

**A STUDY OF STYLE AND FACTORS MOTIVATING THEIR SELECTION IN
THE FILMS OF JUDY KIBINGE AND SIMIYU BARASA**

BY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Mzee Daniel Okutoyi; my mother Beatrice Okutoyi; my wife Linda Muvoka and my daughters Chandra Anyika, Nuri Anyika and Alissa Anyika for their support and patience during the entire study period.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated style in selected Kenyan films namely, *Dangerous Affair* (2004) and *Project Daddy* (2002) by *Judy Kibinge* and *Toto Millionaire* (2010) by *Simiyu Barasa*. The objectives of this study were to: Establish the collaborative effects of aesthetic styles applied in the films and the intended messages; Examine the impact of collaborative technical style adopted in the films on communication of meaning and finally, Determine the factors that influenced the choices of film styles applied in selected films. To achieve the objectives, the study was supported by the following research questions: What is the effect of collaborated aesthetic style adopted in the selected Kenya films on communication of intended message? What are the effects of collaborated technical styles deployed in the selected Kenyan films on communication of intended messages? Which factors affected the choices of film styles adopted in selected films? The study relied on the formalism theory by *Arnheim Rudolf* and *Sergei Eisenstein* (1964) which emphasizes on the manipulation of aesthetic and technical styles in encoding and decoding meaning in film. This study applied qualitative research design approach where observation and interviews were used as primary data collection methods. Literature review from the internet, journals and books formed secondary data. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the functional deployment of style by watching, analysing and clustering the elements of style used in the selected films and their effect on creation of meaning. The study established that there was inadequate collaboration of both aesthetic and technical styles in the studied film which impacted on effective communication by the films in terms of mood creation, taste, beauty and characters status establishment. Further, the study reveals that, lack of technical training on the part of film directors, technical crew and financial constraint influenced the choice of film styles deployed in the production of the films. It concludes that, the films understudy fairly attempted to collaborated style into their films to communicate intended meaning. The study proposes that the government and private sector should support the growth of Kenyan film industry both technically and financially. Whereas training institutions should endeavour to employ qualified staff in film-making study and incorporate theory and practical lessons in their curriculum to equip aspiring filmmakers with relevant skills. This study suggests that future research should consider finding out the ability of the audience in reading and understand of both aesthetic and technical styles in film.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Aesthetic film style: This is style that gives film the element of beauty, taste and pleasure for the audience.

Feature film: A film that tells a fictional story or event for 40 minutes or more.

Film: A motion picture that communicates ideas, perceptions, feelings and atmosphere through the use of virtual moving images and sound.

Film style: Recognizable film technique used by filmmakers to enrich specific meaning in their work.

Kenyan film : Film authored, financed, produced, directed and acted by people who live and work in Kenya,

Technical film style : These are technical stylistic elements that originate from the work of film technical crew, for example, camera movement, shot composition, sound and lighting

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Although film was invented in 1895 by the Lumiere brothers, it remained a silent affair all the way to 1930, and managed to communicate to the audience through visual motion images. The word “film” also called cinema means a motion picture that communicates ideas, perceptions, feelings and atmosphere through the use of virtual moving images and sound. Film-making has since evolved and film makers today have continued making their visuals more communicative at every stage. This attempt to make film images more communicative led to the introduction of colour and later sound and thus enhanced film techniques.

With film still silent, inter-titles were used to enhance the viewer’s understanding of the message. Film technology continued to evolve to a level where sound and scripting as elements of film communication were introduced (Cooper and Dancyger 2005:29).

With the continued development of film, it was demonstrated that for film to communicate effectively several components like picture framing, sound, costume, make-up, lighting and editing among others are to be invoked in the making of film.

A variety of film techniques are available to the filmmaker to tell a story. Rabiger (2008) posits, "the manner in which content is presented" (201) is determined by the way the film's story is told, and it comprises style and content. Different film styles are

invoked in the three stages of film-making namely, preproduction, production and post-production.

For Africa, film making started after the 1960s when most African states began to achieve independence (Ukadike, 1994: 1). A number of reasons have been blamed for the state of affairs on development of African film. Financial, educational and technological reasons have been cited as sources of hindrance to production of films on a reasonable scale in Kenya (Kihang'ah, 2008). These three aspects have continued to exert a stranglehold on the development of a viable African film. Further, findings of a research on factors hampering the Kenya film industry growth also lists some of the causes of Kenya's poor quality film as lack of support services, finances and training (KFC, 2011).

For film to be successful in its influence, it should have high aesthetic value that appeals to the viewers to capture their attention. Film language has a range of techniques available for a film-maker to choose from in telling a story. Content is the outcome of narrative while style is the sum total of film techniques employed (Diang'a, 2012). It is the combination of the two that produces meaning. The manner in which style and content are balanced for semantic reasons varies from one film to another, depending on the director's choice of style and the film's budget.

Meaning is important in the communication process and Abram et al. (2001) argue that aesthetic film style elements plays a big role in creation of meaning in film. In trying to decode meaning out of the elements, a viewer pays attention to setting, props, costumes, make-up, lighting, sound and camera movements among other visual components.

These are components of the language of film. Hence the film-maker needs both the style and content to pass across the message. Rabiger (2008) contends that, “style is just the outside of content, and content the inside of style, like the outside and the inside of the human body, both go together, they can’t be separated” (209).

Being one of the oldest film making countries in Africa, Kenya continues to be used by external film industries as a location to tell their own stories. This dates back to as early as 1909 when “*Roosevelt in Africa*”, a documentary account of US President Teddy Roosevelt's visit to Kenya was filmed by Cherry Keaton.

This trend continued with more films being shot in Kenya, including The resultant film, ‘*TR in Africa*’ screened in 1910 and 1911 in both London and New York, *Out of Africa* (1985), *Mountain of the Moon* (1989), *Nowhere in Africa* (2001), and *The Constant Gardener* (2005), using foreign funds, producers and artists to showcased Kenya’s potential as a filming location.

Scenery is a concept central to developed understanding of film. Thinking and writing on the scene in film helps the study of film achieve its maturity (Gibbs, 2002). Therefore, the use of Kenyan location by foreigners perhaps provides the right scenes for the foreigners’ films in achieving the film intent.

As one of the most noticeable techniques in production, mise-en-scene is made up of several elements that constitute film style such as geographical environment (location), light, costume, props and set. Of all production techniques, mise-en-scene is the most noticeable by viewers. Hence, the viewer’s most vivid memories of watching a film

image emanates from its mise-en-scene as each of its elements on its own and in combination with others, influences the viewer's experience of the film.

Kenyan film makers have not utilized the locally available scenery. Hence, the film makers continue to improvise in their film making initiatives with the biggest challenge being how to achieve the "natural" visual look that film demands. For these films to look as natural as possible, technical elements like lighting and sound, among other techniques, are employed to complement the theme. These are requisite technical elements which can only be acquired through formal training or apprenticeship. To have a realistic film requires the efforts of skilled script writers, producers, directors and actors, and above all, sufficient budget for filming.

In the early 1970s, the then Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, together with the Federal Republic of Germany, established the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication (KIMC) to train audio visual experts. It was envisaged partly that the college would provide the much-needed technical learning that would improve film making in Kenya. However, by the early 1980s, KIMC students under government supervision only produced mostly tourist films such as *Passport to Adventure* (1982) and *Water of Mombasa* (1983) (Diawara, 1992). The films had the intent of luring foreigners to Kenya. The students also produced educational and informational films similar to those made by the colonial film unit, News reel. These films mainly focused on issues such as agriculture and rural women development.

However, in the early 1980s, Kenya started to produce mass feature films that expressed dialectic tension enhanced by conflicts of tradition and modernity that exist among the

people (Diawara, 1992). *Kolormask* (1985), a film by a KIMC graduate Sao Gamba, is one such example. It was a feature film based on the story of a Kenyan student who returns home from England with a white woman. The film is set in post-independence Kenya and is centered on divisions of tradition and modernity to emphasize the differences between cultures. This film then marked the beginning of an indigenous Kenyan film industry (Sorgo, 1996).

For its own film sustainability and reliability, the stage had been set and in the early 1990s. Kenya started producing local feature films for her own consumption. *Saikati 1* (1992) by Anne Mungai, *Battle of the Sacred Tree* (1994) by Wanjiru Kinyanjui, *The Ascent* (1996) by Njeri Karago, *Malooned* (2007) by Bob Nyanja and *Nairobi Half Life* (2012) by David Gitonga, among others, have been produced.

As a result of the increase in the number of Kenyan film productions in recent years, most of the films have exhibited inconsistencies in screen direction and narrative structure which may be as a result of lack of professional training and inadequate funding (Barasa, 1996). The films largely lack creativity in storyline development and production concepts, which are qualities of good film making (Muite, 2011).

Regardless of the Kenya government's conscious efforts to develop the Kenyan film as an industry, the Kenya film is yet to find a way of telling stories effectively and creatively, hence it is poorly received by the audiences (Chege 2014).

Therefore, for credible realization of a well-balanced film in terms of theme and style, skill and capital are a pre-requisite. Capital plays a vital part in acquiring the right

skilled labour, latest technology and necessary equipment. For instance, in Mungai's *Saikati 1*, the film is full of technical and artistic shortcomings such as mechanical acting, poor framing of shots, poor lighting and poor sound (Cham, 1994).

This study looks at how the director's choice of style affects production and the overall outcome of any film. The director's know-how is requisite in the infusion of different aspects of pre-production, production and post-production, which in turn determine the outcome of the film. Ouman (1998) contends that film styles are the features used by film-makers to inform, educate and entertain the viewers.

According to Diang'a (2013), content is the outcome of narrative while style is shaped by the film techniques employed. It is the combination of the two elements that reinforces the meaning of a film. The manner in which the two are balanced varies from film to film; depending on the director's choice of technique influenced by his/her technical knowhow, the budget available and the film genre.

It is, therefore, clear that high quality film requires an artistically well composed narrative carrying content through film style for it to communicate effectively. In order to produce a successful film, one needs to deliver a memorable impact through story and style with the element of verisimilitude – by creating a strong life-like semblance of a film's content. Thus, to bring a good film to life one needs to amalgamate several aspects of content and technique, such as sound and editing to communicate effectively. Styles provide the language and symbolic system through which the message is passed. In this way, a film is able to communicate intended message, entertains and holds the viewers' attention (Bouman, 1998). In order to achieve this, this study insists it is necessary for the director to understand diverse technical aspects of film-making.

Therefore, this study, attempted to find out how the directors choice of styles employed in the selected Kenyan feature films *Dangerous Affair* (2004), *Project Daddy* (2002) and *Toto Millionaire* (2010) affects production, which ultimately influences communication and film quality.

Film Story Overview

1.1.1 Dangerous Affair (2004)

Dangerous Affair explores extra marital sex in marriage. Koi, a successful banker, has returned from America and is keen on getting married. She meets Muraguri, a famous businessman in town, and falls in love with him. Muraguri is convinced of getting serious and settling down in marriage with Koi. Within no time, their relationship is at an advanced stage and preparations for marriage are underway. However, a few days to the wedding day, Muraguri meets a former girlfriend, Rose, who has just relocated from Mombasa to Nairobi. Though married with two children, her relationship with Muraguri disrupts Muraguri's wedding arrangements. Finally, Muraguri marries Koi against his will. He continues with his extra-marital affair with Rose which leads to their divorce.

1.1.2 Toto Millionaire (2010)

The film adopts a simple linear plot line that features the journey from the rural to the city where characters hope to find solutions to their problems. The film presents a single parent family where Toto's mother is a widow living in poverty and disease. This forces Toto to start begging for money and food around the village. This in turn leads to hostile reception from the neighbours and relatives. In frustration, he stows away in a vehicle that is passing by and it ferries him to the city. His appearance causes him to be mistaken for a street boy, and he is mistreated by people in town. Finally, Mr. Supa, a

city council worker, hires him to sell groundnuts and bhang. The two stay together. While in Mr. Supa's house, Toto coincidentally comes across a prize bottle top for a lottery that everyone is looking for in the city. This sets him to sneak from Supa's house and start searching for Mamba Bottlers. In his search and attempt to collect the jackpot, he meets a taxi man and a preacher who both unsuccessfully try to dispossess him of the jackpot bottle top. The taxi man snatches a bottle top from Toto but discovers he was tricked when he presents it to the raffle offices. Finally, Toto ends up at the raffle offices where the manager also tries to dispossess him of the bottle top but fails. In the end Toto is awarded the prize of three million shillings. After the prize, Toto sets on his journey back home.

He is followed by Supa and his friends who demand for a share of the prize. Supa believes Toto picked one of his bottle tops in the house that won him the prize. Their inquiry of Toto's home makes the entire village converge at Toto's home for a share of the fortune. The story ends happily.

1.1.3 Project Daddy (2002)

The film presents an urban life where Mumbi, a Kikuyu lady banker, falls in love with Fred, a young Luo mechanic man. Mumbi compels Fred into getting married and having children but Fred is not interested in having a child at the moment. Upon introduction of Fred to Mumbi's family, Fred is insulted and denied a chance to marry Mumbi. This is because Fred comes from a different tribe. Fred exchanges bitter words with Mumbi's father and leaves dejected. Mumbi follows Fred and this creates friction in their relationship. They later breakup and Mumbi embarks on a journey to find a man to sire

a child with. She meets several men but none impresses her, at the same time Fred flirts with other ladies. Finally, against all odds they, reunite.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Film-making is a medium with rich language of its own, that calls for one to handle it skillfully. This is by focusing on the elements of aesthetic and technical style, to be able to decipher the meaning and understand the film. In Kenya, film-making has given less attention to aesthetic and technical style in their film and studies, which have focused more on how content singularly makes a film.

However, to be able to read a film effectively, one needs to understand its aesthetics and technical styles. This study, therefore, attempted to analyze the inadequacy in collaboration of applied aesthetic and technical styles in the selected Kenyan films; *Dangerous Affair (2004)*, *Project Daddy (2002)* and *Toto Millionaire (2010)*.

By this approach, the study makes significant and unique contribution because it sought to develop a basis on which Kenyan film aesthetic and technical style can be appraised to improve on film quality.

1.3 Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the collaborative effects of aesthetic styles adopted in the selected Kenya films on communication of intended messages?
2. What are the collaborative effects of technical styles employed in the selected Kenyan films on communication of intended message?

3. Which factors influenced the choices of film styles adopted in selected Kenyan films?

1.4 Objectives

The key objectives of the study were:

1. To establish the collaborative effects of aesthetic style adopted in the selected Kenyan films on communication of intended message.
2. To examine the collaborative effects of technical style adopted in the selected Kenyan films on communication of intended message.
3. To establish factors that influenced the choices of styles adopted in the selected Kenyan films.

