

## An Appraisal of Unique Features of Yoruba Narrative Films within the Nollywood Culture

**S. Joseph Bankola OLA-KOYI**

Lecturer, Literary/Film Critic & Media Arts Consultant,  
Department of Performing Arts,  
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye  
[ola-koyi.joseph@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng](mailto:ola-koyi.joseph@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng)/[sundayolakoyi05@gmail.com](mailto:sundayolakoyi05@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

*The introduction of video film technology into the country in the 80s had greatly modified and opened up a new channel through which Nigerians tell their stories and share narratives. The paper explores the unique attributes of selected Nigerian - Yoruba narrative films produced between 1992 and 2016. In this research exercise, the study deploys a library research method, a descriptive research mode and a studio analysis approach, while employing a mixed theoretical framework that comprises structuralist, racial and generic approaches of film theories and criticisms in identifying and discussing common features which distinguished the Yoruba movies from films of other cultures within the Nollywood. In its findings, the study identified the usage of the nonlinear plot structure in Yoruba narrative films and the deployment of the pessimistic pedagogy before identifying the common characteristics of the Yoruba narrative films. In conclusion the study believes that the findings in this study will aid in decoding, comprehending, or analysing the Yoruba films and other Nigerian films.*

**Keywords:** Film features, Narrative, Nollywood culture and Yoruba-films.

### **Introduction**

With the adoption of the video film technology in the making of the Nigerian films, a new approach was opened to Nigerian filmmakers on sharing ideas or experiencing traditional folklores and popular narratives. The new technology opened up a new method of the making, documenting and sharing traditional folktales, stories and popular narratives through the film medium. In tracing the evolution of dramatic and theatrical performances and narrative films in the country Ola-Koyi (2015) observed that,

Prior to the Celluloid film era, there were the existence of both Travelling Theatre and Television drama presentations. That is before the Colonial era (i.e. before 1900), in the Oyo (Yoruba) kingdom, there was the Alarinjo Traditional Travelling Theatre. During the Colonial / Pre-Independence period of the Nigerian film (i.e. 1900-1960), there was the existence of the modern Yoruba Travelling Theatre. During this period, "The Garden of Eden" and "The Throne of God" which were the first productions from Hubert Ogunde, the doyen of the Nigerian Theatre came on stage on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 1944 at the same Glover Memorial Hall, Lagos. By 1981, according to Jeyifo (1984:1), "there are well over a hundred theatre troupes in the Yoruba Travelling Theatre movement."

He further reiterated the fact that, "most of Nigerian film-makers come from what had been designated as the theatre belt of the country – the South West..." with its virile theatre tradition and professional theatre companies. Quoting Wole Soyinka, he opined, "that some of these filmmakers had made a name for themselves on stage before making the transition to film." It is on record that, "...most of the early Yoruba film makers adapted for the screen, some of their successful stage

productions hence; they modified and adapted the acting styles and stage presentation/narrative techniques for the new medium.”

Up till today, the modified acting styles and presentational techniques along with other demands of the new medium have constituted the integral features of Yoruba home video films – a modern popular channel through which the Yoruba portrays the world. Using a library research method, a descriptive research mode and a studio analysis approach and employing a mixed theoretical framework of structuralist, racial and generic approaches, the study examines the unique ways in which Yoruba films portrays the world and scrutinizes the common features of Nollywood – Yoruba films.

### **Theoretical Framework**

It is on record that structuralism is a method of interpretation and analysis which focus on aspects of human cognition, behaviour, culture, and experience. It analyses relationships or contrast between elements in a conceptual system that reflect common features or patterns underlying a superficial diversity. Another school of thought defined structuralism as “...the methodology that elements of human culture must be understood by way of their relationship to a larger, overarching system or structure. It works to uncover the structures that underlie all the things that humans do, think, perceive, and feel.” (Luke Mastin, 2008)

Quoting an online source Ola-Koyi (2019) opined that some basic tools of structuralist analysis which is now ascribed to post-structuralism movement include these key assumptions:

