



SPECTACLE, ENTERTAINMENT, AND CONTROL IN *SUNRISE ON THE REAPING* BY COLLINS

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Abstract

This paper studies the dynamics of spectacle, control and power in *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) by Collins, a work that shows how the spectacle becomes a means to control, and discipline the individuals in society. Based on *The Society of the Spectacle* by Guy Debord, the paper examines how lived reality has been substituted by images, performances and mediated representations that promote the authoritarian control. The novel depicts a society where carnage is turned into entertainment and that only by yielding oneself to the logic of spectacle can one survive. The role of spectacle as a way of social control can be effectively analyzed by using Debord's framework, in which the oppression is covered by visual excess and fabricated stories. The study is devoted to how the Capitol manages to control fear, media, and ritualized violence to strengthen hierarchical power dynamics and make domination a norm. The results of the analysis show that spectacle does not only reinforce political power, it also internalizes obedience among oppressed people. The *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) predetermines the devastating influence of spectacle on individuality, memory, and conscience. The paper concludes that Collins' novel is an influential commentary of modern lives in which media, spectacle and power intertwine in order to control human beings. Through its interaction with the theory of Debord, the text points at the fact that resistance is possible by means of awareness, solidarity, and moral responsibility that makes the *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) an important addition to the modern dystopian literature and critical theory of spectacle and influence.

Keywords: Control, Debord, Entertainment, Obedience, Society of the Spectacle, *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025).

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1. Introduction

In the dynamic environment of dystopian literature, the connection between control and entertainment has appeared as a dominant idea, particularly in media centric society. Entertainment in the dystopian worlds is not just a means of escapism, it is a means of supporting the power systems, creating a collective image, and social order. Authorities divert the citizens through well-planned spectacles of what is really happening resulting in oppression, acceptability of violence and lack of any sort of uprising. Entertainment in these societies acts as a pacifier as well as a way of coercing in a subtle way which defines how power and control can be united to the need to divert and have fun. Collins' *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) returns to emergence of Panem brutal regime and illuminates the concept that how public spectacle normalizes violence and control common masses of society. In the grim society of Panem, the Capitol uses the Hunger Games to control, divert and oppress the people of many districts.

The Hunger Games (2008) trilogy prequel, *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025), goes into the depths of how the visual culture, media, and authoritative rule affect the lives of the dystopian society intertwining with visual culture and media. Holding power through the establishment and manipulation of spectacle is a mechanism that the Capitol in the text uses to assert power as it also serves to keep the citizens at ease but also keep them under close guard. The novel traces the characters and lives of young tributes who are violently forced to take part in the Hunger Games, which is a life-or-death competition not just based on talent but also on how well one can fit the Capitol criteria of entertainment and dictatorship. The lives of the tributes are turned into commodities and become nothing but spectacles, to be consumed by people who need to be distracted and controlled. The domination of the districts of Panem by the Capitol is committed in the spectacle of the Games where the fate of the tributes is determined by the performance and the story consumed by the Capitol. In this case spectacle is not only some kind of entertainment, but repression, created to serve the purpose of not letting the masses notice the oppression and becoming numbed to it, which is a way to sustain the rule of the elite. Through turning the violence into spectacle, the Capitol is able to maintain the population of Panem in a state of complicity, addicted to the spectacle of the Games, and unable to realize how they are exploited. In order to see the full scope of this phenomenon, it is important to look at the theoretical framework of this book through the prism of a French Marxist theorist and a critic, Guy Debord, in his masterpiece, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967). The analysis of the spectacle as the form of social control by Debord helps to understand how the Capitol takes advantage of the visual culture and media to support the authoritarian regime. To Debord, the spectacle is not a series of images, but rather a social bond between individuals, which is mediated by images, in which the spectacle prevails and constructs reality. This theoretical framework plays a crucial role in analyzing *Sunrise on the Reaping*

(2025) because of how the Capitol uses The Hunger Games to squash the opposition and calm the masses so that the spectacle turns out to be a source of entertainment and control. The commodification of the suffering of the tributes and the fact that the narrative focuses on how dehumanized the tributes were, a focus which makes it seem like consumers are objects of consumption and spectacle, help to back up the idea of the modern society being obsessed with the spectacle to the extent that it is ready to use commodities as means of control as well as the power structures to which these commodities belong.