1.5 Research Premise

This study was premised on the understanding that directorial conception of film may have a one-to-one relationship with how film style is applied to form the whole. The successful use of any film style depends on the director's awareness of how each style works and its significance in the process of communication.

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

Film is a medium that thrives on the ability to educate, inform and entertain. This is made possible through application of relevant styles as an accompaniment to content; hence the appeal on the viewer's sense. Different scholars agree that style in film is indispensable if the film is to meet the objective of edutainment. Several scholars argue that film should remain something entirely appealing to the senses and it is only achieved through application of appropriate style (Brecht, 1964).

The study is convinced that with attention given to both content and style, the film industry would grow immensely. Akashoro (2010) concurs that a majority of people believe that African film makers need to improve on their creativity through acquisition of theoretical and technical knowledge in film-making. This is equally true for the Kenyan film-maker who needs grounding in theoretical and technical skills to improve production. With over reliance on content to communicate, the films lack some critical element in passing the message, which can only be attained through proper application and manipulation of style of lighting, sound, costuming and mise-en-scene. When content is well complimented by style the film realizes aspect of communication like mood, atmosphere, social and economic status, which content alone cannot express. Hence the need for this study to focus on the effects of style on communicating the intended message.

The study's findings are of great importance to Kenyan film makers since they do not only highlight the weaknesses that pervade the film industry but also serve as a guide towards rectifying this anomaly and improving the quality of future works. With improved quality, both local and international audience will have quality films to watch and be entertained hence enable indigenous film-makers succeed in both national and global markets.

The findings set up an avenue to spur interest in more areas of research to improve on the current state of film in the country. By so doing, this will enlarge their repertoire on the best practices when directing film. This will also develop the directing praxis of filmmaking and improve the film industry in Kenya.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation

The study concentrated on the analysis of three Kenyan films: Judy Kibinge's *Dangerous Affair* (2004) and *Project Daddy* (2002), and Simiyu Barasa's *Toto Millionaire* (2010). The selection was based on three aspects: films produced between 2000 and 2010 because that is the time legitimate film movement started in Kenya (Diang'a 2007). Two, length, which qualifies them as feature films; and finally, the films' accessibility. Among other films produced during this period are: *Chokora* 2005, *Kibera Kids* 2006, and *Constant Gardener* 2005 but were not considered for study because of their length and non-availability.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by the formalist film theory propounded by Arnheim Rudolf and Sergei Eisenstein (1964). The theory emphasizes on film conveying meaning through use of codes and conventions similar to the way languages are used to construct meanings in communication (Abram, 2001). Formalist film theory also argues that film study is focused on the formal or technical elements of a film which are lighting, scoring, sound and set design; use of colour, shot composition, editing among others. These are the elements that a film-maker manipulates to compliment content in passing the intended message to the audience.

Alamu (2010) agrees that the major concept of this theory is on the film elements that have the ability to communicate in visual signs. For example, light, shot composition, camera angles and editing influence the meaning of a film. This theory, therefore, insists that Film is an art and not original. The aspect of art in this theory is realized when film stylistic elements are manipulated to reflect beauty, pleasure and taste in a film, which

evokes the audience emotions. In formalism, it is all about the reflection of reality, precisely because film is unlike everyday life. The purpose of art, formalists argue is tautologically, about aesthetics, about renewing perception, about making the viewer feel “stoniness of the stone” (Stam, 2000, 11). For formalists, film-makers shape and mold the images we see on the screen, the way a sculptor shapes and molds clay. Their approach to film emphasizes their ability to create stories and emotions through manipulation of elements of film styles.

On the tenet of aesthetics, formalism is primarily concerned with aesthetic elements of style like mise-en-scene, light, props and makeup, that gives the film a concept of beauty, taste and pleasure for the audience and promotes meaning through ideas, emotions, and themes. Therefore, it was paramount for this study to look at how the film directors applied the aesthetic style in their effort to promote beauty and pleasure while enhancing meaning and improving film quality. For instance, how did the directors interact with lighting to bring out emotions such as happiness, joy, humor, suspense, misery and realness?

The technical tenet of film medium, relies on manipulation of technical elements to achieve specific intention. It focuses on the technical elements of film which includes; camera shots, sound, and editing. Hence, it became important to find out how the film directors of the selected films employed technical style in their endeavour to express ideas that connect the viewer’s feelings and improve on ability to communicate and overall film quality. For instance, the use of different types of shots in a film works on the emotional involvement of the audience in the story that is being told. These shots are used as apparatus to make the audience feel more connected to the development of the story. The order in which these shots are used can change the feeling and emotion of

scenes based on how they are presented. What makes this scene realistic is not the theme, but rather the emotional connection which the arrangement of the shots brings to the viewers.

Another important facet of this tenet is sound which, when relevantly used, enhances the film visuals. The application of sound when well mixed and balanced produces the necessary emphasis, which in turn creates desired effects that create meaning. The sound should be synchronous to add to the realism of the shot. For example, if a character opens a door, the sound of the door opening enhances the realism of the image. Based on this argument, this study investigated the aesthetics and technical elements in relation to the films under study.

The tenet on ideological formalism concerns itself with socio-economic and political pressure that influences creation of a particular style. For this study, ideological formalism is relevant for it advocates for styles which are directly affected not by the individuals responsible, but by social, economic, and political pressures, of which the film-makers themselves may be aware. Hence these may have implication on the choices of style and contribute to the overall film quality. For that reason, it became important to find out the social and economic dynamics that affected the choice of style adopted during the making of the selected films.

This theory asserts its relevance in the study because it considers in totality manipulation of various film making elements in order to bring out the meaning. It is a theory that embraces synthesis of various film techniques, both aesthetic and technical, such as editing, shot composition, lighting, costuming and music in its effort to improve

on film quality. Formalist theory based on the tenet of social economic parameters aided the study to find out how the directors interacted with style to enhance film quality despite economic challenges. In this study, the theory's relevance manifested through manipulation of styles to bring out the intentional message to the audience, for instance, how light is used to bring out the mood of a scene and sound creating atmosphere, mise-en-scene revealing the character's social status among other things.

1.9 Literature Review

According to Bouman (1998), production techniques are what make a film entertaining and the goal of all producers is to entertain. Production techniques enable the viewer to gain better understanding of how the drama has been produced in order to present elements like theme, character, setting and plot. The use of language in film-making relies on complex codes in order to communicate and entertain; language is used to communicate to the audience that the story world is suitable to a particular situation. However, film production style has received a short fall in research. This study argues that speech is not paramount means of passing information to the audience but when intertwined with film style it enables the audience to realize intended communication. Therefore, this study set out to find how film style in the selected films enhanced communication.

Schatz (1983) argues that film schools are perceived to have consequences on the kind of films directed by their graduates. This tends to distinguish film school graduates from directors who have entered the film industry from other media. They are highly specialized but limited in their technical capabilities as compared to film school directors who have intense technical competence. Just like any other profession where

training is valued for execution of the job, film making requires training for one to understand its conventions and language.

Osita (2008) observes that most negative perceptions and feelings, especially by Africans in the diaspora on African cinema, arose as a result of the themes treated by African film makers, the film techniques used and the general poor quality. African films especially Nigerian (Nollywood) are of wanting quality. With many people getting into the industry with the desire to get rich, with no proper training and understanding of the art of filmmaking and the rate at which directors churn out their films per week, it was clear that quality was not paramount. The films struggled to impress many audiences who have several choices. Ositia's observation points toward the need for the industry to value both themes and style in order to improve on quality. Poor quality is the concern of this study. Alamu (2010), in his study "Narrative and Style in Nigerian (Nollywood) Films," reviews how film form and style function in relation to narrative. He argues that the relationship between the various parts of a film to create a whole can be referred to as its form. Whereas style is concerned with various film techniques such as mise-en-scene, editing, camera movement, color patterns, sound, music and so on, narrative is the actual representation of the story and the form in which the spectator encounters it.

The totality of a film or the organization of the story depicted in the film comprises its form. The Director must consider the various film techniques and cinematic styles in order to present his or her story and to engage the minds and emotions of his or her audience, as well as to realize the vision underlying the film.

In his study, Alamu (2010) found out that several technical deficiencies have been noted in some films produced in Nigeria, which he argues, may be partially attributable to lack of competency and the absence of the sort of sophisticated equipment required for quality production. From the preceding, one can conclude that form and style are crucial for film narration, and that it is through these elements that a film draws us into a moment-by-moment engagement.

Motiki (2006) observed that many people love Nigerian video-films and find them irresistible mostly because of their familiar story lines. He states that Nigerian movies are a household name all over Botswana. “Although the whole cinematography of the movies, is not of the best quality, a lot of people are in love with them” (1). He further noted that common poor technical works were all ignored as most people were glued to their television sets when these movies are showing. Majority of the people love them because they can easily relate to them. This study is different from the current study for it highlights the role audience plays in decoding the films’ message and again it examines Nigerian films. The current study looked at Kenyan feature films. It nonetheless benefited from the former study from the insights it sheds on the role that the audience plays in decoding messages from filmic texts.

Meyer (1999) argues that the division in the Ghanaian film industry was brought by the trained and untrained personnel in the industry. Trained Ghanaian film makers emphasized and pegged their works on the existing conventions of film making, for example, aesthetics and personal artistic expression. The untrained directors focused on themes that appeal to the audience.

He found out that the untrained directors produced films that were popular with the natives, because the films addressed issues they identify with, despite poor technical and creative input. Trained Ghanaian film makers focus their works on the international audience. Though the study looked at the impact of relevant training in Ghana's film industry, the Kenyan film industry is no different in terms of training and technicality and this study sought to understand the role style plays in Kenyan film production. The former study facilitated the latter with impetus to examine how directors of the selected films employed style in enhancing or mitigating aesthetic value of the films.

Kuijintjes (2018), in a study about costume color design as a symbolic expression in (the independent) film, argues that there is a relation between a film and the clothing color by investigating the symbolic meaning of the colors of costumes as reflected in the situations and psychological state of the characters (Kim, 2004). In this study the colors in small details of costumes were examined. The result of this study showed that symbolic color communicated the whole image of transformation as the story progressed in an effective way. It became clear color delivered gentle emotional messages to the viewer.

The study looked at costume as a single entity of passing information through colour to the film under study and found out that costumes colour convey information about a character, even before the dialogue starts.

The finding of the above study became critical to the current study for its findings on costume as a single element of style was used to give focus to the current study. The current study parts with Kuijintjes by examining how costume when collaborated with

other elements of style manages to bring out the intended meaning of occasion taking place, professions, social and economic status of characters involved in the films, in collaboration with other elements of style to impact on overall film quality.

Ahereza (2022), in his unpublished thesis titled, *Lighting Methods used by Cinematographer in Uganda. A case Study of Kampala*, argues that two methods of lighting films are used in lighting methods used in Kampala, which leads to production of poor standards of film produced hence they fail to meet the standards of Uganda Communication Commission and they even end up not competing in the local and international market.

The study further reveals that, cinematographers in Kampala in a ratio of 4:8 understand the use of lighting films because they are professionals who have studied about areas related with performing. But more cinematographers do not understand the use of lighting since they are not educated about it therefore they do not understand when and where to apply specific lighting. The reason why their film quality is wanting.

It is precisely for this reason that the current study looked at factors that influences the selection of specific styles for use in the making of the selected films.

Mukora (1999), Sipalla (2004) and Diang'a (2005) are among studies done on Kenyan film industry and all focused on how content makes film. They do not consider other production aspects that are vital to film production. Though their thematic focus puts Kenyan film on the global radar, the current study was interested in going a step beyond and looked at aesthetic and technical style, which are the other aspects that when considered in totality enable film to communicate effectively.

In a study of narrative dispositions of non-verbal elements of sound design in selected Kenyan drama films, Kimani (2016) looked at how the range and type of non-verbal elements of sound are deployed and their expressive, dramatic, and symbolic qualities contextualized as narrative disposition in the selected Kenyan fiction films, *Killer Necklace* by Judy Kibinge (2008), *Formula X* by Steve Ominde (2009), *From A Whisper* by Wanuri Kahiu (2009) and *Nairobi Half Life* by Tosh Gitonga (2012). The investigation targeted the creation of direct and symbolic meanings by silence, sound effects, music, and ambience/noise.

The study found out that sound design as a practice is an important process in the creation of a soundtrack that not only exudes pristine technical quality and embellishment, but one that can express meanings that advance the film story in part and as a whole. The current study parts with Kimani's study in that it looks at how the entire film styles in that film works hand in hand in collaboration with content to bring out the intended message. Kimani's study played an important role in this research for its findings on sound as a single element of style was used to give focus on the latter study, by examining how amalgamation of film style overall impacts on film quality.

Wamalwa (2015), in his unpublished thesis titled, *Language Choice and the Problematic of Performance Aesthetics in the Kenyan Films; First Grader, Saikati, Toto Millionaire* and *Nairobi Half-life* examines the role of spoken language and argues that a story which has its roots in a peoples' culture will work even if the formal elements such as camera and sound recording are either poor or redundant. In other words, content is far much important than form. The current study sought to ascertain the importance of film form in the quality and communication process of film if efficiently

utilized. The current study parts ways with Wamalwa's study in that it looks at how film style when properly used enhances communicative quality of a film as does content. However, the study became important to the current study for it postulates that no single element in film making works in isolation, which lay the basis of the current study by looking at how then film style plays a communicative role that is equally important as film content.

On Kenya film style, Wamalwa (2015) argues that use of formal elements of film to effect film aesthetics are unattainable by Kenya film makers currently owing to the underfunding that Kenya film producers experience. However, Wamalwa does not point out other factors that affect proper application of style in Kenyan films. The current study sought to find out other factors that hinder proper application of style in Kenyan film.

In a study of style and content in Kenyan didactic films, Diang'a (2013) looked at how content and style have been balanced in passing the message to the target audience in the several films: Sao Gamba's *Kolormask*, Ann Mungai's *Saikati 1*, Robby Bresson and Mburu Kimani's *Pieces for Peace* and Njoki Mbutia and Mona Ombogo-Sott's *Unseen, Unsung, Unforgotten*. The four films are all message films, with a particular message for a particular audience. Diang'a found out that the films were challenged in balancing stylistic technical aspects with content. This was as a result of certain artistic and technical oversights that disoriented the audience in digesting the meaning in the films, hence, failed in articulating the deliberate meaning. Diang'a's study differs from the current one in that it looked at message films for specific audience while this study looked at feature films with no specific audience in mind. Second, Diang'a looked at the

interplay between theme and style in passing the message across. The current study looked at how selected styles collaborated in the selected film of; Judy Kibinge *Dangerous Affair* (2004), *Project Daddy* (2002) and Simiyu Barasa *Toto Millionaire* (2010) to bring out the intended meaning to the viewer, for instance how did lighting collaborate with sound, costumes and camera angles manage to create tension and identify locations among other styles and improve on message delivery. Though Diang'a's study differs from the current study. Some of its findings on artistic and technical oversights informed the latter study on areas of interest. The study sets up a platform for academic engagement on studies of Kenyan film style. This is besides thematic aspects that have formed part of previous studies. This study chose to examine the overall contribution of film style on film quality.

