CHAPTER ONE
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

The Nigerian film culture, which is of a foreign origin could have started "from 1903, when the very first movie exhibition took place in Nigeria," (Ekwuazi 1987:70) at the Glover Memorial Hall, Lagos. (Oklobia 2007:74) However, it was not given a legal backing until in 1912 when:

> Government attempt at the control of the industry, in fact, predated its involvement in actual production, distribution, and exhibition. The first legislation involving the industry was in 1912, with the "The Theatre and Public Performance Regulation Ordinance, 1912". (Ekwuazi, 1987:4)

The Nigerian film culture had gone through many stages and "there have been remarkable achievement and periods of lull, inactivity, and lack of direction."(Oklobia, 2007:73-74). The first "three crucial socio-economic stages" are the Colonial / Pre-Independence period (i.e. 1900-1960); the Post Independence period (1961-1971); and the Post Indigenisation Decree period (1972-1987) (Ekwuazi, 1987). The current and last stage which is the Post Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) period could be termed as the Video film production era (1988-till date).

In all these stages, the Yoruba films have played the lead role in the evolution of the Nigerian film industry. For instance, in Ekwuazi's (1987) catalogue of indigenous feature films, out of the 55 celluloid/ feature films produced in the country between 1962 and 1987, 21 films were produced in

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Yoruba language; while more than 10 other films produced in English language were by Yoruba filmmakers.

Identified problems in Nigerian films

Over the years, scholars such as Enemaku (2003), Ekwuazi (2007), Ogunleye (2008), and others have identified tenable ethical and technical shortcomings in Nigerian film culture using established theoretical models. In his study, Enemaku (2003) sets out to examine the ethical foundation of the film industry; to know if such foundations are strong enough to sustain an ethically sound superstructure and to detect what can be done to address problem areas in the ethical foundation of the Nigerian video film.

Although the propositions in Enemaku's (2003) study could be applied to narrative structure and plotting system, one could see that his study fails to demonstrate in practical term how filmmakers can technically implement his proposed moral template in film scripting or narrative structure. Therefore, there is a need for another study that will address ways in which filmmaker/critic could improve on technical areas such as narrative structure.

Ekwuazi (2007) identifies five structural stresses in Nollywood which are: 1) the activities of carpet baggers – the video club operators and the producer/marketers, who operate in the crudest and most unprofessional manner imaginable; 2) sterile creative practices where plotting deficiency/structural

laxity, poor manipulation of mise-en-scene and videography are identified as parts of inadequacies of the Nigerian films; 3) that 85% of the films released are by debutants, while only 15% are produced by the old timers; 4) that television houses had not contributed effectively to the growth of the film in Nigeria and 5) "that there is a lack of cordial and creative collaboration between the industry and members of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA). Even though each of these stresses is a valuable area of further research on Nigerian film industry, this study ruminates on all but only addresses one aspect, which is the fifth identified challenge.

Proffering solution to this fifth structural stress, Ekwuazi (2007) advocates collaboration between the video film industry and the members of ANA, while the first four structural stresses identified in his study are left still begging for solutions. Specifically, his study does not cover the technical areas of narrative structure or show how to eradicate the tendency to shoot the whole of an action, rather than using a part of the action to represent the whole (i.e. revealing unnecessary detail, and wasting time on irrelevant aspect that could be cut off). Consequently, this study examines ways in which causality, time and space are designed and managed within a film system

Having identified some shortcomings in the industry, which are mostly in line with Ekwuazi's identified stresses, Ogunleye (2008) agrees that some of these stereotypes associated with the Nigerian video film, are true of some

movies, but certainly not in all movies produced in the country. She states that despite the acknowledged stereotypes, the video films "…evolved from the grassroots, utilizing traditional and cultural materials and due to its transient nature, the medium had overcome poverty and other unfavourable economic policies, ethnic, or geographical boundaries." For this reason, Ogunleye (2008) concludes that, "The measure of expertise and professional attention expended on a script would ultimately determine the quality of film produced."

Looking critically at Ogunleye's position, one could see that her assumption on how to improve the quality of films in the country is ambiguous because what constitutes her "measure of expertise and professional attention" is not explicit enough. Thus, one could easily think that she is referring to the quality of skills invested on the composition of the narrative structure and other components of the film.

From the foregoing, a research gap which the current study seeks to bridge is based on the need for a critical and practical evaluative method which could be deployed in analysing the visual narrative structure of Nigerian films. Therefore, the deployment of formalist principles as analytical technique to the works of a particular film director is a challenge resolved in this study.

Statement of the problem

Tunde Kelani's films have attracted critical attention from various disciplinary standpoints, specifically in the areas of content description, thematic preoccupation and production quality. However, little attention is paid to his narrative style, even though visual narrative is one of the key perspectives in film appreciation. This study therefore, attempts a structural analysis of Tunde Kelani's films with a view to determining his visual narrative style.

Consequently, Bordwell and Thompson's formalist theory, which is concerned with form as an internal system governing the relations among filmic elements, is adopted to critique two of Tunde Kelani's films, namely "MaaMi" and "Abeni". Four formalist principles on visual narrative (opening and closing, story and plot, causality and character identification) are utilised in analysing the films.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to apply four formalist principles in conducting a structural analysis on two of Tunde Kelani's films with a view to determining his visual narrative style. Consequently, the study discusses and demonstrates in practical terms how the formalist principles (opening and closing, story and plot, causality and character identification) on visual narrative are used by analysing and evaluating two films: "MaaMi" and "Àbèní" films.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the four formalist principles as analytical tools in film appreciation,

2. Conduct a structural analysis on two of Tunde Kelani films and identify his visual narrative style.

Research questions

The following research questions are set to guide the study.

i.) Can the application of formalist principles present an objective way of analysing visual narrative structures of Tunde Kelani's films?

ii.) How can the four formalist principles on visual narrative (opening and closing, story and plot, causality and character identification) be used effectively in dissecting the dynamics of Tunde Kelani's style in film productions?

Significance of the study

The work is expected to enrich the knowledge of film critics and scholars who come across it with the introduction of a full scale application of the formalist approach to Nigerian films analysis, evaluation and criticism.

Moreover, the study is would serve as an eye opener to awaken fresh hunger for research students with special interest in understanding Tunde Kelani's films.

It is also believed that whenever the structural analysis carried out in this work is replicated in the analyses of other Nigerian films or applied in the process of any screen script writing, the quality of film analysis and evaluation as well as filmmaking in the country would be enhanced.

This research would equally add to the existing body of knowledge on Nigerian film analysis, evaluation and criticism. The study would serve as a launching pad for further researches on the application of the formalist theory in investigating/dissecting other areas of Nigerian films.

Scope of the study

Due to the peculiar interest in visual narrative and structural techniques, the work examines the unique nature of Yoruba films and deploys selected principles of the formalist theory in carrying out a structural analysis and evaluation of two of Tunde Kelani's films.

Methodology
Interview methods

Selected Nigerian film practitioners are interviewed in the course of writing this study. Those interviewed include Tunde Kelani, Yemi Omodu, Prince Jide Kosoko, and Abiodun Olanrewaju.

Library study approach

The library study is used in this dissertation as another source of information. This method is based on in-depth study, consultation and analysis of relevant literatures and internet materials. Through this method, the researcher examines different works carried out by other researchers on Nigerian film theories, evaluations and practices. Film textbooks, doctorate theses, articles in journals and other relevant books are reviewed.

Studio work approach

The research adopts the studio analytical work approach based on Bordwell and Thompson's formalist principles of narrative structure. In this case, relevant shots/frames from the selected films are identified and selected with the aid of editing machine for necessary diagnosis and evaluation.

From all indications, the use of any laboratory/clinical diagnosis or studio analytical method in a research work is often complemented with sampling the method. Consequently, in carrying out the studio experiments cum video film

editing diagnosis in this study, a non-probability sampling technique is employed. The selection process employed does not follow a random collection technique; rather it is based on specimen accessibility and the purposive personal judgement of the researcher.

The dissertation uses some Yoruba films with rich information that can provide the researcher with the required data for the study. The selected films are in two categories of primary and secondary sources of reference. The primary references are used for practical demonstration. In this case, the two films used provide a great deal of data on the principles of narrative structure. The secondary sources of reference comprise other Yoruba and non Yoruba films. These complementary films are used to supply information which might not be got from the two primary specimens.

Non-probability sampling method

A non-probability sampling method is utilised in selecting accessible specimens of Yoruba films that provide the required information for the study. Two of Tunde Kelani's films are specifically used as samples in film analysis/practical demonstration. These films are "MaaMi" (2013) and "Àbẹ̀ní" (2006).

Definitions of Terms

The word anatomy (*ah-nat'o-me*) according to David Shier, Jackie Butter and Ricki Lewis (2002) deals with the structures (morphology) of body parts – it deals with the various forms of the human parts and how they are arranged. According to Marjorie Boulton (1955-1982), the term is adopted specifically to identify structural components of the various studies she carried out on prose, novel, poetry, drama, language and literary studies.

Anatomy – The term "anatomy" is used in reporting the diagnostic exercise carried out on the structures and the functions of visual components (i.e. narrative structure and mise-en-scene) within the overall system of a narrative film.

A Tight production – This is used to denote an almost flawless film.

A narrative film/story "hole" – This is used to capture any identified flaw or any illogical element in a narrative. This is an unwanted element in a story that is not by the conscious design of the scriptwriter or the director.

Form – The term form is considered as a unifying principle of design or as a holistic structure. The approach in this study considers form not only as a "container" of the film "contents", but as a system that comprises both the container and the content, as an inbuilt system that governs relationships among the various elements of a film and as a mechanism that controls the various levels of viewer's involvement.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The chapter presents critical review of literature germane to the study. The review centres on Nigerian films, the formalist theory as theoretical framework and the selected principles David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's formalist theory as analytic models for the study. Dennis Duro Aiyejina's supernatural theory on African drama, the concepts of linear and nonlinear plot structures and supernatural elements in films are considered as complementary theories. In establishing narrative theories, the works of Vladimir Propp, the "Roles or Spheres of Action Theory", Tzvetan Todorov, " Equilibrium Theory" and Claude Levi-Strauss' "Binary Oppositions Theory" are equally reviewed. The chapter is rounded off with a proposed template of form for African films and a full discussion on the selected principles of narrative structure.

Nigerian films in the contemporary discourse

From all indications, the advent of video film technology/productions in the Nigerian film industry had generated many interests from directors, social researchers, film scholars and critics. The efforts of Nigerian filmmakers in using video technology in the production of films had equally captured the

interests of foreign scholars and journalists. Right from the 1980s till date, each of these interest groups is busy digging into the history, the natures cum the characteristics or the aesthetics of the Nigerian film industry, which is also known as *the Nollywood* phenomenon.

According to Ogunleye (2008:1):

> The development of the video film represents the rise of Nigeria's 'filmic literary realism' and the spread of a new approach to filmmaking, which must not be dismissed or relegated to the periphery of the cultural enterprise. The video film has a lot of critics... Traditional filmmakers who were using the celluloid medium cried out bitterly against the advent of the video film. I remember pointing out to them then that... This [video film] was a pointer to the future of the Nigerian film.

Despite Ogunleye's views, other scholars have emphasised the negative attributes of this medium and the shortcomings of the productions done with video film technology while fewer critics underscores the strength and the prospects of this emerging means of creative expression.

Consequently, the contemporary discourse on the Nigerian home video film could be perceived from two perspectives. The first perspective could be deduced from Ogunleye's comment, and this perspective is represented by the scholars and pioneering film practitioners who advocated the return to celluloid film production. The second view is that of the stakeholders who believe that the production on the video medium has come to stay and despite its shortcomings, it should be given all the necessary supports for its survival. This

school of thought calls for a drastic upgrade of the systemic structures in Nollywood. In other words, it suggests a change from unethical practices to credible practices within the industry; a change from the production contents that directly or indirectly encourage and glorify social vices to productions that promote social values and entrench patriotisms. Finally, this school calls for an industry where quality productions, good moral standard, improved story structures and better technical compositions will be entrenched.

The calls for the return to celluloid film production are championed by the first generation of filmmakers such as Ola Balogun and Eddie Ugbomah. These pioneering filmmakers in the country see the video production as a cheap form of the arts; and not sufficiently adequate for a national film industry. Specifically, Eddie Ugbomah (2004:29) does not believe that video film production as could constitute the nucleus of a viable film industry, even though video production is the mainstay of the Nigerian entertainment industry. Ugbomah believed that the abnormal state of the industry is due to government's negligence and insensitivity to the values and the power of the film medium. In his submission, Ugbomah (2004:29) postulates that:

> It's a shame that the biggest industry in the world does not exist in Nigeria. I am talking about the film industry. And I will blame the government right from 1960 to 1999 that they have not known the value, the power of the film industry in the nation. I am challenging the Film Corporation and Nigerians that we should prepare in the

next 18 month[s] for 3 movies to hit Ouagadougou. For
God's sake it is an embarrassment, the giant of Africa…

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the reactions of Ugbomah and others who have similar view are not restricted to the mere expression of their opinions in writings but they equally engaged in powerful lobby of the various authorities that have to do with the Nigerian film industry. While gathering articles for her book – *The African Video Film*, Ogunleye (2008:1) sent out a call for papers through the Managing Director of the Nigerian Film Corporation who released it to the media. But "immediately, a negative reaction came from one of the popular cinematographers in Nigeria, accusing him [Managing Director] of flirting with a substandard art form, instead of midwifing the rebirth of the celluloid film in Nigeria."

It would have been better if the Nigerian film industry was based on celluloid film format and the country could afford the technological wherewithal or the practitioners could accommodate/afford the huge financial requirement. However, it could be said that, cinematographers who are calling for the rebirth of the celluloid film production format are not in touch with the reality of the current economic condition of the nation. None of these film pioneers could afford to embark on any celluloid film production as it used to be in the past.

As far as the film history is concerned, one could see that the first unpalatable economic factor which was the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was responsible for the state the celluloid filmmaking process in the

country found itself. Yet, the lingering unpalatable economic condition is still making the return of the celluloid film production virtually impossible.

The second perception on the Nigerian film industry is that which requests a drastic change from a system that is polluted with unethical/unholy practices and substandard productions to a more creative and qualitative production. The stakeholders here include Hyginus Ekwuazi, Foluke Ogunleye, Akinwumi Isola, Duro Oni and Kayode Animasaun. These scholars maintain that the video production system has come to stay but that the industry needs a general overhaul. According to these scholars, a system which is full of unethical practices should undergo a therapeutic change for the better. Hence, a valuable standard should be entrenched into this system to meet ideal national and international expectations.

In his essays on "Nigerian Literature and the Development of the Nigerian Film Industry", Ekwuazi (2007) makes a distinction between literature and film, even though both are media of narrative, which is sourced inevitably from the universe of the human mind and the vast dimensions of human life. He also acknowledges the fact that both are collaborators in performing the following social functions:

> Interrogating governance and citizenship/the polity and the dialectics of social contract; Encoding debates on institutional orders and the apparatus of domination; and Scripting social positions for the viewer/reader.

Quoting Schieffelin (1985), Ekwuazi concurs that literature, like film, can be used as "a medium for dictating the views and prescriptions of the dominant class; legitimising the system and controlling people's participation in it; shifting the blame for poverty from the oppressive structures to the "self-impoverishing" poor, and anesthetising people so that they participate uncritically in reproducing the apparatus of domination…." He explains further that literature, like film:

> ...can equally be moved to that other end of the social engagement spectrum, where it can be used as part of a social transformation process in which the oppressed express their problems and grievances, deepen their understanding of exploitative social structures, and build confidence, class consciousness and power through organizing and struggling against oppression.

Having given a historical insight on the Nigerian film industry, Ekwuazi (2007) highlights the pressing problems in the film industry under five structural stresses, some of which reaffirms Enemaku's identified ethical breaches.

The first stress is embodied in the activities of carpet bagger – the video club operators and the producer/marketers who operate in the crudest and most unprofessional manner imaginable. In most cases, they determine the story, the talents, the crew and even the production values. Thus, the industry is plundered for the most sterile story themes and endlessly recycled for the sake of crass commercialism.

On the second structural stress, Ekwuazi (2007) observes the existence of other sterile creative practices where every "successful home video on screen" is like an exercise in the repetition of old mistakes and or the compounding of old

mistakes with new ones. He enumerates ten common pitfalls that he feels are undesirable to artistic expression in the Nigerian film industry, but an eight point highlight of these problems that are germane to this study will be succinctly itemised:

- The excessive display of bloodletting through murder and ritual killing, violence, sex, witchcraft, occultism, all woven into a long plot…;
- The tendency to shoot the *whole* of an action, rather than using a part of the action to represent the whole…/The frequent occurrence of chaotic sequencing of shots arising from poor editing;
- The avoidance of the use of the re-establishing shot, arising from lack of awareness of its value;
- The tendency to emphasize the two-dimensionality of the screen by failing to shoot at an angle of 45 degrees to subject;
- Camera movement usually has no bearing on the logic of the story;
- The tendency to treat the story as being more important than the technique, resulting in the lack of artistic use of sound and no attempt to structure the lighting field;
- Mode of transition is not often determined by the story construction and
- Obvious lack of suspense and the glaring absence to the use of reaction close –up or cut in shots.

Even though Ekwuazi's position on these structural stresses are valuable ingredients for further study on the challenges of the Nigerian film industry, his study has only succeeded in addressing one aspect of a five-point structural stress, that is, giving a way out on his fifth structural stress where he indicates lack of creative collaboration between the industry and members of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), while the first four structural stresses identified in his study are still begging for solution.

In her introduction to *Africa through the Eye of the Video Camera*, Ogunleye (2008) unequivocally affirms her faith in the development of video film production, which represents a new approach to film-making in the country and this, she opines, should not be relegated to the background. Even though the video film has a lot of critics, she insists that, "Like it or hate it, the video format is here to stay. It is the most realistic format for filmmakers in Nigeria and other parts of the world today." (2008:1) She supports her argument with a fact credited to Tunde Kelani (2007) that, "...technological development continues to make available high quality of digital equipment, which provides the opportunity for superior production quality. The choice then left to filmmakers is either to 'make film' or 'make excuses.'"

Ogunleye (2008:1) equally posits that video productions, as they are currently practised, can be described as "...cultural memorabilia which parade the cultures of the environment from which they take life. For instance, Nigeria celebrates its cultural pluralism through the films by utilising materials from Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and other diverse cultures in braiding the films." From her submissions, one could see that she does not only corroborate the assertions of Ekwuazi (2007), but also captures the popular impressions of viewers of Nigerian video films. Even though Ogunleye (2009) agrees that some of the identified stereotypes that have become associated with the Nigerian video film are true of some of the movies, they are certainly not for all of them.

Looking critically at Ogunleye's (2008) proposition, one could see that her assumption on how to improve the quality of films in the country is ambiguous. What constitutes her "measure of expertise and professional attention" is not explicit enough. Meanwhile, if one should consider this submission on a positive note, one could easily think that she is referring to the quality of time injected into the writing of film scripts and other preproduction activities, the quality of equipment used in a given production, and advanced knowledge on the film system.

Oni (2008) in his study entitled "Context and Nature of Contemporary Nigerian (Nollywood) Film Industry", examines at issues in the development of the home video film industry by tracing the major landmarks, investigating the recent trends in the financing and assessing the impact of the new funding on the filmmaking and the distribution in Nigeria. Examining the perceived low quality in the high number of the film produced in the country, Oni (2008) acknowledges the fact that this issue had been taken up and addressed at another level. For instance, due to financial backing granted to the producers of the *Amazing Grace* (2005) sponsored by the Cross River State government and Amstel Malta sponsored *Sitanda* financed by the

With this study, Oni (2008) proves beyond any doubt that what some filmmakers feel is responsible for the recent advancement in the quality of the video films are due to adequate funding and availability of digital technology.

However, his model on ways of maintaining quality or improving standard in the industry could be seen as a reportorial proclamation. From all perspectives, his study only acknowledges the achievements so far recorded in the industry without concrete suggestion on how the reported achievements could be replicated by other producers.

Isola (2008), a renowned Yoruba playwright/scriptwriter, in a paper entitle "In Whose Image?" observes that movie is a cultural weapon "…and that in our films, we should not give the impression that we are behaving 'to type' i.e. 'the white man's black image type'." According to Isola, the function of literature (narrative) that provides the bank of images as guide for acceptable behaviour is an important part of our intangible cultural heritage.

He further postulates that, "without intangible development, there can be no sustainable development." Even though there is the tendency to define and measure development in terms of material things, the truth is that these material goals cannot be sustained by material means alone. To make these material goals socially sustainable, the people require not only knowledge, skill and vision, but also those humane qualities that constitute the intangible aspects of development – honesty, dignity, hard work and so on, otherwise, as a Yoruba proverb says, a child that is not brought up morally will sell the house built by the parents.

Consequently, Isola (2008) concurs that these identified values (i.e. justice, gratitude, honesty, loyalty, truthfulness, tolerance, hard work, cooperation, generosity, kindness, fidelity to one's duty, friend, relative, spouse, dignity and hope, etc.) should be consciously and meticulously infused into the character of individuals that make up the screen family before a favourable dividend is reflective on the larger society.

According to Isola (2008), many African leaders without characters believe "they can import globalised idea of legal monitoring of behaviour from the World Bank or the IMF, forgetting that ideas about dignity, hope, honesty and so on do not appear in generic universal forms. Different people articulate them in terms of highly specific idioms of value, meaning, and belief." Identifying observed anomalies in the Nigerian film industry, Isola (2008:12) points out that:

> ...many filmmakers seem not to care about the necessity to struggle against the economic, cultural and psychological exploitation of Africa by the west in conjunction with the oppressors at home. An objective look at the type of stories we tell [the method of telling them] the language we use, the appearance of the characters – costume, hair-do, and make – up tends to indicate that many filmmakers are mindless copycats and shameless imitators.

In addition to these anomalies, Isola (2008) avers that the name given to the film industry and the language used on screen leave much to be desired. Proffering solution to these irregularities, he, therefore, postulates that filmmakers should be radical in the defence of a sustainable, humane society, by

defending the oppressed and the exploited. In his words, "I want you to prove that what white supremacists are saying about the black man is mean and malicious, wicked, false, and defamatory." Isola (2008)

Moreover, Isola (2008) maintains that the name given to the industry should have emanated from a local significant source that has meaning to Nigerians. He is of the view that the screenwriter in the industry should stick to a language (preferably an indigenous language) in the process of scripting a movie/screen drama instead of using the hybrid language that does more damage than good to each of the languages mixed on screen.

From all indications, Isola's proposed solution on the identified shortcomings only addresses the language used, the need to invoke and propagate intangible values in film themes; however, the issues raised on the elements of visual composition/mise-en-scene (appearance of the characters – costume, hair-do, and make–up; location/set, lighting, etc.) have not been adequately addressed. Thus, there is a need for a study that would analyse how each of these visual elements could be structured in order to improve the quality of composition in films emanating from the country.

After a critical analysis of the available literatures on Nigerian movie and available theories on film, and in response to the call for an indigenous evaluative system which could be used in reading, decoding and evaluating Nigerian films, Animasaun (2011) proposes a theory known as "The

Normative Self-Regulative Approach (NoSRA)" in his theoretical study. The intention of his study is to postulate an indigenous theory for Nigerian movies, which would serve as a departure from the Eurocentric and product-centred approaches of Lacanian, Freudian and Hay theories he has examined. The NoSRA theory is designed for film packaging and film evaluation. Hence, his preposition is of the view that a critic should not venture into film criticism only from the producers' point of view, but should equally consider the artiste's angles as well as the audience's perception on film evaluation and criticism. According to Animasaun (2011:82):

> ...all those involved in movie production are expected to be sensitive to the socio-cultural demands of the movie. And, it should be audience-cultural centred and not producer centred, as is the case in most movies. To this end, the movie artistes more than the producer is expected to continuously regulate himself consciously through guidance of in-built questions, ask himself if he is operating within the norm of the people for which the movies is being produced.

