

CINEMATOGRAPHIC EVALUATION OF INGENUOUS CAMERA DIRECTING IN THE SELECTED WORKS OF KUNLE AFOLAYAN

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Abstract: Over the years, there has been a global evolution of hi-tech cinematic inventions. Film directors all over the world are swayed to handle the totality of their film visuals with great technical drive in a bid to ensuring that their film stories meet the digital yearnings of their audience. In spite of these yearnings for the use of hi-tech filming equipment, many directors/producers have not gotten it right and it is on this premise that this study did a cinematographic evaluation of ingenuous camera directing in the selected works of Kunle Afolayan in *Anikulapo* and *Citation*. This study employs qualitative research design, using the content analytical method and interview from which the primary data for the study are sourced. Secondary data are sourced from documentaries, books, scholarly journals, and internet sources. The study finds that the director used several dark shots and over-the-shoulder angle directorial styles in *Anikulapo* and *Citation* to convey suspense. It was also found that established shots were employed by Afolayan in *Anikulapo* and *Citation* to create effective scene transitions while maintaining an ISO range exposure of 160 to 340 in the films under examination to make the visuals less contrastive. This study concludes that *Aníkúlápó* and *Citation* were directed with a great level of cinematographic expertise, to obtain quality framings and unique visual dimension resulting in a quintessential cinematographic quality through the use of state-of-the-Art filming equipment. The study, therefore, recommended that budding film directors in Africa should emulate this visual dynamism which can be obtained from the process of training and retraining film directors for the purpose of maximising the use of hi-technological filming equipment.

Keywords: CINEMATOGRAPHIC EVALUATION, INGENUOUS CAMERA, DIRECTING, KUNLE AFOLAYAN

Introduction

Whether you are directing an adventure, horror, romance, thriller, epic, war film etc., the cinematography of a movie remains a core aspect that must be carefully handled. Most directors now come up with large budgets, specifically to cater for technical areas, deploying of many so-called sophisticated cameras, lenses and digital lighting equipment so as to make new films with dynamic visual perspectives and unique cinematic expression without the expertise and technical know-how of the use of equipment.

Now, many film directors have their individual cinematic blueprint that best showcases their visual imagination and creativity; most especially how they want each scene to look like (shot composition), including how dramatic beats are framed to deliver good film stories innovatively to the viewers in a more entertaining way. It is therefore important we understand how this unique directorial styles/cinematic approach impact the African film narratives and enhance the popularity of the movies

Kunle Afolayan has been identified as one of the leading film directors associated with Neo-Nollywood. He is well known for his directorial charisma and technical approach to filmmaking. In Nigeria, most people compare him to Tunde Kelani, probably because of their mentor and mentee relationship from the days of *Saworoide* (1999) and *Agogo Eewo* (2002). Between those period and now, Kunle Afolayan has grown in leaps and bounds, his professional training at the New York Film academy further exposed him to different levels of technical proficiency, a wide range of digitalisation and an uncommon artistry in film making in Nigeria and Africa

The recent demand for African films (particularly Nigerian films) globally, on major platforms like Netflix and others has put a great deal of strain on the quality of films produced in Nigeria and Africa. Consequently, film directors in Africa are more challenged to improve beyond the boundaries of conventional film making styles that hitherto characterised film making in Africa. Many of them are now more enthusiastic in embracing non-linear storylines, deployment of world-class filming equipment, CGI, VFX and other digital inputs, so as to attain global acceptability and circulation. It is in the bid to showcasing a Nigeria film director that has keyed into this milieu that we examine the cinematographic ingenuity of Kunle Afolayan in some of his selected works.

Literature Review

The history of film-making in Nigeria and the conceptualisation of some popular film Directors associated with Nollywood have come into focus in the recent discourse of cinematic practice. Similarly, scholarly definition of film directing, cinematography and some other major perspectives about the film production of budding film-makers have also experience academic searchlight. Consequently, this paper x-rays the advent of film-making in Nigeria. Ebelebe (2017, p.11) citing Okome (1996) noted that “at the beginning of the twentieth century, art and technology of cinema were imported into the African continent, and subsequently to Nigeria through the structure of colonialism”. Ebelebe (2017, p.12) also citing Miller (2016) affirms that

“the transition from celluloid to video format in Nigeria occurred when Nigerian cinema was at its formative stage”

Haynes (2000, p. 1) also in contributing to the discourse submits that: “video/films are something between television and cinema and as early as 1986, the use of video format in movie productions became prevalent amongst indigenous film-makers operating in the western states of Nigeria”. Haynes (2000, p. 1) added that “movies such as *Sonso Meji* (1988) and *Ekun* (1989) produced by Ade Ajiboye and Muyideen Alade Aromire, were amongst the first set of video-films produced in Nigeria”. Ebelebe (2017, p.12) then stressed that “the Yoruba theatre practitioners were active during this period, experimenting with video format as an alternative to celluloid technology”.