Gitimu (2013) examined the role of mise-en-scene in a Kenyan edutainment drama *Siri*. In her investigation, Gitimu concludes that set plays a number of functions in the drama. One, it provides a place in which the characters move thus defines their environment. Two, the set is used in the drama to portray changes in plot lines; and finally, it suggests to the viewer the circumstances in which the story takes place. This study highlighted an area that was critical in the effort to communicate effectively, but did not consider the other production elements that complemented the set in communicating. This current study looked at the production style and technique as a whole on improving film quality. It differs from Gitimu's study since it focused on feature films and not serial drama as in the case of Gitimu. However, her findings on mise-ne-scene formed part of the current study.

Wanjiku Kinyanjui in an interview argues that funding deficiency has greatly affected the quality of films produced in Kenya and that evident technicalities are obvious drawbacks to film quality (persona interview held on 3rd June 1999). Wanjiku does not state the technicalities she meant. This study looked at how the director's choice and use of style affects the overall quality (expression) of the film. The study also sought to find out the causes of these technical drawbacks and their implication on film quality.

Kinyanjui (2008) points out that the quality of Riverwood film is technically poor because the films are shot from improvised stories rather than scripts. There is no director to worry about cinematographic techniques and the comedians and musicians do their acts without keen interest on attaining quality. Kinyanjui's sentiment points to a need for the film-makers to give attention to cinematic techniques as well as content in order to add semantic value to their films. Kinyanjui's study exposes shortcomings in Riverwood films. The observation was of great significance to this study because it echoes the central concern of research in the Kenyan feature film.

However, the study does not tell us the causes of the shortcomings, which the current study in part looks at. Notwithstanding, the findings give an overview of what ails the Kenyan film. Hence, this research needed such information in order to entrench the examination of style in the Kenyan feature film to find out where disconnect in style lies.

Sitati (personal communication, August 20, 2008) in the World Organization Report "Building a Self-sustainable, Indigenous Film Industry in Kenya" notes that attention to cinematic storytelling is the key to good film which is the biggest challenge the Kenyan

film industry is faced with and observes that “we have excellent stories being told, but formulating a story and creatively bringing out the true aspect is what is lacking” (p.7). The report further revealed that Kenya as a country is lacking in film education, technology advancement, and formulation of creative stories. This report provides a platform in one of the areas this study seeks to address. The study sought to find out the extent to which this was true of Kenya, by examining film style and how the director’s training affects selection of one style over the other.

The review of literature above has demonstrated that a few studies have been done on Kenyan film over time and their limitations and strength are the cause upon which I explore the use of style in Kenyan films. This study focusses on the motivating factors in selection of film styles and their overall contribution in expressing intended messages.

1.10 Research Methodology

This was a qualitative study that involved reading, analysis and interpretation of the film texts based on formalist theory which emphasizes on film conveying meaning through use of codes and conventions similar to the way languages are used to construct meanings in communication.

This study looked at how aesthetic and technical styles were functional in the selected text of *Dangerous Affair 2004*, *Toto Millionaire 2010* and *Project Daddy 2002*. The three text were all able to convey crucial meaning through already established components of scenes. The scenes invoked realism into the films by providing the environmental backdrop against which the films action unfolded. This provided a basis for meaning generation and interpretation of the character’s socio-economic status.

Lighting in all the three film was mostly applied primarily for illuminating the characters in focus. Other than *Dangerous Affair* which attempted to employ specific lighting that created particular atmosphere. The other two, *Project Daddy* and *Toto Millionaire* relied on primary intension of lighting.

Dangerous Affair use soft filtered lighting on the scene where Muraguri is having Dinner with Koi to imply an act of romance. It equally, used some good dark lit scenes too. An instance is when Muraguri meets with his former girlfriend Rose. The use of dark scenes during day time implied that the motive was not right. Muraguri is already involved with Koi and Rose is married which enabled the film to pass the message effectively.

In camera dynamics, the study, looked at how the recording was done and the image constructed through varied dynamics that interpret the film. All the films, *Project Daddy*, *Dangerous Affair* and *Toto Millionaire* made use of several camera dynamics variedly depending on different factors at play. Camera movements are occasioned by the demand of the character's actions. In some cases, the films had delayed tilts and pans that led to the subject being cut out of frame or having impractical walking room. This eliminated the aspect of realism and put the film at a risk of disbelieve. For example, *Dangerous Affair*, when Koi stands to confront Rose Muraguri's girlfriend in a bar the camera delays to tilt up with her. Equally, in *Project Daddy* when Mumbi's father stands to scorn at Fred's proposal to marry her daughter Mumbi, the camera delays to tilt up with him forcing the editor to cut to full established shot where Mumbi's father is standing.

Overall, the films made a good attempt of balancing the use of these aesthetic and technical styles, which to some level enhanced the overall creation of meaning in the films, but they still had serious lapses in passing of the messages using both aesthetic and technical styles.

Descriptive study design was used where reading and analysis of the selected films was required to get out meaning created by use of adopted styles and assess their communication ability and value to the overall film quality.

Purposive sampling was used to choose the three films. The selection was based on availability of the films and the films produced between 2000 and 2010 because that is the time legitimate film movement started in Kenya (Diang'a, 2007). Though other films like *Chokora* (2005), *Kibera Kid* [2006], *Constant gardener* (2005), *From a Whisper* (2008) had been produced, they did not merit for study because they don't fit in the film genre length under study and they were also not available.

The researcher used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from watching and analyzing the film texts, while structured interviews were conducted with the use of an interview guide with the directors of the selected films.

The interview guide basically was geared towards finding out the following: whether the film directors had undertaken any form of training on film styles, elements of film making that they take charge of, whether they engage the services of other film directors, the factors that hinder the growth of film in Kenya, what determines quality of a good film and factors that influence the choice of their film styles.

The study's source of secondary data included journals and books. The selected films formed electronic texts for analysis. The research looked out for style adopted in the films, its overall contribution towards development of the narrative and processing of meaning. Watching was done through use of a guide on areas of interest, such as use of sound, lighting, editing, camera angles, camera movements, make-up, costume, location and set design.

The researcher first watched each film several times without engaging in any detailed scrutiny until he was able to decode the meaning out of the applied styles. The reading and analysis of each film involved observation of cinematic form and technique with the intention of identifying the film style employed. Each aspect of style was critically looked at and its contribution to the film's overall quality and success was assessed. This enabled the study to establish how certain styles were used to enhance narrative development and overall impression.

During interview sessions with directors, note taking and audio recording of the entire session was done. The interviews were used with the intention of getting clarification on the subject matter through personal opinion and experiences, by probing the interviewee on the topic of study. However, for some clarification after studying the selected films, follow up interviews were done through the phone to confirm certain aspects.

Review of literature with information on Kenyan film was done to establish the lacuna, while review of literature on African film helped to put the Kenyan situation in perspective.

Qualitative data collected by observation was analyzed by clustering the findings into different categories of style and technique. Data from interviews with the directors was also analyzed. Data presentation was done by narration and evaluated in prose form. The analysis was later used to inform the conclusions made.

1.11 Thesis Organization

The first chapter is divided into four main sections. Section one gives a background on film making in Kenya and elsewhere; section two describes the problem in the framework of the organization; section three presents an outline of the literature review; section four presents the research methodology and procedures that are used to carry out the study. Chapter Two identifies and interrogates narrative aesthetic style adopted in the films. Chapter Three looks at technical styles adopted in the films followed by Chapter Four which looks at factors affecting choice of style. Finally, Chapter Five is devoted to a discussion of findings and provides a summary with a discussion of the significance of the findings and directions for future research.

Each of the scheduled chapters therefore applies itself to at least an objective.

CHAPTER TWO

AESTHETIC STYLE IN SELECTED KENYAN FILMS

2.1 Introduction

Film narrative has two basic elements: story and plot. The plot constitutes the segments of a story displayed to the audience through a combination of picture, sound, lighting, costume, make-up and editing (Prammagiore & Wallis, 2006). Rabiger (2008) affirms that a plot is devised to manipulate, entertain, move and surprise the audience. Therefore, in plot creation, film makers exploit different styles and techniques to display the story to the audience. Therefore, the use of film style becomes important in meaning generation. Bobker (1979) argues that the combination of aesthetic and technical elements makes the overall film pleasant and arousing to audience. Hence, in an attempt to communicate with the audience as effectively as possible, film relies on several components including style.

This chapter examines various aesthetic elements of style in the three selected films: *Dangerous Affair* (2004), *Project Daddy* (2002) by Judy Kibinge and *Toto Millionaire* (2010) by Simiyu Barasa. The study specifically looked at the application of mise-en-scene elements including set, costume, makeup, props and lighting. This was in order to find out how the application of the styles contributed to the overall realization of the narrative.

2.2.1 Mise-en-Scene

Mise-en-scene entails everything that is visible on the screen in a film and creates the subjects' world. The elements of *mise-en-scene* include: the setting which is either real or simulated, actors, colour and lighting. Therefore, when a director creates a scene, he

should be aware that for the film to communicate effectively within a scene, and contribute towards the meaning, film style should be well intergraded. For instance, formalists view a film as a language that has to be read through images, props, lighting, camera dynamics and sound. The set in a film should be a unit used to contribute to film language. Monaco (2009) agrees that because we read the shot, we are actively involved with it. The codes of *mise-en-scene* is part of the tools which film makers manipulate to modify our reading and understanding of the shot.

For that reason, the question of where to shoot a film depends largely on the director's intention and knowledge on what he/she wants to communicate. The function of scene is to provide the environment and backdrop against which film action unfolds and is read.

The scene, therefore, is essential in the process of film communication. It is the element that gives the basic images that help to tell a story. According to Robker (1979), the scene must be considered strongly during production of a film. Apart from enhancing meaning, a scene as an element of communication has the advantage of containing all the visual aspects. These are the elements mostly responsible for artistic value of film. Hence, they provide a basis for meaning generation.

In *mise-en-scene*, the viewer is expected to do some form of interpretation to understand the message. In any given scene, one should be able to tell the characters social and economic status as the story unfolds. Kolker (1999) agrees that:

Content – story, characters, and emotions– is never simply there waiting for us to see it. Content is generated by the form and structure of the imagination's work and is specific to the kind of work being done. (p.177)

Setting refers to the locality where the film action takes place and is mainly captured in film as an establishment shot. All the three films under study; *Dangerous Affair*, *Project Daddy* and *Toto Millionaire* used various already established components of scenes well, by invoking realism into the films.

Dangerous Affair and *Project Daddy* are set in an urban area while *Toto Millionaire* is set up in two locations, rural and urban setup. In its opening shot *Project Daddy* managed to establish the location well but *Dangerous Affair* and *Toto Millionaire*, in their establishment shots, fail to suggest the setting of the action clearly. Though the capturing of signage that revealed locality of places in the city, for example, Shaurimoyo Estate, bar labels and shops was well done to establish the setting of the film was well executed in *Toto Millionaire*.

In the first action of *Dangerous Affair*, the viewer is introduced to, a disorganized house that has things thrown everywhere on the floor. The film starts with interior shots of empty beer bottles, socks, shoes, condoms among other things and finally to Muraguri who is in bed with a lady he does not remember her name. This does not reveal to the viewer the place where action is taking place whether in a lodging or his house. Equally, his social and economic status are not revealed in the shots.

In *Toto Millionaire*, the first episode opens with the village setup scene, probably to portray a village where Toto and the mother live. Mama Toto's house is not established in the opening shot, and when finally introduced it looks like a rental house in a market center that is improvised. Improvisation in film is allowed only if it has to give the virtual touch to convince the audience. This may be as a result of lack of knowledge by

the director or due to financial constraints, where shooting in two different locations would cost more. Hence the film was shot in one location (Nairobi) and its environment to cut on cost.

Comparison with *Dangerous Affair* and *Toto Millionaire*, *Project Daddy* establishes the location of the film much better than the two. The viewer is introduced to daylight city life in the city and in the next scene, night life is introduced to the viewer then to a specific office where Mumbi is working. This city night scene implies that Mumbi is working at night.

Frensham (2003) states that, a story must have specific scene for the audience to understand it. Three films under study offers several plots unfolding in different scenes that take the viewers from one act to another. Hence physical details of the scene visual symbols are used to associate viewers with homes, place of work, leisure joints of the major character with specific events taking place.

In *Dangerous Affair*, for instance, the house and the car that Muraguri owns and the places he hangs out for leisure in the narrative, depicts him as a person who is wealthy. Equally, the kind of the house Koi's family own and the car she drives also depict her background as a fluent. Jimmy and Rose former Muraguri's girlfriend on the other hand are portrayed as a family struggling with life. This is considering the house they live in and the disorder in the arrangement of the households in the house.

Muraguri's preference place of meeting Koi and Rose indicates their social and economic status. Koi meets Muraguri in standard clubs and hotels unlike Rose who Muraguri prefer meeting her at a famous local bar (njugunas), which refers to a low

class bar for the commoners. These preferences enhanced the narrative by informing the viewer that Koi is a girl from a fluent family who cannot hang out in low class places whereas Rose is just a local girl who can hang anyway.

The association of the physical details of different scenes with particular acts gives the viewer a better understanding of the story. The viewer is able to recognize changes in plot as well understand the circumstances in which the event takes place.

In *Project Daddy*, the scene where Mumbi's family lives projects a wealthy family collaborated with other aspects in the house there is no doubt it enhances the narrative which projects them as rich. In the same film when Atieno is taken to hospital to give birth, the scenes capture the intention of the narrative. Through, reception where there is a uniformed nurse, the corridor where other patients are being admitted and finally, in the ward where Atieno is admitted. The set has relevant hospital objects and uniformed nurses attending to several patients.

The scene at Mumbi's parent's when Fred visits their house is strategically arranged to have fewer objects, probably for the audience to get the conversation with less attention diverted to the set. For example, the attention was directed to the tribal insult made to Fred by Mumbi's father. When Fred leaves Mumbi's family house, he is dejected and when the next scene is staged in his house, it captures the spirit of the narrative through the objects. For instance, the bible which Fred is reading is probably to comfort him from the tribal remarks made to him by Mumbi's father. The beer cans on the table, perhaps for him to drink and forget about the tribulation he has gone through.