From his study, one is able to see that Animasaun (2011) views films as having a projective nature which filmmakers (producer, scriptwriter, director, artiste, etc.) should deploy in archetypifying cultural and moral values. Consequently, it is clear that his theory centres on culture and moral preservation and promotional role of the filmmaker towards the audience:

> ...our thought of ourselves, images or reflections of us, are a selection and composite representation of our cultural biographies of ourselves to the future. And that these

determine how we are read by other people. Therefore, the artiste should consider both himself and the movie as possessing the tendencies to affect the audience one way or the other. (Animasaun, 2011:82)

In addition, NoSRA theory proposes that the producer, as far as the audiences are concerned, is not a visible entity but a title. Rather, the artiste is a visible and feasible character that carries out the producer's behind-the screen directives. Thus, the artiste rather than the producer usually receives both the glory and the blame of any production. According to the NoSRA theory:

> ...the artiste should be one that is emotionally stable and psychologically natural to continuously regulate himself/herself. He/she should be able and free to discuss scenes or actions of cultural or moral abnormality sensibly with the producer towards maintaining the norm of the society on which the script he/she is interpreting is based. (Animasaun, 2011:83)

Designing an evaluative coding format for his NoSRA theory, Animasaun (2011:86) comes up with the following indicators for his coding format:

> Where the artiste is seen as Theoryling the society negatively, the term "dis" as in disaffective is used to describe the opinion. But if it is good or positive it is described as affective. This coding is designed because the artistes are, as members of the society in their acting are creating indelible imprints in the minds of the audience. These stamps can either be emulated for good or emulated to the detriment of the society. Where it falls outside the norm, it is perceived as disaffective and so it is regarded as not worth imitating.

The core focus of Animasaun's NoSRA theory on Gaze setting and analysis for Nigerian movies is a positive attempt at developing a homemade evaluative yardstick for Nigerian films.

In content, this theory is more tilts towards the deployment of movies for the preservation of cultural norms and analysing the presence or the lack intangible moral values in movies. The NoSRA model could be seen as a good attempt in propounding indigenous theory in Nigerian film criticism. Although the theory could be said to have focused on two areas (film design – packaging and film reading), yet it would not be wrong to observe that in the application, this theory is basically concerned with the evaluation of the presence or lack of cultural values/norms in movies, while it is completely silent on the structural design of movies. Consequently, there is a need for another evaluative system that could deal with the evaluation of other specific areas such as the visual narrative structure or mise-en-scene management in indigenous film production, which could still be used in film review, analysis, and criticism.

In summary, one could see that in proposing solutions to the challenges in the Nigerian film industry, Ekwuazi (2007) recommends a cordial relationship and effective collaborations between Nollywood practitioners and members of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA). Ogunleye, on her part, prefers that

practitioners should evolve from the grassroots, utilising traditional and cultural materials in their productions, while Oni suggests that a cordial financial relationship/corporate sponsorship should exist between the industry and the outside world (corporate organisation/governmental agencies); and that there should be self-control / effective guild system in Nollywood. On his part, Isola proposes an improved use of language, good themes and proper use of the elements of mise-en-scene, especially in the areas of characterisation – costume, hair-do, and make–up; location - set, and lighting, etc.

As it could be observed, most of these propositions do not demonstrate enough in practical term methods of implementation and assessment. This study is, therefore, an attempt to explore new frontiers in scholarship by using the formalist theory in assessing and improving the issue of quality in Nigerian film productions. Specifically, in this current effort, attention will be focused on the narrative structure/content and the mise-en-scene system.

Theoretical framework

The formalist theory serves as a basic tool of investigation for this study because it has a rich record of principles on film analysis and it is capable of absorbing other theories/analytical models.

In giving an overview on the use of the formalist theory in film evaluation and criticism, the Writing Center of the University of Colorado in its online publication on "How to Write About Film…", states that:

> Formalism looks specifically at matters of structure and style; often combined with one or more of the other approaches; strict formal analysis only looks at what happens on screen, ignoring all outside factors, such as the biography of the director, the historical context, etc. (Retrieved June 3, 2013)

From the foregoing, it is observed that a formalist often seeks to know what is most interesting and significant about the elements of a film system featured in a given production and how they add to the story and themes. In looking at a particular scene or sequence, he often searches for the roles and impacts of lighting, sound, editing, or cinematography in contributing to the meaning derived from the film.

In applying formal elements to film criticism and evaluation, the available publications suggest further that a critic or researcher could venture into film assessment through the genre, historical, theoretical, national cinema, auteur, and ideological perspectives.

The Writing Center of the University of Colorado in one of its publications suggests that the researcher should undertake the following summarised mix:

> Looks at the common patterns of form (lighting, editing, cinematography, mise-en-scène, etc.) and content (narrative, characterization, themes, etc.) to determine how a film conforms or diverges from a genre category.

Secondly, researcher must keep in mind the film's historical moment because genre changes over time thus one needs to find out common structures, themes, and techniques that are associated with a particular genre, finds out when a particular genre first appear and why, then one could examine if a particular genre does conform to expectations or not, and if not one needs to provide the answer.(Retrieved June 3, 2013)

In applying the historical approach to a film study, it is stated that the researcher should be able to situate and investigate the unique historical moment of the content of a given film and its period of production/release while attempting to provide answers to the following questions:

- Am I concerned with how historical events are depicted in this film?
- Does knowing the historical background help explain the narrative or technique?
- Will my argument clarify the film's place in history? Some examples include:
  - Researching the effects of film technology's evolution (i.e., the rise of Technicolor)
  - Comparing the subject matter of certain films to their unique historical moment (i.e., film noir's dark narratives are the result of WWI and WWII anxieties)
  - Documenting the reception of a film by a particular audience

Furthermore, historical/theoretical approaches generally require the critic to have a good understanding of film history, film theory, or film technicalities. Typically, such an investigation could explain some of the larger and more complex structures of the cinema and how we understand or fail to understand them. In applying historical/theoretical approaches, analysis can focus on one or be a mix of national cinema, auteur or ideological approach.

In studying films through the national cinema approach, the critic often looks at a film by taking into account each country's unique way of portraying the world, exploring the cultural conditions that produce some unique effects by asking himself the following questions: 1. What exactly distinguishes these films from the American, Indian or Chinese films? 2. How do meanings change when a film is seen outside of its culture? and 3. What kind of cultural research might lead the researcher into a deeper understanding of the themes?

Using the auteur theory, the researcher looks at how directors or other dominant figures, such as producers or actors use pervasive themes and/or styles in their body of works, even though it is a known fact that a director rarely has total control, and the term *auteur* has changed over time. According to the University of Colorado Writing Center, "…the *auteur* theory of the 1960s applied to the work of Alfred Hitchcock differs drastically from the theory now applied to that of David Lynch."

Fundamentally, a researcher using the auteur theory approach would need to provide answers to the following questions: (i) How do the historical conditions of the film production encourage or discourage the unity of the auteur's work? and (ii) What are the most distinctive indicators of the auteur's control over the film?

In using an ideological/political approach, the aforementioned centre postulates that the researcher is bound to ruminate on the underlying message(s)

the film is conveying about society, culture, gender, etc. Furthermore, this category can be broken down into these schools of thought:

- ☐ Hollywood [/Nollywood] Hegemony: how classical film formulas dominate and distort ways of seeing the world
- ☐ Feminist Studies: how women have been positively / negatively represented both in front of and behind the camera
- ☐ Race Studies: how different races have been positively or negatively represented in front of and behind the camera
- ☐ Class Studies: how social and economic arrangements surrounding and represented in film reflect and influence the distribution of social power
- ☐ Postcolonial Studies: from a global perspective, how the repression and subsequent reemergence of indigenous cultures is revealed through and represented in film
- ☐ Queer Theory: how normative gender relations can be challenged or disrupted through film

As the Writing Center of the University of Colorado observes in "How to Write About Film…" it could also be postulated that none of these six critical approaches to film analysis/study could appear in isolation. In most cases, critics often mix them. For example, a writer could consider Tunde Kelani's *Kosegbe* from an *auteurist* perspective by analysing how it does or does not conform with the rest of Kelani's works/oeuvre. He could then examine the film's recurring formalist elements that contribute to the psychological state of the main character; and finally hypothesise about how the historical context of corruption/corrupt practices in government influence the film's content.

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's formalist theory

According to Bordwell and Thompson (2004:48), "The human mind craves for form. For this reason, form is of central importance in any art-work,

regardless of its medium." It is observed that a film is not simply a random batch of elements, but like other art works, form, in film, is an internal system governing the relations among elements. These scholars maintain that form, in its broadest sense, is the overall system of relations that critics or viewers perceive among the various elements in the whole film.

Over the years, Bordwell and Thompson's formalist approach to film study has been termed *neoformalism*. It is on record that neoformalist approach to film study is based on observations first made by the literary theorists known as the "Russian Formalists." The Russian formalist school posits that there is a distinction between a film's *perceptual* and *semiotic properties* (and that film theorists have generally overstated the role of textual codes in one's comprehension of such basic elements as diegesis and closure).
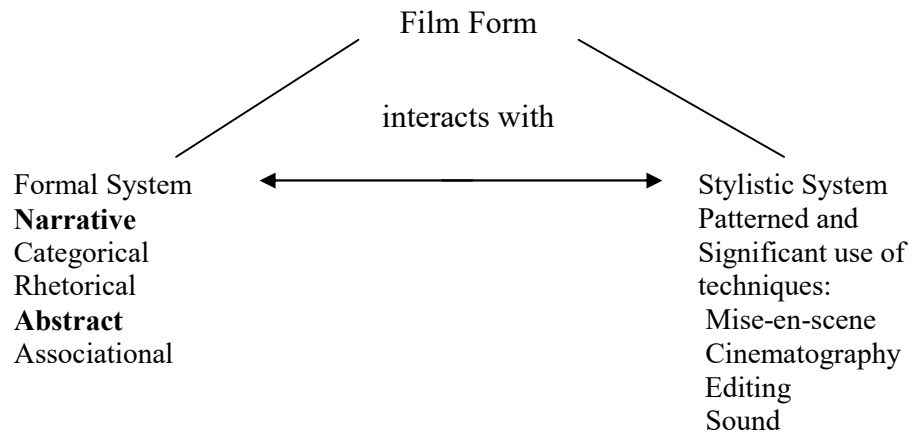
Though Bordwell and Thompson's theory is regarded as "neoformalism" in some quarters, however, due to its specific application in this study it will be referred and regarded as "formalism/formalist theory."

Bordwell and Thompson's formalism theory is chosen for a number of reasons. To start with, this theoretical model is comprehensive and it uses a precisely defined vocabulary. The model has extensive consideration on the strategic components of narrative structure and mise-en-scene; and its

methodology provides a means of capitalising on available data and accommodates data gathering constraints.

Secondly, this theoretical "lens" is a well-honed tool, which has already been applied extensively in other film studies. Lastly, this theoretical framework could be used to connect the current exercise with previous works in the field, (Adebanjo, 2006; Ekwuazi, 2007; Ogunleye, 2008, Animasaun, 2011.)

Fundamentally, the theoretical lens of formalism in film would appear in a triangular format where the *Film Form*, should relate with both the *Formal System* and the *Stylistic System*. The graphic concept of this triangular relationship is depicted in 2.1, below. In this chapter, only the two structural elements (i.e. narrative, and abstract structures), relevant to the dissertation are fully examined out of the five so far identified under the formal system.

```
                           Film Form

                          interacts with

Formal System            ◄──────────►         Stylistic System
**Narrative**                                  Patterned and
Categorical                                    Significant use of
Rhetorical                                     techniques:
**Abstract**                                    Mise-en-scene
Associational                                   Cinematography
                                                Editing
                                                Sound
```

| 2.1. The Working System of Film Form |
| (David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, 2004:175) |

The theoretical "lens" of formalism, propounded by Bordwell and Thompson (2004) is used in diagnosing the visual narrative elements in selected Yoruba films. Essentially, Bordwell and Thompson's formalist school in film studies is based on Hollywood film culture. Thus, in establishing an appropriate insight on the working of form in African/Nigerian films; it is very necessary to develop another template of form that would not only align the structures of national film culture with the global format, but also preserve, protect and project the unique natures of African/Nigerian films.

The study attempts to formulate a new "template of formal system" out of Bordwell and Thompson's (2004) theory and Aiyejina's (2005) supernatural theory in African drama, used in exploring the unique attributes of Nigerian/Yoruba films.

However, some core areas of the existing template as propounded by Bordwell and Thompson's model of form in film revealed in 2.1 is selected and reviewed before the proposed new template of formalism for the Nigerian/Yoruba films is discussed. Even though film analysis and assessment could be done with some degree of objectivity, it has been opined that there is a difference between personal taste and analytical judgement. In film criticism, one needs to set aside personal preference as the sole basis for judging a film's quality and use specific criteria. Moreover, in using a criterion, the critic gains a basis for comparing films for relative quality.

In revealing other criteria, a critic could employ on film evaluation aside from the six critical approaches so far identified in study, Bordwell and Thompson (2004:58) postulate:

> There are many different criteria. Some people evaluate films on "realistic" criteria, judging a film good if it conforms to their view of reality. Aficionados of military history might judge a film entirely on whether the battle scenes use historically accurate weaponry; the narrative, editing, characterization, sound and visual style might be of little interest to them. Other people condemn films because they don't find the action plausible… Viewers can also use moral criteria to evaluate films… Most narrowly, aspects of the film can be judged outside their context in the film's formal system… More broadly, viewers and critics may employ moral criteria to evaluate a film's overall significance, and here the film's complete formal system becomes pertinent.

Apart from the realistic and moral criteria which are suited to particular purposes, other yardsticks postulated by these scholars for film evaluation include coherence, intensity of effect, complexity and originality.

Coherence is a situation where the critic searches for the unifying factors that contribute to coherent quality in the film or the artwork. With *intensity of effect*, one considers the vivid, striking, and emotionally engaging elements as more valuable qualities of the artwork. On *complexity,* Bordwell and Thompson (2004:58-59) enunciate that "…complex films are good. A complex film engages our interest at many levels, creates a multiplicity of relations among many separate formal elements, and tends to create interesting formal patterns." *Originality* is regarded as pointless, but, according to these scholars, "…if an artist takes a familiar convention and uses it in a way that makes it fresh again or create a new set of formal possibilities, then (all other things being equal) the resulting work may be considered good from an aesthetic standpoint".

From all indications, the aforementioned yardsticks (coherence, intensity of effect*,* complexity and originality) in film evaluation are often applied to films based on scientific and realistic plotting. Consequently, one could say that these yardsticks are very inadequate for films based on metaphysical or abstract logic. And since most of African films are based on metaphysical and highly worded plotting, an Afro-centric critic should, therefore, incorporate the effective criteria that will look into the deployment of metaphysical components and the effective use of words as additional criteria in film analysis/evaluation.

Although one could not rule out the fact that the criteria used in film analysis are generally a matter of degree, fundamentally, such criteria should

allow critics to take, as much as possible, formal elements in film system into account. In most cases, film analysis or evaluation is fruitful when it is backed up by a close examination of material within the film. Hence, a film analytical system could be deployed to call the attention of viewers to neglected aspects of the artwork in order to make the perceivers have a rethink on their attitude towards accepted classics or format. Put differently, Bordwell and Thompson (2004) opine that:

> ...evaluation is helpful insofar as it points to aspects of the film and show us relations and qualities we have missed… Like interpretation, evaluation is most useful when it drives us back to the film itself as a formal system, helping us to understand that system better.

Narrative as one of the critical elements of the formal system

The notions of "narration" and "narrative" are simply used to denote a process of telling a linear or a non-linear story; a realistic or unrealistic story, metaphysical story or a fictional /scientific story. It could also be seen as a means of describing events that occur in the course of a given film.

Although it has been claimed that narrative, myths or ancient stories are shared across cultures, some narratives have 'archetypal' features that are central to human existence. Therefore, stories could be seen as having a universal nature. Despite the language barriers, for instance, a well packaged narrative film could be understood by any interested viewer.

In corroborating the fact that the narrative is a general phenomenon common to all races, a system through which knowledge is acquired and shared and an experience which all humans' desire, Morrison (2004), postulates that:

> Narrative is one of the ways in which knowledge is organized. I have always thought it was the most important way to transmit and receive knowledge. I am less certain of that now – but the craving for narrative has never lessened, and the hunger for it is as keen as it was on Mt. Sinai or Calvary or the middle of the fens.

Besides the desire for the narrative as an integral part of every society, Branston and Stafford (2007:41) further identify common means through which the narrative manifests in human relationship. According to them, "Most people spend a lot of time telling stories: gossiping about friends; telling jokes and filling family photo albums with appropriate events to tell a story." Reviewing the traditional modes of the narrative in line with current reality that proverbs and anecdotes could be related in form of stories, Turner (1988:68) highlights the fact that storytelling can take other forms such as myths, legends, ballads, folk-tales, rituals, dance, histories, novels, jokes, and drama.

Visual narrative, among other definitions, could be seen as a process of a logical or cultural portrayal/emotional projection of issues, events, people or conditions with meaningful images, invented in order to entertain, educate or inform the audience. Most stories are designed and packaged in attractive form that is capable of eliciting reaction from the listener/onlooker. Essentially, visual stories are apparently designed to serve different social functions some of which

could generally be grouped as entertainment, information, education or religious purposes.

In Turner's (1988:67) view, "feature films are narratives that tell stories". Moreover, as a creative art form and a medium of telling even a real life or fictional story like literature, visual narrative/feature film "…will fictionalize…in order to produce drama, to telescope time, to avoid being filled up with too many minor characters or simply to be more entertaining." According to Propp, as quoted by Turner, (1988:68), "no matter how widely narratives differ in their surface details (characterization, setting, plots), they still share certain important structural features". The most basic of these are the functions of various sets of characters and actions within the tales.

Based on previously established facts, one could, therefore, say with a strong conviction that there are some intrinsic elements of universality in the structures and the functions of all narratives. In Turner's (1988:68) words:

> ...the world comes to us in the shape of stories... This is not to say that all our stories explain the world. Rather, story provides us with an easy, unconscious, and involving way of constructing our world; narrative can be described as a means of 'making sense' of our social world, and sharing that 'sense' with others. Its universality underlines its intrinsic place in human communication.

Buttressing the above claim, Bordwell and Thompson's (2004:70) postulation on the principle of narrative construction suggests that, "Narrative is a fundamental way that humans make sense of the world." Furthermore,

corroborating the fact that human being cannot do without telling story, Branston and Stafford (2007:50) posit that:

> As we grow up, we read short stories, novels, history, and biography. Religion, philosophy, and science often present their doctrines through parables and tales: The Judeo-Christian tradition's Bible and Torah are huge collections of stories. Plays tell stories, as do films, television shows, comic books, paintings, dance, and many other culture phenomena. Much of our conversation is taken up with telling tales... Even newspaper articles are called stories, and.... We cannot escape even by going to sleep, since we often experience our dreams as little narratives, and we recall and retell the dreams in the shape of stories.

These scholars conclude by reiterating the fact that stories are all around us and that spectators often approach a narrative film with definite expectations; hence, they have anticipations that are characteristic of the narrative form. In addition to this, most viewers probably expect that the problems or conflicts arising in the course of the action will achieve some final resolution at the end.

It is on record that naturally, a film will shape particular expectations by summoning up curiosity, suspense, and surprise, while the viewer picks up cues, recalls information, anticipates what will follow, and generally participates in the creation of the formal system of the film. Moreover, the ending of a given film has the task of satisfying or cheating the expectations prompted by the film as a whole. The ending may also activate memory by cueing the spectator to review earlier events, possibly considering them in a new light or monitoring the

formation of the second equilibrium as proposed by Todorov's theory. That is, viewers are actively involved in decoding when:

> …all stories begin with an '*equilibrium*' where any potentially opposing forces are 'in balance'… but as soon as this first "equilibrium status" is disrupted by some events, this will set in motion, a series of other events that will close with a second, but different 'equilibrium' or status quo…
> (Branston and Stafford, 2007:45)

In addition to revealing moment-by-moment process that guides audience's view in building the story out of its plot system in order to create curiosity and surprise or manipulate viewers' feelings and expectations, a narrative with a good plot system has a way of distributing story information in order to achieve desired or specific effects.

From all the available records, most films from Hollywood culture are based on a linear narrative plot system and some incorporated elements of non-linear system. The identifiable components of this linear narrative format, according to Branigan (1992:3) and Bordwell and Thompson (2004), include "causality", "time", "space" and "logical order". Out of all these components, causality and time are central because without them, no one can make a meaning or make a logical deduction out of a story in a linear narrative plot system.

To demonstrate the importance of these three factors, these two scenarios could be considered:

> Sample - I:
>
> (1) Mr 'A' is seen disembarking from his black bicycle, stands it in front of a house and goes into the house, (2) Suddenly Mr.

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'A' is seen again looking very angry, puts a chain around the front wheel of his bicycle and locks it up with a padlock. (3) Mr 'B' sees this same black bicycle unlocked, standing in front of a house in a deserted street, takes it to the main road, rides and enjoys himself while riding. (4) When these two men finally meet in another street, Mr. 'B' is looking remorseful, while Mr. 'A', the owner of the bicycle, is looking angry.

Sample - II:

(1) Mr 'A' is seen disembarking from his black bicycle, stands it in front of a house and goes into the house, (3) Mr 'B' sees this same black bicycle unlocked, standing in front of a house in a deserted street, takes it to the main road, rides and enjoys himself while riding. (4) When these two men finally meet in another street, Mr. 'B' is looking remorseful, while Mr. 'A', the owner of the bicycle is looking angry. (2) Suddenly Mr. 'A' is seen again looking very angry, puts a chain around the front wheel of his bicycle and locks it up with a padlock. (Ola-Koyi, 2006)

In decoding the logicality of the story in Sample I, one will find it difficult to understand the series of events in the first scenario, because the story lacks logical structure or appropriate causal and temporal relations. But when this same scenario is restructured in Sample II, with appropriate causal and temporal relations, one can see clearly, its logical order of presentation. That is, Mr 'B' illegally takes and rides on the black bicycle without permission from the bicycle owner and this causes Mr 'A' to search for his bicycle and on seeing Mr 'B' on it, he gets upset and for this reason, Mr "A" locks up the bicycle in anger so as to prevent any reoccurrence of the disappearance of the bicycle and unauthorised riding.

Apart from these identifiable components of the narrative form, many other factors could be employed in designing and processing a visual narration

or in the construction of a narrative but the specific point of focus, which will be treated in the latter section of this study will be restricted to the range and the depth of story information that a plot presents.

Dennis Duro Aiyejina's supernatural theory on African drama

Dennis Duro Aiyejina is a structuralist who deploys a descriptive structuralist model in identifying supernatural components of African drama. In his study, Aiyejina (1995:3) acknowledges the fact that literature, like film, is a socio-cultural phenomenon with creative elements that are intertwined with the value system of its community. Thus, literature (or film) in Aiyejina's words is "developed and practised within particular socio-cultural context." Each of these is also meant to preserve, propagate and clarify the vital socio-cultural elements of a given group.

Closely linked to this is a belief system which is another vital socio-cultural element that often features in both African literature and film. Africans' faith in the supernatural is so strong that it shows almost in all African creative works such as music, literatures, dramas and films. In his attempt to illustrate the characteristics of the metaphysical world, Aiyejina uses a prominent modern scientific gauge, propagated by Albert Einstein. Hence, the following features are so identified: a complete abrogation of time and space; the presence of "isness", absolute complete form and the existence of incorporeal entities.

