

CHAPTER 2

INTRINSIC THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Narative Elements

While "*The Boys in the Boat*" is made as a cinematic work rather than traditional literature, Abrams narrative theory remains applicable because film functions as a visual form of storytelling that employs the same fundamental narrative elements as literary texts. Abrams states that narrative elements "constitute the basic units that, through construction, provide a meaning to the work being written, and thus are defined as the building blocks within storytelling" (Abrams, 1971:26), a principle that extends beyond written texts to include visual narratives like film, where plot, character, setting, theme, and point of view operate through cinematic techniques such as cinematography, dialogue, and mise-en-scène. Therefore, applying Abrams literary theory to film analysis provides a systematic method for examining how "*The Boys in the Boat*" constructs its narrative about class struggle, with each element from character development showing class positions to setting establishing Depression era material conditions working together to create the film's overall meaning about social inequality in American society.

2.1.1 Theme

As stated by Abrams, the elements of narrative constitute the basic units that, through construction, provide a meaning to the work being written, and thus are defined

as the building blocks within storytelling. (Abrams 1971:26) The elements of narrating would include plot, character, setting, theme, and point of view operating coherently in a related manner to create a proper structure of narration. These are essential arms in film analysis that enable one to understand how meanings are built and transmitted within the visual medium. As Abrams points out, neither of these elements is independent but interrelated with one another to constitute the entire artistic unity of the work. He asserts that the aspects of narration interact with each other in a system through which "each element conditions and is conditioned by all the others, combining in a complex dance of meaning and interpretation, allowing viewers to follow and understand the message being narrated" (Abrams, 1971:28).

2.1.3 Characters

As Abrams states, characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, interpreted by readers as possessing particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities that are expressed through their dialogue, actions, and descriptions (Abrams, 1999:32)

2.1.3 Conflict

As stated by Abrams, conflict is an essential element of a plot, which is defined as the relation of antagonism between the protagonist (the chief character) and the antagonist (the opposing force). This antagonism does not merely manifest as external struggles between individuals, but can also encompass a protagonist's battle

against nature, social forces, or even internal conflicts within the character's own mind. This dynamic tension is what drives the narrative forward, creating suspense and guiding the plot toward its climax and final resolution (Abrams, 1999:224).

2.1.4 Setting

As it has been stated by Abrams, setting "includes not only the particular physical locale in which the action happens, but also the social, historical and cultural background" (Abrams, "Setting" 284).

2.1.4.1 Setting of Time

Abrams defines temporal setting as the particular period or era when the events of the narrative occur. In his explanation, the time of the setting includes not only the direct chronological situation of the events but also the historical environment that influences and affects the characters' actions, ethics, and conditions (Abrams, 1999:285).

2.1.4.2 Setting of Place

Abrams underscores that physical settings can function literally and symbolically; besides being a backdrop for action, they may be used to contribute to mood, atmosphere, and thematic weight of the narrative (Abrams, 1999:193).

2.1.4.3 Setting of Social Background

As Abrams argues, this aspect of setting is integral for any understanding of how characters are shaped by and respond to their social environment, for it constitutes the "moral and social framework within which characters must operate" (Abrams, 1999: 286).

2.1.5 Plot

According to Abrams, plot is not just a succession of events but the arrangement of actions, including what happens to the characters, in an order that constitutes a meaningful pattern or design in a work (Abrams, 1971:224). In both literary and film analysis, plot refers to the cautious arrangement of events in which every incident is casually linked to develop a coherent and meaningful whole. Abrams insists that a plot differs from a simple story in its emphasis on causality and the psychological, social or moral consequences of the characters' actions rather than simple chronological sequence (Abrams, 1999:137).

2.2 Cinematography

According to Heiderich, cinematography is the complex art of telling with images, much more than just putting a camera on a tripod and recording. The true artistry lies in how the filmmaker can manipulate what the audience perceives-or chooses to ignore-and in the nuanced presentation of images. As a basically visual medium, the best films of cinema can translate narrative and emotion so easily that viewers can understand

exactly what is happening without there being any spoken dialogue at all (Heiderich, 2012:3)

2.2.1 Camera Distance (Shots)

The camera is the surrogate for your audience and determines how your audience feels about what's happening in the scene. The way the camera interacts with the environment it captures determines how an audience member sees and feels about what they are viewing (Heiderich, 2012:6). Consider what you want to feel: Are you trying to create confusion or alienation? Should the tone of the story feel peaceful, volatile, or stagnant? Will you feature sweeping vistas or focus in on minute details? All these different types of shots convey different tones, and answering these questions will be important in determining which type of shots to use (Heiderich, 2012:6).

2.2.1.1 Close-Up Shot

More intimate than a medium shot, this framing allows viewers to better see an actor's facial expressions and emotions, developing a more direct and personal attachment to the character (Heiderich, 2012:8).

2.2.1.2 Extreme Close-Up Shot

To enhance emotional power, an extreme close-up puts the camera right in front of the actor's face to magnify even the smallest ripple of emotions and increase the intensity of what's brewing beneath the surface (Heiderich, 2012:9).

2.2.1.3 Medium Shot

The medium shot is the first that creates a personal relationship with the characters. It gives the distance one would maintain in a casual conversation, enabling the viewer to be more personal with the characters (Heiderich, 2012:8).

2.2.1.4 Medium-Long Shot

The medium shot falls between the long and close shots. It is more informative rather than emotive. It is too close to capture the grandeur of a long shot yet too distant to create the intimacy of a close-up, resulting in an emotionally neutral perspective (Heiderich, 2012:8).

2.2.1.5 Long Shot

The distance of the camera from its subject also reflects emotional distance; the audience is less likely to be emotionally involved in what is happening when they are further away from the action than when the camera is closer (Heiderich, 2012:7).

2.2.1.6 Extreme-Long Shot

Commonly used to show subjects of major size, the extreme long shot presents a mountain climber as a minute figure in a vast snowy expanse. This angle identifies the character as quite minor in their overwhelming surroundings (Heiderich, 2012:7)



Picture 2.1 Close-Up Shot (Heiderich, 2012:8)



Picture 2.2 Extreme Close-Up Shot (Heiderich, 2012:9)



Picture 2.3 Medium-Long Shot (Heiderich, 2012:8).



Picture 2.4 Long Shot (Heiderich, 2012:7).



Picture 2.5 Extreme Long Shot (Heiderich, 2012:7).

2.2.2 Mise-en-Scène

Mise-en-scène is a French term meaning "putting in the scene," and it refers to the way a director controls everything that is seen within the frame of a film (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). According to Bordwell and Thompson (2013, p. 115), mise-en-scène covers four main elements: the setting, costumes and makeup, lighting,

and the staging of actors. Directors use these elements as a tool to create a sense of realism in their films, whether by making the setting look authentic or by allowing actors to perform in a natural and believable way (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 113).

2.2.2 Sound

Sound in cinema plays a vital role in film language, influencing both narrative comprehension and emotional reactions. According to Bordwell and Thompson, sound fulfills various functions in films: it establishes mood, conveys information, directs focus, and amplifies emotional resonance (Bordwell, 2016:301).

