



CODING THE SACRED IN THE SECULAR FRAME: CINEMATIC SEMIOSIS AND THE INTEGRATION OF LUO FOLKLORE IN *SOUL BOY* AND *ANYANGO AND THE OGRE*

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ABSTRACT

Kenyan cinema has increasingly turned to indigenous oral traditions as a source for its narrative material. However, even with this huge step, the cinematic mechanisms by which folklore is translated from oral to audio-visual form remain understudied. This paper examines how two Kenyan fiction films, *Soul Boy* (Essuman, 2010) and *Anyango and the Ogre* (Voline, 2023), use cinematography, sound design, and mise-en-scène to integrate Luo folkloric material into contemporary narratives. Drawing on Christian Metz's semiology of the cinematic code, the paper distinguishes codes intrinsic to the cinematic apparatus from non-specific codes borrowed from oral performance, cultural iconography, and social practice. The two films pursue divergent semiological strategies: *Soul Boy* stages the mythological as an intrusion into an otherwise realist urban register, while *Anyango and the Ogre* constructs two coexisting and parallel narrative planes that allow contemporary and folkloric worlds to operate alongside one another. The latter film thus establishes a contemporary narrative frame alongside an embedded folktale, with the two planes converging both structurally and ideologically. The paper argues that the divergence between the two Kenyan films represents distinct models for how African cinema mediates between folklore, oral culture, and the audio-visual form.

Keywords: *Cinematic codes, Kenyan cinema, Luo folklore, semiotics, mise-en-scène, sound design*

1. INTRODUCTION

The principal objective of filmmaking has always been to create visual works of art that leave lasting impressions on audiences. According to Edgar-Hunt *et al.* (2015), at minimum, a film should be memorable enough to generate new experiences for viewers with each repeated viewing. Film theorists have long argued that cinema possesses a formal language that audiences learn to interpret without explicit instruction. This language, they argue, is a set of conventions through which fragmented shots, sounds, and performances are organized into coherent and intelligible experiences (Edgar-Hunt, Marland and Rawle, 2015). The statement above can also be interpreted to mean that film can generate meaning from heterogeneous material. This ability becomes especially significant when a film sets out to carry folklore and oral tradition, which have initially depended on voice, gesture and present audience. The question of how folklore survives its translation into audio-visual form is not merely technical. It bears on the broader cultural project of using cinema to preserve, reinterpret, or contest indigenous knowledge systems in societies where oral transmission is in decline (Afolayan, 2021; Finnegan, 1992).

Cinematography is the formal language of film that involves the capturing of moving images through a camera and light. Cinematography involves informed choices in lighting, shot sizes, shot compositions, and camera movements. These elements shape how a film's world is



visually presented. In Metz's framework, cinematography operates as a cluster of cinematic codes that govern image composition, camera distance, camera angle, camera movement, and lighting. These codes carry culturally embedded connotations that contribute to ideological and narrative meaning (Maharani *et al.*, 2024).

Over the past two decades, Kenyan cinema has increasingly drawn on indigenous folklore as narrative material, reflecting both a vibrant cultural heritage and the pressures of urbanization, ethnic pluralism, and generational change (Diang'a, 2017). Yet scholarship on African film has examined the narrative content of folklore far more than the cinematic techniques used to render it on screen. Existing accounts of folklore in African cinema have tended to foreground narrative structure and thematic content (Sandhu, 2019; Taiwo, 2019; Usman, 2019), leaving the question of cinematic mediation- how camera, sound, and setting actually accomplish the work of translation- less thoroughly theorized.

This article addresses that gap through a close semiotic analysis of two Kenyan films: *Soul Boy* (Essuman, 2010), a socio-realist drama set in Nairobi's Kibera settlement in which a Luo spirit figure, the *Nyawawa*, intrudes upon a teenager's ordinary life, and *Anyango and the Ogre* (Voline, 2023), a Netflix-produced episode of *African Folktales Reimagined* that embeds the Luo *apul* ogre tale within a dystopian frame narrative. Both films draw on Luo oral tradition from western Kenya, but they do so through markedly different cinematic strategies. This study therefore asks: how do cinematographic, sound, and mise-en-scène choices in these two films operate as a system of codes through which non-cinematic, orally derived cultural material is rendered legible on screen? In pursuing this question, the analysis extends Christian Metz's semiology of cinematic codes (Metz, 1974) to a body of African screen texts in which the relationship between cinema-specific and culturally borrowed codes is unusually visible.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: METZ AND THE SEMIOLOGY OF THE CINEMATIC CODE

Christian Metz's foundational contribution to film semiotics was to insist that cinema, rather than possessing a single unified language, is constituted by a plurality of overlapping codes that intersect, and frequently conflict, within any given filmic text (Metz, 1974; Tröhler, Kirsten and Zutavern, 2018).