After, the tribulation, Fred starts to frustrate Mumbi too. Hence Mumbi turns to the church for soul searching. The scene enhances the narrative through a gathering that is singing praise songs to God with the pastor preaching.

In the successive episodes *Toto Millionaire* introduces Mama Toto's house, which, its windows are covered by carton boxes. This is perhaps as a symbol of abject poverty that the family is living in. Toto enters the house where the mother is lying helplessly on a wooden bed covered by carton boxes. The house is occupied by a few plastic utensils, a wooden chair and a stool. The floor is muddy and dust. This scene with the embellishing props is a clear manifestation of a family struggling to make ends meet. The introductory scenes in this film reinforce the message of a family living in poverty. Therefore, the scenes and objects placed on them are planned to fit the conditions of the narrative but the establishment shots conflicted the message of the props in the house which deprives the film of its fidelity.

Another scene where village women are at the market center selling their products, affirms the narrative. Through the market set up and the farm products they are selling with the background of an abandoned market center. Their character is revealed in their conversation and status exposed through their engagement on the market as social low class people.

The city scene where Toto alights, relates well with the physical details of the city. The sky scrapers, land mark structures in the city, tarmac roads, many vehicle and human commotion on the street which confirms to the viewer that Toto has arrived in Nairobi. With well-established city structures brought out the film truthfulness of the film being

shot in Nairobi. The scene of pastor's house portrays him as an affluent person, due to the kind of the house he is living in and the objects placed on in terms of the couches and television set. Same applies to the managers of the mamba bottlers. By virtue of their jobs, the scenes ably promoted the narrative. However, there are lapses in the aspect of believability whereby the office only seems to have two employees, the manager and receptionist. It would have been better if other staff were in the office doing their jobs and witnessing the occasion to create realism in the film.

2.2.2.1 Conclusion

The three films of this study, *Dangerous Affair*, *Project Daddy* and *Toto Millionaire* used already established components of scenes to invoke realism into the films well. The film captured well physical details of different scenes with particular acts which gave the viewer a better understanding of the story. The viewer was able to recognize changes in plot as well as understand the circumstances in which the events take place, hence impacts on the film communication quality. This gave the films the touch of the film realism.

However, other than *Project Daddy*, the other two *Dangerous Affair* and *Toto Millionaire* lacked proper exterior establishment shots. For instance, in *Dangerous Affair*, Muraguri's house and Koi's family house and clubs and hotels where they went visiting were not well established. The facilities are only established from inside, which does not give a clear picture of the venue and standard of the facilities of meeting. Similarly, in *Toto Millionaire*, the film lacked proper establishment shots in several occasions. For example, its establishment shots, does not clearly capture Mama Toto's house, The Mamba facility and even its offices are limited in their establishment.

This became a manifestation of films deprived of finances, where few shots are used to save on cost or due to technical inability.

2.2.2 Props, Costume and Makeup

Abrahams et al. (2001) define props as the inanimate objects placed within a scene. These are part of the aesthetic elements of film that are captured within the scene. The scene attains its power of communication with reference to these elements. Costume simply refers to the clothes and the accessories that a character in the film wears. Costume in narrative cinema is used to signify character, or advertise particular fashions, or to make clear distinctions between characters. A film's costume speaks about the characters; costumes can be iconographic. Sometimes costumes become the identity of certain characters and symbolize their power. Costumes also reflect the lifestyle and attitude of the society. Costume too may work as a prop in a film. Film genres make extensive use of costume props. The gangster's automatic pistol, guns, cowboy hats are some examples of costumes that work as props.

The actor's make-up is a closely related area of mise-en-scene and all the points discussed with respect to costume apply to make-up as well. Make-up mostly aims at realism; but it is possible to use it in nonrealistic ways as in horror, fantasy and science fiction films. Therefore, when assembling a scene, the director must be aware that what constitutes a shot on screen becomes part of the language of the entire film.

Bandura (2001) states that through symbols, people give meaning, form and continuity to their experience. As a system of signs, scenes and props come together to produce these meanings.

Dangerous Affair use of costumes and props credibly enriched the narrative by giving meaning to scenes, events and characters to fit the condition of the plot. For example, condoms on the floor of Muraguri's house and a woman's panty in his car depicts Muraguri's character. The props in the film enhanced character development of Muraguri and also film fidelity. A rose flower when given to somebody is meant to show love. Therefore, the exchange of rose flowers between Muraguri and Koi during the wedding reinforces the aspect of love on that occasion, especially with the infusion of costumes.

The director's choice of costume, largely blended well with diverse cultures represented in the film. For example, Muraguri and Koi's costumes depict them as economically well-off persons. On the other hand, Rose and Jimmy's costumes signify people who are deprived. The costumes also reveal the kind of occasions taking place in the film. For example, whenever Koi and Muraguri go out for dinner, the costume they put on enhances the occasion. They are dressed differently from the office wear that they are used to. On the wedding day, Koi in her wedding attire and the bridesmaids portray the occasion effectively. During the pre-wedding Koi's dress depicts cultural infusion between Kenya and western culture where she has worked before coming back home. These play out well in capturing her accustomed western culture contrasting the Kenyan culture. Costume and props in these film brought out the film realness, social class and culture differences. Thus, costume is not just a piece of cloth to cover and protect the body; it is a metaphoric symbol that enhances performance and discovery of character (Brockett, 1991).

Costume in *Toto Millionaire* was also used as a form of sign of communication. However, the costume Toto's mother adorns does not support her role. The narrative and the scenes of her house speak the same language of poverty. Her costumes are seemingly above an average person's life as compared to the condition of her living. Toto's costumes are not in tandem with the scene and props. Probably it would have been effective if Toto had torn clothes and bare feet to complement the narrative. However, the set and props were suitable for the conditions of the plot and they made the scene credible for the action taking place. Therefore, because of costumes that don't fit within the portrayed set and props of a family living under abject poverty. The film gave a feeling lack of realness.

In another occurrence, the twilight lady costume plays out well; with her short skirt, short blouse and her painted lips portraying her as real night girl. The city workers' costumes also played out their role well, which portrayed them as being credible.

The pastor on the street of the city is convincingly dressed in a way that portrays him as a clergyman in collar. This is reinforced further by the Bible he is holding. However, he is later betrayed by his thoughts in the soliloquy which probably indicates that he is a wayward pastor. The manager of Mamba Bottlers is officially dressed in a suit to portray the kind of job he holds and his socio-economic status in the society.

The bar scenes with beers and customers drinking married with the narrative. 2.4.2

Project Daddy also used costume to identify characters, their professions, lifestyle and their social and economic status well. For example, in the hospital where Atieno is

taken for delivery, the nurses are dressed in their uniform to depict a hospital environment where the action is taking place. The patients' costumes also reinforce the same message of the action taking place in a hospital. Equally the use of official clothes by Mumbi promotes the notion of her social class and occupation. Fred's costume proves that he belongs to middle social class. At the garage the overall he is putting on defines his profession as a mechanic. The placement of several cars in the garage being worked on also helps in enhancing the narrative. The props in Mumbi's office, for example, files in a shelf, a landline phone, a desktop computer, chairs and table bring out the environment of an office.

Mumbi's photograph that Fred carries with him in his wallet affirms to the viewer how he is committed to this relationship. At the same time, Mumbi's love for Fred manifests everywhere in her office and house through Fred's photograph that hangs there and how she relates to them. The same manifests when Mumbi gets frustrated with Fred's behaviour of hanging out with other ladies and kissing in public. She throws the engagement ring back to Fred but on reaching home she cannot sleep until she holds Fred's portrait and embraces it in her arms. This shows that Mumbi is not ready to let their relationship break that easily. During this period Mumbi wears a stained and creased t-shirt. This portrays her frustration in the relationship. Finally, Mumbi is seen replacing Fred's photographs with a portrait of Jesus Christ probably as a show of having found comfort in Jesus.

On the other hand, the Presentation of a rose flower to a loved one is normally an indication of love. But the actions of Mr. Otieno throwing away a rose flower presented to him by his wife Mrs. Otieno, clearly indicates the heightened tension in their marriage.

2.2.2.1 conclusion

It is important to know where your character comes from, where they live and work for easier relate with the activities unfolding around them. Other than a few lapses on costumes adorned by Toto and the mother in *Toto Millionaire*, costume in all the three films managed to communicate effectively. All the films made clear distinctions between characters, sometimes costumes identified certain characters and also reflect their professional, social and economic status. lifestyle and attitude of the society.

2.2.3 Lighting

Diang'a (2012) argues that a character's action and opinions are easily highlighted by proper use of intentional lighting. Primarily, lighting illuminates the subject in focus. However, different light shades are critical and play a vital role in meaning creation. Specific lighting creates mood, enhances theme, indicates time and evokes emotion. Whether natural or artificial light source is used in a film, the final outcome must always be realistic or expressionist.

The three films mostly employed natural lighting all through the film. These films avoided extensive exploration of expressionist lighting (this is light that is manipulated to create different shade of mood and atmosphere) which would have added value of the intended or deliberate message. Compared to *Project Daddy* and *Toto Millionaire*, *Dangerous Affair* attempted to employ expressionist lighting in its scene. For example, the use of soft filtered lighting in *Dangerous Affair* on a scene where Muraguri is having Dinner with Koi perhaps implies an act of romance. Dark lit scenes are normally associated with sinister motive activities. There is some good use of a dark lit scene in *Dangerous Affairs*. An instance is when Muraguri meets with his former girlfriend

Rose. The use of dark scene during day time implied that the motive was not right. Muraguri is already involved with Koi and Rose is married. Barsam (2007) notes that, “we can generally associate hard, high-contrast lighting featuring deep shadows with serious or tragic stories; and soft even lighting with romantic or comic stories.” The application of light in this film was mostly used to illuminate the subjects and social environment rather than deliberately being applied to create meaning.

In *Project Daddy*, even the application of natural lighting in some occasion kept on confusing to whether it was day or night scene. For example, when the director employed filtered soft lighting, it was not clear for one to tell the different between night and day interior scenes. These easily killed the aspect of time continuity.

In *Toto Millionaire*, the film exhibits basic lighting inadequacy with overexposed scenes that erode the film’s integrity. For example, when Toto leaves the pastor’s house on the stairs, the scene is over exposed. This does not reflect realism where one needs not to imagine that the film lighting was a creation of the crew. The sequence at the start of the film involving a conversation between Toto and the mother, uses natural lighting. Artificial lighting could have been used to accentuate the condition of the dire situation that the mother and son find themselves in. Contrast lighting during this sequence could advance the purpose of this scene by providing the necessary tension. Rather, the director applied full-blown day lighting that lit them well but missed out on the aspect of manipulating the same light to communicate the social condition and mood.

The running away of the city-workers with Toto’s mother’s basket to a street which is well lit just like the other streets eliminated truthfulness of the film. The expectation is normally that the street should be somehow darker as compared to the other streets

since darkness is associated with such activities. Finally, all the three films in some occasions exhibits shadows on the walls especially in interior scenes, which definitely affected film honesty. With all the three film using lighting largely for illumination, exhibited shadows on the walls, overexposed scene among other inadequacies, the film was largely lacked authenticity.

2.2.3.1 Conclusion

In films, much of the impact of an image is due to the manipulation of lighting. The intensity, direction, and quality of lighting have a profound effect on the way an image is perceived. In this section all the films *Dangerous Affair*, *Toto Millionaire* and *Project Daddy* mostly used natural lighting where occasional it became difficult to distinguish day and night scene. All the films exhibited shadows on the walls especially in interior scenes, which definitely affects film authenticity. Generally, the impact of lighting on the three films in discussion would have been better if expressionist lighting was explored. Lighting was majorly used for illumination thus no major contribution to generation of meaning in the films.

2.2.4 Summary

Using the approach of formalist theory, which its primarily concern is aesthetic elements of style like mise-en-scene, light, props, costume and makeup, that gives the film a concept of beauty, taste and pleasure for the viewer and promotes meaning through ideas, emotions, and themes.

This chapter analyzed how aesthetic film styles in the selected Kenyan films collaboratively managed to pass the film meaning, through manipulation of the aesthetic

elements to create desired atmosphere in the film. For instance, how did the directors interact with aesthetic styles to bring out emotions such as happiness, joy, humor, suspense, misery and realness? Bobker (1979) argues that the combination of aesthetic and technical elements makes the overall film pleasant and arousing to audience. The three films used in this study, *Dangerous Affair*, *Project Daddy* and *Toto Millionaire*, had a good selection of already established sceneries that invoked realism into the films. Other than a few lapses in the establishing exterior shots, the films gave a good account of using costume and props in communicating.

However, the films, other than a few occasions in *Dangerous Affair*, lacked in manipulating lighting to create atmosphere and moods that would have impacted on the film communication. The films mostly use natural lighting where day and night in some cases was still difficult to distinguish. The films were not able to create Specific lighting shades to enhances theme, indicates time and evokes emotion in films while creating much of the impact of an image due to the manipulation of lighting. At the same time all the films exhibited shadows on the walls especially in interior scenes, which definitely affects film authenticity. Generally, the impact of lighting on the three films in discussion was not there, majorly the light was used for illumination thus no major contribution to generation of meaning in the films.

CHAPTER THREE

TECHNICAL STYLE IN THE SELECTED KENYAN FILMS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter interrogates the effectiveness of camera dynamics as a stylistic technical element in the making of the selected films, as a means of communication. Bettetini (1973:11) sees mise-en-scene as “a source of stimuli for the hypothetical preceptor”, where mise-en-scene transmits only aesthetic components of film. The camera captures the mise-en-scene, which within it has the mise-en-shot that uses the above techniques to enhance the communication. This element communicates through creating mood, intensifying emotions and highlighting points already made by the mise-en-scene to affirm the intended meaning.

Mise-en-scene captures the image and by extension the narrative, where the story is told through the images. These images are captured by the camera which is one of the elements that a film director uses to manipulate the meaning of a film to what he/she desires to pass across. Robker (1979) observes that technical film elements help in manipulation of aesthetic elements to give the film its originality. Therefore, the film director relies on the technical know-how in manipulating the camera to enhance the meaning.

3.2 Camera Dynamics

This section as positioned in the films under study looks at the camera as a pen with which the film director writes his/her narrative with. It critically looks at how camera dynamics enhance meaning generation.

Dancyger (2007) argues that, at the inception of film, cameras were placed without any movement or manipulation to vary communication, but had to record events in mostly a single shot.

Today, the camera is a key element of communication in the way a film relays its meanings to the audience. The process goes beyond mere recording. It is all about how the recording is done and how the image is constructed through the shots to interpret the world around. Clair (1985) puts emphasis on the impact of a moving camera as immense on meaning generation where the focal plane mobility enhances the viewer's active participation in the process of meaning generation.