On the abrogation of time, Aiyejina (1995:4) explains that:

> ...in the natural realm of existence, time proceeds in a straight line from the future, through the present, into the past. Hence, physical things and events are located either in the past or in the future or in the present. Time in the supernatural mode of existence is different. In this mode, past present and future, all exist now. Events exist not in time, but in an external now... one sees everything at once... Everything that was is...

He describes the abrogation of space thus:

> Unlike the physical realm of existence in which space is fragmented into many separate and discrete entities, as Nigeria is separated from Tanzania ... the supernatural is limitless and unseparated. In the supernatural mode of existence, space is abrogated.

Aiyejina further describes the state of "isness" in the supernatural world as a state of being which is very much "unlike those of physical reality. Supernatural things and events do not develop or change, neither are they liable to destruction. They exist in their absolute complete form...."

On the status of the inhabitants of the metaphysical world, he suggests that the supernatural realm is teeming with figures that are incorporated and kratophanic, while the natural world is inhabited by human beings and animal. Consequently, one could classify these inhabitants of the supernatural realm thus: the Almighty God/Supreme Being, gods, ancestral spirits and ghosts, fetishes, totems, heroes, witchcraft, etc. According to him, the inhabitants of this world are "figures whose character is superior to that of man and who are conceived of as more powerful than man. Also, they are believed to control man's existence and therefore may be conciliated or involved by this to secure advantage over nature and over his fellow man." (Aiyejina, 1995:6)

On the issue of cultural and religious perception of the supernatural world in Africa, Aiyejina claims that communion is very strong in Africa as Africans experience the universe as a religious entity in which the natural and the supernatural co-exist and are interwoven, that the exchange of beings by way of death and birth goes on constantly between the two worlds. He also maintains that the occurrence of binary opposition experiences in human reality is believed to be under the control of the supernatural. Thus, experiences such as life and death, success and failure, fertility and sterility in a person's life and other vital issues that man has no control over are dictated and directed from the supernatural realm.

Lending credence to the above claim, Parrinder (1975:10) opines that "To Africans the spirit world is so real and near, its forces intertwine and spring the visible world that, whether pagan or Christian, man has to reckon with being invisible to mortal sight" while Mbiti (1970), maintains that Africans live in a religious universe in which "...there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and the non-religious between the supernatural and the material areas of life."

Aiyejina (1995:7) further asserts that:

> The Africans apprehend the Supreme Being as God who manifest his powers, authority and function through the activities of the gods... These gods are apprehend as ministers appointed or created by the Supreme Being to preside over each department of his vast empire... most African peoples have a pantheon of gods of war and peace; of harvest, of health and healing and so on.

Quoting Elam and Pever-Ge, Aiyejina (1995) in his study further categorises the four Barthesian codes of semiotics (proairetic, hermeneutic, symbolic and referential codes) into two basic types of *cultural code* and *logical code*. While the *cultural code* encompasses referential code, symbolic code, and symptomatic/proairetic code on one hand, the hermeneutic code is regarded as the logical code on the other. Justifying his stand, Aiyejina (1995:8) declared that:

> ...the African dramatic text or production is easily illuminated through two major codes: *The Cultural Code* through which the real is conceived by those operating in the light of certain cultural norms, beliefs and world view. And *the logical code* which illuminates the general principles of cause and effect, necessity and possibility, especially in the cultural logic rather than the rational logic of the audience.

By implication, the last sentence of the above quotation reaffirms the fact that occurrence in the supernatural realm of existence may not follow rational logic where time and space are strong determinants but follows cultural logic where the operating system is based on the abrogation of time and space and the universe is seen as one indivisible physical and metaphysical entity.

In addition, it could be suggested that either on screen or on stage humans could easily access the supernatural realm through the use of words together with other accessible means such as wine and charm. Here, time and space could easily be abrogated and every occurrence could be reduced to the state of "isness" or "infinitive now" where objects could only exist in complete form.

Therefore, the creative use of words in narrative could be additional code of illuminating supernatural component in African drama.

Having identified the attributes of the supernatural world from his theoretical exploration, Aiyejina (1995:8) observes that, "there is a dynamic inter-relationship between the supernatural and the physical realm of existence. This belief is not only peculiar to African but world-wide. It is an indispensible element in the belief system of every community or race and it manifests in all their activities." These suggested activities by a simple extension can include African literature, narrative film and other forms of non-linear story. This could be one of the reasons why Joseph Campbell (1973:3-4) advocates that, "Every people has received its own seal and sign of supernatural designation, communicated to its heroes and daily proved in the lives and experience of its folk." According to Orimakinde (2013:1):

> Yoruba films scripts are woven around the Yoruba cosmological orientation generated from an animated worldview which upholds strong believe in the connection between the living and the dead. The symbiotic relationship that exists between the natural and the supernatural shape the thought pattern of the movie tradition.

From Aiyejina's premise, the basic characteristic of the metaphysical realm is established. His world view also acknowledges the existence of a dynamic inter-relationship between the supernatural and physical realms but his hypothesis does not give a comprehensive analysis on the nature of this dynamic inter-relationship.

From available evidence, one could interpret as truly symbiotic, the dynamic inter-relationship between the supernatural and physical realms of existence. On one hand, the mortal beings are seen as clays in the hand of the potters who are the supernatural entities. This could be the reason Aiyejina (1995) observes in reality that, the occurrence of binary opposition in form of life and death, success and failure, etc. are under the control of the supernatural. In this sense, the supernatural beings are perceived as powerful forces that could shape the physical word into any form of their choice. However, they could also be appeased by mortal beings to intervene in physical matters.

On the other hand, the supernatural entities derive and rely on human beings for the acknowledgement of their status. In other words, supernatural forces are of no value without the mortal beings establishing their importance or their accorded prominence. By implication, the supernatural beings can hardly influence physical realm without the efforts of mortal agents. It is through these mortal beings that the importance, status and eminence of the spiritual entities are established and preserved. Even in decoding the events in the supernatural realm, mortal knowledge and cultural logic are required. Consequently, in African world view, one could say that as mortal beings hold their existence to the influence of the supernatural forces, the existences of the metaphysical beings are also dependent on the knowledge and the cultural logic of the mortal beings.

Two modes of supernatural manifestations in narrative films

Majority of Yoruba filmmakers often inject elements of the supernatural forces into their productions. Hence, one could classify into two broad categories, the various ways in which the metaphysical elements are injected into narrative films, these are (i) by manifesting as causality agents (protagonist or antagonist) and (ii) by serving as catalyst or as a means to an end.

Having established the four characteristics of metaphysical world and the importance of deciphering the events in the supernatural realm through cultural logic, and the two modes of supernatural manifestations in narrative films, another important yardstick which would further be used as tool in deciphering the manifestation of metaphysical forces in film is the concepts of linear and nonlinear plot structures.

Linear and nonlinear plot structures and supernatural elements in films:

A linear narrative is a story that would follow a chronological order of 1-2-3; that is, starting from the beginning, moving through the middle to the end giving the impression of a sequential experience to both the narrator and the audience. On one hand, a nonlinear narrative might not give a straight forward story experience or a chronological narrative of 1-2-3. It often incorporates other elements such as juxtaposition, or presentation of a non-chronological

order of events, invocation of repetition, and incorporation of flashback or flash forward.

In a nonlinear narrative, the portrayed story does not need to follow the direct causality pattern of the events featured; elements such as parallel distinctive plot lines, dream immersions or narrating another story inside the main plot line are often incorporated. A nonlinear narrative according to an online source "...is often used to mimic the structure and recall of human memory but has been applied for other reasons as well." (*Wikipedia the Free Encyclopaedia*, retrieved on 17-07-2013)

In applying the concept of nonlinearity of the narrative structure to the existence of supernatural elements in African dramatic structure, Aiyejina (1995:28) postulates that:

> Many African plays utilize the non-linear manner of structuring experience, a manner which violates the physical order of existence and corresponds with the sacred one in which time and space do not exist.

Unlike in the natural realm of existence where time and space influence and shape actions in a narrative, the supernatural mode of existence is different as the past, the present and the future fused into a perpetual now and space is void, in this case time and space have no influence on actions or events.

From all indications, it could be stated that, the linear structure works with an unidirectional mode of association which is based on rational logic, while the nonlinear structure works with multidirectional (metaphoric) mode of

association that may appear irrational or illogical to physical order. consequently, a nonlinear structure could be used in explaining occurrence in abstract form or events in metaphysical realm of existence such as invisible experience, spiritual activities, mental sphere or human memory.

For a better perception of the term *non-linear* plot, an extract from Ornstein (1972) study is very useful. While advocating the incorporation of a psychological framework in scientific explanation on the nature of the human stream of consciousness, Ornstein (1972)'s study attempt to use the same nonlinear structure in decoding or interpreting the existence of supernatural elements in narrative films:

> During each complete day, our consciousness flows in and out of linearity. Each night we dream and enter a world in which a linear sequence of time has less meaning. Events in the dream space seem fluid. When we recall dreams and try to place them in a linear mode, we often cannot decide whether one event precede or follow another. At other times... moments come on each of us which are cut out of time. They are moments in which there is no future, no past, merely an immediate present. Our linear analytic world is for the moment destructured. That we now lack a psychological framework for these *nonlinear* time experiences means not that they should be ignored entirely but that we must develop a suitable structure if we are to incorporate them into contemporary science.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the application of a nonlinear analysis/narrative method will go a long way in explaining human experience of the abstract and infinitive events/occurrences with a human timing, knowledge and understanding. With this nonlinear analytical approach, experiences such as a dream, trance or any other metaphysical encounter will be made easy to decode, analyse, or scrutinise.

Fundamentally, the linear plot system is guided by the logic of cause-effect and time-space structure, while the nonlinear plot structure is based on cultural logic where the occurrence and reoccurrence of events take place in a void (unlimited space) and fluid time (infinity). Therefore, as identified by Aiyejina, the various elements or events of a supernatural realm encompassed in "timelessness", "spacelessness" and irrational reasoning are better understood within a nonlinear plot structure.

According to Cowgill (1999:148):

> A nonlinear structure deconstructs a complicated event, situation, character or a combination of these elements by reordering the time sequence and creating a new composition for dramatic (or comedic) purposes. This new arrangement of events makes the telling of the story more surprising, compelling and unpredictable than if it was told in a straight linear fashion.

In addition, a nonlinear structure deemphasises a chronological presentation of events, issues, characters, places or times and it often develops a complicated structure, while the linear plot system, on the other hand, is based on a chronologically-goal-oriented structure that requires logical understanding. Giving further explanation on the unique attributes of the nonlinear structure in promoting a thematic unity in narrative film, Cowgill (1999:149) once again maintains that:

> Nonlinear plots are usually a strategy for describing a character without the constraints imposed by a linear, goal-oriented structure. The filmmaker may want to focus on a character's whole life instead of on one segment. Or, the character may have a nonmaterial goal or spiritual need compelling him to act (a need which may not easily translate into a concrete, goal-oriented action, but nevertheless is the basis for a strong

thematic unity). In either case, unity of action is too limiting to use as the device, instead, thematic unity through character revelation becomes the driving force...

From the foregoing, it is shown that the use of a nonlinear plot structure allows a filmmaker to structure his story in a way that is best suited to his motive of making the film. Thus, this system might deemphasise logicality or cause and effect relationship in favour of other elements such as a unique deployment of motifs, locations, or props in the course of a narrative rather than concentrating on characters, which might not be so necessary for his thematic unity. In this case, plot twists and actions take precedence over characterisations hence, a complicated structure may emerge.

Basically, there is a thin line between temporal and spiritual realms in the African world view. That is, there is a strong bond between African physical and metaphysical worlds just as there is a bond between African arts and its culture. In the word of Ayiejina (1995), "Art as a system of signs depends on the codes of belief and culture of the audience. These codes enable the audience of a play or pick out items which belong to the functional space designated by the code." From all indications, a genuine African writer cannot but acknowledge the fact that a story/plot with metaphysical connotation or resolution in a film or drama may not be decoded only with rational logic but also requires cultural interpretation.

For the fact that Africans live in spiritual universe and majority of African forms of arts have metaphysical inputs or require metaphysical interpretation (in

the case of dramatic or film presentation), it is, therefore suggested that, both the linear and nonlinear plotting and structural analyses are best used in this endeavour of story presentation and interpretation. Hence, the adventure into a discussion on the linear and nonlinear plot structures and supernatural concerns in African story is to highlight the fact that African dramatic structure and context sometimes depend on cultural logic rather than logical reasoning for its composition and understanding. Consequently, an African filmmaker or a film critic should be conscious of how to use both the linear and the non-linear plot structures in narrative construction and interpretation.

Narrative theories

The works of Vladimir Propp, Tzvetan Todorov and Claude Levi-Strauss are reviewed in order to examine narrative theories.

Vladimir Propp's Roles or spheres of action theory

Vladimir Propp (1895-1970) was a Russian critic, folklorist and structuralist. Propp argues that meaning and fundamental structures of different stories could be diagnosed by considering the ways in which many different figures (witch, woodcutter, monster, etc.) can be reduced to eight character roles. Although these fundamental character indicators may not be the same as the actual characters, since one character can occupy several roles or 'spheres of

action'. Moreover, the basic character indicators indentified by Propp (2007:43) include:

> 1. the *villain*; 2. the *hero,* or character who seeks something, usually motivated by an initial lack – of money, or a mother, for example. ('Hero' is one of those terms that does not mean the same within theory as it does in life outside, where 'hero' usually refers to a male, and 'heroic' has moral connotations of 'admirable' or 'good'. Here the words are closer to describing someone who actively carries the events of a story, whether Bridget Jones or Bart Simpson.); 3. the *donor,* who provides an object with some magic property; 4. the *helper,* who aids the hero; 5. the *princess,* reward for the hero (though see above) and often object of the villain's schemes, 6. her *father,* who rewards the hero; 7. the *dispatcher,* who sends the hero on his way; 8. the *false* hero.

Propp's *spheres of action* theory indicates that stories are inevitably related with the times which produced them. Originally, Propp examines fairy tales told in times when many women died in childbirth, and the role of ('wicked') stepmothers could be a shared reference point for audiences. As of the time these stories were produced, the hero was often a female character, like Lara Croft. For the fact that the word 'heroine' was not in use, Propp invents the word '*princess*' to designate a character who hangs around looking decorative until the hero sweeps her away.

Despite the identified restriction in terms of time, culture and lack of definite conceptual framework, Propp's theory could still be applied to other narrative forms from other cultures apart from the Western stories. However, in this study, it is only used as a model in identifying common attributes one could find in all selected Yoruba films. Thus, this study does not necessarily follow Propp's eight character indicators order.

Tzvetan Todorov's Equilibrium theory

Tzvetan Todorov (1939) is a Bulgarian theorist and a linguist who published his influential work on narrative from the 1960s onwards. As a structuralist, Todorov argues that all stories begin with an "equilibrium" where any potentially opposing forces are "in balance" – the "once-upon-a-time" moment but as soon as this first "equilibrium status" is disrupted by some events, this will set in motion, a series of other events that will close with a second, but different 'equilibrium' or status quo.

This theory is more interested in the logical and structural presentation of narratives. A school of thought believes this theory sounds like a cliché, due to its insistence on the fact that every story has a beginning, middle and an end that only re-emphasise the Aristotelian dramatic structure. However, a closer look at this theory shows other interesting aspects of this "equilibrium" label. In this case, once the first state of affairs, a status quo, or a "set up" is affected in certain ways, it is expected to result in a new status quo – the second equilibrium and there is bound to be a change in viewer's knowledge of the events in the story or on the traits of the characters. For instance, when this theory is applied to news story or detective narratives, one would see its captivating strength in the way it presents the two different states of equilibrium - in presenting two different pieces of information and in sharing its information. Basically, the convention in the equilibrium theory may either present the new state of affairs before revealing the

reasons behind the event, or show the first state of equilibrium before a disruption which leads to a new status quo.

Even though Todorov's theory is often applied to detective stories, the theory is equally applicable to news reporting, entertainment and reality game shows. Its strength could be found in its ability to manipulate viewers' logic and emotion. In its capacity to reveal the range of story information employed in a story – be it omniscience or restricted narrative pattern, in its ability to give hierarchy of knowledge where at any given moment viewers could ask, if they know more than, less than or as much as the characters in the narrative. Similarly, Todorov's theory has the capacity to reveal how a filmmaker or a story-teller manipulates the depth of the viewer's knowledge on the story being told. Basically, the depth of information refers to how deeply the plot plunges into a character's mind or psychological states. Thus, with Todorov's hypothesis, one could determine the level of changes in a plot, decide whether the story is a restricted or an unrestricted narrative, and whether it is objective or subjective in presentation.

For the fact that Tzventan Todorov's equilibrium theory is logic based, its level of manipulation could be used to reveal the following in film analysis:

(i)   the range of story information (omniscience and restricted range of story information) and

(ii) hierarchy of shared knowledge between characters and members of the audience. Here, one is likely to ask "Do viewers know more or less than the characters or is the audience on the same level of exposure in terms of range of knowledge information?" or in terms of depth of knowledge. In this case, one may ask "How deeply did the plot plunge into the character's mind?"

(iii) this theory will be useful in investigating (objective or subjective) level of change in the plot and

(iv) finally, the theory could be used to revalidate some of the claims of Bordwell and Thompson on levels of manipulation in narratives.

Claude Levi-Strauss' Binary opposition theory:

Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) is a mythologist and a structuralist who once attempts to relate the characteristics of myth and legend back to the perceptual mechanisms of the brain even though there is no way of proving or disproving this claim. While examining the nature of myths and legends in ancient and primitive cultures, he observes that there is an abiding structure for all meaning-making terms, not just for unravelling the structures of meaning and significance which differentiates one cultural system from another but for narratives that depend on binary oppositions or a conflict between two qualities or terms.

His binary opposition theory sets to showcase the fact that in setting up a goal, there is bound to be an equal force that will stand as an obstacle which a goal-oriented individual should face in the course of achieving his set objective/target. The secondary aim of this theory is to bring out the various ways in which myth could be used to bring meanings into human world. He maintains that myth is used essentially to represent the unpalatable relationship between man and his environment or other unpleasant conditions in such a way that those who have to can live within it. According to Levi-Strauss as quoted by Graeme Turner (1988:72):

> Myths were used to deal with the contradictions in experience, to explain the apparently inexplicable, and to justify the inevitable. Within myths, contradiction and inequities which could not be resolved in the real world were resolved symbolically. The function of myth was to place those contradictions – between man and his natural environment, for instance, or between life and death – as part of natural existence.

Levi-Strauss equally suggests that:

> One of the ways in which humans understand the world is through dividing it into sets of mutually exclusive categories – land and sea, man and woman, good and bad, us and them... This binary pattern is logically supported by the fact that we define things not in terms of what they *are*, but also in terms of what they are *not*. 'Man' means 'not woman'... (Graeme Turner, 1988:73)

Thus, out of the two compared elements, one could get not only the meaning, but also similarity and dissimilarity between the two elements. For instance, one could describe a good person by comparing him with a bad person, or falsehood with the truth, and honesty with dishonesty.

From all indications, the binary opposition theory encourages both a linear story plot and a non linear story – a category into which most of African stories fall. Though this theory can be applied to individual story from all angles, it is more useful when it is applied to sets of narratives as in the African film genre, the Western genre, or across some news stories. According to Branston and Stafford (2007:48):

> Writers suggested that the different sheriffs, outlaws, schoolmarms, Native Americans, etc. of hundreds of westerns [African narratives] could be usefully analysed in Proppian narrative terms (Native Americans as thrilling 'villains' whose motives were often withheld, for example). They could also be seen as organised, over time, according to systematic oppositions, among others:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Homesteaders | Native Americans |
> | Christian | pagan |
> | Domestic | savage |
> | Weak | strong |
> | Feminine | masculine |
> | Garden | wilderness |
> | Inside society | outside society |

From the foregoing, one could see that Levi-Strauss binary opposition is meant to identify different attributes of various characters and to present a method of decoding both the hero and the villain or assessing the good and the evil elements within a narrative system.

New template of form for African films

From Bordwell and Thompson's formalist theory, one could see that the cinematic form incorporates both the formalistic and the stylistic systems. The proposed template of "form" for African films could be developed to

accommodate all the components of Bordwell and Thompson's template but due to the interest of this study, the components of form in the proposed template is restricted to two elements. In this case, the new template also interacts and incorporates the two elements of the formalistic and the stylistic systems. While Bordwell and Thompson's template identifies the different genres of film such as narrative, categorical, rhetorical, abstract and associational films as components of formal system, the proposed template experiments only with two common genres of film on the Nigerian screen: the narrative and the abstract films as the main components of the formal system.

The former model/template of form identifies and incorporates pattern and significantly employs techniques such as mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing and sound as the components of stylistic system. However, the proposed template features from the African point of view only the components of the mise-en-scene under the stylistic system of form. Consequently, the systemic relationship within the new template could be represented thus:

Film Form

interacts with

Formal System
Narrative
Abstract

Stylistic System
Pattern and
Significant use of
techniques:
  Mise-en-scene
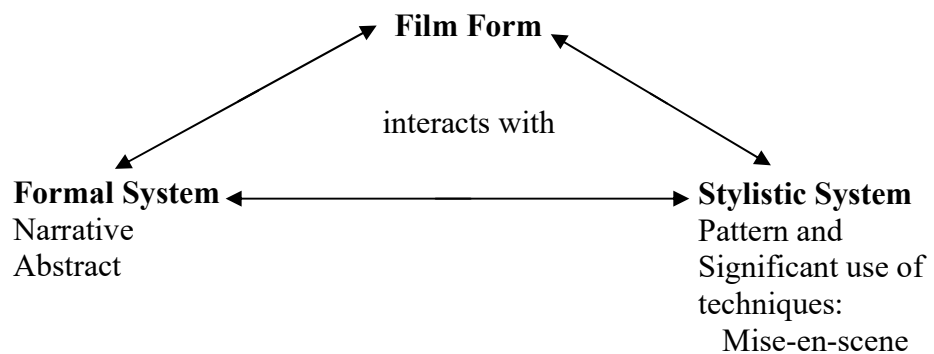
2.2. **An Experimental Template of Form for African Films**

In order to establish the focus of the identified variables that are experimented and incorporated into the new template in this study, there is need to further discuss the identified elements (formal and stylistic systems) of the proposed template of form under the principles of narrative structure and the components of mise-en-scene. However, it should be pointed out that only the principles of narrative structure relevant to this dissertation are examined in detail.

Principles of narrative structure

Having gone through a general overview of formalist theory, the various principles of narrative construction are given further discussion in this section, before they are finally applied in analysing under the stylistic system of form "MaaMi" and "Abeni 1&2" as samples of film analysis. Therefore, the following principles/components are revisited: opening and closing; plot and story; causality; range of story information; time; space; and depth of story information

The principle of opening and closing

Going by the theory of narrative construction with particular reference to Todorov's equilibrium theory, in any given story, there is always a change from an initial condition to a final situation. Other scholarly discourses on this issue suggest that it is often useful to compare the beginning of a story and the ending in order to understand how causality, time, space and other factors have created change or established a progressive movement in the course of a story. Based on

the foregoing, one could say that the opening and the closing of a narrative are the most significant features of a narrative system.

It is established that the story or any given narrative film does not just start, but begin. The opening of a narrative film, according to Bordwell and Thompson (2004:80), "...provides a basis for what is to come and initiates us into the narrative. In some cases, the plot will seek to arouse curiosity by bringing us into a series of actions that has already started." In modern term, this type of opening is called *in medias res,* a Latin phrase that connotes "in the middle of things."

In the words of Bordwell and Thompson (2004:80), "The portion of the plot that lays out story events and character traits important in the opening situation is called the exposition." The exposition of a film will raise viewer's expectations by setting up a specific range of possible causes for and effects of what is seen. Oftentimes, the exposition falls within a film's setup, that is, the first quarter of a film's plot.

