



## **MAC 441**

### **DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

You are welcome to MAC 441: Documentary Film Production. This course is designed for communication students in the school of Arts and Social Sciences. It is designed to help you acquire knowledge in the area of film production, especially on how to handle documentary films. Students who have gone through this course would be able to know the meaning of film or motion picture. They would also be expected to trace the history or origin of films. Students would also be exposed to the various types of films before delving finally into the Documentary aspect of films. All issues in Documentary films – the technical and non – technical members, production details, editing etc will all be x-rayed in this course.

At the end of the course, the students will therefore be expected to have mastered the crucial elements of Documentary film production. Due to the nature of this course, the students are expected to produce one Documentary film as evidence of their mastery of the course. This is because the course is more practical than theoretical in nature.

This course guide provides you with the necessary information about the contents of the course and the materials you need to be familiar with for proper understanding of the subject matter. It also provides you with the knowledge on how to undertake your Tutor – Marked Assignments (TMAs).

In all, this module will help students appreciate the principles underlying all aspects of film especially, the Documentary film and how to produce one. This is because the course will aim at exposing students to all the basic details involved in film production. Students will therefore acquire the skills needed to be successful film producers, directors, actors and actresses, as well as good film editors.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE**

Documentary film production is a course designed to equip you with the basic principles of film production. The course will first of all help you understand the meaning of film, the history of film and how film came to Nigeria. This is what the first module will contain. In this first part, you will know the notable individuals behind the invention of film and how film finally became a medium of mass communication. Other modules look at types of films, and examples

of films before specifically delving into the Documentary aspect of films. Production principles will be handled in the last modules since one cannot go into this area without a proper understanding of the basics of film. As have been mentioned earlier in this section, you are expected to produce a Documentary film at the end of the course. You cannot therefore complete this course without showing a well produced Documentary film as evidence that you have been taught this course.

## **STUDY UNITS**

MAC 441 is a 3 – credit unit 400 level course for mass communication students. There are five modules in this course and each module is made up of five units. Thus, there are twenty-five units in the whole text. The five modules and the five units in the course are detailed as follows:

### **Module 1     Take Off Point**

- Unit 1        Meaning of film
- Unit 2        History of film
- Unit 3        Principles of film form and film style
- Unit 4        Classifications of film
- Unit 5        Components of film

### **Module 2     Understanding Documentary Film**

- Unit 1        Defining the documentary film
- Unit 2        Types of documentary films
- Unit 3        Purpose of documentary films
- Unit 4        Developing ideas for documentary films
- Unit 5        Developing the documentary outline.

### **Module 3     Documentary Film Production**

- Unit 1        Documentary film production methods
- Unit 2        Documentary film production requirements
- Unit 3        Writing the documentary film script
- Unit 4        Production personnel for the documentary film
- Unit 5        Getting set for a documentary film production

### **Module 4     Editing in Documentary Film Production**

- Unit 1        Meaning/definition of editing
- Unit 2        Modes of editing
- Unit 3        Functions of editing
- Unit 4        Editing principles
- Unit 5        Basic effects in editing of films

**Module 5 Performing Criticism of a Documentary Film**

Unit 1	Understanding film criticism
Unit 2	Types of criticism
Unit 3	Functions of the film critic
Unit 4	Tips for film criticism
Unit 5	Writing the criticism: the three basic steps

Each module has a listing of the units introduction, a listing of the objectives, main content including self – Assessment Exercises (SAEs) and one Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA).

**TEXT BOOKS AND REFERENCES**

There is a list of relevant reference materials at the end of each unit. You are expected to consult as many relevant materials as possible because this will help you in attempting the given exercises.

**ASSESSMENT**

Self – Assessment Exercise (SAEs) and Tutor – Marked Assignments are the two types of assessments required in this course. Your answers to SAEs are not meant to be submitted. They are designed to help you assess and acquaint yourself with the contexts of each unit. They are therefore important for your understanding of the course content. The Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs) on the other hand, should be answered and kept in your file for submission and marking. This will count for 30% of your total score in the course.

**TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

At the end of every unit, there is a Tutor – Marked Assignment which you should answer as instructed, and be kept in your assignment file for submission. However, this Course Guide does not contain any Tutor – Marked Assignment questions. They are provided from unit 1 module 1 to unit 5 module 5.

**FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING**

Final examination for MAC 441 will take three hours and carry 70% of the total course grade. The examination questions will reflect the SAEs and TMAs you have already worked on. You are therefore advised to study your SAEs and TMAs carefully before examination.

## **WHAT YOU NEED FOR THE COURSE**

A brief review of what you were taught in all broadcast courses and introduction to film, will help you in this level. In this stage, you are expected to have mastered the basics of all communication courses. The practical aspects of what you have been taught is expected now

In addition, you master the art need to purchase one or two of the recommended texts, especially those within your reach. You are also advised to always watch the local television stations in your area and distinguish documentary programmes from other programmes aired daily in television stations. Watching these documentary programmes will help you think of the types of documentary programme to produce as a requirement in this course. So, try and watch and study documentary programmes as they will guide you in your own class production.

## **FACILITATORS/TUTOR/TUTORIALS**

Fifteen hours of tutorials have been mapped out for the course. Dates and locations, name and phone number of the tutor, as well as your tutorial group, will be made available to you very soon. It is the responsibility of your tutor to mark and comment on your assignments, so, send in your TMA promptly and contact your tutor in case of any difficulty with your SAE, TMA or grading of the assignment.

## **CONCLUSION**

This is a theory based course but you will be given practical exercises. In fact, you must submit a documentary programme produced by your group at the end of the semester. This may be recorded in a DVD or VHS and be submitted to the tutor. This is for classroom purposes aimed at equipping you with the art of producing a documentary programme. The talents and materials for the documentary must be locally sourced from your immediate environment to reduce cost. This will also help your tutor test your ability to select good programme materials and check how “nosy you are for news”

Goodluck as you master the art of becoming a good documentary producer.

# MAIN COURSE

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## **MODULE 1 TAKE OFF POINT: OVERVIEW OF FILM**

This module is the take – off point for this course. It contains the basics you need to know in the course especially as it regards film. You need to understand what film is before moving into what a documentary film is. The essence of beginning with the concept of film therefore is to prepare you for the upcoming tutorials.

In this module, which contains five units, you will be introduced to the concept of film or motion picture, the history of film/motion picture, principles of film form and film style, and the various classification of films. The last unit describes the components of films. It could therefore be seen that the five units are linked together. At the end of this module, you would have been prepared for the upcoming tutorials and would have captured what the concept of film or motion picture is all about.

