NEXUS BETWEEN LITERARY TEXTS AND CORRESPONDING FILM ADAPTATIONS: A READING ON INTERTEXTUALITY

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University

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DEDICATION

For Essy and Tamasha
I take this opportunity to most sincerely thank the following for making this study possible. First of all, I thank GOD for granting me the talent to thrive in the academy, and in my career. Secondly, I express my most sincere gratitude to my supervisors Dr. John Mugubi and Prof. Oluoch Obura. Your guidance has been inspirational and enriching. May God bless both of you unreservedly. Besides, my sincere thanks to Dr. John Mugubi for your mentorship which started long before this - during my undergraduate studies.

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## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Adaptation:** In this study, the term shall refer to both process and end product. Hence, as process, “adaptation” shall refer to the practice of transforming literary texts into films. As end product, it shall be used to refer to films that have been made from literary antecedents.

**Antecedent Literary Text:** Literary text from which a film has been adapted. In this proposal, it is interchangeably referred to as **Source Text, Literary Antecedent, Literary Original** and **Original Text**.

**Cinematic/Filmic Narrative:** Used to refer to the story of the film

**Elements:** Components of literary work and film such as plot, setting, language, characterization and theme.

**Intertext:** A text, either film or literary, that is viewed as original of or offspring of another and hence has some resemblance or features of the other.

**Intertextuality:** The conception that the meaning of one text can be shaped by another (different) text. In this study, it relates to how the literary text and Film shape the meaning of each other. The two are therefore seen as **intertexts**.

**Intermediate Forms:** Texts realized in between the Literary Text and the Film for instance, the film script.

**Native:** Used not in the sense of the offensive and colonially denigrating, but to mean people born in Africa/Kenya.

**Pluralists:** Proponents of Pluralist theory in Film Adaptation Studies

**Soundscape:** Used in the study interchangeably with soundtrack with explanations made where and when the word is used differently by this study, or buy other scholars.
This is a communicative structure composed of words or signs that aid in passing messages. The proposed study recognizes the literary text and Film as text.

Transformatives: Proponents of transformation theory in Film Adaptation Studies

N/B:

Antecedent Texts marked by **bolding and underlining**

Adapted Films marked by **bolding and italicizing**.

Images Courtesy of:  


ABSTRACT

This research makes a comparative study of antecedent literary texts and their corresponding adapted films. The study is occasioned by the aim of putting to scrutiny the reflections and divergences between the two media. This is necessitated by the argument as to whether the adapted film increased or reduced the value of the antecedent literary text (Cartmell et al. (2008). The study interrogates Things Fall Apart (1958) by Chinua Achebe (adapted into a TV mini-series Things Fall Apart directed by David Oure [1987]); The Man-Eaters of Tsavo (1907) by John Patterson (adapted into The Ghost and the Darkness in 1996 by Stephen Hopkins) and Out of Africa (1937) by Karen Blixen (adapted into a film, Out of Africa in 1985 by Sydney Pollack. By nature, this is an exploratory research grounded in the concept of intertextuality, guided by the understanding that different texts (in this case, the literary text and the film as a text) can contribute to the understanding and interpretation of each other. Besides, one of the points of interest in this study is an investigation of the elements that characterize the transformation from literary text to film. Hence, the study discusses the cinematic techniques used by film producers to compensate for what is not exactly transferable (or transformable) from the source literary text to the adapted film. In terms of methodology, this is a qualitative study rooted in textual analysis of the selected literary texts and films. The researcher read the source/antecedent literary texts and viewed the corresponding adapted films with the aim of collecting data from both to meet the objectives set at the beginning of the study. Further, other relevant reference materials were sourced and read from both the library and online sources. Theoretically, this research was guided by Adaptation Theories namely the Transformation and Pluralist film adaptation critical paradigms. The researcher argues that this study makes a contribution to scholarship first, in affirmation of the reality that studies of intertextuality within the realm of film adaptation need more scholarly attention than hitherto, and secondly, due to the fact that the selected texts (though important contributions to literature and film in Africa) had – at the time of this research – not been subjected to an intertextual study to see the interconnection between the literary text and the adapted film. The objectives set at the beginning of this study were met, hence the conclusion that the literary antecedent and corresponding adapted film complement each other in the creation of meaning for the benefit of either. Furthermore, the study finds that in the endeavour to re-vision the world of the literary antecedent, the filmmaker exploits creative license to result in divergences between text and film. Finally, this study acknowledges that literary text and adapted film are different media, and therefore either form has techniques within its province that are used to tell the same story similarly or differently.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Following the invention of moving images (cinema) by the Lumiere Brothers in 1895\(^1\), the relationship between film and literature began developing in the early 1900s. Before this relationship, film was considered a low-level form of mass entertainment. As Strathausen (2012) further notes, film sought to enhance its cultural status by borrowing from already established art forms such as music, theatre and literature. Film’s appropriation of literature, Strathhausen (ibid) notes, helped it to make a shift from mere documentation to narration. The most significant period of these beginnings is what is referred to as the ‘Classic Cinematic Period’ of the 1930s\(^2\).

This era witnessed the adaptation of canonical works of literature into film. Some of the classical works that were adapted include Leo Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina* (1878), Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and William Shakespeare’s plays, originally meant only for performance on stage. Later, adaptations featured works like Mario Puzo’s *The Godfather* (1969). In Kenya, this movement of art “From page to Screen” was seen in the post-independence era in the works of Meja Mwangi whose *Carcass for Hounds* (1974) was made into a film, *Cry Freedom* (1981) by Ola Balogun.

Even as early as the Classic Cinematic Period of the 1930s, film adaptation scholars such as Hunter (1932) remarked that the relationship between fiction and film was more beneficial to the novel than to the film. Hunter (ibid) in ‘Scrutiny of Cinema’ argues that

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1 Auguste Lumière (1862-1954) and Louis Lumière (1864-1948) are considered the pioneers of early cinema. The two invented the Cinématographe, a device that they used to take and project moving pictures for the very first time for a paying audience in Paris on 28 December 1895. Their technology formed the basis of modern day cinema. Cited from www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk on 20th June, 2016.

some novels which were initially less popular gained more recognition. Besides, studies on the inter-relation between the two media during this time focused more on the negative consequences of adaptation on the novel (Cartmell, Corrigan and Whelehan, 2008 and Hunter, 1932). However, in the later years, scholars came to realize that it was a productive academic inquiry that focused on the value and limitations of each media with bias to neither. Strathausen (2012) was one of this pioneering school of thought in film studies. He differs with Hunter (1932) as he holds that film as an art form became more popular because of its use of literary text as raw material. These two contradictory standpoints already point to the concept of intertextuality: Film and Literature have for years contributed to the meaning and interpretation of each other since the beginning of adaptation.

Some of the criticism leveled against adaptation film critics such as Hunter (1932, 1932b) which is opposed to adaptation of literary texts into films, relates to the assertion that the linear progression of events in the film could not embrace the linguistic depth of the written word. This school of thought was defined by the fidelity-betrayal aesthetic of film criticism, in which case a film was judged according to its closeness to the literary original. Scholars like Hunter (1932) and Woof (1950) opined that long works of fiction could not be adequately covered in the resultant films. Even if attempts were made to do so – such criticism posits - a lot would remain left out, thereby making the film less representative of the written works than otherwise ought to be.

Despite a promising beginning in adaptation studies, there was a decline in scholarly interest for the subject. Cartmell, Corrigan and Whelehan (2008) in the journal ‘Introduction to Adaptation’, lament the state of studies in Adaptation over the years. They express dissatisfaction with the manner in which adaptation studies have been relegated to the background of scholarship. They contend that:

… the subject (adaptation studies) has been long neglected in literary and film studies. Up until a decade ago, adaptation was normally regarded as an area unworthy of sustained academic study (p. 1). (Emphasis mine)
These scholars attribute this state of affairs to the problems that started facing adaptation studies in the first half of the twentieth century. They highlight a number of issues as follows.

First, Champions of the cinema in the first half of the twentieth century saw Adaptation as impure cinema and therefore critics resented the dependence of film on literature. This was unfortunate (according to Cartmell et. al., 2008) because it was at this time that film was struggling to be regarded as the new cinema yet it had now been branded the impure cinema. Again, writers and literary critics of the time led by Woof (1950) considered film adaptations as art forms of a lower grade. To them, adaptations were cruder form of the literary source and indeed usurpations of literary masterpieces. Although Woof (1950) appreciates the aesthetic quality in adapted films, she argues that such films were degrading because they made the Twentieth Century readers savages of watching pictures rather than readers. In the same vein, Hunter (1932b) in his essay ‘The Art Form of Democracy’, quoted in the journal Scrutiny (1932), states that films target the lowest common denominator in society and should hence be regarded as the new opium. This is to mean that because films reached a bulk of the masses outside the academy, they were not to be considered as serious art.

In addition, the nature of the academia in the first half of the twentieth century also stood out as an obstacle to the study of adaptations. Specifically, the study of adaptations was considered secondary in the departments of Literature, Film Studies and Media Studies. (Cartmell et al. 2008). Even where and when adaptation studies were done, they were done only to the extent that they benefited mainstream literature – in this case, the antecedent literary texts.

Further, Cartmell et. al. (ibid) argues that the criticism leveled against film adaptations at this time was oftentimes unfair and judgmental. This means that it was mostly tempered with emotive reactions rather than based on textual evidence (Cartmell et. al., ibid). Referred to as Logocentrism, this concept, this conception was adjudged to be the cause
of this biased criticism. Logocentrism is a concept that stemmed from the consideration that written words were better than the film; it is the belief in the supremacy of the literary text over film. Cartmell et al. (ibid) opines:

Most of the criticism, until the twenty-first century, was woefully predictable, judging an adaptation’s merit by its closeness to the literary source or, even more vaguely, the spirit of the book. Logocentrism or the belief that words come first and that literature is better than film has been prevalent. (p. 1)

Because of this bias, the adapted film was judged by its closeness to the antecedent text rather than the merit of the film itself. As a result, the adapted film was viewed as a betrayal; a violated; a vulgarized; and a debased form of the literary original. Since writers in the first half of the Twentieth Century (Hunter, 1932) believed that a lot was lost as a result of adaptation, there was no consideration for what was gained as a result of adaptation. This study answers the question if indeed films debased the literary originals or added value.

Finally, there was the prejudice that art and money cannot mix. The film industry was considered to be driven by the profit motive hence the need to appeal to the masses. As such, it was thought that artistry was bound to be sacrificed on the altar of financial gain. Under accusation was also what was perceived to be the film industry’s preoccupation with the celebrity status of the performers. The proponents of the supremacy of the literary text over the film therefore concluded that the value of the literary text was going to be watered down by adapting it to film, a process which would not ignore the financial imperatives of the film industry.

During this period, (Cartmell et al., ibid notes) the author of the literary text was revered and romanticized by readers and critics. The author was the sort of genius behind the creation of the literary text and therefore anything that seemed to destabilize the state of affairs was treated with disfavour. Adaptations were thus resisted because they brought in other players in the industry who threatened to take the coveted place of the author. For instance, some film directors and performers would end up being more famous than the
author of the literary text. Even when some little space was later given for consideration of adapted works, there were still prejudices within this space. Many readers and critics favoured the adaptation of great canonical works as the only deserving of serious study.

The beginning of the 21st Century, however, witnessed the revival of interest in adaptation studies. Similarly, scholars and critics steadily changed their stance on adaptation. Some of this change in position is well documented by Leitch (2008) in his article *Adaptation Studies at Crossroads*. Referring to Stam and Raengo (2004, 2005), he clearly demonstrates the change of philosophy in critics in respect to adaptation studies. According to Stam and Raengo (2004, 2005), the focus in adaptations studies should be more on how the film and the antecedent literary text help to inform each other, rather than sticking to discussions on whether or not the film is faithful to the antecedent text. In their work therefore, we can read a shift from fidelity discourse to Bakhtinian Intertextuality³ (Leitch, 2008).

While the study of film adaptations in other environments would be sufficiently served by theories such as the fidelity-betrayal aesthetic, a new dimension was deemed necessary to help understand the process and product of adaptations in the African landscape. Tcheuyap (2004) argues that unlike in the West and America, adaptations in Africa from the very onset were fundamentally influenced by politics. In his book, *African Cinema and the Politics of Adaptation*, he adds that commercial imperatives and the profit motive have had little bearing – if any – on adaptations of literary works into film in Africa. This is because – he argues – it would be a futile exercise to try and increase the sales of books by popularizing them in film adaptations as the books were written in foreign languages which a significant percentage of the population could not access even if they were made popular for the simple reason that most of the population is illiterate or semi-illiterate. Tcheuyap (2004) emphasizes that analyzing African

³ This phrase alludes to the influence of Mikhael Bakhtin on *Intertextuality* as a conception. Although the term ‘Intertextuality’ was introduced in the 1960s by Julia Kristeva, it is Bakhtin’s theory of Dialogism that greatly shaped the field of intertexts. Bakhtin writes, “The life of the word is contained in its transfer from one mouth to another, from one context to another context, from one social collective to another, from one generation to another generation. In this process the word does not forget its own path and cannot completely free itself from the power of those concrete contexts into which it has entered.” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 201).
adaptations in the light of political influences is the appropriate paradigm. He quotes Sadlier (2000) who affirms: “From my point of view, my study of adaptation becomes interesting when it takes into account historical, cultural and political concerns” (p. 190).

The theory and practice of adaptation, like many other concepts in the arts, eventually found its way to Africa. Adaptation started during the colonial period in North Africa and West Africa and, as such, was affected by the same influences that impacted on written literature. Tcheuyap (2004) looks at the socio-cultural, historical and ideological issues that characterized adaptation in Africa. While analyzing adapted films from Francophone Africa produced by film makers such as Sembene Ousmane, Tcheuyap adopts this perspective owing to the fact that film, just like antecedent literature before it, was used to entrench the colonial hegemony, Benali (1998). In Kenya, adaptation of literary works into film emerged in the 1980s. This would see the production of such films as Cry Freedom (1981) by Ola Balogun from Meja Mwangi’s Carcass for Hounds (1974).

As a consequence of the discussion above, it is evident that scholarship on adaptation has shifted over time, from the fidelity-betrayal aesthetic, to more incisive and objective scholarship. Even then, it is clear that different critics still hold different standpoints about what an adapted film should be. This, however, does not overshadow the growth that has been witnessed in Adaptation Studies especially in the twenty first century.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Whereas a significant percentage of prose fiction written in Africa has been adapted into film, follow-on questions as to whether the adapted film adds value to, conforms to or reduces the original literary text have not been subjected to extensive and intensive academic inquiry. Costanzo (1992) and Dudley (1980) estimate that well over half of all films ever made are adaptations from novels. This therefore makes the relationship between the source literary texts and their film versions important and deserving of sustained scholarly investigation. Consequently, this study interrogated adapted films and
their literary antecedents which have not been subjected to a comparative study with the aim of defining the intertextual relationship between them. Importantly, this is not a study of the intermediate forms between the literary text and the adapted film, but rather, a research that investigates how the selected literary texts and the film texts inform and complement each other. Within the realm of Adaptation Studies, the study narrowed down to the question of intertextuality between antecedent literary texts and films adapted from such texts. Consequently, in line with its principal aim, this study interrogates the points of convergence and divergence with regard to subject matter and elements such as plot, character, setting, technique and language. This is a study to which the selected works were yet to be subjected to. Specifically, the proposed study makes an inquiry into the intertextual relationship between Things Fall Apart (1958) by Chinua Achebe and a 1987 adapted TV mini-series by the same name directed by David Orere; The Man-Eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures (1907) by John Patterson and a 1996 adapted film The Ghost and the Darkness by Stephen Hopkins, and Out of Africa (1937) by Karen Blixen and a 1985 adapted film by the same name by Sydney Pollack. Besides, this study describes the impact of the difference in macro-style between the two media since they have different sign systems in their presentation of narrative: the verbal signs (for literary text) and audio-visual signs (for film).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study set out to meet the following objectives:

1. interrogate the techniques used in film production to compensate for narrative description as used in the antecedent literary texts.
2. examine the congruence and incongruence in elements between the source literary texts and the corresponding adapted films.
3. highlight the possible areas of convergence and divergence in meaning between the literary originals and films adapted from them.
1.4 Research Questions

The study strived to answer the following questions:

1. which techniques in film production have been used to compensate for the literary text narrative techniques that are not transferable to the adapted films?
2. what are the conformities and deviations in elements between the source literary texts and the corresponding adapted films?
3. how does the meaning realised in the adapted film correlate with the meaning realised in the literary antecedents?

1.5 Research Assumptions

The following research assumptions shaped the study:

1. there are certain techniques in the adapted films used to compensate for untransferable literary-text narrative techniques.
2. there are certain identifiable conformities and deviations in elements between the source texts and the adapted films.
3. meaning, concepts and ideas have been treated differently in the adapted films compared to the antecedent literary texts.

1.6 Rationale and Significance of the Study

The study is a justifiable engagement. First, the findings of this study will inform the reader’s understanding of the novels after interacting with alternative meanings that films can help derive from literary texts. In the same vein, the research findings will contribute to the viewer’s understanding of both the adapted films and their literary sources since the study seeks to investigate how meanings from the two forms inform on each other.
Secondly, Costanzo (1992) quotes John Harrington who estimated that well over 65% of all existing films are actually adaptations of existing literary texts. Bearing in mind this significant relationship between film and literature, the study makes a contribution to adaptation studies in Africa and in Kenya. Hence, departments of Literature and Film Studies stand to benefit directly from the findings of this research which constitute a body of knowledge on adaptation in general and specifically, intertextuality.

It was worthy to emphasize that though the selected texts are important contributions to the literary landscape and film industry, they have not been subjected to a systematic intertextual study; the kind of which this study has done. It is the hope of the researcher that the research findings herein will benefit scholars in the fields of Literature, Media Studies and Film Studies to see how the “literary form” and the “film form” as different sign systems of the selected works interact, especially considering the reality that for the majority of the studies reviewed, these works have been studied not with regard to the concepts of adaptation and intertextuality.

Besides, this research enriches the theory of filmmakers and adaptation critics. This is because an analysis of the congruities and incongruities highlights successes or failures (from the study’s point of view) of the adaptation techniques employed by filmmakers and raises questions as to what are the best theories and practices in the adaptation of literary texts into films. In addition, by virtue of the research findings in this study, the conclusions and recommendations, the research has indeed complemented studies done by earlier scholars in Film and Media Studies in affirming film as an area deserving of much more scholarly attention.

Selection of literary texts and their corresponding films was informed by various reasons. First, the selected works have generated a lot of interest and debate in African and global scholarship (Odipo, 2006 and Thiong’o 1981). It is therefore important that such significant works be studied as inter-texts of their adapted films. Secondly, Things Fall Apart is fictional text authored by a leading African writer about the colonial experience while Man-Eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures and Out of Africa
are non-fiction prose authored by Europeans living in Kenya at the time of writing. This apparent dichotomy provided ample ground for an interesting debate in the course of the study.

Lastly, since all the works were written during colonialism, in the course of interrogating similar and divergent meanings, the research was interested in finding out if any colonial and anti-colonial undertones, overtones and/or opposing attitudes are inherent in the adaptations and how they have been handled, either similarly or differently in both the literary and film texts. The period of the adaptations, ranging from 1985, 1987 to 1996 can be considered the beginning of adaptation of works by Africans and/or about Africa. The study interrogated whether the filmmakers marked this beginning by setting any trends in film adaptations in Africa or about Africa.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study restricted itself to the three selected literary texts and their corresponding adapted films. The investigation undertaken had the aim of highlighting intertextuality. As a result, the manner in which meanings from the two sets of texts (the source literary text, and the resultant film) inform each other, differ from each other or reflect the other was of particular interest. The researcher intended to make a comparative study of the source literary texts and the corresponding adapted films and not any other intermediate forms. Elements of the works such as subject matter, setting, plot, characterization, and narrative technique were looked at with the objectives of finding out firstly, how they either conform or deviate from each other, and secondly, to find out any new meanings arising from the deviation of the film from its literary antecedent.

The element of conformity was examined in line with the propositions of pluralist critics, Kline (1996), Anderson (1994) and Beja (1979) who accommodate both similarities and differences between adapted films and their literary antecedents. They hold that while the adapted film is an offspring of the literary antecedent, it should be allowed its
independence as an autonomous work of art with a different sign system. Deviation was interrogated in appreciation of transformation critics including Miller (1980), Kline (1996), who privilege the adapted film over the literary original and consider the latter merely as the raw material that facilitates the creation of the ‘original adapted film’ (hence they view the adapted film as an original in its own right). The study hypothesized that any deviation from the antecedent literary text contributes to new meaning neither originally, intended, nor anticipated in the literary original. This would then mean that the filmmakers seem to make subtle suggestions about the trends in the theory and practice of film adaptation. It was the intention of the study to carry out an objective driven study with a view to arriving at the desired understanding of what results from the form-content interaction between film adaptations and their literary antecedents.

1.8 Review of Related Literature

Several scholarly publications can be cited to attest to the fact that though a lot has been done in film adaptation studies, there yet remains an unexplored gap in the study of film adaptations of the literary texts targeted by the proposed study. It is this gap this research proposed to fill by way of investigating the intertextuality between the source texts and the resultant films with a view of finding out how the two art forms inform and complement each other.

1.8.1 Review of Literature on Adaptation Globally

Serra (2010) studied adaptation but limited her studies to the difference in sign systems between the literary text and film text. She postulates that the adapted film is not just the handmaid of its literary antecedent but a separate work speaking in its own voice. This scholar raises the issue of imagistic substitution, originally introduced by film critic Costa (1991). The two scholars agree that invention in adaptation should not be viewed as a betrayal of the original but a completion of the source text. Imagistic substitution entails the substitution of words with visual images. While the literary text communicates by
way of verbal signs (words), the adapted film chooses to communicate by way of visual images. In other words, film as an art relies heavily on visual images so that the filmmaker focuses on enhancing the expressivity of those visual images, thereby communicating more than the literary text which communicates through commentary of words.

To advance the argument above, Serra (2010) goes on to draw specific comparison between literary antecedent, the 1951 novel *The Conformist* by Alberto Moravia and a 1970 Bernado Bertolucci adapted film by the same name. She contends that while Moravia employs verbal commentary and explanation to convey the perversion and desire to conform by the main character Marcello Clerici, filmmaker Bertolucci in his resultant film portrays the same of the main character using visual images. Thus Serra (2010) notes:

> On celluloid, the filmmaker Bertolucci shuns lengthy commentaries but shuffles the sequence of episodes and criss-crosses flashbacks and flash forwards to help the viewer enter Marcello’s confused state of mind. Bertolucci’s choice of camera angles creates the same effect. (p. 140)

Serra (*ibid*) concludes that it is common for an independent adapted film to speak for itself as an art in its own right different from the literary source. This is what happens in the case of *The Conformist* (1970). This, she insists, is not a watering down of the literary original but as inspired creativity in which case the filmmaker appropriates such techniques used in figurative arts ranging from oil painting to sculpturing. This study establishes the understanding that adapted films can enjoy freedom as separate forms of art, independent of their literary originals.

Cobb (2010) handles the argument about gendered language in adapted films. She writes about the gendered language of infidelity that is characterized by the masculine-femine binarism in critical adaptation discourses. She also refers to Stam & Raengo (2004) who bravely criticize the use of words such as “fidelity” and “betrayal” when undertaking comparative critiques between source texts and their corresponding adapted films. Such
language, he holds, denigrates adaptations as art forms and reduces them to an extent that it is viewed as translations. She agrees with Chamberlain (1992) that such gendered language is a result of the received cultural interpretations regarding the hierarchy between men and women; between husband and wife which according to these scholars is coloured by double standards on the issue of chastity within romantic relationships. This study departed from this conception of adaptation by appreciating deviations between film and literary text.

Faubert (2008) looks at how socio-cultural factors affect film adaptations. Using Warner Bros adaptation of 1933 Allen Hervey’s novel, *Anthony Adverse*, he rejects the critical paradigms that hinge on the fidelity argument when undertaking comparative studies between the source literary text and the corresponding film adaptation. He documents that as from 1950s, scholars began to look at the adapted film as a result of socio-cultural functions such as financial imperatives and other commercial interests. The present study was inspired by this idea in that it sought to find out if socio-cultural factors such as history and politics had any impact on the resultant adaptations studied.

Further, Faubert advocates for film adaptation studies to move from mere comparative evaluations between the two art forms; the literary text and the film as a text. A fruitful critical approach, he argues, is that which looks at an adaptation as a dialogue between the film as a text and socio-cultural factors. This argument informed the study. Hutcheon (2006) and Leitch (2008) complement this point of view by stating that the socio-cultural setting in which an adaptation occurs makes it have a set of meanings which are more valuable than can be obtained by comparative analysis to establish the fidelity (or lack of) of the adapted film to the antecedent literary text. Influenced by this thinking, this study incorporated the study of meaning and technique in the adapted film so that the research could go beyond mere comparative study.

Murray (2008) reinforces this view by warning that critics risk losing a lot if they ignore what Faubert (2008) calls commercial imperatives in their studies. He contends:
Dematerialized, immune to commercialism, floating free of any cultural institutions, intellectual property regimes, or industry agents that might have facilitated its creation or indelibly marked its form, the adaptation exists in perfect quarantine from the troubling worlds of commerce, Hollywood, and global corporate media—a formalist textual fetish oblivious to the disciplinary incursions of political economy, book history, or the creative industries. (p. 15)

Allen Hervey’s novel, tells a story of a young orphan, Anthony, who is forced by the problems of the 1930s depression to drift around the world in search of a fortune. The corresponding adaptation of the novel to film is therefore suited to the audiences of the economic depression in the USA in the 1930s who can fully relate to the tribulations of the protagonist, Anthony.

Forster (2012) looks at spatial manipulation in adapted films. He studies the use of space in the film adaptation of literary text *Comedie* (1963) by Samuel Beckett. Forster observes that the audience’s reading of space develops as the film progresses. Specifically, he discusses the use of dark, blank and black screen shots. He alludes to Monaco (2000) who states that the blank screen provides unlimited possibilities for the audience to project their experiences. According to Heath (1981), who complements this view, though a blank screen is but two-dimensional, it offers a boundless range of possibilities to be projected on it. Similarly, this study undertook an investigation on how the film makers have used screen space to project various meanings in the selected adapted films under study either as similar or different from the meanings in the literary originals.

1.8.2 Review of Literature on Adaptation in Africa

One of the most critical works on adaptation in Africa is Lindiwe Dovey's *Adapting Violence to the Screen*, (2009). In her work, the author compares literary texts by West African and South African writers to their film offsprings. Specifically, Dovey (2009)
takes a critical look at how colonial and contemporary violence portrayed in literary texts by West African and South African writers has been adapted into film. Besides, she gives insights into how local trends in film making are a contribution to the continental trends in film production. For instance, she looks at the film presentation of apartheid violence in Alex La Guma’s *A Walk in the Night* (1960). It is noteworthy that her work does not however deal with the intertextual relationship of both form and content between the films and their literary antecedents. Nevertheless, it informed this study’s aspiration to investigate the similar or divergent presentation of meaning in the adapted film.

Scholarship on film adaptation in the African case also witnessed the shift to more objective criticism. Tcheuyap (2004) studies the socio-historical, ideological, cultural, aesthetic and thematic problems of film adaptation in Francophone Africa. This scholar gives a background of the entry of adaptations into the African literary-film landscape. According to him, the Lumiere brothers invented the moving images in 1895 and at the same time, the European powers were making their advent into Africa for colonization following the Berlin Conference of 1884/85\(^4\). This period coincided with the European view of Africans and Africa at the time respectively, as animals and an empty space to be conquered\(^5\). The scholar cites the Hegelian or De Gobineau’s race theories (Hegel, 1956 and Gobineau’s, 1967) which treated the African with contempt. Such theories viewed the African as inferior and cannibalistic and in dire need of being rescued from each other. Due to this state of affairs, Tcheuyap (*ibid*) posits, the initial film camera to get into Africa had colonial lenses.

Just as was the case with American and European cinema, the literary heritage formed the majority of films projected and shot in Africa. One of the most notable productions was *King Solomon’s Mines* (1937, 1950 and 1987), adapted several times from a 1885 novel by Rider Haggard by the same name. Of these early adaptations, Benali (1998) observes


that they were very realistic in the sense that their language and discourse reflected that of their literary antecedents. They were in fact viewed as literal; one-to-one renditions of the literary originals. Thus, “transcribed”, he notes, these films were nothing more than continuations of the pre-existing codes of presentation and their attendant disregard of the African as a human of lower form.

An interesting contradiction became clear when European filmmakers adapted local (African) literary content into film. Here, they abandoned the realism seen in the foregoing argument. Contrary to their fidelity stance in adapting European literary texts, they aesthetically, ideologically and culturally distorted the traditional African literary originals to conform to the racist discourse consistent with the ideology of the colonial hegemony. This is why Benali (1998) concludes that the early adapted film in Africa was used to conquer space in the same way that guns had been used before. Clearly, there was a relationship between colonial power, and the narratives of the time in literature and film.

While this was happening, the colonial authorities were conscious of the discontent among pioneer African film makers and other producers who wanted to counter biased presentation of Africa in film. Colonial authorities, therefore, instituted checks to censor productions by Africans or anti-colonial filmmakers. According to Ashcroft (2002), this was best illustrated in Francophone Africa. He notes that no single film could be produced in this region without express authority from French colonial governments. Motivated by the involvement of Africans in the film industry, the film institution was regulated by what is known as the Laval Decree. It was a policy put in place by the French Minister of the Colonies, Pierre Laval in 1934. This ensured that the industry was controlled especially with regard to content with the intent of forestalling what the authorities called subversive and anti-colonial content. Diawara (1992) observes that the authorities examined the scripts and all the people involved in the production process before giving permission for filming to ensure that there was no radicalization of the masses against the colonial hegemony.

Later on, the film industry in Francophone Africa would witness the innovation by
African filmmakers to re-present their people after years of misleading colonial presentation. These filmmakers were led by Sembene Ousmane who adapted his own literary works into films. In some of Ousmane’s films for instance, Tcheuyap (2004) notes, the actors were not professionals but ordinary people from non-literate backgrounds. They had lived in their villages all their lives and spoke only African languages and therefore could act authentically in their portrayal of the African condition. Tcheuyap (ibid) argues that Ousmane was influenced by his Marxist ideology in coming up with the adaptations. Having actively participated in the creation of the 1975 Algiers Charter on African Cinema (which advocated that African cinema needed to be politically relevant and militant) he went on to produce ideological adapted films in the name of Gelwaar (1992).

Ousmane remained committed to this cause, using cinema and adaptations for change because, as he argued, cinema could reach more people than books which were limited by literacy (or the lack of it) and purchasing power (Barlet, 2000). In his adaptations, he strives to liberate Africans from colonial hegemony and later, stifling post-colonial maladministration in as much the same way as the African literary artist used books in the 1950s and 1960s. From the foregoing, we can conclude that whereas the colonist used film adaptations to entrench colonial hegemony and exert control, the African filmmaker used film adaptations to liberate the African from colonial oppression.

In the foregoing review of related literature, it is clear that although various studies on adaptation are available, there is yet a lacuna specifically in the realm of the study of intertextual relationship between the adapted film and the literary original. The selected objects of the study are, in fact, yet to be subjected to any such study. The study hence set out to exploit this gap by studying the object of the proposed study.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This research was informed by the theories of adaptation, namely: Transformation film critical model and the Pluralist paradigm. The two critical perspectives are part of the
four paradigms introduced by Kline (1996) in film adaptation critical thought as reviewed in Literature Film Quarterly 24.1 (1996). The two paradigms had previously been advanced by Cohen (1977), Orr (1992) and Miller (1980). According to the transformation critics, the adapted film and the antecedent literary text are considered separate media, autonomous and independent of each other. This, they argue, is because the two media have different sign systems. While the literary text communicates by way of verbal signs, the film as a text passes its message using audio-visual images, hence difference in media. The transformative critics do not concern themselves with the question of finding resemblance or fidelity between the source literary text and the adapted film. This theory facilitated this research in appreciating the adapted films as texts in their own right, despite being off-springs of literary texts. This is in view of the transformation scholars’ accommodation of deviation of the adapted film from the source literary text.

This school of thought on adaptation privileges the adapted film over the source literary text. The film, then, to them becomes more superior to the literary text from which it is adapted. This view counters critics who opine that the source text is always superior and that, in fact, the adapted film should show a marked fidelity to the source literary text. More specifically, the transformative critics dismantle the view held by critics such as Michael, Klein & Parker (1981) who argue that an adapted film can only be a success if it remains faithful to the literary original. They further condemn films that depart from the thrust of the literary text. This view is supported by Dudley (1984) who favours films that remain faithful to the letter and spirit of the source text.

Contrary to the translation critics, the transform critics view the literary text merely as a raw material which is ultimately significantly altered to give the adapted film its autonomy and grant it status as a work of art in its own right. Cohen (1977) perhaps, goes to the extreme of transformation thought. He regards the literary text as simply the occasion for producing the original work of film art. He implies that an adapted film should be viewed as an original in itself. Cohen holds that a successful film adaptation
must free itself from the literary text. If there is no such freedom and independence of the adapted film from the source literary text, such a film must then be inferior. Cohen argues that such a film is no more than words changed into images. With inspiration from this theoretical perspective, the study determined to develop the argument that the literary source can be treated as a raw material in the making of the adapted film, and in effect view the adapted texts as stand-alone works of art which do not have to be compared with their literary originals.

Cohen (1977) finds support in Cartmell and Whelehan (1999) in advancing the principles of transformation theory. The latter contend that for better appreciation, there is necessity to emancipate the film from dependence on literature. The two scholars disagree with the persistent view that films are normally inferior to their literary antecedents. Their work henceforth seeks to deconstruct the view that derides films as sycophantic and derivative.

Similarly, while acknowledging the importance of the antecedent literary text, Cahir (2006) in her publication titled Literature into Film: Theory and Practical Approaches, affirms the independence of the film as an autonomous work. This is in line with the tenets of transformation theory. In her studies, Cahir comes up with some salient properties that an adapted film ought to fulfill. Although Cahir (2006) uses the auxiliary must in her prescriptions, this study shalls use should.

Among the envisaged properties of an adapted film, four stand out. Therefore, Cahir (2006) contends that an appropriately adapted film should communicate definite ideas concerning the integral meaning and value of the literary source as filmmakers may interpret it, have a collaboration of various filmmaking skills and techniques, demonstrate audacity to be independent as a world apart which exploits the literary source in a way that is self-reliant while at the same time remaining a related aesthetic offspring and avoid being so self-governing; completely independent or even antithetical to the literary antecedent.
Further, Cahir (2006) comes up with three categories of adaptation. Her categories are dependent upon the extent to which the film deviates from the literary antecedent. These are Traditional Adaptation, Literal Adaptation and Radical Adaptation. Traditional Adaptation is characterized by much more freedom from the literary source than the rest of the types. It is inspired by a guarded audacity to create an independent work. In this regard, the proposed study shall be interested in making conclusions on the kind and extent of adaptation.

There are however, conservative transformative critics. Some of these believe that a successfully adapted film, though significantly transforms the literary text, should at the very least have traces of the antecedent literary text. Orr (1992) and Miller (1980) hold the thinking that successful film adaptations are those that improve the text, rather than those that merely use the literary text as raw material in the adaptation process, as Cohen would have it be. Given the Transformatives accommodation of film deviation from the literary original, this theory facilitated the research’s appreciation of divergences in both form and meaning between the adapted film and the source literary text.

The pluralist film adaptation critical paradigm recognizes the connection between the form and content of the adapted film in relation to the literary source. The adapted film’s ability to retain the spirit of the source text is emphasized (Anderson [1994]). Pluralists hold that a successful practice of film adaptation is that which results in analogies between the literary antecedent and the adapted film. However, like the transformation critics, the pluralists recognize the distinction between the literary text and the cinematic text as different sign systems. They hence accommodate deviation in spite of their emphasis on the need for connection between the literary text and the resultant adaptation. They nevertheless steer away from the fidelity aesthetic. With the application of this theory, the researcher was able to appreciate both convergence and divergence between the source texts and the adapted films under study.

The pluralist model of film study accommodates both differences and similarities between the adapted film and the source text. For Beja (1979) and Kline (1996), the
success then depends on the ability of the film maker to find a working equilibrium between two media. Ironically, pluralists maintain that the success of an adaptation thrives on the paradox of the autonomy of the text as an independent fictive world in itself which at the same time renders itself to significantly uphold the spirit of the original literary text. Kline adds that the resemblance to the literary text can be abstract or intellectual.

Although an adapted film is afforded the freedom to be autonomous, pluralists (Boyun 1985 & Kline 1996) insist that the adapted film should capture the mode, tone and values of the original literary text. The freedom allowed adapted films to be self-serving up to a certain extent is emphasized by Morris Beja (quoted in Kline (1996) who argues that just as what a film takes from its literary antecedent matters, so does what the film brings to the literary text. This is the whole point of intertextuality, which is the main subject of the proposed study. According to Beja (ibid), the resulting film is then not a betrayal; not a copy; not an illustration and also not a departure from its literary source, but an autonomous work of art in itself.

Chatman (1978) introduced the concept of Kernels and Satellites which can be used to further understand the concept of intertextuality. He defines Kernels as those elements within the original literary text that cannot be omitted without significantly altering the story and Satellites as the minor elements and events, which though not found in the literary original, can be invented and introduced into the adapted film with the aesthetic reason of embellishing it. According to Chatman (ibid), striking equilibrium between the Kernels and the Satellites is what ensures the success on adaptation, hence the pluralism.

A case is made by one of the pluralists, Alex Fung (as cited in Klein and Parker, 1981), who argues that a good adaptation is not a one-to-one rendition of the original literary text. He criticizes the adaptation of Jane Smiley’s novel A Thousand Acres for being too faithful to the original text to the extent that ironically, the spirit of the literary source is lost. This view is supported by Sanford (1998) who observes:
A Thousand Acres works so hard to pack as much of the book into an hour and 45 minutes that it feels like the highlights tape pulled from several months of a daytime soap-opera...You'll barely have time to weep over one crisis before an even worse one pops up. Quoted

www.yorku.ca/mlc/4319/03-04/gibbons/gibbons.5.htm

The pluralist film critical theory thus enabled the study to treat adapted films and corresponding source literary texts as related and interconnected in aspects of form and meaning, but, without expecting the offspring film to retain one-to-one fidelity to its source text.

To be able to apply the principles of the above theories in understanding the intertextuality between adapted film and source literary texts, inspiration from the theory of translation was found necessary. This study therefore called on the tenets of Transformation film critical model that are relevant in augmenting the two theories above: the pluralist and transformative paradigms.

Jakobson (1959) identifies three types of translation: inter-translation which occurs between two different languages, intra-translation (transformation of a message from one set of symbols to another within the same language) and inter-semiotic translation. It is within the province of the third type of translation that we can situate film adaptation studies. Besides, Lhermite (2005) argues that literary theorists including Foucault (1977), Barthes (1974), Umberto Eco (1992), and Derrida (1982) have for long held the view that the concept of the original is so abstract and hard to define, then duplicate in an adapted film.

While referring to the idea of inter-semiotic translation, Lhermite (2005) cites Catryse (1992) who contends that the field of translation should be expanded to include not only linguistic (verbal) translation but also adaptation studies. In this case, the researcher allowed translation to accommodate transfer of messages between two sign systems: the verbal in the literary text to the audio-visual in the adapted film. Catryse (ibid) lays a strong foundation for the case of the relevance of translation theory in reading and interpreting adapted films in relation to their literary antecedents. He says:
There seems to be no valuable argument to keep on reducing the concept of translation to mere cross-lingual transfer processes. The scope has to be extended to a contextualistic semiotic perspective (p. 68).

With regard to film adaptations, inter-semiotic translation involves transformation of information from the verbal symbol system to the audio-visual symbol system in much the same manner as translation in language which involves a binary system between two distinct languages, or transformation of content between two sets of symbols within the same language. According to Jakobson, inter-semiotic translation may involve the conversion of a literary text into an opera, a musical, a painting, or quite commonly, a film.

Lhermite (2005) proceeds with the case for the application of translation paradigm in the study of film adaptations. He defends that studies should focus on the inter-media phase of translation, while separating the literary text from its offspring; the adapted film, and relating the latter to their emotional, political, social and cultural environment. This, he argues, helps the critic to understand the successive changes that take place during the transformation from the verbal order of communication to the audio-visual one and why.

He concludes his submission by stating that the result of this thinking is that adaptations can then be seen as hybrid products that contain traces of the literary original rather than one-to-one renditions of them; that adaptation involves the blending of sameness and differences. This proposal believes that this liberates the literary-cum-adaptation critic from the reductive fidelity paradigm of adaptation interpretation and criticism. Lhermite (2005) writes:

Cultural capital is transmitted, distributed and regulated by means of translation among other factors, not only between cultures but also within the same culture. (p. 101)

The above eclectic approach was critical to the researcher in facilitating the analysis of source literary texts and their corresponding adapted films with a view to seeing how the
two correlate, inform, add value to or reduce each other.

1.10 Research Methodology

1.10.1 Research Design

This study was exploratory in nature and was guided by the qualitative approach to research. This research procedure involved collection of qualitative data from the selected literary texts and film texts by reading of the verbal/visual and audio-visual material. This was followed by qualitative textual analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The above was preceded by the sampling of the primary material to be studied.

1.10.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Since this research set out to study three adapted films and their corresponding antecedent literary texts, the films: *Things Fall Apart* (1987) by David Orere; *The Ghost and the Darkness* (1996) by Stephen Hopkins and *Out of Africa* (1986) by Sydney Pollack were juxtaposed with their literary antecedents: *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe; *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures* (1907) by John Patterson and *Out of Africa* (1937) by Karen Blixen. The material under study was arrived at using purposive sampling. The films and texts represent both the pre-independence and post-independence era. This sampling criterion enabled the study to settle on two texts written by Western authors living in Kenya at the time of authorship and one text written by an African author about colonial oppression and resistance. According to Schatzman & Strauss (1973), purposive and selective sampling is employed by a researcher as “shaped by the time the researcher has available to him, by his framework, by his interests, and by any restrictions placed upon his observations” (p. 39).

Within the realm of purposive sampling, Fraser (2008) identifies Criterion Sampling, a strategy that enables the researcher to come up with samples that meet a certain criterion.
This explains why the proposed study ended up with three sampled long prose writing and their film versions. This study targeted specifically, prose that has been adapted into film, and the latest film adaptation for each of the selected works. This therefore made the chosen method of sampling the most suited for the research.

1.10.3 Data Collection

The study required both primary and secondary data to be collected and then analysed. As a consequence, it described methods which were applied in the collection of both sets of data as stated below.

Primary Data

The source of primary data in this study was the three selected adapted films and their literary antecedents. The researcher read the literary texts and then viewed films adapted from them. This went hand in hand with collecting and writing down information as guided by the Film and Text Reading Guide originally appended on the proposal of this study. Data was collected on the aspects variance and conformity in terms of form and content. The target elements were characterization, setting, language, plot and meaning. The study, in addition, viewed the films and noted down in the research guide the techniques used by the directors to compensate for narrative techniques in literary texts which are not directly transferable to the adapted films. This was complemented by scanning the texts and specific episodes of the films to validate the data already collected when necessity demanded it. In this respect, the viewing of the films was regarded as reading of the film language⁶.

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⁶ Monaco, J. (2009)
Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected from critical works and other reference materials written on both texts and films sampled for this study. For the literary texts, the study benefited from the critical works analyzing the selected literary texts which were sourced from various libraries – both physical and online. Besides, owing to scarcity of hard copy material on film adaptation and intertextuality, the researcher accessed online journals, e-books and online blogs that host debates and criticism on film studies. In addition, the study was complemented by viewing different versions of films adapted from the same literary text. A case in point is the film *Bwana Devil*, different version adapted from *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures* (1907). The reading and viewing of these materials involved note taking and note making to consolidate data for analysis.

1.10.4 Data Analysis

The primary data collected using the Film and Text Reading Guide, and secondary data were analysed using Content Analysis. According to Babbie (2010), it is an approach in Social Sciences and Humanities used to study the content of communication such as books, paintings, websites and Law. Similarly, Neuendorf (2002) defines Content Analysis as “the primary message centred methodology” (p.9). For this study, content analysis aided the research to decipher meanings from the read literary texts and the adapted films viewed with the objective of making comparisons between the two art forms. By use of content analysis, texts can be studied to understand the key components of form and meaning. The approach, therefore, contributed to the understanding of both the audio-visual elements in the adapted films and the written word in the source literary texts. After analysis, comprehensive synthesis of the notes taken was undertaken to come up with a coherent final dissertation.

The analysis of data as stated above was carried out according to the dictates of the identified theories of film adaptation: Pluralist and transformation critical paradigms.

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7 In Macnamara, J. (2005)
This enabled the researcher to find out the areas of convergence and divergence in terms of technique and meaning and therefore adequately responded to the aim of understanding how the selected antecedent literary texts and the adapted films correlate.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has given an introduction that defines the nature and process undertaken in the course of the study. The chapter has the aim of documenting the necessary background information in film-literature studies and establishing the gap that motivated this research. The gap has been made clear also in the relevant literature reviewed. Finally, the chapter has described the theoretical perspective of the study and the methodology used in the spirit of meeting the objectives set at the start.

Chapter two of this study looks at the techniques used by filmmakers of the films under study to compensate for narrative technique of the literary antecedents. Chapter three of this study examines the conformities and deviations between the literary antecedents and the corresponding adapted films with regard to specific elements namely: character, plot, setting, and language. The import of such deviations or lack thereof is also examined. The fourth chapter puts to scrutiny the all-important subject of meaning with a view to finding out to what extent the adapted films conform to, or deviates from, the meaning realized in the literary originals. The final chapter of this thesis summarizes the findings and conclusions of this research and recommends possible areas of study in film adaptation scholarship.