Okwuowulu (2016, p.12) also conceptualizes the three dominant film directors in the history of Nollywood; mentioning Teco Benson, Izu Ojukwu and Tunde Kelani. He explained that “while the interest of Kelani is focused on ideological patterns majorly because of his seeming obsession with the Yoruba cultural heritage which he often portrays in his films”, Teco Benson’s films on the other hand propels dramatic content filled with high suspense motifs”. Finally, he noted that “Izu Ojukwu can be said to be obsessed with the visual language in his films and this situates him as a technical director”.

In furtherance to understanding the concept directing, this study explores what directing in a functional perspective and according to Wills (1976, p.3) means as: “the process of transforming personal vision into public performance”. This means that a director is a converter of his personal vision into reality before an audience, using the human and material resources to interpret a play. Babalola (2017, p.440) on the other hand notes that: “directing as an art exist beyond the confines of the theatre, because directing movies and TV commercials for examples are different adventures entirely that requires specialized directorial skills and technical know-how.” It is in the same vein that Arinde (2012, p.99) stresses that a director “must know the art of stitching and must be a technocrat in the art of knitting all the bits of the theatrical pieces together to make a flowing narrative presentation that would sustain the interest of the audience.” This therefore underscores that directing as an art is the process of coordinating the entire human, technological, artistic processes of production, be it in theatre, films and other media contents.

Nicholas and Adewale (2002, p.414) describe Kunle Afolayan as a director with “primary emphasis on aesthetics and with a penchant for a unique film tradition”. Adeshina (2014: p.9) also describing Kunle Afolayan’s works, notes that “Afolayan’s films radiate the warmth, humanism, broad-mindedness and moralism that are so characteristic of Yoruba culture.” He added that Kunle “is a poet of fate and affliction, his plotting full of twists and turns, even with his attention centering on the betrayals and loyalties of intimate relationships and in all these ways, Kunle Afolayan is working with the advance thematic of Yoruba filmmaking and Nollywood in general”.

Again, Nicholas and Adewale (2002, p.415) observes that Kunle’s visual imagination is super active in his movies and his creative directorial prowess are incomparable when they observe that, “for even when he has been able to test his ideas, he could see in his mind’s eye

with remarkable vividness how the visual elements might be made to function better as part of the dramatic rhythm of his film”. It is in this direction that this study decides to examines the directorial ingenuity of Kunle Afolayan; as a technologically-inclined director whose cinematographic forte cannot be underestimated.

In further advancing this discourse, Ebelebe (2017, p.10) observes that presently, “substantial academic discourse about the Nigeria film industry have been more concerned with film technologies, cinematic innovation and the opportunities that emanate with it...whilst these technological advances seem to stimulate a number of radical transformations in film practices worldwide, the use of new digital technologies has impacted almost every aspect of the movie-making practice in Nigeria”. Therefore, visual technologies, hence, cinematography remains a crucial aspect of film making practice that needs to be explored.

Credence is given to Christie (2017, p.2) who succinctly submits that: “cinematography is the art of visual storytelling with a motion picture and it comprise all screen technologies and visual elements including framing, composition, angles, depth, focus, exposure and filtration”. Also, Bordwell and Thompson (2010, p.390) observe that “a director makes certain visual choices and adheres to them throughout the film and even though most films seem to have a universal language, yet, there are slight and (un)conscious deviations by some directors in the application of various cinematographic techniques.” it is on this premise that this study adopts the description of Bordwell and Thompson (2010, p.390) on directing as the “deliberate directorial choices”. in this study we see it as directorial ingenuity of Kunle Afolayan inhis cinematic directing of *Aníkúlápó* and *Citation* hence the study focuses on the cinematographic techniques used in the films as well as all the creative commitments of the director to aid the visual narrative of the stories.

Theoretical Framework

Many film directors today delve into film directing without being properly baked in the art of film directing hence they become novices not knowing that pronouncing ‘action’ when the film and camera set-ups are ready for filming is all that a director should do. This indicates that most people do not understand the role of a film director nor the basic technical and artistic qualities that is required for good directing Film as an art should be controlled by the master artiste irrespective of the army of personnel involved in its realisation. Alexandre Astruc’s (1950) had earlier called for an inclusive nature of film production dominated by the personality of the director. Comparing film and literary works like novel when he posits “that a film director should use his camera the way the literary artist uses his pen”. Therefore, this study adopts the Formalist Film theory to interrogate this work.

Formalist film theory focuses on the technical features of a film and specifically how the director uses shot composition, lighting, framing and editing to create special effects etc. This theory was championed by Sergei Eisenstein in the 1920s to provide meanings to dramatic actions and film techniques.

