



Barlow, H. (2021): 'The arena city: the blurring of living and entertainment spaces in YA Dystopian Literature'

Rosetta **Special Edition CAHA Colloquium 2021: 1**

<http://www.rosetta.bham.ac.uk/CAHAColloquium2021/Barlow.pdf>

The arena city: the blurring of living and entertainment spaces in YA Dystopian Literature

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The Colosseum existed as a clear space dedicated to entertainment within the urban landscape of Ancient Rome. Yet despite its obvious architectural separation from the day-to-day spaces of urban life, the impact of spectacle entertainments were not limited to these physical boundaries. Instead, ancient authors repeatedly demonstrated a sense of anxiety that the emotional and moral influences of the arena could be identified both within the arena itself, and daily life in general. Thus despite the construction of a building specifically for entertainment purposes, it is clear that there was a blurring of living and entertainment spaces within the urban landscape.

This paper explores this blurring of living and entertainment spaces within two texts from the Young Adult dystopian genre - Susanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* (2008), and Blake Northcott's *Arena Mode* (2013). In both texts, the audience views the spectacle not from the arena itself, but from separate, often distant locations, thanks to technological surveillance. This paper will argue that despite this physical detachment between the audience and the spectacle, the line between living and entertainment spaces is increasingly blurred. Due to the continuous utilisation of surveillance technologies, the audience is able to remain continuously and intimately engaged with the events of the arena within their own homes. Consequently, whether the spectacle takes place within a physical arena (as in *The Hunger Games*), or the city itself is utilised as an arena (as in *Arena Mode*), the urban landscape and its entertainment spaces appear to have become inextricably fused.