SEMIOTIC CINEMATOGRAPHY IN OMO GHETTO (THE SAGA): A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Semiotic cinematography is the study of film signs. Film signs refer to onscreen visual displays. A camera is a dialogic tool that is wielded by filmmakers to communicate visual signs. Stam, Burgoyne, and Lewis (1992) describe semiotic cinematography as "the study of sign process or any form of activity, conduct, or any process that involves signs, including the production of meaning, as these signs pertain to cinematography" (p. 157). In other words, semiotic cinematography refers to the processes of bringing images together and the arrangements of these images to convey meanings as independent bits of the film and as parts of a unified holistic film component.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Films signify by pointing to narratives that include costumes, gestures, dialogues, body language, symbols, camera movement, shot angles and sizes, and all visual illustrations. Semiotic cinematography "is a useful tool for studying the ways by which visual images form a system for the communication of meaning" (Gorman, 2010, p.39). Everything that is

captured by the camera is a deliberate act to convey meaning to the audience as it relates to and contributes to the overall film content. Music, architecture, set designs, mise-en-scene, montage, and even carefully chosen words in a film are all intended to signify something, which filmmakers place in front of the camera to capture the moments that aid in narrating the story. Metz (1974) reckons that "it is the film-makers who create the art of the cinema; it is through reflection on those individual films that we have liked (or those we have disliked) that we have gained insights into the art of the film in general" (p.3). This means that semiotic cinematography "points" to the audience' shared experiences and for cineastes to make sense of film signs, it must make meaning and hold importance within a social space that the filmmakers and audience belong to. The focus of this study is to analyze a Nollywood film – Omo Ghetto (The Saga) with a view to understanding how semiotics is applied to cinematographic techniques in motion picture presentations.

2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As a visual medium, beyond dialogues, the film communicates meaning through pictures, sounds, and paralinguistic codes that are embedded in onscreen signs. The culmination of all the cinematic signs affords the audience the holistic experience of decoding and cocreating meanings. The level of semiotic applications to cinematographic choices and the extent to which the images of Omo Ghetto (The Saga), contain semiotic codes that carry subtle and overt meanings are what this study analyzed.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

i.   Find out the meanings of semiotic cinematographic cues in Omo Ghetto (The Saga)

ii.   Identify the various cinematography techniques in Omo Ghetto (The Saga)

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 The Theory of Semiotics

Semiotics is a theory that sprung out from two fields of study in the 1990s (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The first occurred when the Swiss Linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure who taught Linguistics in 1906 (Gordon, 1996) proposed semiotics as an extension of psychology and the second was proposed by a United States philosopher who was interested in studying non-language sign system, Charles Sanders Pierce as an extension of the study of logic (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; O'Shaughnessy, et. al., 2017). Semiotics according to Saussure is derived from the Greek word "semeion" which means "a sign" (Pauzan, 2018). Semiotics is the study of the science of signs (Saussure, 1974, cited in O'Shaughnessy, et. al., 2017)," the instinctive capacity of all living organisms to produce and understand signs" (Sebeok, 1999, p.3).

'Semiotics' is a plural noun that is deliberately chosen to stipulate a consolidation of different areas of research (Hall, 1997). Often referred to as semiosis (the process of making and using signs), semiotics is described in Littlejohn and Foss (2009) as "the basic process of human meaning construction standing at the center of all human communication; how humans construct meaning for themselves and others, a central concern for communication scholars" (p.874). "Semiotics is concerned with meanings and the ways in which meanings are

produced and transmitted" (O'Shaughnessy, et. al., 2017, p. 122). The theory states that human language is the most dominant language, yet all forms of communication is based on sign systems that operate within certain rules and structures.

"Signs serve many functions" (Sebeok, 2001, p.11) that include providing humans with the ability to recognize patterns in things, and people, acting as a predictive aid for understanding acts and behavior and taking actions, and serving as "exemplars of specific kinds of phenomena (p.3). Signs exist in all things and where there is a sign, meaning is generated. Signs are the pillars of semiotics as the sign consists of the signifier and the signified, and the Saussurean theory of semiotics explains how language codes are understood through the analysis of how these concepts are interrelated. What is understood as the signified to a signifier is based on shared code or convention and this makes meaning a complicated and polysemic phenomenon (O'Shaughnessy, et. al. 2017). This means that there is no unified understanding of linguistic codes and meanings that are ascribed to the signifier, rather, meaning is context-dependent.