In the submission of Ola-koyi (2019; p4) citing Ola-koyi (2015) notes that:

Formalist looks specifically at matters of structure and style; often combined with one 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.

Formalist film analysts often seek to know the most significant visual composition of a film in any given production and how they add to the story as a whole. For example, a formalist might decide to study how standard Nollywood continuity editing creates a more comforting effect and how non-continuity or jump-cut editing makes film more disconcerting or volatile. One might also choose to consider the cinematography of a film, with analysis on the shot composition and how the shot selection could go from very wide to very close shots, including the analysis of shots decrease as the sequence progresses towards its end. No doubt, formalist film theory is unique because it embraces both the ideological and auteur branches of criticism. In both cases, the common denominator for the formalist film approach is the directorial style otherwise described as features of the Formalist Film Theory include the followings:

- i. That the directorial style is analysed through the visual techniques
- ii. Shot Composition includes Sets and Backgrounds drawing attention to themselves
- iii. The camera images are primary to the analysis

Jade (2018, p.1) observes that “the key characteristics of the formalist film theory is the critical emphasis on form.” Jade (2018, p1) also noted that “the distinction between form and content is that content is the works subject matter whereas form is how we present the subject matter”. Furthermore, Bordwell and Thompson (2004, p167) submit that “that formalist film theory is used as model or as a theoretical ‘lens’ that enables both critic and researcher to conduct a meticulous examination and observation on the various components of a film” When a critical observation is directed at the theory, one will understand that film makers/directors at this digital age are not only concern about the content of their films but at the same time, passionate about the best way to present the story and its background, using technical visual features to emphasize the most important information in the best possible way.

Synopsis of *Aníkúlápó*

The screenplay written by High priest, Ifayemi Elebuibon revolves around one dead Saro who is brought back to life by a mythical creature in form of a very big black vulture-like bird called Akala that is known to have the power of resurrection. Saro, an aso-ofi weaver from Gbongan moves to Oyo in search of greener pastures. On his arrival, he is sighted and liked by Awarun who makes his arrival easier. She gives him a job, shelter, and even a home/work site of his own. Awarun is good to Saro and soon begin to have intimate affairs.

Saro later understands that rich and elderly Awarun has other sexual partners she calls on any time she feels sexual urge. Saro then develops a fresh interest in a young Queen, Arolake after visiting the palace. Queen Arolake is actually unhappy in her marriage because she is forced into marrying the king at a tender age due to the debt her parents owe the king. The choice of Arolake as the Kings favourite queen, constantly causes crisis in the palace, hence the older queens maltreat her. Later, she falls in love with Saro and they began to meet secretly in the

forest for sexual escapade to the extent that she plans to elope with him. While the escape plan is on, a beautiful daughter of the king who is also secretly admiring Saro trace him to his house but is disappointed on meeting Queen Arolake with him. Out of bitterness she runs quickly to the palace to report the affair to the king and the King, without delay sentences Saro to death by lynching. Saro is killed over his relationship with Arolake.

A mythical Akala bird wakes Saro from the dead. Thereafter, Saro now has the power to resurrect any dead person through a gourd picked up by Aroloke from Akala and that earned him the name Aníkúlápó, which means the "one that holds death in his purse"

Saro with his wife become popular in their new found village Ojumo. He later betrays Arolake who is barren by lusting after other women in the village. He grew excessive pride and then begins to make inordinate demands from villagers before he can raise their dead. When Arolake hears that Saro has again asked for the king's daughter's hand in marriage before he can restore life to the king's heir, she become fed up and decide to deserts him. Saro could not resurrect the prince, it was then he discovers that he no longer has the power to tame death. He later regrets his action against Arolake. However, Saro is killed by the King's guard for not been able to bring the prince back to life. Surprisingly, Akala comes again to revive him.

Synopsis of Citation

Citation written by Tunde Babalola is a true-life story about a university student who a professor attempts to rape. A lecturer arranged that a certain lady meets him in a local hotel so that she can graduate; the lady then invites some of her friends to be in the hotel room to record the lecturer. The lecturer sighting other students in the room tries to run away and during the chase by the students, the lecturer is hit by a car. The young lady and her friends are asked to face the college disciplinary committee who decided that they should be rusticated because their actions led to loss of life.

Two years later, a new post graduate student, Moremi reports similar case against another lecturer, Prof. Lucien N'Dyare who just joined the university. Lucien is a popular professor who is loved and admired by the post graduate students so it is difficult to believe Moremi. Even her best friend thinks that Moremi is only trying to get good grades by blackmailing the professor.

Moremi later had to fight to prove her innocence in front of the school's disciplinary committee as she is said to be the one making seductive advances to the professor. The professor outsmarts her and it was so difficult for anyone to believe Moremi.