3.2.1 Camera Movements

Dancyger (2007), camera movement is one of the most exciting choices available to the director to enhance film meaning. Movement is dynamic and energizing, but the choices the director makes can make the resulting energy more powerful. Camera movement functions in several ways, directs viewer's attention, reveals off screen spaces, provide narrative information and creates expressive effects. The most significant choice the director faces is whether the movement should be stabilized by putting the camera on a tripod or holding it with the hand and making the movement.

Therefore, this section analyzes cinematography in relation to camera movement and angling, as consciously or unconsciously applied in the films under study.

The three films, *Project Daddy*, *Dangerous Affair* and *Toto Millionaire* made use of several camera movements variedly depending on different factors at play. Camera

movements are occasioned by the demand of the character's actions. In some cases, we have delayed tilts and pans that led to the subject being cut out of frame or having impractical walking room, which eliminated the aspect of realism and put the film at a risk of disbelief. For example, when Koi in *Dangerous Affair* stands to confront Rose, Muraguri's girlfriend in a bar the camera delays to tilt up with her. Equally, in *Project Daddy* when Mumbi's father stands to scorn at Fred's proposal to marry her daughter Mumbi, the camera delays to tilt up with him forcing the editor to cut to full established shot where Mumbi's father is standing. With shot that cut out the character in focus the director put the films at a risk of disbelief.

All the films made use of camera zoom, pan, and tilt and in rare occasions dolly and tracking shots were used. *Project Daddy* mostly used stationary camera. Whereas *Dangerous Affairs* also employs the same tactics, it had at least more shots on mobile camera movement. In *Project Daddy*, the characters walked in and out of the frame. This affected the mise-en-scene perspective, where it almost looked like a theatrical performance where action takes place on a static set. For example; Martha walks into a framed shot where Mumbi is seated in the office. After their conversation Martha again walks out of the frame. In the same office, Mumbi's workmate walks in with files, in the framed shot of Mumbi seated. After she is done with her business in the office she again walks out of the frame. This creates uncomfortable distance between the viewer and the action thus promotes theatrics. This repeatedly happens in several scenes that follow. Hence appears to restrict the shots action which deprives the film authenticity.

Though in *Dangerous Affair* there were less of such scenes, the film attempted to employ motivational camera movements, where a combination of several techniques is

used to accommodate the new characters introduced in the scene. For example, when Muraguri leaves Koi and her friend Brenda on their table in a bar drinking to join his boyfriends, the camera tilts up with him as he stands and zooms out to show where his boys were, the camera then pans with him until he gets to the boys. The director intentionally uses the pan to introduce environment of the character to the viewers. The zooms are carefully applied to indicate transition of actions and scenes in the film.

Placement and movement of the camera is motivated by the actions of the subject in focus, which are seamlessly achieved to giving the film a sense of realism it deserves.

Toto Millionaire uses the same technique where pans, tilts and zooms are used to introduce other subjects in the scene. For instance, in the scene where Toto alights in the city, the pan introduces the views to the environment of Toto who has arrived in the city. The buildings, roads and people in the city are only revealed through the pan. Motivated by his movement which offered proper walking room to indicate where he is heading to.

The use of slow zooms in the film, for example the zoom away from the two city workers playing draughts into the details of the 3,000,000/= competition poster on the wall. Provides a transition in revealing the radio, which the city workers are listening to as their facial expression keeps changing due to the message from the radio. The use of these techniques in *Toto Millionaire* are quite convincing in a way that the aspect of realism is achieved through for example, motivational pan that gave proper walking room on Toto as he alighted from the vehicle in the city. Proper walking room indicated the direction where Toto was going. The interchange of reaction close-up of the two city

workers, and the slow zoom that reveals the radio which their facial expression is attached to complements their facial action and the talk from the radio.

In *Project Daddy* the application of these techniques give a different orientation in most cases. For example, when Mumbi's father stands to reproof Fred's proposal to marry his daughter Mumbi, the tilt delayed in tilting up with him as he wakes up. In another scenario when Mumbi and Atieno are seated in Atieno's house perusing through the photo album, the camera fails in moving with Atieno as she goes to keep the album, hence cuts from the moving Atieno to a shot where she places the album. The film attempts to conceal this inadequacy by cutting delayed movement into still shots that reveal the subject in question. The trend continues in successive scenes, which at the end creates a disturbing effect on the viewers. However, the same film use of zooms is carefully done. Though not as much used as the other movements, the zooms seem to build the narrative through its transitions. For example, the zoom at the start of the film where the camera zooms from a wide shot to a specific building, then cuts to an office creates an effect of establishment of the locale then advances to specifics.

The zoom into Mumbi's face when in tears as she looks at the obituary of her late friend is well applied and generates meaning of grief. The camera zooms into her face to reveal her emotions then tilts down to reveal the cause of her sobbing, which is the friend's obituary that she is looking at. Generally, the application of the camera zoom as a camera technique is well applied in the entire film for it connects well with other film aspects in enhancing the meaning within specific scenes.

Camera movement must be motivated by the movement of the subject in focus. The movements must at the same time be smoothly done to a level that convinces the audience, that the action being watched is real, taking place in real time and space.

Project Daddy and *Dangerous Affair* invested mostly in the use of eye level angle. The films did not invest in creative angles as expected, apart from few occasions where the films attempt to vary the angling. Nevertheless, the message given by the fewer creative angles, mostly conflicts the narrative. For instance, as evidenced in *Project Daddy*, when Mumbi receives voice mail texts on her phone from Fred, her face implies that she is confused as to whether to go meet him or not. She is shot on a low angle. A low angle is a camera angle that looks up at the character and makes the character look more powerful. This does not match her facial expression in enhancing communication.

This inflicts doubts in the meaning generated, considering narrative development since the two have to work hand in to generate the intended meaning. The popular use of the eye level angle became a setback in the development of the intended meaning. This made the narrative less authentic as the point of viewing remained almost the same throughout the entire film. There were occasions that call for use of low angle to compliment the narrative but the film did not exploit them well. For example, in *Project Daddy* when Fred visits Mumbi's family to propose his marriage to her, he is seen as an important person at the point going for a life turning event. He is shot on an eye level angle that does not amplify his feeling as a very important person visiting parents' in-laws to be. At the same time when he left dejected, by how Mumbi's family had treated him because of his tribe, he is still captured on the same angle, where thing have changed for him. He is humiliated by Mumbi's father, therefore a high angle which

suggests demeaning of subjects probably would degrade his feelings contrary to what he expected.

These angles were not factored rather the eye level angle was preferred hence less impact was created in enhancing the intended meaning. The application of the eye level angle in the two occasion meant, the situation remained the same.

The scene where Fred is waiting for his turn to get into the clinic to test for HIV, as per the presented events, high angle would bring about his uncertainty. Immediately he was given his results which are negative, a low angle shot would have captured his excitement as he ran around the premise until he left. Same angle would apply on Mumbi when she leaves the church majestically and walks on the street feeling relieved after prayers.

Mumbi dancing in the house while drunk, a Dutch angle and hand held camera would have intensified the magnitude of drunkenness. This angle suggests imbalance, transition and instability rather than the preferred eye level angle that implies thing in the normal state. When Mumbi's effort of talking to the guy in the library bears fruit, and walks out of the library in jubilation, she is captured on an eye level angle where she has made an achievement that need to be magnified. In *Dangerous Affair* almost the same thing happened, where at least a few creative angles are used. The use of a low angle on Kio's father, as Koi boards the car for the wedding is well applied. This implicates feeling of a father on her daughter's wedding day. On the other hand, as Muraguri and the friends approached the wedding venue, they are established on an aerial shot. The number of peoples attending the event can only be expressed in such

aerial long shot showing events in the foreground, mid-ground and background in a frame. Though the shot makes less emotional impact, it highly highlighted the numbers and communal excitement.

In *Toto Millionaire*, the director creatively strives to employ different angling to generate different meanings. Nevertheless, to some extent the creative angle applied gave conflicting implication as per the narrative, which it is supposed to match the narrative action. The use of a low angle on Toto running across the village to their house does not imply a boy living under abject poverty. The low angle rather gives an implication of magnification. This is contrary to the narrative, whereas their living conditions are terrible. The announcing of Toto as the winner of Three Million Shillings (3,000,000) jack pot winner implied that he was no longer an ordinary person. Therefore, his shot walking to the city with the money in the sack should have been amplified on a low angle and not on the eye level angle as it is presented. The use of the low angle was to imply the power that came with money he had won.

However, the film made good use of the handheld camera shot on the walking shots in the film that gave that feel of people walking on the streets. There was also good low angle application on Toto in some cases after winning the money. The low angle shot on the pastor in the house soliloquizing came out well. Finally, the use of handheld Dutch angle would have done well on the two city workers when they walk on the street drunk to amplify their instability.

3.2.1.1 Conclusion

In this section, there is a good attempt of using motivational camera movements in introducing character's environment and accommodating characters in a frame which gave the film authenticity. At the same time, other than *Toto Millionaire*, the other films have inadequacy in tilt and pans which result in shots that have impractical headroom and walking room. *Project Daddy* over relies on still shots which restricted character action and finally, all films use of eye angle shot all through the film deprived the films truthfulness.

3.2.2 Shot Composition/Framing

Shot composition comprises several aspects: shot framing, shot size, point of view, movement, pace, duration and finally the object in relation with all these aspects within a given frame (Allan 2001). Framing is the way in which an image is composed with regard to what has been chosen to be shown. The appropriate use of shot framing is what creates shot and narrative continuity. Ablan (2002) observes that right camera placement and shot flow are the most crucial elements in a shot as they aid acquaint the viewer with what is happening in a frame. Therefore, proper flow of shots gives the film the needed sense and maintains audience interest. Thus, the technical knowledge of camera placement results into proper variation of shots and framing for semantic and aesthetic purposes.

Looking at *Project Daddy*, one realizes that several shots have been variedly used to make meaning out of the film but the challenge is how and where they are applied. Though there are shots that are well placed in the film that essentially enhanced the meaning, such shots are very few. Most of the shots used are for recording the film and

varying for a change and not for creation of meaning. The application of various camera movements results in different types of shots. Though, the film favours use of medium shots over the others. The concept of using certain shots depends on various factors at play, for example, finances and training. This forces the director to manipulate the available tools at hand to come up with a film that can pass the message across. This may lead to a film that utilizes fewer shots and techniques that may not communicate effectively hence affect the film.

Instead of using variety of shots which would delve into the emotions of the subject, the film uses medium or long shots in some occasion to cover for the close up shots. This enables the director to avail his intentional message through revealing reasonable details of the subject in question.

However, the long shots that are used establish the locale of events well. For example, the establishment shot of Mumbi's parents' interior house was well done and gave the fill of where the action was taking place and the family's economic and social status. Another well done establishment shot is in a hotel where Mumbi's parents are waiting for her, for the introduction to the man of their choice. However, there is lack of exhaustive shot exploration like close up's which can aid the impact of generated meaning.

The scenes do not generate expected emotional impact other than stating the obvious. For example, the intensity of emotion from the exchange between Fred and Mumbi's father over the tribal insult, would have been felt more on close-ups and extreme close ups to express their anger.

However, the film resolved to use medium shots that had less impact on revealing the emotions of the two. Mostly reaction shots were made on long shots which did not give out the emotional punch of the characters in the scene. The emphases of these shots seemed to be highlighting the social status of Mumbi's family.

The film also repeatedly uses a two shot of Fred and Mumbi in this scene probably to imply sense of intimacy between the two despite their tribal differences. On the other hand, some scenes in the film are established on a medium shot which does not reveal enough details for one to tell where certain event are taking place. For example, when Fred and Mumbi visit their friend admitted in the hospital, the shot does not reveal the environment around him to tell where this patient is, one would think he was on his bed at home.

In addition, most of the hotel and club shots are established on medium shots probably to cover for long shots and close up shot, hence spend less time on location as a result of financial constraints.

Equally, *Dangerous Affair* uses long shots that enable one to understand the environment where action is taking place. The film used a variety of shots that engages one on the activities in the scenes. From long shots the film delves into specifics of the characters through closer shots. Though extreme close up shots are not applied in the film, close up shots, brings out the expected emotions. For instance, Muraguri and Koi's close up shots in the hotel on their night out date. The shots pass out the emotions through facial expression captured on close up shots. Simultaneously, during their wedding day, Muraguri's thoughts on Rose were well capture on close-up shots.

Variation between him and Rose's (the other girl friend in picture) as the wedding proceeded.

The repeatedly use of still shots to allow more characters being introduced into a scene in *Project Daddy* constantly disrupts the viewer's attention. For instance, when Martha enters Mumbi's office, the camera does not accommodate Martha who walks in while Mumbi is seated. At the same time when she leaves the scene, she stands up and moves out of the frame. She obstructs Mumbi who is still in the shot, and walks out on a shot that has no headroom. *Dangerous Affair* does not rely on the same technique but rather uses pans, zooms and tilts to aid in the introduction of new characters in the scenes. This worked well for the film.

Toto Millionaire on the other hand, used well framed shots where by the head room, walking room and facing room are balanced in its shots. For instance, Toto's mother's facial expression was well framed and captured to show her pain on bed. Shots of the market women as they gossip are well framed and keep changing from one woman shot to the other according to the conversation that provided reaction shots.

Pastor's shots in the house are well framed and vary, retaining good continuity. The use of the over shoulder shot in pastor's house focuses the attention on Toto's response to the pastor's conversation with him. The film generally took good care of moving characters and thus enabled them to attain well-orchestrated looking room, head room, walking room, pans and tilts to achieve their purpose. For example, the camera movements as Toto moves on the street of Nairobi initiates pans and tilts that maintains his balance of composition. Similarly, the reframing of the pastor when he sat and stood

up in his house, by tilting down and up kept him within appropriate head room in the frame. These aspects helped fix attention on the most important figures within the frame.

However, all the three films frequently used shots that crossed the line of action. Crossing the line of action refers to an imaginary line which cuts through the middle of the scene, from side to side with respect to the camera placement. Crossing the line changes, the viewer's perspective in such a way that it causes disorientation and confusion, hence affects shot continuity. These types of shots affect film realism and make it look like a fictional piece. For instance, in *Dangerous Affair*, when the parents from two families meet to discuss their children's marriage, it looks like one man is talking to the other but facing the same direction. Another scenario plays out when Koi walks with her daddy in the field during the pre-wedding to introduce Muraguri to her daddy. Their shot on a long shot is reverse but when shot on a close-up the perspective changes.

3.2.2.1 Conclusion

This section looked at how the shot construction aided the film in generating its meaning. The films made a good attempt in balancing shots, but there was lack of exhaustive shot exploration, which as noted above may be subject to different conditions at hand. This leaves the director with no option but to manipulate what he/she has at hand to relay the message. There was use of more still shots in Project Daddy that obstructed viewer's continuity. Lastly all the three films used shots that crossed line of action. These elements did not help in generation of meaning in the film but depressed them of truthfulness.