Charles Sanders Pierce took a different approach to the theory of semiotics. In defining semiotics, Pierce, as quoted in Sobur (2009, p. 41 citing Zeman, 1977) asserts that the "sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some capacity" (p.24); "something that is used in place of something else" (Herbert, 2019, para. 4). Pierce's semiotics is an "account of signification, representation, reference and meaning" (p.7). Suffice it to say that Pierce's is more complex and distinctive from Saussure's because it delved into the essence of interpretation to signification (Lizka, 1996). A key difference between the perspectives of Saussure and Pierce is that while Saussure's semiotics is descriptively dyadic, that of Pierce is triadic. For Pierce, the sign functions through three interrelated parts – a sign/representamen, an object, and an interpretant. "There is the sign (that which stands for something else, i.e., a smoke for a fire) and the interpretant (also called meaning or meaning-effect, and basically means interpretation or the mental image the individual forms of the sign i.e., the user) and the object (or referent, the thing for which the sign stands i.e., the fire signified by the smoke)" (Curtin, 2000, p.53). In the simplest terms, the sign could be likened to the signifier, the object is whatever is signified and the interpretant is the understanding that is derived from the sign/object relation (Atkin, 2010).

For Pierce, semiotics is triadic because a third force – the interpretant is vital for sign interpretation because the signifying prowess of a sign is embedded in the potentiality of it being interpreted by sign users. Pierce refers to the signifying elements of the sign as "sign", "representamen", "representation" and "ground" (p.2), and that some elements of the sign enable the signification of an object. Regardless of whether semiotics is a two or three parts construct, the point is that there exists a dynamic relationship between a thing, event, concept, idea, structure, social system, etc., and the meanings they convey. This makes communication a complex phenomenon that could lead to misunderstandings because signs are polysemous, having multiple signifieds or interpretants, which leaves room for various levels of meaning generation but also capable of potentially causing miscommunication and wrongful interpretations (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). The theory of semiotics is relevant for this study because film texts are fraught with signs that are open to various interpretations and based on which meanings are ascribed to the cinematic images.

4.2 Semiotic Cinematography

Semiotic cinematography refers to the concept used to examine how film meaning is created and communicated through the application of signs and sign systems (Pascual, 2021). It is the totality of activities and conducts that is portrayed in films through certain film techniques for the enhancements of onscreen experiences. Cinematography is investigated with a view to discovering the meanings of signs in moving pictures (O'Shaughnessy, et. al., 2017). In the context of film studies, semiotic cinematography is all-encompassing. According to Pascual (2021), film images are viewed and understood through a cultural lens and the creation of meaning is connected to the visual signs and cues that are expressed through cinematography. Therefore, telling visual stories requires the use of signs, and comprehension is tied to recognition and juxtaposition with decoders' own knowledge, experiences, and culture.

Semiotic cinematography is a language that is used to refer to the meanings of all onscreen visuals including advertising, videos, and television (Yacavone, 2018). As a fleeting media, visuals and their meanings are important because they represent codes that contribute to the narratives, which may not be a part of other components of onscreen language.

4.3 Semiotics and Visual Storytelling

The production stage of filmmaking provides filmmakers with a lot of footage to choose from. In choosing from the images, filmmakers base their judgments on the particular kind of visual story that they want to tell. The criterion on which a filmmaker makes an editing decision on images is based on the science of semiotics. Films are understood from an external point of view because the audience seldom gets to know what the characters are thinking (except that is in fact the language of the film) therefore, image interpretations are based on what is seen on the screen. Semiotics, a method for analyzing language (O'Shaughnessy, Stadler, and Casey, 2017) is "the study of signs and sign systems… how humans construct meaning for themselves and others" (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009, p.874). Edgar-Hunt, Marland, and Rawie (2010) are of the opinion that semiotics investigates how images tell a story and that cinematic images are fashioned to virtually speak to film audiences. A pioneer of the study of visual signs and sign systems, Charles Sanders Pierce, divides signs into three components: the sign, the object, and the interpretation. (O'Shaugnessy, et. al., 2017). According to Pierce (1958), the sign is the representamen the object is that which the representamen refers and the interpretation is the meaning it conveys. The Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure described signs as the building blocks of semiotics that could be broken down into the signifier and the signified (O'Shaughnessy, et. al., 2017). Regardless of how many divisions of signs there are, the division in itself is what creates a gap in meaning constructions. In the context of the film, a "sign is anything, large or small, which we find ourselves responding to. Put another way, something becomes a sign when we single it out for special attention" (Edgar-Hunt, et. al. 2010, p. 17). The physical tangible thing the audience sees or hear in a film ('sign-as-object') is the signifier whereas the psychological reaction or mental picture it provokes in the audience's mind ('sign-as-concept') is the signified. The signified is the response to the signifier (McQuail, 2009). For instance, an image of a subject dressed in a corporate suit passed out on an office desk, with empty beer bottles lying around the frame (sign), may denote (a) that the subject is drunk or (b) that the subject is troubled with the empty bottles (signifier) indicating that the subject had consumed

too much if its content (signified). The suit the subject wears and the office setting (signifier) show that the behavior is not usual and may be precipitated by something unnerving (signified). Similarly, the representative, using the same illustration, represents a subject passed out in at the workplace with empty bottles around him, that which the representatum is the refers is a drunk subject and the interpretatantcould be several including fatigue, personal relationships problems, the subject is having a bad day at work, etc.

