

A SEMIOTIC READING OF DISCOURSE ISSUES IN TUNDE KELANI'S *AGOGO EÈWỌ*

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Abstract

Studies have investigated Tunde Kelani's *Agogo Eèwọ* from the political, literary and sociolinguistic perspectives, but the exploration of the discourse issues embedded in the movie has not been teased out through the instrumentality of semiotic resources. This paper, therefore, investigates the deployment of semiotic elements in portraying inherent issues in *Agogo Eèwọ*. Twelve purposively extracted plates were analysed using Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic approach to multimodality. The narrative and conceptual representational meanings of visual grammar are used to reveal political decadence, social vices and cultural elucidation in the movie. The political decadence is shown through bribery and extrajudicial killing, and the social vices are revealed by means of immorality through sexual innuendo, deployment of youth for vandalism, and self-aggrandisement. Cultural elucidation shows how actions and objects project societal beliefs and values in the Yoruba sociocultural milieu. Gaze, gesture, props, demonstration, salience and vector are some of the semiotic resources used in meaning realisation in the movie. The study concludes that there is a synergy in the use of semiotic resources and thematic preoccupations in Tunde Kelani's *Agogo Eèwọ*.

Keywords: *Agogo Eèwọ*, *Discourse issues*, *Nigerian movies*, *Semiotic cues*, *Tunde Kelani*

Introduction

Movies as artistic works are not produced outside a social context. Like other creative works, movies are reflections of the realities or fantasies of the societies wherein they are produced. The Nigerian movie industry, popularly known as Nollywood, is among the most notable and prestigious movie industries in the world. The artistic craftsmanship and thematic preoccupations of Nollywood have become a brand that Haynes and Okome (1998:106) describe thus:

Nowhere else in Africa has a domestic market been captured so successfully. The video films are produced on a number of distinct bases, and have a variety of forms, styles, and themes, as well as a language of expression. Taken together, they give us something like an image of the Nigerian nation— not necessarily in the sense of delivering a full, accurate and analytical description of social reality, but in the sense of reflecting the productive forces of the nation, economic and cultural.

Nollywood which is now universally visible is really making a giant stride and is enjoying local, regional, national, continental and international recognition and popularity as its viewership transcends the Nigeria territory (Asogwa, et al. 2015). The industry enjoys patronage and has gained popularity in Nigeria, West Africa sub-region, Africa and in the entire globe. This feat cannot be divorced from its informative and social significance.

One renowned name in the Nigerian movie industry is Tunde Kelani. He is the brains behind Main Frame Production; a movie outlet which has distinguished itself given the distinctness of its storylines and the uniqueness of its artistic quality in the areas of settings, plot structure, characterisation, props and costumes. In his work, Onikoyi (2016:240) holds that the veteran moviemaker, having played a part in various productions since the celluloid era simply “bridges the gap between the cinema era and the video/digital period”. Tunde Kelani’s movies and their depth made Klein (2012) concludes that Kelani’s movies open the portals to the

past by leading us on an excursus deeply into a collective source of cultural wisdom to discover and play with Yorùbá history, knowledge, and aesthetics. Kelani's movies are evergreen and have been subjected to studies from different analytical perspectives by scholars.

Studies abound on Tunde Kelani's movies from various scholarly dimensions such as pragmatics (Edun & Ajayi, 2020), feminist discourse (Eben, 2021), gender stereotype (Elegbe, 2017) among others. Some studies have also explored Kelani's movies from a semiotic standpoint (Oyeyebi 2017; Adedina & Taiwo 2020; Taiwo & Adeniyi 2025). These studies share similarity with the present one at the level of semiotic resources but differ in clear ways. Although some of the studies identified thematic concerns similar to the discourse issues discussed in this study, none of them deployed Kress and van Leeuwen's socio-semiotic approach to multimodality as its theoretical anchor, and none explored the semiotic resources in *Agogo Eèwò*. Jensen (2002) has argued that a film is not only a sequence of moving images but also an organised mixture of images, words, texts, music and noises that are characterised by a constant displacement and circulation of meaning. Jensen's submission reveals that the revelation of the discourse issues in a movie extends beyond what the use of language affords the viewers. Semiotic resources are veritable and corroborative tools in the portrayal of issues in any movie. It is along this line of thought that this study sets out to analyse the semiotic resources in *Agogo Eèwò* with a view to accounting for how nonverbal elements contribute to the portrayal of inherent issues in the movie and how such issues typify the Nigerian reality at the time of its production and beyond. The study will broaden understanding on the interconnectedness of verbal and semiotic resources in the communication process in movies. The aim will be guided and realised by the following research questions:

- i. What are the discourse issues expressed in the sample movie?
- ii. What representation modes of visual grammar are deployed in the realisation of the discourse issues in *Agogo Eèwò* and how

do such modes aid the viewers' perception of the issues expressed in the movie?

- iii. What semiotic resources are used to convey the discourse issues in *Agogo Eèwò*?

A Brief on *Agogo Eèwò*

Agogo Eèwò is sequel to the earlier released *Şaworoide*, which is an exposition into political decadence, social maladministration, and the shenanigans of the ruling class seeking personal aggrandisement at the expense of economic prosperity and social advancements prevalent in societies, using the fictitious town of Jogbo as an exemplar. It (*Agogo Eèwò*) presents the travails of the quest for an egalitarian society with the emergence of a new government following years of hardship and misrule. The death of Lápitè (an erstwhile King of Jogbo) and Làgàta (the military usurper) created a leadership vacuum and availed the opportunity for ideological shift in the formation of a new government. Adébólá (son of the murdered crown prince Adébòmí) perceived to be the rightful heir to the throne was schemed out of the race on the rationale of being too young but with the ulterior motive of installing a candidate to suit the ideas of the oligarchy (old chiefs) sucking life out of Jogbo. Adébòsípò, a farmer and retired police officer, emerged as the new ruler of Jogbo with the blessings and support of the oligarchy. However, the hope of the oligarchy was dashed by the non-aligned and corruption-free leadership stance of Adébòsípò putting an end to all under-dealings and evil perpetrated by the cabal of the old order. This move created friction between the king and the oligarchy with the latter deploying different tactics to make the state ungovernable for the king. In response, sensing the uncompromising position of the old chiefs, the king deployed a counter tactic through an executive order directing all cabinet members to partake in the oath of *Agogo Eèwò* (an integrity test for chiefs) just as *Şaworoide* serves as integrity check for the king as embedded in the tradition of Jogbo. The test revealed to the public bad eggs amongst the cabinet members, who were relieved of their positions (deposed or dead)

creating a formidable team and an enabling environment for progressive governance.

Literature Review

A sizeable number of studies have interrogated Tunde Kelani's movies from different angles such as pragmatics (Edun & Ajayi, 2020), feminist discourse (Eben, 2021), and gender stereotypes (Elegbe, 2017). These existing works help in problematising this study and identifying a gap that has to be filled in the deployment of semiotics in *Agogo Eèwò*. Edun and Ajayi (2020), within the purview of pragmatics, examine the representation of the socio-political realities of the Nigerian state in Tunde Kelani's *Şaworoide* and *Agogo Eèwò*. The paper avers that the Nigerian polity is characterised by maladministration, mismanagement, and disrespect for the electorate. The ruling class is described as predators, while the masses are presented as preys. The practs of oppressing and looting are employed to portray the misdeeds of the ruling class, jeopardising the interest of the masses for self-gain and autocratic leadership. The exploitation and maltreatment of the masses is depicted through the practs of suffering and rebelling. The study posits that pragmatics is a veritable tool for the understanding of socio-political realities in the society. The study shares similarity with the current one given the choice of *Agogo Eèwò*. However, while Edun and Ajayi explored the movies within the ambit of pragmatics, the current study is grounded in socio-semiotics. Eben (2021) extols the style and ideological leaning of Tunde Kelani, with emphasis on the way he crafts the story and pictures of *The Narrow Path* to exude protection for women and speak for the recognition of their role in the Nigerian society in relation to peacemaking.

