

Scientific
Journal of
**Applied
Social and
Clinical
Science**

**“COME ON, THEY WILL
LOVE THIS”: VIEWERS-
PLAYERS AT HUNGER
GAMES (2012) FROM
THE FABLE**

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Abstract: In order to understand the construction of spectator-players from the fable in *Hunger Games* (2012), the notion proposed by David Bordwell (1985) will be used. For the author, the construction of the fable takes place between the constant communication between style and *syuzhet*, this process involves these notions and would require an ideal spectator to make inferences. However, the spectator is outside the film, and may or may not exist. On the contrary, in this film, the hypothesis is that the fable is constructed from characters who would be both spectators and players, that is, spectators within the film itself and players through their actions.

Keywords: Narration; Fable; Viewer; David Bordwell; Character.

INTRODUCTION

The formation of the fable consists of the constant communication between style and *syuzhet*, this delineation is proposed by Bordwell (1985). According to the author, these three elements build the narration of a film. It is important to point out that each work has its own narration, even if aspects are similar to other films, it would be unique in style and *syuzhet*.

Style is a technical device used from filming to editing, for example: choosing scene cuts, lenses, framing type, editing, in short, *mise-en-scène*. The *syuzhet* is built according to the style used, so plot twists, connection of the events presented and the unfolding of the plot would be alien to the technical choices and the sequence of scenes. The consonance of these parts informs what the fable is, as it is not

1 The translation of the film's title in Brazil is "Jogos Vorazes" (*Hunger Games*), however, the original name in the English language has a meaning relationship that brings the constructed fable closer to the text. The further away from the center, the poorer the place, the scarcer the food and, more importantly, the way in which young people are selected: because of hunger, the more you ask for food from the government, the more often the name of the young person from the begging family appears. to be drawn, which would imply a greater chance of participating in the games. So, *hunger* in the context it could be hunger, or the act of being "voracious" when eating and, perhaps more importantly, the connection of the hungrier you feel, the more likely you are to die in the event, and the more likely you are to bring wealth to the district and decrease the poverty level. The film title, event and plot shown would be intertwined.

explicitly shown in the film, but is information to the ideal viewer. Thus, when considering this spectator, Bordwell (1985) understands him as an entity endowed with cognitive capacities similar to the human being. The purpose of this article is to understand how the spectator-player is constructed from the fable in *Hunger Games*, therefore, the question arises: in what way is a possible spectator player constructed from the fable in: *Hunger Games*? As a methodological choice [to] contextualize the diegetic universe of the film; [b] understand the rules of this diegetic universe from three events in the film and [c] identify the way in which the spectator-player is constructed from the fable.

We consider the possibility of several spectators in the film, however the spectator-players can be Katniss and Peeta, as the self-awareness of pleasing the audience moves the characters' actions at first. Later, at the end of the film, these attitudes cause the traditional rules of the game to be changed.

THE APPARENT PLAYER

After a war that decimated the State, the: *hunger game*¹ in order to celebrate and remember the difficult times. The city is divided into twelve districts, in increasing number from the richest to the poorest, however all of them must participate represented by a couple, chosen by lot. At first, only one young man must survive, while the other twenty-three must die. The prize for the winner is the decoration and more resources for the youth district. Thus, we arrive at the main characters, Katniss and Peeta, who are part of the last district of the city, number

twelve.

Contextualizing these events of the film, we emphasize the spaces in which the story unfolds, most of them are open, since the introduction, the most prevalent place on screen is the forest. In total, twelve spaces can be seen, among them, the most important are: introduction forest, games board room and games forest. The focus given to the space opened by the plot is due to the existence of the *hunger game*, which, in addition to being televised, also takes place in an environment geographically controlled by the director's room (figure 1). That is, the objective of the participants² it would not just be keeping themselves alive at the expense of the lives of others, but surviving the various traps that the director of the competition himself has in the place of geography.



Figure 1

Source: Film Frame: *Hunger Games* (2012), by Gary Ross, 120:00 min

The controlled space, therefore, becomes an important aspect of the plot for two reasons: there are cameras scattered throughout the event's forest, and in the director's room it is possible to control traps already placed and more, genetically merge animals and insert them in place. Therefore, the event can be characterized as a reality show, insofar as it is broadcast massively by different vehicles and

² They can also be understood as the players.

³ According to the film, the deaths of the participants.

⁴ Through the player's charisma, resourcefulness and track record, wealthy people can sponsor him. They can ship ordered supplies and accessories that make the competition even easier for that specific player.

⁵ In constructing a fabula, the perceiver defines some phenomena as events while constructing relations among them. These

has a specific televised newspaper with live commentary.

The fable: *Hunger Games*, in this context, it can be built around a space that is physical, controlled, manipulated, conveyed and commented on. How would this fable be consolidated? According to Bordwell (1985) the syuzhet would be able to guide and show the possible inferences that the spectator makes, although the fable is not materialized in the film, it exists in the spectator's inferences. Thus, we must understand the relationship between the story and the syuzhet in the image of the controllers' room (figure 1).

