

## CHAPTER II

### INTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

#### 2.1 Intrinsic Aspect

Intrinsic elements of a movie are the components that shape its presentation within specific scenes. The interaction of these elements contributes to the movie's unique identity. As Bordwell and Thompson explain, a story consists of a series of interconnected events driven by cause and effect, unfolding over time (Bordwell and Thompson, 2013:3). This research thesis will analyze several intrinsic aspects, as outlined below:

##### 2.1.1 Narrative Elements

The essence of cinema lies in its ability to create immersive experiences for the audience. To fully appreciate movie as an art form, it is important to examine the reasoning behind its design choices within a cinematic work (Bordwell and Thompson, 2013:2). This research thesis will focus on intrinsic aspects, such as character and characterization, settings, and conflicts. Furthermore, the writer will use cinematography theory to examine how these elements enhance the visual storytelling and contribute to the overall impact of the scenes in *A Cinderella Story* (2004).

##### 2.1.1.1 Character & Characterization

A character is a paradigm of traits that are the building blocks of the narrative's subjects (Chatman, 1987:107). Characters are not just roles or functions

within the plot, but they are constructed through a combination of traits. These traits may include habits, attitudes, or physical features. In addition, characterization can be achieved where the narrator or another character directly describes a character's traits and the audience infers character traits through the actions, speech, thoughts, and interactions with other characters (Chatman, 1987:117).

#### **2.1.1.2 Settings**

Setting refers to the physical environment in which the narrative of a movie takes place (Bordwell and Thompson, 2012:155). It includes the locations, time, landscapes, and other elements that provide the backdrop for the story. The setting contributes to the atmosphere and mood of the movie.

#### **2.1.1.3 Conflicts**

Conflict in a movie is defined as the central tension or struggle that drives the narrative forward (McKee, 1997:210). It manifests in various forms within a movie, including internal struggles within characters, external clashes between characters, or conflicts with their environment.

### **2.1.2 Cinematic Elements**

#### **2.1.2.1 Camera Angle**

Camera angles play a crucial role in shaping how viewers perceive a scene by positioning the audience at a specific perspective to observe the shot's *mise-en-scène* (Bordwell & Thompson, 1979:143). These are generally categorized into three main types: high angle, low angle, and straight angle or eye level. A high

angle shot occurs when the camera is positioned above the subject, making the subject appear smaller and often conveying vulnerability or insignificance. A low angle shot, taken from below the subject, which makes the subject seem larger, more powerful, or dominant. The straight angle or eye-level shot, places the camera at the same height as the subject, offering a neutral perspective that allows the audience to connect with the character on equal terms (Bordwell & Thompson, 1979:145).

### **2.1.2.2 Camera Shot**

Camera shots shape audience perception and are essential in cinematography (Bordwell & Thompson, 1979:152). There are seven primary types of camera shots. The extreme long shot captures vast areas, such as landscapes or cityscapes, emphasizing the environment over individual characters. The long shot brings more attention to the characters while still showcasing their surroundings. A medium long shot frames a person from the knees up, striking a balance between the character and the setting. The medium shot captures the subject from the waist up, making gestures and facial expressions clearer. A medium close-up frames the character from the chest up, focusing more on facial expressions. The close-up zooms in on specific body parts, such as the head, hands, or feet, highlighting details and emotions. Lastly, the extreme close-up captures a very small portion of the subject, such as an eye or a hand, drawing attention to crucial details for dramatic or symbolic purposes (Bordwell & Thompson, 1979:155).

## CHAPTER III

### EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

#### 3.1 Extrinsic Aspects

Extrinsic aspects refer to the external factors that shape a movie's production, distribution, and reception, including historical, cultural, and industrial contexts. The importance of understanding the historical context, which influences the themes and content of movies based on the prevailing social and political conditions of the time (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008: 22). Furthermore, audience reception is another critical extrinsic element, as the way viewers interpret a movie is shaped by their cultural and social contexts, which can change over time, leading to varying interpretations and impacts (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008: 25).