The study discusses the depiction of feminist views, moral values, etiquette, cultural balance and nemesis in the play and concludes that Tunde Kelani is a feminist considering the treatment he gives to the women folk in the film. While this is another inquiry into Tunde Kelani's production, the study is not grounded in any

theoretical orientation and differs from the present one which deploys socio-semiotics as its theoretical inclination. Elegbe (2017) examines the extent to which jealousy and suspicion in marital relationships lead to trauma and gender injustice against women in Tunde Kelani's film, *Thunderbolt (Magun)* and also investigate how these issues lead to marital conflict and how they are resolved. The study reports that suspicion, cultural chauvinism, betrayal, ambition, poor communication, lack of trust, wrong accusation and dominance constitute conflicts between couples in the film and concludes that the issue of conflict and gender injustice against women is a common trait in Yoruba cultural setting. While the study focused on one of the movies from the stable of Tunde Kelani, it is not semiotic-oriented like the current one. Lawal (2024) explores *Agogo Eèwò* and *Şaworoide* from a Marxist perspective. The study examined socio-political conflicts in the movies using Karl Marx's theories of social-conflict and the sociology of literature. It holds that conflict is inevitable in every context where there is violation of rights and a clash of economic interests. The study reveals that socio-political conflicts in societies are predicated on disagreements over the allocation of economic resources and government policies between the ruling class and the masses. It argues that conflict has moved from the generic process of clash of interest to a strategic instrument employed by the people for the emancipation of society from the ruling oppressors. This study focuses on *Agogo Eèwò* but leaves out the affordances of semiotic resources.

From the point of view of semiotics, Adedina and Taiwo (2020), through the lens of Ferdinand De Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce's Semiotics, investigate the use of colour symbolism as a cultural element in selected Tunde Kelani's video films. *Agogo Eèwò* was analysed alongside two other movies, *Şaworoide* and *Arugbá* to establish the cultural significance and the communicative functions of colours in the Yoruba society. The research focuses on three primary colours: red, white, and black. It was revealed that red signifies blood, fire, danger and love in *Şaworoide* for ritual cleansing. White depicts peace, joy, holiness, and spirituality and

was used to portray purity and gentleness in *Agogo Eèwò* and *Arugbá*, while black represents darkness, mourning, and destruction as conveyed in *Şaworoide*. Although this work was done within the ambit of semiotics, it is restricted to the use of colours which makes it different from the present study which considers more semiotic resources used in meaning making in *Agogo Eèwò*. Taiwo and Adetunji (2025) examine the deployment of protest themes in addressing the issues of socio-political disorder in Tunde Kelani's *Saworoide* and *Campus Queen* through the use of verbal and nonverbal codes. The study adopted semiotics and genre theories and also conducted interview to decipher the protest themes in the movies. The paper holds that the protest themes cut across rape, sexual scandal and grades for marks, greed, and lack of proper consideration for the people by the government. It reports oath-taking, voice of reasoning, and music/song as the instances of cultural semiotics in the movies. This study is a multimodal analysis as it accounts for verbal and nonverbal resources but it differs from the present study in terms of the choice of movies, thematic concerns, theoretical inclinations and even the semiotic resources explored.

Oyeyebi (2017) attempts a multimodal analysis of semiotic devices and techniques such as signs, costumes and props, lighting and camera shot in Tunde Kelani's 'October 1' to unveil the untold stories and hidden audience nature of the movie as well as exposing the general significance of the film. The study holds that the semiotic analysis of these elements revealed the social-historical background of the movie whilst portraying themes such as ethnic conflict, sexual violence, corruption and cultural aesthetics. The study further classifies the signs deployed in the movie into three categories: the social codes (dress, make-up, and gestures), the technical codes (camera angles, lightings, sounds, and music) and the representation codes (televisual presentation of signs). This paper, though said to be a semiotic analysis, did not analyse any pictorial frame to achieve its goal; glossing over the analysis of contextual semiotic resources. Despite the numerous studies on

Tunde Kelani's movies with some focusing on semiotic analysis, attention has not been given to how semiotic resources serve communicative import in *Agogo Eèwò*; hence the gap that this study sets out to fill.

