestic and national institutions. Furthermore, it shows how the State, through its Stasi-like Federal Bureau of Reformation, drives lateral surveillance by 'soft' persuasion or by coercion of citizens to integrate surveillance and reporting into their daily lives. People that the young protagonists, Chase and Ember, encounter on their dangerous journey to reach a safe house respond differently to the oppressions (lack of political voice) and opportunities (profiteering) that characterise their worlds. Ultimately, all have formed and shaped themselves into certain kinds of subjects. For some, such as Ember and Chase, the self-transformation means that they are able to resist and struggle against the FBR and those that are intent on harming

them but at the same time remain moral subjects (a similar outcome was achieved in *The Hunger Games*). Apart from the FBR soldiers, individuals and couples participate in practices and techniques that contribute to reproducing oppression and domination. People like the Loftons remain subject to the oppressive regime of the State but also function as an arm of the State, informing on Ember and Chase and being rewarded for their loyal behaviour. These citizens along with the Reformatory Center, with its enforced learning of the Statutes and blind adherence to the State, illustrate how capillary power extends beyond the centre and reaches into the very bodies of individuals, shaping their actions, attitudes, and learning processes (*Power/Knowledge* 39).

Chase and Ember are not simply victims subject to the power of others, as they are also ethical agents. When Ember does not shoot Tucker, an FBR soldier who had killed her mother, she queries whether she made the right decision: 'Should I have killed Tucker? Should Chase have? Tucker could hurt so many others now. There was no right answer' (Simmons 357). Her decision not to kill Tucker results in an ambiguous outcome that highlights the point that even retrospectively, one cannot always be clear about the net result. It also highlights how the desire to be a moral subject is not something that is achieved once and for all but requires ongoing reflection and work.

Little Brother, The Hunger Games and *Article 5* deal with the idea of personal freedom and how that freedom is put at risk when governments are no longer working for the benefit of the people – Bauman's 'crisis of agency'. The dystopian societies that they depict are the kind that Lyon sees as 'directing our attention to the negative, constraining, and unjust aspects of surveillance' (*The Electronic Eye* 204). However this viewpoint does not take into account the productive cognitive estrangement that such dark representations might provoke. For some readers these texts might spark a call to

action (a goal that Cory Doctorow hopes to achieve), or engender a healthy scepticism about the arguments for the extension of surveillance in our lives, or instigate reflection and possibly ethical engagement, or as Fredric Jameson suggests, 'provoke a fruitful bewilderment jarring the mind into some heightened consciousness' (87–8). For me, these texts draw attention to the exclusionary emphases of security-surveillance initiatives and the discourse of suspicion that characterises our world.

The texts illustrate extreme instances of totalised surveillance whereby the discourse of suspicion infiltrates from the top down, reaching into all parts of society. While I am aware of the dangers of collapsing the difference between textual worlds and everyday experience, these YA fictions have the capacity to foster awareness of ethical dilemmas, as well as the consequences of immoral or unjust human actions. They also highlight the capacity for transformation, at least at the individual level. The social orders remain unchanged but through the protagonists' actions there is a clear moral imperative that individuals have a responsibility to be proactive by going beyond the inertia implied in an hermeneutic of suspicion to embrace a more agential way forward through a hermeneutic of retrieval. In this way, the texts advocate new moral and ethical modes of engagement that are necessary for survival in times of crisis.

Orwell's coining of Big Brother provided a way of conceiving how individuals' privacy is threatened by almost constant surveillance and anticipated the possibility of new information technology for monitoring body and brain processes. The authors of the texts that I have discussed have an advantage over Orwell and other early writers in that the advances in biotechnology, information technology and the science of quantum theory have produced realities that are no longer science fiction. Writers will continue to imagine the future, draw on past literature for inspiration, provoke readers into

thinking about surveillance and, as H. G. Wells memorably put it, the shape of things to come.

Notes:

1. Other early examples of surveillance fiction for adults include: Zamyatin's *We* (1927/1993). Chernyshevsky's *What's to be done* (1863/1989), and Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932/1973).
2. For a discussion on subjectivity outside of a Western theoretical perspective see *Subjectivity in Asian Children's Literature and Film* (2013) edited by John Stephens.
3. See for example, John Christopher's tripod trilogy – *The White Mountains* (1967), *The City of Gold and Lead* (1968), *The Pool of Fire* (1968) – where young people are capped at an early age so that they are unable to think for themselves and become slaves to the machine-like Tripods and the Masters.
4. The use of 'tribute' is another Roman reference. Various ancient states gave a tribute (or contribution) often 'in kind' as a sign of respect, or submission, or allegiance.
5. While my discussion focuses on the first book in the trilogy, Vivienne Muller writes of the three books and makes the following observation regarding the ways the texts, with their collapsing of the virtual and the real, could be seen as inviting readers 'to treat the virtual and the real as equivalents and to forgo our capacity to make moral distinctions about the truth or significance of what we see' (61).
6. 'Ethics of care' is a term used by Nel Noddings (*Caring, A Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education*).

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<Author>

Kerry Mallan is Professor and Director of the Children and Youth Research Centre at Queensland University of Technology, Australia. She has published widely in children's literature. Her most recent books include *Secrets, Lies and Children's Fiction* (2013) and *(Re)Imagining the world: Children's Literature's Response to Changing Times*, coedited with Yan Wu and Roderick McGillis (2013). She is a series editor with Clare Bradford for the *Critical Approaches to Children's Literature* list with Palgrave Macmillan (UK).