According to the theory of Debord (1967), in societies where media and commodification play a dominant role in the everyday lives of citizens, reality has become more mediated and the images represent power and the interests associated with power. According to Debord (1967), media is not only an assemblage of optical images, but it is also a social relation between people that is being mediated by images. Particularly applied in analyzing the tactics of authoritarianism used by the Capitol, there are well-planned scenes such as Hunger Games, the reaping rituals and the transmissions by the state that do not necessarily entertain, but inform, misinform and serve as a power mechanism. The readers, or viewers, within the text or in real-life reading, become obliged to meditate on how the spectacle makes people uncritical thought cops and can limit rebellion as pictorial display. In this way, the theoretical model provided by Debord (1967) can represent a formidable key to interpretation of the roots of ideological role of the entertainment in the dystopian fiction.

2. Background of the Study

The Hunger Games (2008) trilogy by Suzanne Collins became a work of great significance for its themes of survival, rebellion and oppression in the dystopian state of Panem. In this world, the Capitol controls the districts through economic dependence, fear and the Hunger Games. The games are a reminder to the districts of their rebellion and a spectacle of the Capitol's power. It has since become a topic of discussion for portraying tyrannical governments, class divisions, and commodified violence. Collins later expanded the world of the games with *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* (2020), which delved into the origins of the Games and showed how political systems progressively develop techniques of control. The book expanded on the psychological aspects of power and how violence can become normative through entertainment. This adaptation paved the way for an exploration of the connections between political rule and public entertainment. In *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025), Hunger Games author Suzanne Collins returns to Panem to explore the Second Quarter Quell, an event in which twice as many tributes are subject to the games. This novel, instead of solely revolving around resistance to political tyranny, provides an exploration of control over memory, identity and public consciousness. Haymitch's journey shows that to survive in Panem, one must not only survive the physical challenges but also the narratives produced by the Capitol. The Capitol manipulates the

image of tributes to the public by turning them into marketable individuals. Entertainment stories shaped their feelings, friendships and personal histories. The arena is a site of suffering turned into a commodity and a site of lives turned into entertainment. Even when the games are over, survivors must continue to deal with public spectacle, trauma and deception. This shows how the games continue to impact survivors on a psychological level. Much of the recent literary analyses of *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) have centered on its references to the previous Hunger Games texts, characterization, and resistance. Yet there has been little discussion about its depiction of spectacle as a system of ideological control. Media performance and its impact on identity and oppression has not received sufficient attention. This research builds on this gap by analyzing spectacle in the novel as a system of power and autonomy that undermines individual agency and freedom. By examining mediated violence, spectacle and identity disintegration, this research offers greater insight into Collins' contribution to dystopian literary discourse.

3. Literature Review

Former researchers have thoroughly examined *The Hunger Games* (2008) trilogy as a reflection of a totalitarian authority that controls and direct through spectacle, where violence is glamourized and broadcast for general audience and public consumption. However, limited scholarly interest has been devoted to *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025), particularly concerning how spectacle performs as a system of control during the formative period of Panem's belief and ideological system. This literature review therefore narrows this gap by examining theoretical frameworks and early analysis of the Hunger Games texts, developing an analytical framework for examining *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025).

The idea of the spectacle is theorized by Guy Debord (1967) who defines it as a state of social affairs where living experience is replaced by representations in a strictly systematic manner. According to Debord (1967), the current societies do not work based on direct human interaction but through the images which mediate social interaction. This sense of spectacle does not merely represent a set of images as media, but a worldview which positions itself as the objective reality. The spectacle makes the social life turn into appearance which promotes passivity, conformity and acceptance of domination. Debord lays stress on the fact that people become observers of their own lives, deprived of true experience and political action, and power is concentrated and irrefutable (Debord, 1967).

Best and Kellner (1999) analyze the relevance of Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) in the context of modern media, consumer culture and capitalism. The authors claim that Debord's idea of the spectacle is a social condition that includes not only television and entertainment but also the increasing mediation of human relations by images and commodities. They stress that the spectacle is a means of ideological domination, which encourages the people to become passive consumers rather than active participants in social and political life. According to Best and Kellner (1999), Debord

demonstrates how capitalist societies transform everyday experiences into commodified representations that shape people's perceptions of reality. The study further suggests that the spectacle normalizes inequality and reinforces existing power structures by replacing authentic social interaction with mediated images. (Best and Kellner, 1999).