Theoretical Framework

This study is conducted within the ambit of multimodality. Alugin (2017, p.108) defines multimodality as “the analysis of all forms and modes of communication”. O’Halloran (2011) further explains multimodal analysis as the analysis of communication in all its forms, but is particularly concerned with texts which contain the interaction and integration of two or more semiotic resources. Multimodality theory is a socio-semiotic approach that seeks to include all modes of communication within a communicative event (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Multimodality ensures that specific representations of different modes are accounted for with reference to the cultural context or situation in which they were used to transfer messages (Bamgbose, 2021, p.95). The analysis is grounded in Kress and van Leeuwen’s social semiotics approach to multimodality.

Kress and van Leeuwen’s theory is an extension of Michael Halliday’s systemic functional grammar within the ambit of semiotics. According to van Leeuwen (2005, p.93), “social semiotics explores two closely related issues: the material resources of communication and the way their uses are socially regulated.” The material resources are either physiological or technical. The physiological dimension deals with facial expression, gestures, non-verbal communication while the technical dimension encompasses communication through instruments, clothes, and other modes that extend the potential of physiological resources. There are three levels of meaning in this approach to multimodality and these levels are: representational meaning, interactive meaning and compositional meaning. These levels coincide with Halliday’s ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions of language. This study uses the representational meaning.

The representational meaning is the ability of a semiotic mode to represent an aspect of the world as experienced by humans. In other words, it has to be “able to represent objects and their relation in a world outside the representational system” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.42). Representational meaning has to do with the capacity of a semiotic clue to depict how the world is experienced by human beings (Bamgbose, 2021, p.96). Representational meaning has two parts which are narrative representation and conceptual representation. Narrative representation means that “when participants are connected by a vector, they are represented as doing something to or for each other” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.59). Vector is a pictorial element. A vector forms “an oblique line, often a quite strong, diagonal line”(Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006:59).Such kind of vectorial patterns show “unfolding actions and events, processes of change, transitory spatial arrangements”(Kress &van Leeuwen, 2006, p.59). A vector links other elements of the clause as done by the verbal element of a grammatical structure (Bamgbose, 2019; Bamgbose, 2025). The vector determines the type of narrative process in the visual act which could be action process, reactional process and mental process. The narrative process is dependent on the number and kinds of participants involved in the visual image which could make the action conveyed by the vector transactional (transitive) or non-transactional (intransitive).

Conceptual representation is a non-narrative process which involves “representing participants in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, or structure or meaning” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.79). Conceptual representation has no vector but as it is with the narrative process, the conceptual representation involves three structures which are named classificational process, analytical process and symbolic process. In the classificational process, at least one set of participants will play the role of Subordinates with respect to at least one other participant, the Superordinate” (Kress & van

Leeuwen, 2006, p.79). Analytical processes are used to link participants in terms of a part-whole structure. Two participants involved in these processes are respectively one Carrier (the whole) and any number of Possessive Attributes (the parts). The symbolic process focuses on what a participant means or is. The material resources and aspects of the representational meaning are used to analyse the data drawn for this study.

Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic approach to multimodality is considered suitable for this study because of its levels of meaning which help account for the uses and functions of nonverbal cues in any kind of human interaction. Although the theory only accounts for nonverbal resources in discourse which is never the whole or even the major side to communication, it helps account for how semiotic cues corroborate verbal utterances in any communicative setting.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive qualitative analysis of the movie, *Agogo Eèwò*. The qualitative features of the data are the nonverbal resources which are carefully deployed to corroborate the verbal exchanges of the characters in the movie. The data for this study were purposively extracted from the movie, *Agogo Eèwò*. The movie is available in digital video disk (DVD) which enabled the researchers to download it on a laptop for repeated viewing in order to identify inherent semiotic patterns that contribute to the thematic preoccupations in the movie. *Agogo Eèwò* is a popular movie and one of the classical movies from the stable of the prestigious Main Frame Production. The movie judiciously explored semiotic resources such as gaze, gesture, props, demonstration, salience and vector in addition to verbal communication to pass across its messages. Three discourse issues which are revelation of political decadence, depiction of social vices, and cultural elucidation are identified from the movie in line with how semiotic resources help thematise these issues. These issues were tracked from the events and discussions in the movie. A total of 12 purposively extracted

plates were subjected to semiotic analysis, using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic approach.

Data Analysis

This analysis reveals the discourse issues that are inherent in the movie and that are further revealed through the instrumentality of multimodal resources. Three discourse issues which are revelation of political decadence, depiction of social vices, and cultural elucidation are identified to have been foregrounded in the movie through semiotic resources. These issues are exemplified with plates from the movie as seen in the analysis that follows.

Political Decadence

According to Yagboyaju (2017, p.2), “political corruption constitutes any illegal, unethical, or unauthorized exploitation of one’s official position for personal or sectional gain or advantage”. This awful phenomenon has been the bane of Nigeria’s development since the independence of the country. Scholars such as Johnston (1997), Nye (1967) and Yagboyaju (2017) have described political decadence in Nigeria as encompassing activities and general abuse of privileges such as the illegal transfer of public funds to private domestic or foreign accounts, unapproved reduction of customs duties on imported items by customs officials, deliberate award of contracts for public works in return for kickbacks, lowering employment requirements in favour of relatives while rejecting candidates with better credentials, perversion of justice by police and judicial officials in favour of individuals who offer bribes or other forms of inducement and several others. The plates below show bribery and extrajudicial killing as manifestations of political decadence in Nigeria.

Plate 1



Plate 1 captures the Balogun of Jogbo Kingdom and a police officer when the latter visits the former at home. Balogun offers the police officer some reasonable amount of money as a bribe to distort the swearing programme which is to be held at the king's palace for all the chiefs to ascertain their integrity or otherwise as chiefs. The distortion plan is imperative for Balogun given his involvement in the political instability of Jogbo Kingdom in many years. The plate is a narrative representation given that it features participants who are connected by a vector in the course of doing something for each other" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.59). The cash jointly held by the participants which comes from Balogun to the officer is the vector, showing the unfolding action of bribery. Evident in the plate is the officer's astonishment as his gaze fixes firmly on the sum of money he is being offered while the Balogun stares at the officer with a laughter on his face. The laughter on Balogun's face is an expression of delight at the officer's astonishment which assures him (the Balogun) of the policeman's adherence to the deal of distorting the process of swearing which is to go on later on the same day. The scenario speaks of the Nigeria Police as being unreliable and as persons who work contrary to their mandate as friends and protectors to the people (Bamgbose & Alugbin, 2022). Although *Agogo Eèwò* was produced in 2002, the 2020 EndSars

Protest by Nigerian youth which was a reaction against a unit of the Nigeria Police considered to be extorting and victimising the youth of the country lends credence to the decadence that characterises the Nigerian political system far beyond the production of the movie.

Plate2



Plate 2 features three persons wherein one is seen with two swollen envelopes and stretches the envelope to one of the two others; the two others being leaders of a group of young agitators. The one giving out the envelope has been contracted by some chiefs to influence a planned riot meant to protest cases of embezzlement by the chiefs. This plate can be analysed as an instance of conceptual representation which involves “representing participants in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, or structure or meaning” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006,p.79). The relationship of the participants in the plate depicts the classificational process where at least one set of participants will play the role of Subordinates with respect to at least one other participant, the Superordinate” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.79). The man with the envelope represents the political class which is the superordinate and the two other men waiting to receive the envelope represent the media which is the subordinate. Many times, the media is at the whims and caprices of the government, resulting in biased reportage in the interest of the political class. The choice of a brown

