



## THE PLACE OF DRONE IMAGERIES IN VISUAL STORY TELLING: A READING OF SELECTED NIGERIAN MOVIES

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### Abstract

*The introduction of drone technology in Film production has significantly transformed visual aesthetics, particularly in terms of capturing expansive landscapes, dynamic aerial shots, and otherwise inaccessible perspectives. Drone Imagery has given filmmakers the ability to introduce innovative and dynamic visuals that elevate the storytelling experience. Using the content analytical approach of the qualitative research method, the researchers appraised the application of drone imageries in selected Nollywood films. Findings show that the application of drone imageries in visual storytelling not only elevates the aesthetic quality of films but also enables filmmakers to depict the richness of Nigeria's landscapes and urban environments. The research concluded that the integration of drone technology into film-making in Nigeria has further revolutionized visual storytelling in Nollywood and, as such, has become imperative on scholars to further appraise its contributions to the overall film experience in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Story-telling, Imageries, Movies, Nigeria

### Introduction

The use of drone technology in film production has significantly transformed visual aesthetics, particularly in terms of capturing expansive landscapes, dynamic aerial shots, and otherwise inaccessible perspectives. The concept of visual aesthetics in film pertains to how various elements such as color, composition, lighting, and camera angles contribute to the mood, tone, and overall appeal of the film. The construction of visual narratives in Nollywood cinema has seen significant transformation, particularly with the advent of advanced shot techniques such as moving shots and aerial shots. The application of drone technology, in particular, has had a noticeable impact on picture representation, offering filmmakers the opportunity to showcase expansive landscapes, dynamic movements, and new perspectives.

However, there is a growing tendency among Nollywood filmmakers to employ drone shots excessively or unnecessarily, often to show off the technological capability rather than to enhance the narrative. This misuse can detract from the film's overall aesthetics, disrupting the flow and purpose of the visual narrative. This notion is not far-fetched for when drone shots are used inappropriately, they can detract from the narrative rather than enhance it. Inappropriate drone shots can disrupt the flow of the story, feel out of place, or be used excessively, resulting in a disconnection between the audience and the emotional core of the film. For example, In *Merry Men*, directed by Toka McBaror, drone shots are used to showcase the urban landscape of Abuja. While the shots are visually stunning, they are often inserted in moments where the characters are in the middle of critical dialogue or during intense moments. For instance, in one scene where the characters are preparing for a heist, a drone shot suddenly



cuts away to an aerial view of a cityscape, breaking the tension. The cut feels abrupt and takes the audience away from the character-driven narrative, reducing the emotional impact of the moment.

Therefore, the true purpose of drone imagery in cinema is not merely to impress, but to serve the story by capturing the viewer's attention and immersing them into the film's environment. Little wonder, Stefan Dux, Christian Iseli, and Eva Vitija, in their conference publication titled, “Impact of Camera Innovations on Visual Aesthetics in Documentary Films – A Filmmakers’ Perspective”, had earlier stated that:

An apparent example is a shift from recording on film to video and digital. With the emergence of small handheld video and DV palmcorders, the technological barriers in handling a camera were lowered in such a way that many directors were able to shoot a documentary by themselves without a cameraman. The choice of the camera not only significantly changes the production environment on the crew side, but also the relationship between the film crew and its subjects, as well as its relationship with the viewer. For example, the low resolution of the DV image evokes different expectations in the audience than a documentary film shot on 35mm film (2).

The above statement highlights how advances in technology have made filmmaking more accessible and have changed the way stories are told and perceived by audiences. This can be directly related to the use of drone technology in Nollywood films. In the past, filmmakers needed expensive equipment, large crews, and helicopters to capture aerial shots. However, with the introduction of drones, this has changed significantly. Drones are smaller, more affordable, and easier to operate. Just as handheld video cameras made it possible for directors to film documentaries without large crews, drones have allowed filmmakers in Nollywood to shoot aerial scenes themselves, without needing a helicopter or extensive resources. It can vividly be observed that this shift in technology affects multiple aspects of filmmaking, such as production environment crew- subject relationship and elevated audience expectations. Before drones, aerial shots required big budgets, specialized crews, and complex setups. Now, with drones, a smaller crew can capture stunning aerial shots, making the filmmaking process faster, more flexible, and cost-effective. Directors have more creative freedom without being restricted by high costs.