The concept of "self" as a singular and coherent entity is a fictional construct, and an individual rather comprises conflicting tensions and knowledge claims (e.g. gender, class, profession, etc). The interpretation of meaning of a text is therefore dependent on a reader's own personal concept of self. An author's intended meaning (although the author's own identity as a stable "self" with a single, discernible "intent" is also a fictional construct) is secondary to the meaning that the reader perceives, and a literary text (or, indeed, any situation where a subject perceives a sign) has no single purpose, meaning or existence. It is necessary to utilize a variety of perspectives to create a multi-faceted interpretation of a text, even if these interpretations conflict with one another.

On one hand, the racial studies on film theory and criticism is concerned with how different races have been positively or negatively represented, by working in front of the camera and behind the camera by foreign or indigenous filmmakers and how a race in particular had been able to tell her stories or project the civilization and other cultural values of the race to outside world by working behind and before the camera. It is believed that the deployment of a national or racial cinema approach to film analysis and criticism will lead a researcher into a deeper understanding of the themes or the culture of any given film of interest.

On the other hand, the genre analysis according to Adeoti (2014):

...is interested in the tradition within the context of which a text (in this case film) is created. It registers certain formal expectations that guide readers' approach to similar works and enables them to understand individual work on their own and as part of a literary collectivity. Each work is a unique entity, yet it belongs to a larger category by virtue of its component and the manner of its composition. The critic's primary task is to determine the kind of art

that is being created before considering other components, because it is around that central intent that such components are woven.

In buttressing his point, he reiterated the view of Stevens and Stewart (1987) that genre criticism considers elements that are intrinsic and extrinsic to the text in so far as they contribute to the realisation of the artistic goal.

### **Research Method/Methodology**

The employment of a *library research method* enables the researcher to source for relevant print and electronic information/internet data. The gathered information/data are thus deployed in the composition/writing of this paper. Consequently, the researcher engages in meticulous reading and systematic analysis of the chosen documents. The findings from this evaluating exercise are thus presented under the discussion and interpretation of this paper.

In utilising a *descriptive research method* as research instrument, this study combined it with a *studio analysis approach*. The descriptive method is employed to describe and analyse relevant shots while the employment of a studio analysis approach involves the use of video editing instrument that enables the researcher to identify and select frames in order to analyse the chosen shots from the selected films.

### **Discussion, Interpretation and Findings**

#### **Identified Features of Yoruba Narrative Films**

In exploring the distinctive ways in which Yoruba race portrays the world, attempt will be made at this section to examine the unique attributes of the Yoruba film culture and identify the various factors which distinguished Yoruba movies from films of other cultures or scrutinize the conditions that produced some specific effects on Yoruba film system. In addition to this exercise of identifying and discussing the specific characteristics of Nigerian-Yoruba films, the study is designed to aid other critics in their attempt to decode, comprehend, and diagnose films from Nollywood culture especially Yoruba films. Thus, the identified common attributes of Yoruba film will be discussed under the following subheadings: the principle of non-linear plot structure; the principle of pessimistic pedagogy and the various forms of narrative in Yoruba films.

#### **Principle of Nonlinear Plot Structure in Nigerian/Yoruba Films:**

It could be reiterated that at a point most Nigerian/Yoruba narrative often go through metaphysical experience before the final resolution in a story. According to Adeoti (2014), "Yoruba video films is a product of the circumstances of its origin and development. It is a tradition in which the narrative and the performative traditions of the people are still surviving alongside their poetic chants..."

If it could be established that Africans live in a spiritual universe where the physical interact freely with the metaphysical, where the cosmos relationship between the world of the living, the dead and the unborn is unbroken. If it is plausible for every event in 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.