envelope is also a symbolic prop to the realization of meaning in the plate as “brown envelope” has come to be associated with bribery in Nigeria. Brown envelope was defined by Okunna (1995, p.57) as a monetary bribe handed out to an unethical journalist to pressurise him or her into doing what the bribe giver wants. Okunna (ibid) adds that “once accepted, monetary bribes and other gifts tie the hands of journalists who then become incapable of being objective in reporting events and issues involving people who give the gifts”. The two men who are supposedly leaders of the agitation group have received bribe, thereby selling the mandate of their struggle towards a corrupt-free society. This plate shows that bribery is an entrenched decay in the Nigerian society which is sometimes observed even among those who clamour against corruption.

Plate 3



Plate 3 is a conceptual representation depicting the act of killing. The plate features Chief Bada in the residence of Chief Balogun where they are seen in a dialogue on how to forestall the chances of confession by the assassins they had sent to kill the chief priest of the land. The chief priest defeats the assassins through his occult power when they badged into him at midnight, holds them in captivity till morning and hands them over to the police. When the news of the failed assassination plan made the rounds, the chiefs quickly converge at Chief Balogun’s house to devise a means. It is

during their interaction that Chief Bada made the gesture in plate 3 to implicitly suggest that they get their police ally to eliminate the assassins before they confess. The plate is a symbolic process which focuses on what a participant means or is. The gesture of placing one's hand around the velum is suggestive of murder. Usually, the slaughtering of animals as food is done through the cutting of the velum and the gesture is universally known as a way of talking about murder among humans. The gesture by Chief Bada is therefore a call for extrajudicial killing of the assassins which characterised the Nigerian state for many years. Despite the fact that this movie was produced in 2002, Odunaïke, Lalude and Odusanya (2021, p.145) still submit that “in Nigeria, there is a high tendency for people of low socioeconomic status to experience police brutality, or even become victims of extra-judicial killing”. This evidences the fact that movies are not produced in a vacuum but serve as reflection of societal happenings.

Plate 4



Plate 4 is the consequence of the gesture made by Chief Bada in Plate 3. It is another instance of the symbolic process of conceptual representation wherein the image of splashed blood is used to depict an extrajudicial killing. The scene opens on the wall with a splash of blood which suggests that a killing has just happened. A superior police officer walks into the scene querying the junior officer over

the reason for the shooting leading to the killing of the suspected assassins and the junior officer claims that the suspects tried to escape from the prison. This is not an unusual justification among the Nigerian police who justify their extrajudicial killing on the ground that the suspects attempt to escape, knowing full well that the deceased can make no case. In 2009, Amnesty International reports that the police officers often claim that the victim (of their killing) was an armed robber who was killed in a shoot-out or while trying to escape police custody. This is the case with the extrajudicial killing captured in plate 4.

Social vices in Nigeria

Apase and Yawe (2019, p.11) submit that “social vices are deviant behaviours such as illicit sex, drug addiction, evil or immoral behaviour such as murder, examination malpractice, thuggery and such other criminal tendencies”. Bringing it to Nigeria, Mezieobi, Jerry-Alagbaoso, Nwosu and Onyeagoro (2015, p.78) note that social vices are misbehaviours, wrong attitudes, unacceptable characters that have bedeviled the development of Nigeria. In *Agogo Eèwò*, social vices are revealed through immorality and sexual innuendo, deployment of youth for vandalism/thuggery and personal aggrandisement. These are seen in the analysis that follows in this section.