Unit 1	Meaning of film/motion picture
Unit 2	History of film
Unit 3	Principles of film form and film style
Unit 4	Classifications of film
Unit 5	Components of film

## **UNIT 1 MEANING OF FILM/MOTION PICTURE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Definition of film/motion picture
  - 3.2 What is persistence of vision
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further studies.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The main thrust of this section is to expose you to the concept of film or motion picture or motion picture film. No matter how it is being put, we mean the same thing. So in this course, film means the same with motion picture and motion picture film as given to it by Mamer (2009:3). You will be exposed to the definitions or descriptions of film or motion picture by various scholars and at the end, the theory

upon which the concept of motion picture is built will be x-rayed. This is the theory of the persistence of vision. This unit therefore, serves as the foundation upon which the course is built. You are advised to give it the necessary attention it requires.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Know the meaning of film or motion picture
- Know the theory of persistence of vision
- Know the meaning of phi phenomenon
- Know why film/motion picture is possible
- Know the roles of film in society.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Definition of film/motion picture**

Film is an art with a long standing history. It could be defined as a record of an image upon a sensitive material called cellulose through the action of light (Kogah, 1999). It is a medium of mass communication whose main component of production technology are the camera and editing equipment; the film projector being the main reception technology, (Anunike, 2005). To Uwakwe (2010), film comprises of individual frames which when shown in rapid successions gives the viewer the illusion of motion. According to Bittner (1989), the motion picture is a medium of mass communication which has touched every segment of the society, has touched and dealt with every subject and has reached every audience. And because some film makers combine entertainment with instruction, films make learning process more pleasurable. It could therefore be described as an art as well as a business which makes those who create it take pride in their creations. It is a significant medium of communication of ideas designed to entertain as well as inform its audiences (Biagi, 2002). Films are illusion of motion which could be used to teach people about history, science, arts, human behavior, culture, health and many other aspects of life.

All these definitions and descriptions of film or motion picture clearly show that films fulfill many roles in the society which are (a) they educate, (b) they enlighten (c) they inspire (d) they play back history (e) provide opportunity for social interactions (f) and they provide platforms for academic works.

### **3.2 What is Persistence of Vision**

Film comprises of individual frames which when shown in rapid successions gives the viewer the illusion of motion. The flickering between films is not visible due to an effect known as persistence of vision. Persistence of vision is the very foundation on which motion picture is based. It is a theory propounded in 1824 by Peter Mark Roget, a scientist and a French national. This theory states that when still photographic frames are projected at the speed of 2 frames per second, there is bound to be an illusion of motion. This is likened to a mirage on a tarred road on a sunny afternoon. Just as there is no real water on the road, there is also no motion on the screen. This happens because at a particular speed, say the normal speed of 24 frames per second, the eye can no longer continue to notice the difference between successive frames resulting in the illusion of motion.

In this theory, Peter Roget explains that the human eye retains an object or image for some fractions of a second when the object has been removed and kept out of the viewer's eye. This persistence of vision creates an illusion of motion. It is so described because what the eye sees is not real moving images but rather an illusion of motion resulting from rapid succession of countless still photographs. This phenomenon can be further explained thus.

Because the viewer is looking at the pictures persistently with full concentration, the subconscious gives the illusion of movement that never be. In other words, due to intermittent recording coupled with a given speed of projection, the persistence of vision forces the subconscious mind to make wrong interpretation that turns out to be an illusion of movement.

This phenomenon, ie persistence of vision is quite different from the phi phenomenon. Although, these two, (phi phenomenon and persistence of vision) are the two quirks of the human perceptual system which make motion pictures and television possible, (Dominick, 2002). Phi phenomenon as described by Dominick (2002) refers to what happens when a person sees one light source go out while another one close to the original is illuminated. To our eyes, it looks like the light moves from one place to another.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Film no doubt is a medium of communication which has come to stay. It has been described by many scholars as a record of an image upon a sensitive material called cellulose through the action of light. Films perform many roles in the society ranging from health, science, arts, to education, culture etc. The concept of motion picture or film was

made possible by two quirks in the perceptual system of human beings. These are persistence of vision and phi phenomenon. While persistence of vision holds that the eye retains an image for some fractions of seconds (one-tenth of a second) after the image is taken away; phi phenomenon refers to what happens when a person sees one light source go out while another one close to the original is illuminated.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit focused on brief discussion of the concept of film or motion picture. Emphasis was laid on its definitions as well as on the two phenomena upon which the concept of film was built. Roles of film in the society were also enumerated and Peter Mark Roget mentioned as the person who propounded the theory of persistence of vision in 1824.

### SELF – ASSESSED EXERCISE

Study the definitions of films given by various scholars. Define film in your own way.

## 6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Differentiate persistence of vision from phi phenomenon.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING.

- Anunike, O, (2005). "Film Criticism: Theory and Application" In V. Agbanu and C. Nwabueze (eds.) *Readings in Mass Communication: Global perspectives on communication issues*. Owerri: Top shelve publishers.
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- Uwakwe, O. (2010). *Introduction to Mass Communication in the Digital Age*. Onitsha: Base 5 publishers.

## **UNIT 2      HISTORY OF FILM**

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- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Tracing the History of film
  - 3.2 History of film in Africa
  - 3.3 History of film in Nigeria
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further studies

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is aimed at exposing you to the various historical backgrounds of film starting from the actual birth of film into the world, its advent in Africa and finally how it all started in Nigeria. There are many versions when tracing the history of film. But in this course, various views of authors with similar opinions have been summarized so you can understand it better.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, students would have known the following:

- The advent of film into the world.
- The notable figures/personalities who contributed to the development of motion picture
- How film came to Africa
- How film was brought into Nigeria.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Tracing the History of Film**

The invention of photography as stated by Uwakwe (2010) played a big role in the history of film. Joseph Niepce was the first person to make practical use of a film and camera around 1816, though his images lasted for short time. But as regards motion picture, two people were noted to be trying to capture and portray motion between 1870s and 1880s. The first as explained by Hanson (2005) was Etienne – Jules Marey. Marey wanted to measure and transcribe motion, starting with blood and heart and then, moving on to how animals

move. She succeeded in doing this. However, Biagi (2003) stated that in 1882, Marey perfected a photographic gun camera that could take 12 photographs on one plate, which happens to be the first photographic gun camera. British photographer, Eadweard Mudbridge, was the second to capture the motion of animals on film. Both Marey and Mudbridge had influence on Edison who is now credited with developing the motion picture industry in the United States of America.

The real stage for the development of a projected image was set in

1877. Leland Stanford, the former California Governor, needed to win a bet he had made with a friend. Convinced that a horse in full gallop had all four feet off the ground, he had to prove it. He turned to Eadweard Mudbridge, a known photographer of that time who worked on the problem for four years before arriving at a solution.

So, in 1877, Mdbridge arranged a series of still cameras along a stretch of racetrack. As the horse sprinted by, each camera took its picture. The resulting photographs won Stanford his bet put at 25,000 dollars, (Biagi, 2003).

As a result of this success, Mudbridge began taking pictures of animals and humans and his photos were published in 1887 in a book titled "Animal Locomotion", (Hanson 2003). In 1888, Mudbridge met Thomas Edison, an inventor who saw the economic potential in what Mudbridge was doing and invented a better projector. Edison and his assistant, William Dickson later came up with a motion picture camera that took 40 photographs per second. Thus Edison's Kinetograph arrived and this facilitated the development of cinema. Thomas Edison later invented the kinetoscope which was better than the kinetograph but which did not project movies to a large crowd.

The lumiere Brothers, Louis and Auguste, made the next advance. In 1895, they patented their cinematograph, a device that both photographed and projected action, (Baran, 2002). Edison recognized the advantage of the cinematograph over his kinetoscope and invented the vitascope, a machine that projected moving pictures on a screen large enough for everybody in the theatre to view simultaneously.