Debord (1988) develops his earlier arguments by examining how the spectacle has become more sophisticated and pervasive in contemporary society. He argues that advanced capitalism works not only through overt media and entertainment, but through surveillance, political manipulation, misinformation, and the integration of spectacle into everyday life. Debord (1988) argues that the spectacle has become a system which forms public opinion, controls social consciousness and restricts opportunities for critical thinking. He emphasizes that governments, corporations, and mass media collaborate to construct realities that maintain existing power structures while concealing social contradictions. Debord (1988) further contends that people are increasingly accepting mediated representations as reality, resulting in alienation and passivity. (Debord, 1988)

Hallam (2024) discusses the spectacle in *The Hunger Games* (2008), considering the theory of the spectacle that was created by Debord. He attributes the reasons why Capitol is employing the spectacle as a form of entertainment as well as a means to retain its political authority. Hunger Games are promoted through the annual festival as an eye-candy that hides the truth about oppression of people living in Panem. The opening ceremonies as well as the Reaping are carefully planned out so that the people of the districts are kept entertained and at the same time to consolidate the control that the Capitol has over its districts. Hallam (2024) also draws attention on the way the Capitol applies the myth-making to rationalize the Games, portraying them as an essential and celebratory tradition, when in fact, they are a way to keep the Capitol in power. He implies that the spectacle that is employed by the Capitol masks the cruelty of their governance causing it all to appear a normal even celebratory affair. (Hallam, 2024)

Gunenc (2022) also contributes in the debate of power and control by discussing how discipline, and oppressive power are represented in *The Hunger Games* (2008) on the basis of the theory of surveillance and the panopticon to see how the Capitol controls its subjects. Gunenc (2022) states that the Panem presented by Collins is an example of a society, in which the authoritative power and its oppressive nature are not provided by the direct violence and the presence of spectacle alone, but also by the pervasive surveillance, the disciplinary measures, and the control of the media. *The Hunger Games* (2008) trilogy as described in the article is a dystopian allegory of contemporary totalitarian control, in which the technological and ideological apparatus of the Capitol has made people always conscious of being monitored, thereby instilling the sense of self-discipline and obedience. (Gunenc, 2022)

Latham and Hollister (2014) also provide a peculiar insight into *The Hunger Games* (2008) by emphasizing information and media literacies as regards *The Hunger Games* (2008) as the means of resistance in the dystopian Panem community. Rather than only exploring political or physical oppression, Latham and Hollister (2014) explore how the capacity of Katniss Everdeen to analyze, manipulate, and utilize media messages and information becomes her survival mechanism and how this mechanism subverts the power of the Capitol. The authors contend that *The Hunger Games* (2008) is more than a show of violence and spectacle, it is also a blueprint on how information literacy, as a way of media and information constructing reality, can be a potent weapon against an oppressive rule. (Latham and Hollister, 2014).

Moffat and May (2021) explain *The Hunger Games* (2008) in relation to the power of spectacle as voyeuristic entertainment and generator of moral panics and containment. The authors presuppose that Collins presents *The Hunger Games* (2008) as a prolonged bloody show that entraps its viewers into the moral abyss as they watch and admire killing innocent people who participated in The Hunger Games. Compared to the readings that concentrate only on the political oppression, this article gives a glimpse into the moral and ethical results of spectacle by revealing how objects of human misery turn out to be a consumer object in Capitol once the media and spectacle are harnessed. It also illustrates how the story reiterates the reader of the grief of high cost of violence and how such aspect of spectacle is used to rectify the authoritative violence of the world and the question of moral sanity of people in Panem world and in our world. (Moffat and May, 2021)

Merritt, and Lu (2018) study *The Hunger Games* (2018) trilogy in the context of Jungian psychology. They argue that Katniss Everdeen represents the archetypal hero whose journey symbolizes psychological growth, transformation, and the search for selfhood. The authors see President Snow as a representation of oppressive authority and Katniss's development is the incorporation of courage, compassion and moral responsibility. They also assert that the trilogy's symbolic structure allows readers to engage with contemporary social and political issues through universal mythological patterns. The study concludes that the trilogy's lasting popularity is due to its successful use of universal archetypes that resonate with readers from different cultures and generations. (Merritt, and Lu, 2018).