However, Moremi in her frustration conceived a brilliant idea to travel to Senegal and visit where the University where Professor Lucien had worked before to gather facts and evidences to justify her claim in front of the college jury. She was fortunate to meet a former colleague of the Professor, who agrees to follow her to Nigeria to testify. Immediately Professor Lucien sees his former colleague as witness becomes uncomfortable. The testimony by the Senegalese lecturer is what saved Moremi from conviction.

Biography of Kunle Afolayan

Kunle Afolayan is an actor, movie producer and director. His contribution to the Nigerian movie industry has been exceptional. Currently, he is adjudged one of the best film directors in Africa. Kunle Afolayan is the Founder/CEO of Kunle Afolayan Productions Television (KAPTV) and Golden Effects Pictures.

Born on the 30th of September 1974 into the family of Mr. and Mrs Adeyemi Josiah Afolayan (aka Ade Love) in Ebute-metta, Lagos State, Nigeria, his father Ade Love was a popular movie producer in the traveling theater of the 20th century. The family hails from Agbamu an Igbomina Settlement in Kwara State, Nigeria. Kunle attended African Salem Primary School; Ebute Metta and had his secondary school education at Denton Grammar School, Agbamu, Kwara State, Nigeria. He proceeded to the University for his Bachelors of Science Degree in Economics. After graduating from the University, Kunle Afolayan in 2005 enrolled for Digital filmmaking at the New York Film Academy in the United States of America. After his education, he worked in a bank for a while and also did some part-time acting before he quits banking to debut in the movie industry. In 2011, he was selected to represent Nigeria at the Subversive Film Festival alongside Zeb Ejiro. Kunle has also worked with many prominent movie producers, directors, international actors and actresses. Kunle Afolayan has also produced many movies that recorded success; he is married to Tolu Afolayan and the marriage is blessed with 4 children.

Kunle Afolayan's Cinematographic Ingenuity in directing the Camera in *Aníkúlápó* and Citation

Cinematography is the art and craft of capturing moving images which is made up of multiple elements and major technical details. In this segment, the study examines Kunle Afolayan's display of cinematographic ingenuity in directing the camera in areas such as shot composition and framings, use of camera angles, use of lighting and exposure.

Shot Composition and Framing

Shot composition is one of the most important aspects of filmmaking because what the audience sees on screen is the direct result of the director's compositional choices. Crisp (2004, p.27) notes that "great shot composition influences emotion, establishes character and most importantly, engages the viewer". Shot composition involves the arrangements of all visual elements in a shot frame.



Fig 1: A young maiden is hypnotized as she is no longer concentrating on the cloth, she is buying but admiring Saro the cloth seller. The picture above captures her look away from the cloth. The shot is a frame of activities of the actors, as well as the weaving tools at the background.(Photo Credit: Anikulapo)



Fig 2: A cut away shot of a cock on the roof and in the shadow of the rising of the sun, explaining the timing of the action (morning). The cock and the rising sun are framed to communicate the time of the events. Photo Credit: Anikulapo

Most cinematographic approaches are often dependent on what experience the director wants the audience to have, knowing what shot composition is and how to use it in visual storytelling is vital. Kunle Afolayan in an interview on December 17th 2022 submits that “I combined the relevant visual elements for each scene to advance the story”.

The picture in fig 3 below explains that



Fig 3: Professor Lucien's teaching using gestures while the students pay rapt attention. The visual elements framed in this shot include a podium, the board, the students and the big lecture room. The framing shows a perfect lecture room in a complete academic setting Photo Credit: *Citation*

While it is impossible to discuss shot composition without discussing shot itself, Sam (2001, p.19) opines that "shots are best described by the distance of the lens to the subject." There are three basic camera shots which include: Close-up Shots, Medium Shots and Long shots." Sam (2001, p.19) expands on that fact that "these three basic shots can be further declassified based on framing which include Extreme Close Ups and Extreme long shots". In both *Anikulapo* and *Citation*, several creative shots and unique framings were identified. Close up shots *Anikulapo* and *Citation* were used to show the intimate and emotional expressions of a character and not just facial reactions. The picture in figure 4 below suffices.