Simply put, 80% of the films studied displayed in one way or the other a nonlinear plot system, in revealing the events of each plot, the eye of the camera or the screen often operates as an omniscient story teller, sharing experiences from an omnipresent point of view. In demonstrating how meaning

is derived or received from a nonlinear plot system in Yoruba creative world, the following scenario quoted from Ola-Koyi (2019) could be insightful leading into Yoruba world of imagination and creativity that would be followed by a cultural explanation:

A colleague comes to see Dauda at home, while discoursing; Dauda informs his friend that as soon as he secures the staff cooperative loan, he will 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 vehicles on the highway. Knowing the reckless plan his son has for his dreamed car, 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, 2019)

First, the bone of contention in this dream-like experience/extract is "a dreamed 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, the stream of consciousness in the above extract flows in and out of linearity. Thus, the linear structure is basically deconstructed in favour of nonlinearity.

Again, in decoding this experience, this 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 *edi*), 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 must be disciplined and tamed. Thus, scolding children is not an act of abusing the minor. Rather it is a means of inculcating discipline into a naughty child 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 – another dream of a son in driving his father's car and the father's reaction in beating the boy into a coma) before receding into the past (on realising the fact that the boy is unconscious) and coming back again into the present, (Dauda raises alarm for 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.

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 to the fact 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, but 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) suggested, “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. Here, it is easy to see the above narrative style as having a 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 logicity experience. 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 characterized 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 just to paraphrase what Ogunleye (2008) captured 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 must 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 ways in which each of these basic genres of film use the narrative varies.

The linear narrative basically relies on the logic of causality, time and space in order to make meaning, while the nonlinear narrative relies on cultural logic which is characterised by the reoccurrence of events in an empty space and in a fluid time. Moreover, it must 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 often employ a pessimistic approach in highlighting the theme or projecting the moral intention in a story. The use of this “pessimistic approach” on screen narrative could be seen as one of the carryover techniques from the stage performance which is equally derived from Yoruba folklore/storytelling practices. This practice could be seen as a regular

philosophical pessimistic feature in most African stories. Going by the view expressed in an online search engine – Wikipedia Free Encyclopaedia:

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. (<http://en.m.wikipedia.org/>)

Although it had been observed that pessimistic philosophy challenges the notion of progress but in most African myths, narratives, mass mediated messages, moral teaching, it is seldom deployed to challenge the notion of progress but to complement and to install order in the society. In most cases, socially accepted values and ideologies are often shared or transferred through a method in which the receiver of a particular didactic message from a myth, a narrative or a story is expected to learn and desist from evil after experiencing the terrible outcome of a specific vice denounced and condemned in the shared or narrated story, mass-mediated messages and other moral teaching myths.

Essentially, this pessimistic approach or method of sharing story or experiencing narrative messages is an ethical method that seeks to eliminate and compel people to desist from vices and evils in the society by exposing the audience/listener/receiver of such a message to the distasteful outcomes in the evil actions and revealing irrational realities of the false expectations, which may lead to undesirable conclusions.

To be specific, one could cite “Saworoide” film as an example of movies where pessimistic pedagogy is used. In this film Lapite (Kola Oyewo) sought to be a king not out of his love to serve the people of Jogbo land but out of his own selfish desire for personal enrichment. During the rite of ascension, he forcefully imposed himself on the kingmakers, without completing the traditional rite of accession and in order to evade the repercussion of his action of none completion of the traditional rite, he assassinated his co-contestant on the race for the royal throne. Having revealed himself as a dictator, his reign witnessed strong resistance and multiple episodes of social unrest. In order to safeguard his reign, he beckoned on the military to help him in recapturing the brass crown which the youth carted away. As nature would have, the same Lagata (Kunle Bantefa), the military general whom king Lapite invited, assassinated the corrupt Oba Lapite in order for the military general to have a taste of the goodies from state treasury and to elongate the reign of corruption in Jogbo land. Any member of any political party in Nigeria or member of the public who have seen this film is encouraged and expected to learn from this narrative and serve in government with integrity, honesty and forthrightness so as to prevent unpalatable experiences as seen in this narrative film. From the foregoing, one could say that the use of the pessimistic pedagogy in this Yoruba film: “Saworoide” is an ethical means of inculcating moral in the society. Narratives or mass mediated messages that mirrored evil deeds for the audience to see is projected as a deterrence/warning for others who have tendencies for similar actions.