This shows that there is a multiplicity of options in decoding film texts. In the film, shots make scenes, scenes make sequences and sequences make a complete cinematic experience. All of it is fragments of signs. A single image can refer to or stand for a variety of meanings. In summing up how signs are polysemous, Chandler (2010) postulates that "there is no language of photography, no single signifying system upon which all photographs depend; there is rather, a heterogeneous complex of codes upon which photography may draw" (para. 9). Thus, the way a character in an image is dressed, the vicinity in which the shot is taken, the weather conditions, time of the day, etc. affect the way a scene is interpreted, yet "meanings are in people" (Communitea Books, 2019), multifarious, and the film is a highly complex act of communication – difficult to insist on a singular meaning, and impossible to know for sure, from what perspective the audience would understand it.

In a general sense, filmmakers are armed with tools for making elements appear on a screen in a systematic manner that provides different levels of signification. While this may seem straightforward (characters, action, and dialogue), it is quite complicated because characters are distinguished by features as basic as gender, height, complexion, size, etc., and as in-depth as bodily hair, bodily gestures, accent, personalities, etc. Objects are also distinguished by colors, shapes, sizes, textures, etc., whereas an atmosphere could hold subtle differences in mood, lighting, and weather conditions. The selection and combination of different features to uphold a certain meaning is dependent on the film's message and the filmmakers' choice of linguistic codes. For instance, according to Shaka (2016), metaphors and metonyms are useful tools for filmmakers to visually construct text, especially in situations where literal texts are insufficient to pass a message. In dialogues, metaphors (the establishment of a relationship between two things using comparisons based on resemblance) are used by filmmakers to invite the audience to ponder over certain phrases or sentences and imagine a bigger picture beyond the obvious narratives. In Nollywood films, for example, metonyms (the establishment of a relationship based on association) are used to substitute one thing for another, e.g., 'staff of office for the traditional ruler, 'Aso Rock' for the Nigerian president, 'the green-white-green flag' for Nigeria as a country, etc. Visual stories can be told for solely entertainment purposes – such as situation comedies and romantic comedies – allowing the audience to denotatively (primary, literal and given) ascribe meaning to the visual or they can be crafted with connotative inclinations (suggestive) for the audience to extensively contemplate on other likely meanings, which gives filmmakers room for seamless and unexpected plot twists (Edgar-Hunt, et. al. 2010).

As a fundamentally visual medium, the film communicates more with actions. Olivares (2016) insists that there is an unwritten rule in filmmaking that words should be relied on less to tell a story and that actions are universally understood (or misunderstood) by film audiences, which makes 'showing rather than telling the best film language. For instance, the classics Charles Chaplin and Buster Keaton movies are 'silent films' yet, they made the

rounds all over the world. Also, Mr. Bean is a film with less than 10 percent dialogue, but the film language is mostly of images that tell the audience all that they need to know to make meaning of the series. Images are key in filmmaking because the idea behind telling visual stories is to capture moving images that play within the screen frame (Zunitch, 2021). In contemporary times, rather than relying too much on words, filmmakers creatively dwell on articulating film messages through context, people, contrast and conflict, suspense, focus, structure, subtlety, etc. (Olivares, 2016). This is signification. However, in situations where film intensity and captions are required to build up the story and set the scene, dialogues prove to be expedient. The complexity of words give film the depth that enhances the cinematic experience. Dialogues also make film appear real because it offers filmmakers the ability to "use and play with the classic scheme of one character facing the other, applying their individual style to convey all sorts of processes, feelings and emotions" (Taste of Cinema, 2018, para 1). In dialogue scenes, filmmakers use certain elements like blocking, mise-en-scene, montage, rhythm, framing and others to bring out the dramatic structure of the conversations to reveal something peculiar about the characters without basing such information on the actual dialogue. On-screen semiotics allows for the interpretations of scenic conversations, actions and characters in relation to the film context, giving the audience the liberty to connotatively infer the meaning of what they see and hear (Filmschoolrejects, 2017). Semiotics can be applied to all film genres and the best films are the ones that have their narratives intentionally flooded with signs (Edgar-Hunt, et. al., 2010).

5.0 METHODOLOGY

This study was a qualitative content analysis research that dissected Omo Ghetto (The Saga), The study's population was one hundred (100) films that was gotten from the PulseNg online database from which the first on the chart was purposively selected. The study's instruments were the researcher and a code sheet that contained coding categories that covered the fundamentals of semiotics and cinematographic techniques. The study's validity was ascertained using peer debriefings that included academics' and Nollywood filmmakers' vetting and inputs and the researcher's ability to keep a reflexive journal that aided the study's course maintenance. The researcher was the only coder for the study which caused the study to ensure reliability through the researcher's formation of a set of coding rules and upholding a strict application of the rules throughout the coding process. Data for the study was collected using primary (films) and secondary sources (books, articles, blogs, etc.), presented multimodally and analyse interpretively and descriptively.