In the context of Baudrillard's theory of simulation and simulacra, Yun (2018) discusses *The Hunger Games* (2008) trilogy and emphasizes the relationship between media, power and identity. The study argues that in Panem, media creates artificial realities that shape public opinion and bolster the political power of the Capitol. Yun argues that televised spectacles, carefully manufactured narratives and symbolic representations substitute for real reality, making it more and more difficult for citizens to distinguish truth from illusion. The author further explains that both the Capitol and the rebels strategically

employ media to influence public opinion, demonstrating that spectacle is not limited to one political group but functions as a broader instrument of ideological control. (Yun, 2018).

3.1. Research Objectives

1. To analyze the use of media to control people
2. To examine how spectacle exploits the people
3. To discuss how the totalitarian regime exposes the threats through media and entertainment

3.2. Research Questions

1. How does novel depict spectacle as a means of political control in post-rebellion Panem?
2. How does Capitol use media and entertainment to dominate, mislead and rule people?
3. What parallels can be traced between the use of spectacle in the novel and real-world examples of media control in society?

4. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The study adopts a qualitative approach to research using an interpretive paradigm for investigating the connections between spectacle, power, and fractured identities in Collins' *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025). The interpretive approach is appropriate for this study because it focuses on subjective meanings, interpretation, and analysis of the ideological structures in a literary text. The research examines how the systems of dominance are expressed through narrative patterns, symbolism, and personal narratives of characters in the chosen text rather than through quantitative measurements.

The study draws its theoretical framework from Debord's book, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), which offers the main conceptual framework for analyzing how visual imagery, spectacular events and mediated realities serve as forms of social control. Debord's ideas of commodification, passive spectatorship, mediated relationships, and illusionary reality inform the analysis of how the Capitol stages violence as an attractive spectacle, and politically controls the districts. The main source of this study is *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025), with secondary sources including journal articles, literary analyses, theoretical books and journal articles on spectacle, surveillance, identity and authoritarianism. It provides supplementary information to enhance the critical analysis of the chosen text.

The research incorporates a close reading of the text. Key passages are assessed to detect recurrent patterns of televised violence, ritualistic performance, surveillance, narrative manipulation and psychological manipulation. Special focus is placed on tribute interviews, public television broadcasts, arena "events", and instances where characters are forced to present themselves and their experiences in ways that appeal to public

standards. These narrative instances are examined to unpack how private troubles are made public as entertainment, and the way institutional narratives redefine personal agency. Narrative elements like symbolism, characterization, dialogue, and imagery are also discussed to understand how Collins' creates a environment where authenticity is constantly challenged by public performance. The analysis draws on tributes characters to explore the impact of surveillance and manipulative narratives on the disintegration of self and conscience. Thematic classification and theoretical analysis are used to highlight key themes of obedience, resistance, performance, trauma and manipulation. This approach allows for an analysis of how spectacle functions as a system that produces perception, domination, and undermines the concept of the authentic self, using the terms of Debord (1967).

5. Analysis and Discussion

It is a qualitative textual discussion of the *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) using the theoretical perspective of Guy Debord, *The society of the spectacle* (1967). The analysis mainly focuses on the experience of tributes and how the Capitol uses spectacle, the manipulation of media and the visual spectacle to engage in political acts of control, to normalize violence and to redefine individual identity.

“The giant screens flanking the stage have lit up with the waving flag in honor of the Hunger Games... Everything is clean and expensive and deadly.” (Collins, 2025, p. 32)

This is illustrated in the description of how the guests are forced to watch the flag of the Capitol on giant screens on the reaping day in which the state violence is transformed into a well-orchestrated gathering. Instead of seeming like a punishment, the reaping is introduced as a spectacle, a fully refined demonstration of the state where the pictures play a bigger role than the meaning. Debord (1967) says that power can sustain by substituting the reality lived with seeming order and legitimacy representations. The words clean and expensive mask the ugliness of death in the beauty and deadly reveals the latent coercion which is under wraps and is concealed in the spectacle. With this image orchestration, the Capitol does not enforce the lack of obedience by using physical force all the time, but by performing ritualized fear, repetition, and making violence the norm in society (Collins, 2025, p. 32).