It is on record that a narrative in Yoruba film could be presented either in a mirroring or an interrogative mode. When a “mirroring modus” is invoked, the filmmakers often present a film version of events in reality, with little or no interpretation or a further 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 such a way that will be beneficial to the viewers/receivers of such a presentation.

It could be observed that most Nigerian narrative movies employed a “mirroring” rather than an “interrogative style” of presentation. Consequently, in most Yoruba film productions (such as “Olalade Mr. Money” (2003), “Kosegbe” (1996), “Abike Alagbere” (2011)), where the mirroring style of presentation is used, the themes of these production are often projected through this pessimistic pedagogy.

The major reason why directors/filmmakers/scriptwriters employed pessimistic pedagogy and the mirroring school of dramatic presentation is due to the fact that the mirroring modus makes it possible to present issue just as it is. Here, issues are mostly projected on screen just the way they are in reality. Thus, the evil acts are reflected in a realistic manner with little or no modification. In this case, spectators are not only forced to face the harsh reality of evil in human existence or see the callousness in human life, but through such displayed actions, repulsive reactions are initiated, while hatred for such evil will be generated in spectators. With this, the filmmakers’ aims are to dissuade the viewers from embarking on such condemnable, insensitive and wicked acts.

The use of this mirroring style of dramatic presentation could equally be seen as one of the factors that leads to the glorification of materialism. According to Adeoti (2014), “Some films, wittingly or unwittingly, promotes materialism through their depiction of fabulous wealth attained through contract scam, and money-making rituals among other Machiavellian means.”

If well managed, folklores, fairy tales, myths or narrative films, with the invocation of this pessimistic modus could be very effective in serving as deterrent for others. It could positively influence a generational change. However, there are other instances in Yoruba films and due largely to the influence of other variables (such as glamorisation of materialism, plausibility and implausibility), this method could fail to accomplish its set target of serving as deterrent and generating positive impact on the viewers.

It could be established that, the main danger of this method is in its abuse and misuse. For instance, as some filmmakers do in Nollywood, if the screenwriters, directors or producers of a film should devote a larger part of the screen time into glorifying and making the criminal experiences very attractive as in the case of “Living in Bondage” (1992/93) where Andy Okeke (Kenneth Okonkwo) who desires an affluent lifestyle ends up murdering his wife for money making ritual. But despite his wealthy status and glamorous lifestyle, he has no peace of mind. While the torment of his deceased wife makes him insane, roaming the street of Lagos until he confesses his sins at a church that saves him. Similarly, in “Glamour Girls 2” (1994) this film focuses mainly on international prostitution syndicate. Where young girls are lured with glamorous life in Lagos, but end up as scandalous Nigerian figures in the international imagination, associated with dangerous human traffic and prostitution syndicate in Italy.

In each of these movies, a good number of times is devoted to revealing charming and affluent lifestyle while little time left in showing the unpalatable outcome(s) of the false lifestyle. Thus, the strength of this pessimistic pedagogy approach was drastically weakened. The efforts invested in such film may be tantamount to what Akinwunmi Isola (2008) termed “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 must be truly channelled towards discouraging viewers from patronising and perpetuating evil. For instance, the producer/director of narrative films on ritual money such as Ken Nnebue of *Living in Bondage* (1992/93) or Ebun Oloyede of “*Olalade Mr. Money*” needs to play down on the glamour or materialism which such unholy income could accord the perpetrator. Efforts should be paid on highlighting the various levels of repercussions of evil or this unpalatable act.

### **Forms/Unique Characteristics of Nollywood/Yoruba Films:**

The concept of forms/unique characteristics of narrative in Nollywood used here is not suggesting the exclusion of other forms of narratives but rather acknowledging the fact that there exist some distinctive forms of Yoruba story in the midst of other characteristics of narratives. The dominant form of narrative in Yoruba films is therefore meant to narrow down the focus of this discussion to 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 narratives especially Yoruba films still maintained some features which could be compared with attributes of films from other culture such as the American fictional movies.