The game has previously stipulated rules, but, as it turns out, only those who are part of the highest level of the event's organization have the authority to manipulate the geographic space of the players. They can communicate by image in the sky at low³, insert objects that help in survival, send supplies funded by sponsors⁴ and change the rules themselves. In this context, in its logical course of events, anything can happen to the main characters and those who report the event, all to some extent are oblivious to the acts committed in the controllers' room.

[...]In the construction of the fable, the observer defines some phenomena as remarkable events while building relationships between them. These relationships are primarily causal. The notable act will be understood as a consequence of another, a character trait, or some general law. Syuzhet can facilitate this process by systematically encouraging us to make linear causal inferences. But, the syuzhet can also organize the acts in a way that blocks or complicates the construction of causal relationship [...] (BORDWELL, 1985, p. 51, our translation)⁵.

Assuming the controllers' room as the organizer of the story is possible in terms of the objective of the film itself - who will win the Hunger Game and those who will die trying - because, in addition to the event, the communication vehicles measure how much the public is interested in broadcasts. Therefore, there would be a cyclical relationship between enticing viewers in the plot by manipulating the game itself and considering manipulation important to maintain media interest.

Although it is not explicit that there is such geographic control by the filmmakers of the event for the audience that follows, their reactions are amplified by decisions that occur in the plot. From hybrid animals to remotely controlled fire traps and wasps, it would all be part of a scenario to foster the pleasure of the spectacle⁶ through mechanical control by the event director and assistants. This level corresponds to the social group that is overly shown to be concerned, fun and willing to be the sponsor of a young person who impresses them in some way. For example, the performance of young people in front of the cameras while they are observed on a type of theater stage (figure 2). They would become the object of desire of this social group, and this would become the object of desire of those who compete, even more so of those from impoverished districts.



Figure 2

Source: Film Frame: *Hunger Games* (2012), by Gary Ross, 32:00 min

This opening of the event is broadcast nationally, it is a construction that uses the clothing, light effects and the soundtrack. The goal is to impress everyone, including potential sponsors. Thus, the construction of a story by the image transmitted by the station from a catwalk, would establish the record of a theatrical event, of a film. In this context, from Marc Vernet (2012) we understand that the event is fictional on two levels, in the first when considering the scenario, actors inserted in a controlled situation to tell something, a story. In the second, when these elements are registered by moving image, it would become a film considering a possible registration. "fiction film is, therefore, twice unreal: unreal for what it represents (fiction) and for the way it represents images of actors and objects"⁷ (VERNET, 2012, p. 100)⁷.

Considering that it would be a type of filmed competitive spectacle, locating the possible objects of desire, and the way in which they are established in person and through a

relations are primarily causal ones. No event will be assumed to be a consequence of another event, or a character trait, or some general law. The *syuzhet* can facilitate this process by systematically encouraging us to make linear causal inferences. But the *syuzhet* can also arrange events so as to block or complicate the construction of causal relations.

⁶ In accordance with part of the notion in Guy Debord (1997). The author, although referring to work and alienation from an economic point of view, inserts the understanding of what the image is, it would be formed by alienation as an object of reach and desire. The image in this context would be a created meaning, something that is imagined or seen. Still, the author presents the spectator's relationship with this object, the former would be emptied insofar as he is observed as the object. It would be the pilfering of the self by a form of representation that would empty it.

⁷ The author explains about the fictional film and the possibly imaginary film. Although he uses a common term like "film", the goal is to understand what a narrative film would be. Within the fable of the film under analysis, there would be a construction of a narrative for the audience that watches the event from a distance or in person. Read about: MARC, Vernet. **Film and narration**. In: AUMONT, Jacques (et al.). *The aesthetics of the film*. 9. ed. Campinas: Papirus, 2012. p. 101-106.

communication vehicle, we can consider this the way the fable is constructed in the film.

THE BUILT PLAYER

In the film's narration, there are two levels of play, one at the level of the influential spectators of the event and the candidates on the field, in person. Two, in the manipulation of the event according to the expressions of interest of both influential viewers and those who follow through some media vehicle. The former would play perceiving each candidate in order to choose the one that most impresses. The second would play in a conditioned way the way the fable is told, linked to the exposed images and sounds.



Figure 3

Source: film frame: *Hunger Games* (2012), by Gary Ross, 32:58 min

In understanding these relationships, it is important to know that all event participants use their personality characteristics and expand them, whether in the way they talk or what they talk about.⁸, still in the way of moving around the space, whether by the clothing used, that is, a set of actions that intentionally imprint a striking feature to the public (figure 3).