3.3 Sound

Warren (2008) argues that the role of sound in film is closely pegged on the source of that sound. Sound can originate from the film world or from outside the film world. Sound source therefore becomes the main parameter in categorizing sound in film. The categories are diegetic and non-diegetic sound. Diegetic sound is sound emanating from the event taking place in the story world, for example, spoken words by the characters, sound made by objects in the story and music coming from instruments in the story space. The alternative is non-diegetic sound which is sound which emanates from a source outside the story world.

Sound in film equally plays a major role just like the visuals. It complements and enhances creation of meaning. Whether noticed or not, it is a powerful film element that cannot be ignored. Bordwell (2008) observes that since its inception and introduction to silent film in 1926, sound has significantly engaged the aural senses which give a synchrony of both aural and visual senses of a film.

Aumont et al. (2004) have postulated that synchronized sound is one of the most natural-appearing characteristics of the film. Therefore, sound actively shapes how we perceive and interpret the image. At the same time, it directs the audience attention quite specifically within the image. When a film maker synchronizes sound and visuals, it complements the theme, scenery, emotion, and mood of a particular sequence. These give a film a semblance of realism.

This study concurs with Bordwell's (2008) assertion that the creation of sound track resembles the editing of the image track. He argues that just like a filmmaker may pick

the best image from several shots, he/she chooses what sound best serves specific purposes. This is done through keen consideration and manipulation of sound to suit a specific need in matching the visual.

Chion (2000:112) argues that the mutual relationship between sound and image is of added value on how they depend on each other to complete the meaning:

The expressive and informative value, with which sound enriches a given image so as to create a definite impression in the immediate expression naturally, comes from what is seen and is already contained in the image itself.

This section analyzes how sound as a film element is connected in relation to sound fidelity, rhythm, space, perspective, simultaneity, effects and motives among other aspects.

Project Daddy makes use of both diegetic and non-diegetic sound. There is application of instrumental music to connect two different events that relate to one another in different contexts. This helps in building and enhancing the plot hence generating meaning. For example, in watching Mumbi cry over their late friend as she looks at his obituary, Fred at the same time is drinking foolishly to forget about the late friend. The sad tunes connect the two occasions taking place in different locations but suffering over the same issue in different styles, with the emotions captured on the close ups. Sound is used to enhance the meaning in the visual elements.

This film uses dialogue well enough by not allowing one person to speak a lot as the others watch in the entire film. This is more evident in the film when, Fred speaks less

but expresses much through facial expressions and body movements - a technique that invites the viewer more into the film by concentrating and trying to relate with specific characters in the film because of their acts. For instance, Fred does this when talking to Mumbi about how children kids are boring in a relationship. He uses the same body language and facial expressions and fewer words to pass his message to Mumbi when they convene together in a hotel before the outcome of the HIV test he has taken.

He does not welcome the idea of talking about it and he does it through body language and facial expressions. There is also use of relevant and connected music which enhances the plot in the case where Mumbi replaces Fred's picture in his house with the portrait of Jesus. The same music is used to link to the next scene where Mumbi buys a curving of Jesus on the street, which she then hangs in the office. The use of music in a scene where Fred is meditating and reading a bible after his marriage proposal has been turned down on tribal grounds is well applied and compliments the visual action. Mumbi puts on music that celebrates the triumph of love over tribal affiliation in marriage which connected well with the situation Fred found himself in.

The film also employed well matched ambient sound for most of the scenes, which complimented the action effectively. The bar and hotel setups came out clearly; as a result of the ambient sound. However, in some occasions non-diegetic sounds does not match the action, the sound either came earlier than the action or later which definitely affects the aspect of realism. The repetition of musical instruments in most of the scenes that applied music was almost predictable. The music was used in situations that sometime would call for a more enhanced beat that would match the situation. The confrontation between Mumbi and Fred in the bar when Fred was found kissing another

lady called for audio effect that would have heightened the conflict. The use of heightened effect would have amplified the tension between the two parties hence enhance the understanding of the message.

Dangerous Affair, use of voice over in some situations was inadequate. The voice over preceded the action. For instance, in the scene where Koi is waiting for Muraguri at the hotel, a waiter hands her a note from Muraguri for change of venue. The voice over comes prior to the opening of the letter, yet the voice over and reading of the note needed to take place simultaneous. Another incident occurs where Muraguri is seen in his house with Rose and part of his conversation with Rose is capture in the parallel scene where he is being a waited for his pre-wedding with Koi. These deprived the film of realism for sound and visuals are supposed to work in synchrony.

Several situations in this film called for use of heightened sound effects to enhance the meaning by supporting the action, but the film did not utilize the opportunity. For example, when Koi and her friends were looking for Muraguri in a bar where he was kissing Rose, with a well panned shot that revealed where Muraguri and Rose were, heightened sound effect would have enhanced the anxiety. Moreover, the use of heightened sound effect at Koi's farewell party, where a fight broke between the ladies would have enhanced the tension that engulfed the room immediately before the start of the fight.

Equally, *Toto Millionaire* utilized sound well. The film relies mostly on ambient sound and matched audio beats. For instance, the background beats when Toto and other people were walking on staircase. Though, it would be prudent to have background

Christian music or beats to accompany the preaching of the pastor on the market. Toto's mother cutting Napier grass would sound better with some soul lifting background music to justify her situation.

Apart from unexploited use of sound effects, all the films made good use of sound to enhance the meaning of their films, especially the application of ambient sound and background music. For example, the bar ambient, garage, church and the romantic background music on the wedding day among others were well fitted.

3.3.3 Conclusion

The films made good use of ambience sound in their application, which gave meaning to the locations in the films. Another good use of sound connecting two related events in the films. There also were lapses in how sound was applied like unmatched dialogue with actions, over reliance on specific beats that became monotonous and predictable. The films also lacked in use of sound effects even when the situation called for it.

3.4 Editing

Editing is the process of cutting and joining of one shot to another. The cutting and joining involves selection of the best takes and discarding the undesired to form a well-coordinated coherent sequence that makes sense to the audience. Ideally, editing is aimed at achieving coherent narrative in film. Since its inception in the 1920s, editing is the most widely discussed element of film. This is because of what it can achieve; hence some writers found it the key to good film (Warren 2003:28). Editing aims at giving the story a certain direction, which the director hopes that the audience will follow. Hence,

“gives the director almost complete control over the events and actors, since the scene only stands when the shots are edited together” (Ibid, 2003:19).

In film, editing involves the audience more than the use of long shot- takes which focuses on the actor and action. For Sergei Eisenstein, a formalist film theorist, editing means joining shots together, while montage means the expressive combination of these shots in order to give a symbolic meaning to the filmed events (Ibid, 2003:25). Dancyger (2007) contends that it is during editing that shot lengths are decided, whereby shorter shots tend to hasten the pace of the narrative. A more rapid pace implies tension. A fairly fast pace narrative keeps the viewer interested since the viewer sees development within the plot and in the character. This is the kind of audience that a filmmaker needs for optimal meaning generation.

Therefore, editing compresses time and space of a story and enhances continuity of time, costume, shots and lighting. This may divide a single shot into several other parts within a film to serve aesthetic purposes. This section analyzed how the cutting and joining of shots was done in the selected films, with respect to various aspects of editing that generate meaning.

The three films credibly joined the shots with respect to functions of editing that emphasis meaning. For instance, the editor’s use of the “meanwhile” model of Stam (2000) to employ different related activities taking place concurrently. To establish the time, place and activities taking place was well applied in *Project Daddy*, as Mumbi is a sleep, Fred is in a bar at night kissing another girl. At the same time when Fred mourns

his late friend Ojuang'a by drinking beer in a bar, Mumbi is in the house sobbing over the same friend's obituary.

Likewise, in *Dangerous Affair* this technique is widely used, for instance Koi impatiently waits for Muraguri on their wedding day at the same time Muraguri is in his house in bed with Rose (the other girl friend), Later, when Koi is having a sleepless night, Muraguri is in a bar with Rose drinking. Similarly, in *Toto Millionaire*, the city workers plan to ransack Toto for the winning bottle top then the shot cuts to Toto playing with the bottle tops. On the next shot, the city workers enter the room and ransack him. The editor's use of several related events taking place concurrently, reflecting on the same issue, removed the aspect of monotony and aided in the developing of the narratives.

All the three films skillfully apply a two shots technique which implies unification of the cast in action. For example, in *Project Daddy*, the two shot of Fred and Mumbi during Fred's proposal to marry her, indicated the aspect of intimacy despite their tribal differences. In *Dangerous Affair*, a two shot of Koi and her mother as Koi confined in her, her wedding worries. This shot in essence reinforced the support the mother was willing to offer for the success of the wedding.

Fast editing technique in film enhances pace of a film which creates tension. This technique was utilized in *Project Daddy* especially in the scene where Fred was proposing to marry Mumbi. The pace increases when Mumbi's father insulted Fred Over tribal affiliation. The films also engaged in time and space compression for instance in *Dangerous Affair*, when Muraguri meets Koi on the road, the next shot

shows them in a bar. The film avoided all activities that were taking place the entire day until in the evening when they emerged in a bar.

The use of reaction shots in the three films was well applied in authenticating the film events, for example, in *Dangerous Affair*, a bar scene where Koi confronts Muraguri with Rose. The editor varies shot of Koi's lady friends as they react to the confrontation. The film also uses deep focus and out of focus shots to vary attention from one character to the other, for example Koi and the mother in the house as Koi narrate her frustration in her marriage.

However, the three films major undoing in editing is the use of several shots that during shooting the camera crosses the line of action. Line of action refers to an imagery line which cuts through the middle of the scene, from side to side with respect to the camera placement. Therefore, crossing the line of action changes the viewer's perspective in such a way that it causes disorientation and confusion. For example, the scene where Rose stops a vehicle to take her children to school, the camera crosses this line. which results in the first shot where they are running towards the screen but in the next shot they are running away from the screen.

The shots repeatedly affect authenticity of the film. Fred at the hospital reception, on his first shot he faces the left side and on the second shot, he is facing the reverse direction. This defect affects characters talking to one another, where reverse shots are expected but in this scenario characters involved are all facing the same direction as per the shots, which eliminated the aspect of realism.

Likewise, in *Project Daddy*, the editor delayed in synchronizing music to particular action which also affects realism. The other major undoing of the editing in this film is the use of still shots and letting other characters that were not in the original shot come in and out without camera movements. When a subject move out of a particular shot it is an opportunity for the camera to move with the subject, then cut to the previous subject on a different shot for continuity.

The subject movements should have motivated the camera to move, but in certain occasions it did not. The control of several technical aspects in attaining the best shot was problematic. For example, tilting and zooming out was not well achieved hence leaving the film with shots that had no headroom and lack of stead camera movements especially when tilting. However, the editors may have had no choice in the selection of shots used in conveying the message, in the three films for their choices depends on the available footage. However, in scenarios where the visuals did not match the audio in these films is a failure on the part of the director and the editor to have flawlessly matched the two.

3.4.1 Conclusion

Formalists argue that film has to transform the normal way in which the human eye perceives things through technical styles. Hence, this chapter appraised how film technical styles in their effort to create meaning in the three films. Thus, the chapter discloses the role played by these styles in creation of meaning. Though, the director's technical competence of the styles and other factors at play determined the final outlook. Therefore, looking at the findings above it is clear that formalist argument on

film as an art that uses several elements to create meaning is achieved by the infusion of a range of these styles.

3.5 Summary

Formalists argue that film has to transform the normal way in which the human eye perceives things through technical styles. Hence, this chapter appraised how film technical styles were used in their effort to create meaning in the three films.

The chapter analyzed how technical film styles in the selected Kenyan films managed to pass meaning, through manipulation of; camera dynamics, shot framing, sound and editing in their effort to create environment that could accentuate the film. For example, how did the camera angles bring out the aspect of power and vulnerability in the films to achieve film truthfulness. Bobker (1979) argues that the combination of aesthetic and technical elements makes the overall film pleasant and arousing to audience. All the films of this study, *Dangerous Affair*, *project Daddy* and *Toto Millionaire* attempted to balance the above styles, through engaging motivational camera movements that introduced characters' environment and gave screen direction which evidently achieved film fidelity. At the same time had shots that cut characters out of frame and allowed impractical walking room that deprived the films of authenticity. *Project Daddy* had many still shots that almost turned the film into a theatrical performance, hence removed the film honest.

The films also in most cases had good interior establishment shots that manage to give characters social and economic status. Similarly, the films deposited good use of sound that connection two related events taking place in different context and application of

ambience sound too. Nevertheless, the films also had inadequacy in synchronizing voice overs, non-diegetic sound and action.

Finally, the film made good use of editing where the editor's use of the "meanwhile" model of Stam (2000) to employ different related activities taking place concurrently, to establish the time, place and activities taking place was well applied. In the same way, skillfully presentation of two shots technique which implies unification of the cast in action and the use of fast editing technique to enhances pace and creates tension in the required scenes.

However, the major undoing in editing of the three films was, use of several shots that crossed the line of action. Though, the editors may have had no choice in the selection of shots that crossed the line of action, since their choices depends on the availability of film footage. From the above analysis one can see the deliberate effort by the films in balancing the styles but because of some other unseen factors at play the films are hampered in presenting the style effectively.

CHAPTER FOUR

FACTORS AFFECTING CHOICE OF FILM STYLE

4.1 Introduction

According to Kihang'ah (2008), Kenya has played home to documentaries and short films rather than feature films. The film industry is still finding its way. Ojiambo (2007) notes that, "the industry is not rising as fast as we hoped it would. For a long time, it was just about how fast one would make money. However, people are starting to realize it is not just about money but quality too" (*The Daily Nation*, June 24, 2014). p. 24

Edwards report (2008) points out that in order for the indigenous film industry in Kenya to produce quality films worthy of a global audience, education, technological and commercial concerns need to be addressed. Therefore, this chapter investigates other factors that affect quality in the selected films.

4.2 Training, Mentorship and Experience

Film communicates through codes and conventions of behavior, language, dress, camera shots, lighting and sound. Bignell (1997) contends that film is considered to have its own language. The stylistic elements are applied in film because they already have meaning associated with them. There are codes specific to film, codes of camera, sound, light and editing. These codes have defined themselves through their successful use in their respective areas. For example, if a film is shot with eerie extra-diegetic music, and with low light and it is successful then it is understood to be horror film. When the next film attempts to find a horror niche, the audience will use the same conventions in order to understand and interpret the film. The filmmaker needs to

understand the conventions of each film genre and the culturally determined structures and concepts applied to a specific people that the film is intended for.