Then, the use of drones creates a physical distance between the film crew and their subjects. In Nollywood, this might mean that emotional or intimate moments could be interrupted by a drone flying overhead, which could make the actors feel less connected to the scene. Similarly, just as low-resolution cameras created a different feeling for viewers, drone shots often focus on scale and scenery, which can shift the audience's attention from the characters to the setting. Likewise, Drone footage has its own visual style. Just as people expect different things from a documentary shot on video versus one shot on high-quality film, audiences may interpret drone shots in a Nollywood film differently. For example, drone footage can make a film feel more polished and grander, but overuse or inappropriate use of drone shots could make the film feel detached from the characters and story.

Visual aesthetics in film narratives refers to the use of visual elements to enhance storytelling and evoke emotions, creating a more immersive and engaging experience for the audience. It involves how filmmakers use color, lighting, camera angles, composition, texture, and movement to convey meaning, mood, and tone, supporting the story's themes and character



development. This, Visual aesthetics complement the story being told by reinforcing the emotional or thematic underpinnings of the narrative. For example, a film might use dark, muted colors and claustrophobic framing to represent a character's emotional isolation. Conversely, vibrant, colorful scenes with wide shots can represent freedom or joy. Essentially, visual aesthetics are the filmmaker's tool to show rather than tell, enriching the storytelling without relying solely on dialogue or plot. According to Emmanuel Nyong Inyang:

Aesthetic judgements are then based on the form in which the content is expressed, for it is the form that puts the various ideas and emotions into relationships that permit them to affect the lives of viewers. To an average moviemaker, the way in which his/her ideas and emotions are expressed is more important than the ideas and emotions in themselves (295).

The statement is saying that when we judge the beauty or effectiveness of a film (aesthetic judgment), we often focus on how the story is told rather than just what the story is about. For example, in filmmaking, the way a scene looks, the choice of colors, lighting, camera angles, and music—these are the "form" elements that shape how the audience feels and interprets the emotions and ideas being presented. These elements are crucial because they create an emotional impact on viewers. To a filmmaker, this "form" (how the ideas and emotions are visually and creatively presented) is often more important than the actual ideas and emotions themselves. Even a simple story can feel powerful if it's told in a visually striking and emotionally engaging way. The way it's presented is what truly connects with the audience. In the context of drone application in filmmaking, the statement emphasizes that how drone shots are used to present a story is often more important than the story itself. The visual aesthetics created by drone shots, such as sweeping aerial views, dynamic tracking of characters, or dramatic reveals of landscapes, are crucial in shaping the audience's emotional connection to the scene.

In essence, the technology behind drones in Nollywood has lowered the barriers to capturing grand, aerial visuals, but it also changes how films are made and how they connect with their audiences, just as handheld cameras did for films and documentaries. By thoughtfully and appropriately integrating drone shots, filmmakers can significantly enhance the aesthetic quality of the film, using the drone's unique ability to present grandiose or intimate visuals that resonate with the emotional and thematic elements of the narrative. Therefore, the effective application of drone techniques should aim to enrich the cinematic experience, rather than simply serve as a display of technical prowess.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research warrants the invocation of Digital Film Theory and the Theory of Creativity in underscoring of the aesthetics and drone imagery to enable the understanding of how technology has helped in shaping the Nollywood narrative construction.

Digital theory in film studies examines how digital technologies, tools, and techniques influence filmmaking, film production, distribution, and the viewer's experience. It explores the impact of digital advancements on both the content and the form of cinema, focusing on how these technologies reshape traditional cinematic practices and narratives.

The application of Digital Film Theory and the Theory of Creativity is crucial to understanding how contemporary filmmakers use drone imagery to enhance visual aesthetics and reshape



narrative storytelling. These theoretical frameworks provide insights into the intersection of technology, creativity, and film aesthetics, grounded in the works of notable theorists such as Robert Stam and Walter Benjamin. Thus, Digital Film Theory is concerned with the impact of digital technologies on filmmaking, including how they reshape film form, narrative, and aesthetics. In the context of drone imagery, this theory allows us to examine how digital innovations, like drones, have transformed the visual language of Films, especially cinematic films. Likewise, Robert Stam's Perspective on Digital Cinema extensively discusses how digital technologies have revolutionized cinema, not only by providing new tools for filmmakers but also by challenging traditional modes of visual storytelling. According to Stam, digital cinema has expanded the possibilities for creative expression, blurring the lines between realism and fantasy, while also allowing filmmakers to break free from spatial and temporal constraints.