6.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Image 1.1   **Images 1.2**

Multimodal text type: Image and Writing   **Multimodal text type: Image and Writing**

Time Stamp: 0:00:22   **Time Stamp: 0:00:23**

Omo Ghetto (The Saga) is a film that is set in the present-day Lagos Nigeria. The images are establishing shots and mapping of the dual socio-economic system of Lagos. Images1.1 and 1.2 areicons because they resemble the two actual opposites of Lagos (Lekki on the Island and Ijora in Ajegunle). Beneath the establishing shots are 'Amen Estate' and the 'Askamaya' ghetto, where the film is set. The establishing of Lekki is shown before that of Askamaya to establish prominence.

Image 1.3   **Image 1.4**

Multimodal text type: Image and Text   **Multimodal text type: Image and Text**

Time Stamp: 0:33:17   **Time Stamp: 0:03:49**

The images above show the protagonist, Lefty in her branded car. The character is a deviant by society's standards. Even though her mother, Mrs. Benson is a woman with means, living in the higher part of society, Lefty always seeks out a reason to leave the vicinity for the Askamaya. Lefty's convertible Volkswagen Convertible Beetle is a classic which is iconic because it represents the kind of car the people of the lower class can afford. It also has her name spray-painted all over it which is an index sign because 'LEFTY' on the car points to the owner of the car. The graffiti-style painting also points to the fact that the car belongs in the ghetto, which is depicted in the framing of the images above. On image 1.3, Lefty is captured in her car, leaving Amen Estate in what appears to be haste to leave the environment. This puts some distance between the audience and the subject, connoting a

feeling of detachment and withdrawal on the part of the subject and causing a feeling of temporariness in the spectator. Lefty is leaving a beautiful environment with alluring colors and when she arrives at the ghetto, she becomes the source of colors for the ghetto.

Image 1.5 Multimodal text type: Image and Text

Time Stamp: 0:03:33

The name of the film Omo Ghetto (The Saga) as shown in the image above is a sign. Omo Ghetto is also a representamen because the words take the form of the sign (signifier). The object is the protagonist, Lefty. The interpretant is the slum kid idea that comes to mind. Omo Ghetto is also a sign, a denotation, which is used to tell a tale of the eccentric woman whose ghetto compositions (her haircut and the colors of her hair, the color and style of her clothes, the color and model of her car, her jewelry choices and combinations – a collection of signs), when put together, create a code. This code is used to show the personality of Lefty.

The style and pattern of the written text is a connotative sign that symbolizes 'broken' and 'in need of repairs'. This is symbolic as it means that the life of the ghetto child is rocky and unstable.

Image 1.6 Multimodal text type: Image and Text

Time Stamp: 0:03:33

The image is an icon because it resembles an actual ghetto. It is also a representamen and signifier because it is a depiction of a real-life ghetto. The actual city in Lagos that the city represents is the object as the rusted roofs, clustered buildings, unpainted and nonpatterned, untarred and unmotorable roads would bring the memory of the real one to mind if a spectator who has been to one like this before sees the image in the film; image of the actual ghetto that comes to the spectator's mind is the interpretant. The image is also an iconic cultural representation of the architectural structure of the lower class of the city (signified). It is an index as well as it points to poverty and low means of livelihood.

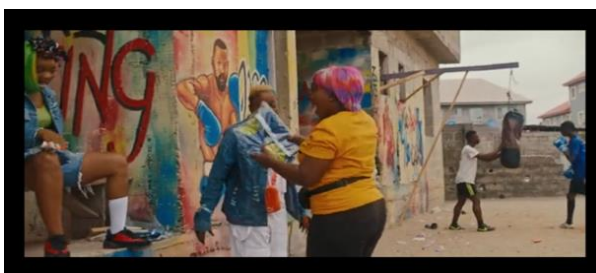**Image 1.7 Multimodal text type: Image and Text**

Time Stamp: 0:04:48

The image above is a shot of Amen's estate. This scene depicts a typical day in the estate. The green plants and trees are symbols that portray growth and development, which means that the wealthy live there. The security personnel at the gate, the tarred road, and the infographic sign are representamen because they are depictions of the situation of an organized residential neighborhood. The organized and secured residence of the upper class in the society is the object and the idea that wealthy people reside in a place as beautiful as Amen estate is the interpretant.
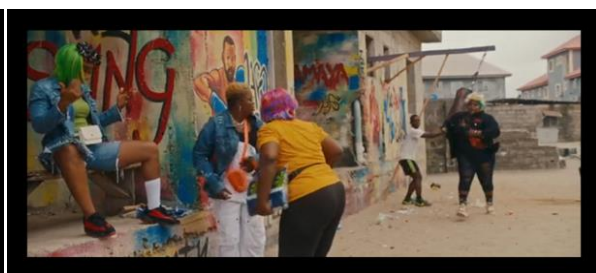
Image 1.8	**Image 1.9**
Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture	**Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture**

Time Stamp: 0:35:18	**Time Stamp: 0:35:57**

The walls on images 1.8 and 1.9 above are covered in graffiti which is a symbol of gangsterism. The text on the wall, 'boxing' is a signifier because it is a combination of letters that refers to the concept of organized physical combat (signified) and the image of a boxer is an icon because it resembles an actual boxer.