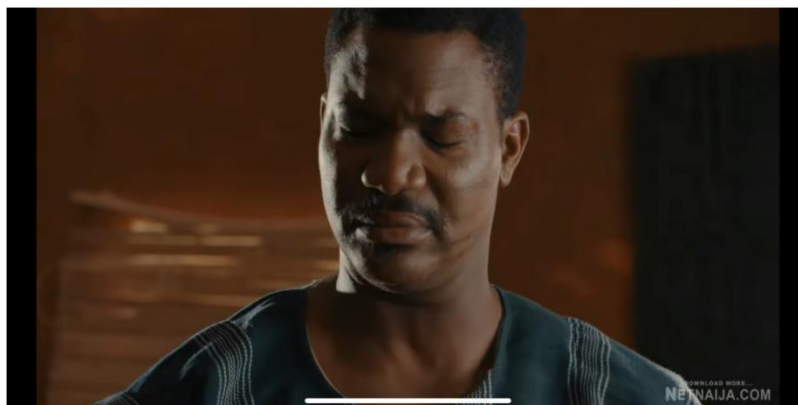


Fig 4: This picture shows Saro crying when he realized he had lost his powers because he maltreated Arolake. An Extreme Close up shot on his face was used to show the tears from his eyes. The shot shows an emotional reaction which is a clear interpretation of Saro's expression of sadness and regret in *Anikulapo*. Photo Credit: *Anikulapo*



Fig 5: The above picture is a Close-up shot on the face of Prof Lucien beaming with smile when he was first introduced to the post-graduate class. The director used this smiling Close up shot of the professor to create the suspension of disbelief (Photo Credit: *Citation*)



Fig 6: The above picture shows a wide shot to establish the good relationship between the Professor and Moremi so as to create an impression as well as establish locale and appreciate nature (Photo Credit: *Citation*)

The director used medium shots (MS) in *Anikulapo* and *Citation*. The medium shot is always a great way to capture the activities of the actor in scene. Sam (2001, p.20) stressed that “a medium shot can be used to frame up multiple actors at once and also capture everything they are doing” The picture in fig 7 below explains that



Fig 7: This medium shot establishes the most Senior Queen in the palace being cared for by a palace maid. There are two other maids standing behind her, captured to show her cultural seniority to other queens. Photo Credit: *Anikulapo*



Fig 8: This medium shot was used to capture several sporting activities and characters with main shot emphasis on Moremi playing table tennis. Photo Credit: *Citation*



Figure 9: The above picture captures the walk of Moremi and her boyfriend using an aerial angle to include the beautiful garden in the shot rather than the conventional panning of camera. (Photo Credit: Citation)

Long shot also remains crucial to film narratives. Nwanwene (2002, p.96) avers that long shot “is a camera shot from a great distance, usually showing the characters as very small in comparison to their surroundings.” The long shot (LS) is also called wide shot (WS) or full shot and it is basically used to show the relationship between characters and their environment. Specifically, Kunle Afolayan states during the interview that “I used LS in the movie to establish locales and at the same time to appreciate nature and to show actors movements from one direction to the other without an intervening shot”.

Camera Angles

In relation to one of the features of the theoretical framework that states that the camera images are primary to the analysis is made manifest in the various camera angles and shot dynamics the director under examination deploys in each scene. This underscores the submission of Blain (2002: p.47) who posits that “the variance of camera angles in filmmaking are used to help enhance the narrative, the theme and the overall mood of the film.” It is not enough to know the shot composition of a film but to also understand the various camera angles and their relativity to the storylines. While there are various camera angles in different films, this study expands on the identifiable camera angles in *Anikulapo* and *Citation*, they include: Aerial Angle (Bird’s eye), Over-the-Shoulder angle, Point of View angle and Established Angle.

Aerial Angle (bird’s eye)

An aerial angle also known as the bird’s eye is an angle of the camera from above, overhead, capturing the actions below. In today’s cinematic experience, these types of angles can only be achieved by using helicopters or drones so as to get the view of what is happening

below. Film directors are now challenged to innovatively include aerial perspectives in their films.



Fig 10: Kunle Afolayan pilots a DJI Mavic 2 Zoom to capture Saro from 250ft altitude to zoom down to a total ground level in a quick sequence. (Photo Credit: Anikulapo)

Over the Shoulder (OTS Angle)

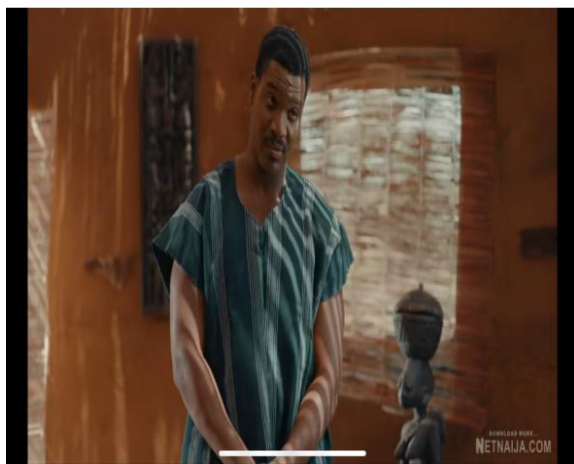
This type of angle is used to establish an eyeline of where each character in the scene is looking and it is commonly framed through medium shot. It is important to state that this angle was the dominant perspective the director employed in both *Anikulapo* and *Citation*. He employs it as the most effective approach when shooting conversational scenes between two characters in a scene.