At the middle of a narrative film are various actions and counteractions of the actors/roles, and through this the viewers are led to the climax of the story. As it is at the beginning, so it is at the ending, "A film does not simply stop; it ends." In the course of a film, viewers are taken round from the beginning through the middle before the resolution and final revelation at the end. Therefore, a resolution of a film cannot just come without the film moving from the setup (introduction and the rises), followed by the middle (action and counteraction/ the climax). Usually, the highpoints of the story events will present a narrow range of possible outcomes. Basically, the climax is established to uplift the spirit of the viewer. "Emotionally, the climax aims to lift the viewer to a high degree of tension or suspense." Then the downturn of events will naturally lead to the resolution. It has been noted that the formal resolution usually coincides with an emotional satisfaction. It is possible for a film to
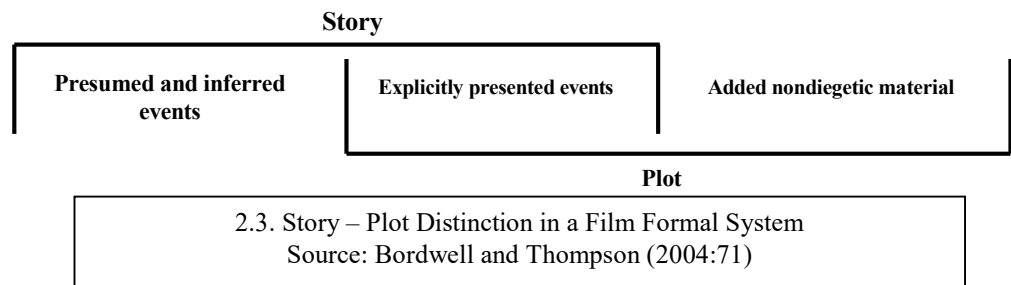
either resolve/close off the chains of cause and effect or allow them to remain relatively open as in the case of the close-ended or open-ended plot systems.

The distinction between story and plot

In decoding the relationship that exists between story and plot of a narrative film, this deciphering process or the act of making meaning out of a film has been diagnosed to involve so many levels. For instance, during this process, Bordwell and Thompson (2004) opine that the viewer engages in multiple activities such as making assumptions and inferences about events in a screen narrative. Hence, activities could be classified into two broad quests:

(i) Inferring events that are not explicitly presented, and recognising the presence of material that is extraneous to the story world, and

(ii) Identifying narrative's events and linking them by cause and effect, time, and space.

An illustration on the distinction between story and plot relation is represented with the following diagram so as to reveal how this principle could be used as another component of formal system or a yardstick of diagnosing narrative film.

Story		
Presumed and inferred events	**Explicitly presented events**	**Added nondiegetic material**

Plot

2.3. Story – Plot Distinction in a Film Formal System Source: Bordwell and Thompson (2004:71)

From the above diagram, it is revealed one that "story and plot overlap in one respect and diverge in others." That is the information above indicates that the plot does explicitly present certain story events, so these events are

common to both domains. "The story goes beyond the plot in suggesting some diegetic events which we never witness. The plot goes beyond the story world by presenting nondiegetic images and sounds that may affect our understanding of the story." (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:71)

Tenet of causality and related principles

In a narrative, actions, inactions and reactions of the characters involved could either make the presentation an interesting and exciting one or a boring one. Therefore, one would agree with the fact that "narrative depends heavily on cause and effect" in both the linear and nonlinear plot systems. However, it should be reiterated that the linear plot depends on logical reasoning, while the nonlinear plot depends on cultural reasoning.

In most narratives, the human character and his interest serve as motifs, or the first agent of causality. Other agents of cause and effect include animals, things, ghost, extraterrestrial beings, environmental/natural forces and metaphysical forces. Among all these agents of cause and effect, the common characters that feature on the Nigerian screens include human persons as seen in "O Le Ku", "Koseegbe", and "Abike Alagbererere", ghost as seen in "Thunderbolt...", "Ijakumo Mefa", samples of films with extraterrestrial beings include "Arugba", and "Yemoja", while films that feature animals and metaphysical forces as agents of causality include (birds used in "Koto Orun",

and he-goat used in "Eran Iya Osogbo". It is clear that there will be no event without the agents of cause and effect. Sometimes, other agents of change work in collaboration with the human figures. In most cases, the characters in each film actually propel actions, events and other occurrences in the course of a narrative. They equally cause both the actions and the reactions that make up the twists and turns of events within the formal system of a film.

Other related principles

An agent of causality is usually presented to the viewers through the character's *traits* which may have human or animal body or may be presented as a being with only voice and without any physical body. Hence, the process of giving traits, attributes or features to a role in a narrative is known as characterisation. Klinge and McConkey (1982) see the screen character as an aggregate of three broad traits: body, voice and motivation, while Bordwell and Thompson (2004) posit that "a character's traits are designed to play a causal role in the narrative." Therefore, character traits can involve attitudes, skills, preferences, psychological drives, details of dress and appearance, and any other specific quality the film creates for a character.

Even though characterisation in Nigerian screen is mostly based on human figures, some narrative films on international level (especially from Hollywood) have been created without human characters serving as the main

agent of motivation. However, if natural forces could be made a main agent of cause and effect in a film, then one would agree to the fact that not all causes and effects in narrative films originated only with or based on human characters. It is on record that in disaster movies, natural forces such as an earthquake or tidal waves are the lead characters and they precipitate a series of actions. Nevertheless, human actions or reactions are still central to these natural occurrences. Thus, in each of these set ups or situations, human desires and goals are usually brought into the actions to develop the narrative.

Apart from the existence of the character and the characterisation process, there are other interrelated elements to causality which include causal motivation, planting, interface, conflict, tension, suspense and pattern of development.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that a memorable character should have a combination of different traits; even though this depends strongly on causal motivation. Motivation could, therefore, be seen as a strong faith, a desire, and a drive that propels a role towards certain action, inaction or reaction. In Ekwuazi's (2002:) view, motivation is used to refer to any element in the story that is justified by the overall form of the narrative. Essentially, a motivation of a narrative film usually performs a fundamental role within the system. Like a connecting cable network, motivation is an intrinsic element which brings different parts of a film system together, making the system a unified whole.

Motivation in a narrative could also be seen as an element through which a story generates the two opposing views or the binary formation of contesting characters (the protagonist and the antagonist). It is also a means through which the opposing views are brought into a conflict and yet, relating harmoniously with other components of the narrative.

In most cases, motivation usually surfaces when a character lacks or desires something, sets out to achieve a goal, or wants to protect what he has against invasion. Some of the character needs may fall within the following: love/sex/procreation, wealth, wisdom/knowledge/understanding, power/domination, glory/fame, preservation/longevity, or any other lack in the basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing.

According to Ekwuazi (2002), motivation in a narrative involves planting of information in advance of an explosive scene. It is believed that a plant must be developed in the course of a story and at the fullness of time, a well-developed piece of information is left to explode in order to perform certain functions, some of these functions are to serve as a logical conclusion, to bring about poetic justice, or to serve other dramatic purposes such as following the chronological structure of human fate or fulfilling the law of karma structure. Lewis Herman (1974:34) is of the opinion that planting could be in the form of a dialogue (voice only), a visual image (image only) or of both the dialogue and the visual image.

Closely related to the causal motivation and planting are interface, dramatic conflict and the generation of tension/ suspense. The meeting point of what Levi-Strauss describes as the 'binary oppositions' or what could be seen as the contending forces in narrative clash with each other has been considered as the point of interface. This is a point where dramatic tension is at its peak. The actual confrontation, the fight or the displayed struggle of these opposing forces, on the other hand, is known as dramatic conflict. According to Kling and McConkey (1982:22), dramatic confrontation could be generated in a film through any of these three modes: (a) a visual confrontation; (b) a sound confrontation; (c) a visual-sound confrontation. Any of the three varieties could be utilised in a narrative in generating tension and enhancing suspense.

A feeling of fear and excitement, which is experienced in the course of a narrative film is known as the dramatic/narrative tension. This is a deliberate creation of the filmmaker to keep viewers glued to the screen. Filmic tension in the case of horror film could result in a feeling of anxiety and stress that makes it impossible to relax while the events are unfolding on screen. From all indications, one could agree to the fact that tension is an indispensable part of suspense.

If tension is part of suspense, then one is bound to ask what suspense is. Quoting Griffith, Ekwuazi (2002:39) describes suspense as:

> ... a straining forward of interest, a compelling desire to know what will happen next. When a hearer [viewer] is totally at a loss to know what will happen, but is eager to ascertain; when he partly guesses what will take place, but deeply desires to make sure; or he almost holds back so greatly does he dread an anticipated situation…

Willingly or unwillingly, anyone who experiences the described situation must have had his/her interest captured by the narrative. Essentially, it could be observed that in all the major films, especially those used in this study, the suspense is generated by any of the identified modes of confrontation. However, it is better realised and perceived through the establishment of visible conflicting "characters", "objects" or "projected ideas". This is the only way a good narrative can move "...from question to answer, from problem to solution" or create a state where the viewer will ask "what has happened? What is going on? Or what will happen next?

Patterns of development

The pattern of *development* is another principle of narrative construction that governs the form of a given film. This principle is not only required in constructing the flow of information in narrative films and in decoding the manifestation of various narrative theories (such as the binary opposition; similarity and difference or the search for a new equilibrium) in a film system, but also helps in detecting and piecing together the various movements within a given narrative plot – the running from the beginning through the middle to the end.

Although there are narratives that follow sequential order, there are others that do not follow the chronological order or based only on repetition and difference. Such other narratives still work with the principle of progression in which the plot moves from the initial point (the first equilibrium) to the final destination (the second equilibrium).

Going by the identified narrative patterns in Ekwuazi (2002), and what is obtainable on global scene, common patterns of story development include love, success, Cinderella, crime, detective, triangle, return, vengeance, conversion, sacrifice, dance, ritual and family patterns.

Moreover, as a way of revisiting and building on the patterns of development, one should not forget the fact that each prototype depends on a mode of presentation or what could be regarded as the flow of information in

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narrative construction. To be exact, most patterns of plot development depend heavily upon the ways that causes and effects create a change in a character's situation.

The flow of information in narrative construction

The flow of information in narratives could be seen as the various ways in which the storyteller/filmmaker manipulates the three basic components of causality, time and space along with other narrative elements in a story. Fundamentally, causality has to do with the presentation of causes and effects of any given plot. Thus causality is a common trend, which could be found in all the previously cited films under tenet of causality and related principles. A plot can also lead viewers to "infer" causes and effects in rebuilding the unfolding events into a total story. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2004:73), "The detective film furnishes the best example of how this active construction of the story may work."

In diagnosing the plot in detective film, the viewer is initially shown a crime committed. In most cases, the effect is shown and not the cause – neither the motive, nor the method is seen. By withholding these pieces of information in a detective film, the narrative will follow the mystery pattern. Thus, this pattern depends strongly on the viewer's curiosity or desire to know the events that have occurred before the current ones. In a mystery film, the narrative

expects the viewer to perform a detective's job of discovering the missing information or the circumstances that surround the cause – such as guessing who the culprit is, establishing his motive and perhaps showing his method before the film runs out.

Detective narratives often withhold causes for later use but this pattern is not restricted to detective films alone. Any film that restructures its plot from the usual chronological order can withhold causes and thus arouse viewer's curiosity. But basically, all the patterns of story development could be structured into any of the following modes of presentation – a change in knowledge or a goal-oriented plot/search patterns.

A change in knowledge is a narrative pattern in which the viewer is given two different pieces of information in the course of a film. While the first reveals the basic state of affairs – the first equilibrium, the other reveals the new status quo – the second equilibrium. A change in knowledge could be for the character, for the viewer or both. Due to the level of experience gathered, a cast may be better or worse for it. Similarly, due to the volume of information gathered/released, a viewer is better informed on the various occurrences in the course of a narrative film and better equipped to deal with similar situation in reality.

A goal-oriented plot/search patterns is a type of narrative in which the filmmaker establishes a goal for the lead role. In the process of accomplishing his

set target, he is bound to face some challenges. Sometimes the convention of the binary opposition theory may play itself out. Another individual or an equally determined force will set another goal of voiding the hero's effort. One important occurrence is that these two opposing forces should cross path and one should give in to the superior force.

At this juncture, it should be acknowledged that, there is no rigid demarcation between these two patterns, just as it is possible for a story to fall simultaneously under these two categories of a change of knowledge and a goal oriented plot patterns. Furthermore, other factors of the narrative construction could still affect and create multi-structural patterns in any story development. Specifically, framing mode, time or space may also affect or determine the plot pattern.

The framing style of a filmmaker in a production could be used to identify a unique pattern of story development. For instance, the presentation style in *The Narrow Path* makes use of a series of flashbacks. The invocation of this flashback technique reveals the importance of the "recalled events" and their various contributions towards the final destination in this narrative.

The temporal factor could also be used to create another development pattern of a story. Oftentimes, a plot with a specific duration for the action would result in a story with deadline pattern. In realising this pattern, a specific target should be accomplished within stipulated time. The specific duration that

is usually conjured for accomplishing such a task ranges from a minute to a year or two. In other words, a plot may set a minute target, 30 minutes or 60 minutes deadline;   90 minutes/one and a half hours, two hours time lapse, 24 hours (as in "Iyawo Ijo Kan") or 48 hours (as in "48 Hours"); a three day deadline; a week, two or three weeks; a month, a three-month or a nine-month target, etc.

The special factor is another element that could also serve as basis for a plot development pattern. In this type of narrative, all the action usually occurs within a specific vehicle or a restricted space. All the action in the narrative is confined to a specific vehicle – car/bus, train, aeroplane or ship. In the case of a restricted space, a single locale/place is used. Here, the venue could be a room, an office/factory, a house/building (e.g. "Home alone"), a campus ("O Le Ku") or a town ("Saworoide"/"Agogo-Eewo").

Other story development patterns include story based on restricted number of cast pattern. Here, the number of cast in the narrative might not be more than two or three or four casts. A story could be based on repeated actions via cycles of events i.e. "here we go again" pattern and finally, a story could be based on a multidimensional pattern. In this case, a plot will combine some of these previously discussed patterns.

The principles of time and space

Time has been established as the closest element to the cause-effect of a plot structure in the principle of narrative construction. Even though, it is possible in a nonlinear format to have a story occurring eternally in void, oftentimes, most realistic stories will depict action based on temporal and special orders. In other words, any action so identified, presented or demonstrated in a narrative should take place in time and space. Basically, time and space help in shaping viewer's understanding of the narrative action as once demonstrated in the story of the unauthorised bicycle rider in the previous section of this work.

It is observed that the story-plot distinction helps in clarifying how time shapes viewer's understanding of a narrative action. Going back to one of the issues on story-plot relationship, one can see that when the sequence of a plot is not presented in a chronological order, viewers could reconstruct the story time on the basis of what is presented.

Secondly, when a spectator is actively engaged in decoding a narrative film, he is not disturbed when ellipsis is invoked in the course of the production. He could understand that a film could use ellipsis as a device of time management. Thus, the invocation of this technique often helps in eliminating uneventful time spent in sleeping, travelling from place to place, eating, or in

growing up. This is to emphasise a better point of focus and to create a concise story.

Therefore, the use of timeline or other time devices will equally make the story to be more interesting. From most of the films studied in this research, it is discovered that majority of the Nigerian films seldom use ellipsis effectively during production. On occasions where it is used, there are still some lapses which often need tidying up. In order to understand, analyse or to create a neat narrative structure for a film, there are three sub-elements crucial to proper deployment of temporal factor in films and these are temporal order, temporal duration and temporal frequency.

Temporal order: Collaborating what has been explained in other sections of this study under the formal system on "Principle of story/plot development", Ekwuazi (2002) is of the opinion that, 'The "natural" [temporal] order of a story is for the events that constitute it to run from the beginning, through the middle to the end: in the $1 -> 2 -> 3$ order.' For instance, the narrative plot could be presented in the 1–>2–>3 format ("Saworoide", "Àbèní 1&2"). However, in order to reflect any of the following alternatives, it is also possible for a plot to be juggled out of its chronological order of the events that constitute a plot/story: 1–>3–>2 ("Thunderbolt..."); 2–>3–>1 ("Alantakun"; "Koseegbe"); 2–>1–>3 ("Agogo–Eewo", "Kuforiji", "Sunmisola" "Otelemuye", "Alase"); 3–>1–>2 ("MaaMi", "the Campus Queen") and 3–>2–>1.

As stated earlier, no matter the order in which the plot is presented to the viewer, it is possible for the spectator to reconstruct the plot and come out with a true chronological order of the story in his mind. In other words, "Such options mean that in constructing the story out of its plot, the viewer tries to put events in chronological order and to assign them some duration and frequency." (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:74).

On temporal duration and frequency, Ekwuazi (2002:44) explains that the temporal duration of the story events deals with the amount of time taken up by the story event, while temporal frequency is the number of times in which a story event occurs. The temporal duration covers three different types of time. The first is the story time; the second is the plot time, while the third is the screening time. In "Saworoide" for example, the story time could be fixed between a generation (30years) and half a century (50years). The plot duration, on the other hand, could be fixed within 12 years and 15 years. Moreover, one can say that the temporal duration covers not only the story and the plot durations but the screen duration – the amount of time taken in watching the film could be placed around 103 minutes.

In most cases, the plot duration selects from story time, while the screen time also selects from the plot duration. Consequently, it would be right to reiterate the claim that the three identifiable sub components of temporal

duration are the story duration, the plot duration and the screen duration which are vital to any good narrative film.

The temporal frequency also deals with the number of times a story event occurs in a narrative. Most playwrights and scholars are of the view that a story event should appear once in the plot. However, in a film with a complex plot, a single story event may appear twice or thrice or even more in the plot treatment. Therefore, critics should understand the two basic ways in which the temporal frequency is used in a narrative. They should be able to identify – a single repetition of a story event and the several repetition of a story event.

As a sub component of temporal frequency, a single repetition of a story event usually forms part of the narrative as a "flashback" or a "flash-forward". A flashback sequence recalls, reflects; recounts or meditates on a previous event or witnessed occurrence in the course of a narrative, while a flash-forward can be used to suggest, project, telescope or plant information ahead in the course of a story. In Ekwuazi's (2002:45) view, these two "...are but different sides of the same coin: what applies to the one applies to the other." The several repetition of a story event that comes in form of multiple narrations/increased frequency or different levels of information frequency is a rare occurrence in Nollywood.

In most film cultures, the invocation of a flashback is a common technique used in repeating a story event. This is a situation where an event has been revealed once in the course of a narration but due to its structural function and

importance, the same story event is repeated in form of flashback to serve as a motivation/a motif for other actions.

Apart from serving as a motif or a narrative technique, a flashback could equally be used to expand or to contract time. When it expands time, the story event will appear at least twice in the course of a story. However, when it is used to contract time, the story event may appear just once which might not be a full length event. Oftentimes, such series of events will come in form of montage sequence. In other words, rather than showing the full length action, the flashback will show the abridged faction of events in form of a reflection or a flash.

The several repetition of a story event as the second sub elements of temporal frequency usually comes in form of multiple narrations or increased frequency of a single story event. Fundamentally, this technique is applied to reveal an occurrence as experienced through different characters or seen from different individuals/perspectives. It may come in form of a view perceived from diverse opinions or different levels of information frequency. In this situation of multiple repetitions, each view provides a new piece of information to viewers on a single event in the story. Viewers are made to see different angles/deeper levels of a story event, and different levels of information frequency. The technique of multiple narratives is mostly employed, first, for viewers to understand the re-contextualisation of old information. That is, seeing a single

story event in a new context or in a new light whenever it reappears. Secondly, it helps viewers in recognising the movement of a plot towards the resolution of the puzzle raised in the course of the film. Thirdly, it aids in the creation of the appropriate mood, tension and suspense, thereby making the climax more interesting and effective.

Space

Space in narrative construction has to do with different locales or settings featured in a film. Special factor of narrative could either take concrete form in a linear story system or assume/immaterial form as in the case of nonlinear story system. Although space is not only an integral part of mise-en-scene, but an essential element that require a detailed examination and thus, it will be given further attention under the analysis of the mise-en-scene.

At this juncture, it will only be introduced as a factor under this principle of narrative construction. It has been observed that in some other media, a narrative might emphasise only causality and time. Many anecdotes (other nonlinear stories) do not specify where the actions are taking place. In film narrative, however, space is usually identified as a visible component even when events occur in elusive or invisible locales such as a dream situation or when they occur in a particular physical venue.

In going into how plot and story can manipulate space, one would naturally agree to the fact that the place of the story action is also that of the plot, but

sometimes, the story will lead viewers to infer other locales that are not presented in the plot as part of the story.

It is observed that, one can introduce an idea akin to the concept of screen duration. Besides the story space and the plot space, video films equally employ screen space. This is the visible space within the frame. Consequently, as it is with the temporal components, one could equally identify the sub elements of the spatial components in a video/cinematic production to the story space, the plot space and the screen space.

The story space as the name connotes, deals with both the presented and inferred locales in a narrative. While the plot space deals with the revealed locations (diegetic and non diegetic) within a plot of a film, the screen space deals with the manipulation of the camera; it involves spaces revealed or hidden on screen. Thus, it is a major factor under mise-en-scene.

By a broader implication, if screen duration selects certain plot spans for presentation while the plot equally takes some parts of the story duration, then one could say that screen space equally selects portions of plot space, while the plot can also select from the story space. By the same token, one could say further that on spatial realm, spatial duration and spatial frequency work in the same way as the temporal duration and temporal frequency work under the temporal application. In addition to this, there are times when the video film makes creative use of off screen spaces in a narrative presentation.

The principles of the range and the depth of story information in plot construction

It is a fact that a narrative film does not only manipulate degrees of the unfolding knowledge but also manipulates the depth of the viewer's knowledge. For this reason, the next discussion will be on the flow of information in narrative construction and other related issues. It should be noted, however, that, every issue raised in the following discourse will be based on an African approach of examining the available facts (i.e. an Afro-centric approach).

Fundamentally, the manipulation of story information is not just a matter of the action that is taking place in the film, but that any choice about range or depth of information has concrete effects on how the spectator thinks and feels about the unfolding events on the screen. But first, one may ask: "what is the range or the depth of story information in plot construction?"

From available data, the range or the depth of story information could be seen as a careful process of relating and decoding different actions/events in a story at various points of a narrative construction. It involves a systematic navigation to and from exiting spots of a narrative in order to capture and sustain the viewers' interest while relating the whole story in a film. "In general, when we go to a film, we know relatively little about the story. By the end we know a lot more, usually the whole story. What happens in between?" (Bordwell and

Thompson, 2004:2). In answering this question, one could say that in most cases, filmmakers (Africans or non-Africans) usually attempt to arrest and manipulate spectator's feelings through a captivating opening or by just whetting the viewer's appetite at the commencement of each narrative. Then through a careful process of divulging information at various points or through a systematic navigation to and from exiting spots, the whole story is related to viewers.
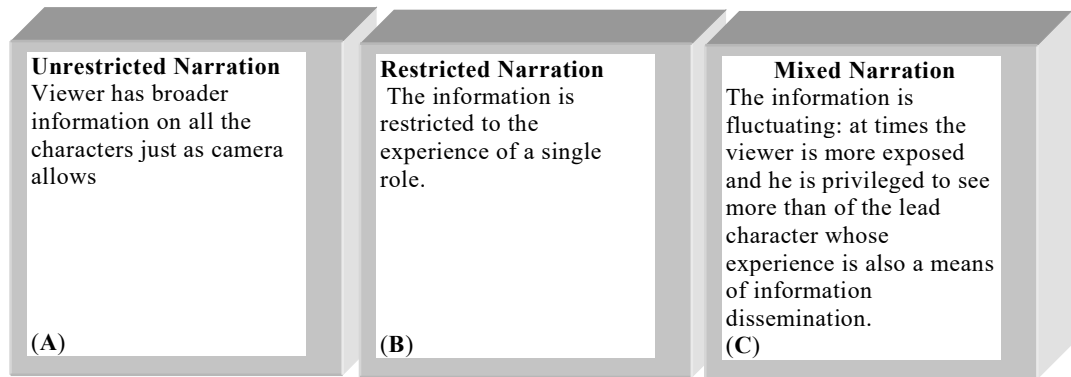
Range of story information

This deals with how a narrative/filmmaker reveals or relates the story to the viewer by adopting a narrative method/style. Oftentimes, filmmakers like novelists, adopt various captivating and interest sustaining methods in telling their stories. According to Murphy (1982:150), six (6) different styles could be identified and treated as the various ways of telling a story in a novel. These identified narrative methods are itemised, while some of the methods are applied to explain the existing narrative styles in the selected Nigerian films:

1. Autobiographical narrative method – This is a style in which the story is told by the first person, here the viewer is privileged to see only what the story teller had gone through and what he is currently experiencing.