The next chapter therefore undertakes a discussion on how technical elements of filmmaking are used to narrate the cinematic narrative in a similar fashion as the use of descriptive narration of the antecedent prose narratives. To be specific, chapter two shall discuss how sound and cinematographic elements such as lighting, camera angle and length, composition, framing and montage facilitate the telling of the cinematic narrative either to a different or similar degree as compared to the prose narration of the literary antecedents.
CHAPTER TWO

DIALECTICS OF PROSE TO FILM TRANSFORMATION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the techniques used in film production to adapt the literary text into cinematic text – the dialectics of page-to-screen transformation. It interrogates how sound, lighting, film shots and other techniques of mise-en-scene have been used to compensate for elements of prose narrative which are not directly transferable to film. The macro technique in a prose narrative is narrative description. This chapter therefore discusses how narrative description in the literary texts has been represented in the adapted films with the effect of telling the same story similarly or differently. The chapter recognizes that literary text and film are different forms of storytelling and hence have different ways of telling the same story, or where necessary the adapted film has different ways of altering the story of the literary text depending upon the adapter’s creative re-visioning of the original story. Alqadi (2015) contends:

Adaptation is indeed a rewriting of a story, which can’t be a copy paste of the original. It’s a subjective interpretation of the director, inspired by a text, and then crafting his film differently. He may insist on some passages of the story than others or expand a single move briefly described in a novel, to a three-shot sequence, with discontinuity between the shots, deliberately changing the pace and the perspectives. Directors may reproduce the context or time period of the novel, but they also may keep only the highlights of the story, its main events, and then make the events take place in another time period, adapting the narrative to another time outline instead of adapting the characters to the period time of the novel (p. 45).

The above statement affirms the view held by transformation critics who believe that an adapted film is not bound to conform to the world of its literary antecedent. The antecedent, therefore, is sometimes allowed to be the raw material form which the film is fashioned. This consequently leads to the liberty of the filmmaker to expand, reduce or vary the scope of the narrative in the film. The common practice, however, is that the
adapter maintains a healthy equilibrium between conformity and deviation, thereby permitting reflections and divergences between the two media.

A significant scope of this chapter invests in discussing how cinematic soundscape has been used in the same manner as narrative voice and perspective of narration in the literary originals. Specifically, this chapter interrogates the use of spoken sound (voice-overs or off-screen spoken sound) in contributing to the diegesis (the storyline) of the cinematic narrative. The chapter reveals that voice-overs in the films *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* have been used to different effect. While in the former voice retains the identity of the narrator in the literary antecedent, in the latter the filmmaker introduces a different voice, hence changing the identity of the narrator. The study sheds light on the impact that retention or change of narrative voice of the text in the film has on the structure and meaning of the adapted film, and whether the retention or change thereof makes the film better or lesser compared to the literary original in the rendition of the story. In *Things Fall Apart*, off-screen sound (voice-overs) takes the form of an omniscient narrator.

This chapter also focuses on the role of other components of cinematic sound. The role of diegetic and non-diegetic music is investigated. Diegetic music (emerging from the action realizable on the screen) and non-diegetic music (in the form of soundtrack and music score) is discussed in his chapter to have an important bearing on the emotive aspects of the films. Such other roles as, establishing mood, emphasizing specificity of setting, contributing to the tempo of the story and revealing character dispositions have also been examined.

Finally, this chapter shifts focus to a critical element of filmmaking: cinematography. Cinematographic elements are discussed in this chapter in relation to how they tell the cinematic narrative in the same way or differently as compared to the prose narrative in the literary antecedents. The chapter analyses the filmmakers’ use of lighting, camera (with regard to length and angles), framing and other elements of production like use of costume and scenery. All these are discussed with regard to how they contribute to the autonomy of the adapted films, while at the same time retaining the spirit of the
antecedent literary texts.

2.2 Sound: From Prose Narration to Audio Narration

"Film sound is rarely appreciated for itself alone but functions largely as an enhancement of the visuals. By means of some mysterious perceptual alchemy, whatever virtues sound brings to film are largely perceived and appreciated by the audience in visual terms. The better the sound, the better is the image."\(^8\)

The above quotation appears here as a prologue to this section so that the chapter begins by appreciating the fact that sound is integral to film. Sound in film is used for both aesthetic and communicative value. For the case of music in adapted films, this chapter looks at how sound is used as a narrative technique to compensate for descriptive narration in the literary original. Besides transferring the meaning of the text into the film, it also introduces new layers of meaning – either purely new, or latent in the literary text.

Sound refers to everything that a viewer can hear from the film in the course of the occasion of viewing. Most films exhibit integration between soundtrack and soundscape (landscape and environment sounds). A combination of all the sound techniques used in a film to correlate with the environment/viewer sees is termed as the film’s soundscape. The soundscape of a film is made up of spoken word (voice), sound effects and music. Schafer (1994 [1977]), alluding not necessarily to film, but using the term for a wider meaning, defined soundscape as “a total appreciation of the acoustic environment” (p. 4).

In the process of film making, a soundscape is incorporated to serve various functions including setting the mood of the film story, advancing the plot, authentication of setting of the action and individuating characters (Martin, 2013). Sound therefore becomes an integral part of the film story; an element of visual story telling which in the adapted film replaces what in literary prose narration which is effected by use of such devices as description, narrative voice and perspective, and dialogue. Further emphasis is made as

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\(^8\) Sound Designer, Walter Murch, quoted in Dakic (2009).
proof of how sound as used in films becomes an indispensable part of the cinematic narrative. Martin (2013) states:

The soundtrack plays an integral part of this experience. Using the term soundtrack can falsely create the impression that this object exists on its own. But, as Chion provocatively put it, there is no soundtrack (Chion 2009, p. 226). All sounds and soundscapes in a film owe their existence to the images and the narrative context, even in documentary film, which strives to be closer to reality and closer to the object of its observation than feature film. Feature films also portray realities through story telling. As in any film form, sound is crucial for creating a sense of reality for the viewer, the sense of ‘being there’ (p.126).

The above quotation emphasizes the idea that sound is an integral element in film that combines with images to create and transmit meaning. Though added to images in the process of editing, sound adds a layer of meaning that is blended with the meaning of the images to produce a wholesome meaning. This section of the chapter therefore seeks to treat sound as complementary to images because among other functions, it helps to anchor film in a realistic setting and to develop an appropriate atmosphere.

According to Martin (ibid), in film discourse, soundscape is a coinage that arises from two words: sound and landscape. It refers to film score that is created as a result of blending music, spoken sound and other sound effects ranging from landscape to environmental sounds that exist within the setting of a film scene. Martin (ibid) writes further about their import:

Soundscape composition for film can be seen as an alternative to conventional film music. Soundscape composition increases the division of labour between the image and soundtrack, that is, establishing shots become less important and can be introduced any time, not just at the beginning of a scene. Techniques of electro-acoustic music have found a new field of application with a much broader audience (p. 133).

In this statement, Martin (ibid) advances his argument to emphasize how music (whether diegetic or non-diegetic) and sound effects work in film to create realism in setting (in terms of place and time) and build appropriate emotion at suitable places in the film. The
films under study have exemplified this use of sound as the chapter examines later. Besides, he states that what images are unable to communicate, sound does because there is “division of labour between the image and soundtrack” (Martin, 2013, p. 133).

Studies in use of sound in film have identified two kinds of sound in film: Diegetic sound and Non-diegetic sound (Chion, 1999 and Dykhoff, 2012). This distinction is based upon the closeness or interaction between the diegesis (the events, the plot and the story) and the piece of sound. Diegetic sound, also referred to as synchronous sound, is the sound that comes from the world of the film story such that it is inextricably integrated to what the viewer sees on-screen. It includes the dialogue of the characters, the sound of their actions, for instance footsteps, silence, laughter, crying and the slamming and creaking of doors. In the case of the films under study, it includes sounds accruing out of natural circumstances like lions roaring and the sound of birds. Besides, if the characters play music as part of the story, such music is categorized under diegetic sound.

Non-diegetic sound, also known as asynchronous sound, refers to the use of audio elements that do not belong to the world of the cinematic narrative. While diegetic sound is integrated into the story, non-diegetic sound is detached and contributes only as a more or less ‘external’ element. This audio category is off-screen because it does not belong to the fictional world staged by the film story. This includes, music score (music composed specifically for a certain film), soundtrack, and other sound effects like the ticking of a clock or the screeching of tires that is not visible on screen.

The success of a film depends on the filmmaker’s ability to balance the use of these two categories and ensure that they are fused into the vision of the film story. This section of the chapter shall investigate the use of sound in the films *The Ghost and the Darkness* and *Out of Africa.*
2.2.1 Sound and Narrator Reliability

This section of the chapter discusses how off-screen voice-overs, such as those in adapted films under study, are used to enhance the credibility of the narrator in the eyes of the viewer. The viewer’s faith in the narrative voice they hear as a reliable source of the narrative hence enhances their appreciation of the cinematic narrative as a real story. This is especially important in the case of the two films that are autobiographical *The Ghost and the Darkness* and *Out of Africa*. Therefore, this section of the chapter discusses how the choice of a reliable voice to render the cinematic narrative facilitates the autobiographical form of the two films.

In terms of narrative voice, the film *The Ghost and the Darkness* differs significantly from the antecedent text, *The Man-eaters of Tsavo and other East African Adventures* (1907). Even though the film conforms – with regard to narrative point of view – to the first person point of view of the literary text, there is deviation in respect of the personality of the narrator. What the narrative point of view – as conventionally used in prose narratives – achieves in the literary original, so does sound in film, specifically, the use of voice-over technique. The filmmaker in *The Ghost and the Darkness* adopts the use of voice-over technique in spite of the criticism levied against this device in filmmaking. For instance, Asheim (1949) argues that on most occasions, literary dialogue is “so unlike ordinary speech as to make literal carryover on to the screen of dubious value” Asheim (1949, p. 26). This point of view is also supported by Mckee (1997) who holds that “The art of cinema connects Image A via editing, camera, or lens movement with Image B, and the effect is meanings C, D, and E, “expressed without narration.” (p. 344). He further posits that the use of voice-over throughout a film “threatens the future of our art” (p. 344).

Significantly, the filmmaker uses the voice-over, but in a distinct way as to allay accusations (Mckee, 1997 and Asheim, 1949) of having “carried over” dialogue from the literary text to the film. In *The Ghost and the Darkness*, the filmmaker opts for a different narrator, Samuel, rather than John Patterson, the author and narrator of his
memoir – literary original. In the adapted film, Samuel begins at 1:04:

This is the most famous true African adventure. Famous because what took place at Tsavo, never happened before. Colonel John Patterson was there when it began – a fine Irish gentleman; a brilliant engineer. He was my friend. My name is Samuel – I was there.

Initially, by the clarity of its statement, Samuel’s voice authoritatively asserts the historicity of the film by declaring that the film is the most famous African adventure, thereby allaying doubts in the viewer that what they were absent to witness really happened. Matuszewski (1997) discusses the function of film in narrating history in a different way from the practice of prose narration. Whereas in prose, history is just told, in the film, it is shown, he posits, stating further that while prose represents history, the film bears witness of history. He further quotes Albert Kahn who opines:

Film, both fiction and non-fiction; offers the historian of the twentieth century an entirely idiosyncratic but nevertheless photographic record of the past. (Matuszewski, 1997, p. 201).

It is instructive that just before the voice, a subtitle showing “LONDON 1898” appears. History bears testimony to the fact that Kenya was colonized by the British; that the rail bridge across river Tsavo was built in 1898 by Col. John James Patterson, and that the railway would later reach Kisumu in 1901. Even the travails of a hapless group of railroad workers at the ferocity of the man-eaters at Tsavo stands the test of the veracity of historical facts (Platt, 2014). The viewer, as a result, is made from the very onset of the film to trust in the narrator who insists that the events, places and people to be viewed are true in fact. This emphatic role of voice-over is in line with McKee’s (1997) contention. In spite of his condemnation of this technique, he posits that “if the visual narration stands on its own and the voice-over(s) provide wit, irony or insights, it is a valuable device” (p. 344).

Besides, the film’s choice of Samuel (one of the foremen at the bridge construction and Patterson’s aide) as the narrator is critical. In fact, Samuel is not even a character in John Patterson’s literary original. Not being a character in the text makes him gain the
confidence of the viewer as an objective narrator of Colonel James Patterson's story; as sort of outsider’s voice that will reveal the adventure of Tsavo without being overly emotionally attached to the events of the narrative as to exaggerate or intrude into the tale. The filmmaker might have theorized that for objectivity’s sake, Patterson himself would not be an appropriate narrator of events that had tremendous effect on his person. This deviation from the autobiographical mode of the literary antecedent establishes a necessary aesthetic distance. The shift from an autobiographical story in the literary text to a graphical rendition of the film story, and the introduction of a character not in the text, with a different voice brings reliability and validity to the claim that the story he is telling us is a true depiction of what really happened at Tsavo. Hence, the film acquires a quality missing in the text; it becomes a more credible story told by a narrator other than the man (Col. James Patterson) who was writing memoirs of his own life at Tsavo.

Of point of view, Rifkin (1994) identifies some of the variants of aural effects in filmic narration. First, he identifies the use of an off-screen voice over that can simply read passages of the original text. This, he says, is the least interesting because it does not allow the filmmaker to exploit their creative potential to appeal to the viewer. Secondly, he notes that information in the literary text narrator’s discourse can be transferred into the discourse of characters in the adapted film as part of filmic narration. Further, he contends that just as point of view shifts in prose narration, so does it in the film narrative. While, in the literary text it can be marked by deictic signals such as change in pronoun or tense and signposts such as “it seemed to her that”, in the filmic text the shifts in point of view are made possible by cinematographic strategies (to be discussed later in the chapter) such as camera length and focus and character glances.

It is noteworthy that this voice is heard by the viewer before setting eyes on Samuel himself. However, because of his assertion “I was there”, the viewer anticipates a firsthand account of the reality that was on the ground. Samuel’s “I was there” thus serves the same function of signpost to identify narrative point of view in the same way as Rifkin’s “it seemed to her that.” In effect, the action in the film is viewed through the eyes of a trusted narrator who is at the vantage point to relate what he saw and took part
in. Later on, we see the image of Samuel upon Patterson’s arrival at Tsavo. He is indeed a native who tells Patterson that his home is “beyond those mountains”.

Whereas the story in the literary text is told by Col. Patterson, a foreigner, the cinematic tale is told by a native who understands Kiswahili and the character of fellow natives and other workers hence a credible source of the story. The only setback would be that when he speaks English, his accent is not East African, but South African. This erodes some of the confidence a knowing viewer – familiar with African languages – would have had in him as a true native of Kenya.

In the preface of her memoir, *Out of Africa* (1937), Karen Blixen quotes in Latin, “*Equitare, arcum tendere, veritatem dicere.*” These words were originally uttered by the Greek philosopher, Herodotus to signify the Greek conception of an ideal life. They were later translated into Latin by a Roman historian, Tacitun, (Donelson, 1998). Literally translated into English, they mean, “to ride, to shoot, (and) to tell the Truth.” According to Donelson (*ibid*), this statement is significant in three ways. The first of these ways relates to the importance of narrative voice in the literary text, relative to its use in the film. According to Donelson, Blixen (1937) uses this quote to seduce the reader with a declaration that the story they are about to read is about the adventures she lived to the fullest and that she will render the events as truthfully as they happened. This declaration echoes that made by Patterson (1907) at the beginning of his memoir as indicated in chapter three of this study. As already indicated, these exhortations are made by the writers to persuade the readers to savour their memoirs as true accounts of what in fact happened. We find the representation of such authorial declaration in the adapted films in the form of voice-overs to be discussed in the next section of the chapter.

According to Donelson (2001), Karen Blixen’s life seems to have been guided by this dictum:

> The motto appealed to Karen Blixen because of the great Nordic sagas (and reiterates the story of the Odyssey) that one must venture forth, confront tragedy, and render it as literature in order to become immortal.
Blixen’s allusion, “Equitare, arcum tendere, veritatem dicere” in the literary original is a subtle declaration on the side of the author that shows commitment to telling the whole story of her life in Kenya. This declaration in Latin, and the voice-overs in Karen’s voice in the film complement each other in the telling of Karen’s half romantic, half tragic life in Kenya.

2.2.2 Sound in Narrating the Tragic

This section of the chapter redefines the conception of tragedy in artistic forms. Here, tragedy is not defined according to the strict Aristotelian prescription, but is interpreted to mean significant reversal of the fortunes of the protagonist. This reversal can be either temporary, as is the case of the protagonist in The Ghost and the Darkness, or permanent, as it is in Out of Africa. In the former, sound is used to narrate the horrors that typify the life of characters in the film, in the latter; it is used to narrate the series of misfortunes that afflict the protagonist. While in the Aristotelian sense tragedy would mean absolute, or near absolute downfall of the protagonist, in this chapter, tragedy is read as a form of capitulation (whether temporary or permanent) of the protagonist against social and/or natural forces. In this regard, Things Fall Apart will be left out of this section because it demonstrates the tragic form with all the dictates of the classical Greek tragedy as prescribed by Aristotle in his Poetics. Things Fall Apart will be discussed in this respect separately in chapter three.

Martin (2013) has written on the role of sound in filmic narration of tragedy, with specific emphasis on how soundscapes are appropriated by the filmmaker to do this. He gives insight into how the film Katalin Varga (2009) by English director Peter Strickland exemplifies the use of sound in narrating the “human emotion of wrath (anger), which culminates in a tragic act of revenge” (p. 131). About this film, in which Katalin, the protagonist and victim of rape is out to revenge, Martin (2013) writes:
As Katalin arrives at the scene of her rape on the edge of a forest, we can hear mysterious, reverberant sounds of voices. Whenever Katalin drifts off into the world of her haunted memories, these spherical sounds can be heard … A good example for the metaphorical use of a sound is an open fire during a rural dance party. Music and other location sounds fade away until we can only hear the intense cracking of the burning wood over the now familiar spheric electronic sounds as a metaphor for Katalin’s tension and turmoil (p. 132).

From the foregoing, we see how sound can be used as an agent of expressing violence and outrage. From this understanding, this chapter discusses the use of sound to narrate the horrific attack on man by the lions of Tsavo in the film *The Ghost and the Darkness*. From the above again, it is clear that sound is often used in film as a means of expressing natural and personal tensions. Martin (*ibid*) goes on to conclude on the multifunctional role of soundscapes in film. He explains how sound combines with the image to express context in film. He opines:

> They provide a sense of place and space and they can evoke emotions. Soundscapes are not burdened by musical traditions and cultural context. In modern film soundtracks environmental soundscapes and (electronic) musical textures are fully integrated seamlessly blending into each other. Soundscapes composition increases the division of labour between the image and soundtrack, that is, establishing shots become less important and can be introduced any time, not just at the beginning of a scene. Techniques of electro-acoustic music have found a new field of application with a much broader audience. The film director and the sound designer have become composing listeners (p. 133).

From the above, we see the role of the film director and sound designer in making meaning by anticipating how the intended meaning shall be received by the audience, then making it. As a result, the viewer is able to relate the action visible on the screen and context – which is expressed by sound. Coming from this background, it is evident in both *The Ghost and the Darkness* and *Out of Africa* how sound can be used in film to establish mood in the cinematic narrative. Specifically, voice-overs have been used to enhance the misfortunes or tragedies that colour the lives of the main characters in the two films. For *The Ghost and the Darkness*, it is the tragic encounter between man and beast in man’s quest to conquer the African interior. For *Out of Africa*, it is the
unfortunate capitulation of a once promising love life of Karen in an alien continent.

In the film *The Ghost and the Darkness*, Samuel’s ominous voice introduces this aspect at the beginning of Col. Patterson’s and the rail workers’ encounter with larger-than-life man-eaters. It is the beginning of the catastrophic encounter between man and beast that threatens to throw the construction of the railway line off-balance. The voice-over comes in the background of images of workers celebrating after Patterson kills a lion – not one of the famous two. The severity of his voice renders the celebration premature and foreshadows the tragic horror that still looms in the days ahead, despite readiness by Patterson to take risks on behalf of the workers. At 16:22 Samuel narrates:

There is nothing like the fear a man-eater brings. They own the night, and kill so quickly. It was clear to the men that Patterson was willing to take risks for them. By one shot, he had taken their fears away.

What happens later on stands as proof that this celebration and relief is only a temporary reprieve for Patterson and the men in their construction project; a deceptive lull of peace for seven weeks before the two infamous lions struck.

The voice-over technique allows the viewer to confidentially be privy to the letter correspondence between Patterson and his wife. Through this technique, the audience reads the first letter he writes to his wife. To start with, a sense of patriotism and character exaltation of the Irish is evident when he writes that the Irish could rule the world if they didn’t drink too much liquour. The letter also prepares us for the eventuality that Patterson will finally conquer the two enormous obstacles that initially impede his progress in retaining his enviable fame as a brilliant engineer: defeating the man-eating lions and completing the bridge.

Darling, you know God invented liquour, so the Irish wouldn’t rule the world. Well, I sometimes think he invented being bold-headed so we could be the best at something. For when this bridge is finished, it will have nothing to do with my engineering skills and all to do with my stubbornness. Africa, it changed everything I planned. Yet, still we are somehow ahead of schedule. Mahina my foreman deserves so much credit.
The man is a model. Oh, another model is Sterling. Sterling has actually convinced some of the natives to convert. I cannot wait to show this beautiful country to you. Lover, John.

Clearly, this piece of voice-over narration characterizes two important characters in the film, Mahina and Sterling as admirable men and role models for other workers. In an ingenious case of foreshadowing, the viewer is later on to feel so much the worse when the fierce Mahina is dragged from his tent and eaten by the lions. It is a death that underlines everyone’s horror and helplessness in the face of the two feline brutes, as Samuel’s voice at 23:27 narrates:

Terror had now built a home inside us and would not leave. Because if Mahina, who was so powerful, could not save himself, what could the rest of us do?

Because of his unreserved appreciation of the natives: Mahina and Samuel, the filmmaker would have the viewer treat Patterson as non-racist, the very antithesis of his (Patterson’s) literary text description of the natives – especially the Swahili tribe – as lazy, ignorant and quarrelsome. Of the Swahili, Patterson (1907) writes:

They are a careless, light-hearted, improvident people, and are very fond of all the good things of this world, enjoying them thoroughly whenever they get the chance. Their life is spent in journeying to and from the interior, carrying heavy loads of provisions and trade-goods on the one journey, and returning with similar loads of ivory or other products of the country. They are away for many months at a time on these expeditions, and consequently – as they cannot spend money on the march – they have a goodly number of rupees to draw on their return to Mombasa. These generally disappear with wonderful rapidity, and when no more fun can be bought, they join another caravan and begin a new safari to the Great Lakes, or even beyond. (p. 30)

The author here paints the Swahili as irrational spendthrifts, and unreasonably fun-loving people. According to Patterson, they would rather suffer the tedium of caravans for months if only to have momentary extravagance and fleeting pleasures.

A letter from Patterson’s wife is also voiced for the benefit of the viewer. It is a letter that
brings a light moment to ease the tension created by the horrific deaths of tens of railroad workers at the behest the brutal lions. She writes about how school kids ridicule her pregnancy, and how she longs to come to Africa. It is however a deceptive light moment that is juxtaposed with the present horror at Tsavo; it is immediately followed by the tragic mauling of Sterling by a lion in broad daylight. It is apparent to the viewer that Patterson’s wife’s idolization of Africa is at the farthest remove from the horrific chaos that present themselves to Patterson at Tsavo. Already, it is evident that Patterson is losing the romantic ideas he had before coming when he says in his letter, “Africa, it changed everything I planned”. This shows that the rosy impression of Africa that the colonists created in their home countries to encourage people to relocate to the colonies was different from the Africa that one found – with the danger of wild animals, revolting natives, malaria and fever (Camargo, 2008). In the film Out of Africa, Berkeley Cole dies of Black Water Fever. This interpretation can be used to support the argument that settlers had to create a romantic and alluring image of Africa of untamed beauty to draw Europeans from the metropoles to the colonies for the purpose of contributing to the economic venture that colonialism was.

In addition, colonialism as an enterprise partly survived on a set of stereotypes and prejudices formed against the African. The film uses Mrs. Patterson’s voiced letter to present the racial overtones prevalent among some Europeans of the time and beyond. While Patterson – upon being asked by Samuel – confesses to love his wife very much, Samuel, the only time he appears mean-faced in a close-up, retorts that he doesn’t like any of his wives. To begin with, to some racist eyes, an African man had to be polygamous, and then, he had to posses no love for his wives.

At 33:01 immediately after Sterling's mauling by one of the two man-eater lions, there begins a voice-over that is also a monologue by Engineer Patterson. In this spoken word, Patterson alludes to the Biblical King Darius and Daniel. Darius speaks to Daniel after the latter has been removed from the den of lions. The quoted scripture is found in the book of Daniel, chapter 6, verses 21-22 in KJV of the Bible:
... and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have we done no hurt? Have we done no hurt? ((Emphasis mine)

First of all, this instance of sound is used to compound Sterling’s tragic death and engender the irony of life in the film. Sterling, unlike the Biblical Daniel – who was seemingly hapless and destined for death after being cast in a den of lions - is killed by a man-eating lion in broad daylight, while armed with a gun. He suffers this fate in spite of being a servant of God, like Daniel. Until his death, Sterling is a man of God, a missionary, whose primary responsibility is to convert the non-Christians and ensure spiritual nourishment of the workers in the camp. This makes the biblical allusion apt in celebrating the tragic demise of a religious man. Again, Sterling’s misfortune can be viewed as symbolic of a showdown between two religions: The Animist (Pepetela, 1989) world of traditional African religion and Christianity. In this particular case the former triumphs. The dialect used in this quotation shows that the words are quoted from the original King James Version of the bible. This also helps to credibly situate the action in the film at about 1896, when Patterson was called upon by the colony to construct the bridge across River Tsavo. This biblical monologue is preceded by an exclamation from Patterson at 32:42: “Jesus, they are two of them.” This is indicative of a man who makes an ominous, even somewhat subconscious confession and discovery, that in his hunt for the man-eaters, he will need spiritual intervention.

Lastly, it is important to realize that towards the end of this allusion, Patterson alters the words so that they are different from those from which he quotes in the King James Version of the bible. In the bible, the last statement is “have I done no hurt.” In the film, the words have become “have we done no hurt” and Patterson deliberately repeats them. These words henceforth reveal Patterson’s psychological state as one who subconsciously

9 Though Pepetela’s publication on Animist Realism is in Portuguese, the ideas in her work are extensively discussed in credible journals and online blogs, including “The Fifth World” as cited on https://thefifthworld.tumblr.com/post/137433436899/animist-realist
feels immense guilt, which he knows he shares with other white people, for the manner in which colonialism, perhaps in the same fashion as the ferocious man-eaters, continues to ravage the African people.

To some natives, represented by Samuel (Patterson’s friend and aide) in the film, the lions were actually part of a near-invincible scheme designed by the African spiritual forces to stop the Whiteman from constructing the railway line and “owning the world” (in Samuel’s own words). This coming from a native complements Patterson’s feelings of guilt and gives the viewer an insight into the psychology of the natives who felt hard done by the Whiteman’s economic and political adventures in Africa. This can be read as a rendezvous between two contradictory symbols: the railway symbolizing the colonizers’ endeavour to conquer the interior and the lions representing the spirit of Africa that would not rest passively but rather, was willing to actively fight to protect the continent from colonialism.

Following the killing of Sterling, we hear Samuel’s voice as the shot fades out from the former’s mauled body, and fades into the image of terrified workers as they protest and ask to be left to leave. This voice over invites local mythology into the film and presents the lions as supernatural and invincible yet out to frustrate the construction of the railroad. The rail workers, especially the natives considered the lions spirits of the dead but influential ancestors. To the non-native workers, they were part of a conspiracy to end their lives in the Whiteman’s endeavour to dominate the East African interior. It is little wonder therefore, that these labourers, led by Abdulla later take off from Tsavo before completing the project. At 33:29, Samuel’s ominous voice intones in epic fashion:

The men called them “The Ghost” and “The Darkness”. Some thought they were not lions at all but the spirits of dead medicine men come back to spread madness. For others, they were the devil sent to stop the white men from owning the world. I believed this: that they were evil. And what better ground for evil to walk than in Tsavo? For this is what the word Tsavo means: a place of slaughter. (Emphasis mine)

These last two instances of voice in the film combine to show what the characters thought
as inevitable: religion, both Christianity (in the case of the Daniel allusion) and secular traditional African religion (in this case local mythology alluded to by Samuel), was the only saving grace to the characters whose physical bodies, and individual and collective psyches were being torn apart as a result of the two lions. It is noteworthy that this last case by Samuel is heard against the background of images which show the resultant fear and terror: the chaotic movement of workers back and forth across the rail tracks, the images and voices of natives shooing their livestock across the dusty grounds, the close-up of Patterson’s tense visage as he strides towards the workers, and the omnipotent roaring lions in the golden brown of the African savanna.

Later, the film shifts from the present tense voice narration by Samuel to what can be termed omniscient narration. The viewer is privileged to get into Patterson’s psyche by way of dream as he has a nightmare of his wife and unborn son being mauled by one of the man-eaters. Besides enabling the viewer to witness the latent fear in Patterson, this technique is used as the foreground to foreshadow the impending death of the hunter, Remington, at the hands of the lions. When Patterson indeed wakes up to find Remington dragged away and killed by the lions, a statement made earlier comes back to haunt the dead man: he had earlier remarked that “they are just lions”. The viewer jerked from this lull together with Patterson, is jolted to the reality that they are not just lions and that their impact on the progress of the railroad and bridge construction cannot be downplayed.

Through Samuel in the last voice-over, the film ends the tale with a narration which produces a fine ending to a story that would have been more tragic – the film story is therefore, partly by virtue of this instance, rendered a narrative of tragic events, but with an optimistic ending. To the eyes of the colonizers (or European eyes for that matter), whatever forces there were in Africa, spiritual or otherwise, were not sufficient to frustrate the European commitment to colonise East Africa. Besides, this is in line with filmmaker’s aspiration to produce a film with historically verifiable action – because even in reality, the lions were vanquished. As well, this narration skips ahead of time and enables the viewer to know that Patterson eventually completed his bridge after ensuring
that he banished the two lions into the bounds of the Field Museum in Chicago, and that all they can do is menacingly gaze at the visitors through their lifeless eyes. This can be heard in the film at 1:37:57:

Patterson did hold his son high; people came back, Patterson finished the bridge; people went their way. If you want to see the lions today, you must go to America. They are at the Field Museum, Chicago, Illinois. Even now, if you dare to lock eyes with them, you will be afraid.

The first three clauses (“Patterson did hold his son high; people came back, Patterson finished the bridge; people went their way”) combine with the mise-en-scene for maximum effect desired. It is instructive to note that they are clauses of similar and equal syntactic structure, hence a case of syntactic parallelism. They have a cadence to them; a calm, regular rhythm which restores the viewer to a point of catharsis that purges them of the terror induced by the exploits of the two lions. In stylistics, parallelism exists in a piece of communication when the speaker or writer states equally important ideas in a series of grammatical structures that are of the same degree or form, for instance, noun – verb arrangement. Mueller (2015) refers to Gregoriou (2009) in explaining the incident of parallelism in poetry. Mueller posits: “When words in a text are structurally parallel—whether by the same or similar sound, meaning, or position in a syntactic structure—there seemingly exists some sort of equivalence or opposition between the semantic relationship of the words” (Mueller, 2015, p. 2). The quoted case of parallelism in Out of Africa, therefore, lends emphasis, symmetry, clarity and elegance to a speech act or a piece of writing. According to Mueller (ibid) such structural repetition is used for purposes of “foregrounding to deautomatize the message, or in other words, to consciously bring attention to the utterance.” (p. 2)

Finally, Samuel’s voice serves as appropriate background upon which significant images are superimposed. The viewer is treated to moving images of workers happily leaving the site after successful completion of the bridge, of Patterson receiving his wife and son as promised, and holding him high in the atmosphere of a sunbathed African summer. There are even still pictures of a train passing on Patterson’s bridge. Samuel’s parting shot,
“Even today, if you dare lock eyes with them, you will be afraid” elevates the two lions to the realm of the mythical and insists they indeed deserve to be at the centre of the epic historical film and earn the film its title, “The Ghost and the Darkness.”

Contrary to the case of *The Ghost and the Darkness*, in *Out of Africa*, the film’s narrative voice realized in all the voice-over narration is identical to that in the literary text – the first person autobiographical point of view. This is a clear intent on the part of the film production to retain the autobiographical mode of the text in the film owing to the fact that it will serve better than any other voice (point of view) in telling the historical romance of feelings and failed attempts by the protagonist to find lasting love in Africa. This contributes to the viewer’s feeling of such emotions with immediacy so as to evoke empathy. It is for this reason that we hear Karen Blixen’s own voice punctuate various sections of the film from start to end. For the sake of authenticity, the film director ensures that the voice of the protagonist – who is the narrator- is coloured by her native Danish accent. To the listener, Karen’s voice makes it clear that her romantic life was ruined by misfortune – a fact evident in the succeeding voice-over quotations.

At the beginning of the film, the protagonist’s voice (Karen’s) leaps ahead of time and introduces viewers to her love story with Denys – a story that is viewed later on played out in the film. This strategy helps in creating unity between the film’s beginning, its middle, and end. At 00:49, Karen is heard:

He even took the gramophone on safari. Three rifles, supplies for a month and Mozart. He began our friendship with a gift, and later, not long before Tsavo, he gave me an honour; an incredible gift; a glimpse of the world through God’s eye. And I thought, “Yes! I see. This is the way it was intended.” I have written about all the others not because I loved them less, but because they were clearer; easier. He was waiting for me there. But I have gone ahead of my story – he’d have hated that.

First of all, for a viewer who has read the literary antecedent, the mention of “not long before Tsavo” highlights a beginning that is laced with the looming doom of the protagonist’s fortunes, as these words subtly allude to the plane crash that kills Denys in
the Tsavo. In addition, the use of this narration sets the mood for what is going to be an absorbing love story between Karen and Denys, not Bror Blixen, the man she left Denmark to come and get married to for the sake of the name; a marriage by which she acquires the title ‘Baroness’. The narration forms the background of Denys’ image superimposed in the foreground of a romantic glowing African savanna sunset. Similarly, “he began our friendship with a gift” attends to the visual of Karen receiving a golden pen from Denys, and with “I had farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills”, we are taken ahead of time to a view of the Ngong Hills as seen through Dinesen’s living room window in Kenya. The conception that the film is an autobiography, just like the source literary text before it, is enhanced by the narrator – Karen – saying “I have written...” attesting to the historical veracity known outside the text and the film that Isak Dinesen was indeed settler and a writer.

However, before this narrative voice, the filmmaker is careful to show the viewer the image of a very aged Karen now in bed in Denmark, having a dream – a nightmare in fact – about her life and times in Africa. Even for a first-time viewer who has not read the source text, the tragedy of her life in Africa looms ever on the horizon, waiting to be unfolded by the film narrative. This pairing of an optimistic beginning with a gloomy ending is symbolic of the unfortunate occurrence that Karen’s fortunes in Africa are doomed even before they begin to be realized.

The loneliness which becomes attendant to the protagonist’s life is narrated to the viewer firsthand in the second instance of voice-over by the frustrated voice of the victim herself - Karen. Shortly after marriage, Bror Blixen, her husband of convenience, leaves their home to take part in the WWI. This particular time, his absence from home is more indefinite than when he had gone away on hunting expeditions from which he returned only depending upon change of season. Worn down by the loneliness, Karen compares the varying fortunes that the war brings to men and women. Partly, it is a feminist voice that speaks for the countless women who watch helplessly as their lovers depart to uncertainty to fight for the King. The music score (which will be discussed later on in this chapter) that accompanies her musings serves to accentuate her feelings of loneliness and
betrayal. At 40:50, her voice is heard:

It is an odd feeling farewell. There is some envy in it. Men go off to be tested for courage and if we are tested at all, it is for patience; for doing without. Perhaps for how well we can endure loneliness. But I had always known that. It didn’t require a war. I said goodbye to Bror; Denys left without a word, which was quite proper.

This statement characterises Karen as an intuitive and perceptive lady who reads from the people around her and makes informed conclusions. In it too, is the plea to the world to realize the sacrifice that women make as they give up their emotional lives in the absence of their men who go to war, yet it is only the men that get recognized. Importantly, this voice-over introduces us to the gendered dimension of war. Karen seems to be calling attention to the role of women in societies which are at war as central to the success of war. In a paper, “The Gendered Impact of War”, Rachel V. Kutz-Flamenbaum discusses the gendered dimension of war. Kutz-Flamenbaum (2010) observes:

The myriad ways in which women have supported war are intimately tied to hegemonic gender norms. Dominant cultural notions of femininity construct women as nurturing and loving and inherently more peaceful than men. Hegemonic gender norms promote the idea that men are responsible for protecting their countries and families and women are responsible for supporting and helping their men. While these norms are not universal, and are the object of challenges throughout the world, they are insidious and they guide much of both men and women’s actions and roles in war. (p. 1)

(Retrieved from www.socwomen.org on 29th July, 2016)

This statement speaks to gender complexities that are attendant to wars and conflicts. Without necessarily taking up arms, women’s role in times of war is significant, but is often ignored. Later on, we see Karen asserting herself in taking an active role in WWI by risking her life to travel across plains to transport supplies to her husband. Her efforts are scorned upon by all the men fighting near Lake Natron in Lord Delamere’s camp.

The lowest moments in the life of the protagonist are made more poignant by strategically spaced voice-overs. In one scenario, there are heartrending such statements by the protagonist that sandwich her experience with syphilis; an encounter with a
disease that changes her reproductive life and almost ends her life.

I had a compass from Denys to steer by, he said, but later came to me that we navigated differently. Perhaps he knew, as I did not, that the earth was made round so that we would not see too far down the road.

The voice-over raises issues of uncertainty and the role of destiny in human life. Indeed, the direction one’s life takes is sometimes determined by destiny (Donelson, 2009) and in such cases, cannot be the subject of pointing at using the mathematical precision of a compass. There is also an element of hope (represented by the compass given to her to “steer by”) given to her by Denys’ coming into her life in the wake of the ill-fated marriage Bror - hope which is dashed in the future when Denys rejects her suggestion of formal marriage. In the immediate, this hope is lost when she contracts syphilis from Bror. Human life here is presented as though it were hostage of fate (Donelson 1998, 2009). In her association with both Bror and Denys, the world is indeed “round” for her so she could not “see too far down the road”: with the former, she becomes incompatible as soon as she sets foot in Kenya, and contracts syphilis before breaking up with; for the latter, though an understanding man he is, her suggestion for marriage is met with rejection and any hope of continued bliss is ended when Denys dies in a plane crash in the Tsavo.

The passage of the two years of pain and illness in Denmark is also made manifest by Karen’s own voice. Her voice is complemented by timely montage of shots: Farah (in Karen’s Ngong Hills home) substituting stale with fresh flowers at her bedside and study tables daily; the change of seasons from the parched farm to the rain-soaked ground; alternating shots of clear and cloud covered Ngong Hills, and the factory growing at construction in various stages. The use of these shots shall be discussed later on in this chapter. After the following narration, her return two years later is understood as distanced at least twenty four months away from her departure to seek treatment in Denmark. This is the filmmaker’s way of cutting short what the narrator in the literary text belabours to narrate in large passages. Karen’s voice is heard as follow:
It was a longer journey this time. The war went on. I fought my own war.
Arsenic being my ally against an enemy I never saw. I stayed in the room
where I was born in Rungstedlund, and tried to remember the colours of
Africa.

These two last cases of Karen’s own voice narrating and giving commentary of
circumstances in which she is the victim should indicate just how much her life in Kenya
had taken a toll on her. She is no longer the hopeful, confident and knowing lady who
had left Denmark for marriage and successful dairy farming. Battered by the
circumstances on the farm (first, the ever absent and riotous Bror, then later the wild and
shifty Denys) she feels that the determination as to the direction her life would take may
as well be out of her hands. It can only be a resignation to fate that would make her say:
“But my mother’s house, I came to know again. And knew I would come back to it sick
or well; sane or mad – someday.” She is indeed sick of soul when she finally returns to
her home in Denmark, broke and without a man in her life – something she had wanted to
avoid as a maiden. In her reference to “the colours Africa” there is a hint to the idea that
after failing to get love in Africa, she projects her affection, for which must find an outlet,
to the continent and its people. Her stay in Kenya is made worse when the coffee factory
is razed down by a fire that consumes her best ever crop. When Delamare comes to
console her after the misfortune, Karen says, “I think God had a hand in it. He gave me
my best crop ever; then he remembered.” This statement continues her long held
narrative that her stay in Kenya was doomed to come to nothing in every aspect.

Towards the end of the film, the events that follow Karen’s departure from Kenya are
narrated by way of her voice reading a letter from Farah. This letter is strategic. Being in
her homeland, away from Kenya, Karen loses the authority to be the direct source of
information from Africa, specifically in Ngong’ Hills, and the farm. This necessitates a
change of technique in narration and in this case, Farah, her closest servant, is found to be
a plausible source of news from Africa through this technique of letter. Attendant to this
voice-over are edits of shots of the railway scene as she departs, a close-up of Farah’s
face expressing profound loss of friend in Karen and the two lions as they stroll around
Denys gravesite on the hills. This letter is a show of the camaraderie and shared
confidence between Farah and Karen (his former employer) which renders him unafraid to write to her about her dead lover. This is evident in his insistence that he must tell Karen about the mysterious lions that visit Denys’ grave. At 2:36:54, her old voice from Denmark intones, finally fading off as the end credits roll in:

Mail has come today and a friend writes this to me. “The Maasai have reported to the District Commissioner at Ngong that many times at sunrise and sunset they have seen lions at Finch-Hutton’s grave. A lion and a lioness have gone there and stood, or lay on the grave for a long time. After you went away, the ground around the grave was leveled out into a sort of a terrace. I suppose that the level makes a good site for the lions. From there they have a view of the plane, and the cattle, and the game on it. Denys will like that. I must remember to tell you.” (Emphasis mine)

Although in the literary original Blixen (1937) writes that Gustav is the author of this letter, the filmmaker shifts the onus of the letter to Farah. The audience is able to hear Farah’s diction in the letter. Farah’s letter is narrated with a certain regular cadence and with parallel; grammatically equal clauses, appropriate for the reduced tempo at the end of the film. Again, there is something peculiar to these words, which reminds the viewer of the character of the letter’s writer – Farah – because the viewer by this time is accustomed to the effusive and superfluous speech, typical of Farah, and that rings in the statement, “I must remember to tell you.” Besides, it is clear that it has been a long time since Karen left Kenya. During her time, the District Commissioner was only stationed at Dagoreti – as both the film and text would testify – but at the time of the letter, there is one at Ngong. It is evident then, that Farah and his former boss have maintained a friendship to be able to write to her after many years. This can only be the reason why Karen begins by remarking, “… a friend writes this to me …”

To sum up the critical contribution of voice-over technique in the Out of Africa and The Ghost and the Darkness, reference to the Mcfarlane (1996) will be important. Mcfarlane begins his exhortation by referring to Barthes (1977) who talks about the elements of the narrative structure. Barthes (ibid) identifies Cardinal Functions as the critical elements of the narrative without which a story would be lifeless, and Catalysers as elements that are ornamental to the narrative. In view of adaptation therefore, Mcfarlane (ibid) contends
that successful adaptation is that which seeks to retain the Cardinal Functions of the literary narrative in the adapted film.

One of the strategies used in the films studied here to retain the important elements of the narrative of the source text is voice-over narration. As already noted, the two films are adapted from literary texts with first person point of view of narration, hence, justifying the filmmakers’ use of the voice-overs with the same first person perspective of narration. Mcfarlane (ibid) has argued that textual first person point of view can be taken care of in film in two ways: the use of the element of Subjective Cinema (particularly using subjective camera shots) and oral narration by voice-overs. He explains the importance of this technique – importance which can be realized in the films under study. First, because the filmic narrative proceeds before the eyes of the viewer in real time (in the present), voice-over technique reinforces the role of past tense, impressing upon the viewer that the narrative they are watching on screen, indeed happened in the past. In effect, this device – as used in Out of Africa and The Ghost and the Darkness – transports the viewer to an appropriate time in the past, thus, contributing to a fuller appreciation of the story of the film. Secondly, Mcfarlane (ibid) argues further, while prose narration in the literary text proceeds because the first person narrator of the events is fully in the position of knowledge, in the adapted films this knowledge function is taken care of by oral narration in the form of voice-overs.

The section above has demonstrated how sound, specifically the voice-over technique, is used in the adapted films to tell the horrific and/or tragic events originally told by the literary texts. While in the literary originals the horrors and misfortunes surrounding the characters are rendered mostly by descriptive narration, the foregoing explains how sound is used in film to execute the same.