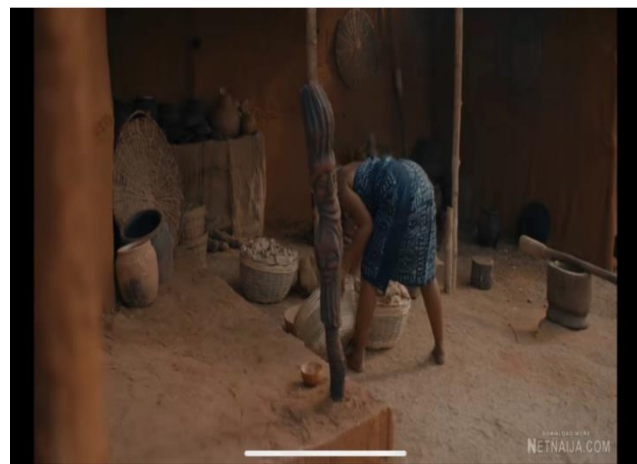
Fig 11 and 12: An over the shoulder angles of Moremi showing the front and back view during Moremi's conversation with her boyfriend

Point of View Angle

A point of view is a film angle that shows what a character is looking at. As earlier stated in the theoretical frame that the directorial style is analysed through the various visual techniques employed by a director in a movie is further sustained by Kunle Afolayans' incorporation of POV angles in *Anikulapo* and *Citation*. Here the camera acts as the eyes of the character and the audience will only see what the camera is seeing".



(a)



(b)

Fig 13: That is the point of View of Saro in picture (a) staring at one of the maids in picture (b) in his compound seductively. The POV angle is used to depict what men mostly admire about women. (Photo Credit: *Anikulapo*)

Established Angles

This angle is used to inform the audience where the next action will be taking place". Practically, established shots are often wide and it is always at the beginning of a scene. The director in both movies used the established shot as a form of scene transition and to depict locales.