Dominick (2002 :228) stated that Edison's and Lumiere brothers movies were largely reproductions of "weight lifters lifting, acrobats tumbling, jugglers juggling, babies eating etc and so with time, the novelty become less attractive for the audience. Edison porter, an Edison company cameraman saw that film could be a better story

teller with more artistic use of camera placement and editing. His 12-minute “The Great Train Robbery” produced in 1903 was the first movie to use editing, intercutting of scenes, and a mobile camera to tell a relatively sophisticated tale.

In 1915, D.W. Griffith released the “Birth of a Nation”. The 3-hour epic film took six weeks in rehearsal and nine weeks in shooting. Hanson (2005) said the film portrayed African Americans as nothing but beasts and in response to the ensuing controversy, two African American brothers, George and Noble Johnson made films that presented a more realistic and accurate presentation of the African Americans in the film titled “The Realization of Negro’s Ambition” (Dominick, 2002:229).

Other landmark developments soon followed between 1914 and 1925, there were more than 1,500 percent increase for the cost of a feature film. This was also the period at which Hollywood came up with sound films. Although historians disagree on the first sound film, Warner Brothers are variously considered the first, and they are: “Don Juan, The Jazz singer and lights of New York” (Baran, 2002:208). By 1927, many theatres were equipped and by 1939, “Gone with the wind” came with new Technocolour film. In 1941, Orson Welles directed “Citizen Kane” which some critics consider “the best American film ever made” (Dominick, 2002: 234).

Later 1940’s came with the second world war but in the late 1950s, the studios started to adjust to the reality that film and television had actually come to stay. The 1960s and 1980s marked a closer affiliation between film and television. In 1978 for instance, Hollywood made around 180 films for television and two dozen more produced for motion picture theatres, (Dominick, 2002). The movie industry experienced decline but in 1975, Stephen Spielberg came up with “Jaws” while the production of “Titanic” in 1997 brought great change seen in the movie industry up till this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **3.2 History of Film in Africa**

Rouch in Uwakwe (2010) stated that film arrived Africa in 1896 through a Vaudeville magician who stole a theatregraph projector from the Alhambra Palace theatre in London and took it to South Africa where he later introduced the first moving image on the continent. The first films made in Africa were exotic and they reinforced the initial stereotypes about Africa as a “dark continent of wild beasts, cannibals, primitive and backward people who grow tails

and idle away time in the jungle” (Rouch in Uwakwe, 2010:105). This distorted image of Africa in the early films has been attributed to selfish motives and ignorance on the part of the Europeans. In fact, “Negro Cruise” was the first film about tropical Africa made by Leon a Frenchman, during his first motor-car trip from North Africa to South Africa in 1924 and 1925, (Mgbejume 1989). The film told the story of Poirier’s adventure. However, the life of the people he saw enroute was also portrayed in the film. The film revealed details of circumcision rites, and depicted an unusual aspect of pygmy life.

### **3.3 Birth of Film in Nigeria**

History of film in Nigeria could be dated back to 1903 during the screening of first motion picture in Lagos. The film was shown by one Balboa of Spain under the management of Herbert Macaulay. When Balboa left Nigeria in September 1903, an European, Stanley Jones began showing films at the same venue. In 1907, the Catholic Priests in Lagos began showing films about the life of Jesus. The film portrayed Judas as a man with a dark skin while Simon Peter was a man of a lighter skin. By 1921, film had become a very popular means of entertainment in Lagos, (Mgbejume, 1989).

In 1920s, instructional films were introduced into the country and by 1929, some local experiments were made on the use of film as an instrument for the dissemination of government health policies by two colonial government officials namely: W. Sellers in Nigeria and A. Paterson in Kenya (Smyth cited in Shaka, 2004).

During the world war II, the British used films as a medium of dissemination of war information. Generally, it could be pointed out that film production started late in Nigeria, long after film distribution had gained popularity. It was only in 1947 that the Nigerian government established its own film unit, the Federal Film Unit which replaced the Colonial Film Unit (Mgbejume op. cit). A Federal Ministry of Information Mimeograph (1978:2) identified the main objectives of the Federal Film Unit as the production of newsreels and documentaries for mobile cinema units, public cinema and television. Its films were designed to accomplish the specific goals of:

- (a) Publishing the activities and objectives of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
- (b) Helping to educate the public on methods of improving its way and standard of living.
- (c) Portraying the achievements of the Nigeria culture and informing the public of news events within and outside Nigeria.

The Federal Film Unit attempted to meet these objectives. But Indians and Labanese who also distributed predominantly foreign films dominated the distribution chain. But in 1972, the Indigenization Decree of 1972 was promulgated. The decree gave exclusive monopoly of film distribution to Nigerians but “nothing was done to enforce it” (Sambe, in Uwakwe 2012). In recognition of the need to enforce it, the Federal Government in 1979 promulgated the Decree NO. 61 of 1979. It established the Nigerian film corporation as a statutory body charged with the responsibility of “developing the film and video censors board came into being via Decree NO. 85 of 1993. The Decree repealed the cinematograph Act of 1963. The NFCVB is a “regulatory agency for local films and foreign films and video works supplied for commercial exhibition and home viewing (NFVCB, 2008:8).

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Photography played a major role in the invention of motion pictures. It all started with Joseph Niepcie’s first image in 1816 which lasted for short time. Every other major development throughout the world centered around this gentleman up to this present day. America took the bull by the horn and sharpened the history of film but while the history of film in the western world had very pleasant surprises, the history of film in Africa started with a stolen theatregraph projector from the Alhambra palace London by a Vauderville magician who brought film to South Africa. Nigeria embraced film lately but the Nigerian film industry, Nollywood could be said to be the leading champions in the whole of Africa. At least, something to beat or diffuse the ugly past with.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

The emphasis of this unit is on the history of film in the world, Africa and Nigeria. The unit has successfully summarized various versions of the history of film as narrated by many scholars.

#### **SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE**

Read the history of film in Nigeria thoroughly and try to narrate the story to someone else.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Critically examine the contributions of individuals mentioned in the world history of film. Identify the individuals that made very interesting contributions in the advent of film.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 3     PRINCIPLES OF FILM FORM AND FILM STYLE**

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- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main content
  - 3.1    Understanding film form
  - 3.2    Understanding film style
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading.

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Film is not just an art but a performing art borne out of strong and orderly imagination. Film form and film style are aspects of film aesthetics. A critic judges a film based on the form and style adopted while producing the film. They are the principles used in assessing how beautiful or how bad a film is. This unit is aimed at looking at the principles of film form and film style.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, students would have known the principles of film form and film style. Specifically, they will understand the following:

- The meaning of film form
- The meaning of film style
- The principles of function, similarity, difference and variation, development and unity and disunity.
- The cinematic techniques.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Understanding Film Form**

Film form according to Bordwell and Thompson (2004:54) is “a system of relationship that we can perceive among the elements in the whole film”. Element in this context is a small but necessary part of the film while the system is a unified set of related interdependent elements that depend on and affect one another. Such elements are acting, directing, light, costume, sound, music, etc. The thrust of the

matter is that each unit of the film is essential and should be considered in relationship to the whole and at the same time, the overall context of a movie can make any element significant, (Anunike, 2005).