##### 3.1.1 Social Capital in the early 2000s in America

In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000), Putnam saw that for the first two-thirds of the 20th century, Americans were deeply engaged in community life, actively taking part in civic organizations, political activities, and religious groups. However, starting in the 1970s, this trend began to reverse, and by the late 20th century, Americans became increasingly isolated. Putnam writes: "For the first two-thirds of the twentieth century a powerful tide bore Americans into ever deeper engagement in the life of their communities, but a few decades ago—silently, without warning—that tide reversed, and a treacherous rip current overtook the nation. Without being noticed at first, Americans were

gradually pulled apart from one another and from their communities over the last third of the century” (Putnam, 2000: 27).

Putnam attributes this decline to multiple factors, including increased mobility, urbanization, and technological advancements that reduced face-to-face interaction. As a result, people began to trust each other less and take part in fewer social activities. According to Putnam, these changes led to a breakdown in the networks of social connection that once formed the backbone of American communities. He further asserts that “The United States has seen a steep decline in every measure of social capital in recent decades. People trust one another less, talk to one another less, and take part in fewer social activities than they did a generation ago” (Putnam, 2000: 219). The consequences of this shift include greater social fragmentation and a weakening of the bonds that held communities together, leaving people increasingly disconnected from one another. This social phenomenon is clear in *A Cinderella Story* (2004), where the protagonist, Sam, navigates an isolated world, struggling to connect with others in a society that emphasizes social status over meaningful relationships.

### **3.1.2 Social Capital and Teen Movies in early 2000s America**

In the early 2000s, teen movies often mirror the social challenges and fragmented societal structures found by Putnam in his influential work *Bowling Alone*. During this period, the themes of isolation, alienation, and individualism become prevalent, reflecting the broader decline in social capital. Putnam’s theory explains how these cultural shifts are rooted in the weakening of community ties

and participation in social institutions. In his research, he proves that American society had moved away from deep engagement in social activities, such as community service, religious groups, and public organizations—a process that accelerated in the latter part of the 20th century (Putnam, 2000: 26–27). Teen movies of the early 2000s, including *A Cinderella Story* (2004), often depict young individuals grappling with their sense of belonging. These movies portray a generation struggling to connect not only with their peers but also with broader societal institutions. Putnam notes that many young people feel isolated in an increasingly digital and disconnected world, and this sense of detachment is reflected in the way the characters in these movies navigate their social lives, often seeking meaningful relationships outside traditional community structures (Putnam, 2000: 321).

The erosion of social capital in American society is further echoed in the narratives of teen movies from the early 2000s. The decline in traditional forms of social engagement—such as communal dinners, local civic involvement, or school clubs—leads to an erosion of social bonds, leaving many adolescents without a clear sense of belonging or community (Berkman & Glass, 2000: 141–144). Teen movies during this period often depict characters struggling with these changes, where the protagonists find themselves navigating worlds in which meaningful social bonds are difficult to form (Klein & Sinitiere, 2009: 455–458). In *A Cinderella Story* (2004), for example, the protagonist, Sam, experiences a lack of connection with her peers and family, reflecting the broader societal trends Putnam finds. She is isolated and misunderstood, not only due to her difficult home life, but

also her society's focus on social status and superficial connections over authentic relationships. Sam's journey throughout the movie—where she finds genuine friendship and love despite her alienation—mirrors the broader societal need for individuals to rebuild and reclaim social bonds.

### **3.1.3 Robert Putnam's Social Capital Theory**

Robert Putnam's concept of social capital, as elaborated in *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (20th Anniversary Edition), explores the value of social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. Social capital is essential in fostering civic engagement, community well-being, and democratic participation. Putnam finds a significant decline in social capital across American society during the late 20th century, a trend which he attributes to various sociocultural and economic changes (Putnam, 2020:27). This decline is especially relevant when analyzing early 2000s teen movies, as many narratives reflect the weakening of social bonds and the struggle to build meaningful connections—issues that parallel Putnam's findings (Putnam, 2020:321).