Image 1.10 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 0:40:13

Image 1.10 is a shot of an impending battle between the two factions in Askamaya. On the left is a group of boys who feel insulted by the Askayma Bee (the group of ladies) for encroaching on their territory. Despite being outnumbered by men, the Askamaya Bee is unshaken and prepared for combat. Both groups are placed on opposite sides of the frame, leaving the middle space open. This is a cinematographic technique to show equality and balance. The imaginary line in the middle also places the spectator in the center of the scene – like an objective and unbiased referee with no clue about who is likely to win or lose in the fight. On the floor, in the middle of the combatants is a tumbled traffic cone (signifier), lying at the opposite end of the fourth wall (mise-en-scene), which is a film language-speak that all caution is dropped, and anything can happen. The litter of empty bottles scattered across the field, including those in the hands of some of the combatants, is symbolic and depicts a battlefield and danger zone.

Image 1.11 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 0:14:12

The image above shows Stone and Lefty in Stone's living room, having a conversation about the lifestyle and choices. The aesthetics in the scene is in the colour, lines and shape of the subjects in relation to the objects (blocking). The paintings on the wall behind Stone is also

significant for this scene (mise-en-scene) because it depicts the personality. They symbolize his overall desires and interests but mostly how he views everyone, including and especially Lefty. The multimodal painting of Al Pacino holding piles dollars with the imprint 'MONEY. POWER. RESPECT.' is a representamen (signifier) that shows the Hollywood actor in the film, The Godfather, whose character lived by the code that the words represent. Stone's attitude and relationship with others in the film that the image refers is the object and the idea that that Stone's worldview is seen through the magnifying glass of money, power and respect is the interpretant (signified).

Image 1.12 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 0:07:06

The image above is a scene that is set in Busty's house. The subjects on their feet are dressed in dark outfits which is symbolic because it means war. The man in the middle holds a red bat which symbolizes danger. The fact that Busty is seated, looking up at the people is a cinematographic technique that shows that their relationship is unbalanced and that she feels scared, vulnerable and diminished whereas the others have the upper hand and look down on her as weak and at their mercy. The shape of the image is circular which indicates intimacy and entrapment.

Image 1.13 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 0:0:45:59

The image above is a three shot and a convention. A group of women wearing dresses that are made from the same fabric (asó-ebi) is a representamen that shows how guests appear at a culture-themed party in Nigeria. The fact that they are dressed like that is the object and the concept that they dressed like that because they are attending a cultural event is the interpretant. The composition of the frame places the subjects in the middle of the frame which means that they should be paid attention to. Also significant is the fact that Chummy Choko and Nikky have food coolers in their hands. This is also a convention that describes a Yoruba culture. The subjects are looking straight at the audience (breaking the fourth wall) which is a cinematography technique that indicates that they are aware of the audience's presence and are communicating directly to them. The colour of the food cooler which Chummy Choko pulls on is red, which means that it contains something dangerous.

Image 1.14 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 0:51:57

The image above is a scene of the dancefloor at Mrs. Benson's party. It is the depiction of what takes place in a typical Yoruba-themed party. The image capturing the live band playing music and dancing guests that are mostly dressed in 'aso-ebi' is the representamen because the image portrays the actual act that happens at a typical Yoruba party (signifier). The act that the image represents is the object because it is referent of an actual party and the 'Yoruba party' idea that the audience would conceive of when they look at the image is the interpretant.

Image 1.15

Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Image 1.16

Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 0:49:21   **Time Stamp: 0:49:33**

The images above show Lefty in a devastating mood without the use of dialogue. Film language is applied to the images to show Lefty's true personality. In image 1.15 an empty reserved table that Lefty prepares for the arrival of Stone and his friends remains unoccupied and even though the party has begun and everyone is enjoying themselves, Lefty is unhappy that Stone is not at the party. Genuinely worried, she repeatedly tries to get him on the phone and her facial expression shows that she is out of luck. Lefty is placed in the middle of the shot in image 1.16. The shot is a rack focus in which Lefty is at the shallow depth of field and in focus on the frame, which means that she is the most important thing in the shot and it also brings her in close proximity to the audience, giving the audience a read on her feelings.