A code, in this sense, is a system that organizes the relationship between signifiers and the signifieds within a particular domain of practice. Metz's most consequential distinction for this study is between codes specific to the cinematic apparatus and those that are not. Cinema-specific codes include the *grande syntagmatique* governing the organisation of narrative time and space through editing, together with codes of camera movement, shot scale, and the synchronisation of sound and image. Non-specific codes, by contrast, are borrowed from other cultural and artistic practices: ideological codes, genre codes, iconographic codes, and, of direct relevance here, the codes of oral narrative performance.

This distinction is paramount to this study, as it clarifies what happens when oral folkloric material is adapted for the screen. Key to note is that the content of a folk tale, ranging from its characters, structure, and moral logic, is not necessarily cinematic. This rightly belongs to what Metz terms a non-specific code, drawn from oral presentations. Manthia Diawara's (1992) account of African cinema further identifies this dynamic. He describes African film as one characterised by an ongoing negotiation between imported cinematic conventions and indigenous codes of oral performance, communal storytelling, and ritual enactment. Further, Melissa Thackway (2003) argues that African oral traditions are structured through formulaic repetition, call-and-response, performative enunciation, and the embodied presence of a



narrator. When adapted to a visual medium, these conventions are recoded rather than simply reproduced. Folklore, in other words, does not appear on screen unmediated; it is re-articulated through the cinema-specific codes of camera, sound, and mise-en-scène, and this re-articulation, rather than narrative content alone, constitutes the proper object of a semiotic analysis of folklore in film.

The analysis that follows accordingly treats mise-en-scène, cinematography, and sound as three interlocking domains within which specific coding choices operate to integrate folkloric, non-specific codes into the narrative architecture of *Soul Boy* and *Anyango and the Ogre*.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative case study of *Soul Boy* and *Anyango and the Ogre*. These two films were purposively selected as contemporary Kenyan films that draw explicitly on Luo oral tradition. In addition, the two films occupy different production contexts and generic registers, yet both bring Luo folklore traditions to the fore. Data were generated through repeated, structured reading of the films, using an observation guide. The guide was organized around Metz's categories of cinematic specific and non-specific codes, with specific attention to camera angle, framing, composition, camera movement, spatial construction, diegetic and non-diegetic sound, dialogue, and mise-en-scène elements of setting and costume. Consistent with semiotic and textual-analytic approaches to film (Bordwell, Thompson and Smith, 2019), the method privileges the detailed reading of recurring formal patterns over statistical generalization. Each film was treated as a coherent signifying system whose codes can be reconstructed through systematic, repeated viewing. The analysis is interpretive rather than experimental, and its claims are advanced as a plausible, textually grounded account of how these two films code folkloric material, rather than as an exhaustive catalogue of every coding choice within them.

4. CINEMATOGRAPHY: ANGLE, FRAME, AND THE VISUAL GRAMMAR OF FOLKLORIC POWER CAMERA ANGLE AND THE ENCODING OF POWER RELATIONS

Camera angle is among the most immediately legible of cinematography's non-specific codes. This is because its connotations come from lived, embodied experience rather than from cinema itself. Cores Sarria (2015) observes that camera angling is directly related to physical power as understood off-screen: a high-angle shot places the viewer above the filmed subject, rendering it diminished, while a low angle inverts this relation, making the subject appear dominant and threatening.

In *Anyango and the Ogre*, this code is deployed consistently to establish equivalence between two figures of menace operating on different narrative planes. Low-angle shots recur for Baba Otis, the abusive patriarch of the film's contemporary frame narrative, and for the Ogre of the embedded folktale that Otis narrates to his siblings. This repetition constitutes what Metz (1974) calls a textual code: a system of regularity through which a film establishes its own internal syntagmatic organization. Because the film visually equates these two characters through identical angling rather than dialogue or plot, the audience can understand them better through cinematographic means. Further to this, it is through the angling that the audience can assert the characters' interchangeability as presented in the film, that is, domestic patriarchal violence and mythic ogre-violence.