2.2.3 Diegetic Sound in Transferred and Re-assigned Descriptions

The use of narrative off-screen voice in Things Fall Apart is one of the means by which the film pays allegiance to the literary original. Both in wording and tone, the film maker
pays tribute to Achebe’s text which for the most part addresses the tragic convergence of two different cultural viewpoints in Umuofia. Importantly, sound is used in the film as a narrative device to compensate for the literary text’s narrative description of the tragic fall of Okonkwo and Umuofia. The few instances of voice over narration in the film are actually either direct quotations or re-readings of Achebe’s novel, or limited paraphrases. According to film scholar and critic, Rauma (2004), this practice in film adaptation is referred to as ‘direct transference’. The catastrophic arrival of the missionaries in the whole of Umuofia, specifically in Abame is presented in one such voice over in the film. In part 32 at 06:10, of the film, a voice narrates:

The arrival of the missionaries in Abame had caused a considerable stir. In the surrounding towns and villages, their activities were a source of great sorrow, not only to the adherents of the traditional religions, but to the leaders of the clan. Many believed that the strange faith would not last—after all, none of the converts was a man of substance. They were called the efulefu. They were the excrement of society, and the new faith, the mad dog that had come to eat it. (Emphasis mine)

Compared with the prose narration in the literary antecedent quoted below, the above filmic narration is a paraphrase that keeps alive Achebe’s story in the film. The gradual fall of Umuofia is told by the omniscient voice-over narration such as the above. Sound is hence used in film to perpetuate the tragic mode of the literary antecedent. Some of the underlined words in the voice-over quoted above are indeed identical to the quotation from the literary antecedent as shown below:

The missionaries had come to Umuofia. They had built their church there … None of his converts was a man whose word was heeded in the assembly of the people. None of them was a man of title. They were mostly the kind of people that were called efulefu, worthless, empty men. The imagery of an efulefu in the language of the clan was a man who sold his machete and wore the sheath to battle. Chielo, the priestess of Agbala, called the converts the excrement of the clan, and the new faith was a mad dog that had come to eat it up. (Achebe, 1958, p. 101) (Emphasis mine)

The same voice recurs twice in part 33 of the film first at 01:05, and then at 09:25. In the former instance, the narrator proceeds:
Many people in Abame did not believe the Whiteman because his god was neither the god of the earth; the god of the sky; nor Amadiora the thunderbolt. … To the converts, the words of the hymns were like drops of frozen rain melting on the dry palate of the panting earth. (Emphasis mine)

Rauma (2004) introduces the concept of re-assignment with regard to comparative analysis of prose fiction and film. She notes that a piece of dialogue or description attributed to one character, event or object in the literary original is shifted to, and attributed to a different character, event or object in the resultant adapted film. While the cinematic narrator re-assigns the above exposition and attributes it to the people of Abame, it is Nwoye to whom this description is attributed in Achebe’s literary antecedent as shall be seen in the quotation below. In this case however, these words are mostly a paraphrase with main words transferred directly from the literary antecedent. In the film therefore, the description is transferred from the people of Abame and re-assigned to Nwoye. Of Nwoye, Achebe in the literary antecedent writes:

But there was a young lad who had been captivated. His name was Nwoye, Okonkwo’s first son. It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow. … The words of the hymns were like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry palate of the panting earth. Nwoye’s callow mind was greatly puzzled. (Achebe, 1958, p. 104.)

(Emphasis mine)

Again here, as in the previous case, the underlined words which are attributed to different subjects in the different media are identical. By this practice, the adapted film keeps faith with the literary original in castigating the cultural flaws in the Igbo world view which are to blame for the ease with which the Whiteman conquered the people with his new religion. Thus, the film and the text become united that the ground in Umuofia was fertile and predisposed to the fall under the Whiteman’s colonial intents because of a complex set of factors arising from the side of the Whiteman and from the people themselves. No motivation, other than the brutal killing of Ikemefuna, and other injustices like throwing twins to die in the evil forest, thrust Nwoye and other converts into the grateful hands of
the Whiteman and his religion. Finally, the film plays in tandem with the animist spirit of Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958). The above pair of quotations shows that in both film and literary text, the earth is treated as if it possessed human life. This is done to highlight animist spirit prevalent in the Igbo society (Pepetela, 1989) and to acknowledge their belief in god of the earth, *Ani*.

The final instance of voice over narration in part 33, at 09:25, is further evidence of re-assignment:

   The missionaries were permitted to take all the land as they cared to, after all, they would all be dead within four days. But as the days turned into weeks; weeks into months, none of the converts of the new faith had died. *Many more converts were won* by the Whiteman for his god in the heavens. (Emphasis mine)

The narrator in the film says the words in this paraphrase of the text about the people of Abame whereas the narrator in the literary antecedent says the similar about the people of Mbanta as shown below:

   The next morning the crazy men actually began to clear a part of the forest and to build their house. The inhabitants of Mbanta expected them all to be dead within four days. … It was said that he wore glasses on his eyes so that he could see and talk to evil spirits. Not long after, he *won his first three converts*. (Achebe, 1958, p. 105 – 106) (Emphasis mine)

To begin with, this is the film’s way of affirming that the experience of the people of all of Igboland (and indeed the whole of Africa) under the invasion of Christianity and colonialism was the same so that it did not matter where one lived. Christianity and attendant Colonialism arrived in Africa, and it became inevitable that the whole continent would feel their presence. To highlight the inevitability of Christianity conquering the people of Igboland, the film makes the spread of the new religion easier than it is described in the literary original: the literary narrator says the Whiteman “won his first three converts” while the cinematic narrator states “Many more converts were won” by the Whiteman.
2.3 **Narrative Music**

While narration in prose is effected mainly by use of narrative description and dialogue, narration in film is, among other techniques, executed by use of music. So in this situation music becomes a narrative device – hence referred to as narrative music here. Kimani (2016) has written on the role of music in authenticating locale, enhancing emotive aspects of film, and creating and enhancing rhythm. In the literary antecedents, these are principally enhanced by use of written narrative description. This section of the chapter discusses the use of music as a narrative technique in the adapted films. It demonstrates how certain instances of music are used to represent significant meanings in the literary antecedents which are conveyed mainly by descriptive narration.

### 2.3.1 Brief History of Music in Film

“Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.”

Plato (428 BC–348 BC)

When cinema was first introduced at the advent of the 20th century, film was silent. This means that the first films had action without speech. According to Howe (2013):

> The silent film era extends from the late nineteenth century, with the earliest work by the Lumière Brothers in France and Edison in America, into the early 1930s, when silent film gave way to “talkies.” However, most scholars situate the silent era in America during the 1910s and 1920s… (p.1)

Schuchman (2004) notes how “older citizens who are deaf or hard of hearing recall the years of silent films (1893 - 1929) as a ‘golden era’ in the cultural history of the American Deaf community” (p.1). Consequently, later on sound was needed to mask any noise that would inevitably interfere with the viewer’s interaction with the images. That is how music was introduced into film. At some point in the 1920s, music would be entirely removed from film (Palmer 1980 and Kracauer 1960). This was as a result of the emergence of sound films (*talkies*) in 1927. Filmmakers at this point rationalised that
with the entry of talking voices, music was no longer needed to cover the silences. These talkie films, besides having music and sound effects, had real voices of the characters. Whereas the spoken sound exemplified the use of diegetic sound, music and sound effects were either diegetic or non-diegetic depending on the vision of the filmmaker. Regardless, it was soon evident that music in film had a role beyond simply covering up for the silence. This was realized when there emerged challenges in establishing the mood and emotional context in film (Munsterberg 1970, Tan 1996 and Kalinik 1992). Music would then make a second entry into cinema with the purpose of adding a third dimension to images and sound effects and voices. (Palmer 1980 and Rosar 1994).

Between 1899 and 1916, psychologist Hugo Munsterberg wrote 24 books on the essence of music in film (Cohen 1999). Since then, music has been an important ingredient in film, with a distinction between score and soundtrack emerging soon later (Cohen, ibid). Fischoff (2005) contends that viewers experience film using the eyes in as much the same way as using the ears; that viewing a film is not only a visual experience, but also an auditory one.

Cohen (ibid) documents the controversy that would arise later in the 1950s, when a movement of realist critics of film emerged and some directors began making films without music. The realists argued for the exclusion of music from cinema, contending that no music accompanies our naturally occurring discourse in our day to day life. They argued, further, that music interfered with a viewer’s attention to images and sound effects or resulted in selective attention. The impact of realist movement’s ideas was not significant though as the centrality of music in cinema became more manifest when music was left out. Fischoff (ibid), an advocate of music in film counters this by tracing the importance of music in theatre to the early days of the Ancient Greek Theatre, in which the chorus was an integral part of the action. In the Greek Theatre, the chorus, numbering between 20 and 50 would give the commentary on the events portrayed by the characters on stage by singing from a section of the acting space called the orchestra. To him, therefore, the use of music in theatre was as old as theatre itself, and cinema being an offspring of theatre could do better with music. Even this early, Fischoff (ibid) would
argue, theatre goers did not go to watch a play merely to feed their urge for the realistic, but also to see the creation of all possible worlds. Music was integral in ensuring this because it added a ‘heightened reality’ or ‘supra-reality’ to film (Cohen, *ibid*). Needing to emphasize the centrality of music in film, Fischoff (2005) quotes film composer Bernard Herrmann thus:

I feel that music on the screen can seek out and intensify the inner thoughts of the characters. It can invest a scene with terror, grandeur, gaiety, or misery. It can propel a narrative swiftly forward, or slow it down. It often lifts mere dialogue into the realm of poetry. Finally, it is the communicating link between the screen and the audience, reaching out and enveloping all into one single experience. (P. 01)

According to Munsterberg (1970) and Tan (1996), emotion characterizes the principal experience of both music and film. This is complemented by Kalinak (1992) who argues:

Scenes that most typically elicited the accompaniment of music were those that contained emotion. The classical narrative model developed certain conventions to assist expressive acting in portraying the presence of emotion … close-up, diffuse lighting and focus, symmetrical mise-en-scene, and heightened vocal intonation. The focal point of this process became the music which externalized these codes through the collective resonance and musical associations. Music is, arguably, **the most efficient of these codes**, (*emphasis added*) providing an audible definition of an emotion which the visual apparatus offers … music’s dual function of both articulator of screen expression and initiator of spectator response binds the spectator to the screen by resonating effect between them. (p.87)

Having been appropriated in the realm of film in this way, music has all along developed with cinema. The films under study, produced much later, are testimony to the continued complementary function between film and music. The following section now delves into the specifics of appropriation of music in the adapted films under study.
2.3.2 Where Words (and Images) Leave Off, Music Begins

In *Out of Africa*, music represents the most outstanding non-diegetic use of sound to contribute to filmic narration. The film's soundtrack was composed and conducted by John Barry. Barry's music score has twelve tracks that run up to slightly over thirty-three minutes. The tracks on the whole music score are used as appropriate background for relevant sections of the film to highlight action, dialogue and scenery. As such, the music is so integral to the narrative of the film that it is impossible to dispense with it.

This score also contains outside pieces such as Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto and traditional African folk music. Barry’s work for *Out of Africa* was so exceptional that besides this soundtrack winning an Oscar for the Best Original Score, it was also released MCA Records. The music score features the following tracks with their total running times:

1. "Main Title (I Had a Farm in Africa)" (3:14)
2. "I'm Better at Hello (Karen's Theme I)" (1:18)
3. "Have You Got a Story For Me" (1:14)
4. "Mozart Clarinet Concerto K622" Adagio (2:49)
5. "Safari" (2:44)
6. "Karen's Journey/Siyawe" (4:50)
7. "Flying Over Africa" (3:25)
8. "I Had a Compass from Karen (Karen's Theme II)" (2:31)
9. "Alone on the Farm" (1:56)

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10 A quote by Christian Johann Heinrich Heine (1797 – 1856) a German poet and literary critic whose poetry was set to music in a form referred to as Lieder (arts songs).

11 Barry, (1933 – 2011) was a legendary English Composer who also conducted film music. He is also known for producing film scores for 11 James Bond films between 1963 and 1987. His contribution to music and film culminated in him being awarded an OBE award at the Buckingham Palace.

12 MCA was an American media company that started with recording music but later became very influential in the film industry and even extended its interest to television.

10. "Let the Rest of the World Go By" (3:17)
11. "If I Know a Song of Africa (Karen's Theme III)" (2:12)
12. "End Title (You Are Karen)" (4:01)

The tracks on this soundtrack are played in classical style to cultivate appropriate moods in the film. This classical style is best suited for backing up the romantic scenes featuring Karen and Denys in the particular time setting (early 1900s) when their relationship is portrayed to have blossomed. A case in point is “I Had a Farm in Africa” which is the main theme track in the film. It is played in classical fashion, in piano solo to foreground Karen’s love for Africa.

Part of the music score executed for *Out of Africa* by John Barry represents his endeavour to have traditional African folk music as part of his soundtrack. Traditional African folk music is represented by melancholic Swahili acapella, ‘*Karen's Journey*/Siyawe’ (4:50). This musical performance plays intermittently for four minutes and fifty seconds to form an appropriate background for specific scenes of the film. While most tracks on John Barry’s music score for the film is played in classical form to enhance a romantic atmosphere, this particular piece punctuates the sad moments in the cinematic narrative and makes them all the more poignant. Kimani (2016) in his study of music in Kenyan films cites Gorbman (1987) in advancing the argument that music is used as an emotional signifier in film. He also goes on to cite Sonnenschein (2001):

> In all types of films, rather than supporting the realistic image on screen, the music allows us to sense the invisible and inaudible, the spiritual and emotional processes of the characters portrayed. (p. 155) (Quoted in Kimani, 2016, p. 113).

‘*Karen's Journey*/Siyawe’ is first heard at 01:03:22 to mark the beginning of Karen’s battle with syphilis. This is hitherto the saddest moment in Karen’s life in Kenya. This song plays against the background of a voice-over in which she rues the new twist in her life and describes the lonely difficult time as she struggles with the disease in her

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mother’s home, in Rungstedlund, Denmark. A comparison between the track in the music score and the voice-over shall suffice to make this point clear:

Karen's Journey/Siyawe (transcribed)

Siyawe ee mamangu, siyawe ee x2  May it be mother, may it be
Watu wa mji wanena  As the town dwellers say
Siyawe ee mamangu, siyawe ee  May it be mother, may it be
Siyawe ndugu angu siyawe eex2  May it be my brother, may it be
Watu wa mji wanena  As the town dwellers say,
Siyawe ee ndugu wangu, siyawe ee  May it be my brother, may it be

In the second playing of this track in the course of the film, this music combines with a voice over (which is an indispensable part of the soundscape) of Karen reminiscing on her hard times with syphilis to make her suffering have profound impact on the viewer:

It was a longer journey this time. The war went on. I fought my own war. Arsenic being my ally against an enemy I never saw. I stayed in the room where I was born in Rungstedlund, and tried to remember the colours of Africa. There was only medicine, and walk with my mother along the deserted stretches of beach. And this room in my mother’s house in Denmark had become a stranger to me, and I to her. But my mother’s house I came to know again. And knew I would come back to it sick or well; sane or mad – someday

The same acapella returns at 02:11:00 when Denys informs Karen of Berkely’s impending death as a result of Blackwater fever. Crucially, in this instance this music flows on to provide the link between this news of illness and Berkeley’s burial. Several pieces of sad news emerge too, key among them being the alienation of Mariammo (Berkeley’s Somali mistress) who cannot move near the graveside to bury her lover because she is not white. It is also at this point that it emerges that Karen’s estrangement from Bror has reached its lowest ebb. Later on, the acapella is replayed to foreshadow the collapse of Karen’s enterprise on her Ngong farm when her factory is razed to its ruin by an inexplicable fire. This particular one enhances the role of fate in her life as she later
says, “God gave me my best crop, then He remembered.” The last time we hear the poignant Swahili track, “Siyawe” is after a scene in which Karen is seen auctioning her property in preparation for her departure back to Denmark. The song here highlights that life in Africa has not worked as she hoped it would, thereby making her departure a sad and inevitable ending to her story with Africa. It is indeed sad that she now goes back to Denmark bankrupt and single. The number goes on against a darkened background of the Ngong Hills, where Denys will soon be buried. This instance also foreshadows the death of Denys – the last and the biggest setback in Karen’s African (mis)adventure. This time round, even the usually golden African sunset isn’t there – the sun can hardly impose itself through the darkened skyline.

Sadness, though evident in Out of Africa, is overshadowed by the romantic feel of the film. The film is as earlier noted a romantic drama on the life and times of Karen Blixen in Kenya. As such, music plays a major role in creating the atmosphere of romance. There is the romance that oozes from the Kenyan landscape and from the sublime interspersing of flora, fauna and human beings, but mostly from the love affair between

Image 2.1: A grab shot that goes hand in hand with sad Swahili Acapella “Siyawe”. An unusually dark sunset foreshadowing Denys’ demise. The ever-dimming sun gradually disappears into an opaque layer of clouds into the horizon – symptomatic of the sunset days in the life of
Karen and Denys Finch Hatton. To entrench this romantic mood in the film, the cinematic narrative is interspersed with Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto at various points of the story. Romantic tunes that pervade the cinematic narrative are both diegetic and non-diegetic. We encounter Mozart’s tune in diegetic form when it plays on the gramophone that Denys brings to Karen’s house. In this instance, the music is within the world of the narrative and hence inextricably interspersed into the times and fortunes of the characters.

According to Sijll (2005), music underscores scenes and acts as a motivation for change. Sijll (ibid) further opines about music in the film “As it is presented as a tangible, moveable prop in Out of Africa and appears repeatedly, it can also be used to track changing relationships and values over time.” (P. 106). It is therefore justifiable to argue that Deny’s presence in Karen’s life is sometimes symbolized by the gramophone that remains in her house, and plays occasionally in his absence. In the same film, music not only underscores action, but also serves the real purpose of being material that motivates the action of characters in form of dance because on three occasions, Denys and Karen are seen dancing to the music from the gramophone.

At 1:20:00, this music (playing in the format of a piano sonata) is heard and combines with high key natural lighting (to be discussed later) shots of wild game in the plains and the lush green environment at Karen’s home to tell the start of the love story between Denys and Karen. This first appearance of Mozart’s composition is played in the format of violin concerto. It also recurs later when Karen and Denys are on safari in the Maasai Mara and they waltz to it in the soft light of the burning camp fire. The filmmaker also uses the same format of music to introduce Karen Blixen as a talented story teller. In line with this, the film celebrates her creativity in composing various writings which are the inspiration behind the film itself. Starting at 1:38:04, a similar track plays, fading in and out of Karen’s story to Denys about a girl who was washed by a storm onto the white beach of Morocco. The girl’s story, which is similar to Karen’s own troubled romantic life, also combines with the music to act as her invitation of Denys to intimacy.

The effect of this instance of music is soon made even more profound by Denys’ poetic
recitation of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poem, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” (1834), of the romantic era as follows:

He prayeth well/who loveth well Both man and bird and beast./He prayeth best./who loveth best All things both great and small;/For the dear God who loveth us./He made and loveth all (Coleridge, 1834, p. 609-617)

As earlier argued in this section of the study, the use of sound is integrated with the use of cinematographic techniques to convey a more complete story that this film is. Notice how the music and the above poetic allusion combine with the shot below to create a romantic mood. This allusion also speaks to the Romantic Poets¹⁵ presentation of love as an illusion that was unachievable. This adds another dimension to Karen’s love life: her search for everlasting love was an exercise in futility. Of the three sets of works under study, Out of Africa does best with regard to integrating sound and image in telling the story either similar to that in the literary original, or where applicable, to tell the story differently depending on the vision of the filmmaker.

¹⁵ Romantic poets such as Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Byron, as well as women Romantic poets are famous for popularizing a genre of poetry characterised by elevated technique and lofty language.
The final sounding of this music is at 2:24:00 and it is used to foreshadow the sad and untimely ending to the Karen-Denys love story. At this time, Karen has already told Denys that she intends to close farm and go back to Denmark. Promising to take her up to Mombasa to board the ship back home, Denys plays the music on his gramophone and dances with Karen for the very last time before he leaves to go and die in a plane crash in the Tsavo. For a viewer who has read Blixen’s *Out of Africa*, this music is listened to within an atmosphere of foreboding the tragedy that looms not far ahead in the lives of the two.

Music in film also contributes to the authenticity of setting and towards giving a historical dimension to the cinematic narrative. The Swahili number, ‘Siyawe’ does this together with a rendition of traditional Kikuyu folk music. On the way to Lake Natron in search of her husband Bror Blixen to deliver supplies during the WWI, part of Karen’s entourage sings a Kikuyu folk song that is in tandem with the African landscape within which the images appear. The shots that go hand in hand with this musical rendition affirm the underlying spiritual power in the African landscape. Some of the images: Farah’s eyes blazing with the reflection of the camp fire, a halo image of Karen and the rest of the party and a dark cloudy sunset, can actually be interpreted to show that Karen was at the mercy of the spiritual forces in the African continent; forces which eventually catalysed her sad departure from Africa.

Finally, John Barry’s music score affirms the historicity of *Out of Africa*. Two illustrations are instructive in arriving at this conclusion. The WWI ended in 1919, and this ending to the war, which came at the cost of Germany (defeated by Britain), was celebrated in Britain and the countries it occupied (Zahir, 2014). A military parade is seen in *Out of Africa* celebrating this victory and in effect, ushering in the colonization of British East Africa, Kenya. The images that attend to this music also speak to the role of African soldiers in the world war. Hence, music is used to situate the film in the pre-colonial and colonial period. In the scene that follows this case, the viewer is treated to a rendition of the national anthem of Britain on the occasion of a new year’s party of 1919.
This performance of “God Save the King” on the African continent somewhat officially ushers in colonialism.

Music in *The Ghost and the Darkness* is both diegetic and non-diegetic. To foreground tension in the film, Jerry Goldsmith’s soundtrack has an assemblage of music meant to engender an atmosphere of terror. First there is diegetic music exemplified by the war chants by the Maasai Moran whom Remington contracts to help him kill the marauding man-eaters (at 48:50). The most dominant sort of music, however, on the film’s soundtrack is diegetic music composed by Barry himself and The Worldbeaters. John Barry’s soundtrack is dominated by tracks most of which are of the heavy metal genre. This discordant quality of music makes the film an African adventure film filled with terror and horror. Even from the listing and naming of the tracks, it is clear that the running motif which the music sought to emphasise is terror:

Music by Jerry Goldsmith:

1. Theme from "The Ghost and the Darkness"
2. The Bridge
3. Catch a Train
4. Lions Attack
5. First Time
6. Sterling's Death
7. Lions Reign
8. Preparations
9. Remington's Death
10. Prepare for Battle
11. Final Attack
12. Welcome to Tsavo

Music by The Worldbeaters:

1. Hamara Haath ("Our Hands Unite")

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17 This is a genre of music that broke onto the arts scene in the late 1960s in England and spread up to America. This music was originally associated with disaffection and protest by the economically disadvantaged who used it to protest against an injustice. It was characterized by amplified distortion, emphatic guitar and beats, and was generally loud. Cited from [https://metal.mit.edu/brief-history-metal](https://metal.mit.edu/brief-history-metal)
2. Dueling Chants, Part I: "Jungal Bahar"
3. Safari Ya Bamba ("Journey to Bamba")
4. Terere Obande
5. Iye Oyeha

Preceding and during Patterson’s duel with the last remaining man-eater which has killed Remington, “The Final Attack” is played in the dissonant and heavy metal way to emotionally psyche up the viewer and build up Patterson’s fight with the lion to the state of pandemonium and cacophony. This is complemented by a dissonant heavy metal variety track, Dueling Chants, Part I: "Jungal Bahar", which is played against the background of Patterson’s battle with the last surviving lion.

Finally, to render to the film a deserved happy ending, and to affirm the triumph of the protagonist over the forces of nature, a celebratory track, “Iye Oyeha” is played against the background of Paterson’s wife and son arriving at Tsavo. It is also used to welcome back the railroad workers who had fled the terror to come and finish the railway project with Patterson.

In the film Things Fall Apart, music is most elaborately used to build the narrative in the part of the plot that narrates the brutal killing of Ikemefuna. The film employs diegetic music because it is sung by characters currently viewed in the cinematic narrative. It is traditional folk music that depicts Igbo art of music. It is important to state at this point that what in the literary narrative is simply related in a short narration is played out in the film to cover a four-part TV series (part 19 – 22) with music playing a leading role in delivering the unjust nature of the death with devastating emotion. While the text is terse in narration and leaves plenty to the imagination of the reader, the film goes to greater length to show the impact of this death on Ikemefuna’s family – especially showing the viewer the interpretation of the boy’s death from the perspective of his grieving mother whose sadness is absolute. In fact, the story of Ikemefuna’s demise in the filmic narrative is not interrupted by any other happening. The film then is seen to add layers of meaning and to fill the gaps deliberately left by Achebe in the crafting of his story for the sake of the viewer who may not have the ability to fill such gaps with their imagination and ability to infer information from subtle references. In other words, the cinematic narrative
makes it a lot easier for the viewers to appreciate the full socio-cultural import of Achebe’s text. As such, the film succeeds in enhancing the debilitating poignancy of this unfortunate occurrence of an innocent boy who must die to pay for transgressions he knows nothing about.

The use of music in compounding this tragic death begins in part 21 with the chanting voices from angelic figures in flowing white robes. Clearly, these are the angels of death sent by the gods to make it clear to Okonkwo that he has desecrated them by taking part in an undertaking the gods had warned about, thereby making his own doom inevitable. These voices also validate Ezeudu’s warning to Okonkwo and the viewer therefore agrees that it indeed came from the gods that Okoknkwo must never take part in the killing of a boy who called him father. Delivered in Gregorian responsorial antiphony, thus goes the wailing chant:

One Voice: Who spilled the blood of the child that called him father?
Chorus: Okonkwo X 3
One Voice: Shall we show him mercy?
Chorus: Okonkwo X 3
All: Blood for blood; death for death; doom for doom. DOOM FOR DOOM!!

It is clearer in the cinematic tale than in the literary one that with his action, Okonwko has made his downfall inevitable. However, criticism can be made in the sense that the film oversimplifies Achebe’s story with almost seeming to make a declaration that the viewer is not able to read implicatures – and thus must be spoon-fed with all details of the story. In line with this, the literary original would be seen more artistically productive in engaging the reader in the narrative because of the suspense created and the apparent requirement on the part of the reader to infer and fill in the missing gaps in the narrative.

Whereas the above use of song serves the role of indicting Okonkwo for his irrational action and highlighting the supremacy of the gods, the next rendition of music shows the extent of the agony that Ikemefuna’s death inflicts on his family – especially his mother and entire clan. This dimension is missing in the literary antecedent. The viewer is treated
to a traditional Igbo dirge, sung in the original (Igbo) language and translated in screen subtitles. Besides, unlike the above song by the angels which is an indictment on Okonkwo, the song by Ikemefuna’s kin tears into the Igbo cultural world, asking the fundamental question that is also asked severally by Obierika in the text: is it just for someone to die or suffer the consequences of an action they know nothing about? The delivery in Igbo renders to the film an authentic Igbo atmosphere that transcends Achebe’s literary original and situates the film in a traditional African setting. This rendition begins towards the end of part 21 and proceeds, intermittently, to the end of part 22:

Ikemefuna’s mother:  Ikemefuna my good boy X3
Ikemefuna, is that your fate?
Lovely boy that has done nothing wrong
The lovely boy that I have been so proud of,
Was given to Umuofia as sacrifice
This is disastrous; a disaster to mourn
Ike my only eye that has been blinded, what shall I do?
How could someone lose his life for what does not involve him?
Oh, Ikem, Ikem, Ikem ooh!
My Ikemefuna, may you remain in my voice

Chorus: Should someone lose his life for what does not involve him? X3

Also executed in Gregorian responsorial antiphony, this rendition – which is sung late into the dark night – allows the filmmaker to foreground the immense pain felt by the grieving mother. The mother, who is most intimately affected by the loss, sings her part alone while the chorus is done by a group of women that surround her. Further, according to Ugochukwu (2014), this performance rendered in Igbo language serves another purposes of indigenising the film and bringing it back home to the owners of the narrative themselves. Ugochukwu (ibid) posits:

Choruses in Igbo, inspired by traditional folktales and music, enhance the cohesion of the storyline, facilitate the viewer’s empathy with the embattled Igbo, and keep the story firmly rooted in Igboland. Here, the Igbo language is more than the inclusion of potentially difficult to translate words, such as *jigida, obi, ilo, or ogbanje*, as in the novel, but it
is a way of introducing a complex language that moulds conversations and is enriched with characteristic speech patterns, proverbs and sayings, prayers, exclamations, songs, and choruses. Some of these Igbo moments, such as the dirge performed by Ikemefuna’s mother or the war song chanted by village youth as they torch Okonkwo’s compound after his accidental killing of Ezeudu’s son, are of remarkable quality. This deliberate and extensive use of the Igbo language in a film in English gives the story back to its people, even where Igbo words are occasionally given English subtitles to help non-Igbo speakers. (P. 171-172).

According to Ugochukwu (ibid), besides uniting the story of Igboland with the Igbo people (its owners), music rendered in Igbo language enables the film to most profoundly narrate the tragedy of Umuofia and Okonkwo. This creates empathy in the viewer and enables them appreciate the events more closely, as if they were Igbo themselves.

Before Ikemefuna is slashed to death in the depth of the forest, music played on flute and melancholic guitar combine to establish the sombre mood that precedes and dominates the demise of an innocent boy at the hands of brutal men inspired by an unforgiving culture. These sad tunes form the background of images of Ikemefuna who leads the way to his death, with a pot of wine on his head as the elders follow. On the trees nearby, birds make unusual sounds, clear among them one that screams Okoknwo’s praise name, “Ebubedike.”. The invitation of birds to participate in the cinematic narrative signals the films use of Animist Realism, a conception of magical realism in African literature (Pepetela, 1989). The birds can be interpreted as ancestors or the gods warning Okonkwo not to go down the road he has chosen and take part in the killing of Ikemefuna. Because he goes on to land the killer blow, the warning from the birds serves to highlight Okonkwo’s stubbornness and arrogance, even hubris, as he goes on to disregard the warning from the Oracle of the Hills. Hence, music and sound effects combine and complement each other in the film’s way of narrating one of the saddest parts of the novel quoted below:

Later in the day he called Ikemefuna and told him that he was to be taken home the next day. Nwoye overheard it and burst into tears, whereupon his father beat him heavily. As for Ikemefuna, he was at a loss. His own home had gradually become very faint and distant. He still missed his
mother and his sister and would be very glad to see them. But somehow he knew he was not going to see them. He remembered once when men had talked in low tones with his father, and it seemed now as if it was happening all over again. Later, Nwoye went to his mother's hut and told her that Ikemefuna was going home. She immediately dropped her pestle with which she was grinding pepper, folded her arms across her breast and sighed, "Poor child." ... Okonkwo got ready quickly and the party set out with Ikemefuna carrying the pot of wine. A deathly silence descended on Okonkwo's compound. Even the very little children seemed to know. Throughout that day Nwoye sat in his mother's hut and tears stood in his eyes. (Achebe, 1958, p. 40 – 41) (Emphasis mine)

A comparison between the above excerpt from the literary original and the aforementioned instance of music use proves that the film is more successful and profound in narrating the poignant and tragic falling apart of Umuofia and Okonkwo. In point of fact, this excerpt, together with a description of the direct effect of killing Ikemefuna on Okonkwo, are the saddest that the text reads with regard to Ikemefuna’s death.

Later in the film, the converts of Umuofia sing on the village paths and in their church. This singing is used to affirm the fact that the missionaries have indeed arrived and thus, like the narrative description of the literary original does in the text, sets the film in the times of the advent of missionary activity and colonial occupation.

As exemplified above, sound in *Out of Africa* is used to tell the story of romance and sadness, in *The Ghost and the Darkness*, to narrate the horrific encounter between man and nature; in *Things Fall Apart*, it tells the story of the tragic capitulation of a community hero Okonkwo, and his entire community of Umuofia.

### 2.3.3 Sound Effects for Filmic Narration

Kimani (2016) defines sound effects as non-speech sounds of objects or characters on a film’s soundscape that could be both on-screen and off-screen, or either. They also include the sounds of props and synthetically generated sounds. In his study, Kimani (*ibid*) has written insightfully on the function of sound effects in film. He avers that
sound effects play a crucial role in enhancing dramatic action, marking transitions, and revealing emotion and spatial characteristics. Some of these functions are realized in the films under study as means by which the cinematic narratives are told. Sijll (2005) identifies four types of sound effects. She further argues that sound effects complement other cinematic devices by adding layers of meaning in a manner that no other technique is capable of. She introduces realistic sound effects, expressive sound effects, surreal sound effects and external sound effects. This study finds three of the above types used in all the three films under study.

Realistic sound effects are diegetic sound effects that emanate from the narrative world of the film. Sijll (ibid) posits that they are organic to the cinematic narrative such that they create an active audience that listens out for the sound cues whether they are produced from the action visible on the screen, or from action not visible. In The Ghost and the Darkness, includes African sounds which also serve to affirm the film’s setting. This is especially seen during Patterson’s night vigils while hunting the two lions. The nights are filled with sounds of crickets, frogs, hyenas, owls, but above all, the sounds of roaring lions that made death real and palpable. The sounds of frogs are used by the filmmaker to typify African setting, while the hooting of owls is used as a forerunner to the several disasters that are always looming on the horizon at Tsavo. For instance, on the night Mahino is killed, the sound of hooting owl is complemented by heavy metal music, and rolling African drums to highlight the looming horror of his death. Similarly, inspired by its African setting, Out of Africa uses sound to authenticate the geographical location of the action. Though limited in application compared to the other two films studied here, realistic sound effects in Things Fall Apart take the form of Igbo chants, incantations and drums that enhance the film’s emphasis on presenting the Igbo worldview. Such appropriation presents the Igbo as an ordered society that is deeply religious.

Sijll (ibid) refers to surreal sound effects as meta-diegetic because they reflect the inner world of the characters in a film. They are sounds that are used to signpost inner thoughts, dreams and nightmares. In Out of Africa, this appropriation of sound is clear at the beginning of the film. The action starts with an old Karen in bed, at her mother’s
home in Denmark, having a nightmare. This nightmare is accentuated by sounds of roaring creatures, perhaps a memory of the lions in the plains of Africa and hazy images of forested Africa that flash across and round the screen. Besides, an image of a wrinkled and emaciated Karen turning in her bed precedes the voice-over narration, “… I had a farm in Africa …” In this particular instance, the film introduces a layer of meaning not realized in the literary original: once back in Denmark, Karen lived a life of desolation and regret after her seventeen-year adventure in Africa melted into sadness.

In *The Ghost and the Darkness*, before Remington is attacked and killed by the last man-eater, Patterson dreams of a lion attacking his wife and newborn child as they arrive at Tsavo. The dream is marked by surreal sound effects: the roaring of the lion and screams of terrified railroad workers who try to warn Patterson and his wife with no success. This dream and its characteristic sounds are used to foreshadow Remington’s death. Patterson is jolted from the dream to discover that Remington is missing. Upon searching, he finds evidence of his death in the savannah and begins an operation that ends in the death of the lion. The sounds in the dream add to the mood of the horrific which dominates the whole film. Even before this, surreal sounds are used earlier in the film. Mahino appears to be the enigma among all the workers that Patterson finds at Tsavo. He is a strong dominant character who holds sway with the other workers. Besides, he is famous for having killed a lion with his bare hands, a tale that intrigues Patterson. However, we know his death is near when on one sunny day in the savannah, roars of non-existent lions are heard against the background of Mahino’s fading image as he shows off his strength to Patterson.

*Things Fall Apart* also marks the use of surreal sound effects. The two instances of this application of sound relate to Ikemefuna’s death. On the day when Ikemefuna is sacrificed, Okonkwo, against the edict from the gods, accompanies the other men of Umuofia tasked with killing the boy. As they walk on a path through the jungle, a bird on a nearby tree can be heard screaming Okonkwo’s praise name, “Ebubedike”. Unperturbed, Okonkwo walks on and eventually lands the killer blow upon the sacrificial
Ikemefuna. The sound of the bird is used to symbolize the bearing of the gods on all the affairs of the people of Umuofia. It shows that the gods pervade every space in Umuofia. It also emphasizes the animist (Pepetela, 1989) world of the Igbo people already discussed. In addition, after he has taken part in the killing of Ikemefuna, Okonkwo is overwhelmed by the spiritual force from the gods. The gods are represented on the screen by the angels who condemn Okonkwo for the abomination he has committed. The angels appear in white robed feminine beings that dance around Okonkwo, but in the cinematic reality, the images of these angels should only be in Okonkwo’s mind. As they circle him, they chant in antiphonal exchange:

Voice: Who spilled the blood of the child that called him father?
Chorus: Okonkwo x 3

Expressive sound effects are also referred to as sound effects from the “outer world”. Although they are also diegetic, they are manipulated by the sound designer for dramatic effect. For instance, the sound can increase or decrease in loudness, or pitch, or tempo, as an emotional cue for the audience. Of the three films under study, this appropriation of sound is evident in *Out of Africa*. The scene is Karen’s house when she hosts Denys and Berkeley Cole for the first time. When Karen narrates her visitors a story about a wandering Chinese, Cheng Wong, who lived with a girl named Shirley, a tune can be heard fading in and out and interspersing with her voice. This sound is used as a suitable background against which Karen’s sad story is appreciated.

As demonstrated above, sound effects in the three films are used to express various moods. In *The Ghost and the Darkness*, it is terror, in *Out of Africa*, it is a mood of melancholy; in *Things Fall Apart*, it is emphasis on the Igbo cultural and spiritual world.

In the literary originals, these moods are expressed mainly by use of narrative description.
2.4 Cinematography: From Prose Narration to Visual Narration

This part of the chapter discusses the role of cinematographic techniques in compensating for the literary text narrative devices that cannot be transferred from the literary antecedents to the adapted film. This section interrogates elements of cinematography and mise-en-scene and makes comparisons between their effect and the effect of narrative devices in the antecedent texts. While cinematography refers to the art of capturing desired images to be used in telling a cinematic narrative, mise-en-scene refers to the visual elements that are realized in the image (Sijll, 2005). Cinematography and mise-en-scene are related in the sense that whereas the former, is the technical process, the latter is the visual effect of the process (Diang’a, 2013).

Sijll (2005) underscores the supremacy of cinematography in the process of film making over all other elements of filmmaking. She emphasizes camera placement, lighting, composition, motion, and editing as the real elements of cinema. Sijll (ibid) refers to Alfred Hitchcock who insists that without good use of these elements, a film becomes no more than a collection of photographs of people talking. She further cites:

“...I can pick up a screenplay and flip through the pages. If all I see is dialogue, dialogue, dialogue, I won’t even read it. I don’t care how good the dialogue is -- it’s a moving picture. It has to move all the time... It’s not the stage. A movie audience doesn’t have the patience to sit and learn a lesson ...” -- Robert Evans, “The Biggest Mistake Writers Make.”

(Quoted in Sijll, 2005, p. 02)

It is relying on cinematographic elements, which really make cinema, that silent films such as The Great Train Robbery became successful. Therefore, this part of the study examines the import of technical cinematic elements such as camera angles, length, composition and framing, lighting and montage on the cinematic narrative which makes the story of the film either similar or different to that of the literary original.
2.4.1 Narration by Camera Length and Angle

Thompson and Bowen (2009) define a shot as the smallest unit of a motion picture. They further state that the image shots that a viewer sees on screen are not “shown from the same exact angle, perspective, or distance” (Thompson and Bowen, 2009, P. 3). As such, whereas prose narratives in the literary antecedents under study have appropriated mainly narrative description (and attendant narrative voice and narrative point of view) the filmmakers of the adapted films have the manipulation of camera angles and distance to tell their story. This section of the chapter investigates how by use of camera angles and length the filmmakers are able to deliver the cinematic narratives either in variance with, or in the spirit of the literary originals.

2.4.1.1 Camera Length

A film based on an autobiographical work is essentially a narrative film that tells the story of people in (and/or) places. Like its literary original which begins by placing the characters in the real context within which the action happens, such a film uses camera techniques to locate characters within an appropriate setting. The film Out of Africa begins with Long Shots (LS) and Extreme Long Shots (ELS) to establish the setting of the story. Also referred to as panoramic shots or establishing shots, they serve to place the perception of the viewer in the scenery and physical location of the filmic narrative. In these shots, the beauty of Africa, some of whose allure is responsible for the entry of Europeans into the continent is evident. Whereas in prose narration Karen Blixen depended fully on narration and description, the filmmaker has the privilege of using images to tell the story. For Karen, Africa represented the untamed sublime beauty that was attained as a result of a combination of ideal weather and the integration between human beings, flora and fauna. A comparison between the shots in the film and the narration in the literary original indicates that by use of visual techniques, the filmmaker achieves what the writer does by use of prose narration. See below:
The image above (3) is one of the products of long shots that appear at the beginning of the film *Out of Africa*. These extreme long shots (panoramic shots) are used to establish setting and emphasize the beauty of Africa which the writer of the literary original narrates in lengthy, sometimes belaboured descriptions. As an establishing shot, one of these shots (not captioned here) is aided by the subtitle “KENYA, EAST AFRICA 1913” which leaves no doubt in the viewer’s mind about the spatial and temporal location of the scene. It has the characteristic of an establishing shot of being long and wide angle, properties which aid the audience in familiarizing with the location where the scene is taking place.

This shot, apart from establishing setting also gives a panoramic view of the beauty of the African savanna which Karen Blixen emphasizes through narration in her book.
The theme that runs in the shots above correlates with the theme in Karen Blixen’s narration in the literary antecedent. With the above images, the film thus does service to Karen Blixen’s glowing poetic description of the beauty of the African landscape. In *Out of Africa* (1937), Blixen narrates:

> The geographical position and the height of the land combined to create a landscape that had not its like in all the world … The colours were dry and burnt, like the colours in pottery. The trees had a light delicate foliage, the structure of which was different from that of the trees in Europe; it did not grow in bows or copulas, but in horizontal layers, and the formation gave to the tall solitary trees a likeness to the palms, or a heroic and romantic air like full rigged ships with their sails furled … upon the grass of the great plains the crooked bare old thorn-trees were scattered and the grass was spiced with thyme and bog-myrtles; in some places the scent was so strong that it smarted the nostrils. The views were immensely wide. Everything that you saw made for greatness and freedom, and unequaled nobility. (p. 13).

The above excerpt, which is in fact translated into film by way of the preceding images, narrates of the sublimity of the African landscape and the profound effect it has on the narrator. Of the African nights, Blixen (1937) writes and compares the nights to the sublime world of beautiful dreams. While in the literary narration the author uses imagery which appeals to senses of sight, sound and smell, in the cinematic narrative, establishing shots are used to narrate the beauty of Africa. According to her, it is such beauty of the African nights that partly inspired her to write.

People who dream when they are asleep at night know of a special kind of happiness which the world of the day holds not, a placid ecstasy, and ease of heart that are like honey on the tongue. … the pleasure of the dreamer does not lie in the substance of the dream, but in this: that there things happen without any interference from his side, and altogether outside his control. Great landscapes create themselves, long splendid views, rich and delicate colours, roads, houses, which he has never seen or heard of. Strangers appear and are friends or enemies, although the person who dreams has never done anything about them. … The thing which in the waking world comes nearest to a dream is night in a big town, where nobody knows one or the African night. There too is infinite freedom: it is there that things are going on, destinies are made round you, there is
activity all sides, and it is none of your concerns (p. 82-84).

In the excerpt above, the author uses the analogy of dram, and the fantasy that comes with dream, to express the boundless nature of the beauty of Africa. Just as the world of dreams presents limitless possibilities, so does the flora and fauna of Africa.

The foregoing exposition (pitting the use of shots in the adapted film and narration in the literary text) shows reflections between the use of camera length in the former and descriptive narration in the literary original. A conclusion can therefore be made to the effect that camera technique is used to compensate for the non-transferable from the literary to the film

In *The Ghost and the Darkness*, this technique is also manifest. Long shots/ establishing shots are used for panoramic effect and to mark the geographical location of the action. By use of long shots, the filmmaker foregrounds the climatic conditions and the flora and fauna of the equatorial region of Africa of which Kenya is part. It is important to note that in the said shots, the journey motif symbolizing Europe’s entry into Africa is highlighted just as it is in *Out of Africa*. In this case however, the image of Patterson’s train cruising through the Kenyan savannah is relegated to the middle ground and the natural phenomena are brought to the foreground. Consider the two images below:
Image 2.5: Long shot of a lush landscape overhung by heavy clouds. This shot enhances the tropical setting.

Image 2.6: Long panoramic shot that foregrounds presence of wildlife in *Africa*. *Patterson's train is relegated to the right of the middle ground.*

The above application of long shots is hence used as a narrative technique in both films use to narrate visually. The film *Things Fall Apart* on the other hand heavily on dialogue, and this can be given as a reason why it lacks use of long shots. This is because what would have been relayed by long shots is largely relayed by the dialogue of characters in the film (as shall be seen in the next chapter). This film may also belong in the category of films that Alfred Hitchcock (quoted in Sijll, 2005) criticizes for falling below par in cinematic quality:

> In many of the films now being made, there is very little cinema; they are mostly what I call ‘photographs of people talking.’ When we tell a story in cinema, we should resort to dialogue only when it’s impossible to do otherwise... It is essential... to rely more on the visual than on the dialogue. Whichever way you choose to stage the action, your main concern is to hold the audience’s fullest attention.” Alfred Hitchcock. (Sijll, 2005, p. 2)

However, because cinema is an incident of culture, this view can be countered with the argument that *Things Fall Apart* is inspired by different cultural reasons as compared to the other two films. As such, its form can be justified as a filmmaker’s way of giving
back to the Igbo people their story (Ugochukwu (2009) and Anyanwu 2010) in film as originally and authentically as it was told by Achebe in the text.

2.4.1.2 Camera Angle

Camera angle is also referred to as perspective. Camera angles are used in film to influence the manner in which the audience perceives characters. There are five main distinct camera angles in film: Bird’s Eye View, Low Angle, High Angle, Oblique Angle and Eye-Level Angle (Sijll, 2005). This section shall look at a select usage of camera angles to delineate character and convey subtle meanings and nuances.