“And if Sid should ask, ‘But why do I have to do this?’ We can only say, ‘Because this is the way things are.’”(Collins, 2025, p. 34)

This dialogue shows how the spectacle of the Capitol manages to make the oppression natural by showing violence as inevitable. The answer of the question, because this is the way things are, indicates a failure in critical inquiry, in which no longer coercion needs an excuse. According to the speech of Debord (1967), the spectacle creates a passive consciousness in which the social arrangements are enclosed and unalterable, which

predetermines the absence of alternatives. Just like in the case of actual media scripts that make war, surveillance or inequality appear normal, the Capitol makes subjects learn to accept domination as a natural state of affairs. With the help of this resignation, spectacle achieves compliance not by direct force but by altering the perception in such a way that the opposition becomes impossible or pointless (Collins, 2025, p. 34)

“Attendance for the entire population is mandatory... Turn up in raggedy clothes and the Peacekeepers hit you or arrest your parents.”(Collins, 2025, p. 32)

The fact that the entire population is obligated to attend the thrift show reveals the mechanism where the reaping is a tremendous disciplinary ceremony instead of a civic act of choice. The Capitol has made power a part of social life by imposing the presence and controlling the appearance by the threat of violence. The spectacle in the words of Debord (1967) also rules not by using the images, but by ritualized involvement and making the people play along with the system even when they fail to believe in the system. The discipline of nonconformity, beatings or imprisonment of members of the family, are guaranteed to gain psychological obedience and turn the population into passive spectators who inculcate discipline. By means of this imposed participation, spectacle turns into an ordinary everyday activity that legitimizes the domination and inhibits the prospect of the struggle (Collins, 2025, p. 32).

“Resistance is not an option. The Peacekeepers will drag him up there kicking and screaming if they have to.”(Collins, 2025, p. 34)

This quotation shows that coercion has outgrown the forceful manner and has been internalized as a part of the population. The fact that the Peacekeepers are bound to intervene kicking and screaming shows that fear does not have to be practiced on a regular basis, it is already expected and accepted. The spectacle within the context of Debord (1967) substitutes unrelenting direct force with a climate of self-corrective fear, in which people punish themselves beforehand. The anticipation of violence makes compliance possible even before resistance can be attempted and it demonstrates how domination can be used best when repression is psychologically enshrined rather than constantly practiced. In such a normalization of inevitability, the Capitol ensures compliance and does not have to show force openly (Collins, 2025, p. 34).

“For the first time, I understand that when they show the reaping live, it isn’t really live. There must be a five-minute hold on the broadcast in case something like this happens.” (Collins, 2025, p. 42)

This fact that the reaping is not actually being aired live shows how the Capitol is manipulating mediated reality. The five minutes delay is a form of censorship, as it gives the powers the ability to wipe lapses of chaos, opposition or too much violence before they are exposed to mass. Taking the notions of Debord (1967), spectacle is not just a distortion of reality but a direct substitution of the latter with the images of controlled manifestations,

making sure that only images that are safe in ideological terms spread. By cutting off chaos, the Capitol upholds the semblance of order and legitimacy, and does not allow the viewers to see the lack of stability in state violence. Thus, media is a governance instrument that normalizes control and authority by silencing the truth and preventing a possible opposition to it through a technologically controlled portrayal (Collins, 2025, p. 42)

“The screens go dark for a second and then the flag reappears. Obviously, they don’t want the rest of the country to witness the disorder here in District 12.”(Collins, 2025, p. 41)

The black out of the screens and the appearance of the flag of Capitol again expose the functioning of spectacle as the selective visibility. The regime actively manipulates the population by eliminating the pictures of the disorder and substituting them with the national image instantly. To Debord (1967), spectacle is not only a presentation of reality but it hides contradictions and instability and maintains an illusion of unity and control. The break is what makes dissent local and unseen so that they do not become a collective experience which can lead to resistance. In such a gesture of erasure, the Capitol is upholding the ideological status quo by replacing instances of disorder with strictly edited signs of power, promoting the facade of peace throughout Panem (Collins, 2025, p. 41).