High-angle shots are correspondingly reserved for the film's vulnerable figures, Mama Otis and the children. The high angles exacerbate their vulnerability. When the children huddle together as the Ogre approaches, the high angle draws the audience into their fear, positioning the spectator to share their diminished vantage on a looming threat. The interchange between the Ogre's low-angle approach and the children's high-angle vulnerability produces a rapid oscillation of subjective positioning. This in turn inhabits the perspective of the threatening figure before returning the viewer to the perspective of the threatened. This oscillation aligns with oral-tradition conventions. In oral-tradition folklore, gigantic, overpowering ogres and villains always dominate vulnerable subjects.

Soul Boy, by contrast, codes its supernatural figure, the Nyawawa spirit, differently. The character Akinyi embodies the spirit. Rather than establishing hierarchy through vertical angling, the film situates Akinyi and the protagonist Abila predominantly in eye-level compositions. Baranowski and Hecht (2017) report that viewers perceive eye-level framing as comparatively neutral and trustworthy. By declining to code Akinyi as either physically dominant or subordinate, the film signals that the supernatural, from Abila's cultural vantage, is neither alien nor menacing. This therefore places the spirit as a familiar feature of his ancestral world that he must learn to navigate rather than fear.

The contrast between the two films' angling strategies is instructive: where *Anyango and the Ogre* uses verticality to align contemporary and folkloric violence, *Soul Boy* uses horizontality to normalise the mythological as continuous with, rather than opposed to, everyday experience.

Framing, Composition, and Depth of Field

Framing constitutes the deliberate inclusion or exclusion of visual elements within a shot, and composition. The organization of those elements for expressive effect belongs to what Metz calls the plastic codes. Stephen Heath (1981) argues that a film constructs its narrative space through framing, depth of field, and shot organization as an ideological operation. He adds that this operation positions the viewer while managing contradictions inherent in the narrative's social world. This ideological function of composition is especially visible in the sequences of *Soul Boy* that stage the coexistence of Kibera's ordinary social world with the mythological realm of the *Nyawawa*.

As Abila approaches Akinyi's hut, a depth-of-field composition places his friend Shiku, representing his everyday world of adolescent friendship, in a brightly lit background, while Abila himself moves through a darkening foreground passage toward the mythological threshold. Kurniawan and Ratnasari (2023) note that layered foreground-to-background composition typically encodes emotional distance and relational structure between characters. In this particular case, that convention is redeployed to encode not interpersonal distance but ontological distance between two coexisting worlds. The gradual dimming of light as Abila advances further encodes his passage as a process rather than an instantaneous rupture, mirroring the way his own cultural tradition understands ritual initiation as a graduated transition rather than a single threshold crossing.

A related compositional strategy governs Abila's first encounter with Akinyi, staged in a wide shot within a space defined by sparse illumination and emptiness. This composition connotes her liminality and detachment from ordinary domestic life, while restricting visibility of her body to hands and feet. The viewer's attention is thereby directed toward specific iconographic markers, notably the hoofed foot that identifies her as a Nyawawa. The film foregrounds this detail compositionally well before it explains it narratively. Hoofed or otherwise physically marked supernatural beings recur across folklore traditions as conventional signifiers of the



non-human (Thompson, 1955). The film's decision to let composition, rather than exposition, introduce this marker allows viewers already familiar with the convention to decode it immediately, while other viewers experience it as a productive visual enigma that sustains narrative curiosity.

Anyango and the Ogre deploys composition differently, constructing the space of oral storytelling itself within its domestic mise-en-scène. The first instance is when Otis narrates the embedded folktale to his siblings. In this scene, the composition consistently places him in the background, facing the camera, while his siblings occupy the foreground with their backs turned. Wang and Whyke (2024) describe such visual arrangements, in the context of animated adaptations of folk material, as cultural translations that rework the performative geometry of oral storytelling for a visual medium. In traditional African storytelling, the narrator typically commands a central performative position, with listeners positioned at the periphery. The film's blocking reproduces this performative geometry through the cinema-specific codes of framing and focal arrangement rather than through dialogue. This further illustrates how a non-specific oral-performance code becomes legible only when translated into a properly cinematographic device. Another compositional code appears in the aerial establishing shot of the forest that opens the embedded folktale: its undifferentiated canopy, lacking any geographically specific marker, reproduces the spatial vagueness characteristic of folktale settings, which are conventionally unanchored to a particular time or place (Thackway, 2003), and thereby aligns the film's visual logic with the temporal indeterminacy of oral tradition.