Image 2.7: Abdulla on train, top left; Patterson on the ground, left bottom

Taken from the film *The Ghost and the Darkness*, image 7 above depicts Patterson (bottom left) facing off with Abdulla – top left – as the latter leads the reneging railroad workers out of Tsavo following the most devastating lion attack on the hospital which results in several fatalities.
Image 2.8: A Straight Angle close-up shot of Abdulla on top of a train as he leads workers out of Tsavo. This is also a point of view shot used to depict his hatred of Patterson. It also depicts Abdulla’s face as viewed Patterson’s POV.

Image 2.9: A High Angle Shot showing the diminished image of Patterson left only with Samuel as Abdulla and other railroad workers leave Tsavo.

The three shots above (image 7, 8 and 9) which appear in a sequence use camera angle to depict Abdulla’s temporary triumph over Patterson. In image 7, Abdulla’s is visually elevated by virtue of a low angle camera shot that targets the roof of the train as the point
of interest (POI) while Patterson’s image is lowered to portray the fact that at least for this time, Abdulla has reigned supreme over Patterson in the power struggle over the control of workers and proceedings at Tsavo. This is however temporary as all the workers come back after Patterson kills the man-eaters. The last shot (depicted in image 9) in this section is demonstration of how high angle camera shot is used to diminish the stature of Patterson so that it appears that the viewer, (from the point of view of Abdulla) now looks down on Patterson. This is also point of view shot in the sense that the viewer regards Patterson from the point of view of another character, Abdulla, who is on top of the train coach. These three shots are assembled by the process of montage to reveal the emotional balance of power between the main players at Tsavo. This use of camera angle can be seen to correlate with Patterson’s descriptive narration of the rebellion of railroad workers at the behest of Abdulla. At the beginning of chapter five of his book, Patterson starts the tale of protesting workers who were also quarreling almost themselves, and proceeds to narrate how the same workers wanted to kill him. Consider:

Both groups of men, carrying crowbars and flourishing their heavy hammers, then closed in on me in the narrow part of the ravine. I stood still, waiting for them to act, and one man rushed at me, seizing both my wrists and shouting out that he was going to "be hung and shot for me" -- rather a curious way of putting it, but that was his exact expression. I easily wrenched my arms free … and if he had succeeded in knocking me down, I am certain that I should never have got up again alive. (Patterson, 1907, p. 17)

We can conclude therefore that the above shots are inspired by Patterson’s narration of the conflict with his workers. By using this technique, the filmmaker is able to make palpable the tension which can only be narrated in the literary original.

Similar to the case of length of camera shots, the film Things Fall Apart shows lack of manipulation of camera angles. The reasons behind this can range from budgetary or logistical constraints during the shooting to the filmmaker’s desire to focus on delivering the narrative more by filmed dialogue and action than by cinematographic techniques. As Ugochukwu (2009) and Anyanwu (2010) would argue, the primary focus of the filmmaker was to deliver the story to the owners (the Igbo) as realistically as possible.
In *Out of Africa*, camera angles are used to express among other things, the master-servant relationship. In the literary original, Blixen (1937) narrates intermittently how her servants submitted to her as was obviously expected. In the adapted film, this relationship is expressed using high and low camera angles. In one of such pairing of low and high camera angle shots, Karen is seen from the point of view of her farm manager in a low angle camera shot that makes her look dominant over the former, who is her junior on the farm. The same shot is followed by a high angle shot of the farm manager as seen from the point of view of Karen which dwarfs the former. The most significant master-servant relationship, however, is the one that pits the Africans against the whites. This too is expressed by use of high and low angle camera shots. This application of shots can noted in a series of shots that show Karen’s first arrival at the Ngong farm as seen below:

![Image 2.10: A low angle camera shot that makes Karen dominant over her native farm servants.](image)

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In the two shots above (image 10 and 11), camera angles combine with Point of View Shots to demonstrate the disequilibrium of power between the master and the servant; the whites and their servants. In the first short, Karen is viewed from the point of view of the native servants. She is seen as an imposing character- as she would even if she were not on horseback. This is used to demonstrate the natives’ view of the white race as powerful and dominant. It shows how the encounter between Europe and Africa led to the rise of white hegemony. This view is complemented by the next shot in which natives look diminished as viewed from Karen’s point of view. This counter points of view are inspired by the cultural and ideological factors that resulted in the consideration of the African as lesser, and the European as greater at the time of Europe’s coming to Africa.

2.4.2 Lighting

All the three films under study have employed a combination of natural lighting and artificial lighting to tell the adapted narratives. According to Sijll (2005), such effects as brightness and colour are used in cinema as visual stimuli to attract the attention of the
audience and add layers of meaning to a cinematic narrative. Of the three, *The Ghost and the Darkness* uses lighting to engender an atmosphere of terror and tension. On the other hand, high key lighting is used in *Out of Africa* to engender a mood of romance that prevails for the most part of the film.

Diang'a (2013) adds to this perspective by stating that lighting in film is first of all used for the purpose of "illuminating for a better view" (p. 118). However, the function of light in film extends to include much more than mere illumination. To this ends, she further writes:

… a deeper engagement with film aesthetics reveals several functions of light as a strong factor in meaning creation and generation. Specific lighting creates mood for a particular character, theme or activity. This way, different colours with well known denotations can be used to enhance the effect of a scene. Sometimes, light can be filtered to reduce its intensity, again for particular aesthetic outcome. Light creates time in film. Different light filters can be used to create a feel of morning, midday, evening or any other time a director desires (Diang’a 2013, p. 118).

Light being thus important, Diang’a (*ibid*) writes on the shortcomings of lighting in the film *Kolarmask* which she says has lighting executed in a manner that fails to convince the viewer that light is a creation of the film crew. Good lighting, according to this view, should happen in such a way that it is interpreted by the viewer to be naturally occurring in the cinematic narrative. The film *Things Fall Apart* would suffer from similar criticism as some of the scenes in the film are replete with shadows which very easily give away the fact that artificial lighting was used. In addition, some of the night scenes are poorly lit, making a critic wonder whether it is the director’s desire to create a dark tale or the result of budgetary constraints – similar constraints that Diang’a (*ibid*) attributes to Mungai in her production of the film *Saikati*.

### 2.4.2.1 Lighting and Composition for Terror in *The Ghost and the Darkness*

To enhance the atmosphere of the horrific in the adventure film, *The Ghost and the
Darkness, the film maker uses camera angle, length of shots and darkness versus light of the lens. This is a cinematographic technique that is used to take the place of what is only mediated by narration and description in Patterson’s literary original, The Man-eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures (1907). This cinematic strategy is seen every time there is an encounter between man and the lions.

Right from the first time Patterson is accompanied by Sterling to wait upon the lions, we see darkness tempered only by shades of light only enough to enable us to have a view of the faces of characters, and silhouettes of people, animals and objects. In this case, the light supplied in the scene is from a hurricane lamp carried up the tree by Patterson, and another dim light visible at the top-right corner of the frame. To intensify the mood, these shots are often blended with the sound effects of hooting owls, roar of lions and the frightening squeaking of the night birds.

Image 2.12: A shot of Patterson and Sterling on one of their night vigils while hunting the man-eaters.

Besides, the conversation between the two men is scanty and a scared Sterling fidgets and trembles in speech until he dozes off and is eventually jerked from sleep by Patterson’s one shot. He slips and falls next to the first lion (not one of the two famous Man-eaters) after it is killed by Patterson.
It is critical to mention that although night shots, the images above portray shots that appear to have been illuminated in a bid to make them black and white shots. Hence, an argument can be made of the filmmaker borrowing from the Film Noir strategy. Film Noir as a concept emerged to describe the American film of Postwar Era (1940s to 1950s). These films were usually crime dramas and mystery that depicted the cynicism and subjectivity of the postwar world (Conard, 2006). Conard (ibid) cites Borde and Chaumeton (1955) who define noir as a series or cycle of films whose aim is to create alienation in the viewer:

All the films of this cycle create a similar emotional effect: that state of tension instilled in the spectator when the psychological reference points are removed. The aim of film noir was to create a specific alienation. (Borde and Chaumeton (1955), cited in Conard, 2006, p. 10)

Hence, such darkened scenes are inspired by the noir technique of creating tension in the viewer so that they are able to appreciate with appropriate emotion, Patterson’s horrific duel with the lions.

Another scene of terror in which interplay between light and darkness is used is played
out on the night when Mahino is dragged from the tent and mauled by a man-eater. In the following series of shots representing the scene, there is no doubt that *The Ghost and the Darkness* is a tragic adventure, or even a horror film, characterized by darkness as also suggested in the film’s name. This kind of lighting combines with the use of a close up (detail) shot to bring the viewer closest possible to the reality of the terror caused by the man-eaters of Tsavo, an idea that is continued in the shot below.

Image 2.14: A scary image of Mahino as he is devoured by the lions and vultures.
The low angle shots above, taken from the ground, make the lion supreme and menacing in this scene. The angle of the camera combines with lighting which creates a halo image of the lion, making it all the more vicious. Relative to the literary original, the film uses lighting and composition to narrate the full extent of the man-eaters’ ferocity and the terror that pervaded Tsavo after the entry of the man-eating lions. Lighting and composition in film, therefore, is effective in elevating James Patterson’s prose narrative of the horrific encounter between man and beast in Tsavo, a feat the writer had done to a lesser extent in his book. This is not to say that the film is better, but illustrates the fact that the film has the advantage of using visual techniques that make its narrative more emphatic than the literary original – which relays its narrative via written signs. The following excerpt is one of the sections in Patterson’s memoir that inspire the use of lighting and composition to narrate horror. A closer reading of this excerpt will reveal that the film assigns the water carrier’s death to Mahino, whose death is depicted in the images above. The manner of water carrier’s death described below is similar to the film’s portrayal of Mahino’s death.

The bhisti (water carrier), it appears, had been lying on the floor, with his head towards the centre of the tent and his feet neatly touching the side. The lion managed to get its head in below the canvas, seized him by the
foot and pulled him out. In desperation the unfortunate water-carrier clutched hold of a heavy box in a vain attempt to prevent himself being carried off, and dragged it with him until he was forced to let go by its being stopped by the side of the tent ... He (lion) sprang at his throat and after a few vicious shakes the poor bhįsti's agonising cries were silenced forever. The brute then seized him in his mouth, like a huge cat with a mouse, and ran up and down the boma looking for a weak spot to break through. Very little was left of the unfortunate bhįsti -- only the skull, the jaws, a few of the larger bones and a portion of the palm with one or two fingers attached. On one of these was a silver ring, and this, with the teeth (a relic much prized by certain castes), was sent to the man's widow in India (Patterson, 1907, p. 09).

The foregoing section has been limited to the analysis of *The Ghost and the Darkness* because it is only in this film that the viewer witnesses the presentation of the extremely horrific. Although *Things Fall Apart* relays elements of horror, the filmmaker avoids showing these to the viewer. As a result, the use of lighting to intensify horror that would have been witnessed as in the case of *The Ghost and the Darkness* is missing. For example, the killing of Ikemefuna, which is one of the most horrific incidents in the film, is not overtly shown. In Part 20 of the film, the viewer witnesses the men of Umuofia draw their machetes and strike the pot that Ikemefuna is carrying on the head. We hear the boy scream, and see Okonkwo as he deals the killer blow, but Ikemefuna’s body is not revealed. In *The Ghost and the Darkness*, such scary scenes and dead bodies are shown, including the mauling of Sterling and the patients in Dr. Hawthorn’s hospital. Such horrific scenes are missing in *Out of Africa* -- a film that demonstrates the use of lighting to tell a romantic adventure narrative.

### 2.4.2.2 Lighting the Romantic Narrative in *Out of Africa*

As *Out of Africa* begins, with the credits rolling in with the attendant voice over and romantic theme song, the viewer is treated to the golden colours of Africa complete with the natural light of the uninhibited tropical sun, the halo images of Denys Finch Hutton and wildlife. In her study of selected Kenyan films, Diang’a (2013) states that besides illuminating, lighting creates meaning in film by establishing “mood for a particular character, theme or activity.” (p. 118). Lighting in the images which come at the
beginning *Out of Africa* is used to set the atmosphere for the romantic adventure in the cinematic narrative. What follows is the story of Karen’s love for the man (Denys) and Africa. Further, the images in their totality actualize the African setting within which the story of film occurs.

![Image 2.16: A shot of Denys in the foreground of African sunset](image)

Besides, this beginning to the cinematic narrative makes the film a reflection of its literary original which begins with extolling the beauty of Africa. In *Out of Africa* (1937), Karen Blixen writes about the Ngong Hills:

> The sky was rarely more than pale blue or violet, with a profusion of mighty, weightless, ever-changing clouds towering up and sailing on it ... in the middle of the day the air was alive over the land, like aflame burning; it scintillated, shone and waved like running water, mirrored and doubled all objects, and created a great Fata Morgana. The hill-country itself, when you get into it, is tremendously big, picturesque and mysterious; varied with long valleys, thickets, green slopes and rocky crags (Blixen, 1937, p. 14-15).

Whereas in the text Karen doesn’t mention Denys at the beginning, and in fact the story of their romance is only implied much later in the text, the film begins the narrative from this perspective while impressing upon the viewer that the story of Karen’s love for
Africa is in fact interspersed with her love for Denys. In other words, the love of either is expressed in the other; a point justified by the fact that Karen’s love for Denys and Africa both fade at the same time. The film therefore more successfully and emphatically brings to relief the romance between Karen and Denys than does the antecedent text. This is made possible at the start because of blending of images, music and voice-over. Image 16 above goes hand in hand with a soundtrack rendition of a violin concerto playing the theme song of the film “I Had a Farm in Africa”. Besides, attendant to this is Karen’s voice narrating at 00:49:

He even took the gramophone on safari, three rifles, supplies for a month and Mozart. He began our friendship with a gift, and later, not long before Tsavo, he gave me an honour; an incredible gift; a glimpse of the world through God’s eye. And I thought, “Yes! I see. This is the way it was intended.” I have written about all the others not because I loved them less, but because they were clearer; easier. He was waiting for me there. But I have gone ahead of my story – he’d have hated that. Denys loved to hear a story told well. You see, I had farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills.

As typical of romantic films, high key lighting in Out of Africa has been used to foreground a cheerful, light and relaxed mood. High key Lighting is also used to foreground the wedding scene at Muthaiga Club which takes place just an hour after Karen’s arrival in Nairobi. Another element of mise-en-scene, colour, is also brought into effect by the filmmaker to enhance the mood of merriment that pervades this wedding scene with white emphasized as the dominant colour. In fact, white remains prevalent in all the romantic scenes involving Denys and Karen. See the shots in images 17 and 18 below:
Besides telling the story of romance, these two shots have costume and lighting combining to enhance the image of the European settler in Africa as an aristocrat. When the settlers arrived in Africa, they brought with them their taste in food, dressing and general manner. For the Britons, the Victorian taste was evident. Rovine (2009) documents how the colonial establishment used food and dressing to alienate the African and distinguish their apartness.
These shots speak of a wedding of grandeur yet in fact their main effect is to contrast Karen’s soon unhappy marriage to Bror with her romance with Denys. Karen finds Denys unpretentious yet charming, an idea proven later when Denys rejects a wedding, stating that he would not love Karen more just because of “a piece of paper”. The best shots of the romantic relationship are set in the wild (a depiction of Denys’ adventurous and free spirit) and light plays a leading role in accentuating the romantic mood.

Image 2.19: A detail shot with natural lighting in which lighting and the landscape combine to emphasise a romantic mood.

The frame of the shot above includes within its composition a gramophone which symbolizes Denys’ expression of romance. While Bror was blunt, Denys is contrasted as uninhibited and adventurous. Such shots with their attendant lighting are used in film as a re-narration of such literary passages as follows:

When he came back to the house, it (the gramophone) gave out what was in it; it spoke, as the coffee plantations speak, when the first showers of
the rainy season they flower, … Denys had a trait of character which to me was very precious … (Blixen, 1937, p. 193 – 195).

The foregoing quotation is just one in several in which Karen memoirs narrates her love with Denys with subtlety and poetry. Whereas the literary antecedent leaves the story of love latent and implied, the adapted film by use of lighting and other elements of mise-en-scene foregrounds the romantic adventure for the viewer.

This section of the chapter has limited itself to investigating how lighting is used in Out of Africa to tell a story of love between Karen and Denys and Karen’s love for Africa. In none of the two other films do we have a romantic theme dominating as it does in Out of Africa. As such, correlation with other films in relation to this issue cannot be made. In this particular film, there is a combination of high key lighting and natural light in presenting images of sublime beauty of the African landscape. The film uses this motif of the protagonist and her lover in such a setting to consistently foreground the romantic relationship between Karen and Denys.

2.4.3 Montage

Montage refers to the technique or process by which shots are selected, edited and pieced together in a deliberate series to make a continuous video that tells a story. Sijll (2005) states that montage is French for assemble. It is created by an assembly of a series of quick cuts disconnected in time and/or place but which combine to form a larger idea so that in effect the audience can make comparisons and draw inferences. Mainly, montage helps to create an impression of passage of time, change in place and character progress. It can also highlight emotional transition in characters. Besides, montage is also important because:

The strength of montage lies in the fact that it involves the spectator’s emotions and reason. The spectator is forced to follow the same creative path that the authors followed when creating the image. The spectator does not only see the depicted elements of the work; he also experiences the dynamic process of the emergence and formation of the image in the same way that the author experienced it (Eisenstein, 1938, p. 309).
In line with Eisenstein’s thinking, montage is used by the filmmaker to express what the author of the literary antecedent expresses by narrative description. At the start of *Out of Africa*, montage helps give the impression of the passage of time and distance as Karen travels on a train from Mombasa to Nairobi. Shots captured in the three images 20, 21 and 22 below are part of a series of edits that show how time progresses from afternoon, evening, night to morning. The images are serialized in a montage to indicate this chronological transition.

Image 2.20: Train journey from Mombasa to Nairobi. It is also an aerial view shot taken at a Bird’s Eye View angle.
As illustrated in the above, the film _Out of Africa_ demonstrates use of montage to show transition in time when Karen travels on train for the first time from Mombasa to Nairobi. This cinematic technique is anticipated in the literary original. In the literary narrative, Blixen (1937) in the text _Out of Africa_ delivers narrative snapshots of Africa’s flora and fauna. Her description is both graphic and formulaic, giving an impression of the reader
‘watching’ animals the same way the viewer does for the film. Consider a paragraph in which the author executes this:

Out on the safaris, I had seen a herd of buffalo, one hundred and twenty nine of them, come out of the morning mist under a copper sky, one by one … I had seen a herd of elephant traveling through the dense native forest … I had followed two rhinos on their morning promenade, when they were sniffing and snorting in the air of the dawn …. I had seen the royal lion before sunrise, below a waning moon, crossing the plain on his way home from the kill (Blixen, 1937, p. 23) (Emphasis mine).

This narrative description has a deliberate repetition (I had seen …) which makes it formulaic and gives an impression to the reader as if they were actually watching the animals with the narrator/author. Besides, by it the writer serializes different kinds of animals that are representative of the alluring natural phenomenon that Africa is. This repetition in the literary text works in the same fashion as the above montage in film – “I had seen” is used to introduce in prose narration, the series of snapshots that the narrator/author wants the reader to “see”. This instance of textual narration in Out of Africa is also illuminated in the film, The Ghost and the Darkness. In this film, Patterson’s life in Africa starts with seeing the animals that Blixen (1937) catalogues in her memoirs above. This is further illustrated below.

Montage has been used for similar effect in The Ghost and the Darkness with similar effect. Col. Patterson and Sterling travel at the head of a train discussing Kenya’s flora and fauna which Patterson admires and says is the reason he has always wanted to work in Africa. Besides showing transition in time and place, this instance of sequentially edited and fused shots serves as testimony to the beauty of Africa which served as an allure to explorers and colonialists. In this case, it is important to note that the shots are unrelated in the sense that they were shot at different places and times of the day. They are however edited into a series that is relevant and which forms the background to the conversation going on between Patterson and Sterling. Images 23, 24 and 25 appear below and are part of a series of shots which exhibit transitional montage to show change in time and distance.
Image 2.23: The second shot in the montage of wildlife shots as Patterson sees on train journey from Mombasa to Nairobi

Image 2.24: The third shot in the montage of wildlife shots as Patterson sees on train journey from Mombasa to Nairobi
Evident from the resemblance between the montage at the beginning of both *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* is the intertextuality between the two films. Though made by different directors, the films exemplify the motif of the Whiteman’s entry into Africa on a train in exactly the same fashion. Again, in both, is the idea of colonialism having entered Africa concealed as the Whiteman’s spirit of adventure whose thirst was to be quenched by site seeing of the flora and fauna of the continent. This lie of adventure as the main motivation is dispelled at the end of both films as we see that colonialism has fully taken effect by the time the directors shout the final “CUT”.

There is transitional montage in *Out of Africa* which is used to indicate change in time. This series of shots is edited to show passage of time; to indicate the passage of two years mentioned in both text and film during which Karen was in Denmark battling with syphilis. In this montage, we witness change of seasons from dry to wet season and back, the factory at various stages of construction and Farah changing flowers daily in Karen’s room. The series begins at 01:03:10 and ends at 01:04:47. This duration of one minute and a half therefore used by way of montage to cover for the two years.
Image 2.26: The first shot of Farah changing flowers in Karen’s room

Image 2.27: The second shot of Farah changing flowers in Karen’s room
Images 26, 27 and 28 show edits that appear in this series of edits in this order and show Farah bringing to Karen’s bedside table flowers of different colours on different days. This appears to be a ritual he repeats loyally on all days of Karen’s absence. The film also uses serialized edits that appear in a series of shots in order to show how the construction of Karen’s coffee factory progresses during Karen’s two-year absence.

In another significant case, the film uses edits that appear in this series of edits to show change of seasons during the two years of Karen’s absence. The rains come and go before she comes back. This also helps account for the duration of two years. The filmmaker pairs the illustrated use of montage with a voice-over which affirms the passage of two years that Karen spends in her mother’s house undergoing treatment. It also juxtaposes Britain’s war against Germany in WWI with Karen’s personal war with syphilis.

It was a longer journey this time. The war went on. I fought my own war. Arsenic being my ally against an enemy I never saw. I stayed in the room where I was born in Rungstedlund, and tried to remember the colours of Africa.

Whereas the foregoing illustrations of montage in *The Ghost and the Darkness* and *Out of Africa* discussed above relate to the use of series of edits to narrate passage of time,
*Out of Africa* alone displays what can be called ‘Panoramic Montage’ of Kenya is observed from the skies. The bird’s eye view impression in the series of aerial shots gives a panoramic adventure for the viewer to witness the beauty of Africa (Kenya) narrated only in words in the literary antecedent. Besides elevating the adventurous romantic journey undertaken by Karen and Denys, with this instance of montage, within less than two minutes, the viewer travels across Kenya’s most impressive tourist attractions which include the Gura Falls in the Aberdares, Mt. Longonot, the Wildebeest Migration and the flamingoes of Lake Nakuru. This panoramic montage hence works towards advancing the love story between Karen and the continent of Africa; a love story that goes hand in hand with the romantic narrative of her Karen’s love life with Denys. The film takes the viewer along through this long and adventurous journey in a cinematic duration of slightly over one minute and a half. Images 29, 30 and 31 below are part of this case of montage:

![Image](image-url)

**Image 2.29:** An aerial shot of a river winding through a wooded landscape.
This case of panoramic montage is the cinematic presentation of the description evident in the literary source. In *Out of Africa*, Blixen describes such beauty as witnessed when she flies with Denys. In the text, these panoramic narration spans four pages and can be captured in the snippets below:

One day Denys and I flew to Lake Natron, ninety miles southeast of the farm, and more than four thousand feet lower … The sky was blue but as
we flew from the plains in over the stony and bare lower country, all colour seemed to be scorched out of it. … Suddenly, in the midst of it was the lake. The white bottom, shining through the water, gives it, when seen from the air, a striking, unbelievable azure colour so clear that for a moment you shut your eyes at it. … Here live thousands of flamingoes. … (Blixen, 1937, p. 205 – 207).

Albeit in different ways, both film and text take us to a time in the past where we are able to fly with Karen and Blixen and witness the sublime beauty of the Kenya and the African continent. Hence, the film becomes a visual narration of the beauty that Karen Blixen extensively describes in her poetic narration in the text *Out of Africa* (1937).

*Things Fall Apart* displays limited use of montage, most likely a result of logistical and technical challenges that the filmmaker faced in the process of adapting Achebe’s novel to screen. This apparent shortcoming in editing and montage can also be witnessed with regard to lighting (a case referred to by Diang’a (2013) in her study of films produced in Kenya) and camera angles and length. With these two, the filmmaker fails to achieve variety and dynamism. The most significant case of montage is used to tell the story of the annihilation of the village of Abame by the Whiteman and his army. In Part 33, the filmmaker uses a series of edits that are interspersed with and alternate with shots of Obierika narrating the brutality of the Whiteman in Abame. At the beginning of Part 33, an omniscient voice-over narration introduces this edit and initially plays as background to it. It starts with a shot of Obierika narrating the tragic events to Uchendu and Okonkwo, then moves to shots of traders at Abame market, the approach of the Whiteman and his soldiers, and later shots of the devastation at the market after the massacre. This montage culminates in a shot showing Okonkwo’s and Uchendu’s reactions to the news.
Image 2.32: A shot of the Whiteman and his soldiers approaching Abame.

Image 2.33: The People of Abame display their wares at the market unaware of the impending massacre.
Image 2.34: A soldier takes aim at the market people.

Image 2.35: Bodies of those massacred sprawled at Abame market
Worried elders of Umuofia hold a night meeting in the wake of the Abame massacre.

This instance of montage is the cinematic storytelling of the encounter between the natives of Abame and the Whiteman which is only briefly told in Achebe’s literary original. To be specific, the narration in the voice-over that attends to the discussed case of montage is a paraphrase of the brief narration of the tragic happenings in Abame in Achebe’s novel.

2.4.4 Framing, Composition and Character Placement

In cinematographic terms, composition refers to how elements of mise-en-scene, including characters, colour, lighting, space and the whole set appear in the frame of the image (Sijll, 2005). Composition is also referred to as mise-en-scene. Framing ensure that relevant elements of the shot are captured within one frame of the shot so that together they are arranged in a grammar that creates meaning. The filmmaker chooses what to show and captures it within the frame (Allan, 2001, cited in Diang’a, 2013). Diang’a (ibid) also opines that “The composition of a shot has a strong semantic effect on the visual message communicated to the viewer” (p. 157).

In *Out of Africa*, the filmmaker uses composition to tell the story of the racial divide between the African natives and Europeans. The placement of Africans within the image
frame, compared to the positioning of Europeans within the same frame demonstrates this assertion. In the two shots in images 37 and 38 below, Denys’ bodyguard, Kinuthia is alienated by distance from his employer, and indeed from all the other white characters that are placed within the shots. The filmmaker uses this distance to dramatise the reality that colonialism created different worlds for Africans and Europeans and these worlds were worlds apart.

![Image 2.37: Kinuthia in the foreground stands opposite to Denys, Berkeley and Karen seen in the background.](image)

In image 37 above, Kinuthia is made to stand alone across the dam on Karen’s farm as the white characters all appear on the opposite side. The distance and alienation created by the space across the dam represents alienation of the two worlds from each other which is both ideological and socio-cultural. In image 38 below, Kinuthia follows Karen, Denys and Berkeley behind as they walk from Karen’s coffee farm. This is a further depiction of cultural and racial alienation. This creates the role of the African as that of the subaltern - the other.
Comparison to the text is necessary. In *Out of Africa* (1937), Karen Blixen devotes large passages of narration in descriptions that are laden with racist undertones and overtones (already quoted severally in this study). In the adapted film, this is executed by means of framing and composition (aspects of cinematography illustrated above). Importantly, the film advances Kinuthia’s role in the film relative to his very limited presentation in the text. In Blixen’s *Out of Africa*, Kinuthia is briefly told of as no more than Deny’s boy and gun bearer. In the film, he is used to enhance the filmmakers narration of race relations between the native blacks and the Europeans.

In image 39 below, composition is used to depict a balanced opposition between two world views: The African and the European. This image is characterised by balance as Karen and Farah stand on the one side, facing Kinyanjui and his son on the opposite side. This is the film’s way of narrating the economic, political and socio-cultural face-off between the native African world and the intruding European establishment.
In the film *Things Fall Apart*, the supernatural world of the Igbo is also presented through composition of shots. In image 40 below, Okonkwo has just killed Ikemefuna, against the will of and advice of the gods. As soon as he commits this transgression, he is assailed by angelic figures which chant vows declaring that he will not be spared. These angelic characters are costumed in sparkling white robes with impressions of wings, showing that they are on the side of the good (the gods) whereas Okonkwo is dressed in shades of red, symptomatic of the blood which the angelic figures vow to avenge in their chant, “blood for blood”. The white colour is symbolic of the idea that these are benevolent spirits of the Igbo that seek to defend the weak and exact justice on their behalf. The good that they stand for is therefore juxtaposed with the evil deed of killing Ikemefuna by Okonkwo.
The image above is also used to emphasise the tragic mode of the cinematic narrative – to be discussed in the next chapter. It is at this point in the film that Okonkwo’s life takes an irreversible turn for the worst. He has done what the gods forbade and lost their protection. This act of hubris leaves him exposed so that misfortune after misfortune befalls him. After this angelic declaration of their quest for revenge, Okonkwo accidentally shoots dead a kinsman and is banished to a seven-year exile. While in exile, Whiteman brings a new religion to the land and changes the vibrant dominant Umuofia to a subservient one. When he comes back and cannot adjust to the new order of things, he tragically takes his own life by hanging. The image captioned above finds resonance in the literary original. In the aftermath of killing Ikemefuna, Achebe presents an Okonkwo who has been wrecked by his own actions. The text narrates:

Okonkwo did not taste any food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna. He drunk palm-wine from morning till night, and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat when it was caught by the tail and dashed against the floor. … He did not sleep at night. He tried not to think about Ikemefuna, but the more he tried, the more he thought about him. … He felt like a drunken giant walking with the limbs of a mosquito. Now and then, a cold shiver descended on his head and spread down his body (Achebe, 1958, p. 44).
Form the foregoing, again, the text and the film unite in demolishing the larger than life image of Okonkwo a reader or a viewer may have had hitherto. Although he may not admit it, it is clear that Okonkwo’s actions have left him besieged and wrecked, like a “rat when it was caught by the tail and dashed against the floor.”

The last section of this chapter has devoted time to discuss the elements of cinematography, namely framing, composition and character placement. It is clear therefore that appearance of characters within the frame is not an accidental affair, but a deliberate design to visually dramatise issues of race and colonialism (in *Out of Africa*) and the Igbo spiritual world, in *Things Fall Apart*.

### 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to interrogate how elements of the cinematic media have been used to tell the filmic narrative either differently or similarly as related to the prose narratives of the literary originals. The point of departure of the whole argument in this chapter is that the literary text and the film media have different story telling techniques which either form uses aesthetically to deliver its story to the audience (Stam and Miller, 1999). Hence, the role of sound and cinematographic devices such as mise-en-scene, lighting, camera angle and length, and composition has been investigated as means by which filmmakers transport the narratives in the literary originals to the world of the three adapted films studied here.

The study therefore concludes that sound as a cinematic technical device was extensively used in all the three adapted films to tell stories which in the literary originals are largely told by descriptive narration. The filmmakers have appropriated both diegetic and non-diegetic sound to facilitate this. Of particular interest as regards appropriation of sound is the use of voice-over narration, music and other sound effects.

The study found that two of the adapted films, *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* utilise non-diegetic off-screen voice-over narration as a storytelling device.
Whereas *Out of Africa* uses first person narrative voice with the narrator sharing the same identity with the first person narrator of the literary original, *The Ghost and the Darkness* adopts a first person narrator who is not even present in the literary original but is introduced in the adapted film. The use of Karen’s voice to tell the story of the film enables the filmmaker to retain the element of the autobiographical just as it is in the literary antecedent. This allows the viewer to feel the emotional roller-coaster that Karen Blixen’s life in Kenya is most intimately than would have been achieved by any other narrative voice. Her failed love with Bror Blixen, her suffering with syphilis, and the rekindled love with Denys are some of the emotional experiences that Karen’s own voice most intimately narrates.

On the contrary, the film *The Ghost and the Darkness* does not have the first person narrator of the literary text, Patterson, as the owner of the narrative voice that the viewer hears. Instead, a new character, Samuel (a character missing in the literary original), is introduced in the film to ensure that the adventures of Patterson are narrated by a distanced and objective narrator. This creates the aesthetic distance necessary to ensure that the cinematic narrative is credibly and objectively told. However, Patterson’s voice is heard to narrate a letter he writes to his wife, same as his wife’s. Their voices bring a lighter and romantic dimension to an otherwise very tense and horrific tale.

*Things Fall Apart* differs radically from the other two films under study in the sense that the off-screen narrative voice-over the viewer is treated to belongs to an omniscient narrator. Most importantly the narrator’s voice here is used by the filmmaker to affirm loyalty to Achebe’s literary narrative. This is because all the parts narrated by the voice of an omniscient narrator are in fact descriptions and narrations directly transferred from the text to the film – mainly verbatim – in what Rauma (2004) terms “direct transference.” At the very least, the transferred descriptions are paraphrases of identifiable sections in the literary original. This makes the film *Things Fall Apart* the most realistic adaptation of the three films. As a result, chapter three of this study arrives at the conclusion that this film is a translation of its literary antecedent.
The role of music in narrating the film has been interrogated. Both diegetic and non-diegetic forms of music were studied. Music as used in the three films is seen to have been appropriated to create suitable moods, actualise setting and sometimes tell the sections of the narrative which in the literary antecedents are passively narrated. Music has therefore ‘activated’ the film narratives so that they now have more emotional life than the literary originals. In *Out of Africa*, music is seen to mainly tell the story of romance between Karen and Denys. To a limited extent, it also places the film in the appropriate historical and political context especially where a rendition of Britain’s national anthem, ‘God Save the King’ is made. In his composition, John Barry has appropriated Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto and fused it with African folk music to place the story in *Out of Africa* in the geographical and cultural realm of Africa, and within Kenya to be specific.

In *Things Fall Apart*, music builds up the plot and tells the tragedy of Okonkwo especially with regard to the brutal killing of Ikemefuna, a boy prisoner of war. What the text only briefly narrates, is extensively advanced by use of diegetic music – notably the dirge that Ikemefuna’s mother performs during her son’s mourning, and the chants by angels of death that assail Okonkwo soon after he takes part in Ikemefuna’s death. The film by this use of music does not leave the audience with task of reading implicatures and making inferences as the text does. For instance, the role of Ikemefuna’s killing in the eventual capitulation of Okonkwo is clearer in the film than in the text because of the foregoing instance of music. Music also makes the film, like the literary text before it, a tragedy of the Igbo culture and the hero (Okonkwo) who brings himself down because of his folly.

In *The Ghost and the Darkness*, music is used to foreground terror. Here discordant music combines with sound effects (the animal sounds of the night) to invite the necessary tension that the viewer requires to appreciate the horrific adventures of Henry Patterson at Tsavo.

The filmmakers used cinematographic techniques in the three films appropriately to
compensate for the elements of textual narration in the literary originals. Lightning and composition as used suitably tell the story of Karen Blixen, and her love for the continent Africa, and the man, Denys in a more appealing fashion than the textual descriptive narration. Lightning in *The Ghost and the Darkness* was used to create a mood of terror that pervades Tsavo when man-eaters start to devour the railroad workers. In *Things Fall Apart*, it tells the tragedy of Okonkwo and Umofia’s downfall. This chapter has cited evidence from the three literary originals to show how cinematographic elements were inspired by sections of the texts so that then, technical elements in film making are used to replace the narrative elements that are not transferable from text to film. The chapter also discussed the use of montage to visually represent transition in time and place, and use of camera angles and length to depict point of view and tension between characters.

This chapter, therefore, enables the study to arrive at the conclusion that literature and film are different media and hence use different devices in storytelling. Whereas one targets a reading audience, the other targets a viewing audience. However, with regard to *Things Fall Apart*, an argument is made in favour of the literary text – here, the film is accused of oversimplifying the story of the literary original by over-representing elements of the narrative that have best been left for the imagination and inference of the viewer. This would justify the fidelity critics in film adaptation such as Woof (1950) who argue that adaptations are usurpations of literary masterpieces. This notwithstanding, there emerged areas where this chapter highlighted that the films are able to advance and clarify the story of the text more than the latter does.

Having looked at the techniques of storytelling that define the literary as opposed to the cinematic narrative, the next chapter of this study proceeds to investigate the result of this difference. Specifically, chapter three discusses how the adapted film deviates and conforms to the world of the literary antecedent with regard to artistic elements: character, plot, setting and language. Besides illuminating the key cases of deviation and conformity, the chapter gives insights into the import that this conformity and deviation has on the meaning created collectively by both text and film.
CHAPTER THREE

CONFORMITIES AND INCONGRUITIES: LITERARY ANTECEDENT VIS-À-VIS ADAPTED FILM

3.1 Introduction

This chapter undertakes an investigation of the significant points of convergence and divergence with regard to such narrative elements as characterization, plot, setting, and language between the antecedent literary text and the adapted film. The conformities notwithstanding, this chapter realizes a lot stands to be gained by looking at how the adapted film deviates from the source text than by outlining the conformities. For this reason, a larger section of this chapter is biased towards discussing the deviations, analyzing them and finally arriving at interpretations of their significance. However, the main areas of conformity take the form of synopses of the cinematic text and its corresponding source text and how the major elements of the prose narrative and the cinematic narrative reflect on and interweave into each other. These synopses describe the correspondence in narrative structure and narrative elements between the literary original and the resultant film under the subchapter “Invariable Narrative Elements.”

This study contends that it is by first of all interacting with the elements of conformity that the research is best aided to use such as the background against which to appreciate the deviations and their import on the nature and function of the film adaptations. Besides, this chapter of the research develops its arguments by first hinging them on two concepts: the Invariant Fabula Components and the Variant Fabula Components; concepts originally introduced by Miller and Stam (1999). To these scholars, fabula refers to story, tale or narrative. Whereas the Invariant Fabula Components are used in the chapter to characterize elements of conformity, the Variant Fabula Components refer to elements between the prose narrative and the filmic narrative that are incongruous. In addition, this chapter makes its arguments in recognition of the work by Chatman (1978).
Chatman (ibid) introduces the concepts: kernels and satellites. This scholar states that kernels are those components in the literary antecedent which should not be omitted in the film adaptation because that would radically alter the narrative; while satellites are minor elements and events which may not be present in the source text but can be introduced in the adapted film. He, however, adds that the best practice of adaptation should take into consideration creating a healthy equilibrium between kernels and satellites. Hence, this chapter interrogates how the filmmakers have created equilibrium between the satellites and kernels.

Conclusively, this chapter specifically investigates the consistence and the lack of it in artistic components between the source literary texts and the adapted films. Character, plot, setting and language are compared and contrasted with a view of seeing whether they are variant or invariant. Eventually, the chapter makes conclusions on the impact that the variance and the invariance has on the reflections between the literary originals and their corresponding film adaptations.

### 3.2 Invariant Fabula Components

Miller and Stam (1999), in *A Companion to Film Theory*, conceive of Variant and Invariant Fabula Components (VFCs). They characterize Variant Fabula Components as the difference between the elements of the cinematic narrative and the plot of the antecedent prose narrative of the literary antecedent. According to these scholars, the exact contrary of this conception occasions the idea of Invariant Fabula Components (IFCs). The latter refers to the consistency between the elements of the cinematic narrative and prose narrative of the original literary text. This study acknowledges that adaptation of film from literary text is not merely a translation of the former into the latter. Consistent with this acknowledgment, as made clear earlier, reflections and variances between the adapted film and the source literary text are both accommodated as necessary artistic undertakings by this research. That being the case, this section of the study shall proceed to give a summary of the diegetic (or narrative) elements realizable as
consistent in both filmic narrative and the prose narrative. These, this research has called the Invariant Fabula (story or narrative) Components. Those components that are Variant (incongruent with each other) in the two media shall be discussed later in the chapter, under a section dealing with deviation in elements such as plot, character, setting and language.

3.3 Invariant Narrative Elements in the Adapted Films and Source Texts

3.3.1 Out of Africa: Text vis-à-vis Film

*Out of Africa*, the literary text, is a 1937 publication by Karen Blixen of her memoirs under the pen name, Isak Dinesen. Fifty years later, in 1986, Sidney Pollack adapted the text into a film by the same name. This film and its literary original enjoy the same setting, on the slopes of the Ngong Hills in Kenya. The time span for both narratives covers the period from pre-colonial to colonial Kenya - specifically, 1914 to 1931. However, in the cinematic narrative for the film (the screenplay written by Kurt Luedtke and directed by Sydney Pollack), the artists enjoy the license within the realm of adaptation theory and practice to include information beyond the text *Out of Africa*. As the credits at the beginning and end of the film indicate, the film is not inspired by the text (*Out of Africa*, 1937) alone, but also by Blixen’s other works, *Shadows on the Grass* (1961), *Letters From Africa* (1981), Errol Trzebinski’s 1977 text, *Silence Will Speak*, and Karen Blixen’s biography, *Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller* (1983) by Judith Thurman. This notwithstanding, *Out of Africa*, a memoir, is Blixen’s most outstanding work; autobiographical in texture, which tells her story in Africa and about Africans. It is therefore absolutely fitting to acknowledge that although her other writings and her biography by Thurman inspire the film; the greatest influence behind the film is *Out of Africa* (1937), hence the choice of an identical title for the film. Crucially, in terms of the narrative components, both the film and antecedent text enjoy a more than significant reflection upon each other as seen below. Karen Blixen’s own memoir, *Out of Africa*, and all the other texts cited above indeed have reflections with each other and the adapted film that they inspire.
According to Thurman (1983), Karen Blixen was born in 1885 in Rungstedlund, Denmark to a rich family. At the age of 28, she got married to her second cousin, Baron Bror Blixen of Sweden after moving to Kenya, thereby acquiring the title Baroness. Still, from both text and film, it is a marriage of convenience because Karen forces herself into the union to avoid being ridiculed by her society because she is yet to get married at such a considerably advanced age. Again, she is eager because by getting married to Bror she will get into mainstream nobility as a baroness. On the other hand, Bror marries for the money. This is evident especially in the cinematic dialogue that begins at 03:37:

Karen: You could marry me?
Bror: Well, I have to marry a virgin. I can’t stand criticism.
Karen: For the money I mean.
Bror: Probably.
Karen: Bror, listen to me. They wouldn’t teach me anything useful. And I have failed to marry. You know the punishment for that? Miss Dinesen at home. And you have gone through all your money. You are now seducing the servant girls. We are a pair you and I. I mean, at least we are friends. We might be alright, and if you want, at least you would have been somewhere.

She arrives in Kenya in 1914, upbeat about their plans (with the husband) to start a dairy farm in Ngong. Upon arrival, she is disappointed that Bror has already made a unilateral decision that they will in fact plant coffee instead of keep dairy. She makes a concession, albeit with reservations, as a means of making their relationship which gets off to a rocky start work. As shall later emerge in the course of this chapter, while the film manifestly plays out the tensions between Karen and Bror, the text tells a subdued; even detached, tale of the marriage between the two. In the literary original, Karen does not introduce Bror straightaway as her husband as it happens in the film. In fact, at page 16, the reader is only given a hint of a husband that the writer is reluctant to name:

We grew coffee on my farm. The land was in itself a little too high for coffee, and it was hard work to keep it going; we were never rich on the farm. But a coffee farm is a thing that gets hold of you and does not let you go, and there was always something to do on it: you are generally just
From this quotation, two things are evident: Karen in her book introduces the man she comes to Kenya to get married to in a clearly reluctant manner, and not as her husband. In addition, by saying “We grew coffee on my farm”, she denies Bror credit of ownership of the farm as a spouse. On the contrary, the film is crystal clear in painting these tensions right from its beginning. From their first conversation on the investment plans in Africa in their Ngong house, the following conversation occurs:

Bror: I didn’t come to Africa to sit with silly cows.
Karen: Next time you change your mind, do it with your money.
Bror: That bought your title, Baroness

Upon settling in Kenya, Karen discovers that Bror is an always absent husband, unfeeling and cold; first as a philandering adventurous hunter, and later as a participant in the WWI on the side of the British, something she does not approve of. Karen begins by establishing contacts with the natives, with the assistance of Farah, her most trusted servant and aide. She would like Chief Kinyanjui to allow her engage the native Kikuyu workers in her coffee farm. All this while, Bror is gone hunting in the wild.

Throughout her stay in Kenya, Karen Blixen maintains a more sympathetic attitude to the Africans, which does not bode well with other Europeans including Denys Finch-Hatton, Lord Delamare and Berkeley Cole. Though she has all-natives as her farm and house servants, it is not lost to the reader/viewer how she treats her farm hands such as Kamante using basic nursing skills, and even starts a school for them, hiring a European teacher for them. She also becomes proactive in settling disputes when they arise between her servants.

A year into her stay in Kenya, Karen suffers a syphilis attack, having contracted the disease from her husband, Bror. She is devastated because of the threat of infertility, insanity or even death and has to travel back to Denmark, to their home in Rungstedlund. The film, like its literary antecedent is keen to document in narrative her stay in her
homeland for the two years of treatment. After this duration, she returns cured but rendered infertile and now unable to conceive a child of her own. Her commitment towards providing a formal education for the children on her farm is henceforth viewed by her critics as a form of overcompensation to provide for the children she will never bear.