Image 1.17 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture
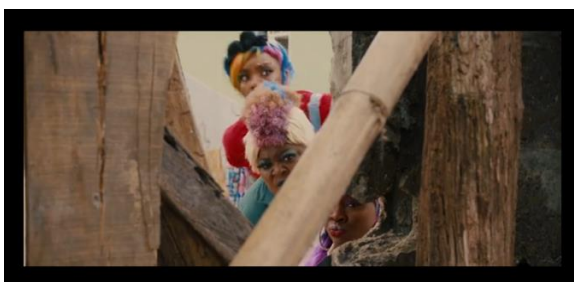

Time Stamp: 1:07:31

The shape of image 1.17 above is circular. This means that Stone and his 'circle of friends' are trapped in a homicide. The end credits rolling on the otherwise dark television screen at this moment is a signifier that connotes the dark end of an era for this group and also the end of Efe Money.

Image 1.18   Image 1.19

Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture   Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 1:32:18   **Time Stamp: 1:32:22**

Lefty's friends spy on Stone and his girlfriend, Rose from a cracked fence. Stone is unaware of their presence, and they observe his activities behind sticks and stones. This is a cinematographic technique that is used to show the relationship between Stone and Lefty's friends. This is significant because since Lefty is grounded at Amen estate, Chummy, Busty and Nikky are her eyes in Askamaya and here they get to see Stone's betrayal firsthand and report back to Lefty which is significant because as the "Askamaya Bees", their primary duty is to keep busy with the affairs of Askamaya. Also, as the Askamaya Queen Bee Lefty is the obvious link between her friends and Stone and when she is not there, they are invisible and unrecognized. This heightens the supremacy of the protagonist in the story.

Image 1.20 Image 1.21

Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture   Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 1:19:16   **Time Stamp: 1:30:00**

On image 1.20, Lefty and Prisca are marched to the police counter for identification in a crowd shot. The subjects in this scene are arranged in a rectangular shape, depicting harmony and an open communication channel. Don Cash and AY Pomping trust the police and have faith in the system. The scene is captured in a medium shot which is a cinematography technique that is used to project realism in dialogues and also to immerse the audience in the action. The audience is placed at the edge of the counter, giving them the feeling that they are a part of the conversation. In the scene in image 1.21 on the other hand, the shape is cyclical, and the subjects are backing away from the audience and shown to be distant from them. This shows intensity, dishonesty, and entrapment. Here, Don Cash and AY Pomping have lost faith in the police and do not trust the system.

Image 1.22 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 1:47:25

The image above is an extreme wide shot of Lefty drowning in her sorrows after learning about Femi's betrayal. Lefty is seated by herself in the middle of nowhere completely devastated. The shot is a wide shot that places Lefty at a corner, which means that Lefty feels abandoned and alone. The heap of sand at the other side of the frame is a symbol that represents the unmovable mass of pain that Lefty feels is weighing her down. The heap of sand is also an index that points to a construction site which symbolizes that Lefty is broken and in need of a rebuild and restructure. The image also shows Lefty at her weakest and most vulnerable, shrouded in emotions and pain cause by a broken heart. She finds solace in sitting by herself under a pink shade. This means that despite the tough and rascally front and masculine appearance, Lefty is feminine on the inside.

Image 1.23 Image 1.24 Multimodal text type: Image and GestureMultimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 0:22:42   **Time Stamp: 0:23:46**

The image above shows Ayomide's return from work. Her husband and father are seated in the living in the middle of a discussion. Even as a respected and inspiring boss, and despite being on the phone with her mother (which she would not turn off out of respect), she manages a stoop to greet her father. This is a convention. The bend is a representamen because it represents the traditional means of greeting an older person in the Yoruba culture. The greeting is the object and the idea of respect that the greeting symbolizes is the interpretant.

Image 1.25 Image 1.26

Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture   Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 0:25:29   **Time Stamp: 0:25:35**

Images 1.25 show Lefty on the phone with her twin sister, Ayomide. Her father, Baba oni baba asks Ayomide to bring the phone to him so that he would have a word with her and "talk some sense" into her and Lefty is immediately scared and fidgety because she fears her father. Baba oni baba is a symbol because he represents discipline and the Lefty's facial expression is an index because it points to fear and anxiety. It is also a convention because in Nigeria, fathers are figures of authority to be feared. The camera angle on image 1.25 is an over-the-shoulder shot which connotes a relationship dynamic between Ayomide and her father. Image 1.26 is a Medium Shot that places Shalewa under the scrutiny of the audience to pass judgement on her actions. The image behind Shalewa is a family portrait (mise-en-scene) from which she is cut off which means that she is on her own, while Ayomide sides with their mother.

Image 1.27 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 1:56:04

Image 1.27 shows the burning of furniture. The furniture on fire is the platform on which Chummy Choko sells food items to the residents of Askamaya. Stone and his friends destroy the platform and set it ablaze as a warning to the Askamaya Bee that war is coming. This is a symbol because the act connotes a destruction of relationship and the declaration of war.