In relation to drone imagery, Stam's views help us understand how drones offer unprecedented freedom of movement and perspective, thus enhancing visual aesthetics in ways that traditional cameras cannot. The fluidity of aerial shots made possible by drones can create immersive, dynamic visual experiences, contributing to the overall visual style of a film. However, Digital Film Theory also invites us to critically assess whether these technological advancements always serve the narrative or sometimes detract from it, especially when used arbitrarily without enhancing the story.

The second theory to be applied in the course of this research is the Theory of Creativity, which, particularly as applied to film, focuses on the ways filmmakers utilize their imaginative capacities to create unique and original works. In this study, it is relevant for understanding how directors and cinematographers integrate drone imagery into films to produce innovative visual effects and narrative techniques. In this regard, Walter Benjamin's seminal essay titled "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction": Walter Benjamin's essay offers a foundational background to the discussion of creativity in the digital age. Benjamin argued that mechanical reproduction, such as film and photography, altered the "aura" of traditional art by making it more accessible and reproducible. With the advent of digital technologies like drones, Benjamin's ideas become even more relevant. The democratization of aerial imagery, once the domain of large-budget films, has now becomes available to filmmakers of all levels. This accessibility fosters greater creative exploration, allowing filmmakers to experiment with new perspectives and visual styles.

In terms of drone imagery, Benjamin's concept of the loss of aura can be extended to explore how the novelty of drone shots may wear off as they become more ubiquitous. However, the creative challenge for filmmakers lies in how they use drones not just as a gimmick but to enhance the emotional and narrative depth of their films. The Theory of Creativity encourages us to look at how directors are finding innovative ways to incorporate drone imagery into the visual narrative, ensuring that it serves a purpose beyond mere spectacle. Therefore, the integration of Digital Film Theory and the Theory of Creativity informed by the perspectives of Robert Stam and Walter Benjamin provides a rich theoretical foundation. It allows for a deeper exploration of how drone imagery shapes the visual and narrative aesthetics of films, particularly in Nollywood, and challenges filmmakers to use this technology not just for its novelty, but as a meaningful tool in visual storytelling. Through this theoretical lens, the study examines the evolving role of drone imagery and its place in the future of cinema.





## SYNOPSIS OF ANIKULAKPO (2022)

*Anikulapo* (2022) is a gripping tale set in the ancient Oyo Kingdom, where a young and ambitious textile weaver, Saro, seeks a better life filled with riches and power. Leaving his humble origins behind, Saro arrives in Oyo and quickly wins the admiration of the townspeople with his craft. However, his life takes a dramatic turn when he becomes entangled in a forbidden love affair with the king's youngest wife, Queen Arolake. Caught in the throes of passion and blinded by ambition, Saro's relationship with Arolake soon becomes dangerous. Their secret love affair is discovered, and Saro is sentenced to death by the king's guards. Beaten and left for dead in the forest, Saro's lifeless body lies in the open until a mystical bird known as Akala, the harbinger of life and death, descends upon him. The bird brings him back to life, bestowing upon him a powerful gourd with the ability to resurrect the dead. This newfound power gives Saro a second chance at life, but with immense power comes great responsibility and temptation. Fleeing Oyo, Saro and Arolake settle in a new village where they begin a new life. Saro uses his resurrection power to save lives, quickly earning fame, wealth, and influence. The people revere him as a god-like figure, calling him Anikulapo, meaning the one who holds death in his pouch. However, as his power grows, so does his arrogance. Blinded by greed and a desire for more recognition, Saro begins to abuse his gift, bringing death and chaos to those around him. His relationship with Arolake becomes strained as his ambitions overshadow the love they once shared. Arolake, feeling betrayed and abandoned by Saro, confronts him in a dramatic twist that leads to his downfall. In an act of poetic justice, she takes the mystical gourd and leaves him to face the consequences of his actions, powerless and alone. Saro's rise and fall serve as a cautionary tale of how unchecked ambition and greed can lead to self-destruction. *Anikulapo* is a visually stunning and emotionally charged film that weaves themes of love, betrayal, power, and fate, offering a rich tapestry of Yoruba mythology and culture. It is a story of second chances, moral dilemmas, and the ultimate price of ambition.