Karen eventually divorces her husband Bror and soon finds new love in Denys Finch-Hatton, a safari hunter and son of a titled English family. Although caring, romantic and appreciative of the qualities of Karen Blixen as a woman of great intellect and artistry, Denys, like Bror before him, is wary of commitment, and quite literally, keeps going in and out of her life, consistent with his adventures as a hunter. Having finally found what she feels is true love, Karen is keen on settling down with Denys in a family way but he would have none of it, seeing that it would be so restricting to him. Whereas the text is subtle about the tension between her and Denys, the film lays this bare in a scene at 02:06:00:

Karen: Bror has asked me for a divorce. He says he has found someone he wants to marry. I just thought we might do that someday.
Denys: (Jokingly) Divorced? (Seriously) How would a wedding change things?
Karen: I want to have someone of my own.
Denys: No, it wouldn’t.
Karen: What’s wrong with marriage anyway?
Denys: Have ever seen one you admire?
Karen: Yes I have. Many… people marry, it’s not revolutionary. There are some animals that mate for life.
Denys: Geese!
Karen: You use the damn animals for your own arguments but you won’t let me use them for mine.
Denys: … One day at a time.
Karen: When you go away, you don’t always go on safari, do you?
Denys: No.
Karen: You just like to be away.
Denys: It’s not meant to hurt you.
Karen: It does.
Denys: Karen, I am with you because I choose to be with you. I don’t want to live someone else’s idea of how to live. Don’t
ask me to do that. I don’t want to find out someday that I am at the end of someone else’s life. I am willing to pay for mine, to be lonely sometimes, to die alone if I have to. I think that is fair ... I won’t love you more because of a piece of paper.

This upset in her love life coincides with The Great Depression of the 1930s\(^ {18} \) (Thurman, 1995), a global economic downturn that drastically impacts on the coffee prices on the world market, to the detriment of coffee farmers like Karen herself. Fate’s worst twist for her comes when a fire razes down her coffee factory, consuming with it all her coffee crop to ashes alongside the machinery. This misfortune is clarified in both adapted film and the literary antecedent, with the marked difference being the times when the incident is revealed in the two media: whereas in the film it occurs at the tail end of the cinematic narrative, in the text it is introduced much earlier:

Our machinery was not quite what it should have been, but we thought highly of it. Once the whole factory burned down and had to be built up again (Blixen, 1937, p. 17).

As if the tragedy of her stay isn’t enough, on one of his expeditions in the Tsavo, Denys dies in a plane crash and is buried in the Ngong hills. Bereft of love and hope of companionship, and bankrupt, Karen leaves Kenya in 1931 after securing land for the natives living on her farm from the colonial government (Thurman, 1995 and Blixen 1937). In her homeland, she settles down on a writing career that lasts up to her death in 1962, and among other works, authors *Out of Africa* (1937).

Both film and literary text render a poignant finality about the life and times of Karen Blixen in Kenya: thus battered by the storms of life in an African country, she returns to Denmark, financially impotent and her life generally miles removed from the dazzling allure that Africa had been to her before setting foot in the continent; the cinematic

\(^{18}\text{This was a global economic downturn that started in 1929 and ended in 1939. This depression coincided with the WWI, making the world so much the worse economically. It was characterized by worldwide reduction in production, acute unemployment and severe inflation. Although its impact was first felt in the US, it went on to affect European countries up to and including their colonies.}\)
narrative, like the original prose narrative in the text sums up her encounter with Africa as one tragic romantic adventure.

3.3.2 Things Fall Apart: Text vis-à-vis Film

*Things Fall Apart* (1958) written by Chinua Achebe was adapted from page to screen by David Orere (director) to produce a TV mini-series by the same name in 1987. The screenplay was written by Adiela Onyedibia. As the variant elements in the narrative of film relative to the antecedent literary text are left for analysis later on, a summary of the prose fiction narrative components that remain stable in the adapted film (which count for the majority) can be given. The two art forms tell the story of a famous man from the Umuofia clan in the lower region of Nigeria, Okonkwo. He is a brave and fierce warrior of the Igbo people and a resident of Umuofia (a group of nine villages). The film, like the prose narrative from which it is adapted, is set in a traditional Nigerian community, with evidence of Igbo language and idiom present. At the age of just eighteen, he (reverently referred to by his people as Ebubedike) beats Amalinze “the cat” in a wrestling match to earn the reverence of his people and win himself his second wife who deserts her husband. He ends up with three wives, and creates a fortune for his family by planting yams, and at a not-so-advanced age, he gets a third title. He lives his life emphasizing masculinity, knowing that it is a trait treasured by his people who despise weakness in men. Okonkwo distinguishes himself as a defender of his people’s way of life and protector of his clan and their sense of pride.

Alongside his successes, Okonkwo is a man who lives in perpetual fear of winding up like his father Unoka: a man who was a spendthrift eventually dying debt-ridden and without any title. Indeed it is this immense fear which pushes him to his violent temperament, restlessness and contempt for emasculated behaviour. With this trajectory of life as dictated not by his head but by his heart, comes his downfall which is symptomatic of the “falling apart” of the whole of Umuofia, Nigeria and indeed Africa at the dawn of colonial imperialism. While celebrating the beauty of the African people,
Achebe – and later the film – avoids falling into the trap of romanticizing everything African. Using the life of the tragic hero - Okonkwo, the two art forms demonstrate that the African people and their culture should take their rightful share of blame for the ease with which the white man conquers them.

In a concession to avoid war with Umuofia, the neighbouring village of Mbaino (in the film varied to Isike) offers a virgin and a boy as compensation for the woman of Umuofia killed in an irrational and unprovoked attack at a market. Okonkwo is appointed the custodian of the boy, Ikemefuna, until such time as the oracle shall direct that the boy be sacrificed to appease the blood of the Umuofian killed. In the meantime, Okonkwo develops a liking for Ikemefuna who as it turns out, is an astute worker, talented and a bearer of the masculine folklore of the Igbo which he believes will shape Nwoye. Indeed, he begins to notice a change in Nwoye’s personality, thus dispelling his fear that his first born son might end up becoming a failure like Okonkwo’s father, Unoka.

After a couple of years of Ikemefuna staying in Okonkwo’s household, an elder, Ogbuefi Ezeudu arrives at Okonkwo’s to inform him of a message from the Oracle, directing that it is time to sacrifice the boy. Together with this message, Ezeudu also warns Okonkwo never to take part in the killing of a boy (an abomination) as he has been calling him father. Okonkwo, in his stubborn show of character and masculinity interprets that failure to take part in the sacrifice will be read as a demonstration of weakness on his part. He thus proceeds to take part and indeed deals the boy the fatal blow with his machete, even as the boy runs to him, calling him father, for rescue.

This is a spectacular display of hubris from a man who would have others believe that he is a protector of the ways of his people. It is a more barbaric echo of Okonkwo’s refusal to listen to advice from the gods and elders, thinking also of how he had brutalized his wife during the week of peace. This occurrence sends his life spinning out of control and falling apart. After this incident, Okonkwo’s life should seem to be out of his hands as he loses the faith of his son who almost profoundly disbelieves the killing of his friend, and in the days to follow, he accidentally shoots dead the son of Ezeudu – the same old man
whose warning he refused to heed with regard to Ikemefuna.

Okonkwo’s homestead and property are destroyed and he and his family must face the longstanding punishment for one who kills a kinsman (even inadvertently) – live in exile for seven years. He goes to live at his uncle’s in Mbanta. His exile coincides with the time when the Whiteman has just started making inroads into the land. During the seven years, the colonists swarm the land with their government and religion like the legendary locusts depicted in the text *Things Fall Apart*.

When he comes back after seven years, the Whiteman’s growing influence in Umuofia is inevitable. Okonkwo, holding on to the golden past of before the seven year exile cannot cope. He gets into a collision course with the new powers and religion (to which his son Nwoye has already converted), gets arrested, and finally slashes dead a white government’s messenger sent by the DC to stop a meeting of the men of Umuofia. Then it dawns on him that his tribesmen, originally united and fierce at war, would not join him in killing the rest of the messengers and then drive the Whiteman out of Umuofia. Things had fallen apart in his absence. Thus devastated by this realization, he tragically ends his life by hanging himself. He ends up almost like the father he had tried to run away from as his people shall not now bury him, but strangers. Read differently, Okonkwo loses the war against his father’s ghost which he has tried to run away from without success (Walunywa, 2006). According to Walunywa (*ibid*), it is the tragedy of a man whose dead father’s spirit wrestles to defeat in his futile attempt to avoid being like the father he despised. Alongside the tragedy of the man, is the more important tragedy depicting the falling apart of a traditional African society upon the coming of colonialism.

### 3.3.3 The Man-eaters of Tsavo vis-à-vis The Ghost and the Darkness

*The Ghost and the Darkness* (1996) is a Sidney Pollack film adapted from Col. James Henry Patterson’s memoirs published in 1907 under the name, *The Man-eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures*. Similar to the case of the above works, although there is variance between certain elements of the two narratives (the cinematic and the
literary), important elements of the fabula hold stability in both. Both film and literary text are set in pre-colonial Kenya during the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway. The place is mainly the plains of Tsavo, where Col. Patterson arrives in 1898 charged with the responsibility of building a bridge across the River Tsavo to join two ends of the railroad.

Col. James Patterson arrives at the Port of Mombasa, already charmed with the beauty of the land he is to work in. Right from the Port of Mombasa, we see him savour the beauty of the scenery and the homeliness of the people, both visitors and natives. Upon his arrival in Tsavo, he is under no illusion about the challenge that lies ahead of him. As it is soon manifested, Patterson realizes that there is a myriad of problems ranging from lack of water, lack of stone, workers’ mutinies, truancy, to trickery of some workers; challenges which put in jeopardy his ability to finish his assignment on schedule. None of these, however, is comparable to the challenge that soon comes in the form of wildlife. Two savage lions arrive on the scene when Col. Patterson is just settling down in his assignment.

Unlike other lions, these two Man-Eaters – christened in local folklore, one as “The Ghost” and the other as “The Darkness” – develop a sinister liking for human flesh to the extent of ignoring the carcasses of other animals. The locals believe they are invincible as indeed they keep on evading very trap that Patterson lays down for them. With daring defiance, they attack both in daylight and darkness. The consequence of this uncanny behavior by the lions is that some of the workers begin to think of Patterson as the devil that brought the lions to devour them since they had not come before his coming. It is little wonder, therefore, that some of the workers begin to look for excuses to mutiny against his authority, with little success.

Against all these odds, Patterson succeeds in killing the lions thereby giving himself and his group the much needed respite to complete the bridge building assignment. Together with his charges, he finishes his assignment in relative peace, punctuated only by scares from such animals as leopards and hyenas. In the days succeeding this feat, Col.
Patterson becomes famous around the world. Later on, he immortalizes himself and the lions in his 1907 memoirs, *The Man-eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures*. These memoirs are the inspiration behind the film, *The Ghost and the Darkness* (1996). Alongside Col. Patterson’s adventures with the lions is the narrative (in both film and literary text) are attitudes and stereotypes held about Africans – and people of other races – by the Western world.

The conformities examined above demonstrate agreement with Jakobson (1959) who – in his case for inter-semiotic translation – argues that adaptation creates a similar story in the film, as in the antecedent text. The difference is in the use of symbols. While the text uses visual/verbal symbols, the film uses audio-visual symbols. In cases where the film has proven deviation from the world of the literary original, a case for the application of transformation theory has been made evident (Miller, 1980 and Kline, 1996).

### 3.4 *Things Fall Apart* and Fidelity: A Case of Translation from Text to Film

Kalra (2015) posits that literature has continued to serve as nourishment for film for over a century now. She credits this state of affairs to “perhaps a certain sense of semiotic congruency between the two artforms” (Kalra, 2015, p. 1). She adds that though film and literature are different media of storytelling, there exists a unity of language between them. As such, film adaptation – to a larger or lesser extent – translates text into images, consequently retaining a sense of identity between literature and film. She in fact holds that all adaptations are indeed translations. Whereas there are disparaging remarks made about adapted films relative to their literary antecedents, (MacFarlane 1996), some critics, and indeed novelists have been more receptive. Kalra (*ibid*) cites the case of David Mitchell, author of *Cloud Atlas* and his view on the film *Cloud Atlas*:

> Adaptation is a form of translation and all acts of translation have to deal with untranslatable spots. Sometimes late at night I’ll get an email from a translator asking for permission to change a pun in one of my novels or to substitute an idiomatic phrase with something plainer. My response is usually the same: You are the one with knowledge of the “into” language,
so do what works. When asked whether I mind the changes made during the adaptation of Cloud Atlas, my response is similar: The filmmakers speak fluent film language, and they’ve done what works. – *David Mitchell* on *Cloud Atlas*, the film (p. 2).

That said, for the case of *Things Fall Apart*, the confluence between the literary text and the cinematic film demonstrates a one-to-one translation of text to images. Whereas narratives in the films *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* exhibit significant variance relative to the *fabula* (narrative) of the literary originals, the film *Things Fall Apart* should read like a case of translation from the literary narrative to the cinematic one. This viewpoint is in line with the position of Ugochukwu (2014):

One of the striking characteristics of the film is its respect for Achebe’s text, culminating in the famous words, “the white man… has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart” (124–25). It not only uses the novel as a canvas on which to embroider, but borrows a great deal of it, most often word-for-word, carefully weaving the storyline like a patchwork of fragments of the narrative interspersed with added dialogue and episodes strung together as one story … A total of 34 pages from the novel have been built into the film, ensuring it is securely grounded in its source text (p.74).

This study, like other scholars (notably Ugochukwu, 2014), recognizes that the filmmaker has made some variations on the nature of the filmic narrative. These changes, specifically, relate to a number of added scenes. It is however important to state that the introduction of new scenes is not a deviation from the literary world of *Things Fall Apart*, (1918), but rather inclusions that serve to enhance the clarity of the story. As Anyanwu (2010) avers, by so doing the film actually serves to bring closer to Igboland, to the original owners of the narrative who may not have accessed Achebe’s text written for the not-so-ordinary-reader. With this added scenes that bring clarity, the film avoids imposing on the side of the viewer the need to make intellectual or academic inferences in order to understand the import of the story. The film, “while respecting the spirit of Achebe’s narrative, took a fresh look at some of the events and read them in a unique way” (Ugochukwu, 2014, p. 175).
Achebe’s literary original starts a whole decade after the death of Unoka, Okonkwo’s father. The reader gets to know about Unoka, his laziness and improvident through past tense narration of prose. On the contrary, in part one of the screen adaptation, Unoka is still alive. He is lazy but now portrayed in slightly less negative light. He is a passionate man about his talent in music, about the role of music to the soul, and even inspires his son to be the greatest by going on to beat Amalinze in a wrestling match. This added scene is important in two ways. First, because of its inclusion, the viewer witnesses a credible and natural interaction between Okoknwo and his father. The proud father calls his son by his praise name “Ebube Dike” (the brave and glorious one) whereas Okonkwo is made by his mother to apologise to his father when he scolds him harshly without respect. Secondly, the scene provides the necessary audio-visual background that is memorable in aiding the viewer (even the reader) to appreciate why Okonkwo later strives to be unlike his father.

There are also Ikemefuna’s mourning scenes which are an expansion of the original literary text. These scenes help the viewer acknowledge the depth of the tragedy and the extreme sorrow it has on the family. They also let the viewer have a glimpse into the matriarchal worl of women and their judgment on some cultural practices which they view as barbaric and unjust. The ruthless Igbo patriarchy is thus juxtaposed with matriarchal tenderness. Ugochukwu (ibid) further opines:

These added scenes reveal women’s opinions with its premium on feelings and relationships, thereby offering a more balanced view of situations and enriching Achebe’s earlier presentation of the Igbo traditional world, in which men made decisions affecting their families without consulting their wives or even informing them. In the same vein, the long night preceding Ikemefuna’s killing offers an unusually intimate view of the relationships within Okonkwo’s household, with the three wives discussing the matter at hand, deciding to try and stall the elders’ decision by putting pressure on their husband. Nwoye’s mother will try, in vain, to persuade Okonkwo to change the elders’ decision by insisting that Ikemefuna saved their daughter’s life by discovering she was an ogbanje. In the morning, she tries again to beg to save the boy, but her husband tells her off, saying that the oracle decreed it. Left alone, Okonkwo meditates on the conflict he is facing: to love or to obey—words used as title for the seventh episode of the film (p. 176).
Although the added or varied scenes are more than cited here, it is crucial to briefly examine expanded scenes that show the relationship between the missionaries (or the colonial government) and the natives with regard to the question of culture and religion.

One of these features the catechist who rushes to the missionaries to inform them that Okoknwo is back and that he will cause an upset in Umuofia’s new church and thus should be arrested. He also warns the missionaries against entertaining the notion of attempting to convert Okonkwo. This shows the extent to which the new culture had taken root to the extent that a man of Umuofia can now betray his kinsman to the white people. It also sets the stage for the later arrest and detention of the elders of Umuofia, Okonwko among them, after the traditionalists burn the new church.

The last added scene in the film depicts an interaction between the white DC and his Houseboy in a brief conversation. This episode reveals the conundrum that colonial domination in Igbo has become. Although working for the Whiteman, the Houseboy recognise the tragic falling apart of his community as a result of Whiteman interference with a once well-ordered society. Besides, the Houseboy reveals that the people, at the very least Okonkwo, will not let their time-tested ways go down into oblivion without a fight. He tells his boss that Okonkwo is certain to cause trouble. The following conversation obtains:

DC: What trouble?
Houseboy: Because you come, take this land, you come kill their god, come spoil their children. And so? Trouble! And their man returned from many, many years in another country and….
DC: All right, I know what to do!

In spite of these very limited variations of the film from Achebe’s literary original, it is clear that the cinematic narrative exhibits considerable correlation with the narrative in the literary source. In this case, the filmmaker waives his license to autonomy and retains the prose narrative in the adapted film almost wholesomely. This is contrary to the case of Out of Africa and The Ghost and the Darkness, in which the filmmakers have exercised significant autonomy and control over the filmic narrative as to make their
films almost stands-alones; separate from the texts.

### 3.4.1 Text and Film as a Tragedy

The invariance between the film *Things Fall Apart* and its antecedent literary text can be best illustrated by demonstrating how the filmmaker retains Chinua Achebe’s presentation of the tragedy of the people of Umuofia at the advent of colonialism, and how he upholds this tragedy through an identical cinematic fall of the protagonist of the literary text, Okonkwo. The fall of Umuofia, as epitomized by the tragic fall of one of their greatest sons Okonkwo, as presented by both film and text, have been engineered in the crucible of change (or the failure to adjust to change) and catalysed by two ideals: the forces within the cultural fabric of Igbo people of Umuofia, and the alien colonial civilization. From the start, both media (the literary and the cinematic) prepare the audience for this capitulation of a society at the hands of a foreign cultural ideal. By point of fact, both media have an identical title that sets the mood for this fall.

Chinua Achebe introduces his story by an epigram that is an allusion to the poem, ‘*The Second Coming*’ (1919) by William Butler Yeats. In relation to the story of the novel these four lines speak to reversal in fortunes of an erstwhile stable society of Umuofia.

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;  
*Things fall apart, the center cannot hold;*  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. (*Emphasis mine*) (Achebe, 1958, p. iii)

The people of Umuofia have lived as a close knit society with time-tested stability culturally, economically and politically until the coming of the Whiteman. With the attendant introduction of Christianity and colonial government, the cultural values that have held the people together are severed hence the falling apart of a once united people. And this fall, is made more inevitable because of what happens to Okonkwo, their hero, as shall be seen later in this section of the chapter. The filmmaker recognizes the artistic
impact of this beginning and executes an identical beginning to the film. As the credits
roll in, the viewer is treated to background music, singing the words: “Things fall apart
... when the centre cannot hold” sung repeatedly. This song is paired with a montage of
edits/cuts depicting a pre-colonial African setting with the famous wrestling matches, and
a colonial setting with white missionaries marching into the village singing with a band
of converts. Unoka also appears in one of the edits. The use of song combines with the
above mentioned case of montage to set the mood for the falling apart Umuofia (seen in
an advanced way in the fall of the tragic hero – Okonkwo). Besides, the shot featuring the
white missionary in the montage skips ahead of time to foreshadow that missionary
activity is the reason that will precipitate the reversal that the people of Umuofia are
about to suffer.

Achebe portrays the life of his tragic hero, Okonkwo, in line with the Aristotelian
conception of tragedy as laid out in the philosopher’s sixth chapter of his classical work,
Poetics, written at about 335BC. Aristotle – in agreement with the tradition of tragedy
established by Greek playwrights before him such as Aeschylus – laid out several
prescriptions relating to language, character and plot of tragedy. Several of these can be
illustrated in the text. These same prescriptions are realizable in the adapted film in a near
identical fashion. In Poetics, Aristotle contends that a tragic hero has to be a man of
position in his society. That this character, by a combination of circumstance and his own
character, must be a man who has worked his way up to the echelons of his society. As
portrayed in both media, Okonkwo fits this bill. In Achebe’s book, he has extricated
himself from the weaknesses of his father and grown to be a successful farmer, a fierce
warrior of Umuofia, a man with a home and three wives and one who has won three titles
and sees himself winning up to the fifth (the highest) in the foreseeable future.

As stated above, his rise to the top is a product of complex forces: the force of his
character and the force of circumstance. Okonkwo is naturally born to be an aggressive,
hardworking (fearful of failure) and combative man. These qualities are enhanced by the
very nature of his society, which reveres masculinity, strength and expects a real man to
do everything in his power to succeed. Indeed, weak men in Achebe’s text are referred to
with the same name by which women are called - *agbala*. It is right therefore to state here that Okonkwo becomes a victim of his people’s patriarchal ways and Spartan\(^\text{19}\) philosophy. According to Chukwu (2006, 2014), past and present studies combine in illustrating how Igbo culture has for ages privileged the place of the man in their society to the disadvantage of women. These circumstances in his society are consistent with the natural tendencies of the man and therefore the two variables combine to get Okonkwo to the top. This textual aspect is evident in the film. The elders of Umuofia, including his father, want him to defeat the wrestling champion from a neighbouring village and win fame for his village. The people of Umuofia have already earmarked him for greatness and see only in him the possibility of winning the right to fame against neighbours. They christen him ‘*ebubedike*’ – the strong and fierce one. Towards the end of scene two, Unoka is seen to be proud of his son and urges him to go on and beat Amalinze, ‘the cat’ in a wrestling match. This is a blessing and inspiration from his father (albeit a weak one) who sees his son as a compensation for his own failures.

In scene three, the pride and arrogance of the people of Umuofia come to the fore. The elders would not have a man from the village of Isike retire as the undisputed wrestling champion all over the land. His society literally thrust him into fame, and to the top from which he eventually falls. In their usual superfluous and lofty speech, they go to Okonkwo and tell him:

> Time compels us to hurry to you for our honour and victory … the back of Umuofia must never touch the soil of any other land … you must cleanse yourself of the fear of failure.

The last statement is made when Okonkwo expresses hesitation towards the duty to which his people are calling him. When he clearly expresses doubts in his ability and appears scared, one of the elders declares with finality, “We shall not listen to that”. After this, the dice is cast – a hitherto reserved and contemplative man is compelled by his

\(^{19}\) Sparta, a city state in Ancient Greece, known for its unparalleled military prowess and famed for its education and culturing that emphasized the masculine (courage, energy and hardiness) – with their dictum being “Hard it is to be good.” Whereas the Athenian philosophy was aimed at creating the human being fit for both war and peace, Spartan thinking favoured the culturing of the best man in war. (Moore, 2014)
people to take part in a match that propels him to fame, heroism and later arrogance. Okonkwo is transformed by this call and asks with typical ferocity of Amalinze “What makes him think he can retire undefeated?” Aristotle’s exposition of tragedy is inspired by the religio-philosophical orientation of the Greek society. The Greeks hold that the gods uplift what they want to destroy. The Umuofia gods, represented in this film by the elders, force the tragic hero into fame from which he falls with catastrophic effect.

Another element of the classical tragedy that relates to the nature of the tragic hero is the presence of flaws in his character which make his destruction inevitable. The adapted film is consistent with the text in the depiction of those certain weaknesses in Okonkwo’s personality which precipitate his capitulation. Among these, his arrogance, stubbornness, exaggerated masculinity and fear of failure stand out. In the literary original, he insults weak men, expects too much from his son Nwoye whom he is afraid could turn out like Unoka and beats up his wife during the week of peace. He also stubbornly goes on to take part in the killing of Ikemefuna against advice from the Oracle delivered by elder Ezeudu. These last two acts put him at odds with his people and indeed, the gods of the Igbo people. These aspects of his character are played out in the film. In scene two of the film, Okonkwo scolds his own father for being weak and lacking in ambition. In response, his mother warns him against letting his “anger stand in the way of wisdom” and instructs him to apologize to his father but Okonkwo does not. Besides, as scene one begins, it is evident that Okonkwo sets standards that are too high for his family to adjust to. He scolds his wife out of her sleep very early in the morning asking, “How can a man get up before his wife every morning?” When his wife complains in self speak, another of his flaws is realized - restlessness. She complains in the soliloquy saying that her husband can’t even sleep or rest. Here again, the cinematic and literary narratives are both in tandem with the ideas of the classical tragedy as advanced by Aristotle.

Related to the above, is the element of hubris. This is excessive pride against the gods and their representatives. In an essay submitted for a competition at Havard University by Guzick (2008) titled “An Outrage to the Gods: The Concept of Hubris in Hippolytus and the Bacchae”, he notes that in Greek literature, hubris is most associated with
excessive behavior that violates social norms. Although in common lingo it could refer to excessive pride or self-confidence, in the Greek tragedies it assumed the meaning of an outrage specifically against the gods. According to ancient Greeks, the gods are responsible for the wellbeing of society and therefore have to be respected. They contend that the gods will not hesitate to withdraw their favours and protection, and then inflict punishment on anyone who disrespects them. It is clear that in both text and film, Okonkwo commits outrage against the gods and their representatives. To start with, he beats up his wife during the week of peace and goes on to do the unthinkable by going on to kill Ikemefuna even when the Oracle of the Hills has directed that he must never have a hand in the sacrificial death of a child who has called him father. Okonkwo puts his pride above the need to obey the gods and having done so, leaves himself unprotected by the gods and vulnerable. A few days later, when the man who delivered the message from the Oracle dies, the gods allow Okonkwo – restless and emotionally unstable since his killing of Ikemefuna – to accidentally shoot the son of the dead man. He is henceforth banished into exile for seven years in line with the laws of the land. It is while in the exile that Umuofia undergoes radical change as a result of missionary activity that the hero of the people of Umuofia can neither cope nor save his people who have fallen apart in his absence. His death becomes inevitable and is clearly partly caused by his own hubris.

In line with the above, it is noteworthy that the adapted film joins its literary source in the quest to demonstrate reverence to the Greek tradition in literature and theatre. In the classical Greek tragedy, seen for instance in the tragedies of Sophocles, the role of the gods in the lives of the tragic heroes is critical. The Delphic Oracle reigns supreme in ancient Greek tragedies. In Greek Mythology, the Oracle was also referred to as The Pythia, or any priestess from the temple of god Apollo who delivered prophetic messages to humans (Broad, 2006). All of the tragic heroes in the Sophocles’ plays such as *Oedipus the King* (430 BC) and *Antigone* (441 BC) meet their tragic ends because of their hubris against the oracles’ edicts. According to Herodotus in *The Histories* (1920) – translation by A.D. Godley, the Oracle lived on Mount Delphi, the seat of Apollo whence from communications were delivered to human beings. In Achebe’s text, and the resultant film under study, the oracle is referred to as the ‘Oracle of the Hills’ and
therefore also lives in the hills just like in the Greek situation which the filmmaker, following in the footsteps of Achebe is keen to pay tribute to. Perhaps Chinua Achebe would have chosen an Igbo equivalent of the term ‘oracle’ but it is clear that he wanted to leave no doubt in the minds of the readers about his admiration of the classical Greek literary and theatrical tradition, even shaping his main character according to the classical conception of tragedy by Aristotle.

Other characterizations of the tragic hero that are advanced by Aristotle in Poetics that are evident in the plot of the classical tragedy that the film and the text espouse are hamartia (an act of folly), anagnoris (important realization) and peripeteia (reversal in fortunes of the tragic hero). Hamartia refers to a single most significant error committed by the tragic hero that marks the point of no-return in the life of the main character. In the two media, hamartia is reached in two instances: when Okonkwo deals the fatal blow on Ikemefuna and when he makes an error in judgment and hacks to death the Whiteman’s messenger who comes to stop the meeting. He slashes the man to death believing that the people of Umuofia will join in and kill the rest of the messengers. He is wrong – his people, battered into submission by an alien culture and colonial government look on startled and wonder why he has committed such folly. Seeing this, Okonkwo realizes (this is the point of anagnorisis) that his community has fallen apart beyond redemption and that he has been left alone in the belief that the Whiteman can be defeated and driven away. Dejected, and not ready to suffer in the hands of the Whiteman he detests, he walks to his home and commits suicide. This completes the peripeteia – the reversal in the fortunes of one of the greatest men in Umuofia that began years before with his banishment to exile. It is an undeserved ending for a man destined for greatness, but now who will not get the honour of a decent burial as the ways of the people would not let a man of Umuofia touch his body. Obierika, in Achebe’s text, sums up this fall in his words to the white District Commissioner:

Obierika, who had been gazing steadily at his friend’s dangling body,

\[20\] As used in Greek drama, hamartia means an error of judgment. Literally translated, it means “missing the mark” as it was originally used to allude to the act of an archer missing his target. Although often used to mean tragic flaw(s), hamartia is different – meaning an act of omission or commission by the tragic hero which turns his fate against himself. From http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_H.html#hamartia_anchor
turned suddenly to the District Commissioner and said ferociously: “That man was one of the greatest men in Umuofia. You drove him to kill himself; and now he will be buried like a dog…” He could not say any more. His voice trembled and choked his words (Achebe, 1958, p. 147).

The reader and the viewer are jolted to the realization of the unfairness of life in this tragedy. This is so because Okonkwo was not a bad man and his weaknesses were average human flaws. He died protecting his people and his culture. Eventually, it is acceptable to conclude that the tragedy of Okonkwo, is the tragedy of the people of Umuofia, and indeed the tragedy of all colonized societies that could not weather the advent of the colonial empire. This tragedy is told in equal measure and to similar effect by the antecedent literary text and the adapted film hence rendering the adapted film a translation of the literary antecedent.

Walunywa (2006) has offered critical insights on the psychological duel between Okonkwo and the spirit of his dead father. According the Walunywa (ibid) Okonkwo tries without success to repress the image of his emasculated father. Although he projects the image of the father he wished he had in Nwakibe to resolve his ‘fatherless’ crisis, the ghost of Unoka keeps raring its head before him. In an attempt to defeat this, he displays an exaggerated masculinity to portray his unlikeness with his father as realized in his temperament, energy and vicious brutality. Eventually, his psyche fails to run away from Unoka’s haunting image, and the more effort he made, the faster his tragic end approached. Walunywa (2006) contends:

The metaphor of the wrestling match, with which the novel opens, is used to represent the relationship between the two men, which consists of the psychological struggle between Okonkwo and his father that operates in the deepest recesses of Okonkwo’s consciousness and that traverses the whole course of his life as represented in the novel [...] Okonkwo responds to the negative image that Unoka projects among the Igbo men – and women essentially by repressing the image of his father, so that his whole life revolves around his persistent desire to avoid everything that has to do with Unoka. [...] (Unoka’s ghost) keeps coming back in the form of a return of the repressed that constantly draws his attention to possible weaknesses he could have inherited from him as a man (p.37).
We can conclude, therefore, that when Okonkwo fails as a result of deliberate and conscious efforts to live up to the standards of Umuofians and subconsciously avoid being like his father. Following his eventual ignominious death, his father, Unoka (or at least his ghost) which he has spent all his life running away from, and trying to suppress, wins the duel in much the very same way as the allegorical wrestling match between Okonkwo and Amalinze which the former wins.

To conclude this part of the chapter, it is clear that all the three films under study retain the spirit of their literary antecedents in the ordering of the important elements of the fabula (narrative). These elements have been referred to as kernels (Chatman, 1978). As a result, the deviations to be discussed later on in this chapter – though significant – do not suffice to divorce the films from their literary sources.

### 3.4.2 Of Parallel Dialogues: Things Fall Apart Back to the People

It is important to further buttress the argument that the film Things Fall Apart being a translation from its literary original, a comparison of the dialogue between the two forms is necessary. Rauma (2004) has written on the reflections between dialogue in the literary original and cinematic dialogue. While studying the metamorphosis of dialogue between the Stephen king’s novel The Green Mile (1996) and Frank Darabont’s motion picture, The Green Mile (1999), Rauma (ibid) introduces the conception: ‘Direct Transferral of Dialogue’. Rauma contends that according to some views on film adaptation, dialogue is one of the elements in the novel that is directly transferrable to the film. Rauma (ibid) concedes, however, that the process of adapting prose dialogue to cinematic dialogue is complicated and therefore, the novel does not easily render itself for transferral to screen. But she adds:

Direct transferral of dialogue does exist, however. I have defined as a directly transferred line any line of dialogue which exists in the film in the exact form it does in the novel, leaving aside variant spellings such as getting/gettin’ (p. 122).
Rauma adds that this direct transferral is one of the strategies used by filmmakers to retain fidelity to the literary original. The excerpts below will reveal that the dialogue in the film is similar – almost identical to that in the literary original. What is more, characters, setting and scenery realized in the film paint a true picture of the textual representation of the same in Achebe’s text. Hence, in adapting prose dialogue in Achebe’s text, the filmmaker opts for – in very many instances – a word-for-word rendition of the literary dialogue in the film *Things Fall Apart* as shall be illustrated in the excerpts below. Most importantly, the illustrations that follow show how the adapted film correlates with Achebe’s literary original in terms of using cinematic dialogue to tell the tragedy of Okonkwo and Umuofia.

Except 1 of dialogue in the literary text:

"Have you heard," asked Obierika, "that Abame is no more?"
"How is that?" asked Uchendu and Okonkwo together.
"Abame has been wiped out," said Obierika. "It is a strange and terrible story. If I had not seen the few survivors with my own eyes and heard their story with my own ears, I would not have believed. Was it not on an Eke day that they fled into Umuofia?" he asked his two companions, and they nodded their heads. "Three moons ago, … a white man had appeared in their clan."
"He was not an albino. He was quite different." He sipped his wine. "And he was riding an iron horse. The first people who saw him ran away, but he stood beckoning to them. In the end the fearless ones went near and even touched him. The elders consulted their Oracle and it told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them." Obierika again drank a little of his wine. "And so they killed the white man and tied his iron horse to their sacred tree because it looked as if it would run away to call the man's friends. (Achebe, 1958, p. 97)

Except 1 of dialogue in the adapted film, part 35:

Obierika: Have heard that Abame is no more?
Okonkwo: What?
Uchendu: How is that?
Obierika: Abame has been wiped out. It is a strange and terrible
story. If I had not seen the few survivors with my own eyes and heard their story with my own ears, I would not have believed … a Whiteman had come into the clan.

Okonkwo: An albino?
Obierika: No! Not an albino, he was quite different, and he was riding an iron horse. Oracles had said that a strange man would visit their clan and spread destruction, and some other men would follow his way. And that the Whiteman was their harbinger sent to survey the terrain. People did not understand the man’s language, and worse still, they thought that his iron horse would run away. Then, they killed the Whiteman and hung his iron horse on their sacred silk cotton tree.

Excerpt 2 from the literary text:

"Why is Okonkwo with us today? This is not his clan. We are only his mother's kinsmen. He does not belong here. He is an exile, condemned for seven years to live in a strange land. And so he is bowed with grief. But there is just one question I would like to ask him. Can you tell me, Okonkwo, why it is that one of the commonest names we give our children is Nneka, or "Mother is Supreme?" We all know that a man is the head of the family and his wives do his bidding. A child belongs to its father and his family and not to its mother and her family. A man belongs to his fatherland and not to his motherland. And yet we say Nneka - 'Mother is Supreme.' Why is that?" (Achebe 1958, p. 94 – 95).

In the same spirit of demonstrating fidelity to the literary original while adapting, the filmmaker also executes a one-to-one rendition of the section above in part 33 of the film. In this section of the film, Uchendu convenes a family meeting and proceeds to make a speech in the same stream of thought, beginning with “Why is Okonkwo with us today?” In addition to supporting the case for faithful adaptation, these one-to-one renditions of the literary into the cinematic also go in line with the seeming intent on the part of the filmmaker to have the text live in the world of the film with regard to voicing some of the strongest philosophical arguments that Achebe makes through his characters.

The features exhibited in the foregoing hence distance the film *Things Fall Apart* from the other two films under investigation. Hence, *Things Fall Apart* emerges as a realistic
and faithful adaptation that retains a one-to-one fidelity to the literary original. Though limited in terms of cinematographic elements and the creation of effect compared to the two other films, it is clear that there was an endeavour on the part of the filmmaker to produce a film that reflects the true spirit of the literary text from which it is adapted. Anyanwu (2010) and Ugochukwu (2014) posit, in the absence of an Igbo translation of the novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), this film fills the void that would have left the Igbo people unaware of their own story. Before the reediting of the film under study here, it had in fact earlier on been remade in Igbo with English subtitles (Anyanwu, 2010).

By appropriating word-for-word adaptation of the dialogue and description of the literary original, the film therefore indigenizes Achebe’s story among his own people with the most compelling cases of this indigenization being the dirge performed by Ikemefuna’s mother, the war song during the destruction of Okonkwo’s compound after his accidental killing of Ezeudu’s son, and the formulaic prayers and greetings. In Anyanwu’s own words, the film answered the “need to bring back the stories (*sic*) (that have travelled far and near) to the people as their own story” (Anyanwu, 2010, p. 37). Further, Anyanwu (*ibid*) avers:

> From reading all of Achebe's novels and a wide range of his critical essays, I realized that my responsibility as an adaptor of an Igbo novel is to create a sense of community among the people. The retelling of the people’s stories is the first step towards achieving this, for in doing so, the adaptor helps the community to retrieve those values and elements that empowered them as a people. It becomes necessary, therefore, that the adaptations must be culturally recognizable to the people. (p. 171).

This section of the chapter has endeavoured to present the conformity in the *fabula* (narrative) between the literary antecedents and their corresponding films. It is clear from the foregoing that all the three films retain the spirit of the literary sources, in spite of the variances that are to be discussed in the next section. This section has also proven that of the three films, *Things Fall Apart* stands out as the most realistic adaptation that retains a one-to-one correlation with the narrative of its antecedent. We can therefore conclude that each filmmaker chooses the degree to which to exploit the creative license in
adaptation, depending upon their vision of the narrative.

### 3.5 Variant Elements in the Films and Source Texts

This section of the study acknowledges arguments made by Transformation and Pluralist film critics in the realm of adaptation studies. The two theoretical perspectives are brought to light in the work by Kline (1996), enhancing ideas advanced later by Cohen (1977), Orr (1984) and Miller (1980). These arguments were groundbreaking with regard to schools of thought needed to counter the Fidelity-Betrayal (Woolf, 1950 and Hunter, 1932) perspective which dismissed adapted films that failed to fit the bill of faithfully sticking to the components of their literary originals. The transformation and pluralist film critical paradigms recognize the license of an adapted film to stand on its own.

Transformationists, in fact, privilege the adapted film over the literary antecedent, arguing that the adaptation is always an improvement on – hence superior to – the literary source. They dismiss views held by Klein & Parker (1981) and Dudley (1984) to the effect that an adapted film should only be taken seriously if it maintains a fidelity to the literary original. By so doing, Transformationists make a statement that adaptations are not mere translations. While a film translation would strive to stick to the letter and spirit of the literary source, in adaptation, the literary original merely acts as the raw material to be altered in order give the adapted result its autonomy. In support for the Transformation critics, Pluralists accommodate both deviations and conformities between the two media. Though reflections of the literary source should be seen in the film, there should be freshness in the new work that sets it apart as a world apart. One of the Pluralists, Fung (as cited in Klein and Parker, 1981), states that a good adaptation should not be one-to-one rendition of its literary antecedent. It is clear, as shall be seen in the succeeding discussion, that the foregoing finds room to shape arguments on the form-content aesthetics between literary texts and their representations on screen.

In the previous section of this chapter, it has already been established that the films under study are largely reflections of their literary antecedents. In this regard, the discussion has
established that of the three films, *Things Fall Apart* stands out as a demonstration of realistic adaptation which retains a one-to-one fidelity with its literary source. The films *The Ghost and the Darkness* and *Out of Africa*, however, have been found to be significant breakaways from their literary sources in terms of characterization, plot, setting and language. This variance affords the films a cinematic aesthetic value and enables the film makers to foreground issues they envision as outstanding. Because of the need to make the work communicate ideas to a viewing audience differently from the way a text would communicate to a reading audience, the filmmaker has made critical variations in characterization, plot and setting that depart from the world of the literary text.

### 3.5.1 Variance in Characterization

This part of the study intends to investigate how filmmakers have exercised the creative license to deviate from characterization evident in the literary antecedents. This course of action by the filmmakers is in concurrence with ideas expressed in Leitch (2008) and Stam and Raengo (2004, 2005). In this regard, this section of the study will investigate the resultant changes in characterization. A comparative reading of the texts vis-à-vis the films shall reveal that new characters have been introduced in the films, characters present in the texts have been omitted in the films and identities and personalities of characters present in both film and text altered. This part of the research shall endeavour to comment on the significance of this variance to the aesthetics and meaning of the adapted films.

Unlike the film *The Ghost and the Darkness*, *Out of Africa* is not an adaptation inspired by only one literary source. This note has already been made at the beginning of this chapter but it is important to acknowledge it here. Although it is a point of fact that the film largely uses as its raw material the literary text *Out of Africa*, other texts were used by the filmmaker to make a complete cinematic narrative. These complementary texts include Judith Thurman’s biography of Karen Blixen titled *Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller* (1983), *Silence Will Speak* (1977) by Errol Trzebinski and Karen Blixen’s
other writings *Shadows on the Grass* (1961) and *Letters From Africa* (1981). With such varied sources used as occasions for the film, inconsistencies between the adapted film and the main text from which it is adapted are justifiable. These inconsistencies have affected *fabula* concepts such as characterization, plot and language.

One of the most notable variations in characterization relates to the portrayal of Chief Kinyanjui, a major character in both film and text. While the literary text exalts Kinyanjui’s stature, character and manner, the film diminishes him to a diminutive figure of a man, lacking not just in confidence but in the knowledge of basic Kiswahili. In the antecedent literary text, Kinyanjui is a man who – because of his demeanor and intelligence – was made chief by the British, and consequently earned the respect of his people – the Kikuyu. In *Out of Africa*, Blixen (1937) writes:

> The big chief Kinanji (sic) lived about nine miles north-east of the farm, in the Kikuyu Reserve near the French Mission, and ruled over more than a hundred thousand Kikuyus. He was a crafy old man with a fine manner, and much real greatness to him, although he had not been born to be a chief, but had been made so, many years ago, by the English, when they could no longer get on with the legitimate ruler of the Kikuyus of the district. … Sometimes the old chief would come walking over to my farm in *a gorgeous fur cloak, accompanied by two or three white-haired senators* and a few of his warrior-sons, on a friendly visit, or to take a rest from governmental affairs (p. 127) *(Emphasis mine)*

In another paragraph, the writer furthers her glowing description of Kinyanjui, and emphasizes his intelligence and independence of mind. Here, Kinyanjui strikes the reader as a philosophical man who also understood protocol as was demanded by the colonial authority:

> When he talked freely and openly, for my private ear, he showed much originality of mind, and a rich, daring, imaginative spirit; he had thought the matter of life over and held his own strong views upon it. (p. 128)

A close examination of Kinyanjui’s speech in the film runs contrary to the assertion
above made by Karen in the literary antecedent. The linguistic prowess alluded to in the text disappears in the film, and all of a sudden, the ‘Great Chief’ who was confident becomes a man who is ill-versed even in Kiswahili which he is expected to be competent in. At 23:05, chief Kinyanjui responds to Karen’s request for workers to help her on her coffee farm in Kiswahili as follows:

"Naelewa, na hayo yote, sisikii kabisa. Ikiwa waendelea, endelea kabisa kwa upesi, isipokuwa, jua lawaka kabisa, itakuwa kiwendelea ije bila kwingia ka-kazini. Uzuri kahawa, iwe sawa sawa kama mwaka juzi, itakuwa sawa sawa.”/ I understand you, and all that, I don’t understand at all. If you want to farm coffee, go ahead quickly except that the sun is so hot. As it will be going on coming without going to work. Provided the coffee does well as it did last year. (Emphasis and transcription mine)

This particular scene creates a caricature in the place of an otherwise respectable chief. Kinyanjui is turned into a cartoon figure and bows and sways as he talks. As evidenced in the English translation and/or transcription, it is almost impossible to understand Kinyanjui, especially with regard to the underlined sections of his statement. It indeed takes Farah’s ingenuity to tell Karen that the Chief has accepted her request. Such incoherence of speech in the film is not expected from a man Karen describes in flamboyant terms as an “old man with a fine manner, and much real greatness to him” (Blixen, 1973, p. 127).

Clearly, Kinyanjui of the film is a far cry from the one described in the text. The viewer does not experience greatness or legitimacy in his manner and speech that is espoused in the literary original. As for his appearance, what the audience is treated to is an image of an old man with sprinklings of grizzled grey hair, shrouded not in fur cloak, but in a crumbled animal hide. Besides, there is nothing in the film image of KInyanjui that resembles the “gorgeous fur cloak” or “big chief” imaging by Blixen in the text. Additionally, in all the scenes he appears in, we do not see the “white-haired senators” who would have enhanced his status as a man of influence. In one of such shots, one of his warrior-sons stands behind him, unaware of the obtaining conversation with Karen but only succeeding in dwarfing his diminutive father. Throughout that dialogue, he is illogical and incoherent even as he speaks Kiswahili which we would expect him to speak
fluently. In postcolonial film criticism, films made by Europeans have been criticized for this denigration of African characters (Diang’a, 2007). In this fashion, royal elements and characters in the African cultures are turned into caricatures in the same way that *Out of Africa* screens Kinyanjui. As seen in images 41 and 42 below:

**Image 41:** A haggard and diminutive Chief Kinyanjui is made to wear a creased animal hide and attire resembling a “gorgeous fur cloak.” As in the text.