2. Epistolary narrative method – This is a style in which a single story is revealed in series, episodes or parts. Starting from the first through to

the last episode, there is a continuation and retention of the roles, settings, costumes, props and other elements of narration.

3. Eye-of-God/Omniscient narrative method – This is a type of story in which the eye of the camera assumes that of God who is all-seeing and all-knowing.

4. Stream-of-consciousness narrative method – This is a method in which the story is told through the inner mind of a character, just like the autobiographical method where the story is told by the first person. Experience shared in this story is the reflection of the lead role. In this case, the whole narrative will be centred on his ideas and experiences.

5. Mixed narrative method – This is a style in which a filmmaker combines some of the above methods in telling the story in a single production.

6. Personal authorial interruption narrative method – This is a situation in which writers of novels or the film auteurs step right into the narrative and address readers or viewers directly in their own persons.

Bordwell and Thompson (2004) summarise all the six identified storytelling methods into three types. These are the unrestricted, the restricted and the mixed narrative methods. These three methods are categorised under the range of story information in film productions and each of these three categories could be represented thus:

Unrestricted Narration	Restricted Narration	Mixed Narration
Viewer has broader information on all the characters just as camera allows	The information is restricted to the experience of a single role.	The information is fluctuating: at times the viewer is more exposed and he is privileged to see more than of the lead character whose experience is also a means of information dissemination.
(A)	(B)	(C)

Depth of story information

On the depth of story information, attention is on diagnosing how the narrative/filmmaker manipulates the depth of viewers' knowledge. Fundamentally, the depth of story information is meant to reveal a character's psychological state. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2004:85), "Just as there is a spectrum between restricted and unrestricted narration (in the degree of story information), there is also a continuum between objectivity and subjectivity (in the depth of story information)."

A narrative is relatively objective when its plot confines the viewer only to information about characters' external behaviour – speeches and actions. However, a narrative film could also be relatively subjective, whenever the film's plot grants viewers access to what a character sees, hears and thinks. Thus, it is possible to deduce three broad categories of subjective sources of information as: optical, sound and mental perspectives. The optical perspective

is called the point-of-view shots. This is a situation in which shots are taken from a character's optical standpoint. Sound perspective is a situation in which the viewer perceives sounds or hears auditory information from the character's view. The sound perspective offers a greater degree of subjectivity. For this reason, this perspective has been regarded as perceptual subjectivity. This perspective brings about the possibility of accessing a character's thought through auditory means or it is a case where the plot plunges into the character's mental state through acoustic channel.

Mental perspective has to do with using both the optical and sound or audiovisual means in penetrating or revealing character's thought, dream, or any other form of psychological perception or mental state of mind. Man thinks and dreams in audiovisual form; thus, mental perspective is yet another way of accessing the subjective view, mental perception or inner thought/information of a character on screen. It is possible through this channel, for the spectators to hear and see simultaneously the character's memory, fantasy, dreams, or visions in form of inner images and sounds.

It is on record that a restricted range of knowledge does not necessarily or always create a greater subjective depth. Although oftentimes, restricted range of knowledge works with subjective depth of story information, it is also possible to have a film with restricted range of knowledge working with an objective narrative.

Even though it is common to have omniscient narration working with objective depth of information, it is equally possible to have a production based on unrestricted range of knowledge with pockets of subjective depth of information.

Identification of the various components of the mise-en-scene

Due to specific interest of the study, effort is only made at this point to identify the various components of the mise-en-scene. Thus, the setting; the costume and makeup; the lighting system; the acting and the movement could be identified as the elements of the mise-en-scene.

Conclusion

In an attempt to establish the various analytic models and project research hypotheses, this chapter has been able to present a review of the selected observations and views of scholars on Nigerian films in contemporary discourse. Specifically, Hyginus Ekwuazi, Foluke Ogunleye, Akinwumi Isola, Duro Oni, and Kayode Animasaun are considered.

On the issue of analytic models, the formalist theory is identified as a basic tool of investigation because the formal analytic technique is capable of absorbing other theories/analytical models. Narrowing down the theoretical lens of formalist to a specific format, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's formalist theory is deployed as the study guide.

The chapter equally discusses some features of Bordwell and Thompson's formalist theory along with other supplementary theories which include Dennis Diro Aiyejina's supernatural theory in African drama, Vladimir Propp's roles or spheres of action narrative theory, Tzvetan Todorov's equilibrium theory, and Claude Levi-Strauss' binary opposition theory.

Due to the scope of this study and in an attempt to adopt the formalist theory to the specific African narrative film situation, a new template for African films is developed with new features of formal and stylistic systems. Under the formal system, only the narrative and abstract films are identified while the various principles of narrative construction are discussed. Under the stylistic system, the pattern and significant used of mise-en-scene is acknowledged, while the different components of mise-en-scene are only identified. Fundamentally, each of the theories so treated in this chapter serves as basis for further discussion in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

FEATURES OF NIGERIAN/YORUBA MOVIES

Introduction:

In Chapter Two, it is established that the formalist theory accommodates a study of films or film culture through a national/racial cinema approach. Having adopted this approach, the study examines the distinctive ways in which a nation, a race or a culture portrays the world by exploring the unique attributes of that culture and by identifying various factors which distinguish a film/a film culture from others or by examining the traits that produce some specific composition/effects in a film system.

It is pertinent to understand the unique attributes of Nigerian films/film culture in which the formalist theory is deployed and since it is believed that a national or racial cinema approach will lead a research work into a deeper understanding of the themes of films or a film culture. In this chapter, attempt is made to deploy formalist theory of national/racial cinema approach in identifying and discussing the specific characteristics of Nigerian-Yoruba films so as to aid other critics in the attempt to decode, comprehend, and critique films from Nollywood, especially Yoruba films. Consequently, the following identified attributes are discussed: the principle of non-linear plot structure; the principle of pessimistic pedagogy and the forms of narrative in Yoruba films.

Principle of nonlinear plot structure in Nigerian/Yoruba films

It is observed that most Nigerian/Yoruba narratives often go through metaphysical experience before the final resolutions. Therefore, the principle of non-linear plot structure in Nigerian/Yoruba films could be approached from the previously established fact that it is plausible for every event in Nigerian/Yoruba

world view to occur in an unlimited time and space just as the understanding of any metaphysical occurrence will require a cultural judgment rather than a logical reasoning. Hence, the various events or reoccurrences in the Yoruba film plot could exist perpetually in omnipresent, omniscient and omnidirectional modes.

In demonstrating how meaning is derived or received from a nonlinear plot system in Yoruba creative world, the following scenario could be insightful lead into Yoruba world of imagination and creativity that would be followed by a cultural explanation:

> A colleague comes to see Dauda at home, while discussing, Dauda informs his friend that as soon as he secures the staff cooperative loan, he will use it to purchase a saloon car, unaware that his first son is eavesdropping. As soon as Dauda sees his colleague off, his son comes into the sitting room and starts daydreaming by vocalising his thought. Suddenly Dauda walks back into the sitting room while his son is deeply engrossed in his daydreaming on the proposed car. Just then he demonstrates how fearlessly he will handle his father's car while racing against other fast moving cars on the highway. Knowing the reckless plan his son has for his car, this instantly upsets Dauda and within a short while he descends on his son as he beats him into a coma. On realising what he has done, he raises alarm for help...(Ola-Koyi, 2006)

First, the bone of contention in this dream-like experience in the above extract is "a saloon car." As a 'proposed car' this suggests a futuristic and unreal element. The reaction of the boy is another futuristic component, a proposed intention based on a previously established objective. However, the action of the father in beating the boy to a coma is not an abstract act but a reality. Consequently, one can see the omnidirectional nature of this plot system. Here,

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the stream of consciousness in the above extract flows in and out of linearity. Thus, the linear structure is basically destructured in favour of nonlinearity.

Again in decoding this experience, the story requires a cultural interpretation before it could be fully understood. To an African or a Yoruba man, the action of Dauda could not be considered as ordinary but an action under the influence of a spell ("asasi" or "eedi"), while a non-African will see his action as irrational and highly irresponsible. Even if Dauda is not under a spell, an African interpretation will still excuse Dauda's action on the premise that African culture expects children to be respectful, docile, and submissive to their parents. Any child who fails to do these should be disciplined and tamed. Scolding children is, therefore, not an act of abusing thee minor; rather it is a means of inculcating discipline into a naughty boy or correcting a wayward child.

Secondly, based on the foregoing narrative, one could say that the events in the plot occur in a state of "isness." There, one could easily notice the abrogation of time and space. For clarity, the abrogation of the temporal logic could further be analysed thus: the future (the intention or the proposed car) flows into the present (by generating a new intention – the dream of the son in driving his father's car and the father's reaction in beating the boy into a state of coma) before receding into the past (on realising the fact that the boy is unconscious) and coming back again into the present, (Dauda raises an alarm for

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help). That is, the experiences shared occurred at a period when there is no future or past but everything is taking place in an immediate present. Simply put, in the nonlinear plot system, the eye of the camera often operates as an omniscient story teller, sharing experiences from an omnipresent point of view.

The omniscient and the omnipresent nature of this plot system lend credence to the issue of the complete abolition of the spatial plane. In the story under review, one would agree that the various events recorded occurred in fluid space. Here, the viewers are placed in an omnipresent pedestal where they can see how the first set – the real sitting room – flows into the second – an imaginary place where cars are sold, and the third location – an imaginary highway of the boy's fantasy – and fades back to the sitting room – as his father jolts him back to reality.

If the argument of the abrogation of time and space could be applied further to the nature of the camera, screen, prose writing or news casting, one could say that although a story might refer to the past or the future, the real moment (time) and the real place where a story is shared – screened or told is the real time and space of the narrative. That is, every event being revealed will occur in an infinitive now and space.

Even though the various events are cut out of time, space, and logical reasoning, the element of causality is not completely eliminated in this extract as viewers could still decide whether one event proceeds or follows the other.

In order to incorporate the nonlinear plot system into contemporary science as Ornstein (1972) suggests, one could see that most Nigerian narrative films have provided a lead way. The above extract, for instance, provides a new perspective when compared with the linear plot system. It is easy to see the above perspective as structural illogicality. But its omnidirectional, omnipresent and omniscient features suggest a composition of new structure based on cultural logic where hitherto the unexplainable metaphysical components or unscientific experiences are made comprehensive and conceivable for the audience's interpretation.

Put differently, it could be said that the lack of orthodox linearity in the above extract is tantamount to the lack of a psychological framework for the nonlinear time, space, and destructured logicality experienced. But from the explanation given, one could actually make meaning out of this nonlinear plot system. Thus, a new template could be seen as an unorthodox system where the psychological framework could be discerned.

Again, unlike the linear plot system, the nonlinear plot system could be seen as a framework which possesses a unique but an unorthodox configuration that is based on cultural logic and characterised by reoccurrence of events in perpetual time and infinitive void. This framework could also be seen as a missing link and an answer for some Nollywood film critics who find it difficult to understand why in most Nigerian films every problem is traced to a spiritual

source to paraphrase what Ogunleye, (2008) captures as "Every problem you have is spiritual". This system could be seen as a sufficient template which could be applied in analysing and decoding other Nigerian stories with metaphysical structure.

It should be reiterated that all types of film (linear and nonlinear) in one way or the other are embodied in the narrative form; hence, the narrative is not only common to fictional and abstract films but could be found in documentaries, animated, experimental/avant-garde films. However, the various ways/forms in which each of these basic genres of film uses the narrative structure varies.

The linear narrative basically relies on the logic of causality, time and space in order to make meaning, while the non linear narrative relies on cultural logic which is characterised by the reoccurrence of events in an empty space and in a fluid time. However, it should be stated that this does not mean other formal principles do not govern the working of the non linear plot/narrative system in film.

Principle of pessimistic pedagogy:

Like most African narratives, Yoruba films usually deploy the pessimistic approach in highlighting the theme or the moral intention in a story. The use of the "pessimistic approach" on screen narrative could be seen as a by-product of

the regular practice in featuring philosophical pessimism in most African stories. Going by the view expressed in an online search engine http://en.m.wikipedia.org/:

> Philosophical pessimism is the related idea that views the world in a strictly anti-optimistic fashion. This form of pessimism is not an emotional disposition as the term commonly connotes. Instead, it is a philosophy or worldview that directly challenges the notion of progress and what may be considered the faith-based claims of optimism.

In most African myths, narratives, mass mediated messages, moral teaching, etc., socially accepted values and ideologies are often shared or transferred through a method in which the receiver of a didactic message, myth, narrative or story is expected to learn and desist from evil after experiencing the terrible outcome of specific vices from the shared theme/lesson of the myths, narratives, mass-mediated messages and other moral teaching stories. Essentially, this "pessimistic approach" or pessimistic method of sharing the theme/lesson or experiencing narrative messages is an ethical method that seeks to eliminate vices and evil in the society by exposing the audience/listener/receiver of the message to the distasteful realities in the evil world and revealing irrational realities of the false expectations, which may lead to undesirable outcomes.

The pessimistic pedagogy could, therefore, be seen as an ethical approach to inculcating moral in the society. Narratives or mass mediated messages that mirror evil deeds are to serve as deterrents for others who have tendencies for such actions. Having been made to experience the harsh reality of the evil world

or the consequences of evil acts in a narrative, people are expected to desist from such acts or other social vices.

It is observed that a narrative could be presented either by mirroring or through interrogative/modelling modes. When a "mirroring modus" is invoked, the filmmakers often present a film fashion of events in reality in form of entertainment, without any interpretation or interrogation. But when an "interrogative modus" is utilised, the presentation will not only mediate on the event in reality but also interrogate and interpret the events in form of edutainment that will be beneficial to viewers/receivers of such presentations.

It could be observed that most Nigerian narrative movies employ a "mirroring" rather than an "interrogative modus" of presentation. Consequently, in most Yoruba productions where the mirroring style of presentation is used, the themes of such productions are often projected through the pessimistic pedagogy. In this situation, viewers will uncover, through the screened narrative, the evil occurrences in the story that could serve as deterrents in their own reality. Hence, viewers are expected to shun evil after watching such a film by making up their minds not to do evil or picking up their own interpretations/lessons from the story.

Furthermore, the operators of this pessimistic pedagogy (directors /filmmakers/scriptwriters) often hang it on the mirroring school of drama/film presentation/projection or production. In deploying the pessimistic pedagogy

based on the mirroring modus, issues are mostly projected on screen as a reflection of reality. Thus, the evil acts are reflected in a realistic manner, a realistic picture of issues with minor or no modification. In this case, spectators are not only forced to face the harsh reality of human existence or see the callousness in human life, but through the repulsive reactions so generated in spectators, the filmmakers expect viewers to be dissuaded from embarking on such insensitive and wicked acts.

If well managed, in some fairy tales, myths or narrative films, the invocation of this pessimistic modus could be very effective in influencing and generating a positive change in the audience. However, there are other instances in films and due to ignorance on proper use of this method and the influence of other variables such as commercialisation policies of the filmmakers, glamorisation of materialism, the rule of plausibility and implausibility, this method could be abused and will, therefore, fail to accomplish its set target of serving as deterrent or generating positive impact on viewers.

Moreover, it could be reiterated that, the main danger of this method is in its abuse and misuse. For instance, if the film personnel (screenwriters, directors or producers) should devote a larger part of the screen time (i.e. 90 minutes of a 120 minutes film) to glorifying and making the criminal experiences very attractive at the expense of the time (30 minutes) left in showing the unpalatable outcome(s) of evil deeds, the strength of this approach will be drastically

weakened. The efforts invested in such film may be tantamount to what Isola (2008) terms "holding up decay as a model for the society to copy."

If the basic aim of mirroring and revealing the disastrous outcomes of social evils on screen is to discourage people from committing crimes, then the effort and method invested in the making of such films should be truly channelled towards interrogating issue and giving direction on what ought to be which will discourage viewers from patronising and perpetuating evil. For instance, the producer/director of a narrative film on ritual money needs to play down on the glamour, which such unholy income could accord the perpetrator of such evil and concentrate more on analysing the various levels of repercussions of the vices.

Based on the foregoing, one could then advocate a shift in paradigm. The auteur of any film could establish the pessimistic pedagogy through interrogative modus of drama/film presentation; thus, rather than producing story for entertainment, they can produce story for modelling or edutainment sake. A new situation could, therefore, emerge where filmmakers will present not a film version of events in reality, but a mediated mode of reality on screen. This mode will naturally require deep interpretation, better understanding of the role of the auteur as thinker and a further interrogation of social occurrences. In this situation, viewers will not be exposed to evil occurrences in reality through the screen narrative but will experience a well-developed cum mediated screen

message that is directed towards the specific objective of correcting evil. Consequently, viewers will receive the message not just as a filmic reflection of social reality, but as a mediated message full of appropriate interpretations and good lessons from the screen.

Forms of narrative in Yoruba films

The concept of a dominant mode of narrative in Nollywood as used here is not suggesting the exclusion of other forms of narratives but rather acknowledging the fact that there exist some unique characteristics of African/Yoruba story in the midst of other forms of narratives. The dominant mode/form of narrative in Yoruba films is, therefore, meant to narrow down the focus of this discussion into specific, identifiable features or unique characteristics of the Yoruba narratives. The interest in this mode is based on the conviction that despite the inbuilt system of supernatural elements or linear and nonlinear structures, the African/Nigerian films, especially Yoruba films still share some features of the American or Asian fictional movies.

From all indications, Vladimir Propp's (1983) study attempts to look at the common trend in selected stories and this is what brings about his "spheres of action theory". Propp (1983) opines that:

> What is apparently the same act can function in different ways for different narratives. For instance, the 'prince' may build a castle (or a spaceship) as: a preparation for a wedding; a defiance of a prohibition; or a solution of a task.

In his attempt to establish the common features in all the stories in his study, Propp's (1983) argues that "…meaning and fundamental structures of different stories could be diagnosed by considering the ways in which many different figures … can be reduced to eight character roles." However, in this study, efforts are made to analyse common practices or conventions in Nollywood movies not in line with Propp's "spheres of action theory", but in comparison with the classical Hollywood mode.

It is a fact that fictional film like any other medium of narrative in every culture could be dominated by a single mode of narrative form. In the American experience, this dominant mode is tagged the "Classical Hollywood Cinema" (Bordwell and Thompson, 2004:89). Similarly, other filmic traditions such as Indian film or Bollywood culture and Chinese films culture have their unique ways of telling stories. Even though there are some distinctive modes and restricted factors common to a specific narrative culture, there are some common features which could still be found in all narratives despite the variations in their cultures.

In the Nigerian experience, the dominant mode of narrative has many qualities that could be compared with the Hollywood mode. Some of the features so far identified include:

i) **Human characters used as primary agents of causality:** The actions in these movies always spring from human characters employed as primary agents of causality. Although natural causes (flood, earthquakes or other unfavourable weather conditions) or societal causes (institutions, wars, economic depressions) or metaphysical causes (ghost, witches, charm and spell) or animal with human attributes (bird, cats, goat, snake) could serve as primary agents of causality/catalysts or preconditions for the narrative action, however, the main agents of change in Nollywood stories are still human beings. In this case, the chain of actions in a narrative may be triggered off from personal human needs (which may be physical, psychological or physiological needs), group interests, or societal demands. These needs or desires will invariably come down to decisions, choices, actions or reactions of the characters involved in the narrative. While the Hollywood productions have been able to reflect on every sphere of human endeavour, due to financial and technical limitations, the common areas of exploration in Nollywood films have been restricted to societal, animal and metaphysical issues.

ii) **Having Spiritual Colouration:** Majority of the Yoruba fictional films studied in this work have spiritual colouration; a situation in which the plot reveals man as mere handmaid to the gods or metaphysical forces could be identified as another feature or narrative convention in Nollywood. The

supremacy accorded the metaphysical forces on screen has its origin in the Yoruba world view. Consequently, the supernatural is often given the supreme status which no man could dare question or antagonise. Hence, the operating principle is "that which is greater than man has the final say." This assertion is often justified by the fact that, once the spiritual universe is upset through human error, a sacrifice or a prescription must be offered to secure the second "spiritual equilibrium." In line with this, most filmmakers have various ways of reflecting human fate and destiny or in projecting different operations on the law of karma, hence, the saying, *asegbe kan ko si, a se pamo lo wa*, meaning "no atom of evil will go undetected, even though it could be hidden for a while" thus "no sinner will go unpunished." According to Ola-Koyi, (2009:4), "for every man's flaw, there is a merited punishment which could not be eradicated by any act of forgiveness."

In recent film criticism, the metaphysical influence on Yoruba narrative films is seen as overstressed to the point of constituting a major obstacle identified in topical essays (e.g. the shortcomings on Nigerian films, featured on Obafemi Awolowo University, (O.A.U.) intranet source, 10th of October, 2007.)

iii) **Invocation of binary opposition:** This could be seen as another feature of Yoruba films. In this case, an interest/desire and counter-interest/desire could be identified as the two important traits in any dramatic narrative. While a desire of a role will kick-start the chain of events in a narrative, the counter-interest of another character will bring into the narrative a conflicting structure. A conflict has been established as "the soul of any dramatic presentation". (Ola-Koyi, 2009:8)

In the Nigerian film experience, this binary desire is often projected in a simple narrative format. The craving for binary opposition is usually projected in a plot by setting up a goal for the hero, while the counterforce within the same plot will be given a contrary goal, aiming at voiding the previously set goal. As a result, a binary structured process as propounded by Levi-Strauss (1955) will reveal the two main blocks of the protagonist and the antagonist. These two characters whose traits and goals are opposed could either be human agents or any other catalyst. Along with this binary structure, all other dramatic elements will come to play their parts in the course of the unfolding events through the two opposing forces.

To be precise, one could see in the linear plot pattern of films that the structure of cause and effect usually comes to play when characters desire things which are capable of bringing about changes from the initial point – "the first equilibrium" to another status quo – the second equilibrium. Both the initial

desires and counter goals usually serve as motivations for the cause and effect mechanism. But in certain films with active, goal-oriented protagonists and antagonists, both the protagonists' desire and the counter goals of the antagonists are projected at the initial stage. These goals are then developed in the course of the unfolding narrative in a film by alternating the revelations of the opposing forces in actions through to the climax before a final resolution could be obtained at the end of the narrative. However, some "supposed" action films end up as caricatures or "accidental comedies" for viewers due to improper articulation of goals and counter goals. In these types of productions, one could see that either or both of these objectives are usually not properly or logically articulated in the plots.

iv) **Simple narrative outline/structural pattern:** The structural pattern of most Nollywood productions often follows a simple narrative outline which could be expended to accommodate other socio-political issues. In most cases, the demonstrated evil acts are basically meant to serve, firstly as a deterrent for members of the audience who have similar tendencies for evil, secondly, emphasise a moral end that justifies intrapersonal, interpersonal or social harmony.