## Application Of Drone Imageries In *Anikulakpo* (2022)

Drone shots in *Anikulapo* are strategically deployed to provide a sense of place, amplify emotions, and visually symbolize the character's journey, cultural heritage, and the mystical elements of the story. The movie started with an image of a big black smoky bird soaring in the sky, then a transition to a low-angle shot of the bird in the sky.

The wide-angle shot of a big black smoky flare bird hovering in the sky is a powerful and symbolic cinematic device. From both a digital film theorist and a creative perspective theorist standpoint, this scene can be critically analyzed for its aesthetic and narrative significance. From the above image, the wide-angle shot serves to establish an expansive visual frame, capturing the bird's ominous presence and its dominance over the landscape. The use of drone technology enhanced the shot's depth and perspective, offering an aerial view that accentuates the bird's mysterious and supernatural qualities. The black, smoky appearance of the bird symbolizes impending doom, chaos, or a metaphysical force, aligning with traditional African mythological representations often explored in Nollywood epic narratives. The bird's movement across the sky, combined with its dark, smoky aura, evokes a sense of foreboding and heightens the dramatic tension in the scene.

Visually, the smoky texture surrounding the bird enhances the mystical and surreal aesthetics of the film, blurring the line between reality and the supernatural. This creative choice contributes to world-building, reinforcing the film's epic and mythological tone. The high



contrast between the bird's dark form and the bright sky creates a striking visual effect, drawing the viewer's attention and emphasizing the bird's symbolic role in the narrative.

From a narrative perspective, the bird may serve as an omen, a harbinger of significant events to come, or a representation of a spiritual or ancestral force watching over the characters. Its movement across the sky could signal a transition in the story, marking a shift from peace to conflict or from the physical to the metaphysical realm. The slow, deliberate pace of the drone shot allows the audience to absorb the scene's symbolic weight, giving the bird a near-mythical status. Therefore, the aesthetic use of this wide-angle drone shot combines visual beauty with deep symbolic meaning. The choice of framing, the smoky visual effect, and the bird's flight create a visually arresting image that enriches the film's narrative and contributes to its overall atmospheric tension and mythical undertone. This demonstrates how Nollywood epic films successfully integrate digital technology with traditional storytelling, offering audiences a unique blend of cultural heritage and cinematic innovation.

Another drone shot is the wide aerial shot of Saro lying lifeless on the ground. This drone shot offers a detached, almost omniscient perspective, capturing the vulnerability and isolation of the character within a vast and indifferent landscape. From the perspectives of a digital film theorist and a creative perspective theorist, the shot holds significant aesthetic and narrative meaning. The wide aerial shot creates a sense of scale, emphasizing Saro's small, lifeless figure in contrast to the expansive surroundings. This visual choice reinforces themes of helplessness, fate, and mortality, commonly explored in epic narratives. The use of drone technology enhances the cinematic experience, giving the audience a godlike vantage point—a metaphorical all-seeing eye, which could also be interpreted as the perspective of the supernatural bird introduced earlier in the story. This technique heightens the emotional resonance of the scene, making Saro's predicament feel both personal and universal. The composition of the shot is carefully crafted, with Saro positioned centrally, drawing the viewer's focus to his body while allowing the surrounding environment to tell its own story. The vastness around him symbolizes his disconnection from life and society at that moment, evoking a sense of abandonment or punishment. The aerial view distances the viewer emotionally, encouraging an analytical rather than empathetic response, which aligns with the detached gaze of the supernatural forces at play in the narrative.

From an aesthetic standpoint, the lighting and color grading in this shot likely play a crucial role in conveying the mood. If the lighting is dim or the colors are muted, it enhances the somber and fatalistic tone. Conversely, if the lighting is bright, it may symbolize an ironic juxtaposition between life and death, or the transition from one state of being to another. The natural environment surrounding Saro, perhaps a barren field or dry landscape, adds texture and realism to the scene, grounding the mystical elements in a tangible setting. Narratively, this drone shot functions as a crucial turning point, marking a moment of vulnerability or transformation. The elevation of the shot signifies Saro's fall from grace, while the bird's eye view represents both surveillance and judgment. It captures not just the physical state of Saro but also hints at the metaphysical implications of his actions, serving as a precursor to the events that follow.