**Image 42:** Kinyanjui and one of his warrior sons as he talks to Karen outside his hut on one of her visits. Even in stature, it appears he is not the big chief the text talks about.
This degraded appearance of Chief Kinyanjui in the film is consistent with Farah’s attitude towards him. First of all, Farah refuses to acknowledge him as a chief *per se*, always referring to him as “*this chief*”. He also cleverly despises him for not knowing English when he remarks to Karen, “*Sabu, this chief has no British*.” Later on in the film, Farah even advises Karen to ignore Kinyanyui saying, “*He is a chief, but he is a Kikuyu!*” This can be interpreted to mean that Farah thinks that as long as Kinyanjui is a Kikuyu, even if he is a chief, he is not someone worthy of serious consideration. It appears that the filmmaker is determined, contrary to the spirit of the literary antecedent, to show that African leaders of the time were as diminished figures in stature and influence as is seen of Chief Kinyanjui. For a man given such a glowing description by Karen Blixen in her text, a lot better was deserved of the manner in which he is depicted in the film.

Denys Finch-Hatton is Karen Blixen’s lover for the most time that she lives in Kenya. Both text and film reveal that the two have an intimate relationship from 1926 up to the time when Denys dies in 1931. Nevertheless, there is a difference in the portrayal of his relationship with Karen between the cinematic narrative and the prose narrative. To begin with, in the literary text, Denys comes to Karen’s life much later than in the adapted film. In the film, Denys and Karen meet in between Nairobi and Mombasa when she is on her train journey to the capital. He is an ivory hunter who loads ivory on to the train on which Karen is traveling and requests her to give the parcel to Berkeley Cole in Nairobi. Later on, Karen meets Denys after her wedding to Bror at the Muthaiga Club for the second time on the same day. In point of fact, before a real encounter between the two, the film opens with shots depicting Denys’ image superimposed on the image of an African sunset, accompanied by an opening voice-over narration in which Karen’s voice begins to tell their love story. This early encounter in the film is critical. This can be interpreted as the films way of foreshadowing that Denys’ and Karen’s paths are destined to cross at some point of her stay in Kenya. Similarly, by his early introduction, the film impresses upon the audience the perception that the story is about the romantic lives of Karen with Denys, and not Bror, the man she leaves Denmark to come to Kenya and get married to.
Because he is a more prominent character in the film than in the text, he is introduced this early, and features more prominently throughout the film than Bror who is supposed to have been the reason for Karen’s coming to Kenya. Whereas the literary text is a tale of Karen’s misadventure in Kenya, the film, which draws on resources from other writings, foregrounds the romantic narrative more than anything else, and Denys being an integral part of this narrative, has to be granted enough space and time in the filmic narrative to play his part.

In addition, by characterizing Denys using the audio-visual elements – ranging from sound effects to camera shots – the extent of the romance with Karen is so clear in the film, contrary to the subtlety and vagueness with which it is treated in the literary original. The compass that Denys hands her on one occasion “to steer by” in order to deliver supplies to Delamere’s WWI group should symbolize the sense of direction that Denys gives her life and sensibility after her failed marriage to Bror. In the text, Karen only refers to her as “a friend”, but in the film we see them get intimate on several occasions. In one of the voice-overs, Karen says of her relationship with Denys at 01:50:54:

In the days and hours that Denys was at home, we spoke of nothing ordinary. Not of my troubles with the farm; … my failing crop; … what he knew was happening to Africa; or of anything else that was small and real. We lived disconnected, and apart from things. I had been making up stories while he was away. In the evenings, he made himself comfortable, spreading cushions like a couch … and I, sitting cross legged … he would listen, clear-eyed, to a long tale, from when it began, until it ended.

This voice forms the background of a montage indicating passage of seasons, meaning that it was for a long time that the two were in love. To cap it, a romantic instrumental symphony accompanies the voice. Karen yearns for marriage as she makes it clear in one of the conversations but Denys insists that he loves her and won’t do it more or less because of a piece of paper – a marriage certificate. This notwithstanding, the mutual romance between them lasts; matched only by the passion that Karen has for the beautiful
African landscape, and her Ngong Hills farm.

It will be important to, therefore, conclude that what is done in the film with clarity and emphasis is only implied in the text by means of subtle allusions and symbolism in the literary antecedent. In the text, Karen uses lofty allusions metaphoric language to describe the love between them. In describing the pleasure of receiving visitors on her farm, the most important among them, Denys, she writes, “A real friend who comes to the house is a heavenly messenger, who brings the *panis angelorum*.” (Blixen, 1937, P. 141). Loosely translated, *panis angelorum* means “the bread of angels” which serves the purpose of bringing Christians together at a holy communion. The phrase is derived from a Roman Catholic Church hymn. An English translation of this Gregorian hymn can be found in *The Parish Book of Chant*, (2008). Titled *Ecce Panis Angelorum*, it translates into *Behold the Bread of Angels*. Applied to her situation with Denys, his coming to her house is as fulfilling and invaluable as the bread served at a holy communion is to the Christians. This allusion therefore becomes a textual exhortation by Karen Blixen which elevates her adoration of Denys to sublimity and to the realm of the spiritual.

Later in the text, Karen Blixen writes in another allusion, “Saint Francis and Saint Claire were entertaining one another upon theology.” (P. 141). Theologically, this is a special love that passes ordinary understanding. Again here, as is the case of the previous allusion, Karen’s love for Denys is seen to surpass the ordinary and embrace the spiritual.

According to Davis (2014) in *The Love letters*, over eight hundred years ago, two young people (later St. Claire and St. Francis) left their small town of Assisi in Italy to explore the world and its natural beauty together. It is their yearning for unadulterated love for each other, for God and for nature that makes them set towards the adventure of listening to each other’s heart. Both of them escape from the bounds of their families’ and neighbours’ expectations that would have had them follow different paths and get different partners in marriage. This allusion enables Karen to emphasise in the text that her love life with Denys was natural and unrestricted. This in the text is effected to greater effect by use of audiovisual devices.
The full extent of Karen’s attachment to Denys is shown in what without doubt remains the lowest moment for Karen in Kenya – Denys’ death. She is devastated but bears it with grace and fortitude enough to give him a heartfelt tribute at the graveside in the Ngong Hills. She eulogizes him by rendering part of a poem which upon scrutiny, happens to be “To an Athlete Dying Young” (1896) by Housman:

The time you won your town the race/ We chaired you through the market-place/ Man and boy stood cheering by/ As home we brought you shoulder-high / Smart lad, to slip betimes away … Runners whom renown you outran/ And the name died before the man/ And round that early-laurelled head/ Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead./ And find to unwithered on its curls/ A garland briefer than a girl’s.

In Housman’s poem, the persona talks of a young athlete winning the most important race for his town and occasions celebrations from fellow town dwellers. Then sadly, the athlete dies too young, but with his record still unbroken. While the persona is sad about the young man’s death, he has consolation that the town hero died before anyone could better his record; hence, he will remain a hero even in death - eternally. This poem raises conflicting feelings and interpretations about death: though it is sad, death is not always unwelcome.21 There is no doubt that Karen is beyond sadness because of the death of her lover, but she finds respite in the fact Denys dies as the only man who is the first to have a lasting impression on her life. The irony found in her choice of the poem to eulogize Denys can be emphasized in a statement she makes earlier on while on Safari with him. That very statement seems to foreshadow his death, “When God wants to punish you, He answers your prayers.” She ends her quotations struggling between sobs and proceeds to pray:

Now take back the soul, of Denys Finch-Hatton whom you have shared with us. He brought us joy, and we loved him well. He was not ours; he was not mine.

She gathers a handful of soil to throw in the grave but too overcome with grief is she that she chooses to walk away and leaves the rest of the funeral party numbed. A few days

21 Refer to http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides3/Housman.html
before his death in a plane crash, a romantically lit scene in the night on one of their outings shows further proof of the mutual romance between the two:

Image 43: Karen and Denys at a dinner table in the wild. Notice how the frame helps to enhance an air of harmony and a romantic mood. Soft (Low Key) lighting and balancing of characters and objects in the frame reflects a mutual state of emotional balance.

Image 44: Karen and Denys at a dinner table in the wild. Same scene as above but this shot has fire burning within the frame, symbolic of passionate romance.
In the handling of Denys as a character, he is understood better – and moreso foregrounded and upheld with doubtless clarity as Karen’s lover – from viewing the film than by reading the literary text. This is understandable because film and prose are different media. What is done by narration, description and dialogue in the text, film does it better by calling upon cinematic resources including sound and cinematographic techniques to give the audience a better impression of the character.

It ought to be noted that its magnitude notwithstanding, the text Out of Africa sometimes belabours the obvious, oftentimes engaging in very lengthy descriptions about characters that are not so central to the story. This happens with characters about whom less than we read in the text should have been written. For instance, the writer dedicates a whole chapter to Old Knudsen, a Danish man who comes to the farm and sadly dies there. After his death, nothing is heard of him again, perhaps indicating that he was not so central a character to deserve a whole chapter about him, when such a favour is not even reserved for Denys. Another character who receives a lengthy description is one Emmanuelson. He also, once overwhelmed with life in Nairobi, takes off to Dodoma through Karen’s farm. Such characters are missing in the film as the filmmaker chooses to retain characters that are central to the main threads of the narrative: the romantic thread and the historical thread. Such characters as Lord Delamare and Berkeley Cole give credence to the historic strand of the narrative.

Samuel is a character not in the original text but introduced in the film The Ghost and the Darkness. First of all, he is brought in to serve as the appropriate narrative voice in the filmic narrative. While the text, a memoir as it is, is told from the perspective of the first person subjective narrator, the narrative of film is seen through Samuel’s eye – a third person narrator; but a participant in the events of the cinematic narrative. The filmmaker changes the narrative voice to enhance authenticity of the story. This is meant to make the cinematic narrative modest (appear unexaggerated) and as objective as possible. In the literary text, there are clear means by which the reader is made to believe that the story they are about to read is in fact a true account of what happened and not an
exaggerated and subjective tale. The author, Patterson (1907), makes a plea in the Preface of the text towards this end:

I have no doubt that many of my readers, who have perhaps never been very far away from civilisation, will be inclined to think that some of the incidents are exaggerated. I can only assure them that I have toned down the facts rather than otherwise, and have endeavoured to write a perfectly plain and straightforward account of things as they actually happened (p. 2). (Emphasis mine)

Slightly later on after the Preface, F. C. Selous, (quoted in Patterson, 1907) writing in the Foreword, adds to Patterson’s commitment saying:

My own long experience of African hunting told me at once that every word in this thrilling narrative was absolutely true. Nay more: I knew that the author had told his story in a most modest manner, laying but little stress on the dangers he had run when sitting up at nights to try and compass the death of the terrible man-eaters, especially on that one occasion when whilst watching from a very light scaffolding, supported only by four rickety poles, he was himself stalked by one of the dreadful beasts (p. 3). (Emphasis mine)

While the nature of literary format affords the writer the time and place to make such exhortations as the above, the filmmaker has to use ingenuity on their part to ‘make’ such persuasions upon their audience. Thus, Samuel – rather than Col. Patterson as narrator in the literary antecedent – is a new character introduced to tell the cinematic story in a different way so that the film does not run the risk of being labeled a subjective and exaggerated representation of what took place. At the beginning of the film, Samuel’s voice is heard at 01:05:

This is the most famous true African adventure. Famous because what took place at Tsavo, never happened before. Colonel John Henry Patterson was there when it began – a fine Irish gentleman; a brilliant engineer. He was my friend. My name is Samuel – I was there.

The declarations “what happened at Tsavo” and “I was there” impress upon the consciousness of the viewer the fact that the account of events they are about to watch is
delivered by a trusted narrator who witnessed them first hand. Secondly, Samuel delivers the story from a native’s point of view. Samuel is one of the key characters in the film and his presence and commanding voice makes the film as much an African story as possible. As he states in the quote above, the story is “the most famous African adventure” therefore is only fitting that the filmmaker allows no other but an African voice and eyes to facilitate the narrative. With regard to the use of a native’s point of view, an argument can be made that the filmmaker makes an attempt to validate some of the stereotypes held between ethnicities/races and religions by making them come from the mouth of an African and not a Whiteman. By distancing such attitudes from Europeans, Stephen Hopkins, the director might be making a point that the stereotypes are proven facts because even people from non-European descent approve of them. For instance, Samuel makes the following statement at 10:50:

The truth is, the workers don’t like each other at all. Obviously, (emphasis mine) the Africans hate the Indians, but the Indians also hate other Indians. The Hindus believe cows are sacred, while the Muslims eat the cows.

Thirdly, viewed from another perspective, Samuel is the personification of the African perception of the Europeans. From his close interaction with a Whiteman (Patterson) during the colonial period, and the assessment of him thereof, we can deduce that the filmmaker wants to make a point that relationships between Europeans and Africans were not always the sheep-dog; or hegemonic type. Sometimes there existed genuine friendships. Although Samuel is Patterson’s subordinate, he describes him as “a fine Irish gentleman; a brilliant engineer. He was my friend.” Obviously, Samuel would not have given such a glowing description of Patterson if he had not liked him.

In addition, Samuel as authoritative voice is introduced in the film and appropriately used to explain the African world view, myth and folklore and their bearing on the lion adventure and the role of the Whiteman in Africa. In his frustration that the lions are proving immortal and unkillable, Samuel is brought in to explain the natives’ position on this catastrophe:
The men called them “The Ghost” and “The Darkness”. They were two of them and that had never happened before. Because man-eaters always walk alone. … Some thought they were not lions at all but the spirits of dead medicine men come back to spread madness. For others, they were the devil sent to stop the white men from owning the world. (Emphasis mine)

Although the effectiveness of Samuel as an African voice to tell the story cannot be gainsaid, criticism would be that the filmmaker would have done better with an actor of Kenyan origin to make watertight his claims to understand the mythology of the local community in their interpretation of the disaster that the lions have brought. Samuel’s role is actually played by John Kani, a South African as is even clear in his accent. This casts a slight shadow on the credibility of the character he plays.

Another character, missing in the text but introduced in the film is Sir Robert Beaumont. He is the principal railroad financier who is keen to see the project completed as soon as possible. The filmmaker invents this character in the film to represent the image and attitude of a true imperialist – an important aspect that the literary original lacks. At the time of the action, the Berlin Conference of 1884 – 1885 has been conducted and the scramble for Africa is on. At 02:40, Beaumont declares:

We are in a race Colonel, and the prize is nothing less than the continent of Africa. We are building the most expensive and daring railroad in history for the glorious purpose of saving Africa from the Africans, and of course, to end slavery. Our competitors are the Germans and the French. We are ahead and we will stay ahead provided you do what I have hired you to do. Build a bridge, across the River Tsavo, and be finished in five months. (Emphasis mine)

According to Crowe (1942), The Berlin Conference was hosted by Otto von Bismarck at the request of Portugal with the principal objective of avoiding rivalries and conflicts among European powers as they scrambled over Africa. During the period of establishment of the colonial enterprise in Africa by European powers, successful colonial authorities were those that had aggressive and fierce imperialists who were preoccupied with grinding economic benefits from the colonies to the European
metropoles. Crowe (ibid) cites the doctrine: “Principle of Effective Occupation”, according to which a European power had to exercise complete control over the colony, and exploit the human and natural resources fully, or risk losing the territory to a more serious occupant. Against this background, Beaumont’s manner and attitude can therefore be appreciated. By extension, they would end up getting famous as Robert himself declares that all he cares about is his knighthood and not the forty people killed by the lions, or the little trouble Patterson is experiencing “with local wildlife”. He therefore raises to relief the fact that to the colonial powers the loss of the lives of Africans and junior white subordinates in the colonies was permissible if spreading the economic and political tendons of their empires in Africa was at stake. By being thus the epitome of the default imperialist of the time, complete with the Fredrick Lugard type of moustache, he helps evoke dislike for the colonialists who were out to cripple Africa for their own benefits. According to the Britannica Encyclopedia, Frederick Lugard was a colonial administrator who served in east Africa and West Africa, especially establishing British Direct Rule in Nigeria. Lugard in his (1922) book titled *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, is as racist as Beaumont turns out in the film:

In character and temperament, the typical African of this race-type is a happy, thriftless, excitable person. Lacking in self-control, discipline and foresight. Naturally courageous, and naturally courteous and polite, full of personal vanity, with little sense of veracity, fond of music and loving weapons as an oriental loves jewelery. His thoughts are concentrated on the events and feelings of the moment and he suffers little from the apprehension for the future, … He lacks the power of organisation, and is conspicuously deficient in the management and control alike of men or business ... Perhaps the two traits which have impressed me as those most characteristic of the African native are his lack of apprehension and his lack of ability to visualise the future (Lugard, 1922, p.70).
When Patterson asks him if he had a nice journey to Tsavo, he says, “How could it be? I hate Africa.” We see him at his worst when he says of Patterson’s unborn son, “I really don’t give a shit about your upcoming litter. I have made you with this assignment; don’t make me break you.” His presence therefore brings a new dimension to the film which doesn’t exist in the literary original – representation of the cold mean imperialist. See how the images of Lugard and Beaumont compare:

![Image of Lugard and Beaumont](http://images.npg.org.uk)

Image 45: Images comparing Lugard and Beaumont

In the spirit of the film seeking its autonomy, there is an evident change of the identity of characters between the film and the text. The Dr. Rose of the literary text shifts to Dr. Hawthorn in the film. In the literary text, Dr. Rose is left a subdued and a peripheral character, rarely mentioned while in the film; Dr. Hawthorn is seen as an imposing figure, brave and not afraid to have an opinion on issues. He also ends up being killed by the lions while Dr. Rose is spared in the literary antecedent. Most importantly, he is brought into the film to do something that Dr. Rose fails to do in the text: to give his stand on colonialism. He is very skeptical of the true intend of building the railroad and
ends up standing up for the idea that not all Europeans supported colonialism. There were those like Hawthorn who saw it as the injustice it really was. Consider what he says of the railroad project while dismissing Patterson:

“This is a sham! Who needs it? It is ridiculous. It is only being built to protect the ivory trade. And make rich men richer!”

Though restricted to an appearance in only two scenes – at the beginning and end – Mrs. Patterson is another important introduction to the film. The filmmaker ensures that she remains ever-present in the cinematic narrative through the correspondence by letters that we read through off-screen voices from Patterson and his wife. She serves several roles. First, because of her, the perception of Patterson as human being with tender feelings of love is enhanced. This is not at all in the text in which there is not even a mention of Mrs. Patterson. The fact that her husband leaves her behind to take up a dangerous job in Africa not only shows Patterson as adventurous but also committed to his work and brave. She is however emotionally strong to let the husband go to another continent to fulfill his dream of working in Africa, as she says, “You go … You build bridges John; you have to go where the rivers are.” Lastly, she brings the romantic flavor to an adventure that would have largely remained dark. Her arrival at Tsavo so that Patterson can lift up his “son in the air” in Remington’s words is a fitting end to a story that has a lighter ending than would naturally be anticipated. This ties the film’s end to its beginning: at the time of his hiring, when the film is just beginning, Patterson promises to take his son to Africa.

There are also variations with regard to other characters such as Sterling, Mahina, and Abdulla. Sterling is brought in the film to represent the missionary work the preceded and went on during colonialism. He is at Tsavo to spread Christianity and win converts of the natives, Hindus and Muslims. His presence makes the film a more complete piece of work because it is a historical fact that missionary work was the precursor to, and attendant to the colonial experience in Africa. Abdulla on his part brings prejudices held against Europeans by other races. When Patterson affirms that he will kill the lions, Abdulla remarks, “Of course you will; you are white; you can do anything.” Finally,
Mahina in the film is the brave foreman who once killed a lion but – in a tragic irony – is killed by one of the Man-eaters. This seems to be a change of identity as in the text, a man called Ungan Singh is killed in exactly the same way as Mahina, while the Mahina of the literary text is simply Patterson’s gun bearer.

This part of the chapter has pointed out the changes such as characters being left out, new characters being introduced, or the identity of some characters being changed. However, there has been more focus on the characters missing in the literary originals but introduced in the films. This is because the bringing in of new characters into the story has been witnessed more than any other kind of variation in characterization. As seen in the foregoing, this variation has occasioned new meaning originally not realized in the literary narratives.

3.5.2 Variance in Plot

In terms of the plot of the narrative: the events that happen in the film and the motivations that both occasion and result from them, there also exist variations relative to the circumstance prevailing in the prose narratives. The variations range from similar actions happening at different times and places to the introduction of action that originally has not been realized in the literary narrative. Action in *The Ghost and the Darkness* begins in London in 1898 while the literary original begins with Col. Patterson arriving at the Port of Mombasa. Although at the very beginning we are treated to a shot of the untamed golden savanna of Africa momentarily, we go back to London to begin the story with Patterson receiving instructions from Sir Robert Beaumont upon his posting to go to Africa and build a bridge across the River Tsavo. There are motivations behind this beginning, which makes the film an improvement on the literary source. First of all, this beginning is significant because it provides the historical background against which the railway is being constructed. The filmmaker does not leave anything to chance and therefore makes clear the imperialists’ desire to economically and politically determine whatever kind of investment that would be made in East Africa. All the major powers in the world, mainly Britain, Germany and France are in a race bidding to get as
big a portion of the African resources as possible. In the beginning seen of the film, Robert Beaumont says:

We are in a race Colonel, and the prize is nothing less than the continent of Africa. We are building the most expensive and daring railroad in history for the glorious purpose of saving Africa from the Africans, and of course, to end slavery. Our competitors are the Germans and the French.

This also introduces the question of the racist ideals that provided justification for Europe’s involvement in Africa. The missionaries and imperialists of the time combined to propound a flawed philosophy that painted Africa as a dark continent populated by savages who needed to be saved from themselves and from their environment. About this deliberately skewed philosophy that was aimed at undermining the African psychologically, morally, socially, politically and most importantly, economically, Lola (1996) remarks:

The need to impose a moral and physical order on colonial subjects was seen as the duty of the Christian, civilized nations. Various scientific explanations regarding the inferiority of the black people formed the rationale for carrying out this mission (p. 50).

About the economic dimension to missionary work and colonialism, she adds:

On an economic level, it has been suggested that the imperial expansion that started from roughly 1875 and carried on until World War I, was due, at least in part, to capitalist overproduction coupled with an under-consumption in the home market which led to the search of markets overseas (p. 56).

The literary original, being an action-adventure narrative, leaves out the incident that gives the necessary historical background. Patterson’s memoir is written in the thriller-adventure fashion in which case the author rationalizes that it is important to take the reader into the action as fast as possible. And the main action for the writer was to narrate his adventures with the man-eaters at Tsavo. Finally, the scene speaks to the genuine character that Patterson is. He holds fast to the love for his career and to his idea of
Africa that is beautiful, refusing to be drawn into the pre-colonial materialistic imperialism.

Another notable variation in the presentation of events relates to Patterson’s arrival in Kenya and his trip to Tsavo. In the text, Patterson stays in Mombasa for a whole week before proceeding to Tsavo. His movement from Mombasa to Tsavo is plainly narrated with hardly any dialogue. The film improves on this. To begin with, Patterson travels from Mombasa to Tsavo in 24 hours. The emphasis moves from the author’s description of the Port of Mombasa to his journey into the interior. The film introduces Sterling who accompanies him to Tsavo. This humanizes the trip – bettering the plain narration in the text to develop characters by the audio-visual – as the lively chit chat between the two should show. Patterson reveals to Sterling his admiration for Africa, which is complemented by a montage showing a series of shots of the beautiful flora and fauna. To the upbeat Patterson, standing at the head of the train with Sterling, this justifies the choice to take up the job at Tsavo. However, it can be juxtaposed to the danger that lies ahead in store for Patterson at the hands of the Tsavo lions.

Finally, the adapted film introduces the Maasai Morans who are not present in the antecedent text. In the course of Patterson’s tribulations at Tsavo, Remington arrives with an army of Morans who are supposed to hunt and kill the marauding man-eaters. Their presence adds to the African touch and flavor in the movie that comes in the form of their war chants in Maasai language. One of the Morans justifies the title of the film when he remarks that the lions are actually two devils: “Zimu na Giza” Kiswahili for “The Devil” and “The Darkness.”

In a fashion similar to that in The Ghost and the Darkness, Out of Africa starts with a scene in Denmark while the text starts with a description of Karen’s farm near Ngong Hills. The viewer is introduced in winter in which the characters are shooting game-birds. The setting is aristocratic as Bror, his brother Hans and the family is richly born, with Karen’s family having ties with royalty. The attire, drinks, guns and the talk itself attest to this. This scene is important because it sets a background against which the
viewer will be enabled to appreciate what is to be presented later. Noticing that she is not growing any younger, Karen is desperate to get married but his lover, Hans, is not ready for commitment. An arrangement is therefore reached so that Han’s brother, Bror Blixen who is willing to marry for the money now stands to marry Karen. She finds it an acceptable arrangement because by doing so, she will have a chance to relocate to Kenya where she will use some of her family money to invest in dairy farming.

Later on when the marriage does not work, the viewer is privileged to know that it was a marriage of convenience for Karen, who wanted to evade social pressure to get married and for Bror who wanted the money. Soon after their marriage, Bror makes a unilateral decision that they will now not establish a dairy farm but will plant coffee, something that has not been attempted around Ngong before. Karen is irked and it becomes clear that the marriage is already up to a difficult start and the divorce that happens seven years down the line does not surprise the viewer in the least. The following conversation (which is in fact not captured in the literary antecedent – hence an improvement by the film) ensues:

Bror: I didn’t come to Africa to sit with silly cows.
Karen: Next time you change your mind, do it with your money:
Bror: That bought your title, Baroness.

The precursor to the scene above is an extremely important incident that makes sense, not just in the scene, but whose effect runs through the whole film. The filmmaker takes us ahead of time and we see and hear Karen in her old age. There is a montage of rapid, hazy shots showing the wrinkled face of an old and emaciated Karen – probably ill – experiencing a nightmare in bed, back in her homeland in Rungstedlund. The idea of a nightmare is evident from the sound heard: “unseen running water, twittering sounds, a flurry of a chase, followed by a sharp scream that is cut short, then a hush” (in tandem with Screenplay by Luedtke, 1983). When she begins to talk, her voice is weak and dry. This very important cinematic technique makes the narrative to begin with its end; hence, it makes an artistic statement that Karen’s story in Africa was doomed for failure – economically and romantically – from the very start. This start is presented to the viewer
soon after in the hunting scene explained above.

Her voice, with devastating weakness intones; “I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills” bears the scarred memories of one who hoped to succeed in Africa but failed in a wild twist of fate. Significantly, these words appear in a sentence at the beginning of the literary original, at page 13. The appearance of these words in both film and text unite the two art forms and highlights the reflections of each other that exist between them. The insistence of “I had” should signify that Karen’s economic prowess in her prime is now but just a remote memory. It is a voice toned with regret and echoes of it can be read in the literary text in paragraphs that capture Karen’s last moments in Africa. It is justifiable to say that the melancholic beginning in the film finds intertextual unity with the poignant ending of the literary text as Karen departs forever to Denmark.

At the Samburu station on the line, I got out of the train while the engine was taking water, and walked with Farah on the platform. From there, to the south-west, I saw the Ngong Hills. The noble wave of the mountain rose above the surrounding flat land, all air-blue. But it was so far away that the four peaks looked trifling, hardly distinguishable, and different from the way they looked from the farm. The outline of the mountain was slowly smoothed and leveled out by the hand of distance (Blixen, 1937: 330).

As she goes back to Europe, having lost all she came with and failed to win what she came hoping for, the difference between her expectations and the actual outcome is as huge as that which “the hand of distance” has set between her and her African home in Ngong. A further look at the text proves that Karen is one of those Europeans who were attracted to Africa by the allure of the continent and came with dreams of various degrees of success. At the beginning of the story, the reader is treated to the lyrical expressiveness of the writer in her romantic description of Africa.

It was Africa distilled up through six thousand feet like the strong and refined essence of a continent. The colours were dry and burnt, the colours in pottery. The trees had a light delicate foliage, the structure of which was different from that of the trees in Europe … all the flowers that you found on the plains, or upon the creepers and liana in the native forest, were
It is important to sum up this section by stating that although *Out of Africa* is a cinematic narrative portraying events that flow into each other, the literary original is written in an anecdotal fashion with the writer handling different characters, events or ideas in separate sections or sub-chapters – almost as if independent of each other. For instance, some characters such as Kinyanjui, Knudsen and Kamante are depicted each in his own section and time. Using these anecdotes, the filmmaker is able to weave one captivating storyline of a continuous cinematic narrative.

### 3.5.3 Variance in Setting

Little can be said about setting in respect of *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness*. The latter, like its literary antecedent, is set in Kenya but with two scenes at the beginning set in London: one scene depicting Sir Robert Beaumont and Patterson and the second featuring Patterson and his wife. Apart from providing the needed historical background explained before, the scenes in England give the film a universal appeal besides making a statement that Tsavo is not just a fragment of a place in Kenya’s interior, but that it is a place with economic significance which links it to the rest of the world due to the obtaining geopolitical situation occasioned by the endeavour to colonise. This point has already been handled earlier with regard to the examination of the role of film character Sir Robert Beaumont.

The films *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* are similar in many respects. The manner in which setting is crafted is one of those similarities. Like the case explained in the foregoing paragraph, the filmmaker takes the beginning of *Out of Africa* to Europe, and not Kenya where the text begins. It appears that again here the filmmaker is keen to give us the background of the characters and the motivations that bring them to Kenya. Both films present European characters who strive to be residents of a twin-world: the European experience, and the African experience. In *Out of Africa*, the setting
in Denmark reveals Karen’s predicament – a dilemma that eventually forces her into an uneasy union with Bror.

It is evident that her society has put a lot of pressure on her to get married. She is a member of the aristocratic family and the demands upon her to live up to the expectations of her family are high. She thinks that staying too long in her mother’s house paints a bad picture in the glorious history of her aristocratic family. As such, she is forced to leave the lover she would have wanted to get married to, Hans, and settle for Bror (his brother who accepts the marriage because of the money that will come with it). Her coming to Kenya, therefore, can be read both as an attempt to defeat and an act of flight from the societal demands that place the onus upon her to live according to the family blueprint.

From the foregoing, setting in all the three films remains largely unchanged when compared to their literary antecedents. The case of *Things Fall Apart* was settled much earlier on in this chapter, and a conclusion arrived at that in all aspects, it is a realistic adaptation that steers by the world of its literary source. As such, a discussion on setting for its case is a foregone conclusion. As for *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness*, setting varies only a bit with the filmmakers intending to introduce new dimensions of meaning as discussed above.

3.5.4 *Variance in Language*

The verbal language of the adapted films varies significantly from its equivalent in the literary originals. The pair that best illustrates this variance in language is *Out of Africa* (text vis-à-vis film). This variance owes itself to two reasons – the difference in media, and the need to re-present the world of the literary originals. Any communicative act, be it verbal or non-verbal, has certain characteristics. Berlo (1960), a communication theorist introduced the S-M-C-R Model of communication. According to Berlo (*ibid*), any communicative act has the Source, the Message, the Channel and the Receiver. The efficiency of the communication process is dependent upon the relationship between the Source and the Receiver. The source is the originator of the message, in the case, of this
research, the authors and filmmakers. Berlo \textit{ibid}) insists that there are certain essential elements that characterize the source which have a critical bearing on the incident of communication. These are knowledge, communication skills, the social system, culture and attitudes. These elements construct the essence of the source (the communicator).

Incidentally, these very same elements characterize the receiver and determine their reception of the message. Message is the meaning or content of what the source wants to get to the receiver. Within the realm of the message, is the code. Code is the language within which the message is packaged. Language uses the five senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting as channels through which the message is delivered to the receiver. While the communicator in film capitalizes on the use of seeing and hearing made possible by of the audio-visual elements of the film, the literary author usually uses words by evoking feelings of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling. This section shall therefore investigate the varying ways in which the cinematic communicator has used language relative to the literary antecedent and show the significance in the use of different codes of communication between the films and their literary antecedents.

The filmmaker in \textit{Out of Africa} has used ‘the code’ – language – to communicate the message to the receiver (audience) in the form of character discourse. This has also been done for the purpose of giving the film an aesthetic quality that enables the message to be delivered in an interesting and idiosyncratic way without making impositions upon the audience to understand the text(s) in certain ways as can sometimes be pinpointed in the literary original.

The two characters who best exemplify this inimitable use of language are Farah and Kamante. As for Farah, his intonation, diction and grammar set him apart as the only one of his kind. Indeed, when Farah speaks either English or Kiswahili, what the viewer reads cannot be a lack of the above-average command of the languages, but rather, the filmmaker uses him to demonstrate the versatile nature of language (and versatility of African speech acts) and attain a degree of realism that can be easily appreciated by the viewer. Or perhaps, it is the filmmaker’s way of laying claim to the assertion that
language is basically meant for communication before anything else. Rauma (2004) distinguishes between literary dialogue and cinematic dialogue. She asserts that while literary dialogue is written, cinematic dialogue is spoken. Rauma’s position points to there being more realism in cinematic dialogue than in its literary counterpart. His English is not only characterized by the non-native speaker handling of a foreign language but with the distinctive flavours of African languages and accents that are brought into English.

A number of cases can be cited in the course of the cinematic narrative which point to Farah’s sublime use of language which portrays the refinements that Africans can bring to their speech. The first we encounter of Farah’s fine art of speech is his response to Karen’s directive that they dam the water in the river flowing through the farm. He objects saying, “This water must go home to Mombasa … this water lives at (sic) Mombasa.” This should be understood as a philosophical man’s way of saying that damming the river was tantamount to interfering with the order of nature. Farah makes his point more impressively without having to make a blunt statement about environmental consciousness and human noninterference with nature. Besides this assertion, by this instance of language use the filmmaker depicts Farah (and perhaps Africans) as animists who believe in the existence of the spirit in every object or being. According to Pepetela (1989)22 and Oughter & Alexander (1878)23, animism is the worldview which holds that non-human entities such as plants, animals, and inanimate objects possess a spiritual essence. Farah, therefore, animates the river to show the power of life that exists in every element of nature. William Butler Yeats in his poem The Second Coming (1919) calls this essence, “spiritus mundi” – the belief in the existence of the spiritual in everything and that spiritual power this links every object and being to a universal spiritual world through which every being and object is interconnected with

22 The term ‘Animist Realism’ was first used by Pepetela (1989) who considered it the African strand of Magical Realism (a style of writing associated with Latin American writer who infused elements of fantasy and magic in otherwise realistic literature). Animist Realism refers to the technique in African novels by which writers allude directly or indirectly to the presence of ancestors. It would be extended to mean a style of writing in which the non-human in a literary text are seen to possess spiritual power that is interspersed into the activities of human beings. Many filmmakers in Africa have employed magical realism in their films.

the rest to make up a singular complex spiritual universe.

Farah’s idiosyncratic speech is further evidenced in a conversation with Karen after Chief Kinyanjui issues an edict that grown up children must not go to school. Such speech instances as one quoted below characterize Farah as an original man, humorous but seemingly unaware of how comical his statements are. See the dialogue and screen shot below:

Farah: This chief says, children higher than this, must not learn to read!
Karen: Tell him that all the children must go to school!
Farah: No Sabu! This is a chief, you are not a chief!
Karen: Absurd!
Farah: It is not for tall people to know more than this chief. *When these children are tall, then this chief can be dead!* (Emphasis mine)

![Image 46: Farah translates a message from Chief Kinyanjui prohibiting grown up children from going to Karen’s school.](image)

Kamante, by virtue of the linguistic idiosyncrasy that he displays, can further be used to
advance the argument of the African belief in animism\textsuperscript{24}. He stands out as one of the most mystifying characters in the text and film. What is achieved in the text by use of author description is in the film achieved mostly by spoken word (his speech). Consider the conversation below which begins at 36:32 when Kamante comes to Karen’s seeking treatment for his leg:

Karen: Your leg has got worse, you should go to hospital.
Kamante: This leg may be foolish; it may think not to go to hospital.
Karen: This leg will do as it pleases, but if you take it to hospital, I will think that you are wise. And such a wise man as this, I would want to work in my house – for wages.
Kamante: How much wages would come to such a wise man as that?

Kamante views his own leg as a separate entity with a mind and spirit of its own, capable of having attitudes. Kamante’s recognition of the spirit (which is in agreement with the concept of \textit{Spiritus Mundi} discussed earlier on) in all phenomena is persistently seen in the film, most notably towards the end of the narrative. Such superfluity and mystery of speech, together with his Kikuyu accent contribute to authentic characterization. When the tea factory goes up in flames, he goes into Karen’s bedroom and says, “… I think that God is coming.” His reading of the ferocity of the destructive flames can be interpreted in the light of the Christian teaching he has received while in Karen’s household. It is the fire similar to (and hence symbolic of) the fire of Armageddon that has come to put an end to Karen’s strivings on the coffee farm.

Farah, we can hypothesise, is used to represent the African’s knack for the poetic. While attending to Karen’s wounds after a lion attack, he says:

\begin{center}
Sabu is bleeding; she doesn’t have this ox, 
This lion is hungry; he doesn’t have this ox, 
This wagon is heavy; it doesn’t have this ox, 
God is happy Sabu; He plays with us.
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{24} It is a belief in the existence of spiritual essences in non-human entities such as plants, animals and inanimate objects. According to Harvey (2005, p. 9), “the world of full of persons, only some of whom are human, and that life is always lived in relationship with others”
This incantation can be understood as Farah’s celebration that Karen and the rest of the party traveling to Natron have been lucky enough to survive the lion attack that leaves one of the bulls dead. By this poetic rendition, tension built up in the viewer by the lion attack is toned down and an emotional stability required to view Karen’s trek to Lake Natron as objectively as possible is restored. Rather than just say “we are lucky”, he does it in an inventive style, poetic in texture and succeeds in having a greater impression on Karen and the viewer as being a man with his own mind which enables him to attain an independent interpretation of the world in which he lives. He also deliberately subverts language whenever it suits him to deliver his harshest criticism of the European establishment in Africa, specifically, Kenya. This goes in line with the filmmaker’s intent of depicting Farah as an analytical man who knows what to say and to whom. He knows very well that Karen is not supportive of the British occupation of Kenya and therefore he is sure to be forgiven for voicing his prejudiced views about the English. Satisfied with the impact of Karen’s school on the children on his farm, Kinyanjui comes in appreciation to give Karen a go ahead and educate even the bigger children. Below is a bit of the conversation that illustrates this:

Kinyanjui: Mtoto mrefu, aweza kusoma. *(Taller children can now come to your school)*
Farah: This Chief says, tall children can now come to school, *Sabu*.
Karen: Tell Chief Kinyanjui that reading is a valuable thing. His people will remember him well.
Farah: Anasema, kusoma ni ya mzuri, watu yako tasema, Kinyanjui, asante. *(She says that education is important, your people will remember you for that)*
Kinyanjui: Anaweza kufanya hivyo, na akisoma akuwe na upusi *(They can do that, but let them not dare to be insolent thereafter)*
Farah: This chief says, *British can read, and what good has it done them?* *(Emphasis mine)*

It is very clear here that old Kinyanjui does not say anything about the British. To a viewer familiar with the Swahili language, Farah is seen and heard deliberately mistranslating Kinyanjui to Karen to make a political point with refined subtlety: although the British are well read, that has not stopped them from engaging in a costly
war with the Germans or from imposing a forceful occupation on a people and their land. This statement can be read as subtle form of protest by Farah. As Abbink & Van Walraven (2003) note: “Throughout Africa's history, distant as well as recent, Africans have resisted forces of domination” (2003, p. 01). As for Farah and Kamante, they contribute to the humour that colours several instances in the cinematic narrative, hence influencing the narrative of the film to have a lighter and romantic mood, which is largely missing in the literary original.

The film *Out of Africa* is more sympathetic in its portrayal of the natives and people of other races than is the literary text. This divergence is brought about because of the manner in which the filmmaker deviates from the language of the text in the interpretation of what the adapted film should portray. The whole body of the adapted film has – with regard to language – avoided the racist and prejudiced language that the text embodies in the author’s use of language and description on the natives and other people of non-European descent. In the text, the author’s contemptuous tone is heard severally when she describes the Somali, the Indians and black Africans. Writing in The Standard newspaper on May 8th, 2006, Dominick Odipo castigates these very racist overtones. According to Odipo (2006), whatever the worst that Karen did not write in her already worse memoir, appeared in another of her writings: *Shadows in the Grass* (1961) in which she asserts:

> The dark nations of Africa, strikingly precocious as young children, seemed to come to a standstill in their mental growth at different ages. The Kikuyu, Kawirondo²⁵ (sic) and Wakamba, the people who worked for me on the farm, in early childhood were far ahead of the white children of the same age, but they stopped quite suddenly at a stage corresponding to a European child of nine. (Quoted from [http://mg.co.za/article/2006-05-31-a-letter-to-baroness-blixen-out-of-africa](http://mg.co.za/article/2006-05-31-a-letter-to-baroness-blixen-out-of-africa) on 20th January, 2017.)

It is important to mention here that *Shadows in the Grass* was written thirty years after Karen had left Kenya. The prejudice with which it describes Africa and Africans

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²⁵ The Kavirondo constitute Bantu and Nilotic residents of the western part of Kenya, in the region around the Nzoia River valley and the northern shores of Lake Victoria. They are mainly Dholuo speakers and some Luhya subtribes. (Hobley, 1902)
complements and correlates with the racism in *Out of Africa* (1937) – written three decades before it. It becomes clear to the reader that Blixen’s texts were mainly written for Danish readers, or at least European audiences whom the writer was sure shared the same stereotypes, prejudices and misconceptions about other races. Of Husein Choleim, an Asian visitor to the farm, she says, “There are times when coloured people cannot make themselves clear to save their lives” (p. 152). Other biased descriptions are reserved also for the Maasai and Somali as shall be discussed later in chapter four.

Importantly, the film *Out of Africa* deviates from the racist language of prejudice read in the text. Because of divergence in the application of language, the film can therefore be termed a fair depiction of the Africans and the prejudices that arise in it are not as blunt as those that the text bears. Karen Blixen in her memoir may have tried to give a sympathetic description of the natives but the scathing remarks she makes about them by far outweigh the positive. This is to say that Karen Blixen wallows in a series of stark contradictions in her assessment of non-European races – which then renders her story racist. One of these contradictions regards Kamante. Karen describes how grateful Kamante was her for curing his chronic wound, but goes on to contradict herself that natives have no capacity in themselves to say “Thank you.”. Worse, she writes in her autobiography, *Out of Africa*, that her dealings with the natives have become efficient because of having learnt how to handle wild animals and nature. At the beginning of the story in the text, Blixen consistently uses racist language to draw comparisons between the natives and animals:

> What I learned from the game of the country was useful to me in my dealings with the native people. It was not easy to get to know the natives. They were quick of hearing, and evanescent; if you frightened them they could withdraw into a world of their own, in a second, like the wild animals which at an abrupt movement from you they are gone – simply are not there. Until you knew a native well, it was almost impossible to get a straight answer from him (Blixen, 1937, p. 24).

Lastly, she praises and castigates the Somali, almost in the same breath. Consider:
The Somali women themselves had dignified ways, and were hospitable and gay, with a laughter like silver bells. I was much at home in the Somali village through my Somali servant Farah Aden, who was with me all the time that I was in Africa, and I went to many of their feasts (p. 21).

Later on in the same text, Karen Blixen contradictorily writes:

The Somali here had their own position. Somalis are not good at being all on their own, they are very excitable, and, wherever they go, if they are left to themselves they will waste much time and blood over their own tribal moral system (p. 133).

This last quotation, like others before it in this section, reveals the author as one who haboured a plethora of prejudices for non-Europeans. In all the foregoing illustrations, it is the non-Europeans temperament, intellect, culture or all of these that are mocked by the writer and held to relief for ridicule. It is important to again reiterate that Blixen had Europeans as her principal audience and thus was not scared to express some of the prejudices and generalizations held against people of other races. With regard to the question of racist language, the film tones down the prejudices to mere undertones in a possible effort to re-present the African. This marked difference between film and text may have also been inspired by the historical and social context within which the film is produced - Out of Africa was produced in the modern era in which great strides had already been made in relation to thawing racist prejudices and discrimination.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has engaged in interrogating the polar scenario in the theory and practice of film adaptation: conformity and deviation. As far as conformity is concerned, the films retention of the spirit of their literary antecedents has been studied under the invariant fabula elements (cinematic narrative components that are consistent with the narrative elements in the literary texts). It is in the course of appreciating the invariance between the texts and the films that it has emerged that indeed the stories read in the literary sources are the same ones told in the adapted films. For the case of films Out of Africa
and *The Ghost and the Darkness* which are autobiographical, consistency has been observed between them and other historical accounts regarding the lives and time of Karen Blixen and John Patterson respectively as documented in other historical accounts and writings cited earlier on in this chapter. This very consistence has also been established to be a fact between the films and their literary originals which are memoirs written by Karen Blixen and John Patterson.

The film *Things Fall Apart* presents a different dimension in its adaptation of Achebe’s novel. Whereas the other two films under study exhibit a marked autonomy and independence from their literary sources, *Things Fall Apart* displays the filmmaker’s endeavour to enact the action as guided by the spirit of the literary source. In this spirit of conformity, the filmmaker seems to have been inspired by the structure of the prose narrative as to realistically portray the world of Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and its story of the Igbo society. The effect of this parallelism between text and film is that both the cinematic and the prose narrative narrate the story of the tragic encounter between the Igbo (African) world and the European world at the dawn of colonialism. Besides, the research in this chapter has expressed that as seen in both media (the cinematic and the literary); the Igbo world – because of far-reaching flaws in its cultural fabric – played a part in its own downfall.