“Shut up or we’ll kill every last one of you!”(Collins, 2025, p. 46)

This publicly staged and mediated show of an overtly violent command, is an example of spectacular intimidation in the Capitol, as a method of government. The menace is not told or hidden, but it is proclaimed in such a way that terror is made communal and apparent. Within the concept of the spectacle, Debord (1967) has highlighted the mechanism of blending terror and visibility and making sure that control is instituted through the pictures of punishment and not by rational consent. Similar to real life authoritarian states that employ televised force as a means to end the opposition, the Capitol turns violence into a lesson to everybody, and illustrates what resistance can do. The regime ensures that people comply not by influencing them ideologically but by destroying opposition in front of the whole population and making fear a regular state of social existence (Collins, 2025, p. 46).

“A hovercraft passes right over the square... Peacekeepers next to her fire a spray of bullets into the air.”(Collins, 2025, p. 46)

The synchronized visuals of the hovercraft and the gunfire fired by the Peacekeepers indicate the staging of violence as a spectacle by the Capitol. Coercion is turned into a spectacle with the help of the use of sophisticated machinery and coordinated weaponry, which is supposed to be observed and remembered. Violence in this context, in the sense of Debord (1967), is a kind of image and not an act of dialogue, justification, but broadcasting the power. The public display of terror in its technological spectacle

reinforces domination by spectacle, as the regime makes sure his subjects are subdued by spectacular force instead of appealing to their will. It is a display of force, not a form of persuasion, which is being taught (Collins, 2025, p. 46).

“The back of Woodbine’s head explodes.”(Collins, 2025, p. 40)

This is an extreme portrayal of immediate death as a spectacle of caution and not an individual punishment. The shocking, graphic exposure of violence is meant to be shocking and educative enough to leave a sense of fear in both witnesses and observers. According to Debord (1967), the spectacle educates by terror which transforms violence into a picture whose main role is pedagogical, to teach obedience by example. The Capitol reinforces the message of domination by enacting execution publicly so that the message spreads even more effectively than any word. Such apparent brutality is normalized in a way that strengthens control because the results of dissent become instant, unquestionable and visible in society (Collins, 2025, p. 40).

“It would be soothing if it wasn’t for the scattered cries of children being chased in their dreams.”(Collins, 2025, p. 11)

Such image discloses that the influence of spectacle is not only on the mass events but also on the individual and psychological lives of the citizens. The opposition of the possibly calming fog to the screams of children with nightmares affects the audience that fear has already pervaded even the time of rest and closeness. Spectacle by definition is not only active during visible aspects of rituals such as the Games but is in fact electrified throughout all the elements of conscious thought and the emotions and subconscious reactions of the populace. The dreams of the children are indicative of internalization of dominance at an early age such that terror is constantly replicated without necessarily being exercised. It is this psychological saturation that allows the Capitol to keep people in line by instilling fear in everyday life, even before the spectacle actually starts (Collins, 2025, p. 11)

“We’re supposed to sing along but instead we mumble whatever. Just keep our lips moving at the right time.”(Collins, 2025, p. 36)

This scene reveals the fact that the Capitol values outward conformity to beliefs. The participating in the ritual is more than just the conviction since the very fact that we are still moving our lips indicates that we are actors on an ideological stage. Spectacle, as defined by Debord (1967), is not reliant on persuasion and belief; it is just a matter of engagement in appearances that makes the image of unity and fit. The mumbled singing is an indication of vacant performance, which satisfies the requirements of power, and how spectacle transforms obedience into habitual performance. By such ritualized performance, domination is ensured through the application of external conformity and making inner perversion irrelevant (Collins, 2025, p. 36).

“Everything is clean and expensive and deadly.”(Collins, 2025, p. 36)

This is a drastic contrast of the terms clean, expensive, and deadly and reflects this tendency of making violence acceptable by using all the means of Capitol aesthetics. The refined look of the environment hides the deadly fact behind which it provides and promotes the view of brutality as decent and sophisticated. The spectacle of domination, according to Debord, is masqueraded as surface beauty and alters the horror of violence in favor of visibility of domination. Making oppression look graceful and well-regulated, the Capitol makes sure that the audience convinces themselves to see the image instead of addressing the agony it generates. This visual refinement makes violence not only acceptable but visually acceptable, making it possible to get in order without causing an ethical reaction (Collins, 2025, p. 36).