The structure of the Yoruba film in particular is said to be simple because viewers could identify early enough, these two forces of the protagonist and the antagonist. Fundamentally, the simplicity of the plot

system in Yoruba films often enables a critical spectator to predict rightly the outcome of a production within few minutes of seeing it. Even in most complex structures, the predictability nature of these films could not be totally erased. In some occasions, the main target of the narrative is accomplished largely through the recourse to metaphysical forces.

v) **Film based on a nonlinear narrative structure:** In examining films based on a nonlinear narrative structure, the issue of cause and effect seldom follows the logical/scientific reasoning but a cultural reasoning as argued elsewhere in this work. For instance, in "Thunderbolt: Magun", the scene where the magun spell is cast on Ngozi (Uche Obi Osotule) is never shown to viewers; no one knows she has a deadly affliction on her body until she is told by a celestial being – her grand mother's spirit. Again, the case against Yinka (Lanre Balogun) is not scientifically established. However, his guilt is established through metaphysical evidence as he refuses to have intercourse with his wife for the fear of sudden death and his refusal to defend himself when accused. Thus he is seen as the culprit who casts the magun spell on his wife. In addition, the attempt of Dr Dimeji Taiwo (Wale Macaulay) to demystify the existence of the *magun* spell ends up confirming the potency of the spell.

Apart from the existence of the linear and nonlinear plot systems, Bordwell and Thompson (2004:90) identify other types of narrative modes which are yet to find their ways into the Yoruba films. For instance, a story can

exist without a well articulated protagonist. According to these scholars, it is possible to have a narrative where no individual serves as protagonist (Sergei Eisenstein's "Potemkin", "October", and "Strike"), or a narrative that eliminates protagonists in totality (Jacques Riveter's "Lamoure Fou" and Robert Altman's "Nashville"); or a narrative where many events are caused not by characters but larger forces (social dynamics in the former, an overarching nature in the latter); or a narrative where the protagonist is not active but passive (Michelangelo Antonioni's "L'Avventura").

Of all categories so identified, only the active, goal-oriented protagonist narrative is common to Nollywood. Lack of technical know-how or total ignorance of the existence of other modes of narrative films on the part of Nigerian filmmakers could be the basic reason for the non-existence of these other modes of narratives in Nollywood. Even though most Nigerian filmmakers desire to bring novel ideas into production, the limited knowledge of production techniques and technology could be seen as a major challenge militating against their desire to create complex story structures and quality productions.

vii) **Invocation of the cut-in-shots:** This is another narrative device that is common to both the Nollywood and the Hollywood films. In this case, some films establish unmotivated intervals between more significant events which sometimes come in form of a panoramic view of a city, the traffic

sequences, or "comic reliefs". Even though in some instances on Nigerian screen, the cut-in-shots are not motivated by narrative cause and effect, they are usually employed for other narrative purposes, which include serving as, a means of plot elongation, a creative/aesthetic device or a marketing strategy. There are instances in some Yoruba films where the cut-in-shots are used as a means of bridging two scenes in order to create the impression of a time-lapse. Some of this could be found in "Abike Alagbere".

In other narrative films, "comic reliefs" are used as "cut in shot", even though the inclusion of a comic relief might have nothing to do with the main plot and sometimes such innovation, if not well coordinated, might end up as "structural holes" in the narrative. However, many producers still include some comic characters as comic reliefs basically for marketing purpose or as a popularity strategy.

In addition, it is possible for Yoruba films to use other materials that are unmotivated by narrative cause and effect. Sometimes, a narrative film features cultural festivals that have nothing to do with the main plot but used to identify the film as traditional genre. It is also possible for a film to be completely subjective in the revelation of dream experiences. As well shuttle ambiguously between objectivity and subjectivity.

viii) **Invocation of simple plot order or complex plot order:** Although it is a common practice in Hollywood narratives to make the causal chain more perplexing or complex in order to capture and sustain the viewer's interest, usually this interest capturing process is done through the restructuring and juxtaposition of the plot of a story out of its chronological order. Majority of the Nigerian filmmakers prefer a simple plot structure. Even though these filmmakers are at liberty to make the causal chain more complex by rearranging the chronological order of the plot of a story, however, very few engage in productions with complex structures.

In "The Narrow Path", for instance, a good attempt is made at utilising both the flashback and the flash forward creatively. The director use the various events in the flashbacks by interspersing them with the main actions of the plot; and with each flashback or flash forward, he varies the depth of story information which gradually introduces viewers to the various causal relations in the plot system.

Apart from this good attempt, there are other filmmakers who abuse /misuse this technique, just as there are some films which actually confuse viewers in the way the flashback or flash-forward is handled. For instance, in using the flashbacks in some films, the camera might dissolve on the face of a character in order to reveal his subjective views of that role but at the end of his experience, the camera will zoom out on another

character who is listening to the narrator. In such a case, one finds it difficult to identify who is actually revealing his thought in the story.

In manipulating both the time and space in a plot, it is common practice to see a situation where the cause-effect chain is made superior to the plot time just as there are other narrations where this cause-effect chain is subjected to the plot time. In the case where the causality factor is made superior, the plot of a film will omit significant durations in order to show only events of causal importance. In this case, the time could either be contracted or expanded to meet the causal demand of the narrative.

In contracting or expanding the time, there are several other technical options a filmmaker could use in addition to the use of the flashback or flash forward. Some of these common alternatives featured in Yoruba films include the use of visual transition (cut, dissolve, fade, defocus-refocus, wipe, flexitron and swish pan); the use of title - "Two Years Later"; the invocation of montage sequence; the use of repeated/recurrent frame or shot; or the use of freeze frame.

In the case where the temporal factor is made superior to the plot in a narrative, the identified/specific motivational devices used in Nollywood narrations include "appointment" and "deadline" narrative techniques. Each of these techniques often subjects the story's causality to the plot temporal factor. When the "appointment" technique is used, each character in the

narrative is motivated to encounter others within a specific rage of time. For instance, "The Narrow Path" uses appointment device in its plot system. Awero's (Sola Asadeko) state of virginity is made the centre of the dramatic conflict and her true status could only be discovered at a point in time, i.e. when Odejimi (Seyi Fasuyi) her groom is to have intercourse with her at a particular place.

When the deadline device is employed, the cause-effect chain of actions is made dependable on a particular time limit within the plot. Basically, the deadline device is employed in creating suspense and sustaining the viewer's interest. In such a plot, every event is motivated towards keeping to or not keeping to the deadline. Two examples of this type of motivational technique could be found in "Thunderbolt: Magun". In the first instance, Ngozi (Uche Obi Osotule) is initially given six weeks ultimatum to get cured of the *magun* spell or meet her untimely death. With the help of Mama Tutu (Bukky Ajayi), and the willingness of her father (Ikem Emordi), she commences the treatment. The second instance occurs at the tail end of Ngozi's treatment, where Ngozi is given another seven days ultimatum within which she must have intercourse with a man for the final test of confirmation on the potency of the *magun* treatment. In whatever form a filmmaker wants to use his motivation, it is advisable for him to make it as clear and complete as possible so that the spectator could follow his point of view.

ix) **Invocation of metaphysical and psychological causes:** In most Yoruba films, the chain of actions is predominantly based on metaphysical and psychological causes, just as a cultural logic could also be deployed to motivate effects and influence other cause-effect chains in a striking way within a narrative. For instance, in Muhydeen Ayinde's "Igboro Ti Daru", even though the actual ritual is not shown, one can see the striking way in which the effect of metaphysical forces operate in the life of a young lady Desola (Tope Osoba) by the actions of Hon Ajewole (Remi Shitta Bay) a ruthless parliamentarian, in terminating her life abruptly. In this sequence, the plot is restructured out of the chronological order in the story so as to present the cause-effect chain in a most striking way.

x) **Insubordination of the audio components to the visual elements:** The Hollywood tradition of filmmaking often subordinates the audio components to the visual elements. However, the visual elements in Yoruba films are often projected as equilibrium to audio components. In other words, speech and soundtrack are placed on equal level with visual images. In most cases, any of these audiovisual elements could be prominently used in revealing parts of a screen story.

In some extreme instances, the deployment of the visual quality is subordinated to audio elements. This often occurs in a situation where words are used as substitutes for the required images in order to reveal

some pieces of vital information or to complete other structural portions of the pictures in the story.

The value so placed on the use of words and other audio means in narrative films could be traced back to the Yoruba world view, where knowledge is not restricted to scientific modes alone. The Yoruba believe in spiritual universe, which is made up of both the physical and metaphysical entities. Thus, words are used in accessing and communicating within the three spheres of existence: the physical, the psychological, and the metaphysical. It is a fact that both the physical and psychological entities could be scientifically verified and logically proven, however, metaphysical entities still defy any logical or scientific experimentation. Thus, words and other audio means remain the most potent means of accessing the spiritual domain in the Yoruba world view.

By extension, some filmmakers exercise this doctrine of the Yoruba world view on the use of words in their productions. Therefore, words are used in both reality and on the screen to address not only the physique/physical nature, but also to communicate with the psychic/psychological (extra-sensory, intuition) and the supernatural (spiritual, mystical) essences of persons, animals, plants, or things. Consequently, in order to understand and appreciate better, the values of

words on Yoruba screens, an adequate acquaintance with Yoruba cultural values and logic is required.

However, a school of thought believes that some filmmakers make use of words on Yoruba screens to make up for their short-comings in film techniques or to cover up their improper application of the film images. Even though this school of thought may be right to a point, however, it is not true in all cases.

xi) **Impacts of socio-cultural roots on films:** Some Yoruba filmmakers are highly tied to their socio-cultural roots, hence, they tend to glorify and project the positive values of their culture. For instance, in "Thunderbolt...", the filmmaker promotes traditional medicine over the orthodox medical practices. In other cases, in some films which members of the Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners (ANTP) consider as "traditional films", there is usually the promotion of indigenous values and ethics, or glorified cultural practices and festivals. A good example of films where tradition rites and fiestas are practised is Jimo Aliu's "Fopomoyo".

However, in another category of film which ANTP classifies as "modern films", the narration usually attacks traditional values, cultural practices and indigenous institutions. Some of these films get to the level that is counter-productive. Oftentimes, such films allow the foreign

religion/faith to conquer the indigenous beliefs/cultural practices. It is on record that this miscarriage of justice occurs on screen due to misunderstanding on the part of the filmmakers, or lack of in-depth knowledge about African values system. It may also occur as a result of deliberate misinterpretation and misplacement of socio-cultural values.

On the part of viewers, those who are culturally conscious and proud of their origin on one hand, will condemn some of these productions that give prominence to foreign elements over the indigenous/cultural values. However, some elites and foreign religious fanatics, on the other hand, will praise such productions that downgrade indigenous principles for a cheap foreign culture in the name of religion.

xii) **Partial implementation of basic functions of mass communication:** According to Schramm (1973:33), basic functions of mass communication could be summarised thus: surveillance and correlation of the environment; transmission of culture/social heritage; and entertainment. Although some of these producers are aware of their functions as part of the senders of the mass mediated massages on preservation and promotion of the socio-cultural heritage of the people, due to commercial interest or the return they make on film productions, majority of Yoruba filmmakers only pay attention to the commercial and

the entertainment gains rather than the cultural values and edutainment gains of the film medium.

It could not be proven that some Yoruba filmmakers/directors as mass communicators and cultural values producers are aware of their functions and duties to the society. Due to personal gain and other inferior interest or super-imposition from higher authority (executive producers/distributors), these duties are ignored for commercial gains, even the National Films and Videos Censor Board (NFCVB) could not help out in this regard.

Furthermore, the surveillance of the environment requires that a filmmaker, as a producer of mass mediated messages, should be conscious of the current happenings in his environment (i.e. being conscious of various occurrences in the national and the international affairs). The correlation of the environment requires a filmmaker to interpret current affairs and information positively for the benefit of his society. However, some Yoruba filmmakers are yet to properly key in to this conditional function by aligning the time of their films released or the themes of their productions into reflecting the seasons (international festive seasons or national holidays) in their environment or societies.

Going by Ekwuazi's (2007) position, personal observation reveals that, rather than reflecting the mood of the seasons, the band wagon

syndrome usually dictates the type of productions for a particular period. In most cases, the new releases do not reflect the actual season of the year. Even though the festive seasons and national holidays are current issues which viewers will appreciate when entrenched in their leisure programmes, the seasons/days such as Christmas, Lenten or Easter seasons for Christians, Ramadan, Id-el-Kabir, or Id-el-Fitri for Muslims or national holidays such as the New Year Day, Worker's Day, National Day or Boxing Day, are yet to appear adequately in Yoruba screen productions.

Even though majority of the Nigerian filmmakers as the senders of the mass mediated massages and culture producers are very resourceful, they are unable to demonstrate adequate interpretation of current issues in their productions. One is, therefore, forced to think that these producers are yet to be exposed to various techniques of interpreting current affairs in productions and this could be the reason for the non-existence of appropriate reflection of seasons or national holidays in some Nigerian/Yoruba films.

Although a good attempt is made by Tunde Kelani in "Arugba", there is still the need for the training and retraining of some of these filmmakers (scriptwriters and directors) on how best they could create some narrations around festive seasons and national holidays.

xiii)   **Ethical issues and general assumptions:** Other related facts on the characteristics of Yoruba films, include ethical issues and general assumptions. On the ethical ground, even though some films, "Igboro Ti Daru" for example, attempts to break the convention of non screening of nudity, the Yoruba screen still does not encourage the revelation of profane act, nudity and sexual act or the dissection of human anatomy on screen.

From all the films studied in this work, over 60% are based on family stories, while 30% are on personal/social harmony. However, less than 10% are on war related issues. On this issue, it is widely believed that Yoruba films are based on domestic story, personal/social harmony or on traditional wars. Although there are attempt to demonstrate the use of modern weaponry in some English/Igbo films, the productions of modern war stories with the use of sophisticated weaponry and the scientific fictional films are still alien to the Yoruba film productions. It is equally believed that due to inadequate capital, some Yoruba filmmakers are very effective in economising the cost on each cast and in obtaining cheap but quality form of production inputs such as the camera and its accessories.

xiv)   **Unique idiom for film closure/ending:** Although most classical Hollywood narrative films display a strong degree of closure at the end,

leaving few loose ends unresolved, these films often seek to complete their causal chains with a final effect. In other words, viewers usually learn the fate of each character, the answer to each mystery, and the outcome of each conflict at the end. Even though a filmmaker needs not resolve all of the actions at the end of a film, films made outside the classical tradition sometimes have open endings/closures.

In the Nigerian experience, some productions in Nollywood often leave the audience dissatisfied due to lack of proper resolution, while others deliberately hang up the resolution till the next episode. It is also shown that Nollywood productions have invented another convention or idiom for film closure/ending. Rather than writing "The End", most Nigerian films will sign off with "To God be the Glory" which is not acceptable in some quarters.

Conclusion

In this chapter, attempt has been made to identify and discuss the principle of non-linear plot structure, the principle of pessimistic pedagogy and the issue of forms in Yoruba narrative films as unique attributes of Nigerian films. It is submitted that these identified features will not only serve as background information and insight for critics but also aid them in decoding and analysing various films from Nollywood, especially Yoruba films from an indigenous African point of view.

CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS,

Introduction

This chapter adopts the formalist principles of the narrative construction in analysing two Tunde Kelani's films – "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ́ní 1&2". The chapter includes the synopses of these two narratives. In applying the principles of the narrative construction, four components of visual narrative are utilised: opening and closing; plot and story; causality (which include time and space) and character identification (which deals with range of story information and depth of story information.)

Production data of "MaaMi"

> 2013. Mainframe Film & T.V. Production. Directed by Tunde Kelani. Screenplay by Tunde Babalola, an adaptation of the novel by Femi Osofisan. Photographed by Sarafa Abagun, Edited by Agboola Kazeem and Hakeem Olowookere. Sound Mixer Bode Odeyemi. Music by The 9ice, Jimi Solanke. Cast: Funke Akindele, Wole Ojo, Tamilore Kuboye, Ayomide Abatti, Y. Davies, Kayode Balogun,Olumide Bakare, Fatai Rolling Dollar, Biodun Kupoluyi.

Synopsis of "MaaMi"

"MaaMi" is based on the struggle of a single parent. According to the director, Tunde Kelani (T. K.), the film, "MaaMi", is all about a desperately poor mother, Ebunola (a.k.a. Maami) and her young son, Kashimawo (a.k.a. Kashi). The boy is gifted, his mother, however, is a woman with a loving heart, enterprising spirit and brave soul. From all indications, she is the centre of her

son's world, until he clocks ten and longs for a kind of dish she never had and a father he has never known – a man with a terrible secret.

In the attempt to celebrate the tenth anniversary for her son, and to give him a special red meat soup he longs for, Ebunola employs so many devices to raise the required capital for this special dish. But in the process of satisfying her son's desire, she loses her life through a motor accident.

Through the method of anachronism, a twenty-three-year past experience is intertwined with a two day occurrence that leads to the World Cup fiesta in 2010. Although Kashimawo, who is the only surviving son of Ebunola, is from a humble background in a south-western Nigerian town of Abeokuta, yet he is a boy with strong determination and a good moral judgement. Through hard work in his study and persistence in training, he eventually rises to international stardom in an English football club, Arsenal. As a celebrity, he is under a strong pressure to join the national team of Nigeria – the Super Eagles in preparation for the 2010 FIFA/Orange World Cup, the first senior soccer fiesta, ever to be staged in Africa.

But due to his personal hatred for his father, he could not make up his mind on time, until he gets even with his dying old man on a wheelchair. As soon as he has his way, he reports to camp in preparation for the coming World Cup fiesta.

The Synopsis Production Data of "Àbèní"

Synopsis of "Àbèní"

"Àbèní" is a romance story with two political prefaces. The film is in two parts, each has short political story as opening glee. In the prologue in the first part is a short political satire or sensitisation story that is meant to serve as a wakeup call for viewers on the need to participate in the democratic process the country was experimenting at the time the film was realised. This opening glee is also meant to serve as an appetiser for viewers, a way of preparing them for the main story.

The prologue of the first part of this narrative reveals a metaphorical short story on a nascent democratic system that Nigeria as a nation was experimenting as of 2006. The story starts with the three different hands interlocked on a void while supper imposed graphic defines democracy as the government of the people by the people for the people. Then the narrative fades into a panoramic view of a deserted bus stop by the beach with a man holding an umbrella on a watchtower gazing onto the infinity. Panning to the left of the frame, the only bus at the bus stop that is tagged "the people bus" comes on screen. As the

conductor calls out the destination of the bus to passengers, people are boarding the vehicle, while the driver is fast asleep. By the time the bus is filled up with passengers, the conductor displaying a typical Nigerian *Agbero* traits, forces the driver to wake up and suspend his comfortable sleep.

Suddenly, the conductor sips from his bottle of local gin, while the driver alights from the bus to ease himself in front of the bus. On taking his place behind the steering, the driver equally performs the ritual of 'topping it up' by finishing the liquor left in his small bottle of local gin however, his action infuriates some passengers.

As a passenger downgrades the driver and describes him as misfit, another ruminates on the good old days when only a worthy person functioned within the public transport system as driver. A man in suit who is impatient to get to his destination converses and urges the passengers to give the driver a break so that he can concentrate on his driving. Amidst fears and panics, the driver takes off moving and zigzagging along the road. As a short film, the prologue ends with an end credit.

The opening glee in the second part of "Àbẹ̀ní" is another political satire. This is a further political instruction, which is directed to the politicians – the key players of the political game in the country. In this short narrative, the two symbolic football teams depicted could be metaphorically identified as the ruling political party and the opposition party which is an amalgamation of other lesser

parties. As it could be expected in a democratic setting, all the players in the satire are in traditional costumes that represent some tribal nations within Nigeria as a multiethnic country.

In the course of the game, the spectators are busy cheering the players on while some of them commit blunders, gaffes and other false moves until a woman finally scores the only goal. The expected significant role of the spectators in this tournament is that of a critic / commentator who is meant to call the attention of the player to the desire of the people as indicated in banners of different inscriptions that the spectators carry.

The spectators, through their various banners, are calling for "transparency", "equity", and "good governance". However, from all indications, viewers could see that the political players on the field are not following the desires of the spectators as they play according to their own will. Thus, it is clear that the players are not ready to listen to any critic/spectators while the skills displayed in this tournament by these two teams (of players) are more like two new teams undergoing a training session on the pitch, as there is no proper coordination or purposeful game plan from either side. As short interlude the prologue equally ends with another end-credit.

The main plot of the narrative is an interlocking romance story between a Nigerian Lady, Àbẹ̀ní (Sola Asadeko) and a Beninoise man, Akanni (Akin Hamzat), on one hand, on the other hand is a subplot, another complementary

love affair that develops between Agagu (Ayo Badmus) a Nigerian man and Awa (Noeue Agbandegba) a Beninoise Lady.

This romance story is basically about Àbẹ̀ní (Sola Asedeko) and Akanni (Akim Hamzat) on one hand and Agagu (Ayo Badmus) and Awa (Noeue Agbandegba), on the other hand. At the beginning of the first part of the narrative, Àbẹ̀ní is revealed as a girl from a rich family who has a special interest in Akanni, a child from a poor background. However, the love affair between a Beninoise boy, Akanni, and a Nigerian girl Àbẹ̀ní, does not last due to chief Bello's (Jide Kosoko) hatred for this Beninoise lad.

As nature would have it, with a childhood incident where Àkànní has a fight with a prankster who is harassing Abeni on her tenth birthday party, a bond is created between these two children. Unfortunately, the incident eventually leads to sack of Akanni's father from his gate-keeper duty at Chief Bello's residence – chief Bello is a business mogul and Àbẹ̀ní's father. Thus, the poor gate-keeper and his wife decide to relocate back to their native home in the Republic of Benin to raise their son.

Many years later, the young lovers meet again in a restaurant only to renew their relationship. Àbẹ̀ní, now a mature person, and her friends are on an exchange programme from a Nigerian university to the Songhai Institute of Agriculture in Porto-Novo, Benin Republic. While the girls are out to seek fun there and then, these childhood lovers run into one another.

Having accepted a marriage proposal from his business associate, Chief Atiba (Kareem Adepoju, a.k.a. Baba Wande), Chief Bello who would rather have his daughter marry his business associate's son, Agagu (Ayo Badmus) sets a trap that leads to the detention of innocent Akanni, who has come to spend his annual leave with his lover Àbèní in Nigeria. As a rebellious and independent woman, Àbèní resists the overbearing influences of her father by setting the stage for a disastrous wedding with Agagu, the spoilt brat of Chief Atiba who studies in US, but currently on vacation in Nigeria.

In the second part of this narrative, Chief Atiba and Chief Ballo believe that the marriage between their children would strengthen their business empires. However, with the assistance of her mother, Àbèní succeeds in tricking her father to escape a forced marriage to Agagu, she then elopes with her lover Akanni to his native land in Cotonou, in the Republic of Benin.

The disastrous outing on his wedding day soon brews a bad feeling between Agagu and his father as he leaves his father's mansion in Nigeria for a carefree lifestyle in Cotonou. There he teams up with his friend, Laku, to live *a life on the fast lane*. While at it, he comes across Awa Laku's younger sister. As a focused and serious young lady, she succeeds in persuading and influencing Agagu for good.

However, nemesis still catches up with Agagu as Laku opposes the union of his friend - Agagu and his sister – Awa. As a way of stopping Agagu from

having a relationship with his sister, Laku anonymously reports his friend's fraudulent activities to the authority but both of them are arrested and detained on this fraud related offences. It takes the timely intervention of Awa and Akanni to free the two fraudulent friends from the Beninoise arms of law.