Plate 5



Plate 5 is an instance of immorality through sexual innuendo. The plate is a narrative representation where the lady depicting her buttocks is represented as doing something to King Bosipo who is sitting right behind her. The narrative process in the plate is an action process with the lady's pose serving as the vector with which she is trying to achieve her aim of seduction. The displayed underwear serves as the use of costume for thematic purpose. The sexual innuendo is conveyed through double entendre. Double entendre is a particular way of wording that is devised to have a double meaning, one of which is typically obvious, and the other often conveys a message that would be too socially unacceptable or offensive to state directly. When this is applied to the semiotic situation in the plate, the lady in the frame pretends to be busy sorting her wear which she has come to sell to the king while deliberately loosening her wrapper to seduce the king. The lady had been advised to make this move by the Iyalode (the female chief in Jogbo) as a way to make more gain from King Bosipo. Unfortunately for her, the forthright and disciplined king does not fall for this trap intended as a dent on his image. He orders the lady out of the palace and she ends up not making both the legitimate gain and the extra gain, leading her to such an immoral act. The king is therefore an exemplar for morality and discipline, a virtue expected of good leaders and everyone.

Plate 6



Plate 6 captures Chiefs Balogun and Seriki at a distance from some youth who they are charging to distort the swearing process which is to take place at the king's palace. This is because they have been involved in embezzlement and participating in the swearing process is prone to danger for them. They resolve at deploying the youth as political thugs as is characteristic of Nigerian politicians. The scenario depicted in plate 6 is an example of transactional narrative action process. The transactional structure consists of both *actor* and *goal*. Chiefs Balogun and Seriki are the actors who are instigating the youth to violence as illustrated through the demonstration of raising their hands which serve as the vector together with their eye contact. Goal is "the participant at whom or which the vector is directed" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The youth shown on the other side of the chiefs are the goals who are being manipulated to disrupt a legitimate swearing process in the palace. The use of colours is also significant in the plate as red and black as worn by the youth are mostly attributed to evil acts in the Nigerian sociocultural milieu. Odotola (2014) holds that Nigeria has a very large youth population that is presently unengaged, unemployed, untrained and unskilled to positively contribute meaningfully to the prosperity and growth of the nation and the situation has resulted in the involvement of the largely unengaged youths in the perpetration of political and economic violence in Nigeria. The plate therefore captures the deployment of the youth for vandalism.

Plate 7



Plate 8



Plates 7 and 8 address the same manifestation of social vice which is personal aggrandisement. Personal or self-aggrandisement is the tendency to rate oneself more favourably than one assesses other people. Plate 7 is on the one hand a narrative representation and on the other a conceptual representation. As a narrative representation, the plate depicts the young man holding the swing-disc as an actor and the gaze of the three participants as the vector. It is a transactional narrative with the swing-disc as the goal. From the conceptual representation perspective, the plate also “represents participants in terms of their more generalized and more or less stable and timeless essence, in terms of class, or structure or meaning” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p.79). The young man with the swing disc exercises monopoly over it, resulting in the activity in plate 8 where the three participants are seen struggling to have the swing-disc. The plate is a transactional action process with the action of the three participants as the vector and the swing-disc as the goal. The scene is a metaphorical representation of the human tendency to want to possess what belongs to a number of people, in most cases the society. Such self-aggrandisement results in social imbalance which often leads to conflict as seen in Plate 8. Personal aggrandisement plays out in government and private sectors. Embezzlement, marginalisation and nepotism are manifestations of aggrandisement in the public sector while delayed or unpaid salaries

and other entitlements are indications of aggrandisement in the private sector. Every society will enjoy peace and stability when people prioritise collectivity over individuality.

Cultural Elucidation

Semiotic resources are deployed in *Agogo Eèwò* to elucidate aspects of cultural values among the Yoruba through the use of signs and symbols. In an all-encompassing explanation, van Leeuwen (2005, p.4) holds that:

“social semiotics resources are signifiers, observable actions and objects that have been drawn into the domain of social communication and that have a theoretical semiotic potential constituted by all their past uses and all their potential uses and an actual semiotic potential constituted by those past uses that are known to and considered relevant by the users of the resource, and by such potential uses as might be uncovered by the users on the basis of their specific needs and interests”.

The plates below reveal the use of signifiers and observable actions for social communication among the Yoruba.

Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11



Plates 9, 10 and 11 feature an elderly woman whose name is not mentioned in the movie but who takes care of three young persons (two boys and a lady). In the plates, she is seen with different positions with the headgear on her head. This is because she is explaining the implication of the different positions to the young lady and explaining to her that the different choices or positions of the headgear are not culturally arbitrary. The plates are instances of a transactional narrative action which features an actor (the woman tying the headgear) and the vector (the different positions of the headgear). Although there is the young lady who serves as the goal in the scene to whom the lesson is given, she is not captured in the

plates so as not to lose clarity in the plate. In Plate 9, the old woman illustrates to the young lady that the protruding edge of the scarf is the cultural preference for the young ones among the Yoruba given the connotation that the future belongs to them (the youngsters). She enlightens the young girl that when the edge is positioned sideways as seen in Plate 10, it is the cultural preference of the married women which is suggestive of contemporariness as people who are in their prime. Plate 11 which shows the protruding edge positioned backward is explained as the cultural preference of the old women who are relinquishing the stage of fashion and sophistication. The plates reveal that signs and symbols are cultural signifiers among the Yoruba and are not always to be considered arbitrary choices. *Agogo Eèwò* can therefore be said to enlighten viewers on cultural values among the Yoruba.

Plate 12



Plate 12 shows the deployment of costume and gesture as cultural symbols in Yoruba culture. The plate presents two persons; a young chief and an old chief priest. The plate is another transactional narrative action which features an actor (the chief), a vector (signaled by the gaze and removal of cap) and the goal (the chief priest). The scene is set at the palace of the king on the day of the

swearing in for chiefs. The chief priest says the process may not continue because one of the corrupt chiefs feigns illness and the younger chief moves close to seek clarification. Significant for cultural elucidation is the removal of cap by the younger chief acting as the subject, before the chief priest who is the recipient of this gesture. The removal of cap is, among the Yoruba, a marker of respect. Aside from possible markers such as kneeling, bowing or prostrating before an older person, removal of cap is another way to show honour and mark significant age difference between interlocutors or between a citizen and royalty. This again shows that gestures and gesticulations are sometimes expressions of cultural values in movies.

Conclusion

The paper explores multimodality in Tunde Kelani's *Agogo Eèwò* given that meaning is not a mono-directional process in human communication. The study is conducted in a bid to account for how non-linguistic elements contribute to the portrayal of inherent issues in the movie. The study deploys Kress and van Leeuwen's social semiotic approach to multimodality as its analytical framework and twelve purposively extracted plates were descriptively analysed. Political decadence, social vices and cultural elucidation were the discourse issues identified and analysed through the instrumentality of the narrative and conceptual representational meanings of visual grammar. The analysis shows bribery and extrajudicial killing as manifestations of political decadence in Nigeria. Social vices are illustrated through immorality revealed through sexual innuendo, the use of youth for vandalism/thuggery, and personal aggrandisement. The discourse issue of cultural elucidation is also shown through the use of semiotic resources to show the Yoruba traditional beliefs and values. Gaze, gesture, props, demonstration, salience and vector are some of the semiotic resources used in meaning realization in the movie.

The discourse issues identified through semiotic resources are clear assertions to the fact that artistic works such as movies are not created in a vacuum. The issues identified in the analysis are reflective of the realities of Nigeria. As seen in the works of other scholars such as Johnston (1997), Nye (1967) and Yagboyaju (2017), political decadence is a common problem in the Nigerian polity which has to be fought by the citizenry at large. Also, as reported by scholars such as Apase and Yawe (2019), there is the preponderance of social vices in Nigeria which are deserving of collective effort to eradicate them. Evidently too, the analysis reveals that cultural values among the Yoruba is greatly tied to nonverbal acts which must be understood by members of the Yoruba speech community and others who care about the lifestyle of the Yoruba. This paper concludes that films are veritable means of creating awareness on societal happenings and the cultural values of a society. The study recommends that filmmakers should endeavour to remain watchdogs to the society by filming significant societal realities for the consciousness of the citizenry and intervention of the government. Also, the government should take cues from films as the perception of the citizens about their administration, thereby determining how to improve on governance.

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