#### **3.1.3.1 Causes of Social Capital**

Putnam finds several causes contributing to the erosion of social capital in American society:

##### **1. Socioeconomic Background**

Socioeconomic background refers to an individual's social and economic status, which includes factors like education, income occupation, and overall

financial stability (Putnam, 2020:289). People from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often have better access to education, stable incomes, and leisure time, which allow them to engage more fully in social activities, like joining clubs, volunteering, and taking part in civic events (Putnam, 2020:289-290). On the other hand, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often face financial instability, limited educational opportunities, and a lack of free time, which makes it harder for them to take part in community life (Putnam, 2020:290). As a result, social participation becomes unequal, weakening social cohesion and contributing to the decline of social capital in society (Putnam, 2020:290).

## **2. Family Relationship**

Family relationship refers to how supportive and stable the interactions are within the family unit. This is important because family is where individuals first learn about trust, cooperation, and social norms (Putnam, 2020:273). A stable and nurturing family environment helps children develop trust and a sense of civic responsibility, which they carry into adulthood, taking part more actively in society (Putnam, 2020:273-274). However, when family relationships are unstable due to factors like divorce, neglect, or conflict it can hinder the development of social trust and make individuals less likely to engage in social life. Therefore, strong family relationships play a crucial role in regenerating social capital, while dysfunctional families contribute to its decline (Putnam, 2020:274).

## **3. Peer Relationship**

Peer relationship refers to the social connections individuals form with their

peers or friends. These relationships are significant for social capital because positive peer interactions teach trust, cooperation, and mutual support, which are essential in broader social networks (Putnam, 2020:295). Strong friendships can open up opportunities for involvement in community activities, leading to greater social engagement (Putnam, 2020:295). Conversely, negative peer relationships can lead to social withdrawal. In conclusion, healthy peer relationships are vital for building and expanding social capital, while harmful peer relationships contribute to its erosion (Putnam, 2020:296).

### **3.1.3.2 Types of Social Capital**

#### **1. Bonding Social Capital**

Bonding social capital refers to the strong connections within close-knit groups, like family, close friends, or people with shared identities (Putnam, 2020:22). This type of social capital provides a sense of emotional support, solidarity, and shared values, which help strengthen bonds within the group. However, while these strong ties are important for personal support, they can also lead to social exclusivity, where the group becomes isolated from others, limiting their exposure to broader networks (Putnam, 2020:22). In short, bonding social capital is key for building deep connections and offering mutual support (Putnam, 2020:22-23).

#### **2. Bridging Social Capital**

Bridging social capital refers to weaker connections that link people across different social and demographic groups (Putnam, 2020:23). These ties are essential

for the flow of information, as they create opportunities to access fresh resources and broaden social networks. Bridging ties help promote social mobility and create more inclusive communities where individuals can collaborate across differences (Putnam, 2020:23). By connecting people from diverse backgrounds, bridging social capital fosters cooperation, and understanding, which is crucial for building a healthy and integrated society (Putnam, 2020:23).

### **3.1.3.3 Impacts of Social Capital**

The presence or absence of social capital has measurable consequences on individual and societal levels:

#### **1. Economic Empowerment**

Social capital has a strong connection to economic empowerment. Individuals who have stable economic conditions are more likely to engage in civic and community activities, as they have the resources and time to invest in building social networks and taking part in collective efforts (Putnam, 2020:354). Financial stability enables people to contribute to social capital by supporting community initiatives and keeping meaningful social bonds. On the other hand, individuals facing financial difficulties often experience social withdrawal, as their limited resources make it harder for them to form or keep social connections. Therefore, a stable economic position supports the development and maintenance of social capital, while financial hardship can undermine it (Putnam, 2020:354).

#### **2. Psychological Growth**

Social capital plays a crucial role in psychological wellbeing. Strong, trust-

based relationships provide emotional support, increase resilience, and foster a sense of belonging (Putnam, 2020:354). People embedded in rich social networks often report higher levels of happiness, mental health, and civic responsibility (Putnam,2020:354-355). These social bonds create a foundation for both personal growth and community stability. A supportive social network helps individuals cope with stress and challenges, promoting overall psychological health. Therefore, social capital does not only enhance individual happiness but also contributes to social stability by fostering emotional well-being (Putnam, 2020:355).