Meanwhile, Chief Bello heads for Cotonou due to his determination to track down his daughter and her runaway lover and bring them to justice for stealing his car and disgracing his family. He wants to carry out his operation before his wife returns from her business trip to Dubai. With the help of a musician friend, Chief Bello locates the lovers' home only to discover that his wife is a step ahead of him. There and then Chief Bello finds out that Àbèní is not only a legal wife of Akanni, but also discovers that his own wife, who leaves home on the pretext of travelling to Dubai for business has come to Cotonou to join her daughter who has just been delivered of a child.

As nature would have it, a helpless Chief Bello has no choice but to accept the prevailing situation and the arrival of a new baby. Going by traditional African approach, this child could be named *Omolaja* because new born has a unique way of settling misunderstanding and quarrel within any given family.

Analysis and discussion

The opening section/prologue of "MaaMi" is presented with the combination of background music and a slide show which is reminiscent of a family album. The efforts made here could be seen as a novel approach to film prologue design and an uncommon experience in filmmaking in the country. However, with "Àbèní", the prologue sequences are presented with the usual prelude that is made up of actions, speech and sound track.

Furthermore, Tunde Kelani (TK) deploys *in medias res* technique, in introducing these two films under review (**4.01** and **4.02**). According to Bordwell and Thompson (2004), in medias res which is a Latin phrase for "in the middle of things" is a technique often deployed by film makers to activate and capture viewers' interest. From all indications, TK creatively utilises this technique in his films systematically to initiate story, introduce characters and provoke curiosity.

It is clear that the closing tactics deployed for these films formally resolve all chains of causes and effects, thus bringing about emotional satisfaction to the audience. For instance, having resolved the chain of actions in "MaaMi" (**4.03**), a frozen frame is used to give the impression of an open-ended story format, while in resolving the chain of actions in "Àbèní" (**4.04**), the narrative gives the impression of a close-ended story format.

Through the principle of story and plot featured in these two films, the story in "MaaMi" like any other narratives is comprised of the diegetic elements

and the inferred events that exist in the story world. In other words, the story combines the diegesis (the Greek word for "recounted story") or diegetic elements which are the explicitly presented events on screen and thus captured under the synopsis and the inferred events which are not revealed in the plot. Samples of inferred occurrences in "MaaMi" include: the following facts: that Ebunola (a.k.a. Maami) is once married to Otunba Bamisaye when he is poor, that Bamisaye's quest to make it in life by all means, leads him to using one of his two sons for money ritual, that on discovering the evil deeds of her husband and his evil chamber, Ebunola is compelled to move out of her matrimonial home to live in her father's compound. All these identified series of actions could be presumptions; they are inferred events because they are not revealed in the plot of "MaaMi."

The inferred events in "Àbẹ̀ní", occur in a period between Abeni's tenth birthday anniversary, where both Abeni and Akanni are separated in Lagos and the time the two reunite in Cotonou where Abeni has gone for an industrial attachment. It could be assumed that during the identified times, the two characters must have gone through secondary schools and tertiary institution training before their reunion. From all indications, the concept of ellipsis or omission is injected into this narrative to create an interesting story that is precise, concise and devoid of unnecessary actions and details. The omission of these events in the narrative is also an effective tactic of time management.

From either "MaaMi" or "Àbèní", the plot comprises the explicitly presented events (i.e. all the revealed actions on screen.) The plot presentation format in each case encompasses actions, dialogues, thoughts, settings, costumes, properties and other non-diegetic elements – sound track and graphics/logo, (**4.05**) utilised as parts of the plot structures. The application of this principle of story and plot often helps both the filmmakers and film viewer/critic in defining and distinguishing the components of story from the events and elements captured in the plot of each narrative. It also helps in recognising what is extraneous to the story world or the presence of non-diegetic elements.

On the principle of causality, time and space, it could be established that the manipulation of causality in "MaaMi" and "Àbèní" is done to reflect both the linear and non-linear plot features of African stories. "MaaMi" for instance, incorporates elements of non-linear system by incorporating some supernatural components identified as features of Yoruba films in its linear plot structure. That is, this narrative takes viewers from physical experiences into the metaphysical world before its final resolution. Evidences of this fact could be identified as follows: psychological disturbance, telepathic communication, and the appearance of Ebunola's ghost.

In other words, when Ebunola takes her son – Kashimawo (Kashy) to his father's house and shows him Otuba Bamisaye's evil chamber, this experience

constitutes a psychological torture for Kahsy in his adult life. Again, one could recall in **4.06**, how a distortion in Otunba Bamisaye's chamber is telepathically communicated to him in his sitting room where he is relaxing. Moreover, the frame in **4.07** depicts another metaphysical manifestation in "MaaMi", where Ebunola reappears as ghost to Kashimawo after she dies in a fatal motor accident. In this scene, Kashy who miraculously survives this motor accident, frantically searches for his mother before he suddenly sees and embraces her; unknown to him that his mother has given up the ghost. He soon discovers the reality of this illusion in **4.08** where he asks his mother to follow him home but she could not move, then he realises that his mother is no longer alive. The three identified cases and other experiences Kashy has with his mother are revealed to the audience as occurrences in Kashimawo's stream of consciousness which is another technique of non linear plot system.

In addition, other attributes of the metaphysical world depicted through the invocation of anachronism technique creates the impression of an infinitive time and unrestricted space by bringing the past into the presence or taking the presence into the past. In this case, Kashimawo's mind could travel to anywhere at any time as he recalls each event of his life from memory.

Furthermore, the shot in **4.09** reveals the images and the evidence that Otunba Bamisaye is an occultist whose source of wealth is spiritual. This evidence is eventually used as a motif, a psychological disturbance that propels

Kashy to seek revenge as a particular revealed image consistently disturbs his mind throughout the major points of decision making in his life.

The component nonlinear structure featured in "Àbẹ̀ní" could be located at a sequence where Akani has a premonition about his unborn baby. This daydreaming experience is a form of a metaphysical occurrence in **4.10**, where Akani sees himself playing with his unborn girl, while Abeni watches them. This premonition stands as a flash forward and a psychological cum spiritual state where human is made to experience the future in "infinitive now", where the future, the presence and the past are experienced at once. Shortly after dreamlike experience, a nurse wakes Akani up and informs him that his wife has actually delivered a baby.

In examining causality in these narratives, the roles of the following components of narrative: *causal elements*: *causal agent*, *causal motivation*; *planting*; *interface*; *conflict*; *tension*; *suspense*; *pattern of development* are diagnosed.

Although it is possible to use natural phenomena such as flood, earthquake, rain or animal such as bird, cat or snake as primary agents of causality in a narrative, the invocation of animals or other natural phenomena as chief agent of causality is not firmly established. Like any other Nigerian films, the primary agents of causality in the two films under review are human characters serving either as protagonist or antagonist.

Zooming on "MaaMi", the film presents a dual narrative plot format, where anachronism method of presentation is used to bring the past into the presence in the unfolding story. The causal motivation in one of these dual plots portrays how the desires of Otuba Bamisaye in acquiring wealth by all means make him to use one of his sons for money making ritual. His action, in turn, is the reason why Ebunola, his first wife packs out of her matrimonial home in order to raise her only surviving son a lone. However, her state of poverty is responsible for her deployment of cunning tactics in raising money but she is, in turn, robbed of all the money she acquires. Furthermore, one could also see that Ebunola's efforts in providing for her only child eventually lead her into her grave (**4.07**).

The structure of the second plot reveals the childhood experience of Kashimawo that is built up around hatred he has and nurtures for his father. This hatred makes him to be very reluctant to accept the Nigerian Football Association (NFA)'s invitation to play for the country. Nevertheless, as soon as he gets even with his father, he gladly accepts the NFA's invitation.

For clarity purpose, the causal motivation in "MaaMi" could be summarised thus:

     i.   Bamisaye's desire for wealth forces him to use his first son for money ritual

    ii.   Inability of Ebunola, Bamisaye's wife, to condone evil deeds of her husband compel her to move out of her matrimonial home

iii. Kashimawo's desire to eat meat forces Ebunola to devise various means of raising required fund but dies in the process

iv. The evil thing told about his father and the evil chamber which Kashimawo is exposed to as a ten-year old boy make him to develop hatred towards his father and propel his desire to avenge his mother's sudden death.

v. Kashimawo's hatred for his father equally makes him to be very reluctant to play football for his fatherland

vi. In the process of avenging the pain and death of his mother, Kashy is compelled to forcefully remove a life saving chain in his father's neck and this leads to the old man's death.

vii. After getting even with his father, Kashimawo is able to decide and accept to play for his country – Nigeria.

One could equally see that causal motivation in "Àbẹ̀ní" emanates from the hatred Chief Bello has for Akani as a boy. Consequently, a genuine move by Akani to restore order in Abeni's tenth anniversary party is not seen as youthful exuberance but misconceived by Chief Bello as howler and for this reason, he sacks Akani's father. This occurrence forces Akani's family to relocate to Cotonou where Akani is raised. Furthermore, the child love experience shared between Abeni and Akani is eventually reactivated as soon as these two come across. Thus, their interest in each other is rekindled and with time, the strong bond between these two individuals manifests into real love that lead into marriage. From all indications, one could see in "Àbẹ̀ní" that the power of love that exists between these two lovers supersedes any parental hatred or dislike.

The major image deployed as a "planting" in "MaaMi" is the image of a skeleton in a room (**4.09**) where a boy is turned into a statue and from where Otunba Bamisaye generates his wealth. Viewers could see that, from the moment Kashimawo is exposed to this image, it continues to resurface in his memory, thus the shot in **4.09** is repeated more than three times in the narrative as a reminder and a propeller that fuels Kashy's hatred for his father. In "Àbẹ̀ní", there is no practical attempt made to deploy "planting" in building up suspense however, the only scene that looks like "planting" is the premonition scene (**4.10**), where Akani dreams of a baby girl shortly before he is told that his wife has given birth to a girl.

The interface and the components of conflict deployed in "MaaMi" are made up of binary oppositions in a visual – sound confrontation format. In **4.11,** Otuba Bamisaya, the antagonist in the narrative, is revealed at the climax as a sick elderly man on a wheelchair, while Kashimawo, the protagonist, is a young healthy footballer. While Otunba is in his residence, Kashy is revealed as an intruder. Again, viewers could see that, the old man on his wheelchair is not expecting any visitor nor prepared for a confrontation. Kashy invades his house with has mind prepared for war. At the end of this confrontation, Kashi had an easy victory over his father who is already paying for his evil deeds. Thus, the climax which could be projected through sound or visual component alone is

presented in an audiovisual form. In **4.11**, viewers are made to see and hear everything that goes on during this confrontation.

Aside from the main conflict at the climax, there are several other conflicting points of interests in "MaaMi". For instance, there is a conflicting point at the market where the agents of the market authority demand the toll on stall but when Ebunola could not afford to pay in cash or in kind, the confrontation in **4.12** ensues and the market officers destroy her goods in **4.13**. Another point of conflict is revealed when Kashimawo requests meat and his mother rebukes him harshly for being indifferent to her plight before she later apologises to him. Other minor conflicts of interest occur when Kashimawo's personal assistant tries to force him against his will to accept the NFA's invitation sooner than he wants. Yet, another conflict still occurs, when Ebunola, the prank mistress, together with his son is robbed in a cab after duping so many unsuspected cheerful donors.

In "Àbẹ̀ní", the same binary oppositions in a visual – sound confrontation format is deployed. In this narrative, Akani, the protagonist is revealed as a young man who is not prepare for any confrontation, while Chief Bello, the protagonist, on the other hand, is depicted as an elderly chief who is prepared to invade and confront Akani in his house in order to recover his girl, Abeni and his stolen car. However, Chief Bello's hatred towards the protagonist is weakening by the new social stature of Akani, whose residence speaks volumes of his

success/achievement and reveals him as a wealthy man (**4.14**). But at the turn of events, love prevails over hatred and as the prepared elderly man who is full of hatred loses, while the unprepared young lover wins. In **4.15**, the audio-visual confrontation reveals how Ajani's love for Abeni eventually triumphs over and neutralises Chief Bello's anger and hatred towards him with the birth of a new baby.

Like other Yoruba films, tension in these two narratives is very light in transmission and usually it is not generated through fast actions, anxiety or excitement. In most cases, Yoruba films sustain viewers' interest by eliciting and appealing to their emotions or challenging their points of reasoning. Thus, sentimental conditions, sympathy, compassion or illogicality are often injected into the plot to generate tension in Yoruba films. A sequence in "MaaMi" (**4.16 – 4.21**), where Aunty Bimpe empathises with Kashy on his efforts to defend his mother's honour could be used to illustrate how tension is elicited through empathy.

Fade in
[Entering the backyard...]
Bimpe –   E ku 'le o!
1st Woman –   A wa niyen o!
2nd Woman –   Aso wa dee!
Bimpe –   Abi oh!
1st Woman –   Aunty Bimpe se gbogbo owo aso ebi yen le ti gba?
Bimpe –   O ku die.
1st Woman –   Ah!

Bimpe –	Iya Seyi tie n sa fun mi ni tie ni... Sugbon ma lo kaa mo 'le itaja ogun e lale yi... Jumoke ni o dola ni tie
2nd Woman –	Iya Kashy n ko?
Bimpe –	Iya Kashy ke... se eyin ri aso ebi lorun 'e ri ni? Iwon iba owo die to n ri ori omo re lo naa si...
2nd Woman –	Ode ri'en so o... eyen tunmo si wipe... e e ni pe si ibi igbeyawo ni yen oh...
Bimpe –	Ki lo de? Ma pee… okan je wipe gbogbo n kan taba ha nibi inawo yen ni a o ni fun un, igbatio ba won se'bi...
1st Woman –	Ohun ati omore a sa je ajeyo lojo yen sa
Kashi –	[Moving closer and calling out] Aunty Bimpe...
Bimpe –	Kashy
Kashi –	Aso ebi yen ma ra fun Maami...
Bimpe –	Ki lo wi?
Kashi –	Mo wipe, aso ebi yen ma ra fun Maami
Bimpe –	Olola kekere, talo ma sanwo e
Kashi –	Emi ni... ma ba yin fo gbogbo aso yin, maa tun gbale ile yin fun ose mata, ose merin, ese marun
Bimpe –	[Astonished] Ah....eh... wa se gbogbo yen notori kiya e le wo aso ebi?
Kashi –	Bee ni, mi o fe kie ah nkan koja lori Maami
Bimpe –	[Beckoning] Gba, mu fun 'ya e...
Kashi –	E se [running towards the entrance of his room... stops suddenly] Aunty Bimpe nigba wo ni ma bere si se gbogbo ise yen?
Bimpe –	Mase iyonu Kashy, muu fun iya e
Kashi –	[Joyfully] - Maaaa miiii!
Fade out	

Translation:

Fade in
[Entering the backyard...]

Bimpe –	Greeting!
1st Woman –	You are welcome!
2nd Woman –	At last this is our cloth!
Bimpe –	Yes oh!
1st Woman –	Aunty Bimpe, have you collected all the payments on the materials for this family uniform?
Bimpe –	Not all.
1st Woman –	Ah!
Bimpe –	Iya Seyi now dodges me in order to avoid payment for the material... However, I will go and see her at her drug store this evening whenever she opens... on her part Jumoke says she will pay tomorrow...
2nd Woman –	What about Kashy's mother?
Bimpe –	Kashy's Mother? Have you ever seen a family uniform on her before?... the little sum she makes is always expended on her son...
2nd Woman –	That is true...Does that mean that you will not invite her to the wedding? ...
Bimpe –	Why not... I will invite her but she will not be given any souvenir due to her inability to buy the family uniform.
1st Woman –	Anyway, the woman and her son will surely eat to their satisfaction on that day.
Kashi –	[Moving closer and calling out] Aunty Bimpe...
Bimpe –	Yes Kashy
Kashi –	I will buy the cloth material for my mother...
Bimpe –	What did you say?

Kashi –	I said that I want to buy the material meant for the family uniform for my mother
Bimpe –	Your excellence, the honourable... who will pay for the cloth?
Kashi –	I shall pay you in kind... I shall serve you by washing all your clothes and sweep all your vicinity for three weeks, four weeks or five weeks until I'm able to cover the cost of this cloth.
Bimpe –	[Astonished] Ah.... eh... you mean you are willing to endure all these just to make sure that your mother use the family uniform?
Kashi –	[bravely] Yes... I will do all it takes to ensure that my mother is also given all the souvenirs meant for your invitees...
Bimpe –	[Beckoning with empathy] Take and give to your mother
Kashi –	Thank you so much [running towards the entrance of his room... stops suddenly] Aunty Bimpe, when shall I commence the service...
Bimpe –	Don't worry Kashy just give the material to your mother...
Kashi –	[Joyfully] - Maaaa miiii!

Fade out

From the above dialogue, it is observed that Kashy's love for his mother actually propels him not only to desire and defend his mother's interest and honour in the commity of house wives but also compels his willingness to labour in order to purchase and secure required material (cloth) that will ensure his mother's right and privilege are not denied. His innocent readiness to labour and sacrifice for his mother's rights actually pay off as his strong determination

eventually induces sacrificial spirit in aunty Bimpe and other women who do not only sympathise with him, but also empathise with his sacrificial mission. The heroic spirit of kindness Kashy shows for his mother eventually ignites Aunty Bimpe's willingness to help Kashy in realising his dream. As a result of this, she gives Kashy without any charge what he desires for his mother – the cloth that is sold to other women. This high point of kindness should have been used to highlight the theme of the narrative but is only used as a minor reference – a fragment of Kashy's imagination and a source of pain towards an ungrateful mother who insults him when he only asks for a piece of meat to be part of his meal.

It is stated that, the temporal components featured in films could further be divided into the following sub-components: temporal order, temporal frequency and temporal duration. The temporal order deals with the format in which a plot is presented to the audience. For instance, in "MaaMi", a 3-1-2 presentation format is employed. The narrative in "MaaMi" employs a dual plot system that is based on anachronism technique. In this case, the narrative begins at the tail end, which is the arrival of Kashy from England as a successful football star invited to join the national team **4.01D**. This tail end sequence could be seen as the outcome of a struggling young boy. Thereafter, the narrative reveals the childhood experiences of Kashy – the beginning before

moving through the middle where viewers are shown why Kashy's dislikes his father or his reluctant to accept the NFA's invitation extended to him.

In "Àbẹ̀ní" the presentation format is in a 1-2-3 order. In this case, the narrative commences at the beginning, unfurling how the two leading roles, Abeni and Akani, develop likeness for each other right from childhood. Their interest in each other is attested to in **4.22A- 4.22C** which reveal how these two lovers defend each other as children. The narrative then moves through the middle **4.23,** where the two lovers rediscover their feelings for each other and rounding it off at the end where they are married and blessed with a child whose naming is celebrated at the last sequence of the film in **4.04**.

Basically, temporal frequency in a narrative deals with the number of time in which a story event occurs in a plot. Temporal frequency often manifests on screen as flash forward, flashback, multiple representations of an event, or used as anachronism. The temporal frequency used in "MaaMi" is meant to expand time, while in "Abeni 1&2" it is used in two ways – to expand and to contract time.

For instance, in **4.09 -** a scene in "MaaMi", where Kashy recalls the statue in Otunba Bamisaye's evil chamber is repeated for more than three times as a motif and a creative device that reveals on each occasion the mental state/disturbance in Kashy. In "Àbẹ̀ní", flashbacks are used to expand time in **4.24** when Akani recalls her mother's warning on the pending danger in his

relationship with Abeni; again a flash forward is used to abridge time in **4.10,** a scene where Akani has a premonition.

In reviewing and relating to these two films, the temporal duration which deals with the amount of time taken by each narrative, another set of subcomponents, classified under a temporal duration featured in each of these films include plot duration, story duration and screen duration. For instance, in looking at the story duration in "MaaMi", one could say it runs over a period between twenty eight and thirty years. Hence, it could be established that the story duration in this narrative incorporates some omitted years on the plot, around five or seven years, before the birth of Kashy. This is the period when Ebunola and Bamisaye were married with a baby while Kashy is still on the way. It is during this period that Bamisaye has the opportunity to sacrifice Ebunola's first son for money ritual. The following ten years, however, is revealed as part of the plot. This is the period when Kashy is raised solely by his mother, Ebunola, but on the day Kashy clocks ten his caring mother dies in a motor accident. Following the death of Ebunola, there is another ellipsis – a period of thirteen years, out of which Kashy spends six in an orphanage. That is the omitted period where Kashy is raised from orphanage in Nigeria to stardom in England.

In "Àbèní", the story duration could be placed around twenty five and thirty years.   This period covers the occurrences at the tenth birthday anniversary of Abeni, the relocation of Akani's father back to Cotonou, the period these two

individuals spends studying at various institutions, the time of their reunion, the period Akani spends in jail, the duration of failed marriage ceremony, the time the lovers elope, and the period of Abeni's pregnancy and the birth of a new baby, down to the period of final reconciliation and finally, the child naming ceremony.

The plot duration in "MaaMi" could be placed on a four-day-period. On one hand, there is the last two days of Kashy's tenth birthday anniversary. Within these two days, the narrative reveals ten years of Ebunola and Kashimawo's struggle and the period is terminated with the death of Ebunola in a fital accident; on the other hand, is another two days of Kashy's twenty-third birthday anniversary, which equally coincides with the last two days of Nigerian commencement of the preparation for the 2010 world cup. The last two days is coincidentally terminated with the death of Kashy's ailing father and his acceptance of NFA's invitation to play for his nation.

From all indications, the plot duration in "Àbèní" only covers selected time of events which are revealed to the audience in the course of this narrative. The plot time, therefore, starts from Akani's preparation to attend Abeni's tenth birthday anniversary, running through a few weeks later when Akani's father relocates his family back to Cotonou, going through the time of their reunion after some years apart. It also covers the period Akani spends in detection, covering the period Agagu attempts to marry Abeni, the time when the lovers elope, and few

months of Abeni's pregnancy and the birth of the new baby, down to the period of final reconciliation and the naming ceremony of the new baby.

In considering the screen period in "MaaMi", the film runs through ninety-three minutes (93 minutes), while the screen time in "Àbèní" is around one hundred and eighty minutes (180 minutes).

The spatial factors in each of these films encompass both the physical space and the metaphysical space. Furthermore, the physical space featured in these films could be divided into story space, plot space and screen space. The story spaces in "MaaMi", comprises locations within three cities of Lagos, Abeokuta and London. The plot space features locations in Lagos which include Muritala Muhammed International Airport, the Airport road and Eko FM station, as well as LTV complex. All these locations are at Ikeja, other location feature include the renovated site of Old Oshodi Market, an hotel and other landscapes views/streets within Lagos metropolis. The spatial features in the city of Abeokuta include a primary school - a football field and blocks of classrooms; a market, Ebunola's family house, a petrol station and other houses of Kashy's relatives.

In "MaaMi" viewers could see that the city of London and other locations in England are used as referential locales deployed for the purpose of making the story meaningful. Therefore, all the locations in England could be considered as abstract locales that share similar condition with the metaphysical spaces that exist in the words or minds of the actors.

Similarly, the story spaces in "Àbẹ̀ní" feature cities such as Lagos, Cotonou, and Songhai, while reference are made to United States of America, but only Lagos, Cotonou and Songhai are made visible on the plot of this film.   Considering the metaphysical space featured in "Àbẹ̀ní", one could locate this in Akani's premonition experience where he finds himself playing with his baby girl in a visionary compound.

The screen space of each of these films could be considered from two angles. The first is the size of the screen used in watching the film and the second is the screening space which could be a public or a private venue. Each of these angles does affect how mediated messages on screen are revealed and perceived.