Conclusions made in the foregoing paragraphs notwithstanding, this chapter invested at greater length in the discussion of the various ways in which the films and texts stand at variance with each other in respect of such fabula components (narrative elements) as character, plot, setting and language. Specifically, *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* have been elevated to relief as films whose deviation from their literary antecedents (even though they understandably espouse the spirit of the literary originals) has made them more autonomous and independent art forms than *Things Fall Apart*. These transgressions from the norm of the literary antecedents are not in vain, or done for the sake of deviating.

Importantly, evidence has emerged to the effect that the adaptations of texts to films is a
worthy enterprise because of the proven extent to which the films inform on and improve on the literary antecedents. A case in point is variance in characterization. This chapter has established that characters missing in the literary originals but introduced in the adapted films have contributed to a better rendition of the cinematic narratives than the literary ones. The same case obtains for deviation in terms of setting, plot and language. As such, in lieu of the illustrations adduced in support for these artistic deviations, the films have added value to and not debased their literary antecedents. This disproves assertions made by Woolf (1950) and Dudley (1984) who opined that film adaptations actually debased and adulterated their literary originals. Consequently, the practice of adaptation is one that should be encouraged and cultivated so that it contributes to interdisciplinary interplay between film and literature – a tradition that began way back at the end of the 19th century (Kalra, 2013).

The next chapter of this research discusses how the adapted films under study and their literary antecedents are analogous and divergent in respect of the meanings expressed by either medium. This chapter arises from the hypothesis that because of the different techniques used by either medium to tell its story, there is bound to both affirmation of the meaning of the literary antecedents in the adapted films and/or emergence of new layers of meaning in the adapted films that are not explicitly expressed in the literary antecedents.
CHAPTER FOUR

ANALOGIES AND DISSIMILARITY IN MEANING

4.1 Introduction

This chapter endeavours to show the significant ways in which the adapted film and the antecedent literary text divert and converge in respect of meaning as each media strives to express meaning using the system of signs and techniques within its province. In essence, the chapter seeks to answer the question: How do the film and the literary text deliver the same story, or a different story, either similarly or differently?

Particularly, the chapter first of all examines the texts’ and their corresponding films’ answer to the question as to whether it was the spirit of adventure or the quest for political and economic dominance that brought Europeans to Africa. In the course of answering this question, it emerges that the early European visitors to Africa represented the two motivations (intent to colonise and spirit of adventure) as reflected in both the adapted films and their literary antecedents. This being an intertextual study, it is a priority to investigate and arrive at conclusions on which, between the adapted films and the source literary texts inform the audience to emphatic effect on this subject. In addition, this chapter is interested in discussing the European-African perception of each other as “the other” and how the two races reinforce this concept of otherness in the perception of the opposite race and in attitudes towards each other. In this regard, the issue of prejudice is brought to relief as a complex phenomenon not just affecting the European and African view of each other, but rather as one that is intra-racial: evident amongst members of the same race. Where race holds constant, it is apparent that characters recede into ethnic or tribal extracts to define themselves vis-à-vis others.

Further, in respect of the injustice of colonialism, it behooves this chapter of the study to show how Europe supported the colonial enterprise and how both media (film and text)
either similarly or differently treats colonialism. Here, art in the way of film and literature is read to represent antithetical attitudes with regard to the question of colonialism. As with all complex societies, divergent views existed during the scramble for Africa on the subject colonial advent in Africa, and there were indeed Europeans who were opposed to colonialism and saw it for what it was – political and economic oppression of Africa. Thus, this chapter examines this skepticism by some Europeans (as represented in film by European characters) regarding the imperialist claim that the advancement of infrastructure in Africa was meant to benefit the Africans. In line with this, the chapter introduces Cultural Darwinism26 as a characteristic of societies (in this case European) which for many years held, and indeed still hold, the belief that their cultures have undergone evolution and are thus superior to others. It is of specific interest for this section of the study to discuss the filmmakers’ role in critiquing, affirming or dispelling prejudice towards African culture (which is portrayed in the literary antecedents) through the filmic presentation of characters and exposition of their views on their own cultures and cultures of other people.

Finally, this chapter interrogates how resistance to colonial subjugation of Africa as espoused in the literary texts is similar to, or differs in perspective from the cinematic presentation of the same idea. Whereas in the history of Africa resistance as a responsibility is taken up by the African people who begin by taking up arms against the colonial imperialists, this chapter investigates how filmmakers introduce elevated forms of resistance beyond the human. The chapter seeks to discuss how these forms of resistance are undertaken by the forces of nature and the spiritual world which fight to thwart the colonial empire’s repression of the African continent and its people. Operatives in the African non-human world (including animals and natural calamities) and those from the spiritual world (including but not limited to the idea of the gods; or God) are discussed in this regard.

26 The concept, as applied by (Comfort, 2008) to refer to the use of Darwinian thought to make sense of social and economic issues.
## 4.2 The Adventure-Imperialism Paradox

According to historians, one of the reasons that motivated Europeans to make their entry into Africa was the spirit of adventure. Used to the rhythm of life in their homelands (as that argument had it), Europeans were desirous of the experience to be savoured in the adventure of visiting Africa. These same people would later end up being missionaries, settlers and then eventually colonial imperialists preoccupied with transferring to Europe maximum benefits from the vast resources of Africa in the form of minerals, raw materials, and of course free labour. This adventure argument is unjustifiable considering the resources that the European powers deployed into Africa before and during colonialism. According to an online publication: “The Age of Exploration; 1492 – 1650”\(^\text{27}\), various reasons motivated European entry into Africa and the rest of the colonized world. Thirst for adventure and myth is given as one of those motivations. The document states:

> Love of adventure, curiosity and a fascination with the possibility of locating peoples and places popularized in the mythology of the time were also factors. Some searched for Prester John, a legendary Christian king believed to rule somewhere in Africa. Others were fascinated by fables of exotic peoples – some with tails, others with no heads but with faces emerging from their chests (p.1).\(^\text{28}\)

Another online publication: “Colonialism and the African Experience”\(^\text{29}\) supports this view:

> The first reason has to do with the need to gather scientific knowledge about the unknown. Africa, then referred to as the “Dark Continent,” provided just the right kind of challenge. It held a lot of mystery for European explorers, who traveled and observed and recorded what they saw. Many of the early explorers of Africa were geographers and scientists who were beckoned by the mysteries and exotic qualities of this new land. Expeditions of people like Samuel Baker, Joseph Thompson, Richard Burton, John Speke, and others in the nineteenth century, conducted in the name of science and knowledge, served to attract Europeans to Africa.

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\(^{28}\) Ibid

\(^{29}\) Retrieved from [www.pearsoned.ca](http://www.pearsoned.ca) on 22\(^\text{nd}\) July, 2016.
They “discovered” rivers, lakes, and mountains. They studied the African people and wrote about them (p. 101).

However, arguing by the films, *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness*, one needs only look at the resources that went into the construction of the railway from Mombasa to Uganda, and the challenges that had to be surmounted in the process, to dispel any notions that Europeans were so adventurous as to be desirous enough to invest heavily in Africa in the spirit of adventure and exploration. Quite obviously, the quest for economic and political domination of Africa by way of colonizing the continent overshadows all other intents. “*The Age of Exploration; 1492 – 1650*” lays clear the strength of the economic motivation:

Long before the sixteenth century the Crusades had introduced European people to the goods and luxuries of the East. Some goods, such as spices, became necessities, but they were becoming increasingly costly. They had to be transported over long and sometimes dangerous overland routes, and several middlemen … What Europeans needed was a new, less costly route to Asia. Before the route was actually traversed, however, a New World was opened for conquest. This led to intense economic and political rivalry among European powers to see who could first secure the prizes it offered and who could hold the others away (p. 1).30

The film *The Ghost and the Darkness* presents these varying objectives of the early European visitors to Africa more elaborately than the source text, *The Man-eaters of Tsavo and Other African Adventures* (1907). To begin with, while there may be a few (like Col. Patterson as depicted in *The Ghost and the Darkness*) who are drawn to Africa because of their genuine affection for the continent, the principal reason for the arrival of Europeans must read colonialism. The adventurous Europeans, represented by Patterson, inadvertently find themselves as helpless pawns in the advanced and extensive scheme of exploiting the land and its people. This conclusion is informed more by the film than by the antecedent text. While in the text it is merely mentioned by the narrator (James Patterson) that he loved coming to Africa, in the film, through characterization and mise-en-scene (which extends beyond the characters to include characterization of the

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beautiful Africa), this allure of Africa that draws Europeans to the continent is presented in several ways. As the film opens with credits running, the viewer is invited to see the golden glow of the African savanna, bathed in sunlight. This sight should serve to justify Patterson’s desire to experience the adventure of living and working in Africa. Patterson, having been termed by his African friend Samuel in the opening narration voice-over as “a fine Irish gentleman” can be given the benefit of doubt, and thought of as one of the select few that were drawn to Africa by the beauty of the continent.

He leaves his pregnant wife behind – and promises to take her to Africa together with their unborn son, to see Africa and his bridge project upon completion – to take up the job of building the bridge across the Tsavo River. Besides, he understands a lot of facts about the land and its flora and fauna, and his treatment of non-white workers at the project cannot be faulted as racist at all throughout the whole duration of the film. He seems to be one of the few white people who were motivated only by the spirit of adventure. As he rides at the open head of a train on his first coming to Africa, Sterling – who would have liked the opportunity to introduce Patterson to Africa – is surprised that his guest already knows a lot more than him yet he has not been around for long. The dialogue that starts at 07:16 shall illustrate:

Sterling: They are amazing (giraffes), aren’t they?
Patterson: You know the most amazing things about them? They sleep only five minutes a day.
Sterling: I have lived in Africa for a year and I don’t know what you know. How long have you been here?
Patterson: Just about twenty four hours but I have been longing for this all my life.

To some Europeans yet, Africa is a place of refuge. Mistreated by life in their homeland, they find solace in the peace and unadulterated aspect of Africa. The professional hunter, Remington, wanders in the African wild hunting for a fee. From Samuel, we learn that he is a man who escaped his European homeland after all his relatives were killed in an ethnic conflict. Remington being an Anglo-Saxon name, this study can deduce that he is a victim of the ethnic conflicts in Northern Ireland (Holloway, 2005). For this reason, he
appears to be a comfortable man in Africa who does not seem to be in a hurry to return to Europe. Besides, he is a man who has been immersed in the culture of the natives as seen in how fluently he speaks Kiswahili and seamlessly interacts with the Maasai Moran hunters. He is an arrogant and hard-to-please character and therefore his remarks – “Africa is the last good place” – should be taken as his honest assessment of the continent and the people of Africa, and seen as a sign of his frustration with his homeland. It is a brutal irony, even betrayal to him and his faith in Africa, that he is eventually mauled to death by the man-eaters which are the very representation of the unadulterated continent that he came to for refuge.

On this very question of European intent in Africa, the text Out of Africa seems to add weight to the adventure myth advanced in the film The Ghost and the Darkness. Blixen’s portrayal of Denys at this point in the text also correlates with that in the adapted film, Out of Africa. Blixen (1937) presents two important characters in the text (her friends in real life) as adventure settlers in Kenya who were not particularly keen on the whole enterprise of colonialism. Of Berkeley and Denys, Blixen (1937) writes:

It was a curious thing about Denys and Berkeley – who were so deeply regretted by their friends in England when they emigrated, and so much beloved and admired in the colony - that they should be, all the same, be outcasts. It was not a society that had thrown them out, and not any place in the whole world either, but time had done it, they did not belong to their century (p. 184).

This description justifies why Denys of the film is so adamantly opposed to WWI being fought in Africa, and to the eventual declaration of Kenya a British colony. As such he warns his friend Berkeley who wants them to get on with the fight and go back to their lives that the war may end, but life will not go on as usual. The post World War I situation in Kenya justifies his fears.

Cultural Darwinism is a concept that refers to the belief by some societies that their cultures are evolved and have been refined over time so that now they must be taken as superior to others (Young, 1996). One of the reasons given for colonization of Africa can be summed up in a phrase: “The Call” (Young, ibid). Some Europeans considered the
African continent dark and its people primitive and savage. They therefore considered their coming to Africa as a call to come and civilize the Africans. In the film, *The Ghost and the Darkness*, Sir Robert Beaumont, the man who hires Patterson appears to be one such person when we encounter him in his office in London. In his patronizing voice – typical of racist imperialists, he declares at 02:40:

We are building the most expensive and daring railroad in history for the glorious purpose of saving Africa from the Africans, and of course, to end slavery. (Emphasis mine)

Before proceeding with this argument, it is important to distinguish the literary portrayal from the filmic presentation of the European agenda in Africa. While the literary original remains silent on the European desire to conquer Africa politically and economically, the film is categorical in its imaging of it. Beaumont, a character missing in the literary original is introduced in the cinematic narrative to further illustrate that economic and political imperatives drove Europe to meddle into Africa.

From Beaumont’s statement above, it emerges that the principal reason that brought Europeans to Africa is the economic benefits that would accrue from the colonial experience. Although Robert Beaumont starts his directive to Patterson by a lofty assertion that there is “the glorious purpose of saving Africa from the Africans”, it is quite unambiguous here that he (Robert Beaumont) represents the school of thought of Europeans who were honest about their coming to Africa. Theirs is an intent hidden in the open deception of responding to a call of saving the continent from the savagery of its people (Young, 1996). To all European powers that entered Africa following the Berlin Conference of between 1884 and 1885, Africa was a “prize” up for scramble.

Consequently, in respect of the scramble for Africa, the most significant part of his statement is the expression of fear that the Britons could be outdone by their fierce rivals if the railway project does not succeed. This explains why the Germans and the French are termed by Beaumont as competitors in the enterprise of scrambling for the continent and not allies in the pretentious and elevated call of civilizing the continent. In his
declaration, he includes the suggestion of “the call” (saving Africa from Africans, and ending slavery) simply as a cover-up. The railway and the bridge themselves are the very symbols of the British desire to conquer the East African interior and facilitate colonial hegemony. The manner in which the European powers gave mixed signals about the reason for their coming to Africa is clearly shown in the film, a feature missing in the source literary text.

Indeed, Robert Beaumont represents those who did not come to Africa because of the allure of the people, the wildlife and the weather. This type of Europeans was driven by an imperialist agenda and to them what mattered was the building of the British Empire in East Africa. Once, Beaumont remarks “I hate Africa”, and later on, when Patterson is disturbed about the forty workers killed by the lions, Beaumont retorts that he does not care about the forty dead; all he wants is to see the completion of the bridge on schedule so that he can be knighted. Unlike Patterson, he is the epitome of a true imperialist who did not fall in love with the idea of Africa but with what it could give to Europe in respect of economic prosperity. This argument is made evident by the fact that some Europeans are critical of the assertion in their countries that Europe’s involvement in Africa from the 19th C was to benefit Africans. Such characters consider the reason being given for the ‘civilization’ of Africa by the European powers as a deception. Dr. Hawthorn, a medic stationed at Tsavo at Patterson’s time, sees through this lie behind the real reason of building the Kenya-Uganda Railway. About the railway, he dismisses Patterson at 13:01 saying, “This is a sham! Who needs it? It is ridiculous. It is only being built to protect the ivory trade. And make rich men richer!”

Apart from the historical resistance to colonialism by Africans, the film *The Ghost and the Darkness* presents the possibility that even nature itself (represented by the lions), and the spirit of Africa went out in an attempt to frustrate the colonists in their endeavours to subjugate the continent and its people. It is known how sometimes the Whiteman died of malaria and other tropical ailments associated with heat. These natural impediments to the Whiteman’s agenda can be read as symbolizing Africa’s animist forces (Pepetela, 1989) that resisted colonialism. On disease and climatic impediments to
The colonial expansion of England, France and other minor partners, including the United States, into the Caribbean and the Pacific, unfolded a new world full of exploitable riches, but also of unknown or unwonted diseases. Since most of the new colonies were located in the tropics, these curious and exotic diseases were said to be “tropical” (p. 95).

It is perceived, therefore, by the natives around Tsavo, that the lions were part of the larger natural-spiritual scheme out to make sure that the Whiteman did not succeed in his conquest of Africa. Because of this perception, the natives mythologized the lions in local myth. According to the legend as told by Samuel, the lions were believed to be spirits of dead medicine men that came back to torment Tsavo. Samuel even says that the lions were the devil, sent to stop the Whiteman from “owning the world.” At 33:29, Samuel intones:

Some thought they were not lions at all but the spirits of dead medicine men come back to spread madness. For others, they were the devil sent to stop the white men from owning the world.

In point of fact, the lions are so mystifying that even the Maasai warriors who have been hired to kill them take off sensing something peculiarly mysterious about them. The Maasai warriors, speaking in Kiswahili, tell their boss Remington that the lions are “zimu na giza” – “ghost and darkness”. According to Samuel’s legend, the lions are no less than the natives who took up arms and resisted colonization, and their ravages in the Tsavo wild are hell-bent on ensuring that the railroad project does not succeed. Some of the natives, and indeed most railroad workers, seem to have bought into this mythology. Suffering at the hands of the lions, they interpret it as the futility of their efforts to help the white man conquer the interior in the face of terror from nature and take off from Tsavo, midway the bridge construction. They only return when their boss, Patterson, has vanquished the two lions.

Even long before colonialism, the interaction between Africans and Europeans privileged
the latter to the detriment of the former. The cultural, economic and political hierarchy of these races was well established starting with the time of slavery (Nunn, 2008). First it was slave trade and later on – among other injustices, Europe subjected Africans to the brutality of a war they knew nothing about or had nothing to do with. In the film *Out of Africa*, the impact of WWI is more elaborately displayed than it is described in the source text by the same name. We see what impact the instability that a ‘European’ war, called a world war, has on the natives and the African continent. The ripples of the war reach Kenya and Delamare is seen organizing fellow Europeans in Kariokor, in pre-colonial Kenya. The role of the Maasai and the Somali is discussed. It is clear that the natives will be needed to fight on the side of Britain even though there are fears about the danger of arming the Maasai. Delamare delegates responsibilities to his contemporaries to mobilize the ethnic groups they are in good terms with to fight on their side in the world war. Berkeley is charged with the task of drafting the Somali into the war. Koller (2008) notes:

> The impact of the First World War on the colonies was profound and many-sided. A conflict that began in the Balkans turned into a general European war in July and August 1914, and then took on extra-European dimensions, particularly as some of the belligerent states ranked as the most important colonial powers globally (p. 111).

It is evident in the film but not in the text, however, that not all Europeans at the time supported the war. One such man was Denys. He thinks the war is a useless venture and discourages his friend Berkeley from taking part. At 38:47 Denys tells off Berkeley who exudes confidence and zeal about the role he is going to play in the war:

> What is it about? Have you any idea? … Not really. Now why do you wanna get into it? It is got nothing to do with us, Berkeley. They have made agreements we know nothing about. Victoria and the Kaiser were relatives for God’s sake. They divided Africa between themselves; do you know where there is a border? Because she had two mountains and he had none, so she gave him Kilimanjaro. It is a silly argument between two spoilt countries.

In this statement, the injustice occasioned by the infamous scramble and partition of Africa, and the consequent colonialism, is evident. Some of the settlers did not want the
war because it would interfere with their agricultural activities. This view explains why – in the adapted film – they cause a row at the commencement of the war, asking Delamare just how long the war would take because they are wary of the impact of the war on their farming activities. For Denys, colonialism and domination of Africa is itself a mistake he does not approve of. We see it clearly in the disposition he assumes when the rest of the white community is celebrating Britain’s victory in WWI. While the rest drink, party and sing the national anthem “God Save the King”, he wanders about, a lonely detached and aloof figure in the midst of the bustle of glory. Unlike Berkeley, Denys is an intuitive character who understands that the war is going to be the game changer. When Berkeley Cole argues that they should get on with the war and “the sooner it ends, the sooner we pick up where we left off”, Denys dismisses him saying, “It may end, but we are not going to pick up where we left off.” Denys is vindicated because the WWI ends with Kenya being declared a British colony. As a result of Kenya being declared a colony, the relationship between the whites and the Africans becomes more racially tempered than before, with Berkeley himself becoming a direct victim of it. This dimension is played out clearly in the film when Berkeley won’t introduce his Somali mistress, Mariammo, to his white contemporaries because he knows, as we do, that with the prevailing colonial and racial attitudes, they will never approve of such a union. When Berkeley dies, the woman he loved is not even allowed to move near his grave at burial.

Conclusively, the film Out of Africa is a clearer expose’ of the WWI and its impact to the colonized world that the literary original. While in the text the war is mentioned just as if it were an incident and is merely given passing description, in the film a lot more time is afforded to this subject as we see the war being planned, going on, and eventually witness it culminate into the establishment of the British colonial empire in Kenya and East Africa.

The tale of the colonist’s entry into Nigeria as depicted in Things Fall Apart (both film and text) was no less tragic. Because of the immense cultural divide, specifically language and religious differences, the Whiteman’s coming is characterised by cultural disintegration, death and destruction. This emphasizes the fact that the colonial
experience was as bad in any part of Africa as it was to the communities of the Lower Niger. The people of Abame experience the wrath of the Whiteman when they kill a white man whom they find mysterious and do not understand what he says. This act inspires great fear in Obierika who sees this as a harbinger of the worst that the people of Lower Niger, including Umuofia, were yet to experience. In the expression of his worst fears, Obierika draws the viewer’s attention to the fact that colonialism is just another version of slavery which European powers intent to subject the African to. This is clear in the dialogue about the calamitous wiping out of the village of Abame found in Part 35 of *Things Fall Apart* TV series:

**Obierika:** Yes, they have paid for their foolishness, but I am greatly afraid. You have heard that the Whiteman, who made those powerful guns, and made those strong trains, and took away slaves across the seas. But we never thought those stories were true.

**Uchendu:** There is no story that is not true. Do you think that they came to our land by mistake, or they strayed into a strange land thinking that everybody is like them?

Consequently, by virtue of Uchendu’s wisdom, it is prudent to conclude that the Whiteman’s coming to Africa was not a mistake – it was a well orchestrated agenda to exploit the continent and its people in almost a similar fashion as slavery had been used to impoverish Africa and develop Europe. Similarly, as seen in *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness*, Europe was not on an adventure spree, but on an economically motivated agenda to tap into the vast resources of Africa. By way of Things Fall Apart, the filmmaker emphasizes as Achebe had done before him that the claim of responding to “The Call” to save Africa from the Africans was indeed fraudulent. This is seen in how the filmmaker pairs images of preaching the gospel by white men with the destruction of the people and village of Abame.

The foregoing is a clear illustration of how the literary original and the adapted film agree and correspond with each other in their respective treatment of this issue. By point of fact, the cinematic dialogue that proceeds above is a replica of the literary dialogue in Achebe’s text. However, the film is literally graphic in its presentation as images of a
Whiteman preaching are paired with the images of the Whiteman’s indiscriminate shooting of the people of Abame at a market to present the viewer with the crude irony of Europe having come to civilize Africa.

4.3 Race and Colonial Hegemony

Cohen (1988) argues that race is an ideological construct (and not a scientific one) based on differences between sets of inherited properties upon which judgments of domination and subordination in society are made. He further dismisses the import of such differences:

> Although the division of people into race categories often based on valorization of the primacy of phenotypical features – the visual signifiers of difference – it is generally accepted that the biological definitions of race which date back to at least the eighteenth century are spurious (Cohen, 1988, p. 38).

At the core of the motivations that brought Europeans to Africa, either for purposes of slave trade, missionary activity or colonialism, is the saddening incident of racism. Having already alluded to the concept of Cultural Darwinism earlier in this study, it should be prudent to only slightly clarify that a significant part of the European society believed that their culture was far more superior to the African culture, and felt that it behooved them to come and civilize the ‘dark’ continent (Young, 1996). To the European mind, the African culture, history and mind was as dark as the complexion of the person. The two films, *The Ghost and the Darkness* and *Out of Africa*, and their respective literary antecedents are embedded with such racial attitudes. These suggestions of racial superiority of one over the other are however more graphically represented in the films than in the source texts. Whereas the texts only describe and catalogue them, only in a few instances with realistic dialogue, the films allow us to see the characters and racial attitudes in their actions, thoughts and speech.

Lola Young has extensively discussed the conception “Cultural Darwinism” and castigated racial attitudes and their role in the oppression of the colonized world. In her
In her 1996 work, *Fear of the Dark: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Cinema*, she furthers her assertion saying that key among the institutions involved was the Eugenics movement. The members of this organization, including Marie Stopes, H.G. Wells and George Bernard Shaw took it upon themselves to advance the science of selective breeding to ensure the health of the “race”. Obviously, that should read the white race. According to Young (*ibid*), the proponents of the Eugenics were influenced by the ideas of Charles Darwin on evolution, with indeed the Eugenics movement being begun in the nineteenth century by Darwin’s cousin Sir Francis Galton.

She proceeds with her condemnation of Europeans who thought that they had full knowledge about Africa and Africans, which she actually thinks was mostly an accumulation of stereotypes and misrepresentations constructed by myths, ancient traveler narratives and later, in literature, popular fiction, anthropology, photography and cinema. On the real motivation behind colonialism, and how it was justified by the ‘morality’ of civilizing Africa, Young (*ibid*) avers:

> On an economic level, it has been suggested that the imperial expansion that started from roughly 1875 and carried on until World War I, was due, at least in part, to capitalist overproduction coupled with an under-consumption in the home market which led to the search of markets overseas. For the African colonial subject, colonialism meant that the organization of whole populations was destabilized … Ideologically, nineteenth century British colonialism was justified as a moral duty, a benevolent effort to spread Christianity and civilization across the continents of Africa, Asia and America (Young, 1996, p. 56).

Hence, this study seeks to introduce the point that – and discuss it with evidence – some of the racial attitudes either covertly or overtly espoused in the works under study are part of the tailoring by Europe to justify colonialism. In the course of this discussion, this research shall compare and contrast the literary and filmic presentation of the same.

### 4.3.1 Racial Undertones in “Ghost…” and “Out of Africa”

In reference to the above subject, this section of the chapter restricts its discussion to the
two films: *The Ghost and the Darkness* and *Out of Africa*. This is because they are two films adapted from literary originals written by European writers. In point of fact therefore, both film and text are products of European artists – as the films are produced and directed by European filmmakers. This study finds the two films and their literary antecedents bearing racist overtones and overtones, and as such, intends to compare them with regard to manner and degree of presentation of the question of race. *Things Fall Apart* finds itself outside this bracket because it is a film produced by an African filmmaker, and adapted from a literary antecedent by an African writer. While *Things Fall Apart* is a purveyor of the postcolonial discourse that is revisionist, the other two are laden with colonial discourse that seeks to undermine the standing of Africans in comparison to other races.

When Col. Patterson first arrives in Tsavo, he is introduced to his native aide, Samuel. It becomes apparent that Samuel is racist in his thinking and speech towards non-Europeans, including fellow natives. It should be pointed out here that the filmmakers choice of Samuel as the narrator and the medium of some of the racial stereotypes is meant to give an impression to the mind of the audience that even Africans themselves believe in the ‘darkness’ of their people and continent, and that it is futile for anyone to expect a lot of positive things from Africans and their continent. At least in this particular instance, the film assumes a more racist leaning than its literary antecedent. What is more, just before we see Samuel, the filmmaker uses Sterling to impress upon the viewer that Samuel is the trusted one, and therefore what he says is supposed to pass as the fact. Samuel is consequently used to give some very grim assessment of Africans and Africa to a man who left London upbeat about the adventure of working in a continent he loves.

Carried together with this prejudiced analysis of Africa, is an attack on the Arabs and Indians as well. Also, Samuel is seen at his patronizing best, unnecessarily and endlessly barking orders to the workers who are already doing their job anyway. While Patterson is in very high spirits having finally set foot at his station, Samuel confronts him with quite unwelcome news, at 11:45:
Patterson: Everything seems to be under control
Samuel: Thank you. If it is, it is a miracle.
Patterson: Why is that?
Samuel: The truth is, the workers don’t like each other at all. *Obviously, (emphasis mine)* the Africans hate the Indians, but the Indians also hate other Indians. The Hindus believe cows are sacred, while the Muslims eat the cows.
Patterson: Do you eat a cow?
Samuel: Of course.
Patterson: I have worked with both Muslims and Hindus, perhaps I can help.

Samuel: You can certainly try. It won’t work. Nothing works here, *Tsavo, is the worst place in the world (emphasis mine).*

It is unfortunate for Africa and the African viewer of this film to see that the filmmaker chooses an African man to be the bearer of such prejudiced assessment of his continent as being “the worst place in the world”. This would only serve to reinforce such biases in people of other races who would treat such information as coming from a credible source.

Besides this presumed superiority of the whites to the Africans, is a veiled attack on other cultures and religions. To the European mind, it was necessary for Sterling to be hired and brought to Tsavo to convert the natives, Muslims and Hindus to a more superior religion. The role of religion in preparing ground for colonialism is also seen here. Young (1996) notes:

> The need to impose a moral and physical order on colonial subjects was seen as the duty of the Christian, civilized nations. Various scientific explanations regarding the inferiority of the black people formed the rationale for carrying out this mission (p. 50).

Secondly, if Tsavo should in this case be taken to have been chosen as a microcosm of Africa, then it is an Africa viewed as a place where nothing will ever work unless there is intervention from Europeans. That Patterson succeeds in laying the bridge against this grim prophesy by Samuel does not help the African case very much. Patterson’s success can be used as justification by racist imperialists and their apologists about why they had to heed to “the call” to come to Africa and make things work even when Africans
themselves believed that “nothing works” or would work in their continent.

*The Ghost and the Darkness* conscientiously presents the African man as thoroughly polygamous and devoid of affection for his wives. This consideration of polygamy being non-European still exists. A case in point is Federico (2014) who in a study opines that polygamy is spreading in Europe due to the immigration crisis. Hence, Europe more readily blames the migrants – mostly Africans and Muslims – for polygamy. In respect of the issue of marriage, Samuel is depicted as the very antithesis of Col. Patterson. He is the archetype of the European conception of the African man, cold and detached in relation to his spouse(s). It can indeed be argued that the filmmaker introduces in the film a character who is not in the literary antecedent in the first place to advance these racial contradictions and make manifest the European interpretation of Africans with the purpose of feeding fat the ‘white’ fascination with the African. On the other hand, the viewer interacts with the image of Patterson in overt display of affection towards his wife when he comes right from Robert Beaumont’s office, to the railway farewell in London, and finally through their correspondence of letters. At the beginning, there is Patterson’s wife bidding an emotional farewell to her husband at the railway station, and then later, letters are exchanged on several occasions. In one memorable instance, Samuel delivers a letter from Patterson’s wife and then, intrigued by Patterson’s eagerness to read the letter, asks if he (Patterson) loves her. When Patterson answers in the affirmative, Samuel, clearly thinking aloud, with a frosty unfriendly face makes the caustic declaration about his relationship with his wives: “I don’t like any of mine.” This is in line with the then prevalent European stereotype of the primitive and backward African man. It is the image of a native in a continent about which Sir Robert Beaumont declares, “I hate Africa”; an image calculated by racist whites and advanced in this film. Samuel and Beaumont therefore are introduced into the film *The Ghost and the Darkness* to be purveyors of racist and prejudiced thoughts.

Upon this clash of cultures and traditions at the encounter between races, racial attitudes were not going to be one-way. The other races, feeling despised by the Europeans, had a way of hitting back. In *The Ghost and the Darkness* this happens through the person of
Abdulla, a Muslim of Indian extraction. Abdulla feels pressure from other rail workers who believe that their continued stay at Tsavo risks their lives, making them susceptible to being killed by the lions – after all, even the all-powerful Mahina who is famed to have killed a lion with his bare hands has just been mauled by one. He approaches Patterson demanding that the workers be given the freedom to leave Tsavo but the latter would not hear of it. He taunts Abdulla for being frightened and assures him that he will kill the lions. It is in response to this that Abdulla says with stinging sarcasm, at 26:06, “Of course you will. You are white. You can do anything.” The terror induced in the men as a result of the marauding lions finally makes Abdulla utter words that highlight what the natives and other races at Tsavo feel about the apparent arrogance of the Whiteman - Patterson.

Whereas the literary originals do not expose racial prejudices held by whites against whites, the adapted films have been elaborate in dramatizing these. This is especially so in the film *Out of Africa*. It is evident that even amongst themselves, Europeans descend to the level of delineating themselves into insignificant fragments as determined by ethnicity and country of origin. This fact – which squashes the perceived infallibility of the European – emerges for the first time in the encounter between Lord Delamare and Karen Blixen just after her wedding to Bror. Reference can be made to a conversation at 13:28:

Delamare: Baroness, a Swede, are you?
Karen: No, Danish actually.
Delamare: Ah, the little (emphasis mine) country next to Germany. If it comes to war, where will Denmark stand?
Karen: On its own I believe. We do have that history.

Lord Delamere utters the words “little country” with a patronizing attitude, clearly intending Karen to notice the inferior standing of her country, Denmark, in comparison to Britain. Besides, it smirks of Delamere’s hatred of Germany as it is the country Britain is about to go to war with – Denmark is thus defined by Delamere (a Briton) in terms of the enemy, Germany. It is needless to say that he considers the impact of Denmark insignificant in the event of war, and perhaps, that it will not even matter if she sided with
Germany as Delamere seems to suspect. Karen, noting this implicit assessment by Delamere, gives him a curt intelligent response read above. When Bror finally decides to take part in the war on the side of the British, in spite of Delamere’s warning to him to keep off, “Blixen, this is our war, you don’t have to be involved”, Karen is against it. To Delamere, Bror Blixen is not a Briton and therefore not welcome to their war. Consider Karen’s opposition to Bror’s entry into the war:

Karen: You don’t have to go! You want to go?
Bror: We’ve got to leave here, Karen.
Karen: They have made a plan; they don’t want you.
Bror: They don’t know where we stand. I’ll have to show them.
Karen: Well, am not so fond of their empire, I’ll have you shot for it?

The important conclusion we can arrive at consequently is that racial and ethnic prejudice is treated as a complex phenomenon not just occurring between Africans and Europeans, but also between Europeans of different ethnic extractions themselves.

The film invests a lot in showing the master-servant relations that existed between whites and native Africans from early on in the 19th century. This relationship (characterized by white hegemony) existed from the first encounter between the two races when the first settlers started coming, through the colonial period. Even history has accurately documented that blacks were the porters, cooks, foot soldiers and subservient security guards (that is, on the rare cases they could be trusted to guard the whites). Burawoy (1974) traces the entrenchment of class stratification between Europe to the colonial era. In Out of Africa, natives, adult Africans at that, are called boys and are screened in a ridiculous fashion as they run in childish excitement to meet Karen on her first arrival at the Ngong farm. Bror parades all the farm families in the cold of Ngong hills to inform them that Karen will be there female boss and that they should welcome her.

Ngugi (1981) accuses Karen Blixen of glorifying the convoluted justice of the settlers that was used to oppress the African. This, Ngugi (ibid), does by alluding to the Kitosch incident in the Karen’s memoir Out of Africa (1937). Kitosch is a native character who
dies after being brutalized by a white settler who also locks him up to die. In the case proceedings that follow, the white settler actually ridiculously defends himself arguing that Kitosch dies because he wished to die. At this point, it is important to note that this particular episode is left out of the film. This goes in line with an argument already launched to the effect that the film tones down the racism in the literary original, hence it becomes a more sympathetic presentation of Europeans and their attitudes against Africans and their condition. Ngugi (ibid) is irked because, at the very least, it would be expected of Karen to condemn the unjust killing of Kitosch. This side of the postcolonial criticism with regard to Karen’s text, it can be argued, begins critical discourse that most likely influenced the making of the film that eventually expunged the racist overtones prevalent in Blixen’s text.

Another postcolonial critic who attacks Karen Blixen’s presentation of the African is Carolyn Martin Shaw. Shaw (1997) in her work *Colonial Inscriptions: Race, Sex, and Class in Kenya*, argues that Blixen in her memoir seems to reinforce the perception that Africans can evoke both admiration and distaste from Europeans because of their failure to alienate themselves from primitive aspects of their environment.

Quoted in Brantly (2013), Shaw writes as follows:

> Blixen’s romanticism never removed Europeans from their pinnacle. She delights in nature, and her belief that Africans had not quite severed the umbilical cord with nature results in both admiration and disdain for them. This is paternalism (maternalism), and it is racist (Brantly, 2013, p. 36).

Brantly (2013) disagrees with Ngugi (ibid) and Shaw (ibid) arguing that Karen Blixen’s anticolonial stance in *Out of Africa* is always misread because of longstanding class and race implications. Being a white settler and from the aristocratic class, Karen Blixen has for long been prejudged to have been a supporter of the colonial ideal, and indeed, a perpetrator of injustice against the downtrodden – in this case the colonized natives. She cites an illustration of one of Blixen’s letters in which Karen, according to her friend Gustav, is reported to have been really upset by the death of Kitosch to the extent of asking that Gustav assists her to court case papers without the knowledge of the British
authorities, because colonial authorities considered her to be pro-native. According to Brantly (ibid), Karen even refuses to expunge the Kitosch episode from her book upon the demand of her British publisher who felt that this episode would paint the settlers and by extension the whole colonial enterprise in bad light. She defends Karen for demonstrating subtlety in her condemnation of unjust colonial practices without sounding overly propagandist.

Quoting Blixen in her an undated manuscript, Brantly (2013) writes:

> It was my deepest hope that my race, by handing down a just verdict in the case, would make up for the shame that a single individual—who certainly might have been upset—had brought upon us. But it did not happen that way, and the verdict itself, but particularly the testimony of the two doctors, which to me was so obviously meant to save his skin, was not only a source of sorrow, but filled me with a feeling of deep disgrace [...]
> I do not understand how the description of these shocking details could fail to give the reader an impression of my indignation over them. [...] After the book came out, I got a letter from one of the two doctors who had given testimony at the trial. He wrote that my story had gotten him to think more deeply than before about his own conduct in the case (p. 32-33).

Is it then possible that this double-sided postcolonial discourse arguing for or against Karen Blixen’s fairness to the African in *Out of Africa* (1937) influences the nature of the adapted film? After a comparative analysis of the literary original vis-à-vis the adapted film, this study can answer this question in the affirmative. In several instances, what can be read as Karen’s overt prejudice against Africans in the text is replaced by an overemphasis on Karen’s goodwill for the Africans in the adapted film. In the film, Karen is seen to have a trustworthy relationship with her servants – especially Farah and Kamante, characters she even allows to have access to her private rooms. She also starts a school for the black children on her farm, going to great lengths to convince Kinyanjui and indeed other whites who are against the idea of natives being exposed to western formal education. Even though she knows she stands to incur the wrath of fellow whites, Karen confronts the colonial authorities and fights for the land rights of the natives on her farm. Throughout her stay on the farm, in her conversations with other whites, she refers to her servants as “my Kikuyu.” This should indicate that she felt a certain unity with the
natives on her farm and feels that as their matriarch; she has a responsibility to safeguard their welfare. This would not be the thinking of an overly racist character even though evidence of her racial attitudes is clear.

The Karen Blixen of the literary antecedent, *Out of Africa*, consistently draws analogies between native Africans and animals. These comparisons smirk of prejudice and may suggest that to her mind, at least subconsciously, Africans of her time operated at the same level as animals. Also, these descriptions reveal deep-seated mistrust and suspicion for the Africans – suspicions which Europeans held. In one of the descriptions, she writes:

> What I learned from the game of the country was useful to me in my dealings with the native people … and yet it was difficult to tell, for the natives were great at the art of mimicry (Blixen, 1937, p. 24–26).

In respect of suspicion, Blixen also writes:

> If we pressed or pursued them (natives), to get an explanation of their behavior out of them, they receded as long as they possibly could, and then they used grotesque humorous fantasy to lead us on the wrong track. Even small children in this situation had all the quality of old poker players, who do not mind if you overvalue or undervalue their hand, so long as you do not know its real nature (Blixen, 1937, p. 26).

The prejudices expressed in Blixen’s text reach a point where the reader cannot help but conclude that she wrote this story specifically for a Caucasian audience with whom she shared prejudices about other people. In the absence of Africans to be discriminated upon, Blixen seems to find the next victim to face the brunt of her racist evaluation. Upon the visit of an Asian Chief Priest, Karen is requested by Farah and other Mohammedans to present a gift on their behalf to the priest about this incident, Blixen writes:

> But would the priest, I asked, believe it to be a present from me? Of this I could extract no explanation from Choleim Hussein; there are times when coloured people cannot make themselves clear to save their lives. (Blixen, 1937, p. 152)
It is therefore surprisingly ironical that a writer who sounds this racist would herself later describe her friend in the text, Berkeley, as one who “had no principles, but a surprising stock of prejudices, as you would expect in a cat. (Blixen, 1937, p. 186). This makes Karen Blixen an ambivalent character who sways like a pendulum from one side of the inter-race perception continuum to the other as may be convenient to her.

4.3.2 Things Fall Apart: A Reading of Heart of Darkness and Cultural Defense

(Young, 1996) considers “The Call” a pretext used by the colonizer to cover up the real intent of dominating Africa economically and politically. This dishonesty is made clear to the viewer of Things Fall Apart, as it is to the reader of the film’s literary antecedent. Like was the case with all other colonized societies, the imperialists rationalized that they had come to liberate the African from their own savage cultures. Thus, Christianity and colonialism were made to sound and appear as if they were to benefit the Africans at the expense of the imperialists. In the rationalization of this pretext of benevolence to the Africans, literatures that were racist and rather propagandist in nature were called upon. Joseph Conrad’s text, Heart of Darkness (1899) is one significant text that aided Europe in advancing its racist and prejudiced agenda against Africa. Besides, Heart of Darkness’ polarization with Achebe’s text, written some sixty years later, has only grown clearer. This part of the study therefore discusses how both film and text as intertexts, unite in espousing the postcolonial discourse – the kind of which is advanced by African artists and critics in countering the negative portrayal of Africa in Western art and thought. This section first treats the text and its film version as intertexts, then views both, combined, as having intertextual relation to Conrad’s Heart of Darkness (1899) whose Africa they strive to counter.

4.3.2.1 Intertextuality with Heart of Darkness

In response to such prejudiced presentation of the African, Achebe in his text and later David Orere, the filmmaker, present a well ordered Igbo society that is the epitome of other African societies. Certainly, as Chinua Achebe himself acknowledges, his Things
Fall Apart (1958), is a revisionist response and protest to the very puerile assessment of African history and culture that is evident in Conrad’s text. In a speech made on one occasion at the University of Massachusetts in 1975, he says that there was something in the Western psychology that was determined to set up Africa as the very antithesis of Europe, and to show the continent by its very nature as a place where culture and history negated that which could be found in Europe – this being one of spiritual grace (Achebe, 1977). In his exhortation, Achebe (ibid) notes:

*Heart of Darkness* projects the image of Africa as "the other world," the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality. The book opens on the River Thames, tranquil, resting, peacefully "at the decline of day after ages of good service done to the race that peopled its banks." But the actual story will take place on the River Congo, the very antithesis of the Thames (p. 2).

Achebe goes on to quote Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* (1899), a passage which is instructive in creating perspective for this argument. In Conrad’s own words, the African even though not entirely non-human, did not meet the threshold to be considered entirely human:

We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet. We could have fancied ourselves the first of men taking possession of an accursed inheritance, to be subdued at the cost of profound anguish and of excessive toil. But suddenly as we struggled round a bend there would be a glimpse of rush walls, of peaked grass-roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage. The steamer toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us … who could tell? We were cut off from the comprehension of our surroundings; we glided past like phantoms, wondering and secretly appalled, as sane men would be before an enthusiastic outbreak in a madhouse … Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough, but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you … you so remote from the night of first ages … could comprehend. ... And between whiles I had to look after the savage who was fireman. He was an improved
specimen; he could fire up a vertical boiler. He was there below me and, upon my word, to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather hat walking on his hind legs. A few months of training had done for that really fine chap (Conrad, 1899, p. 57 – 59).

In the two quotations above, Conrad (1899) presents a mysteriously alien Africa. Both the continent and its people are to be feared and pitied. In the second quotation, the sentence structure makes a profound argument for the savagery of the African. The author uses a series of loose paratactic sentences (with the main thesis in the main clause, followed by trailing clauses that offer staunch support) to emphasize his point. The African is presented as ugly, insane and a human being of the lowest intellect who is very difficult to train. The European who arrives in Africa for the first time therefore finds himself to be the only sane human being in the midst of creatures living in a “madhouse”. The writer uses the symbolism of two rivers juxtaposed (River Thames and River Congo) to show one continent as civilized, well ordered and calm, and another as uncivilized, chaotic and hostile. It is such prejudice that both text and film combine in countering, and presenting a favourable image of Africa seen from the eyes of the African artists.

It is against this background that we can conclude without risking contradiction that Achebe’s text would not have carried the story it does without Conrad’s text having been in existence earlier. In Things Fall Apart (1958), Conrad finds representation in the person of the white District Commissioner who comes to Okonkwo’s home after the latter has committed suicide. Like Conrad’s main character in Heart of Darkness (1899), Marlow, this white DC pities himself for having toiled to civilize the Africans yet they remain bound in their savage cultures. He, captive in the imperialists’ deceptive rationalization of “The Call”, intends to follow in the footsteps of Conrad by writing a book on the savagery of the African, in spite of the European endeavour to civilize the continent. He is to title this book “The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger” and in it, the story of Okonkwo will get no more than a paragraph. Two cases of irony emerge here: First, the DC chooses to refer to colonial domination, which goes to the extremes of wiping out the whole village of Abame (shown in both text and film) as ‘pacification’. Secondly, while he determined that the story of Okonkwo deserved no more than a paragraph in the book he was writing, Achebe’s text and its offspring film
fully commit themselves to the story of Okonkwo from start to end. In deciding that he would limit Okonkwo’s story to no more than a paragraph, the White DC relays his prejudice against African history. Just like Conrad before him, the DC believes in the twisted idea of Europe responding to a call to civilize Africa. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad believes that Africa was a void before the arrival of Europe. He writes:

> True, by this time it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery—a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness (Conrad, 1899, p. 10).