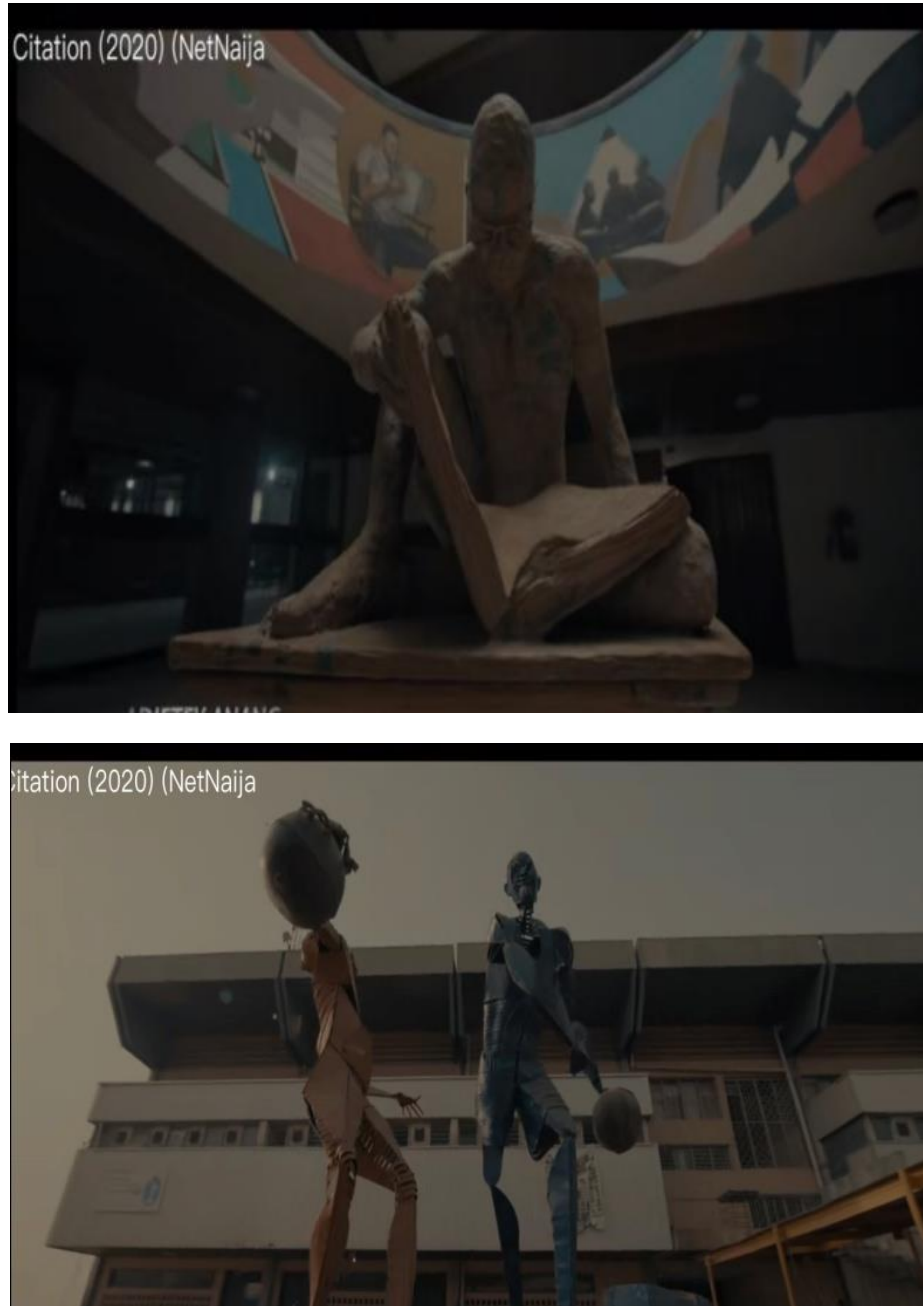


Fig 14: OAU sport complex and the statues in front of it as an established shot to depict locale in scene transition

Cinematographic Ingenuity in the use of Light

Without good lighting, the best camera in the world can't capture a perfect picture and it is very important we understand how Kunle Afolayan in *Anikulapo* and *Citation* use lighting to enhance images, create depth, and support the story's mood and atmosphere. This study

identified various lighting styles incorporated by the director which include; Ambient lighting and Practical lighting. Ambient Light also known as available light is any light the cinematographer did not bring to the film location. This lighting includes natural light such as sunlight, moonlight, streetlamp etc. For day time in *Anikulapo*, the director maximized natural lights, since most of the shots were outdoor as it is captured in the sunlight reflection on the cloth of Saro in *Anikulapo*. Of aesthetic interest are the night shots in *Anikulapo*, especially the dark scenes where the director deployed practical lighting to create special effects.

Practical Lighting

This is the technique of using light sources that are seen within the frame of a shot. They are called practical light because they can be achieved with a variety of light sources from lamps to flash-light, car headlights, candles etc. Kunle Afolayan used these practical light sources to establish and create realism for the audience. Example of the use of practical lighting is in the picture in fig. 15 below:



Fig 15: In one of the sex scenes between Saro and Queen Arolake, an Atupa which is an example of practical light is illuminating the breast of Queen Arolake, making the breast visible in a brief and total dark shot sequence. (Photo Credit: Anikulapo)



Fig 16: The Hunter's wood light was the source of illumination for the shot another practical source of lighting.
(Photo Credit: Anikulapo)

Exposure

Kunle Afolayan shoots with RED camera series, for *Anikulapo* he noted during our chat that both Scarlet M-x and Epic dragon were all available at the location while Epic was used for *Citation*. Exposures in films are camera based and for a film to look good, the shots must not be too bright (overexposed) or too dark (underexposed). Marcus (2020: p.26) noted that exposure is simply the measurable amount of light that hits the image sensor in any given scene

Contrast

Contrast is simply the ratio between light and darkness. High contrast display scene brightness while low contrast maximizes shallower range of tones. Deciding how much contrast to have in a scene will be based on the mood the director is trying to depict. Kunle Afolayan achieved contrast not via editing but via exposure. Moremi in most of the scenes where she was trying to prove the truth of the matter was depicted with low contrast to show her mood of sorrow after the professor made attempt to rape her.



Fig. 17: A low contrast image of a depressed lady in her final year in the University but has to pay the price of succumbing to sexual demand by her lecturer before she could pass his course. The low contrast image is used to depict her mood of sadness and unhappiness.(Photo Credit: Citation)

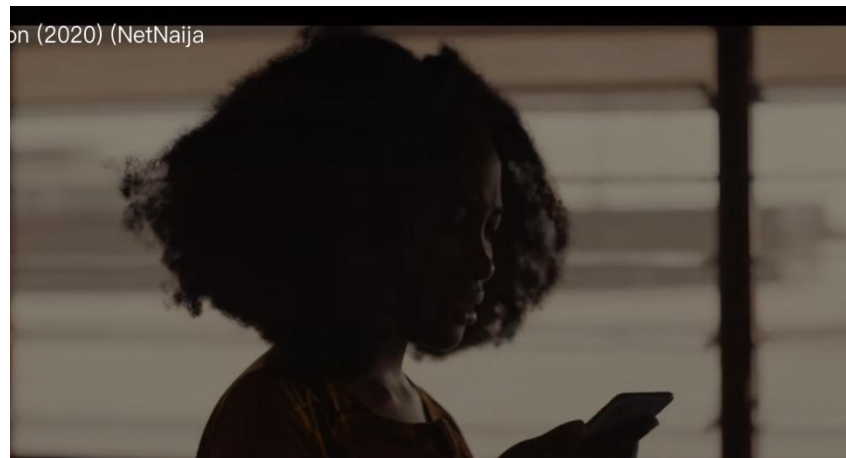


Fig 18: Another low contrastive image of Moremi at the beginning of the film, the image clearly shows her state of depression during her quest to prove her innocence (Photo Credit: Citation)

Again, the range of exposure varies on camera specification because some camera can achieve depths than the others. Kunle Afolayan noted that while shooting indoor, he maximizes an ISO range of 500-1000, shutter speed of about 125 while aperture will be about f4. He added that for outdoor, ISO will be on 100-200 range, shutter speed of 200 and aperture still f4 based on RED capacities and other environmental light factors.