In the Nigerian experience, the dominant mode of narrative has many qualities that could be compared with the Hollywood mode. Some of the characteristics/features of Nigeria/Yoruba films so far identified include but not limited to the followings:

- I. Even though some films, “*Igboro Ti Daru*” for example, attempts to break the convention of non-screening of nudity but on moral ground, it could be reiterated that Yoruba screen still does not encourage the revelation of profane act, nudity and indoctrinate sexual act or the dissection of human anatomy on screen.
- II. Findings from Ola-Koyi’s study in 2019 on “the narrative structure/characteristics of Nollywood/Yoruba films” revealed that of the thirty (30) films he examined, 60% of these films are based on family stories, 30% are on personal/social harmony while 10% are on war related issues. From his findings and the recent observation, one could reiterate that Yoruba films are often based on domestic story, personal/social harmony or on traditional wars. However, the productions of modern war stories with the use of sophisticated weaponry or the scientific fictional films are still alien to the Yoruba screen.
- III. The actions in Yoruba narrative movies usually spring from human characters that served 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 secondary agents of causality/catalysts or preconditions for the narrative action, but, the main agents of change in Nollywood stories are still human beings.
- IV. It could be observed that some 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. In this case, metaphysical forces have capacities to affect and influence man’s actions or inactions. Thus, the invocation of metaphysical forces could be identified as another feature of Yoruba



films or another narrative feature in Nollywood. In recent film criticism, the use of the metaphysical influences in Yoruba films had been observed by Ogunleye (2008) as “overstressed.” She reiterated that this overstressed shortcoming constituted one of the major problems in Nigerian films and she claimed this fact was placed on O.A.U. intranet channel on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, 2007.

- V. The invocation of binary opposition could be seen as another feature of Yoruba films. This is a situation where 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. According to Levi-Strauss (1966) a narrative will reveal the two main blocks of the protagonist and the antagonist. In other words, binary opposition will occur in a narrative when the “desire” of the hero and the “counter-desire” of the villain are on a collision course in which only the hero will emerge victorious.  
According to Ola-Koyi (2009) a conflict is “the soul of any dramatic presentation”, thus as it is in other narrative films from different cultures, binary opposition arrangement also plays a very important role in Yoruba film structure. Examples of this binary opposition construction abound in Yoruba films: in “Thunderbolt...”, we have Dimeji [Wale Macaulay] a medical doctor – vs Yinka [Lanre Balogun] – an engineer, in “October 1”, there is Danladi Waziri (Sadiq Daba) vs Prince Aderopo (Demola Adedoyin). In most Yoruba films, these two characters whose traits and goals are opposed are mostly presented as human agents than the use of any other catalysts such as animal, nature or spiritual force. Along with this binary structure, all other dramatic elements will come to play their parts in the course of the unfolding events along within these two opposing forces.
- VI. In the case of films based on a nonlinear narrative structure, the issue of cause and effect might not follow the logical/scientific reasoning but a cultural one. For instance, in “Thunderbolt: Magun”, a narrative which aimed at authenticating the existence of *magun* spell, and tried to dissuading the couple from using it as promiscuous control mechanism in marriage, the scene where the *magun* spell is cast on Ngozi (Uche Obi Osotule) is never shown to the viewers, no one knows she has a deadly affliction on her body until she is told by a celestial being – her grandmother’s spirit. Again, the case against Yinka (Lanre Balogun) is not physically/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. Consequently, 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.
- VII. The Hollywood tradition of filmmaking would subject or subordinate the audio components to the visual elements. However, it could be established that 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 producer or filmmaker intends to promote oral arts and narratives. In this case, words (poetic chants and narratives) are used as substitutes to 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. As previously established in this work, Yoruba believe in spiritual universe, which is made up of both the physical and metaphysical entities. Thus, words are used in as a means of communication among these three spheres of existence: the physical, the psychological, and metaphysical. From all indications, both the physical and psychological entities could be scientifically verified and logically proven. However, metaphysical entities still defy any logical or scientific experimentation. Hence, 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 in the use of words in their productions. Therefore, words are used in 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 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.