There are no laid down rules or regulations on the form to be adopted while producing a film. This is because film art is artist's perception, and imagination and all artists do not share the same experience and cultural background. Hence, movies do not have the same form. But the general principles of film form are discussed and perceived under functions, similarity and repetition, difference and variation, development and unity/disunity.

- **Function**

Every element in a film fulfils a function or a role. There must be a justifiable reason why an element is chosen. For instance, why is a particular costume or sound effect adopted in a particular scene and for a particular character and not for another one. The viewer must therefore be able to rationalize the function of an element in a film.

- **Similarity/Repetition**

Repetition of an element draws attention to it and makes it significant. Another name for repetition is motif. This creates parallelism, which in turn gives pleasure to the film viewer. Film form also makes use of universal similarities and specific repetitions.

- **Difference and Variation**

Similarity and repetition could be very boring and lead to disinterest in the film. To avoid this, variation is brought in. so variation and difference in film form and analysis refer to the addition of variety. After all, variety they say, is the spice of life.

- **Development**

Every good film has an order. From the beginning, middle and then the end or concluding part. This is why producers segment films into shots, scenes, episodes and acts in order to appreciate their differences and similarities as its overall plot progression.

- **Unity and Disunity**

A film achieves unity when the relationships in the film are clear and in synergy. However, a disunited film develops illogically and elements are superfluous and sometimes have no known synergy unity and disunity should be used to with regards to films formal convention. For instance, it is wrong to judge absorb film as lacking in unity.

### 3.2 Understanding Film Style

It could be seen that film form refers to the principle by which a film is structured. However, film form cannot be discussed independent of its style or the technique adopted in structuring it or in laying its outline. Bordwell and Thomson (2004:175) outlined four techniques or styles as: Mis-en-scene, cinematography, shot-to-shot, and sound in cinema styles or techniques.

- **Mis-en-scene**

The director's control over what appears in the film is known as Mis-en-scene. Aspects of mis-en-scene include setting, costume, make-up, lightening, movement and acting. There is also mis-en-scene in space and time.

- **Cinematography**

Like in mis-en-scene, the film-maker controls what is filmed and how it is filmed. This is known as cinematography. The cinematography aspects of film include:

- (a) The photographic aspects of the shots
- (b) The framing of the shots and the duration of the shots

- **Short –to – shot technique**

A film contains thousands of shots framed out of sequence, hence there is a need to co-ordinate one shot with the next in sequential order. This is the essence of editing. It is during editing that these shots are arranged sequentially and necessary ones that may likely distort or disorganize the order removed. It is also during editing process that unwanted footage and superfluous frames are eliminated.

- **Sound in the cinema technique**

Sound in another film technique or style which engages a distinct sense mode, shapes how images are perceived and interpreted, directs attention to the image and gives a new value to silence. Sound, sound effects and music synchronization are carefully used with other elements to achieve a greater aesthetic value in the film.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The above discussed styles or techniques as well as the film forms make film a distinct medium of communication which is quite different from other media of communication.

Film form simply refers to how a film is structured bearing in mind the various elements like acting, directing, lightening, costume, music, sound etc. but film style refers to the technique adopted in

structuring the film. The four techniques or styles developed by Bordwell and Thompson (2004) were carefully enumerated and discussed.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, effort has been made to explain the various elements that are considered in film form and the styles or techniques adopted in structuring a film. The functions of sound in films were also x – rayed.

### **SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE**

Critically study the form and style adopted in any film of your choice.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Briefly explain why films are segmented into shots, scene, episodes and acts. Page limit: 1page.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

- Anunike, O. (2005). “Film Criticism, Theory and Application in V. Agbanu and C. Nwabueze (eds.) *Readings in Mass Communication*. Owerri: Top shelf publishers.
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## **UNIT 4 CLASSIFICATION OF FILM**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main contents
  - 3.1 Film Genre
  - 3.2 Functions of film Genre
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The film medium is a technical revolution which has transformed the creative sensibilities of artistes, from the “make belief” scenic constructions on stage to “real – life” presentations on the screen. But all films are not the same. Films have been classified in various ways.

This unit aims at enumerating and discussing the various classes, genres of films and the functions which a film genre performs in film analysis.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, students are expected to know and understand:

- How to define a film genre
- The various categories of film genre
- The functions which film genres perform
- The factors that influences the functions of film genres.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Film Genre**

The New Webster Dictionary of the English Language (1997) defines genre as kind, type or category especially of works of art and literature. Similarly, Barnhart and Barnhart (1988) define genre as kind, sort, or style especially in art or literature. It is therefore an

index for the classification of artistic materials such as films, drama, music, dance and even literary works. It is used in determining the specific type of classification, into which a work of art can be

categorized. It provides the template for analyzing the characteristics of artistic presentations so that an understanding can be achieved, as to the specific kind of work that is assessed, (Owuamalam, 2007). Although films are classified according to types, there is only a thin wall between one genre and another, which is hardly noticeable, hence it is easier to recognize one than define it, (Anunike, 2005). Notable film genres according to scholars like Anunike (2005), Owuamalam (2007), and kogah (1999), include the following: Westerns, gangsters, musicals, war films, thrillers, spectacles, science fiction and Horror films. Others are documentary, feature, experimental and animated films. These genres are discussed in the upcoming paragraphs.

- Westerns.

This was the first America genre to develop. Since then, it has remained a staple of the motion picture industry in that country. The Westerns delve into the mythical American past and deals with the justification of violence sometimes resulting in loss of lives in the process. Examples are *Cowboys, outlaws, settlers and tribes of native Americans*. Others are based on songs, popular and wild west shows on the American frontier.

- Gangstars

From the 20<sup>th</sup> century, films about organized gangs and the violence that accompany them have been one of the most popular genres. Its popularity was as a result of the introduction of sound into film. The screeching powers of high speed auto chases; the staccato rattle of automatic machine guns, and the chattering and smashing of breaking glasses gave a sense of the gangstars' level of destructiveness. The gangster film is closely tied to real facet of American life.

- Musicals

This genre emerged in late 1920s with the invention of sound tracks. Musicals deal with a fantasy land and the consummation of love. Almost all the musicals centre on the love relationship between two characters. One typical example of a musical is the one titled "love boat" shown on NTA Aba in the 80s. It was all about love relationship between actors.

- War Films

War films have received popular acclaim for two major reasons. First, wars have occupied much of contemporary world history. Second, and most importantly, war as a subject matter is well suited to what film can do best. For instance, the tension and energy leading up to the scenes of combat, the wide ranging battle fields, the explosion that raise buildings to the very foundation level, the destruction of men

and tanks, the eruption of fire, and the conclusive forces that spew out smoke, could all be captured by modern film technology.

- **Thrillers**

These films rely heavily on the literary source of their materials. Ian Fleming was the author of James Bond novels from where the contemporary thrillers originate. The films are lit as though they were comedies unfortunately; the bright lights, beautiful girls and luxurious setting form an ironic contrast to the menacing evil hidden by all those beauty. Thriller films are also called spy films or detective films.