Spatial Construction and the Cultural Geography of Folklore

The two films go beyond individual shots and actively construct narrative space as a vehicle for ideological and social argument. This is in line with Henri Lefebvre's contention that space is produced through practice, representation and lived experiences rather than given as a neutral backdrop (cited in Chen, 2024). In *Soul Boy*, the film is set entirely within the Kibera slum. This urban space is marked by dense population and an interethnic diegetic space marked by everyday precarity. The film rejects conventional establishing-shot exposition, instead revealing its environment through Abila's movements. Within this generally realist spatial register, Akinyi's hut functions as a liminal enclave, perceptually sealed from its surroundings. For instance, as Abila enters, ambient street sound recedes, light dims, and the space visibly constricts. This differential spatial coding marks a boundary between the everyday diegetic world and *Nyawawa's* mythological register, without resorting to special effects or overt genre markers.

Anyango and the Ogre expresses a more explicitly allegorical spatial logic. The film achieves this by organizing its contemporary frame narrative around a binary social geography of the 'Blue Zone' and 'Grey Zone'. The "Blue Zone" is coded through architectural grandeur, technological control, and visual warmth, while the "Grey Zone" is coded through open space, material scarcity, and visual coolness. This spatial binary carries an ideological argument about patriarchal exclusion: women are expelled from the Blue Zone once they pass a designated age, a rule enforced through spatial banishment rather than narration. The embedded folktale's forest hut is deliberately rendered spatially and materially proximate to the Grey Zone rather than to an idealized elsewhere. In doing so, the folktale does not offer narrative escape so much as a mirror of the precarity already structuring the frame narrative. The convergence of these three spaces, Blue Zone, Grey Zone, and folktale hut, advances the film's implicit claim that the injustices of the contemporary social world are not historically new but structurally continuous



with the threats figured in oral tradition, and that the moral vocabulary of folklore therefore remains available as a resource for naming and resisting them.

Sound Design: Auditory Codes and the Mediation of Orality

Sound design governs how folklore is heard in the two films. This domain also carries particular theoretical weight. Oral tradition is, by definition, an acoustic practice transmitted through voice, rhythm, and formulaic repetition (Finnegan, 1992). Michel Chion's (2019) concepts of acousmatic sound, added value, and synchresis describe how sound and image combine to generate meanings that neither channel produces alone. Further, Kaja Silverman (1988) treats the film soundtrack as composed of distinct, interacting signifying codes. Metz (1974) classifies music itself as a non-specific code, since its meaning derives from the cultural tradition from which it is drawn. However, once incorporated into a film, its relationship to image and narrative becomes governed by cinema-specific conventions of diegetic and non-diegetic deployment.

a. Musical Code as Cultural and Supernatural Marker

Soul Boy uses diegetic popular music, specifically contemporary Kenyan hip-hop rendered in Sheng. Sheng is an urban vernacular blending English and Swahili. The film uses this approach to situate its characters within a specific generational and social identity. This is key to distinguishing Abila's urban youth culture from both the rural Luo tradition invoked by *Nyawawa* mythology and the affluent, Western-inflected world of Karen. This is signaled through a contrasting soundtrack shift when Abila travels there. Beus (2023) describes this kind of musical hybridity in African cinema as a form of cultural negotiation between local tradition and transnational popular culture. The film's non-diegetic score is also distinct. It is particularly marked by heightened tempo and tonal ambiguity, functioning as a recurring motif that accompanies each of Abila's encounters with the supernatural, from his father's initial disorientation to his eventual search for Akinyi's hut. Metz (1974) describes such motific repetition as a way to establish equivalence between an auditory signifier and a narrative signified. The musical motif serves as an auditory premonition of the supernatural, acting independently of any visual or verbal confirmation.