Sitati (2008) observes that in Kenya there are no film schools to offer rigorous training in film production. She argues that there are universities currently offering film courses like Daystar and the University of Nairobi but they teach more of communication than film courses. They teach media, but concentrate heavily on journalism, for they don't have facilities and lecturers to teach film courses.

Nathan Asiago (2008) observes that the introduction of film courses at the university would see the students trained in production, directing and other business aspects. He further argues that this comes at a time when the Kenya film sector is in need of skills in all areas of film production. Dancyger (2007) notes that a director should be technically, intellectually, and creatively endowed to produce a sound film. The more layers operating for a director the more likely the film will be lively and engaging.

However, with introduction of film programs in more institutions of higher learning like Moi University and Kenyatta University, the number of trained filmmakers in the country has increased. In addition, the introduction of film in the Kenya National Drama and Film Festival is another route aimed at improving and increasing films produced in the country.

Simiyu Barasa argues that film training institutions in the country have incredibly increased but the filmmakers are not increasing. He observes that:

There is lack of hands-on training in film courses within the learning institution. The students are well trained theoretically but cannot execute this in practical. Hence, there is need for well-grounded film practical studies in the film training institutions. (2014, June 16, Personal interview)

These sentiments are shared by Edwards (2008) who states that in order for the Kenyan film industry to grow each aspect of the industry needs to be looked at.

Simiyu deems training in film making as a very important aspect. One has to learn and understand how film aesthetic and technical styles becomes a language that encodes messages through codes that are to be decoded by the audience. Fiske and Hartly (1978) agree that the understanding of the way in which sign systems operate is fundamental for the interpretation of film.

In section two of the same interview Simiyu admits that for a film director:

It is important for one to have vast knowledge in the entire process of filmmaking. However, this does not necessarily mean that he/she has to multitask. The director should let the other crew members to do their work with his/her supervision. Though a filmmaker who can multitask not because of financial constrain has an advantage for his/her vision, for the film becomes clearer. (2014, June 16, Personal interview)

Apart from the training, Simiyu relied on experience accrued from different productions he had been part of in making *Toto Millionaire*. Working from one production to another, one is bound to make mistakes that can be avoided in successive productions. Edwards (2008) argues that Kenya can only overcome mistakes by having willing and able film educators sharing their film education with Kenyans. These Kenyans can later share their experience and achievements with other Kenyans, which will over time, build up the first generation of schooled filmmakers. It is clear then, that the film director only applies aesthetic and technical styles that they are familiar with and when they are supported by financial muscle for a good production. Simiyu further explains the importance of training:

I studied literature at Egerton University for my first degree and started my career on stage as a script writer before I transformed to film and television. I worked as a script writer for the stage, for some time, and then developed interest for the screen. I had to enroll for a short course at Media Development for Education in Africa (MEDEVA). Here, I was trained on the aesthetic and technical style

aspects of filmmaking and also attended workshops that grounded me on filmmaking within and without the country. (2014, June 16, Personal interview)

On completion of the course, Simiyu went ahead for on-job training with Makutano Junction, a television program where he launched his career as a film/television editor. After which he worked in various capacities of film production until when he transformed to script writing, directing and editing. Simiyu notes that transformation of other professionals to film without proper training is a major undoing on the quality of film produced.

He cites the influx of players from theatre, music, comedy and even business men/women who come to the industry with the objective of making money. He further cites River Road productions which thrive on thematic aspects and sales their products to a specific clientele. Their work lacks in film technical and aesthetics styles and good acting. These elements he says, work hand in hand to compliment the theme for a film to compete favorably in the market. Failure to achieve the above elements lead to films that over rely on content, hence, fail to communicate film messages like mood, beauty and atmosphere to the audience.

Judy Kibinge concurs with Simiyu that education is a factor that affects film quality among many other factors like mentorship and finances. However, Kibinge adds that:

Film training in Kenya is not the kind of training expected for one to become an accomplished filmmaker. The training should be technically practical oriented; to give the trainees an opportunity to put what they learn in class into practice. My professional training had an impact on the productions, but of importance is experience and mentorship from other film gurus. For instance, *Dangerous Affair* is one of the productions that was very successful as a result of working with Njeri Karagu, a producer who had experience working with various Hollywood filmmakers. The experience she brought in helped in mentoring the entire film production. (2014, June 16, Personal interview)

Kibinge further cites film directors from River Road who have no relevant training in film but produce good films as a result of mentorship from their seniors in the film industry. Kibinge agrees with Dancyger (2007) that, “the world of advertising, acting and theatre has launched the career of many filmmakers, for example, Ton Scott *Man of Fire*, Michael Bay *Bad Boys*, Robert Redford *Ordinary People*”, who are successful filmmakers today.

Kibinge was trained as an advertiser and it is from this background that she transformed herself into film making. This was after making several major audio-visual adverts in the country. Other than her training in advertising which ushered her to filmmaking, the rest has been on-job training, on-line and through workshops. She adds:

Sometimes I even don't bother about the aesthetic and technical styles because I don't understand them well, but my director of photography always takes care of them. My responsibility is to explain and describe to him/her what I want. Then he/she has to implement it in practice (2014, June 16, Personal interview)

On a close analysis of her films, the impact of training is seen in the two films. The application of filmic techniques in *Dangerous Affair* is better compared to *Project Daddy*. Though *Dangerous Affair* was produced two years earlier than *Project Daddy*, its quality in terms of application of film techniques is superior. This may be attributed to film aesthetic and technical style know-how of the director of photography and other factors at play. Her knowledge in aesthetic and technical film style, as she confesses, may have also played out hence she relied on the director of photography fully for the application of relevant aesthetic and technical style in the films. Some of the obvious manifestation of technical lapse in the films could have been avoided if she had the

technical knowhow of film. Kibinge agrees with Simiyu on the aspects of job training, mentorship, exposure and finances as major players that enhance film quality.

In an interview with African World Press in the year 2000, Wanjiku Kinyanjui points out that:

The film school was definitely a great opportunity for me because we had no theoretical exams. Our papers were actual films and we could, therefore, experiment on each film we made after every seminar or workshop. Some cinemas in Berlin provided us with free tickets to watch films in cinemas. This made it possible for us to watch as many different films as we wanted.

Here I choose my own subjects, my own film format and people I would work with on my productions. In a way it was a freeing experience. In Germany, there are enough professionals to choose from if you are producing a film. Things are sometimes more organized (depending on funding and the production conditions etc.)

In Kenya, one has to depend on a small group of people, most of whom have no professional training or exposure. This is one of the areas people need further training so that when a film project comes up, you are confident with the crew and you don't end up worrying about aesthetic and technical details in every department. It's possible to attain a well-crafted film by a professional crew that understands their work without worrying of their ability to achieve what the director envisions. (2014, June 16, Personal interview)

4.3 Finances and Film Quality

Film production is a costly affair. Sitati (2008) explains that filmmakers around the world incur a lot of costs. Kenya's film industry is not different. Filmmakers in Kenya have to find their own funding through any means necessary (Edwards, 2008). Good professional equipments are expensive for Kenyan independent filmmakers. The Kenya Film Commission has recommended to filmmakers to partner with corporate firms like

Safaricom and Coca-Cola in financing their productions. However, the corporate firms seem to shun away from filmmaking for it not a worth the risk.

Both Simiyu and Kibinge agree that one can have a brilliant script, but without finances the film quality cannot be attained. They both agree that from pre-production to post production, film making needs money. The hiring of quality crew, equipment, cast and scenery, all call for finances.

In the production of *Toto Millionaire*, Simiyu argues that lack of finances is the key factor that limited his exploitation of aesthetic and technical film styles that would have added value to the final product. He cites aspects like hiring of quality equipment and experienced crew as one of the major challenges. He argues that if one does not get quality equipment, then definitely the expected quality may not be realized. When the correct lights are not provided, cranes and professional tripods, one cannot achieve the intended picture quality. The director is forced to work with improvisation which leads to situations where some scenes are avoided and overreliance on particular shots to save on time spent on location. With this assertion in mind one can understand why Kenyan films face technical lapses.

Toto Millionaire in some occasions used long takes and less creative lighting which can be justified by the above argument.

Kibinge equally shares the same sentiments with Simiyu. However, comparing the two films, *Dangerous Affair* managed to use a few relevant aesthetic and technical film style in a better way than *Project Daddy*. Though finances may have played a role, some

common mistakes like jerky, shaky camera movements could have been avoided by insisting on carefully handling of esthetic technical operators. Wanjiku (1999) agrees that funding deficiency greatly affects the quality of films produced in Kenya. These sentiments are shared by Betty Kathungu who states that lack of financial support from the government is a challenge and affects the quality of production.

“In this film industry, financing is a major problem. Filmmakers struggle since there are no regulations in the industry that can help them receive funding through government or financial institutions,”. Retrieved April 18th, 2016 from muendo@standardmedia.co.ke.

Grace Kahaki the co-producer of *Single Kiasi*, the renowned original Showmax 13- part drama series argues that, a good film requires a big budget to give room for creativity during pre and post production. “A good film production for instance, in Kenya costs between Ksh 4 million and Ksh 6 million,”. (Moolah Team April 14, 2022). This can be compared to the case of *Nairobi Half Life* which was part of a training workshop run by Germany-based One Fine Day Films, which spent roughly Ksh 50 million for the project in which actors were paid Ksh 1,666 per shoot day lasting four weeks. (*Daily Nation*, November 16, 2007)

Comparing the above sentiments and figures from other regions of the world it is evident that Kenyan film production is underfunded. For instance in Nigeria, *Half of a yellow Sun* (2013) film budget cost was 1.4 billion, *76 Military coup* (2016) costed N.600 Million. *District 9, a south Africa* (2009) film was produced at a cost of 30 Million USD, *Khumba another south African* (2013) film too, was produced at a cost of 20 Million USD and *Tsotsi* (2005) at 3 Million USD. In Hollywood the average amount of making a film is between \$50 and \$100 USD. <https://filmlifestyle.com> ›

Filmmaking

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study concludes that financial constraints contribute a lot on the styles adopted by the directors, thereby affecting the quality of the resulting product. This study adds that technical training plays a key role in the decisions made on the adopted of aesthetic and technical style in film-making.

Summary

It is clear that the film-makers of the selected films used various aesthetic and technical film-making styles in order to convey specific messages to the audience. The filmmakers in their choice of style were influenced by three major factors; finances, training and mentorship. This is revealed during the interview, and explains why some shots were used regularly over others and also the films being not able to attain specific effects due to the constraints.

The manner in which the two are balanced varies from film to film; depending on the director's choice of technique influenced by his/her technical knowhow, the budget available and the film genre.

In so doing the outcome hampered the production quality of the three selected films under study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study summarizes that a good film should be inventive, adhering to technical aspects and aesthetically appealing. The style employed in a film helps in enhancing the audience's understanding of film content. The three films, *Dangerous Affair*, *Project Daddy* and *Toto Millionaire*, under study made good attempt in passing across intended messages via aesthetic and technical styles, but failed in some instances in the application of these varied styles due to perhaps lack of proper technical knowledge from the technical crew that would have impacted on the quality and improved the output to communicate effectively. This study states that good quality in film production can only be attained through proper application of aesthetic and technical style to effectively accentuate film communication quality.

This study established that style in film making is a central part of the whole production process and therefore, film production requires adequate funding to achieve this. The analysis of mise-en-scene focused on the use of aesthetic elements in enhancing meaning and improving the films' quality. Mise-en-scene to some level conveyed some meaning but, occasionally, failed to express it successfully. For instance, the setting established the subjects' environment but, did not capture the socio-economic status of the subjects correctly due to minimal use of establishing shots which would have communicated clearly. Hence, the scenery in some cases failed to establish the relationship between the subject and the environment clearly.

Scenery as a form of style. As stipulated by Bordwell and Thompson (2001), a scene is judged by its level of believability. For Kenyan film makers to attain film credibility, there's need to appreciate the significance of mise-en-scene in giving meaning to the subject and producing meaning to the audience accurately.

All the studied films made use of simple costumes that managed to convey meaning along cultural, social and professional lines but, did not clearly define economic status. Props played out well in the studied films, they defined and developed the subjects. Proper use of costumes and props as elements of aesthetic style in film production enable the audience to connect with the films by being able to tell the subjects' social class, tastes and economic status. For instance, Muraguri and Koi in *Dangerous Affair* own cars. This defines their economic status. Likewise, the house and props in *Toto Millionaire* depict the social status of Toto's family as living in abject poverty. Equally, in *Project Daddy*, the props used define and boost the social class theme. This study states that props that were placed in the right environment influence the subject's association, speech and general behaviour.

Lighting is another important element in understanding a film. The studied films attempted to employ expressionist lighting, which is light created to portray a certain atmosphere or mood but in most attempts the light gave conflicting messages when read together with the other elements of aesthetic style. Lighting in the three films studied was employed for illumination and not for creation of meaning, hence, missed to dictate the other aspects of lighting in film, but brought out the illumination purpose.

The other element on technical film style is achieved through cinematography. This is creation of perspectives from which the viewer is invited to watch the events in the film. These aspect of style, enables the film director to mitigate meanings in their production. Meaning is a key purpose for which a film is developed. Cinematography plays an important role in improving visual aesthetic appeal and communicaion of a film to the audience. Camera movement, camera angling, camera distance and shot framing, sound and editing constitute cinematography and can be deliberately manipulated to create meaning. In the three films under study, the findings show little attention given to variety and manipulation hence, the elements added little value to the films' communication. The three film mainly applied eye angle camera level in most occasions capturing the subjects in their normalcy. Camera movement in some occasions played out well. *Dangerous Affair and Toto Millionaire* made good use of pans as camera movements were commendable in establishing the subject's environment as well as tilts and zooms in maintaining subjects in given frames. Though Shot framing in all the three films was predictable since certain shots were over-used. Manipulation and addition of variety in shot frames would have enhanced the films' meaning more.

Sound is another significant tool of film style which needs careful and deliberate use. Sound use in film produces an aesthetic experience when it rhymes with the images portrayed on the screen. Film makers use sound to create an illusion of believability to the film world. The three films under study, mostly relied on dialogue to define the subject's relationships in terms of age, authority and intellectual engagement in the story. The films exploited little on application of creative sounds to communicate and create mood. They relied mostly on ambience and background sound, which remarkably dictated the pace of events in the films.

This study, agree that editing contributes to the overall aesthetic quality of a film. It defines the character, develops plot, establishes motifs and parallels, and develops themes and ideas applied in the film. Editing helps in forming contrasts and parallels which enhance meaning. It evokes emotional response when sharply contrasting shots are juxtaposed. Parallel editing determined meaning of shots by their association with the preceding and succeeding shots.