Looking at the screen size/width, it could be stated that Nigerian movies are watched on big, small or mini screen. The big screen is the one found in the cinema houses, while the small screen which could be a television or a computer screen is utilised either in the public places/offices or in the private homes/offices. The mini screen could be that of the phone or tablet screen which is equally used either in the office or at home.

The place of viewing Nigerian films or the screening venue often determines the size of the screen used in viewing. For instance, in the cinema houses, big screen are used and the standardised gauges/sizes of the cinema screen, according to Bordwell and Thompson (1980), range from 8mm/super 8mm, 16mm, 36mm to 70mm. Although most Nigerian films are shot with

digital video technology, the producers and sometimes the cinema houses have ways of blowing the video production into any of the celluloid film's gauges and thus such a video film could be seen through any of the identified cinema screen width/gauges.

When viewed on small screen, the standard size of most television or computer screen ranges from 10", 12'', 14", 16", to 32" or more. Thus, the films could be watched either at public venues such as restaurants, hotels, beer parlours and public transport or watched at home.

The principles on the flow of story to plot information have to do with the level of audience identification with the characters on screen. On these principles, efforts are made towards analysing the principle/pattern of story development, the principle on the range of story to plot information and the principle on the depth of story to plot information.

"MaaMi", utilises a mixed method/style in its story development. Three narrative styles are combined. The first is an *autobiographical narrative method*; this is a style in which the various events in a narrative are revealed through a person who is sharing his experience; thus, the audience could only see, think or hear through what is perceived or revealed. In this film, viewers are privileged to experience only what Kashimawo, the lead role has gone through in the past and what he is currently experiencing within the two days of his arrival from United Kingdom.

The second narrative device is known as *anachronism*, which is a method of intertwining the past with the presence. The employment of this method is meant to create parallels between two different experiences of the lead character - Kashimawo. In other words, anachronism allows viewers to see alternatively Kashimawo's experiences as ten years old boy and Kashimawo's experiences as a twenty three years old adult. The third method used is a *Stream-of-consciousness* method. This is a process in which the story is told through the inner mind of a character. In "MaaMi" many subjective views, fears and experiences of Kashimawo are revealed to the audience through his thoughts and fears. The frames in **4.06, 4.07, 4.09** and **4.16 - 4.21** are samples of some experiences, reflections and dreams of Kashimawo in forms of flashbacks and flash forwards that are revealed as his inner thoughts/subjective views on screen.

However, in "Àbẹ̀ní", the director relates his story by employing both the eye of God/an Omniscient and stream of consciousness methods of storytelling. As the primary mode of relating the story, the camera assumes the eye of God who is omniscient; in this case the camera serves as the all knowing and all seeing device. That is, in this film, majority of the scenes are revealed to the audience through the eye of the omniscient camera. All actions and events are shown as they occur at various locations and positions. The few scenes where stream of consciousness method is used could be located in the shots on **4.10,** and **4.24**.

The functions/effects of the restricted range of story information deployed in "MaaMi" reveals as a style of withholding information on the mystery behind Otunba Bamishaye's evil chamber. This range of story information helps to establish a detective mode of the story. This style is equally used to activate curiosity about the situation which Kashimawo finds himself, first as young boy, on the place he grows up, his mother motives for living as a single parent, and his motive for not accepting the NFA's invitation on time. Furthermore, some curiosities are generated by deploying some levels of subjectivity – i.e. a constant repetition of the image in the evil chamber as viewed through Kashy's memory; the inner disturbance and dreams of various kinds; and other flashbacks which are meant to activate viewers' curiosity. All these subjective occurrences are used to increase viewers' level of identification with Kashy's experiences and the reasons behind his mother's behaviours.

In "Àbẹ̀ní", an unrestricted range of story information is deployed. In this narrative, viewers have broader information on all the characters as the omniscient camera allows. The camera maintains a constant shift of times, spaces and characters as the film progresses. For instance, it is revealed that both Chief Bello and his wife are not faithful to their marital vow. Each of them had a kid outside the wedlock. It is equally depicted that Abeni is not biological daughter of Chief Bello whom she thinks is her father. Furthermore, in establishing Àbẹ̀ní's love for Akani against her father's hatred for him as a

narrative motive, the camera constantly changes viewers' sources of information on each of the unfolding scene, events and characters in various situations.

The utilisation of this restricted range of story information is not only meant to increase the level of spectator's identification with the lead character – Kashimawo, but also to unveil the traits of any other role like Otunba Bamisaye, the antagonist and to justify the options a role might take in the course of a narrative. Example of such action is Kashimawo's action of detaching from his father's neck the life saving mystical chain, which eventually speeds up the dying process of this old man.

In addition to activating viewer's identification with the characters, the principles of the range of story to plot information (either restricted or unrestricted mode,) are equally used in the two films for other purposes such as to elicit sympathy from the viewers, to increase the level of viewers' fascination, curiosity and participation, to stimulate suspense and increase tension, and to create parallels among characters or project binary opposition between two or more roles.

It has been established that, as there is a spectrum between restricted and unrestricted plot system, there is also a continuum between objective and subjective codes in the depth of story to plot information. In revealing the depth of story information in a narrative, critics are likely to look at both the objective depth and the subjective depth of information.

On one hand, the subjective depth of story information allows viewers to gain access into what a character sees, hears or thinks. In any given visual narrative, the subjective depth of information on a character could be revealed through three different sources. The first one is optical perspective which deals with what is seen alone, the second is the sound perspective which focuses on what is audible alone and the third is the mental view which combines both the optical and sound information. On the other hand, the objective depth of information reveals external features/behaviours through a character's speech, action, mannerism, and other traits which constitute his screen personality. Thus, all these objective depths of information could manifest through dialogues, appearance, posture, stance, proximity, costume, the lighting technique used, as well as the set within which the characters operate.

For instance, if the subjective depth of information yardsticks is to be applied on Kashimawo in "MaaMi", in intellect, Kashy as a ten years old boy is a brilliant as he tops his class in school, in dialogues he is a respectful and a loving boy who will put the interest of his mother first, even when he is playing football which is his desired sport sample of this fact is revealed in **4.25** where he forfeits his favourite game to return home just in time to prevent his mother from worrying about him. In proximity, Kashy is a devoted child and very close to his mother as he will do all he could to preserve his mother's honour and integrity (**4.16 - 4.21**). In posture, he is a considerate boy for he always

sacrifices his personal desires and keeps them within his mother capacity to provide for him. In appearance, he is not wealthily dressed but he is costumed neatly within the range of his mother social stature.

In considering the subjective depth of information on Kashimawo as a boy, **4.26** and **4.27** exposed Kashy dreams which centre on pleasing his mother; thus, scenes where he reads for his mother's pleasure and helps with cooking are prominent parts of his reflections. His childhood psychological disturbances include his memory on his father evil chamber (**4.09**), his mates tormenting him on his family state of poverty and inability to show his father. In other words, the frames in **4.28** depict a scene in Kashy's school where a group of girls hold him hostage demanding to see his father until a teacher recues him from them. All these images are revealed as flashbacks, disclosing Kashimawo's mental view. Thus, the optical and sound projection of this mental state of Kashi are perceived by the audience as audio visual massage.

Abeni who is the lead role in "Àbèní" is revealed as a wealthily dressed daughter of an affluent member of the society. Abeni's father, the influential Chief Bello is depicted as a business tycoon. As a young girl, her dialogues reveal a respectful child. In appearance, she is pampered with what her father's wealth could acquire, while in posture and stance, she is surrounded by spoil brats and other children. In proximity, she is also close to her mother and her interest in Akani is always a contradiction to his father's hatred for the boy.

In considering her father's social status, she lives in wealthy home which could be regarded as an architectural master piece. Being a child of a wealthy man, Abani does not suffer any psychological experiences like Kashi in "MaaMi". Thus, there is not effort made in this narrative to reveal any subjective depth of information on her.

Looking through the dialogues of Kashimawo as a twenty three years old man, one could say he is a smart young man, however, he could be very assertive with his secretary. In appearance, the narrative reveals him as a wealthy young. In posture and stance, he is revealed as a successful footballer who is sought after by his country and he is not easily impressed until he is convinced on anything. In proximity, he is very close to his secretary who seems to be a replacement of his mother and his bodyguard who is always before or after him in all his movements. As a football star, he is always found in the companies of the aristocrats in the society and he stays in five stars hotel.

Penetrating into Kashimawo's psychological state of mind, the narrative repeats the main image of his childhood tormenting experience as soon as he returns to the country. The terrifying scene in 4.09 comes on screen as Kashimawo is being driven out of the Airport. This subjective view but scaring experience is actually repeated in the film to reiterate the alarming state of Kashimawo's mental disturbance as an adult. However, this tormenting view is

finally dispelled when he revisits his father's house and finds out that the chamber does not exist anymore.

Projecting the psychological state of the lead role in "MaaMi", the narrative presents audio-visual flashbacks or mental point of view. Aside from the main scarring image, other subjective views of Kashy includes the frames in **4.16 – 4.21**, that capture the sequence where he saves his mother's honour in the committee of housewives, the frame in **4.25**, which is a vision where he sees his mother waiting for him at home and the shot in **4.07** which captures his final encounter with his mother's spirit after she has given up the ghost.

The lead role in "Àbẹ̀ní" as an adult, on the other hands, is projected objectively in **4.29** through her dialogues, appearance and costume, as an attractive, fun seeking young lady and a loving personality. In proximity, she is always found in the company of her friends – girl/boyfriends or course mates (**4.29**). In posture and stance, she is revealed as an independent personality who knows what she wants and she knows how to defend her interest. She is accommodated in a suitable flat where she can attend to her female and male friends. Abeni is a character on whom viewers are not allowed to penetrate into her inner mind or thought either through the optical, sound or mental perspective. Her personality is revealed only through an objective depth of information.

In "MaaMi", the information on Ebunola, who is another significant role is presented to viewers in appearance, posture and stance as a devoted mother, a non promiscuous woman who will do anything legally possible to bring food to her son's table. She is shown as a petty trader, who hostiles to raise her only son but die in the process. In proximity, she is very close to her son whom she plays with like a child. In the comity of house wives, she is seen as a less privileged single mother who could not afford to buy any of the family uniforms. Her mental perspective is projected on her youthful fantasy of Termogine, a young man whom she secretly admires as a young girl. The camera uses a monochromic picture in diving into her subjective reflection on the activities of Termogine, as an attractive man with a charming ring, while her speech is projected as a voice over of this flashback.

In dissecting another major role in "Àbèní", through his body language and his speeches, Akani as a young boy does not like going to Chief Bello's mansion and when he goes there, in posture and proximity, he prefers to stay alone and not mingle with those children from wealthy homes. In appearance, he is a child from humble background, a neatly dressed lad and a cool headed person.

As an adult, Akani is depicted as a person who acquires success through hard work and willing to go for what he desires or wants. In proximity, he is very close to his mother and he finds it difficult to tell Awa that he is no longer

interested in a relationship with her. However, as a straight forward guy, he breaks the news to her with a soft landing condition. Considering his manner of dressing and the places he works and stays, he is revealed to the audience as a successful accountant and a director of an accounting company.

A subjective view of Akani is revealed while he is staying in Abeni's flat, where he recalls his mother's warning on his relationship with Abeni. This subjective depth of information is shown through mental perspective. Another depth of information is divulged during his short doss at the hospital where he has a premonition of an unborn child. This mental perspective is used as a flash forward projected through monochromic shot that differentiates a vision from reality in this narrative.

On the role of Otunba Bamisaye in "MaaMi", one could see that he is projected in **4.30**, in appearance, stance and posture as an intimidating figure, a brute, who will stop at nothing to get what he wants. These traits are revealed through dialogue or the comments and reactions of others such as Ebunola and his guard. In this narrative, Bamisaye is projected as a heartless being who will like to make money at all cost which includes murdering his own son and any other boy that is available. In proximity, Bamisaye is not friend to members of his household. He is rather surrounded by the invisible spirits, which he attempts to ward off or accommodate with the use of multiple perfumes and fragrances. Towards the end, audience are made to see Bamisaye eventually paying for his

evil deeds as he suffers a stroke and is reduced to a vegetable and living on a wheel chair **4.11.** Revealing the subjective view, is done through sound perspective in **4.06**, a scene where it is established that Bamisaye is telepathically connected to the money ritual "human-turned-statue in his evil chamber. As soon as Ebunola destructs the composition in the chamber Otunba is telepathically alerted through an audible sound track in his sitting room.

The role of Chief Bello in "Àbèní", he is revealed as a successful business tycoon who loves to manipulate everyone around him, and these include his wife and children. Through his speech, one could see that he dislikes Akani as a boy and he does not think twice to demise any employee who displeases him. Although, he maintains close proximity with his immediate family members due to some of his actions, he is not so loved by his daughter Abeni or his wife. In appearance, he is revealed as a dictatorial personality whose order must be obeyed. As an unforgiving spirit, Chief Bello's subjective traits are depicted through audible soliloquy centred on how to avenge those who have wronged him in one way or the other.

Findings and Conclusion

It could be established that "MaaMi" and "Àbèní" deploy *in medias res* and prologue style of opening to activate spectators' interest. The closure preference for "MaaMi" is an open-ended narrative, while a close-ended

narrative is used in "Àbẹ̀ní". Each storyline in "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" combines both the diegetic elements of the presented events and the inferred events. The plots of these films, on the other hand, combine both the presented events and the non-diegetic elements. Human beings are used in both "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" as primary and secondary agents of causality. Both "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" feature temporal order, frequency and duration. The duration is further divided into plot, story, and screen durations. The spatial factors featured in both "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" include story, plot and screen spaces. A mixed method of autobiographical, anachronism and stream of consciousness is utilised in "MaaMi", while in "Àbẹ̀ní" an eye of God presentational model is employed *Maami* is presented as a film with restricted range of information, in a mystery narrative prototype based on a goal oriented story format, while *Abeni* is presented with unrestricted range of information, a family narrative prototype based on a change of knowledge story format. Fade in transition mode is deployed in revealing information about some characters and in increasing the level of viewers' identification with such characters in "MaaMi", while "Àbẹ̀ní" deploys mostly objective depth of story to plot information in unveiling events.

Shots analysis

4.01. Selected shots from the opening sequence of "MaaMi" where *in medias res* technique is used to introduce and begin the narrative from the middle of ongoing morning activities of village dwellers and Lagos metropolitan inhabitants

4.02. A selection of shots from opening sequence in "Àbèní" where *in medias res* techniques is equally used to begin the narrative from the middle of ongoing morning chores of the people living in Badiya area of Lagos State.

4.03. A frozen frame is used to end the story in "MaaMi". Freezing the unfinished actions in this frame gives the impression of an open-ended cloture for the narrative.

4.04. In "Àbèní", a close-ending technique is used in resolving all points of conflict in the narrative and closing up the story.

A – A computer designed company Logo	B – A shot of series of slide pictures used as part of prologue in "MaaMi"

4.05. The non-diegetic elements used as parts of the plot structures in two Tunde Kelani films. These include computer images/logo of the production company, the slide shot of photographs, dedication graphic and the sub-titles...

C – A shot from "MaaMi" containing the dedicating graphic of the film.	D - A shot from "Àbèní" reflecting the sub-title in English

4.06. A sequence of shots reveals how a distortion at Bamisaye's chamber is telepathically communicated to him in his sitting room and this causes him to be very furious in finding the perpetuator of this ritual distortion.

The Calabash on the head of this human effigy is removed and it is in tear of blood...

The shot above shows Ebunola revealing to Kashi the human image in Bamisaye's chamber and she is about to distort the ritual set up of this money making statue

Telepathically, Otunba Bamisaye is alerted on the disorder in his evil chamber

4.07. The shot shows Ebunola's ghost embracing Kashimawo who is unaware that his mother has died in the motor accident...

4.08. Kashimawo is urging his mother to follow him home as he races toward her ghost

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4.09. The image which is registered and captured in young Kashimawo's mind consistently disturbs him throughout the major points of decision making in his life.

4.10. A light yellow chromosome soft lighting technique is used in projecting Akani's premonition at the hospital as he awaits the arrival of his first child.

4.11. The sequence reveals the interface and confrontation at the climax of the "MaaMi". The sequence is depicted through audio-visual means of image, speech and sound.

4.12. A confrontation that ensues when Ebunola could not afford to pay for her stall either in cash or in kind.

4.13. The market officers are busy destroying the stalls of women who could not pay the toll for their stalls.

An extreme long shot of Akani's intimidating mansion

my Akanni can never reside in this mansion

so here we are

could it be that your Akanni actually lives here ?

4.14. Chief Bello's hatred towards the protagonist is weakening by the new social stature of Akani, whose residence speaks volumes of him as a young successful/wealthy man.

just let me have the baby

4.15. With the birth of new baby, these shots reveal how Ajani's love for Abeni eventually wins and triumphs over and neutralises Chief Bello's anger and hatred towards him... Here chief Bello has no other choice than to accept Akani and his family...

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4.16. Kashy suddenly stops washing at the mentioning of his mother's name in order to pay attention to the trend of discussion among the women.

4.17. Kashy is calling out to Aunty Bimpe

4.18. Kashy requests a piece of the material meant for the family uniform

4.16 – 4.21: A montage sequence on Kashimawo's encounter with Aunty Bimpe, which has been identified as the point of generating tension or eliciting sentiment, sympathy or compassion from the audience.

4.19. Here is Kashy stating his term of payment for the clothing material

4.20. Here is Aunty Bimpe marvelling at the determination of Kashy to buy a piece of cloth for her mother by his willingness to enslave himself.

4.21. At last Kashy is given his heart's desire, free of charge on a platter of gold...

4.22A – 4.22C. The shots here reveal the interest Akani and Abeni once share as children... here these two children defend each other before Chief Bello and other children....

4.22A. Akani observes the party from a distance

4.22B. Chief Bello is upset with Akan because he challenges the untamed naughty boy in Abeni's 10th birthday party

4. 22C. Here is Abeni defending the presence of Akani in the midst of other children from wealthy homes... saying she is the one who invited him

A

B

seems he can't take his
eyes off you

4.23. Here the two lovers are rediscovering their feelings for each other...In shots A and B Abeni and Akani try to recall where they have seen each other... while in D they finally recognise each other and in D they declare their love for each other.

C

it was only when I heard
the name that it clicked

D

I love you too

her father is still alive

Abeni is a nice girl, I like her

hence I want you to forget
Abeni completely

4.24. In this sequence, Akani recalls her mother warning on the pending danger on his relationship with Abeni...
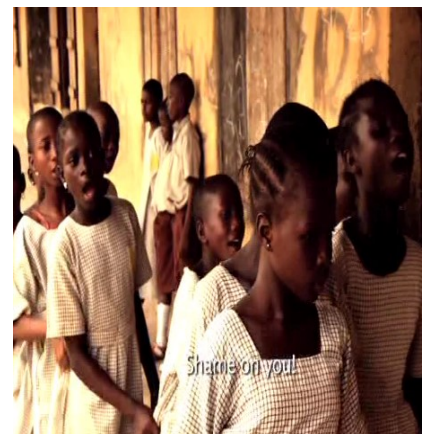
4.25. Kashy suddenly recalls his mother's smelly image waiting for him... just then he quits the football he is playing joyfully...	4.26. Kashimawo is reading a novel for his mother's listening pleasure	4.27. While his mother is grounding pepper, Kashi is busy redressing the woods in the wooden stove

4.28. A group of girls is holding Kashy hostage, demanding to see his father until a teacher comes to rescue him, thereafter the girls mock him.

4.29. In "Àbẹ̀ní", Abeni is projected objectively through her dialogues, appearance and costume, as an attractive, fun seeking young lady and loving personality. She is always in company of one friend or the other

4.30. Otunba Bamisaye is projected in appearance, stance and posture as an intimidating figure, a brute who will stop at nothing to get what he wants.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

In chapter one of this study, effort is made to introduce and identify the various milestones in the development of the Nigerian film industry. The research problem, the research questions and the aim and objectives of the study are equally presented. Under the scope, it is established that the study would focus on a structural analysis of Tunde Kelani's films with a view to determining his visual narrative style in two of his films: ("MaaMi" (2012) and "Àbèní" (2006). The various methods employed in carrying out this research are identified under the research methodology. The first chapter is then rounded off with the definition of terms.

Chapter two offers a critical review of related literature. In perusing the analytic models for the study, the views and concepts of the following theorists are thoroughly considered: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's Formalist Theory, Dennis Duro Aiyejina's Supernatural theory in African Drama, Vladimir Propp's sphere of action theory, Tzvetan Todorov's equilibrium theory, and Claude Levi-Strauss' binary oppositions theory. The second chapter concludes by introducing a new template of form for African films with analysis on the various components of the new template.

Chapter three identifies unique features of Nigerian/Yoruba movies. Consequently, the variables discussed include the principle of nonlinear plot structure, the principle of pessimistic pedagogy and the forms of narrative in Yoruba films.

Chapters four engages in the systematic and structural analysis of the two Tunde Kelani's films: "MaaMi" and "Àbèní", while the final chapter focuses on summary, conclusion and recommendation.

Conclusion

In finding a path way for this study, an attempt is made to trim down the statement of the problem to two basic research questions. In the conclusion, effort are made to revisit and reiterate these basic questions and compare it with the findings in order to show if the study has been able to proffer solutions to these research questions: i."Can the application of formalist principles present an objective way of analysing visual narrative structures of Tunde Kelani's films?" and ii. "Can the four formalist principles on visual narrative (opening and closing, story and plot, causality and character identification) used in this study be effective in dissecting the dynamics of Tunde Kelani's visual narrative style in film productions?"

In solving these questions, the study employs Bordwell and Thompson's formalist principles as theoretical framework along with other theories. The lead theory is used mainly to focus on form as an internal system governing the

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relations among filmic elements and the four principles of this formalist theory on visual narrative, namely opening and closing, story and plot, causality and character identification are utilised in analysing two of Tunde Kelani' films: "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní". These films are purposively selected for this qualitative study due to their unique visual narrative forms.

For emphasis purpose, the findings of this study established that facts that "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" use in medias res and prologue style of opening to activate spectators' interest. The closure preference for "MaaMi" is an open-ended narrative, while a close-ended narrative was used in "Abeni 1&2". Each storyline in "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" combines both the diegetic elements of the presented events and the inferred events. The plots of these films combine both the presented events and the non-diegetic elements. Human beings are used in both "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" as primary and secondary agents of causality. Both "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" feature temporal order, frequency and duration. The duration is further divided into plot, story, and screen durations. The spatial factors featured in both "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" include story, plot and screen spaces. A mixed method of autobiographical, anachronism and stream of consciousness is utilised in "MaaMi", while in "Àbẹ̀ní" an eye of God presentational model was used. "MaaMi" was presented as a film with restricted range of information, in a mystery narrative prototype based on a goal oriented story format, while "Àbẹ̀ní" is presented with unrestricted range of information,

a family narrative prototype based on a change of knowledge story format. Fade in transition mode is employed in revealing information about some characters and in increasing the level of viewers' identification with such characters in "MaaMi" and "Àbẹ̀ní" deployed mostly objective depth of story to plot information in unveiling events.

Based on the foregoing, it could be stated that the application of formalist principles does present an objective way of analysing visual narrative structures of Tunde Kelani's films. From the findings it is clear that the four formalist principles on visual narrative used in this study are effective in interrogating the dynamics of Tunde Kelani's visual narrative style.

Recommendation:

The study has objectively demonstrated the fact that the application of formalist principles could be deployed in analysing visual narrative structure in selected Nigerian films and the evaluation carried out has effectively captured the dynamics of Tunde Kelani's style of film productions. This study is therefore, recommends the application of the four identified formalist principles for objective analysis of other Nigerian films.

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