- **Spectacles**

Spectacles are among the most profitable American genres. They come with big budget productions and focus mainly on the production values rather than on story, character and mood. The two most popular kinds of spectacles have been historical epics and disaster films. They all try to create the impression that they are works of authentic history rising above mere fiction. Biblical stories have become a veritable source of material for spectacle films.

- **Science Fiction**

The science fiction sometimes combine certain elements of horror and disaster. However, they are quite distinct in their purest forms. For instances, the science fiction film developed after the World War II. This time, the film ceased to be considered as a mere fantasy for children. Ever since, it began to reflect the atomic age, space travel and the wearisome discoveries of advance science and technology. As the science fiction developed, the films agreed that the dangers of the future seemed not from sources outside man's control. The films tell viewers about a successful trip to the moon and in contrast, the consequences of atomic destruction.

- **Horror**

The horror film is known for its emotional shock, disgust and reel on the audience. The appearance and texture of the film make full use of the expressive possibilities of the film medium. The extreme contrasts, of the dark and light settings, the ominously moving camera eager to zoom in or out on some shocking discovery, the tilted angle of the frame expressing a sense of disorientation, the use of low angle shots to express domination, or high angle shots to depict submission, all create a film form that sets its audience into various moods.

- **Documentary films**

Anunike (2005) emphasized that all film genres fall into two major categories of documentary and feature films. A documentary film is a film that basically presents factual information (non – fiction) about persons, places and events and about the world outside the film that is trustworthy. In such films, the filmmaker may present the event as they actually occurred using charts, maps, or other visual aids or he/she may stage some events and record them.

- **Feature film**

This is any film that is theatrically produced for the entertainment of the viewers. Unlike the documentary film, that deals with factual information and events in the society, feature films are usually fictional in nature. Even when the plot is non – fiction, the characters, treatment and staging cannot be easily recognized with a particular individual, society etc.

- **Experimental Films**

This came about through the effort of filmmakers who set out to challenge established conventions of what a movie is and how it is made. It is self – expression or experimentation that is a total departure from the film forms and styles. Another name for experimental film is avant – garde film.

- **Animated film**

Conventionally, the live – action shooting speed of films is 24 frames per second. But animated films do not frame an on – going action in real – time. Animators merely produce many images by shooting one frame at a time. When projected, the images create illusionary motion distinct from live action films. This manipulation (Animation) can be achieved by means of two-dimensional drawings, three-dimensional objects of electronic information stirred in a computer.

### **3.2 Functions of Film Genre**

The genre performs specific functions which makes it possible to identify its significance to the literary and creative art. It enables the assignment of meanings and interpretation of events, in the screen art of films, videos and movies. It aids society to aggregate efforts towards a specific production style that can transmit a processed message through a film type. However, these functions are influenced by several factors like culture, society, environment, and science. Details of these functions as examined by Owuamalam (2007) are as follows:

- **Cultural Factors**

The totality of life in a specific environment, attests to culture. It means that those plots which portray the activities of people in their cultural milieu, provide the required template for assessing and understanding the cultural values of a society. The genre, therefore reaffirms the cultural attributes of a given society.

- **Social Factors**

Genre explores social values and attributes, it is common to experience the life – style of an artist in a film and how reactions influence actions of others in the film and the viewers at home. It portrays such qualities like wealth, grandeur, and opulence as social indicators of followership as organizational expectations, genre jealousies, intrigues and betrayals as sources of social conflicts as examples of social considerations in genres.

- **Environmental Factors**

The social conditions of the society are brought to public glare through film genre. It shows how stories, theme, values or imagery of the genre, harmonises with the life in the immediate environment where the film is produced or cast. For instance, corruption, prostitution, and religiosity are common themes in Nollywood films. They depict the environmental conditions of their productions.

- **Science or Scientific Rationalism**

This consideration was given as a product of the scientific age of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It deals with the reason behind an action, deduced in a rational and logical order. It is an argument or an incisive enquiry into a creative work of art, based on reasoning. Empirical or scientific deductions form the template for assessment in scientific rationalism. Also, actions are subjected to rational tests and deductions. The essence of the scientific rationalism approach is to put artistic work under the test of intellectual and rational evaluation

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Film genre is an index for the classification of artistic materials such as films, drama, music, dance and other literary works. It is used in categorizing all works of art. Based on the forgoing, the following film genres emerged: documentary, feature, animated films, and experimental films. Other popular genres are westerns, gangsters, musicals, war films, thrillers, spectacles, science fiction and horror films. All these film genres perform specific function of aiding the society to aggregate efforts towards a specific production style that can transmit a message through a film type. But this major function is influenced by factors like culture, environment, science and society at

large.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit x-rayed the major genres of films and the functions these genres perform. The factors that influence these functions were also discussed in details.

### **SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE**

Go through all the film genres and identify the prevailing ones in Nollywood.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

List and explain five social and environmental issues that mostly influence movie themes in Nollywood.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Anunike, O. (2005). "Film Criticism: Theory and Application" In V. Agbanu and C. Nwabueze (eds.) *Readings in Mass Communication*. Owerri: Top Shelve Publishers.

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## **UNIT 5    COMPONENTS OF FILM**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Components of Film
  - 3.2    Film Theories
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Studies

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

The previous unit dealt with film genres and functions of film genres. It is therefore necessary to conclude this module with film component. Film components are vital aspects of every film as well as the theories that guide the production of films. This is the essence of this unit. It is aimed at discussing the components of films and the theoretical foundations of films.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

It is expected that at the end of tutorials in this unit, students would have a good mastery of:

- The components of films
- Film theories
- The four film histories
- Three elements of setting.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Components of Films**

All films tell stories. And for the stories to be understood, they must be woven around the basic film components of theme, plot, characters, language and setting. These components are discussed in details as follows:

- Theme

The theme is the main or the central idea which the film writer wants to communicate through the script. This theme could be overtly or covertly presented through dialogue directions, description of characters and setting. There is need for film critic to comment on the theme of the film he/she writes on.

- **Plot**

The plot is story that the scriptwriter tells. More than that, it is the structure, the plan of the story, the arrangement of the shots, scenes, episodes, incidents, acts and the overall film. It has the following elements: exposition, conflict, complication, crisis, climax, flashback, point of attack, suspense etc. every good plot has a beginning, middle and end. A film critic includes, in the work, a plot, a summary of the film in about a page. He looks at the plausibility or otherwise of the plot, the sequence and knitting to achieve a synergy.

- **Characters**

The characters in a film are the characters about which a story is told. They include human beings, gods, spirits, animals etc. character essentially means character's idiosyncrasies, distinctive qualities, desires that he/she exhibits through actions, dialogue, language, and scriptwriter's directions. Character can be portrayed or delineated through its external, internal and objective characteristics (Mgbejume, 2002). The two major characters in a film are the protagonist (the lead character) and the antagonist (any character that stands against the protagonist). Others are seen as minor characters.

- **Language**

This refers to the scriptwriter's way or method of communicating his/her work to the viewers. This could come in the following ways: diction, semantic, syntax uses, proverbs, idioms, adages, symbols, gestures, dialogue, aside, monologue etc. It also concerns or refers to thought, appreciate choice of words easily spoken of (Duraku, 1997).