A school of thought believed that some filmmakers make use of words on Yoruba screens to promote the values Yoruba placed on orature or oral arts common among these arts are poetic chants and stories. Some of the poetry often feature in narrative films include Oriki – Panegyric, Iyere-Ifa – Ifa divination poetry, Ijala – hunters’ chants, rara – ballad, Ekun Iyawo – bridal chants etc., while the stories usually featured riddles and anecdotes.

A pessimistic school of thought opined 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 level, though, it is not true in all cases.

- VIII. Some Yoruba film makers are highly tied to their socio-cultural roots. Hence, they tend to glorify and project in their works the positive values existing within their culture. For instance, in “Thunderbolt...”, the filmmaker displays the potency of traditional healing over the orthodox medical practices. In some films which members of the Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners (ANTP) considered 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 is glorified is “The Narrow Path”, “Soworoide” and “Arugba” while fiestas and festivals are captured in “Fopomoyo”, “Yemoja” and “Arugba”.

In another category of film which ANTP classifies as “modern films”, the narration usually attacks traditional values, cultural practices and indigenous institutions for instance in “Kufori” the traditional religious institution was debased. Some other films get to the level that is counter-productive. 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 value 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 victory to foreign elements over the

indigenous/cultural values. Some elites and foreign religious fanatics on the other hand will praise such productions that downgraded indigenous principles for a cheap foreign culture in the name of the new-found religion.

- IX. Although most classical Hollywood narratives/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 closure.

Moreover, it could be reiterated that, some productions in Nollywood still leave the audience dissatisfied due to lack of proper resolution, while others deliberately hang up the resolution till the next episode. In addition, it could be pointed out that that Nollywood production has 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 study attempt had been made to appraise and highlight the common features of Yoruba narrative films by identifying and discussing the principle of non-linear plot structure; the principle of pessimistic pedagogy and the issue of forms in Yoruba narrative films. The principle of non-linear plot structure was established with practical demonstration on how it allows the film directors to employ both the physical and metaphysical elements in the construction of the plot structure.

Specifically, the experience in "Soworoide", is used to buttress and demonstrate the deployment of the principle of pessimistic pedagogy. Here viewers are expected to shun evil after watching a film that showcased the repercussion of evil act and encouraging the audience in making up their minds not to do evil. The study further advocated for a shift in paradigm. That, any auteur of Nollywood film should channel his pessimistic pedagogy on interrogative modus of dramatic/filmic presentation. This new situation could emerge where filmmakers will not only present a film version of events in reality, but a mediated mode of reality on screen. This mode will naturally require deeper interpretation and a further interrogation of social occurrences. In this case, viewers will not just 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, the viewers will receive the message not just as a filmic reflection of social reality, but as a message full of appropriate interpretations and clear guidelines for positive change.

On the examination of forms or the unique attributes of Nigerian/Yoruba films among other things, the study observed that Yoruba screen still does not encourage the revelation of profane act, nudity and indoctrinate sexual act or the dissection of human anatomy on screen. That films of Yoruba extraction are based on domestic story, social harmony or tribal wars. The two ways in which metaphysical influences are used in Yoruba narrative films had been examined. It has also been observed that the use of modern/sophisticated weaponry in some Nollywood - English/Igbo films, had not been extended to Yoruba film productions while the scientific fictional films are still alien to the Yoruba screen. It had equally been demonstrated that some narratives reveal man as mere handmaid to the gods and the invocation of binary opposition is another feature of Yoruba films.

Finally, the study examined the values Yoruba film producers placed on the use of words and other audio means in narratives.

Based on the foregoing, the study will like to conclude that the identified features of Yoruba film would not only serve as background information and insight for critics but also aid in decoding and analysing various films from Nollywood especially Yoruba films from an indigenous African point of view.

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