In *Anyango and the Ogre*, music is deployed differently. It plays a key role in marking the threshold between narrative registers rather than tracking a mobile supernatural presence. The film opens with an off-screen woman humming before any image appears. According to Chion (2019), such sound that precedes any visual disclosure is known as an acousmatic prologue. Further, Hoffman (2002) documents comparable vocal preludes among West African griots, functioning to prepare performer and audience for the shift from ordinary speech to mythological enunciation. The humming in the film therefore performs an equivalent threshold function, signaling the onset of a performative, storytelling register associated with African communal tradition. A subsequent drum motif accompanying Otis's narration performs a related ritual function. This drumming in Kenyan communities customarily, as Gearhart (2005) notes, helps to facilitate transitions between ordinary and spiritually heightened states. The film recreates this non-diegetically as the children prepare to enter the folktale's fictional world.

b. Dialogue and the Oral-Performative Code

Dialogue in both films operates through what Metz terms linguistic and vocal-performance codes. These codes, he adds, govern how traditional knowledge is transmitted through speech according to conventions of authority and formula. *Soul Boy* code-switches between English, Swahili, Sheng, and Dholuo. Interestingly, Dholuo is reserved for moments of cultural intimacy



and ancestral invocation. The film shows this when Abila addresses his mother in Dholuo to convey the gravity of his father's affliction. Another instance is when Macharia explains the *Nyawawa* mythology to Abila. His speech shifts register entirely. He adopts a proverbial and metaphorical language, deliberate pauses, and measured intonation that mirror the pacing of oral narration. Fludernik (2009) observes that oral storytellers typically mark such a performative stance through shifts in tone, rhythm, and formulaic expression. This he adds, signals a transition from ordinary conversation into narrative performance. In *Soul Boy*, this appears when Macharia requests a cigarette before he begins narrating, which functions as precisely this kind of formulaic threshold marker. In *Anyango and the Ogre*, the equivalent oral-performative code is carried by Otis's vocal differentiation as he voices multiple characters while narrating the folktale to his siblings. Kolawale (2023) identifies this technique as one that heightens emotional resonance in comparable oral-performance traditions. This, in turn, allows the film to maintain, through voice alone, the structural distinction between the narratorial frame and the narrated folktale.

c. Ambient Sound, Sound Effects, and the Acoustic Coding of the Supernatural

Ambient sound in *Soul Boy* establishes Kibera as an acoustically dense social space, overlapping voices, street commerce, and traffic noise. This sound rightfully reflects the film's thematic concern of interethnic coexistence. This density is deliberately suspended as Abila approaches Akinyi's hut, whereby his footsteps become isolated and magnified, and the resulting acoustic vacuum stages the entry into supernatural threshold space. This is consistent with most oral performance conventions, where entry into the spiritual world is marked by a falling away of familiar social sound. A whooshing wind motif reinforces this threshold, drawing simultaneously on Luo mythological association between wind and *Nyawawa* presence (Sewe, 2022)

Anyango and the Ogre uses silence rather than sound intrusion for a comparable purpose. As seen in the film, each time Baba Otis's anger escalates, the musical score abruptly ceases. In its place, an eerie stillness signals impending violence. This trajectory is consistent with oral-performance conventions in which narrators lower their voices or fall silent to signal danger. Additionally, the acousmatic, off-screen sound of the mother's beating persists audibly while the children narrate their folktale. This prevents the embedded story from functioning as straightforward escapism. Folklore narration is instead staged against a backdrop of ongoing domestic violence, suggesting that, within the film's ideological frame, oral tradition operates within and against suffering rather than transcending it.

Mise-en-scène: Setting, Costume, and Iconographic Coding

Mise-en-scène comprises the elements a director controls within the frame: setting, costume, lighting, and staging (Bordwell, Thompson and Smith, 2019). *Soul Boy*'s Kibera setting is coded through a social-realist idiom, revealing the environment incrementally through action rather than establishing shots. Another instance is the presence of foregrounded props: a curtain separating domestic and commercial space, packets of flour, and a thermos, as visual codes of a subsistence economy.

Further, the recurring railway setting in which Abila lies at both the film's opening and its close constitutes a structural code of cyclical repetition. Through this action, the film frames adolescent initiation and paternal inheritance as a recursive rather than linear process. *Anyango and the Ogre*'s Blue Zone and Grey Zone are similarly coded through architectural and material contrast. This is seen in the film's use of palatial homes and biometric access control against



modest huts and improvised play. This establishes a setting code that directly serves the film's critique of patriarchal social organization.