- **Setting**

Film setting refers to the representative of the natural location, locale of the film. It is the habitat of the characters. Setting has three elements namely:

- (a) Physical setting of the script
- (b) General significant occurrence, which grows out of a character's social, moral, and cultural intercourse within each of the settings and
- (c) The atmosphere, which embodies the emotional characteristics of each setting, (Mgbejume, 2002).

### **3.2 Film Theories**

Every when critically assessed must be anchored on a theory. Giannatti (1999:438) gave a list of theories which can be used in appreciating a film.

The theories are as follows:

- **Theory of Realism**

This theory applies mostly to documentary films. Films that are based on this theory represent elements as they are in real life.

- **Formalist Theory**

This theory postulate that movie is unlike real life. It is based on the principle that films do not represent or reproduce reality. However, with manipulation of time and space occasioned by the modern techniques, films could produce a world that resembles real world only in a superficial sense.

- **The Auteur Theory**

This theory states that films ought to be assessed on the basis of how and not what. The auteur theorists like the formalists, hold that what makes a film is the stylist treatment i.e the director's use of mis-en-scene, the cinematography, editing and sound.

- **Electric and Synthetics Theory**

The exponents of this theory maintain any films should be assessed in any context deemed fit by a critic. They oppose the use of any theory to interpret or assess a film, rather arguments with concrete facts are proposed. This theory is however criticized due to its subjectivity.

- **Structuralism and Simiology Theory.**

This is the introduction of scientific approach to film assessment; which allows more systematic and detailed analysis. The exponents of this theory note that language of cinema is symbolic with complete signs, hence, they come out with cinematic communication based on signs and codes.

- **Historiography**

This theory has to do with the theory of history, because films have histories. Giannetti (1999: 465) identified four film histories, each with its own set of philosophical assumptions, methods and source of evidence as follows:

- (a) Aesthetic film histories – film as art;
- (b) Technological film histories – motion picture as inventions and machine;
- (c) Economic histories – film as an industry and;
- (d) Social histories – movies as a reflection of the author's values, desire and fears.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Film components consist of theme, plot, characters, language and setting. Theme is the main idea which is conveyed in the structure or plan of the story. Characters depict the persons or things about which a story is told. Language is the scriptwriters' method of communicating with the viewers while setting refers to the locale of the film. Films are enched on theories such as the theory realism, formalist theory, auteur theory, electric and synthetics theory, structuralism and simiology theory and finally, the theory of historiography. These film theories have four basic histories namely aesthetic, technological, economic and social histories.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit dealt with theoretical aspects of film. The theories that guide the assessment and appreciation of films were discussed. Components of films as well as the four histories of films were also enumerated and explained.

### **Self – Assessed Exercise**

Critically watch any film of your choice and identify its components.

## **6.2 TUTOR -MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Study at least five Nollywood films and write out the theories upon which they could be assessed.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

- Duraku, A.B.C (1997). *A handbook on drama and theatre*. Owerri: Colon concept
- Giannetti, I. G. (1999). *Invitation to the theatres*. New York: Harcourt Barcel and world Inc.
- Mgbejume, O. (2002). *Dramatic TV, film and scriptwriting*. Jos: Redeemer house publishers.

## **MODULE 2 DOCUMENTARY FILM**

Documentary films could be described as an integral aspect of television programmes. Documentaries are aired almost on daily basis in most television status. This is why they are important in every stations programme schedule because they provide in depth analysis and interpretation of events in the society and are used in educating, entertaining, informing, and in retaining the attention of audiences of most broadcast stations.

This module is aimed at discussing important topics that will help all students, especially you, in understanding what a documentary film is and how to write a documentary film script. You are expected to pay attention and use the knowledge of all you have been taught in module one concerning films. This is because you need this knowledge to fully grasp what this module is all about. As you will see, documentary film is simply a type of film under film genres as has been emphasized in module one, unit four.

This module is therefore divided into five units as follows:

- Unit 1        Defining the documentary film
- Unit 2        Types of documentary films
- Unit3        Purpose of documentary film
- Unit 4        Developing ideas for documentary films
- Unit 5        Developing the documentary outline

### **UNIT 1        DEFINING THE DOCUMENTARY FILM.**

#### **CONTENT**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Defining the documentary film
  - 3.2    Differences between a documentary and a feature film
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

As has been stated earlier, a documentary film is an aspect of a film genre. Under the categories or classifications of films, documentary film is one of the most commonly produced film which is aired for most television audiences all over the world. This is due to the nature of documentary films. They are used to depict the prevailing trends in the society whether negative or positive and are based purely on factual events, not fictions. Real events, real people and real places are portrayed in the film. For this reason, documentary films are important aspects of every television programme schedule. The essence of this unit is basically to help you understand what a documentary film means.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through the tutorials in this unit, it is hoped that you would have:

- Known the meaning of a documentary film
- The proper way of defining a documentary film
- The difference between a documentary film and a feature film.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Definition/Meaning of a Documentary Film.

The word, “documentary” was first coined by John Grierson, popularly known as the father of the British documentary. He used the word to describe Robert Flaherty’s film “Moana” produced in 1962. But the word, documentary, comes from a French word “documentaire”, which is a term used by the French to refer to “travel” (movie) pictures. John Grierson described documentary as the creative treatment of actuality. So basically speaking, documentary is a term that can be applied to all non-acted films. They are films based on actualities. Hence the earliest films which had no story lines were considered documentaries, (Kogah, 1999).

A documentary film, properly defined is a film hinged on actualities, and based on actual facts, (Anunike, 2003). As defined by Nworgu (2010), a documentary is a non-fiction programme which suggest reality. It could, however, use dramas which provide fictional accounts of real events (docu-drama). This involves the dramatization of real events. A documentary could also be described as a creative treatment of actuality or creative interpretation of actuality. Some scholars describe documentaries as current historical accounts. A look at Nwanwenne’s definition of what a documentary is, shows

that documentaries are not just historical accounts. This scholar defines documentary as:

All methods of recording on celluloid, any aspect of actuality interpreted either by factual shooting or by sincere and justifiable reconstruction so as to appeal either to reason or to emotion for the purpose of stimulating the desire for and the widening of human knowledge, and understanding and of truthfully posing problems and their solution in the spheres of economic, culture and human relations.

All documentaries, no doubt, have dramatic appeals. They also develop and reveal characters. They therefore offer insights and revelations about people and the world about us.