“Listen, everybody. There is something bigger than you and me happening here. As we all know, the Hunger Games are a sacred ceremony of remembrance for the Dark Days. A lot of people lost their lives to guarantee peace and prosperity for our nation. And this is our chance—no, it is our duty—to honor them!”(Collins, 2025, p. 268)

This speech is a clear example of the Capitol redesigning systemic violence via ideological discourse that turned the Hunger Games into a worship-like ritual instead of a tool of oppression. Convincing people to sacrifice their lives by invoking the concept of collective memory, sacrifice, and national duty, the regime transforms coercion to moral duty. According to Debord (1967), the effect of spectacle is the mythification of power where historical and political reality is substituted by narratives which are emotionally charged and require participation to be followed instead of reflection. The call to pay tribute to the dead camouflages constant violence as the memory of the dead so that citizens are enabled to acquiesce to domination by deciphering suffering as the need to be patriotic. By the way of this rhetorical spectacle, the Capitol dominates the equilibrium of authority by equating obedience to moral virtue and leaving no intellectual room to disagree (Collins, 2025, p. 268).

“I know we’re being dressed for slaughter, but at least now we look like something worth watching.”(Collins, 2025, p. 273)

This sentence clearly explains the way people value something by the visibility in the spectacle. Despite the fact that the speaker realizes perfectly well the violence that will follow, as he is dressed like he is being slaughtered, there is still the value that is attached depending on how well the body may be worth watching. The spectacle, according to Debord, is an erosion of human importance in favor of visible attractiveness, in which existence can only have a meaning when it is perceived. The fact that this logic is accepted shows how much the process of commodification has been internalized because existence and recognition are based on the performative appeal instead of humanity. By reducing beauty to value, the Capitol makes sure to dominate the world, where people engage in objectifying themselves, despite being aware of its lethal results (Collins, 2025, p. 273).

6. Conclusion

Applying the *Society of the Spectacle* by Debord (1967) to the *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025), this analysis allows understanding how the Capitol shoulders its authoritarian dominance not by its direct force, but by the calculated utilization of the spectacles. The contemporary world as Debord (1967) proposes, does not exert physical dominance alone to instill power but rather, through the invention of a mediated reality, a reality that replaces the lived experience; the image created is meant to be more controlling. The spectacle in *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) is not a mere performance that takes place on the outside of the society; it is life, which has been deeply embedded in the structure of the society. Capitol employs the media, ritualized violence, and spectacle to enforce passive compliance, which is used to construct beliefs, values, and identities of the citizens of Panem even after material collapse. With the different illustrations of the manipulation of media, censorship, and ideological control, it is clear that the Capitol has not lost its grip on its citizens but has transformed into informal cultural and social norms that are not formal. The very spectacle of reaping, being a spectacle, demonstrates that the Capitol manages to commodify violence, to transform it into an image that the people will look at as something they need and something that will happen. Once the spectacle becomes not defined by the conventional forms of governing the people but by the less noticeable ways of control, e.g. the art acts, religious ceremonies, and cultural memory, the Capitol makes sure that its ideological authority is not diminished even after the material institutions on which it was based fall. In the end, *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) is an effective example of how spectacle can be used to construct and maintain ideology in such manners that go beyond the failure of physical institutions.

Using the theory proposed by Debord (1967), the analysis shows that the spectacle is not a form of control but the material on which the social organization and individual mind are made. Ideology remains, and through the spectacle continues to evolve, even in the face of a post-apocalyptic world, where old, outdated forms of power have broken down; and domination continues to be perpetuated, only in new, more insidious forms. The persistence of spectacle in *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) highlights how ideology remains strong and plays a vital role in the formation of human identity, memory and meaning despite a breakdown of society.

Future researches on spectacle in *Sunrise on the Reaping* (2025) can be done by comparing the text with the media texts to observe the influence of ideology, power, and public opinion. Research could focus on psychology, desensitization, normalization of violence, cognitive biases, etc., to better grasp how audience becomes a passive recipient of ideology. Other research interests include the impact of digital and social media, including influencers, viral media, and live streaming, on the creation of modern spectacles affecting political beliefs and maintaining power. Also, future research can explore the use

of spectacle in political resistance and activism to mobilize and disrupt power, thereby challenging existing power structures.

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