Image 1.28 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture
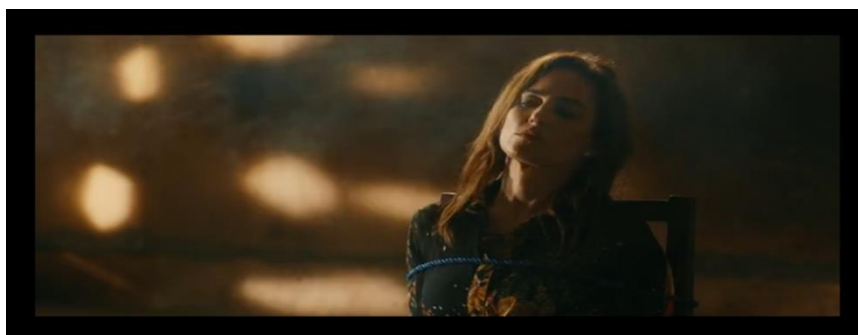
Time Stamp: 1:47:53

Image 1.28 above shows Rose tied to a chair. Sitting in the shadow with only a small portion of her face in the light denotatively and connotatively indicates that Rose is in a dark place. The colour of the twine used to bind her to the chair is blue which is a symbol that means that she is sad. The room is dark except for a few balls of sunlight penetrating through the window. This is also a symbol to mean that Rose is hopeful. It also means that underneath the bad situation lies hope and positive outcomes for Rose. This scene also represents her relationship with Femi. It is a symbolic portrayal of her entrapment in a fake relationship with Stone and how she is in the dark about his true intentions for her.

Image 1.29 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 1:47:38

Rose comes face to face with the reality of her situation in the image above. The shape of the composition is a semicircle which indicates that even though Rose is trapped in a situation with the Askamaya Bee, they do not share the same interests. The shot type is a medium long shot that is taken from the eye level of the Askamaya Bees, with the ladies looking down at Rose, which means that the relationship between the subjects is unequal relationship. This is a cinematography technique to show that the Askamaya Bees are dominant in the frame and Rose is the weak, fragile and vulnerable subject.

Image 1.30 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 2:03:59

The image above shows a kidnapped and bounded Ayomide with a gun to her head as she is forced to cajole her parents to pay a ransom for her freedom. The act of kidnapping Ayomide is a symbol of penance for Lefty's actions that thwarted Stone's con on Rose and her resemblance to Lefty produces a cathartic effect for Stone and his group. She is in a dark space which is signifies gloom and her facial expression is a signifier that means fear and helplessness (signified). The shape of the frame composition is circle which symbolizes a shared interest however, Ayomide is in the middle which connotes that she is the center of the shared interest of Stone and his friends, and at the center of their issues with the Askamaya Bees. The colour of the rope she is bound with is green, which is a symbol that refers to money. She represents payday. The shot is taken at Ayomide's eye level, which is a cinematography technique that is used to connect the audience to her by bringing them down to her level so that they may empathize with her in her current predicament.

Image 1.31 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 2:11:38

Image 1.31 above shows an aerial shot of the Askamaya Bees on a rescue mission to from captivity. This is a symbol because it shows the true nature of the "Bees" as dedicated. The shot captures a journey into the forest where Ayomide is held hostage. The environment is a forest without an end in sight. This is a symbol that connotes that there is no way to tell what is in store for the Askamaya Bees.

Image 1.32   Image 1.33

Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture   Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 2:22:02.   **Time Stamp: 2:23:00**

Askamaya Bees take on Stone and his friends on images 1.32 and 1.33 above. The physical combat is a symbol thatdepicts equality of the genders.

Image 1.34 Multimodal text type: Image and Gesture

Time Stamp: 2:24:15

Image 1.34 above is the final scene in the film. The shot is set at nighttime which is symbolic because it means the story has come to an end, especially since it is a contrast of the opening scene which was set in the daytime. Also, this scene brings a resolution to the story. The darkness of the police vans in comparison to the lit ambulance are symbolic because they show the contrasting reality of Stone and his friends and that of the Askamaya Bees. Stone and his friends are heading to prison whereas the Askamaya Bees are going to get medical care. Taken from an objective point of view, the audience is made the judge of the last events in the film. The scene is also framed to keep the audience at a distance, which is a cinematography technique that is used to tone down the emotional appeal and bring them to the reality of the film's end.

7.0 DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Based on the data presented and analyzed in Omo Ghetto (The Saga), findings for Objective (i) reveal that the cinematic cues that were used in the film had semiotic meanings and the data are presented as Multimodal images. In images 1.1 and 1.2, the semiotic cinematographic cues are the opening establishing daytime shots, which were captured using natural lighting and the images mean that the film Omo Ghetto (The Saga) is a "happy" film. The opening cinematographic cue established the fact that it is a story about some fictional members of the affluent class as shown in image 1.2. Another semiotic meaning of the cinematic cues is that Lagos Island is superior to the ghetto. These findings support Pascual's (2021) definition of semiotics cinematography as the concept used to examine how film meaning is created and communicated through the application of signs and sign systems. Also supporting this finding is O'Shaughnessy, et. al. (2017) in their analysis that cinematography is investigated with a view to discovering the meanings of signs in moving pictures.