In summary, the aesthetic use of this wide aerial shot in this scene combines symbolic storytelling with visual artistry. It effectively blends modern digital filmmaking techniques with traditional narrative elements, offering viewers a compelling and layered experience. The



shot underscores Saro's mortality and his relationship with fate, nature, and the supernatural, creating a memorable and meaningful moment in the cinematic narrative.

The third drone display shows that the aesthetic use of drone shots is evident through the combination of an establishing wide-angle shot of a thick forest, followed by a high-angle shot of a village entrance. These two shots serve complementary narrative and artistic functions, creating a visually immersive and thematically significant experience. From the perspectives of a digital film theorist and a creative perspective theorist, the sequence encapsulates both the practical and artistic potential of drone technology in epic cinematic narratives. The initial wide-angle establishing shot of the thick forest sets the tone and context for the story. It conveys the grandeur and mystique of the natural environment, which is often a key element in Nollywood epic narratives. By using a drone, the filmmaker achieves a sweeping perspective that captures the depth and density of the forest in a way traditional camera setups cannot. The movement of the drone over the forest creates a dynamic visual experience, symbolizing a journey or transition from the unknown into the domain of the village. From a creative perspective, the forest serves as a metaphor for mystery, danger, or the untamed aspects of life, while the fluid drone motion mirrors the story's unfolding or the arrival of external forces into a previously isolated world.

The high-angle shot of the village entrance provides a dramatic shift in perspective. It frames the village in a way that emphasizes its vulnerability and interconnectedness with the natural surroundings. This elevated vantage point gives the viewer a godlike perspective, reinforcing themes of fate, surveillance, or predestination. From a digital film theorist's standpoint, the use of drones allows for seamless transitions between expansive and intimate scales, enhancing the narrative by blending the macro (the forest) with the micro (the village). The high-angle view also creates a sense of hierarchy, where the village appears small and defenceless compared to the looming forest—a visual metaphor for humanity's fragility in the face of nature or external threats. From an aesthetic standpoint, the interplay of light and shadow in these shots is crucial. The thick forest likely features patches of sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a textured and layered composition that adds depth and realism. The transition to the village entrance could use contrasting lighting to draw attention to the cultural and human aspects of the story. The drone's movement, which starts from a hovering, exploratory motion over the forest to a steady framing of the village and creates a narrative rhythm, inviting viewers into the world of the story while building tension or curiosity.

Furthermore, the use of drone shots in this sequence underscores the filmmaker's creative vision. The juxtaposition of the forest and village serves not only as a visual contrast but also as a thematic bridge, suggesting a relationship between the untamed and the civilized, the mystical and the mundane. The fluidity and scale of drone imagery enhance the storytelling, providing an immersive experience that traditional filming methods may struggle to achieve. In this wise, the aesthetic use of drone shots in these scenes effectively combines narrative depth with visual sophistication. The establishing shot of the forest introduces a sense of grandeur and mystery, while the high-angle shot of the village entrance conveys vulnerability and thematic resonance. Together, these shots utilize the full potential of drone technology to create a cinematic experience that is both engaging and meaningful, embodying the rich visual and narrative traditions of Nollywood epic filmmaking.

Another drone shot begins by sweeping through the mountain terrain, capturing the vast and rugged landscape. This sweeping movement not only introduces the audience to the grandeur



of the setting but also establishes the mountain as a significant symbol within the narrative. The vastness of the terrain reflects the magnitude of the journey undertaken by the king's wife and Anikulapo, signifying a moment of transition or transformation. The natural elements, such as the rocky slopes and cliffs, highlight the characters' struggle and determination as they ascend to the mountain's peak. As the drone shot steadies on the figures at the top of the mountain, it creates a powerful visual contrast between movement and stillness. This transition marks a pivotal narrative moment, where the steady framing emphasizes the emotional and physical climax of their climb. The top of the mountain symbolizes a place of power, freedom, or revelation, and the drone's steady perspective reinforces this sense of achievement or impending change. The decision to use a wide-angle drone shot allows the audience to experience the scene from a god-like vantage point, evoking feelings of awe and heightening the dramatic tension. This perspective positions the characters as small figures against the immensity of nature, emphasizing their vulnerability yet hinting at their resilience and strength.