This also means that there can be no action, movement, gesture, thought, speech, word, feeling, etc. etc., without their proper perspective. The simplest entry or exit, on stage, any action that is done to carry

out a scene, pronounce a sentence, words, monologue, etc., must have a perspective and an ultimate purpose (the super objective). Without them the actor cannot even say yes or no. Even a tiny sentence by itself has its own brief perspective (CONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKI, 2018, p. 239, italics by the author).

According to Stanislavski (2018), perspective is the main aspect in the construction of the character, it in accordance with the purpose would base the construction of the character to avoid monotony and lack of depth for those who watch, but what would perspective be? The notion and contextualization of the entire play with the formation of the character unfold in a kind of harmony. In this context it is possible to understand the perspective linked to different expressions: theater and cinema. According to Décio Prado (2014), the character in the theater turns directly to the audience when telling a story, the spectators deal with the character through what they are seeing and hearing – in short, the audience is possibly persuaded by three characteristics of the construction of the character in the theater: how he acts, what he reveals about himself and what others communicate from it. Here would be the indication of the relationship between the spectators in person in the ceremonies and different presentations of the candidates of: *Hunger Game*.

In cinema, “[...] the structure of the film is often based on the narrator's willingness to successively assume the point of view (not physical, but intellectual) of successive characters.” (PAULO GOMES, 2014, p. 107). That is, the characteristics of the theater character would be present in the film, mediated by its structure, since the action of the main characters is shaped by the pre-established events of the society

⁸ “Vamos lá, eles vão amar” (C’ôn, They will love it!). Phrase spoken by Peeta to Katniss moments before he raised the young woman's hand at the induction ceremony (Figure 3).

around them. The structure in this context would involve the style and *syuzhet* who in constant communication develop the fable. According to Bordwell (1985), style would be the cinematographic technique used. Cuts, editing, lenses, setting the scene, in short, everything that would materialize the progress of the plot.

Those present spectators would be in an observer position with regard to direct interference, that is, the observation could be a relation of desire with the object (participants of the *Hunger Game*).

Object in this context could be treated as the construction of an intentional image on the part of the candidates, after all, they would benefit from being able to captivate a sponsor. We understand that in this process it is possible to infer the relationship between the present spectators and the possible sponsored ones, because: 1) the emotional effect is used in the presentations through the historical insertion of the country in the meaning of the event; 2) the physical effort when the characters demonstrate their abilities to evaluate by grade and steal the attention of a sponsor, in addition to using strategies to predict what would attract the sponsor, thus configuring the mental effort; 3) the continuous hunger game – participants/sponsors would have a cyclical game relationship, that is, there would be a voracious game between the participants, players, sponsors, players. As the latter's position is one of control and choice, but not of effective action in the geographical field in which the hunger game takes place, its configuration could be that of spectator-player.

According to Bordwell (1985) the style is composed of technical devices existing in cinema, such as the moment of editing, cuts, camera, lenses, in short, everything that

would help to build the film. *syuzhet* – em *Hunger Games*, the discourse of the image is present in gestures, clothing, expression of feelings and, finally, a story (figure 4). It means considering that the spectators following the event's progress – from the ceremony to the awarding of the participants – immerse themselves in a real story, with characteristics of a reality show.⁹



Figure 4

Source: Film Frame: *Hunger Games* (2012), by Gary Ross, 131:18 min

Thus, Katniss and Peeta would be a couple who love each other, faced deaths and not just one must survive, but both. Therefore, the public's action to pressure the creators of the *hunger games* to change the rule would derive from the actions of the object that would become everyone's desire: the fable of the couple in love.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The objective of the work was to understand how a possible spectator player is constructed from the fable in: *Hunger Games*. What is understood is that there are two types of spectators represented by the plot, 1) those who follow the event in person and 2) those who follow from a distance. This narrative construction takes place from the organizers and used by the couple Peeta and Katniss. These understand that it would be necessary to captivate everyone for them to survive

⁹ It is understood as a geographically controlled place from strategically installed cameras, traps through the production of a super objective (or prize) and the remote participation of those who watch the interviews and interactions of the event organizers.

(literally) the game - so, intentionally, they take advantage of being an object of attention and from small stylistic elements of representation in gestures, speech and attitudes, the desire to play becomes tangible. All who accompany them, regardless of the spectatorship.

The fable at: *Hunger Games*, it would be presented in a style that would approach the reality show according to the plot, which employs a game that is part of the country's history and used culturally. It would be an important and unique moment for all citizens due to its historical weight. Which makes the couple get the action of both sponsors and remote spectators to help them in a number of ways, including changing a main rule: there must only be one survivor. Finally, although they were not directly observing an image of

themselves acting, they had an expectation, an idea, or a notion, even more, an image that they would represent and in which way everyone would interpret: a true love between young people.

The game invented in the film: *Hunger Games*, in that syuzhet could be played by the couple. The other two types of spectators are diegetic and participate remotely as the cameras on the field of play present what is happening with the couple.

Thus, Peeta and Katniss can be spectators of themselves as part of the construction of a fable of a couple in love fighting for life for the others.

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