### **3.2 Differentiating a documentary from a feature film.**

A feature film is primarily designed for entertainment purposes. This does not preclude in all entirety some elements or traces of information and education. The feature film runs for over seventy- five minutes usually between ninety and one hundred and twenty minutes. They can also be distributed to cinema houses. All feature films are fictional in nature, using professional actors to drag home some points. Although feature films are relatively fictional in nature, they still may be based on real lives of people or an actual events, contemporary or historical. But a documentary film is basically based on facts. It uses ordinary people and real places and events. Staged events are not used in the story line. They are therefore, all non-acted films, (Kogah, 1999)

In documentaries, the filmmaker is attempting to interpret his/her subject for the viewers, rather than ordinarily showing a pictorial record of things, people or places of interest. The main object of a documentary is analysis. Such analysis is based on real events as recorded by the camera lens. Granted that a documentary presents a kind of truth, since it is said to be the presentation of actual events, such a truth is the one as shaped by the filmmaker. The professional film man does this job through his/her approach to photography, editing, sound recording, narration and all other skills of his/her trade.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Documentary films present factual events, places and things as portrayed by the camera lens and shaped by the filmmaker. It is quite different from a feature film in the sense that feature films are mostly fictional while documentary films are all non-acted films. The filmmaker in documentaries, provides analysis for his/her viewers

but in feature films, viewers are left to make their own analysis. Analysis in documentary films are based on the real events recorded through the camera lens. Documentary films have shorter duration than feature films that could last up to one hour and twenty minutes.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit discussed what a documentary film is. Thus, related concepts and various definitions of media scholars, that would help you understand the meaning of documentary were also discussed. This unit also provided a detailed description of the major differences between a documentary and a feature film.

### SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE

Study the definitions of documentary as provided by authors whose works were cited in this unit. Is there any difference or similarity in their definitions?

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

In a one-page writeup, give your own definition of documentary and differentiate a documentary film from a feature film. Ability to give examples of each attracts a special mark.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2      TYPES OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Different types of Documentary films
  - 3.2 Documentary film formats
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Documentary films are categorized into several types depending in the nature of issues treated in the film. But no matter the category into which a documentary film belongs, it must be a creative treatment of actuality or creative interpretation of actuality. They are facts about how people or animals live in their various environments. It revolves around plants, animals, human beings and how they interact with beings or objects in their immediate environment.

This unit is designed to help you understand different categories or types of documentaries.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of tutorial in this unit, you are expected to know:

- Examples of each category of a documentary film
- Different types of documentaries
- Film formats in documentaries
- What a film format means

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Different Types of Documentary Films**

Documentaries as emphasized by Owuamalam (2007) are artistic productions made for the consumption of broadcast audience. They are produced for the screen medium. Kogah (1999) give five classes of Documentaries as naturalist, realist, newsreel, propagandist and the cinema verite documentaries. A detailed discussion of these classes of documentaries is provided as follows:

- The Naturalist Documentary

These are the documentaries that make use of their natural surroundings and everyday scenery. The naturalist film makers make drawings and symbols of the mountains, rivers, deserts, erosion gullies, sand dunes and forests of all kinds so as to tap natural emotional values. The essence of using these natural phenomena is simply to depict nature. Two of the most representative films in this category most representative films in this category are the “Nanook of the North” and “Man of Arah”.

The “Nanook of the North” was written and directed by Robert J. Flaherty in 1922. Flaherty used the film to capture the daily lifestyle of the people of Nanook. The film which was made in the rugged icy regions of Canada portrays a hardy nomadian and his family struggling against nature and travelling from place to place in search of food and shelter. They survived against all odds just like the cattle nomads of the Northern Nigeria and the fish settlers of the Niger Delta who follow the movement of the fish. Flaherty’s creative treatment of the film subject brought him fame and made the technical aspect of documentary film making very popular.

Two other personalities like John Grierson and Walter Ruttmann, followed Flaherty’s lead in making films from naturally existing situations.

- The Realist Documentary

The use of photographs to high light contradictions of life in the cities and rural areas produced the realist tradition in documentary film making. The film maker would show the poor and the rich, clean and dirty environments, as well as other points and counter-points which are prevalent in urban and rural areas, to drag home a point.

Albert Calvanti is one of the most recognized film directors in the realist tradition. Alberto’s “Rien que les Heures” (Nothing Passes time” produced in 1926, broke new ground as he attempted to show what the passing of time is like in the city of Paris. David Griffith and his other colleagues see the film as the first attempt to express creativity in the life of people in a city and urban environments.

- The Newsreel Documentary

A film that presents the events of the day in a straight forward manner, with little or no elaboration for effect, is in the newsreel tradition. A typical newsreel filmmaker has no special viewpoint, an approach quite different from that of most documentary filmmakers who portray events for a special purpose. Whereas newsreel reportage does not take much time and may be accomplished

without much thought, the documentary requires full contemplation.

The present day investigative or specialized reporting and the usual bare news reporting are typical examples of documentary film approach in the newsreel filmmaking. But the investigation reporting takes pretty time to accomplish while the normal bare news reporting can be done with minimum time and concentration.

- The propagandist Documentary

The use of film as a persuasive instrument to elicit a particular effect on an audience is the key to the propagandist tradition. Propaganda, according to Harold Lasswell in Agbanu (2005) in this regard, refers to the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols such as clinched fist, elevated eye brow, sophisticated gestures, powerful words and body movements. The propagandist uses various strategies including arguments and persuasion.

Soviet filmmakers were among the first to use film for political propaganda. For instance, the rise of communist ideology in the Soviet Union coincided with the perfection of the documentary. It was therefore natural that the young nation used film to promote its special view of the world. Communist ideology has remained indelible in the minds of most Russian citizens despite the splitting of the former Soviet Union into different states.

Sergei M. Eisenstein's "October" produced in 1928 and V.I Pudovkin's "Deserter" produced in 1939 are the two notable films that used familiar images and persons to create a unique propagandist impact. The propaganda film probably reached its peak during the Second World War. On one part, the German film makers were eager to influence the masses in support of the Third Reich. On the other hand, American and British filmmakers told the world of the exploits and heroics of the "Allied Troops" against the German war machine, (Kogah 1999: 36).

- Cinema Verite Documentary

The rise of cinema verite brought a boom to documentary films. Films in this category reveal the power of an event to speak for itself. Frederick Wiseman is perhaps the most effective member of the cinema verite school. Wiseman's fascination is with institutions and his emphasis was on editing rather than planning in order to document factually without intrusion of social and political narration.

The film maker dispenses with the narrator's voice and allows the situation itself to tell the story.

Frederick Wiseman achieves his objectives by allowing the camera to rove much as the human eye would naturally do with little or no pre-planning. Wiseman's "High school" produced in 1965, his "Tital Follies" of 1967, his "Law and Order" of 1969 and his "Hospital" produced in 1970, all explored every aspect of the functioning of traditional institutions. What makes cinema verite popular in recent times is the portability of camera equipment plus audiences distaste for the preaching films.

In cinema verite, the film maker is able to gather all the evidence needed to communicate a message. In the contemporary society, the documentary filmmaker continues with the tradition of presenting a viewpoint with a naturally occurring phenomenon.

### **3.2 Documentary Film Formats**

This connotes the film's physical characteristics such as the size, the packaging and whether it is silent or sound film. The size of film can be measured in millimeters (mm). This is the standard measurement. Film sizes range from 8mm, normally used for domestic purposes, to gigantic 70mm, which is used on some wide screen feature films. For television film production, only three sizes are used. They include 35mm, 16mm and super 8mm. 16mm is the most common among the three while 35mm is mainly for professional productions, (Kogah, 1999).

The 35mm is used in the prime time entertainment programmes. The size of this format produces exceptionally beautiful pictures.