Furthermore, the drone's movement reflects the emotional and psychological states of the characters. The initial sweeping motion conveys a sense of urgency and adventure, while the stabilization at the peak suggests a moment of reflection or resolution. The drone shot becomes a visual metaphor for the characters' journey, with the climb representing their struggle to overcome obstacles and the mountain peak symbolizing a moment of triumph or revelation. This blend of natural beauty and human endeavour resonates with the audience, creating a deeply immersive experience.

In addition to its narrative function, the drone shot adds a layer of visual poetry to the scene. The interplay between the landscape and the characters enhances the scene's epic and mythological tone, aligning with African cinematic traditions that treat nature as both a setting and a symbolic force. The drone shot captures the mountain as a character in its own right, embodying strength, endurance, and mystery. By combining sweeping movements with a steady frame, the scene achieves a rhythmic balance that mirrors the characters' journey, reinforcing both the story's emotional core and its visual splendour. From a creative perspective, the drone shot functions as an artistic tool that embodies the characters' emotional journey. The elevated angle could symbolize triumph, stability, and control over their destiny, particularly in the context of their past hardships. The composition of the shot—whether the house is framed centrally or off-axis—can further reflect the emotional weight of the moment. If the movement of the drone is slow and sweeping, it enhances the feeling of admiration and satisfaction, allowing the audience to share in their joy. Additionally, lighting and colour grading in the aerial shot can influence perception; warm, golden hues might suggest comfort and fulfillment, while cooler tones could hint at underlying tensions or uncertainties. This shot, therefore, is not merely an aesthetic choice

### **Synopsis of Dare Olaitan's *Ile Owo* (2022)**

*Ile Owo* (2022) is a Nigerian psychological horror film directed by Dare Olaitan. The story follows Busola, a young woman from a middle-class family whose desire to find love leads her into a dangerous relationship. She meets Tunji, a wealthy man who seems perfect at first glance. However, as their romance progresses, Busola discovers dark secrets tied to Tunji's family, including their involvement in ancient rituals and blood sacrifices for power and wealth. The film explores themes of greed, love, betrayal, and the supernatural, as Busola must choose between wealth and her survival when faced with a terrifying truth.





### **Application Of Drone Imageries in Dare Olaitan's *Ile Owo* (2022)**

The use of drone imageries in *Ile Owo* is a significant aspect of its visual aesthetics, contributing to the storytelling and creating a captivating visual experience for the audience. Directed by Dare Olaitan, the film employs drone shots not merely as decorative cinematic techniques but as essential tools for establishing mood, enhancing suspense, and giving depth to the narrative. From the opening scenes to the climax, the drone imagery plays a vital role in reinforcing the film's dark, psychological, and supernatural themes.

The first drone shot in *Ile Owo* is a powerful cinematic device that goes beyond mere visual spectacle. It establishes setting, reinforces thematic undertones of control and surveillance, contrasts spatially with the film's confined horror, and positions Lagos as a living, breathing force in the narrative. This interpretative layering makes the use of drone cinematography an essential tool in Olaitan's storytelling, elevating *Ile Owo* beyond conventional horror tropes.

In the opening sequence of *Ile Owo*, drone shots provide an expansive view of the city, offering a contrast between the bustling urban environment and the isolation that the protagonist, Busola, feels within her personal life. The aerial shots capture the vastness of the cityscape, subtly foreshadowing Busola's journey into a larger and more complex world than she anticipated. This visual technique gives the audience a sense of perspective while emphasizing the duality between the visible, everyday world and the hidden, supernatural realm that she is about to encounter.

As the story progresses and the tension builds, the drone imagery becomes more deliberate in creating a sense of unease. The camera often hovers above isolated locations, such as Tunji's family mansion, which is framed in such a way that it feels foreboding and almost like a trap. The high-angle drone shots of the mansion and its surroundings reinforce a feeling of surveillance and entrapment, suggesting that Busola is constantly being watched and that escape might be impossible. These shots visually reflect the themes of control and manipulation that permeate the film, while also giving the audience an omniscient perspective, heightening the suspense.