Evaluating the three films, one realizes that thematic issues are given the hefty role of communicating to the audience through dialogue, far more than aesthetic and technical film aspects. Generally, the finding of this study is that, the three films, *Dangerous Affair*, *Project Daddy* and *Toto Millionaire* made a good attempt to apply film style in their effort to communicate. This study argues that, the communication ability of the films styles was not effective.

This study observes that, the technical lapses experienced in the three films disorient the viewers by distorting meaning. These flaws can be attributed to directorial failures in line with other factors in play. The study adds that the director's training on film-making as a whole has an impact in finally relaying meaning to the audience. Each film style has a role to play in complimenting each other. Proper use of aesthetic and technical style leaves the viewers with no doubt of what the intended meaning is. Film production techniques, when appropriately used call for the viewer's attention to various elements of setting such as environment, occasion and status of the character in focus. However, this can only be achieved if the director is aware of the implication of aesthetic and technical style to use.

This study finds that, the three film use of aesthetic and technical style collaboratively, fairly established the overall objective of the films. Style must be applied skillfully to convey effective meaning to the audience. The two aspects largely informed the rather inadequate application of these style; lack of relevant film technical knowhow, and budgetary constraints. There is need to have practical training for film crew to understand differences in film genres and the role played by each technical and aesthetic aspect of film to bring out the intentional meanings. In addition, to achieve the aspect of quality in film production, attention must be placed on how different styles give meanings to scenes and actors hence, effective communication.

5.2 Conclusion

This study was based on Formalist theory by Arnheim Rudolf and Sergei Eisenstein (1964) which advocates that a film has to communicate through manipulation of elements of film aesthetic and technical style. By examining how the choices of aesthetic styles adopted affected the production, the study specifically looked at the choice of mise-en-scene which included set, costume, makeup, props and lighting. This was in order to find out how the application of the styles contributed to the overall realization of the narrative.

The aesthetic styles are supposed to affects the film mood, time of the day and historical set-up of the film via manipulation of lighting. Sound meant to affects the film atmosphere and helps in revealing the film setting and finally, costume and mise-en-scene are intended to revealing the characters social and economic status and their profession which all help in creation of meaning.

Other than a few lapses on costumes adorned by Toto and the mother in *Toto Millionaire*, Costume in all the three films managed to communicate effectively. All the films made clear distinctions between characters, sometimes costumes identified certain characters and also reflect their professional, social and economic status.

On lighting, all the films *Dangerous Affair*, *Toto Millionaire* and *Project Daddy* mostly used natural lighting where occasional it became difficult to distinguish day and night scene. At the same time all the films exhibited shadows on the walls especially in interior scenes, which definitely affects film authenticity. Generally, lighting was majorly used for illumination thus no major contribution to generation of meaning in the films.

This study concludes that application of relevant aesthetic film style is critical in accentuating film meaning and impacting on its overall communication quality.

The three films under study did not attain the required standard due do incompatible application of the aesthetic styles.

The other element on technical film style is achieved through cinematography. This is creation of perspectives from which the viewer is invited to watch the events in the film. These aspect of style, enables the film director to mitigate meanings in their production. Cinematography plays an important role in improving visual aesthetic appeal and communication of a film to the audience. The study looked at, camera movement, camera angling, camera distance and shot framing, sound and editing constitute cinematography and can be deliberately manipulated to create meaning.

In the three films under study, the findings show little attention given to variety and manipulation hence, the elements added little value to the films' communication.

Styles when properly conceived and executed have the ability to appeal and express the core meaning of film to the audience.

Various factors influenced the choices of aesthetic and technical style adopted in the above films. First, the director's technical knowhow of how style communicates, secondly, the technical film crew technical knowhow of how film styles communicates and finally, financial constraint.

The study agrees that, the directors of the three films understudy fairly employed the styles but somehow failed to combine them effectively to achieve an overall aesthetic and communicative quality. The manner in which the two are balanced varies from film to film; depending on the director's choice of style applied.

Therefore, this study concludes that the directors had some difficulties in expressing the overall collaborative meaning of aesthetic and technical styles in the films understudy. This is Possibly this was due to lack of relevant technical skills by the directors and their technical crew of the films and inadequate funding where few shots are used to save on cost.

This study concludes that, proper financing, film technical knowledge and investment in variety of elements and equipment are key pillars in production of films that use both aesthetic and technical style collaboratively to communicate effectively to the audience.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

This study suggests that future research should consider finding out the ability of the audience in reading and understand of both aesthetic and technical styles in a film.

5.3.1 Recommendation to the Government

According to Judy Kibinge and Simiyu Barasa, the directors of the studied film, today in Kenya we have many film institution offering film courses that thrives on theory because most of the lecturer in film are from communication studies. Therefore, film practicals are not considered important.

1. Therefore, Kenyan government should evaluate the human resource capacity of all film training institutions to ensure they meet required standards.
2. The government in collaboration with private sector still need to support the growth of Kenyan film industry financially.

5.3.2 Recommendation to Film Training Institutions

Film training institutions should regularly review their courses and offer relevant curriculum that entails both theory and practice in order to equip aspiring film-makers with necessary skills of telling stories

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE GUIDE FOR FILM DIRECTORS

1. Did you ever attend a film school or undertake any other relevant training? Explain
2. Did you by any chance study script writing for the screen, film style and cinematography? Explain
3. Which elements of film do you exploit as a director to tell your story?
4. Do you ever engage the services of a performance director and/or director of photography or you do direct the actors and technical aspects by yourself?
5. What factors do you think majorly hamper the growth of film in Kenya?
6. What do you think determines the quality of a film?
7. What influences your choice of approach to making a film?
8. Are there other factors that you think influenced the choices of film styles you adopted and how you applied them? Explain
9. During the making of your films would you say that you had enough money to come up with the films you had envisioned to produce?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX II: FILM OBSERVATION GUIDE

1. Which film elements are explored in the film?
2. Are the costumes and make-up and hand props bringing out the characteristics of the actor/actress their mood, theme and socio-economic status in the film?
3. Does the set create meaning within the scene?
4. How many types of lighting are employed in the film?
5. Is the applied light communicating the film theme and mood?
6. What types of sound are used in the film?
7. Do the sounds have any communication value?
8. Averagely how many shots are used in a scene and do they communicate?
9. How are the shots framed? Are they able to communicate?
10. What is the order of shots in the scenes? Does this have any significance in meaning generation?
11. What camera movements are used? Were they necessary and motivated?
12. What camera angles are applied? Did they have any communication value to the film?
13. Did editing create any meaning in the film?
14. Was there any discontinuity in the applied styles?
15. Overall did the employed styles enhance communication value of the film?

APPENDIX III: TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW I

Interviewer: Williat Anyika (WA)

Interviewee: Film director Judy Kibinge (JK)

Date and time: June 16th 2014

Interview Location: Nairobi

WA: Good morning and welcome for this interview.

JK: Your welcome.

WA: I'd like to start by asking. Who is Judy Kibinge? And what is her academic and professional background?

JK: Judy Kibinge is a film maker and an artist. I write and direct both fiction and documentary films.

WA: Did you ever study film in school?

JK : No, I studied design and communication which was basically advertising, but for nine years I was in charge of producing radio and screen commercials. This is how I got to film in 2002 and started to learn a few things that I dint know through online studies, workshops and conferences, for learning is a continuous process.

WA: Did you ever get trained in Script writing for the screen, film style and Cinematography?

JK: No, though I was doing scripting for commercials but they were short and with no, formal training. Film style and cinematography like I said has been through online training and workshops.

WA: What activity of the film do you take charge of?

JK : I do scripting or co-scripting and in my films I am normally the overall director of the film.

WA: Do you ever engage the services of a performance director, director of photography or you do direct the actor and technical aspects by yourself?

JK : As a director I do direct actors in my films because they are the people you work with all through. But for photography I engage services of a well conversant D.O.P who understands the film technicalities. He must understand the lighting, sound and shots, some of the things which I don't understand but I rely on him.

WA: What are the things you think majorly affects the growth of film in Kenya?

JK : They are several; technical training which people think that, film making is just picking a camera and start shooting, it is wrong film making is a craft. A film maker is trained to understand how each element work in complimenting each other to attain a quality film at the end of the production. Mentoring from experienced filmmakers, watching other director's films from the globe, support from broadcasting houses by purchasing the films for show on their stations. Finally, lack of finances to input in the film production, here without money you can't attract professional crew members for the film, you can't hire or buy quality equipment which impacts on the final communication film ability and quality. Film makers even rush to complete the film to avoid more expenses

WA: Among the film element which one would you say is important in a success of a film?

JK : Every aspect of filmmaking is important as the other, for example if you have a good script you need to apply appropriate film style to communicate your idea effectively. The style will help you to realize story elements like Setting, characterization, plot and mood which works jointly to affect the final communicational value.

WA: what do you think determines the quality of a film?

JK : Just like I have said film quality is achieved through three major things;
Finances, equipment and the know-how of film making

WA: Please explain further on what you have mentioned.

JK : I mean in brief everything in film making revolves around the three. Finances will help you procure or hire quality equipment that will enhance the film quality, less money means hiring inferior equipment. Filmmaking knowledge very key for a successful film which equally depends on finances, less money means hiring less experienced and qualified personnel which in turn affects the film quality

WA: How would you tell that a film is of good quality?

JK : One, look at the picture quality, which is affected by equipment used. Two, look at the interconnection between aesthetic and technical style application, are they complimenting each other? Then finally is the dialogue and styles applied in agreement in conveying the filmmakers intended meaning?

WA: What influences your choice of approach to making a film?

JK : Off course money

WA: Explain please

JK : I have explained it for you before. Anyway money means hiring the right equipment, getting services from trained, qualified, experienced crew and finally, money allows one to stay on location as long as it takes to get appropriate shots.

WA: Has your training impacted on your directing practice?

JK : Yes it has a lot. Every training, I have attended has impacted positively on my films. When you understand what it entails to make a film you will be in a better position to know other crew members works and you can tell when all is no well.

WA: Are there other factors that you think influenced the choices of film styles you adopted and how you applied them? Explain

JK : The other factor that influences how we direct is by watching other director's work and mentorships from experienced directors

WA: Is there a single day during making of your films, that you would say, you had enough money to produce a film that you had envisioned?

JK : No, not at all, finance is a major constrain that we go through as film makers we work with the little that we manage to gather. The government is not sponsoring us, private organization are no willing to partner with us, the media house are no willing to purchase our finished film. These makes it hard for a filmmaker to recoup her money from the produced film and embark on the next project.

WA: Finally, what would you say is a quality film according to you?

JK : It is that film that can communicate using both style and content, where by each compliments the other in passing the director's intended meaning.

WA: Thank you very much for your time

JK : Welcome and I wish you well in your research and studies.

APPENDIX IV: TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW II

Interviewer: Williat Anyika (WA)

Interviewee: Film director Simiyu Barasa (SB)

Date and time: June 16th 2014

Interview Location: Nairobi

WA: Good afternoon and welcome for this interview.

SB : Welcome too.

WA: Who Simiyu Barasa? And what is his academic and professional background?

SB : My name is Simiyu Barasa I, am an independent filmmaker and Television director in Kenya. I studied Literature at Egerton University then I got concerned with theatre but later realized that theatre had not developed well that is why I moved to television and had to do my training at MEDIVA where I trained as a television producer. I then went for job training at Media for Development of education in Africa where I trained in almost all departments.

WA: During all that period, did you ever get trained in Script writing for the screen, film style and Cinematography?

SB : Yes. Like I said I trained in almost all the film and television departments where scripting, cinematograph and film style in general was part of the training. I also went to Nigeria for study on the same for we dint have relevant training in Kenya on film. I have also attended several workshops and training organized by Kenya film commission. One other important thing for a film script writer is to understand how other elements of film like camera shots, framing and camera movement works because the later affects how the screen script is written.

WA: What activity of the film do you take charge of?

SB : I take charge of my script and directing of the film.

WA: Do you ever engage the services of a performance director, director of photography or you do direct the actor and technical aspects by yourself too?

SB : As a director one of my responsibility is to direct the cast. Yes, I do direct actors in my films. But for photography I engage services of a well conversant D.O.P to help in the production of the film.

WA: What are the things you think majorly affects the growth of film in Kenya?

SB : They are several; Finances, we rush to produce films because we don't have money to spent on quality shooting, for example to get all the necessary takes and shot for seamless coherent communication of the shots. Lighting, costumes and almost every other element of filming is improvised for lack of money; you can never attain a quality film that can communicate the director's intended message. Film is a craft therefore needs time and knowledge to execute it.

In a nutshell lack of finance input in the film production is a major challenge.

Without money you can't attract professional crew members for the film, we are always rushing to complete shooting and editing of our films to avoid more expenses.

WA: Among the film making elements, which one would you say is important in a success of a film?

SB : Every element is important because no element works in isolation they have to complement each other to bring out the directors desired message. For example, a good script will produce a good film but will not be as good as when appropriate film styles are incorporated to communicate the idea which improves on communication quality of a film.

WA: what do you think determines the quality of a film?

SB : Finance, finance and practical training, not formal training, we have so many people out here trained formally with degrees and masters but cannot operate a camera for filming. It is all about practical training that we need as filmmakers.

WA: What about equipment?

SB : Yes equipment's are equally important in all these, but of course it goes back to the aspect of finances, because that is what will enable you to hire quality equipment that will enhance the film quality,

WA: How would you tell that a film is of good quality?

SB : A good quality film, will be affected by equipment used. Two, look at the interconnection between aesthetic and technical style application, are they complimenting each other? Then finally is the dialogue and styles applied in agreement in conveying the filmmakers intended meaning?

WA: What influences your choice of approach to making a film?

SB : Off course money

WA: Explain please

SB : money means hiring the right equipment, getting services from trained, qualified, experienced crew and finally, money allows one to stay on location as long as it takes to get appropriate shots.

WA: Has your training impacted on your directing practice?

SB : Yes it has a lot. Every-training I have attended has impacted positively on my films. When you understand what it entails to make a film you will be in a better position to know other crew members works and you can tell when all is no well.

WA: Are there other factors that you think influenced the choices of film styles you adopted and how you applied them? Explain

SB : The other factor that influences how we direct is by watching other director's work and mentorships from experienced directors to improve on our works

WA: Is there a single day during making of your films, that you would say, you had enough money to produce a film that you had envisioned?

SB : No, this is the reason Kenyan filmmakers don't produce films, finance is a major constrain that we go through as film makers.

WA: Finally, according to you what would you say is a quality film?

SB : It is that film that can communicate to the audience without straining to understand the meaning using both style and content.

WA: Thank you very much for your time

SB : Welcome and all the best.