Findings

Kunle Afolayan's visual imagination is very crucial to his cinematographic exploration, his inventive cinematographic directorial approach in *Anikulapo and Citation* are found to be ingenious skilful incorporation of various shots composition, camera angles, lighting, exposure, contrast, which gave a remarkable dramatic rhythm to all the scenes in the two films examined.

One of the most fascinating parts of *Anikulapo* that we find in this study is the narrative technique via the cinematographic directing technique. Kunle Afolayan uses flashback to avoid the common straight up narrative technique; he begins the play with dead Saro being brought back to life using a fantastic CGI-created akala bird. He then returns the audience to what led to his death before advancing the story. No doubt, such plot structure affirms his directorial and cinematographic uniqueness.

For *Citation*, it was a case of multiple flashbacks from two perspectives. Kunle Afolayan used the cinematography as a form of report to the college jury about what transpired in the past between Moremi and Professor Lucien. While he maintained some sequences of present situation, the audience can still differentiate the flashback narratives from the present scenarios, though they were quick and simultaneous.

The framing of the shots in both films were exceptional cinematographic ingenuity. Mainly, the director employed flashbacks as his dominant techniques in both films, but this time around, the flashbacks were not the usual black and white contrast style of Nollywood. As a matter of fact, the flashbacks were the main plot structure.

In relation to the theoretical features, the directorial style and the dominant cinematographic technique is best described as plot-structured flashbacks in a narrative sequence. Secondly, sets and backgrounds were used as scenery transition to sustain the understanding of the audience about the locale.

Our findings also reveals that the camera images express the mood, comment on the themes and subject matters of both films using the special incorporation of shot compositions such as close ups that shows the true emotions of the actors and medium shots that shows the actor's activities in the scenes. The dark shots in *Anikulapo* were technically and specifically used to create suspense and to allow the true projection of sexual actions, perverseness and promiscuity in our society while exposure and contrast in *Citation* were used to explore the moral and emotions of girls that were sexually harassed by lecturers in the community under examination.

Close observation also reveal that Kunle Afolayan is adequately informed on directorial principles and cinematographic techniques, which was why he explores diverse visual tools. Again, *Anikulapo* and *Citations* are films with deep socio-cultural relativity and one of the major techniques used by the director was to maximize the use of flashback and multiple flashbacks in the narratives to sustain the emotional attachment of the audience to the storyline.

Afolayan's uneconomical investment on hi-tech cinematic equipment, especially the RED camera series mentioned in this study are not regular cinema equipment often seen in Nollywood film locations. Furthermore, the thrust of the film in terms of sexual harassment, sexual

perverseness and promiscuity in our society were totally sustained, depicting the root causes, pleasures and pains of the various women and their circumstances in the films without excessive show of nudity. It was also noted that Kunle Afolayan is one of the major figures in the new Nollywood who does not only produce, but also direct his films attesting to his cinematographic skills.

Kunle Afolayan has proven that film directors in Africa should no longer shy away from sexual themes and tendencies in our society as the right cinematic principles, techniques and lighting approaches, realistic projections can be used without contravening ethical principles in our society.

However, a popular Yoruba adage that says "One to dun, owo lo pa" which literally means "a delicious soup is costly" point us to fact that production of good movies require a lot of funding. Therefore, Film directors must continue to expand their budget and seek more of government and private individuals' support for funding so that access to quality resources to make good films will not be a mirage.

Finally, a movie that will go far in circulation and also impact the society cannot be patched up. The culture of using standard and sophisticated cinematographic equipment must be encouraged. Film directors must therefore continue to deploy all necessary expertise and evolving sophisticated filming mechanism in achieving a production that can be projected at major film festivals and cinemas globally.

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Filmography

Citation (2020). Produced and directed by Kunle Afolayan. English/Yoruba; Golden Effects Pictures, Lagos. 2:31:24.

Anikulapo (2022). Produced and directed by Kunle Afolayan. English/Yoruba; Golden Effects Pictures, Lagos. 2:22:44

Interview

Researchers interview with Kunle Afolayan via Instagram on December 17, 2022.