One of the drone shot in *Ile Owo*, presents a wide-angle aerial perspective of Lagos city, focusing on its industrial area where Busuola's workplace, the hospital building, is situated. This shot is significant in establishing the geographical and socio-economic setting of the narrative, reinforcing themes of modernity, urban tension, and structural contrast within the film's environment.

From an aesthetic standpoint, the wide drone shot provides a panoramic view of Lagos, capturing the vastness and architectural diversity of the city's industrial sector. The shot's left-angle perspective introduces a dynamic framing technique, allowing the audience to appreciate the layers of urban development, from towering buildings to the network of roads and industrial infrastructure. This composition contrasts the rigid, structured environment of the city with the more organic, unpredictable elements of Lagos life, subtly hinting at the underlying tension in the protagonist's journey. The positioning of Busuola's hospital within this industrial landscape further emphasizes her role as a character navigating the structured yet demanding realities of urban life.

From a Digital Film Theory perspective, this drone shot exemplifies the technical capabilities of aerial cinematography in storytelling. The use of a wide-range shot ensures that the



environment itself becomes a character, giving the audience a deeper understanding of the protagonist's world beyond the hospital walls. The drone's movement across the industrial skyline helps to establish a sense of place, scale, and atmosphere, reinforcing the city's imposing presence over the characters. Additionally, the contrast between static buildings and moving elements like vehicles and human activity enhances the realism and dynamism of the shot, creating an immersive viewing experience.

Creatively, this drone shot serves a symbolic purpose within the film's narrative. The expansive yet isolating cityscape mirrors Busuola's emotional and psychological state, reflecting her struggles within the structured, often impersonal world of her profession. The hospital's placement within the industrial setting further emphasizes the tension between duty and personal turmoil, a recurring theme in the film. The high, detached perspective of the drone shot may also represent a sense of surveillance or fate, suggesting that forces beyond the protagonist's control shape her journey.

The wide-angle drone shot of Lagos' industrial area in Ile Owo is more than just an establishing shot—it is a visual metaphor for the protagonist's reality, highlighting themes of urban structure, personal struggle, and systemic constraints. Through aesthetic composition, digital film technology, and creative symbolism, this shot effectively immerses the audience in the film's world, reinforcing the psychological and environmental stakes faced by Busuola.

During scenes involving ritualistic practices, drone shots are used to capture the rituals from above, giving the audience a god-like viewpoint. This choice of perspective enhances the eerie, mystical atmosphere of the film. The slow, sweeping drone movements contribute to the suspense and build tension, leaving the audience anticipating what might happen next. The aerial shots of the ritual grounds, surrounded by dark woods, evoke feelings of isolation and danger, visually amplifying the stakes in the narrative. The juxtaposition of light and shadow captured by the drone imagery further highlights the film's dark tone and emphasizes the supernatural elements at play.

Dare Olaitan's Ile Owo employs drone cinematography as a crucial storytelling device, as seen in a wide shot of Lagos city from a right-angle perspective, establishes the setting. This drone shot is not merely an aesthetic choice but serves multiple interpretative functions within the film's narrative and thematic framework.

## **Conclusion**

The aesthetic considerations of drone shots in Nollywood films reflect the industry's growing commitment to improving production quality while maintaining cultural relevance. Drone technology has allowed Nollywood filmmakers to expand their visual storytelling techniques, creating films that are not only visually stunning but also thematically rich. By using drone shots to showcase Nigeria's landscapes, create fluid movements, and enhance symbolism, Nollywood directors are redefining the aesthetic language of African cinema. As drone technology continues to evolve, its impact on Nollywood films is likely to grow, contributing to the industry's ongoing transformation into a global cinematic force. In this case, the study concludes that drone imagery has significantly reshaped Nollywood's visual storytelling, offering filmmakers greater creative flexibility and elevating production value. While drones have enabled breathtaking visuals, their misuse can undermine the integrity of a film's narrative. The research underscores the need for intentionality in using drone shots, ensuring



they align with the film's thematic and emotional core rather than serving as mere visual spectacle.

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