Further findings show that in Omo Ghetto (The Saga), the semiotic cinematography of night shots and cinematic takes in low-lighting rooms were mostly used to establish a link between the night time and social vices such as injustices, fraud, deception, quarrels, and betrayals as shown on images 4.1.5, 4.1.6, 4.1.15, 4.1.20, 4.1.30, 4.1.51, 4.1.52, and 4.1.53. This finding is supported in O'Shaughnessy, et. al. (2017) who aver that some signs look nothing like the thing they represent. Additionally, the cinematic shots in Omo Ghetto (The Saga) of the Nigerian police signify threat and corruption as derived from images 4.1.4, and 4.1.44. This finding is also in support of the Saussurean postulation that words have no surface meaning, for the meaning of such words can only be ascertained by virtue of the relation between a word's different from all other words, which can be likened to film images (LittleJohn& Foss, 2009).

The finding further reveals that the cinematic capture of bright colors and generous color combinations on subjects and objects in Omo Ghetto (The Saga) means 'ghetto' and 'lower class' as data show. The semiotic meaning of the cinematic capture of exotic locations, cars and décor reverberates wealth, affluence and upper class as shown on images 1.11, 1.18, 1.19, 1.24 and 1.25. This finding supports the assertion in Bradley (2016) that film images are about relationships between the images and relationships are about positioning.

Additionally, this finding according to Trohler& Kirsten (2018) contains syntagmatic interpretations because they show the possibilities for which relationships can be combined to illustrate common storytelling conventions in juxtaposition with societal conventions. This relationship and its analysis are reflective of filmmakers' individuality, worldview, and understanding of filmmaking techniques and application of filmic styles.

Findings also show that the images for Omo Ghetto (The Saga) were cinematically captured to establish some emotional connection between the audience and the characters as majority of the shots were taken as a medium and from a neutral angle as shown on all images presented except for images 1.1, 1.2, 1.11, and 1.12 which were taken at a high angle, which were used to establish a power relationship between subjects in the frame and/or to provide the audience with the means of passing judgements on the subjects. These finding support what is recorded in Metz (1974) which states that film shots provide for a systematic analysis of the narrative structures of particular films and by extension individual styles, movements and modes of filmmaking. These findings are also in agreement with Barrance (2021) who

posit that like words that are placed side by side to form sentences, every image is intentionally captured, placed along or against another to make cinematic sense.

Finding for Objective (ii) reveals that various cinematographic techniques were used in the Omo Ghetto (The Saga). As shown on Images 1.1, 1.2, 1.31 and 1.34, the aerial shot was used as a technique to establish the location and time of the scenes. This finding corroborates Lowood&Nitsche (2011) position that back of the frame is usually used to show scenery or location whereas the front of the frame is "the fourth wall.

Images 1.3, 1.7, 1.8. 1.9, 1.10, 1.14 and 1.17 were taken in a wide shot whereas in other to bring subjects and objects within the frame closer, the middle shot was used in images1.4, 1.12, 1.15, 1.16, 1.18, 1.19, 1.20, 1.21, 1.30, 1.23, 1.24, 1.25, 1.26, 1.27. Other shot sizes include the medium wide shot, medium close up, extreme wide shot and the medium long shot as images 1.11, 1.13, 1.22, 1.28, 1.29, 1.32 and 1.33 reveal. This finding is in line with Edgar-Hunt et. al. (2010) expression that there exist an infinite number of possible framings, compositions and arrangements and that every image is carefully chosen by filmmakers to fit a particular purpose. Beyond the shot sizes and types, camera movements (including pan, tilt, pedestal, dolly, tracking, etc.)mise-en-scene, the 180-degree rule, reaction shot, and high/low angle shot were used to achieve believability as the images portray. This finding supports the assertion of Edgar-Hunt, et. al., (2010) that camera movements make the film experience for the audience seem much more realistic because the fewer the cuts, the more involved with the view of the scene the audience feels,and the stretch and manipulation of time become easy.

Furthermore, different types of lighting techniques were used to illuminate or dim a setting and establish day or nighttime. This finding is in tandem with Studiobinder (2021) position that lighting illuminates or dims a set to create a believable feeling for the audience and that lighting is considered one of the most important elements of producing images – realistic or unrealistic.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The infinite affordance of cinematographyallows filmmakers the possibilities of providing onscreen experiences with motion pictures that are replete with signs and open to various interpretations. Using various semiotic cues that are embedded in cinematographic techniques, the Nollywood film,Omo Ghetto (The Saga) offered the audience the means of co-creating meanings whilst enjoying a seamless transcendence into the cinematic world.

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