From the quotation above, the role of Europe in erasing and rewriting the history and culture of African is evident. In the years preceding colonialism and during colonialism itself, most parts of Africa were treated to a renaming of places and physical features in an effort to imprint European legacy in Africa in the place where African culture had dominated. Rodney (1973) writes about this colonial agenda. The revisionist intent of Achebe’s text, emphasized later in the film, is indeed clear in his own words at the end of his invocation against Conrad’s book:

> Although the work of redressing which needs to be done may appear too daunting, I believe it is not one day too soon to begin. Conrad saw and condemned the evil of imperial exploitation but was strangely unaware of the racism on which it sharpened its iron tooth. But the victims of racist slander who for centuries have had to live with the inhumanity it makes them heir to have always known better than any casual visitor even when he comes loaded with the gifts of a Conrad (Achebe, 1977, p. 09).

Celebration of Africa’s cultural, economic and political organization in Achebe’s text and the adapted film ranges from idolization of language to cultural practices and customs. Both forms of art show that this cultural organization falls apart after the Whiteman’s interference. The Igbo people thus emerge as a people whose art of speech is characterised by their sublimity in the use of sayings and proverbs. It becomes clear that, to them, passing the message is not enough – the message has to be delivered in as interesting a manner as possible. This is reinforced by the textual declaration that
“proverbs are the palm wine with which words are eaten”. By way of illustration, their greetings are standardized and their dialogue superfluous in an interesting way. One such instance in both text and film is seen when Okeke visits Unoka to ask for repayment of a debt owed to him. In Part 2 of the film, without the hurry to go to the point straight, Okeke starts:

Okeke: To count eggs, a man must make sure that his hens can lay eggs at all. And if they can lay eggs, then he must put them together before he can count them. You may have heard that I intend to take another title; the third title.

Unoka: I wish you well.

From this exchange, it is clear that the language has within its structure the ability to use sayings and proverbs for purposes of circumventing what would otherwise not be polite if stated otherwise. Okeke must understand his friend’s irresponsibility and understand that he needs the most convincing language to extract his money from him. Unfortunately, the desired result is not realized. Unoka, a man without a title, who no doubt detests his people’s love for status gives aesthetic quality to what is a very rude response. In the literary text, Unoka says:

The sun shines first on those who stand before it shines on those who sit below them. Go home and wait for your money, I will first of all pay my bigger debts before I pay the small ones (Achebe, 1958, p. 6).

Another of the cultural exaltation of the Igbo people’s way of life is the elevation of the matriarchal aspect of the culture of the Igbo. While it is granted that the society is patriarchal, Achebe and later the film uphold the sentimental manner in which the society has kept in touch with one aspect of the tenderness in their culture. Upon arrival at his uncle’s in Mbanta at the start of his seven-year exile, Uchendu tells his nephew to feel at home and goes on to explain that the link that binds one to his motherhood is difficult to sever because “mother is supreme”, in Igbo, “nneka”. He explains that this is so because when one’s mother died, she was taken back to her kinsmen to be buried there. This is
symbolic because even Okonkwo – as great a man in Umuofia and patriarchal as he is, is
given refuge because of the spirit of his dead mother preserved in the diligent Uchendu,
his uncle and his people.

Uchendu hence emerges as the custodian of the very best within the culture of the Igbo
people. He hates violence, and blames the people of Abame for attracting the wrath of the
Whiteman by killing a white explorer who had not bothered them or said anything. This
should speak of his detest of the warlike nature of his people. In part 39 of the film,
Uchendu wisely advises the people of Mbanta to leave the fight for the “gods to fight
their own fight” when a convert kills the sacred python. He is vindicated when the
convert, his own brother dies mysteriously. These are matriarchal tendencies of caution
and tenderness in a great patriarch of Mbanta. While Okonkwo’s patriarchal tendencies
have landed him in a deplorable seven-year exile, Uchendu teaches his people to be
cautious. In so natural a fashion, Uchendu acts as the purveyor of the good old past to the
younger generation. While praising Obierika for visiting Okonkwo who has been exiled,
he says in part 34 of the film:

Those were the good old days when men had friends in distant clans. Your
generation does not know that. You will stay at home, afraid of your next
door neighbours. Even a man’s motherland, is strange to him nowadays. I
am old, and I like to talk. That is what I am good for now.

Eventually, the reader of Things Fall Apart (1958) and the viewer of film adapted from
the text will see an Igbo society that is socially, economically and politically well-
ordered. This has been made possible because of the revisionist intents of the writer and
filmmaker. Even for the readers and viewers with capitalist tendencies, they will see a
society that puts high premium on individual effort for economic prosperity. Besides,
with regard to justice, it was a fair society in which rewards and punishments go to the
deserving in equal measure, be they men of titles like Okonkwo or not.
Conclusions in the foregoing section notwithstanding, the narratives in *Things Fall Apart* (the literary and the cinematic versions) cannot be accused of being simply anti-Conrad art forms that engage in blind romanticization of the African culture. The film, like its literary source has sought to – in the same measure as revising the Conrad view of Africa – give an honest critique of the African culture. As such, Achebe’s text and later the adapted film, accuses African cultures for having played a supporting part in their own tragedy. It is important to emphasise the tragedy of the African society at the advent of colonial domination is more pitifully and spectacularly summed up in the tragedy of the lead character – Okonkwo who is the epitome of patriarchal callousness.

To begin with, the people of Umuofia set Okonkwo on the road to destruction when they thrust him into the limelight by forcing him to take part in the wrestling match meant to restore the honour of the people of Umuofia. His people are by nature proud and warlike and clearly transmit these traits to him thus playing a significant role in the eventual fall of the man. The resultant pride and his warlike character turn him into an overzealous man who would like to outdo everyone. As a result, he accidentally shoots a kinsman and suffers the ignominy of seven years in exile - itself a punishment from his culture’s demands too severe because his crime is inadvertent. In one of the most imposing scenes of the film in part 35, Uchendu warns against this warlike character of his people, plainly calling it foolish. This emerges in a dialogue that proceeds upon Obierika’s visit to Okonkwo in Mbanta in which he relates how the Whiteman wiped out the village of Abame with their superior weapons:

Obierika: Have you heard that Abame is no more?
Okonkwo: What?
Uchendu: How is that?
Obierika: Abame has been wiped out. It is a strange and terrible story … Three moons ago, on an Eke market day a little band of fugitives came into our town. Most of them were sons of our land whose mothers had been buried with us. But there were some too who came because they had friends in our town, and others who could think of nowhere else open to escape. And so they fled into Umuofia with a woeful story.
During the last planting season, a Whiteman had come into the clan.

Okonkwo: An albino?
Obierika: No! Not an albino, he was quite different, and he was riding an iron horse. Oracles had said that a strange man would visit their clan and spread destruction, and some other men would follow his way. And that the Whiteman was their harbinger sent to survey the terrain. People did not understand the man’s language, and worse still, they thought that his iron horse would run away. Then, they killed the Whiteman and hung his iron horse on their sacred silk cotton tree………

Uchendu: Never kill a man who says nothing. Those men from Abame, they were fools.
Okonkwo: (Shouting an irritated) Yes, those men, they are fools. Because they had been warned that danger was ahead. They should have armed themselves with machetes even when they went to the market.
Obierika: Yes, they have paid for their foolishness, but I am greatly afraid.

From the above exchange, it is evident that among the three, Uchendu is the epitome of the latent Igbo spirit of caution and matriarchal humility. He uses the analogy of the duck and the duckling (derived from Igbo oral culture) to illustrate to the younger men that one must never fight a war of blame, and that war must be avoided at all costs. In this excerpt we see how sharply he is contrasted with a mercurial Okonkwo (a representative of the patriarchal Igbo foolhardiness) and an almost non-committal Obierika. In this quotation also, there emerges another element of astute Igbo organization this traditional African society has designed its own system of keeping time equal to that of the West. When Uchendu says “three moons”, he means three months.

Besides, the Uchendu exhortation against the violent nature of the Igbo people, several issues arise from this quotation of the cinematic dialogue. The first of these issues is the irony of interpretation evident in this exchange. The three men in this dialogue interpret the foolishness of the people of Abame differently. Uchendu is angry at the men of Abame and calls them foolish because their violence was meted out on a man who was until his death innocent. According to him, they fought a war of blame and attracted the fury of the Whiteman. Uchendu’s thinking is motivated by his matriarchal tenderness that
allows reason to precede anger. Okonkwo reason for getting angry is different. To him, with his patriarchal overemphasis on masculinity, the men of Abame deserved to die if they were not ready and strong enough to fight and defend their land. Lastly, Obierika’s sees this incident as one that portends danger not just to the people of Umuofia, but for the whole of Igboland. Another point of fact arising from the conversation is culture shock on both the European and the African in the encounter of each other. One of the reasons the people of Abame kill the Whiteman is evident as the cultural divide that exists between them and the Whiteman – these natives cannot understand his language as he cannot theirs. They also find his iron horse (bicycle) mysterious, even scary. The implication here is that the contact between the two races during colonialism was always going to be tragic, especially for the African. Finally, Uchendu’s cautious matriarchal tendency in approach to issues is paired with Okonkwo’s unreasonable patriarchal forcefulness, which it is clear costs the people of Abame their lives and land.

Secondly, the Umuofia society is too demanding that those who cannot measure up to their very high expectations are treated as weaklings, these ones become the first converts. The barbarity of some cultural practices is also highlighted. Children who are born twins (osus) and lepers are destined to be thrown in the evil forest. These osus, the lepers, and the mothers of the osus join the list of the first converts. In one of the most chilling incidents in the narrative (both literary and cinematic), an innocent boy Ikemefuna, a prisoner of war, is hacked to death and by this act, Nwoye his friend is never the same, eventually converting to a new religion he sees hope in.

The death of Ikemefuna is perhaps the most chilling incident in both text and film. However, because of the combination of the audio-visual elements in the film, the film gives a better presentation of this incident with the result of giving a damning critique of the Igbo culture. Before he is brought to live with Okonkwo, his life is violently disrupted because of something he has no understanding of. His father, having participated in the killing of a woman of Umuofia at a market, is forced to give his son as compensation. In earlier parts of the film (as in the text too), Ikemefuna is abducted from their home and
separated from his wailing mother then taken to live with an alien family. It is worth noting that the film devotes four of its parts (which translate to four episodes) to the heartrending end of Ikemefuna’s life while the literary antecedent only briefly narrates the same. In Part 19, Ezeudu delivers the directive from the oracle to Okonkwo that time has come for Ikemefuna to be sacrificed, and the killing and its impact is serialized in parts 20, 21 and 22. Here again, the raw barbarity of Igbo culture is witnessed. As earlier, it is the patriarchal nature of this society that blinds it from adopting the positive matriarchal aspects of tenderness, some of which have already discussed. Okonkwo’s first wife (unnamed in both text and film), the representation of this matriarchal tenderness, goes to her husband to plead with him to spare the boy’s life and the following dialogue obtains.

Okonkwo’s Wife: I plead with you, Ikemefuna, he is one of us. Please, plead with the elders. The whole of Umuofia holds you in fear. Ebubedike … Ebubedike… think of Ikemefuna, how you love him; how he loves you. And he calls you father.

Okonkwo: I know not what you know …

Okonkwo’s Wife: Then speak to the oracle…

Okonkwo: (Shouting) They made me what I am … the gods decreed it! The gods decreed it!

After this, he dismisses his wife, warning her against dire consequences from the god Amadiora. This scene is an important additional act that is missing in the novel and it helps bring to the fore what the literary text did not – the ignored matriarchal sensibilities that would have spared the life of Ikemefuna, and indeed that of Okonkwo himself and by extension, the old order of Umuofia. Without intending to digress from the present argument, the tragic nature of this culture and Okonkwo’s action are enhanced by his wife’s saying “… he calls you father…” words originally uttered by Ezeudu in the spirit of deterring Okonkwo from taking part in this killing. Because he doesn’t want to disappoint the patriarchal leanings of his people and in his soul, his pride makes him deliver the killer blow and in the process angers the gods. We can conclude therefore, that had this society (and in extension Okonkwo) been more willing to allow the matriarchal and tender aspects within its structures to be dominant, it would have
survived its own downfall. When the boy is finally killed, the folly within the culture is elevated. In part 21, his mother (another symbol of the said matriarchal tenderness) renders a song to mourn him in the Igbo language. This song is translated in subtitles as the action goes on. The most scathing line in this song that attacks the very core of Igbo culture is: “How can one lose his life for what does not involve him.” Clearly, in the light of its presentation of the cruel death of Ikemefuna, the film has done what the text did not do: the unfairness of the death, and the pain and pity evoked by it, is emphatically shown from the perspective of women namely, Okonkwo’s wife, Ikemefuna’s mother and the women who mourn with her.

A defense for the text can be that this matriarchal tenderness is shown by male characters who silently rebuke the cultures of their people. Obierika, who has suffered by having his twins (osus) thrown into the evil forest distances himself from Ikemefuna’s death and silently questions the killing of his innocent newborns. Nwoye, Ikemefuna’s friend, never recovers from the cruel loss of his friend. He would later rebel from this culture he considers cruel by converting to Christianity. The above debated issues sum up Achebe’s indictment of African culture has having contributed in part to the colonial experience.

In view of the above, both text and film are purveyors of the insiders fair criticism of their own culture that is held to relief and satirized for having contributed to the ease with which the Whiteman colonized the people of Umuofia by both religion and politics. With regard to this therefore, the negative colonial discourse by the likes of Conrad (1899) in his *Heart of Darkness*, and the white DC in Achebe’s text in his upcoming book, though extreme, may find some justification.

4.4 Self-Subversion and Ambivalent Screening of The African

The film *Out of Africa* presents the question of race and prejudice as a complex one; as a matter beyond the usual black-white discordance. This section of the study intends to discuss the film as more pronounced than the literary original in showing how Africans discriminate themselves (subvert or undermine their own standing), and the film’s
ambivalence in presentation in respect of the issue of racism.

Even with the rudimentary English conversations between Karen and Farah, the prejudice against black Africans by Africans of Somali extraction can be noted. In all his references, Farah never calls Kinyanjui “the chief”, but always with a conceited and derogatory sounding “this chief”. This creates an impression of the “we-them” distinction existing between the two African ethnicities with either seeing the opposite as “the other”. This consistent reference to senior chief Kinyanjui as “this chief” is a sign of a conscious determination by Farah that is meant to alienate black Africans from Karen and her fellow whites and portray them as the inferior and Somalis as the superior. For a speaker of Kiswahili as Farah is, the reference should be read as translation from Kiswahili, “huyu chifu” in which case it means that Farah doesn’t recognize himself as one of Kinyanjui’s subjects. If he did, he would have been willing to refer to Kinyanjui as “our chief”, the English variant of the Kiswahili “chifu wetu”. Frantz Fanon has written on the tragic contempt of the African by fellow African. He however blames the colonial legacy for this state of affairs. Fanon (1967), in Black Skin, White Masks explains this phenomenon:

> The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question (p. 17).

This is illustrated further when Karen visits Chief Kinyanjui in the company of Farah. The mission is to request the chief to help her enlist the Kikuyu (who she apparently believes are hardworking) as workers on the coffee plantation. Throughout the conversation, Farah maintains harsh visage and is dismissive of the chief. He is justified to cut Karen short when she begins her exhortation in English, but it is the manner in which he does it that speaks of his negative consideration of the chief. He says curtly, “Msabu, this chief has no British!” From the sounding of it, Kinyanjui’s lack of the knowledge of the English language is one of the reasons that must make Farah consider him ignorant and only fit to be a chief for the Kikuyu. Farah therefore enjoys what he
considers a coveted knowledge of English which stands him in good stead as a translator. He also deliberately misrepresents Kinyanjui to Karen suggesting that the chief talked about the height that coffee must not grow beyond, something that the chief did not say. In this scene, Farah’s contempt of the chief’s ethnic identity is clearer than ever as it also proves that Farah is prejudiced against the Kikuyu and therefore Kinyanjui. Consider the following at 24:45:

Karen: What else did Kinyanjui say?
Farah: He says, coffee must not grow this high (gesturing slightly above knee-high). Never mind Sabu, he is a chief, but he is a Kikuyu!

Despite Farah’s disregard of Africans of darker complexion, he and his fellow Somalis are not spared either in the film’s bigoted portrayal of non-Africans. In this case, however, both literary text and its adapted film Out of Africa offer a prejudiced depiction of the Somali. Although it would seem that the two art forms rate the Somali as superior to other African ethnicities, they also receive their own share of the racial bigotry witnessed in the two art forms. It must, however, be pointed out that the Somali receive the kindest depiction by the filmmaker relative to other African ethnicities. Farah is Karen’s trusted servant who accompanies her on all missions. Importantly, he is her interpreter and the overseer of the other farm workers. Throughout her stay, Farah remains endearing and protective of his boss, always calling her “Sabu” – a respectable title. On the trip to Natron during World War I when Karen goes out to find her husband Bror, Farah is ever present and defends her from a lion that would have devoured her. The film screens him as an ingenious character possessing also a sense of originality as often seen in the calculated thoughts that he voices. During her first days on the farm, Karen wants to dam the river so that she can get water to be used on the farm but Farah resists this, and with reason too:

Karen: Do you know how to make a pond?
Farah: Sabu, this water must go home to Mombasa…
Karen: Well, it can’t go home after we make a pond.
Farah: Sabu, this water lives at Mombasa.
From what might seem like a childlike conversation, is derivable the fact that Farah is a conscientious character who is also environmentally conscious and hence is against Karen’s interference with the course nature. To him, damming the river is an interference with nature’s plan which is designed to ensure that the water passing through the farm eventually ends up in the Indian Ocean. Farah’s originality of character is also seen in the aftermath of the lion attack on the way to Lake Natron. Everyone including himself has been traumatized by the incident, and as he cleans Karen’s wounds, he delivers what can be read as a poetic prayer in a sing-song voice. This should also be taken as evidence of his sublimity and originality in language use. Manifest also, is the fact that that Farah is decidedly religious in his undertakings:

_Sabu_ is bleeding; she doesn’t have this ox,
This lion is hungry; he doesn’t have this ox,
This wagon is heavy; it doesn’t have this ox,
God is happy, _Sabu_; He plays with us.

This kind depiction of the Somali is missing in the literary original. In the text, they are presented as eternally violent, instinctive and oppressive of their women whom they seem to have turned into private toys denied of varied freedoms. In the literary antecedent, Karen Blixen begins her assault of the Somali character by stating that

The Somali bring much trouble upon themselves by their terrible tribal quarrels. In this matter, they feel and reason differently from other people (Blixen, 1937, p. 21).

Further scathing claims will convince a contemporary reader that the target audience must have been meant to be a European reader whom Karen was aware shared her prejudices about other races. While the film is more forgiving in its appraisal of people from non-European races, the original text, with its autobiographical mode, is clearly laden with the author’s subjective view of “others”. What is more, the writer introduces a historical dimension as to the motivations behind what she labels the Somali character:

Somalis are not good at being all on their own, they are very excitable, and, wherever they go, if they are left to themselves they will waste much
time and blood over their own tribal moral system. But they are fine seconds-in-command, and perhaps the Arab capitalists have often given them charge of daring undertakings and difficult transports while they stayed in Mombasa themselves (Blixen, 1937, p. 133).

In this respect, Karen Blixen would have the reader believe that the Somali are as she paints them because of the heritage of being used by the Arabs, as assistants in the ventures of the latter in Africa. She writes further:

> With them (the Arabs) came their young illegitimate half-brothers the Somali – impetuous, quarrelsome, abstinent, and greedy, who made up for their lack of birth by being zealous Mohammedans, and more faithful to the commandments of the prophet than the children got in wedlock. The Swaheli (sic) went along them, slaves themselves and slave-hearted, cruel, obscene, thievish, full of good sense and jests, running to fat with age (Blixen, 1937:132). (Emphasis mine)

This quotation raises the issue of the European disposition to stratifying human beings according to race, ethnicity and inherited characteristics, among them, the colour of the skin (Young, 1996). Coming from a royal background, Karen believed that race was not enough to guarantee one a respectable standing in society; one had to come from a respectable lineage.

The foregoing notwithstanding, this study reads an ambivalent depiction of the African in the films *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness*, whereas their literary antecedents are largely decidedly prejudiced. There are some scenes in which African characters have been given a positive assessment by both the filmmakers and white characters. This however, has remained largely implicit and therefore not enough to remedy the damage done by the prejudiced presentation, which is overt and consistent throughout the films. Besides, this can only be said of the two main African characters in the respective films, Farah and Samuel by whom the films attempt to correct the prejudiced presentation in the antecedent literary texts. For the case of Farah, this can be said to be an attempt to re-vision – positively – what Karen Blixen writes in her text. It is a different scenario for Samuel because he is a character introduced in the film but
missing in the literary original. He too is given an undecided imaging.

Besides Samuel’s negative imaging earlier discussed, the film *The Ghost and the Darkness* is also ambivalent because it later on in the cinematic narrative presents him in positive light. Samuel is shown as an African man of vast knowledge, innate intuition and a peculiar sense of humour. When the viewer first meets Samuel, he is being introduced to Patterson by Sterlin. Understandably, Patterson asks if he speaks English, upon which Samuel interjects: “And very poor French”. Remarkably, it is during the evening fireside conversations spent over a glass of wine, that the viewer sees the best of Samuel: relaxed, enthusiastic, unrestrained of laughter, and intelligent. This emerges in a conversation between Remington (the hunter), Patterson and Samuel at 49:22:

Remington: *(to Patterson)* Samuel says you killed a lion!

Patterson: Probably just luck.

Remington: Nobody kills a lion with one shot by luck, you might be useful tomorrow. And even if you are not, you should understand it may take two, maybe three days to sort this out. When I leave, you still have to build that bridge so I don’t want your men to lose respect for you.

Patterson: That is very considerate of you.

Remington: Well, I’m a very considerate man, my mother taught me that. *(Samuel chuckles twice before bursting into unrestrained hearty laughter).* Now what the hell are you laughing at? You don’t think I’m considerate?

Samuel: I don’t believe you had a mother.

We can draw a conclusion about the person of Samuel from this brief interchange. First of all, Samuel who has been listening to the tense conversation between Patterson and the atrocious-looking stranger in Remington has the intuition to crack a joke that relaxes everyone, including Remington himself. The joke catches him off-guard as he bursts out, ejecting the drink out of his mouth. The rapturous laughter that follows speaks of this. Soon after, Samuel proceeds to tell Patterson and Dr. Hawthorn a rendition of the history behind Remington’s presence in Africa. This case also pictures a lot of positives about the rich narrative experience by Africans as a people who can render tales to great effect. The viewer should in this case conclude that it takes somebody of intellect to be the
bearer of such information, distant as it is with regard to time and place. This is seen at 51:15:

Samuel: Two great tribes of his country fought a terrible civil war for many years.
Patterson: His side lost.
Samuel: Everything. Land and family. Very young ones and the very old ones, all lost. He buried his family and left his country forever. Now, he hunts all over the world, but he always returns here. He says that Africa is the last good place.

In summary, the ambivalent imaging of the African appears to be an attempt on the part of filmmakers to render their films less racist than the literary sources from which they are adapted. Also, it can also be argued that this ambivalence is necessary in making the film adaptations have echoes of the prejudices in their literary antecedents so that they are not dismissed as complete departures from the films, hence betrayals or usurpations (Woof, 1950) of the latter.

4.5 Tragedy, Romance and the Story of Karen Blixen

Donelson (1998, 2009) has argued that inspired by her literary mentors of the era of romantic literature, Karen Blixen in Out of Africa (1937) does not tell her romantic life with Denys in a simplistic over-narration. Her life and times are narrated in a subtle fashion with the reader accorded the reading from nuances or implicatures. The literary antecedent relates a poetic narrative that only makes suggestions and implicatures of an important encounter between two lovers. Unlike its literary original, the film Out of Africa does tell the same story differently and makes evident what in the text is only hinted at, or presented by subtle symbolism. This difference in expression of love between Karen and Denys is down to the difference in the system of signs and symbols use to pass messages. Especially, the use of mise-en-scene and sound facilitates this in film. This argument finds weight in the work of Linda Donelson in her 1998 work, Out of Isak Dinesen in Africa: Karen Blixen’s Untold Story. According to Donelson
(1998), Blixen’s subtle telling of her love story must have been influenced by her literary mentors. Besides, Donelson (2009) writes:

Her mentors were poets of the romantic era, (who) pursued symbolism, archetypes, subtlety and suggestion. Never say what you are thinking; hint at everything; pretend that your story applies to every person, not just you; make it seem like your life follows the great themes of history, not the petty concerns of the individual; describe yourself in the sublime third person, calm, all-wise and controlled; describe your love affair as if it were a continent or a country. (Retrieved from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatlife/6703866/An-introduction-to-Out-of-Africa.html on 2nd May, 2016)

To this scholar, Blixen literally conceals her love for Denys and presents it as if it were her love for the Africa; for Kenya; for the flora and fauna or her love for the colours of Africa. We can therefore conclude that with regard to this distinct and divergent presentation of the same phenomenon between text and film, the film informs on, and contributes to the viewer’s interpretation of the literary original.

The proven subtlety in the antecedent text is also played out in the manner in which the tragic capitulation of the love affair between the author and Denys is narrated by the author. By point of fact, the text merely reports Denys’ death without building the background of the existing tension between him and Karen. However, on the other hand, again, the film – with length and depth – demonstrates the spectacular reversal in Karen’s romantic fortunes in Africa. Of the impact of Blixen’s literary background on the subtle narration of her life, Donelson (2009) writes:

**Out of Africa** is the fruit, not just of Karen Blixen’s experience, but of Western literature, of Scandinavian history, and of the great Romantic Movement taking place at the time of her birth. For nearly two thousand years, from the ancestors of Beowulf to Smilla’s sense of snow, Scandinavian literature has turned tragedy into entertainment.


In the above, Donelson (2009), proceeds to give her commentary on the melancholic
ending of Karen Blixen’s narrative of her life in Africa. She likens Karen tragic fate to that of seminal characters in the European literary canon, and accuses the adapted film for having failed to live to the expectations set by Karen’s memoir. By this she gives testimony to Karen Blixen’s artistry in managing to weave a tale that is a delicate blend between romance and tragedy:

*Out of Africa* is seldom thought of as a love story between two earthly human beings, although the Hollywood version brought us much closer to that understanding. The book has long been described as a “prose pastoral” - the story of the author’s love for Africa and all that the term represented ... Imagine marrying on an unknown continent, without family or friends, surrounded by a foreign culture, faced with a job you have never handled, a language you speak haltingly at best, a climate known for its morbid disease? Setting out with great hope and aspirations only to meet divorce, bankruptcy, and death of your greatest friends? And turning all these immense disappointments into one of the greatest works of poetic prose ever written. (Retrieved from [http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatlife/6703866/An-introduction-to-Out-of-Africa.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatlife/6703866/An-introduction-to-Out-of-Africa.html) on 2nd May, 2016)

Donelson (*ibid*), however, notes that in spite of having been inspired by Karen Blixen’s book, the film grows long with Robert Bedford (as Denys Finch Hutton) unnecessarily over-dominating the filmic narrative. With the impact of Denys Finch Hutton’s characterization in the film discussed at length the chapter two, we can conclude that Donelson’s criticism is harsh. Going by the evidence adduced in the said chapter, both film and its literary source are all the more better off because of the screening on Robert Bedford. Where some readers might have remained in ignorance on this love affair, the film maker clarifies and therefore enriches the readers’ appreciation of Karen Blixen’s text. It is in that light that this study finds Donelson (2009) below prejudiced and hence proof of her Logocentricism (Cartmell et al., 2008) which unfairly privileges the literary source over the adapted film:

Sydney Pollack’s 1985 film acquired its greatness from Karen Blixen’s original inspiration, but the real story is, as they say, better than fiction. The Hollywood account plays from the male viewpoint of Pollack and his screenwriter, But the movie grows long where Robert Redford dominates, and this is because his role is fictional - male-oriented, deprecating,
humorless, unsympathetic - qualities opposite to the real Denys Finch Hatton, who made everyone, including the readers of Out of Africa, perpetually smile.  

However, this study can conclude that Out of Africa, just like Things Fall Apart, is a film that seeks to make accessible to even ordinary audiences a story that would otherwise be obscure to them if presented with the subtlety of the literary antecedent.

In agreement with Cartmell et al. (2008) and Donelson (2009), Blixen, by way of delicate allusions, in the literary original narrates with subtlety her romantic relationship with Denys. As earlier mentioned, in respect of this subject, the film (which is overt) then becomes a big departure from the literary text. Some of these allusions have been discussed in chapter three in relation to different narrative techniques in film and text so the study shall only hereby summarise them. One of the allusions is effected by a Latin expression, Post res perditas. Loosely translated, it means “After everything was lost, this also happened.” This Latin expression comes before a chapter of the text which narrates Karen Blixen’s interaction with her lover, Denys. This particular allusion expresses the fact that her life in Africa was not just one long tragic encounter with fate, but that she also experienced some of her best days in Africa. In addition, Blixen refers to the coming of visitors (especially Denys) to her farm as “panis angelorum” – the bread of angels. This means that Denys coming to the farm was something sacred to her, as the Holy Communion would be to Christians. In another allusion, Blixen compares her house in which she shares moments with Denys as “the house wherein Saint Francis and Saint Claire were entertaining one another upon theology” (Blixen, 1937:141). This reference elevates her love with Denys to the realm of the spiritual. Similar to the case of St. Francis and St. Claire in the Roman Catholic tradition, her romance with Denys refuses to be defined by social boundaries and restrictions. It is important to state that in all of the text, Karen never refers to Denys as her lover. These allusions therefore stand as symbolic declarations of her lover.
The chapter in the literary text in which Karen Blixen comes closest to openly declaring her love for Denys, and almost describing it in open terms is labeled “Wings”. This should signify the emotional flight that Karen’s heart takes after her encounter with Denys. In this chapter, she describes Denys in elevated terms and in a lofty poetic and lyrical style reserved only for her lover. No other character in the text benefits from such a glowing description. Snippets of the description which runs from page 193 to 195 show this:

When he came back to the house, it gave out what was in it; it spoke, as the coffee plantations speak, when the first showers of the rainy season they flower, dripping wet, a cloud of chalk. … He was happy on the farm; he came there only when he wanted to come, and it knew, in him, a quality of which the world besides was not aware, a humility. He never did but what he wanted to do, neither was guile found in his mouth. Denys had a trait of character which to me was very precious; … He gave me a gramophone. It was a delight to my heart, it brought new life to the farm…


Blixen also uses deliberate repetition to impress upon the reader that this particular chapter is all about Denys and herself and their romance. This emphatic repetition is so formulaic and occurring at strategic locations of her prose as to make it impossible to escape the attention of the reader. From the middle of page 195 to the start of page 196, in three short paragraphs, the author repeats the phrase “Denys and I” four times. Three of those four times, the phrase occurs at the beginning of each paragraph. This study finds this case of repetition a strategy of foregrounding her romance with Denys because she insists on repeating “Denys and I” even where “we” would have been more appropriate. Following in the tradition of her literary mentors, (Donelson, 2009), Blixen finds this symbolism and subtlety more artistically fruitful than merely laying plain what can be best implied.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the question of divergence and convergence in meaning between the antecedent texts and the adapted films. The research can therefore conclude that the films and texts have demonstrated their ability to address similar issues both
differently and similarly.

To start with, the chapter set off by seeking to answer the question regarding what really motivated Europe’s entry into Africa: was it the spirit of adventure or the spirit of imperial conquest? It has emerged in the course of this chapter that the two motivations were evident with the quest for colonial domination prevailing over the spirit of adventure as the main reason. Importantly, it has emerged in this chapter that literary texts, especially *Out of Africa* (1937) and *Man-Eaters of Tsavo and other East African Adventures* (1907) downplayed the quest to colonize as the main motivation and fronted mainly the desire for adventure, and Europe’s response to a ‘call’ to save Africa. The adapted films therefore have succeeded in dispelling the adventure myth and elevating the principal reason for Europe’s coming to Africa as the intent to dominate the continent mainly economically and politically.

Secondly, the chapter discussed the issues relating to race and colonial hegemony as ideas that have been advanced by both adapted films and antecedent literary texts, albeit with differing degrees. Cultural Darwinism as a conception emerged in the chapter as a justification used by the racist sections of Europe in viewing Africa as “the other” and “the lower”. This issue has been presented differently between text and film.

The study found out that European characters appear less racist in the films than they are depicted in the texts. In fact, the film transforms the racial overtones in the texts into racial undertones at the most. For instance, Ngugi, (1981) accuses Blixen of being racist in the text, and perhaps such criticism may have influenced the filmmaker to degrade the racist views expressed so blatantly in the antecedent texts to veiled undertones that are subtly screened for the viewer. Further, the film *Out of Africa* demonstrates this ambivalent presentation of African characters who are at times elevated then degraded by equal measure. At some point, the film blames African characters for being discriminative of fellow Africans.

For *Things Fall Apart* the film is seen to agree with the literary original in respect of the
view that both are realistic responses to the biased representation of the African and their culture in European literature. This chapter has cited a case that demonstrates that both film and its literary antecedent are viewed as revisionist of the prejudiced portrayal of Africa in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899).

Lastly, the chapter contrasted the subtle narrative of Karen’s romance with Denys, with the self-evident romantic narrative that the film projects. Whereas in the antecedent text, Blixen leaves with the reader the task to make inferences about her love life from the allusions and symbolism, in the film, the filmmaker by use of cinematic devices makes the love story between Karen and Denys more predominant than any other story within the filmic narration. In addition, the text fronts her love for Africa but the film fronts her love for Denys and makes her love for Africa only subordinate to, and interspersed with her lover for the man, Denys. In view of the foregoing, it is clear that in respect to adaptation of literature to cinema, the film and text make each other all the better by aiding in the interpretation and advancement of each other.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Being the last chapter of the study, this section constitutes a summary of research findings, conclusions and finally recommendations for further research. It also reflects on the extent this research met the objectives that it established at the time of proposing the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

This study has undertaken an investigation of the concept of intertextuality; a concept which in this particular case is occasioned by adaptation of literary text into film. Specifically, this research investigated reflections and divergences between literary texts: *Out of Africa* (1937), *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Man-Eaters of Tsavo and other East African Adventures* (1907) and their respective film adaptations. In this regard, the research undertook a comparative study of the two media to arrive at conclusions on the extent of reflections and divergences in terms of meaning and technique. Importantly, the study also looked into the technical film devices that have been used by filmmakers to compensate for literary text narrative devices that are not transferrable to the film medium.

The first objective set out to establish the extent to which the adapted films either conformed to, or deviated from the world of the antecedent literary texts. Whereas this study discovered films *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* to be liberal adaptations, *Things Fall Apart* emerged as a case of traditional adaptation. The research classified the former as liberal adaptations because even though the filmmakers retained
the spirit (*fabula* [story]) of the literary originals in their cinematic narratives, they exercised more freedom than is the case with the film *Things Fall Apart*. In the production of *Out of Africa*, film director Sidney Pollack, for example is not only inspired by Karen Blixen’s memoir *Out of Africa* (1937), but also by her other writings namely; *Shadows on the Grass* (1961), *Letters from Africa* (1981), *Silence Will Speak* (1977) by Errol Trzebinski and Judith Thurman’s biography of Karen Blixen: *Isak Dinesen: The Life of Story-teller* (1983). This partly explains the license enjoyed by the adapted film from its literary antecedent with which it shares an identical title.

In the same exercise of freedom, film director Stephen Hopkins retains the spirit of John Henry Patterson’s adventure narrative about his experiences at Tsavo but is not tied entirely to the reality of the literary original in his production of *The Ghost and the Darkness*. The result of these liberal adaptations is that there are deviations in characterization – new characters not in the literary antecedents are introduced in the films, while others in the texts are omitted in the adapted films. Similarly, the two films demonstrate significant deviations and variance in terms of plot, setting and language, relative to the literary originals. This study has incisively discussed the variations in the foregoing elements between the films and the texts and consequently concludes that the variations and deviations have been motivated by the filmmakers’ re-visioning and interpretation of the source literary texts.

This study found the case of the film *Things Fall Apart*, being a traditional and realistic adaptation of Achebe’s novel; *Things Fall Apart* (1958) valid. The filmmaker, David Orere, held stable the main *fabula* elements (narrative elements) in the film just as they are in the literary original. This is to say there is one-to-one conformity to the literary text thereby making characterization, setting, plot and language invariant. The conclusion is therefore that David Orere, in his adaptation of Achebe’s novel exercises fidelity to the text with intention of bringing, through his film, the story of *Things Fall Apart* (1958) even closer to people, or back home amongst the very people about whom Achebe’s narrative is written (Ugochukwu (2009) and Anyanwu 2010). The Igbo people who may not have read Achebe’s book are therefore able to access its true spirit in the film which makes the narrative reach even the non-literate members of the society. A similar
conclusion was made regarding *Out of Africa*’s laying bare of Karen’s romantic narrative unlike its subtle literary original. This is because the film exploits the media of cinema to evade the obstacle of intellectualism that is related with reading literary texts in the sense that ordinary members of the society are now able to access meanings they would not have accessed in the literary text – if at all they would read.

The second objective of this study resulted in a discussion about the cinematic technical devices that are used to advance the narratives in the films to either similar or different effect in comparison with the case of the literary originals. Sound and several cinematographic techniques such as lighting, composition and framing, camera angle and length and montage were investigated. It was significantly clear that because of the films’, use of audio-visual elements, they delivered the narratives with more immediacy and clarity than the literary texts which relied mainly on descriptive narration and dialogue.

Examples here will be instructive: voice-over narrations in *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* make the cinematic narratives authentic and are used to compensate for descriptive narration that is realized in the antecedent literary texts. In some instances, what was suggested in subtle allusions and symbolism in the texts is made more immediate and clear. Besides, music in *Out of Africa* is used to create romantic and sad moods as appropriate in the course of the story, while in *The Ghost and the Darkness* it is used to create tension necessary in an adventure horror film that it is. In *Things Fall Apart*, music is used to heighten the tragedy of Okonkwo’s and Omuofia’s fall. In all the three films, sound effects such as the night sounds of animals and objects are used to make the African setting of the three films authentic and credible.

Lighting in *Out of Africa* (mainly high-key lighting and natural lighting) is used to engender the romantic atmosphere that dominates the whole film. This romantic mood is merely and only subtly hinted at in the literary original by Karen Blixen in lengthy descriptive passages tinged with symbolism, irony and allusions. In *The Ghost and the Darkness*, interplay between light and darkness is used to create an atmosphere of terror and tension while in *Things Fall Apart*, the film uses darkened shots to tell a tragic
narrative which in Achebe’s literary antecedent is mainly told by a combination of narrative description and dialogue.

The study examined the use of montage in *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness* to arrive at the conclusion that this technique is used by the filmmakers to show transition in terms of time and place. More specifically, montage is used to enhance the train journey motif technique which symbolizes Europe’s entry into Africa. At the beginning of both *Out of Africa* and *The Ghost and the Darkness*, montage is used to identical effect to show the change in landscape and time as the protagonists – Karen and Patterson respectively – travel from Mombasa to Nairobi on their first visit to Kenya. Besides, what is narrated in the literary originals in lengthy descriptive paragraphs is narrated in films by having a sequence of related edits serialised to tell the same story. Additionally, montage in *Out of Africa* is used to advance the theme of romance. In this respect, the protagonist’s love for Africa is interspersed with her love for the man, Denys.

In summary, what is told in the literary texts largely by narration is delivered cinematically by among other devices: lighting, camera angle and length, composition and framing, and montage. These inter-media differences in the delivery of narratives are testimony to the fact that literature and film are different media with different tools of transport by means of which they transmit their narratives. Besides, it is demonstration that while literature celebrates and exhibits such salient aesthetics as symbolism, allusion and irony which allow the reader to make inferences as demonstrated in this study, the cinema is mainly a visual art that depends on showing (in the literal sense of the word) rather than telling. This quality of cinema is utilised by filmmakers to reach bigger audiences than literary texts which are mostly read and understood by the more literate members of society, or those in the academic world. In other words, the visual nature of cinema puts much less intellectual demands upon the viewer than does literature.

The third objective of this study led to a discussion on the emergence meaning out of the films relative to their literary antecedents. The study proceeded to make its arguments based on the understanding that film adaptations should not necessarily be one-to-one renditions of their literary originals (Klein and Parker, 1981). As such, differences in the
form of film adaptations, comparative to the literary antecedents, occasion different dimensions to meanings not originally expressed nor anticipated in the source literary texts. Whereas all the three adapted films converged with their literary originals in respect of meaning, this research argued with evidence that there exists significant divergences as summarized in the below.

The adapted films, similar to their literary antecedents explore the motivations that led to Europe’s involvement in Africa. In the course of this research, however, it emerged that the films dealt with the issue differently. In the texts Out of Africa (1937), Things Fall Apart (1958) and The Man-eaters of Tsavo and Other East African Adventures (1907), the main reason for Europe’s involvement in Africa is fronted as the spirit of adventure and response to a “call” to civilize Africa (Young, 1996). The adapted films depart from this notion by showing that though the desire for exploration, adventure was a motivation, the intent to effect colonial domination in Africa was the main reason for the coming of Europeans (Young, ibid). The films therefore, unlike their literary originals, have played a revisionist role in portraying the true state of affairs as they were. Even then, this study found out that the films make a statement that not all Europeans supported colonial domination of Africa. These are represented by Karen and Denys in Out of Africa and Dr. Hawthorn in The Ghost and the Darkness who are blatantly candid in their opposition to colonial exploitation of Africa.

With regard to the question of racial prejudice, this study realised racist bias, and the concept of Cultural Darwinism underscored earlier, as justification given by colonial imperialists to dominate Africa (Pepetela, 1989). Importantly, racism in the film Out of Africa and The Ghost and the Darkness is slightly veiled, and is in point of fact established earlier in this study realized mainly by means of subtle undertones. This contrasts the case of the literary originals in which racist characterization and description of non-Europeans dominates. This justifies the cited criticism leveled especially against Karen Blixen’s book Out of Africa by Kenyan writers and critics such as Ngugi (2006) and Odipo (2006). As a result, this study notes that the films appear less racist than their literary antecedents.
Viewed together, both film and novel versions of *Things Fall Apart* emerge as a suitable protest and revisionist collaboration between text and film which demonstrates artistic efforts made by Africans in their attempts to correct the false and prejudiced imaging of Africans in European literature. The study was obligated to extend its reach to discuss intertextuality between Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899). This was necessary because the study was keen on finding out how far the spirit of the text and that of its corresponding adapted film combine in reaction to Joseph Conrad’s assertions in the novel. Consequently, the study concluded that Achebe’s text and David Orere’s film are both forms of protest against biased (re)presentation of African people and their culture in Conrad’s text.

Lastly, this study has expressed insights into the treatment of romance in the film *Out of Africa* and its literary antecedent. In the text, Karen Blixen writes more about the love of the land and its people, only making subtle references to her romance with Denys. Donelson (2009) attributes this to influences in the literary world within which Blixen grew up and wrote. On the other hand, the film elevates the love story of Karen and Denys to the very fore of its narrative, the result of which is that Karen’s love for Africa therefore overlaps with, and only subordinates her love for the man.

In view of the foregoing, the research can authoritatively conclude that all the objectives set at the beginning of the study motivated scholarly interrogation, the result of which logical conclusions have been summarized in this chapter. This study concludes that the relationship between the adapted films and their antecedent literary texts is symbiotic as either medium/form feeds upon, and benefits the other at the same time.

### 5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

In the course of undertaking the research, a number of new research areas arose as deserving scholarly interrogation:

1. This study has undertaken a comparative study of adapted films and their literary originals – texts which can be categorized as serious literature. It will
therefore be of scholarly benefit to study popular literature in Kenya and its film adaptations. A case in example is John Kariamiti’s novel *My Life in Crime* (1984) which is a literary text of the popular genre currently being adapted to screen.

2. This research recommends an intertextual study of literary texts of the drama genre and films adapted from such texts. This is so because the present study has looked at adapted films and their literary originals which are all literary works in prose. To unearth differences and similarities between adaptation of drama and prose to screen, scholarly study regarding this will be necessary.

3. Intertextuality is not only limited to film vis-à-vis literature, as such, this research recommends that a study be carried out to investigate the intertextuality between literature and literature. In this connection, this research advocates for a study of the intertextual correlation between Karen Blixen’s *Out of Africa* (1937) and her other works *Shadows on the Grass* (1961) and *Letters from Africa* (1981). Similarly, a study of how her works correlate with other people’s writings on her life is academically viable. Such works include *Silence Will Speak* (1977) by Errol Trzebinski and Judith Thurman’s biography of Karen Blixen: *Isak Dinesen: The Life of Story-teller* (1983).

4. In the same vein, this study recommends a scholarly inquiry into the correlation between related films. This is important because, just as literature inspires the creation of film, some literary texts have inspired the creation of other texts and similarly, some films have inspired the creation of other films. An interrogation of such intra-genre or intra-media reflections and divergences stands to benefit literary and film studies.

5. It will be of scholarly value to undertake a study to investigate the transition of meaning from the literary antecedents through the intermediate stages in the process of making adapted films. This will help get insights into the possible
gradual changes in meaning as filmmaking personnel (including screenwriter, director of photography and producer) execute their functions.
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## APPENDIX: TEXT AND FILM READING GUIDE

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