Costume operates as a comparably dense social code. The film uses fabric, colour, and style to signify social position and cultural affiliation. In *Soul Boy*, ordinary contemporary clothing situates most characters within Kibera's socio-economic realism. For instance, Akinyi's appearance as the *Nyawawa* is visually marked chiefly through a pale blue satin gown. This colour, Bae Jang and Park (2025) associate with fear and despair in cinematic costume codes. Interestingly, it is worn over otherwise naturalistic hair and features that preserve continuity with African physical identity rather than resorting to elaborate supernatural styling.

Anyango and the Ogre organises costume around a chromatic opposition mirroring its spatial binary. Blue Zone characters wear bright, elegant, blue-accented clothing signifying privilege, while Grey Zone women wear grey and ashen tones indexing marginalization. The embedded folktale departs from both registers, dressing Anyango and her children in sisal skirts, beaded ornamentation, and clay body markings. These costumes situate the folktale within a traditional cultural environment distinct from either contemporary zone. This act reinforces, through costume alone, the folktale's function as a repository of precolonial cultural memory, held in tension with the frame narrative's contemporary social critique.

5. DISCUSSION: TWO SEMIOLOGICAL STRATEGIES OF FOLKLORIC INTEGRATION

Read together, the preceding analysis suggests that *Soul Boy* and *Anyango and the Ogre* pursue structurally opposed strategies for cinematically integrating Luo folklore. This opposition also constitutes a significant, underexamined axis of variation within African screen adaptations of oral tradition.

Soul Boy maintains a single diegetic plane: contemporary Kibera. The film odes the mythological as an intrusion upon that plane rather than a replacement of it. As earlier discussed, eye-level framing normalizes the supernatural. The depth-of-field composition allows two ontological registers to coexist within a single frame. In the film, sound design also marks the threshold between the aforementioned through suspension rather than the addition of acoustic information. The *Nyawawa* does not displace socio-realism. Instead, she is absorbed into it. This approach makes the film's ideological argument that ancestral tradition persists as a latent, always-available feature of contemporary urban life rather than a separate, bounded domain.

Anyango and the Ogre, by contrast, constructs two distinct narrative planes. The first is a dystopian contemporary frame, and the second is an embedded oral folktale. The film pursues integration through structural equivalence rather than intrusion. As earlier discussed, identical camera angles equate contemporary and mythic villains. Spatial and costume codes align the folktale's precarity with that of the Grey Zone. In addition, the musical and ambient sound codes mark, rather than blur, the boundary between frame and embedded narrative. Where *Soul Boy* argues for continuity between tradition and modernity by refusing to separate them visually, *Anyango and the Ogre* argues for continuity by rendering two formally separated worlds structurally identical. Through this, therefore, the folktale becomes legible as commentary on, rather than escape from, the frame narrative's social conditions.

This divergence matters theoretically because it shows that Metz's distinction between cinema-specific and non-specific codes does not, by itself, determine how folkloric material integrates. The same theoretical toolkit accommodates at least two, and plausibly more, distinct integrative



logics, depending on how a given film distributes its diegetic planes and allocates cinema-specific codes across them.

6. CONCLUSION

This article has argued that the cinematic integration of folklore in *Soul Boy* and *Anyango and the Ogre* is accomplished through the systematic conjunction of cinema-specific codes. They include camera angle, framing, editing rhythm, and the non-specific codes of Luo oral tradition and cultural iconography.

Camera angle encodes folkloric hierarchies of power. Framing and composition spatially encode the coexistence or separation of ontological registers, while sound design translates an inherently acoustic oral tradition into diegetic and non-diegetic auditory codes. Mise-en-scène anchors folkloric material within specific, legible cultural geographies. This is evidently achieved through setting and costume. Read comparatively, the two films reveal that African cinema's engagement with oral tradition is not a single, homogeneous practice but admits of at least two coherent, semiotically distinct strategies. These are intrusion and continuity, and embedding and structural parallel. The paper suggests that questions of folkloric adaptation are best pursued not only at the level of narrative content, what stories are told, but at the level of cinematic form, how the specific codes of camera, sound, and setting are organised to make oral tradition legible within an audio-visual medium. Given the continuing decline of oral transmission across many African communities (Afolayan, 2021), cinema's capacity to perform this semiotic translation is significant for preserving folklore.

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