However, it is rarely used for most video film productions since only the network and a handful of television stations have 35mm projection capability.

The 16mm format is the industry standard for local television film production and projection. It is less expensive than 35mm, yet the various professional film stocks available in 35mm are also present in 16mm. Again, 16mm production equipment is completely professional and comparable to the quality of 35mm equipment. Finally the 16mm equipment is comparably lighter and more portable.

Super 8mm is increasingly becoming very popular in view of its low cost alternative to 16mm. Consequently, it is used by relatively smaller stations and production studios. Although the 16mm is less expensive than the 35mm films, it is no doubt an expensive and

costly medium in comparison with the super 8mm film. Granted that the super 8mm does not in any way compare favourably with 16mm, both in picture quality and production flexibility, it does not however produce acceptable pictures as in the case of its superior 16mm film. In spite of this drawback, the super 8mm finds good use with satisfactory results at smaller stations and production studios. This is based primarily on its simplicity and low cost of the equipment.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The categories or classes of documentary films are the naturalist, the realist, newsreel, propagandist and the cinema verite documentary. The naturalist documentaries dwell on natural surroundings and everyday sceneries. The realist documentaries use photographs to highlight contradictions of life in cities and rural areas. Documentaries in the newsreel category present events in a straight forward manner with little or no elaboration for effect, while propagandist documentaries use persuasive elements to elicit a desired effect in their audiences. The cinema verite documentaries, simply, allow the objects or events in the film to speak for themselves.

Documentary films mostly come in various formats of 35mm, 16mm and super 8mm. The format to be adopted depends on the producer's choice or taste for quality, finance at his/her disposal and the capacity and size of the television station.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit examined the different classes of documentary films. To this end, all the types of documentaries were discussed and examined. Example of each category, the writer, director or producer as well as the year of production of each mentioned film were also x-rayed. This unit also discussed the various formats for documentary films and their features and advantages.

#### **SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE**

Critically examine the various categories of documentaries discussed in the unit. Could you think of an example of at least two most common category prevalent in Nigerian television stations.

## 6.2 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Study the naturalist and the newsreel classes of documentaries. List at least three topics or issues that could best be treated under each category. Give reasons for your answers. Page limit = 2

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Agbanu, V. N. (2005) "Propaganda and Public Opinion" In V.N. Agbanu and C.D Nwabueze (eds.) *Readings in Mass Communication*. Owerri: Top shelve publishers.

Kogah, V.C (1999). *Visual Communication, Film, Graphics, Photojournalism*. Owerri: Gust – Chuks publishers.

Owuamalam, E.O (2007). *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri: Top Class Publishers.

## **UNIT 3      PURPOSE OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Purpose of documentary films
  - 3.2 Importance of documentary films
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Documentary films are not just produced in a haphazard manner for the fun of it. They are well thought of and organized in a manner that must communicate something of significance to the viewer. For this reason, every documentary film has key objectives or purpose why it is produced. This unit aims at discussing the purposes for the production of documentary films. The importance of documentary films were also x-rayed.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of tutorials in this unit, you are expected to know:

- The purposes or objectives of documentary films
- The importance of documentary films.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENTS**

#### **3.1 Purpose of Documentary Films**

A documentary filmmaker sets forth “not simply to register events and circumstances, but to find the most moving examples of them” (Bluem, 1972:10). It is so because every documentary is dramatic. It adds an artistic dimension to journalistic and societal aims. It aims at one or more of the following objectives or purposes:

- To provide socially useful information or basically to inform the audience. The essence may be to arouse human interest to take a remedial action, on the observed lapses in the human environment. The documentary provides relevant information through compelling pictures and images. It deals with the focused subject so that the issue raised would be appreciated

and understood. For instance, the weekly news presentation on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) network service on Saturdays titled “week-end file” mirrors an aspect of the Nigerian society that requires public attention and consideration. One of the editions as captured by Owuamalam (2007) dealt with the fate of the textile industry in Nigeria. It showed how the industry has virtually collapsed with the decline in the number of textile factories, from more than 200 in the 1990s to less than 40 in 2006, how the workforce has reduced from more than 300,000 workers to less than 20,000 within the same period. It also showed how the cotton farms have been neglected and the yarn machines abandoned. It explains why the scarcity of finished Nigeria prints has led to the smuggling of textiles and fabrics, even now that the materials are currently banned for importation into the country. It brings the travails of the industry to the fore and advocates a socio-economic actions that can return the industry to its previous glorious moments of boom.

Other purposes of documentaries include

- To persuade the audience to take remedial action and to inspire or lift.
- To convince people to accept a new idea or to develop a new opinion or attitude.
- To persuade the audience to carry out a specific course of action.

A given documentary can accomplish one or more of the above objectives. If however it is well organized, it will be primarily aimed at accomplishing one of them, (Willis, 1967)

### **3.2 Importance of Documentaries**

The documentary film is important and very crucial to broadcasters and media professionals for many reasons. Firstly, it gives them a chance to use the broadcast media to explore the significant issues in their immediate environments, rather than expanding their resources on what may be frivolous and ephemeral.

Secondly, it provides opportunities for experimentation and the exercise of one's ingenuity not often possible in such formula- obsessed fields as drama and comedy.

Thirdly, it allows broadcasters the opportunity to re-experience creativity, outside the realm of typologies often associated with specific production formats. It allows the freedom to explore the various attributes of performance, as a communication strategy, designed specifically for the audiovisual medium.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Documentary films are specifically produced for the purposes of informing and providing socially useful information, persuading the audience to take remedial actions, to inspire, to lift and to convince people to adopt or accept a new idea or to develop a new opinion or attitude. They could be produced for the purpose of reinforcing an existing opinion or attitude and to help the audience carryout a specific course of action. They are therefore important because they allow broadcasters the freedom to exercise the creative potentials inherent in them and to explore their immediate environments.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined the purpose or objectives behind the production of every documentary film. These objectives were examined and example given to show how a documentary could be used to offer solution to a societal problem. The importance of documentary films to broadcasters were also discussed.

## SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE

Do you agree on the purposes behind the production of documentaries? Are they justifiable?

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Watch “weekend file” on NTA. It is a network programme of NTA aired on Saturdays. Identify the type of documentary aired in the edition you watched and enumerate the purposes for the documentary.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Bluem, W. A (1972). *Documentary in American Television*. Chicago: Brown Company publishers.

Owuamalam, E. O. (2007). *Screen and Film Directing*. Owerri: Top class publishers.

Willis, E.E. (1967). *Writing Television and Radio Programmes*. Chicago: Holt Rinechart and Winston Inc.

## **UNIT 4     DEVELOPING IDEAS FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Contents
  - 3.1    Ideas for documentaries
  - 3.2    Research for the documentary
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further REadings

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

The documentary film, as has been emphasized in the previous unit, follows a well thought out pattern. It does not follow a haphazard approach. The ideas are carefully chosen and organized to suit the purpose and achieve the objectives for the documentary. This unit is therefore designed to help you understand the importance of organizing ideas for the documentary and more importantly on how to develop ideas for documentary films.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorials in this unit, you are expected to know and understand the following:

- How to generate ideas for documentary films
- How to conduct research for the documentary
- The importance of research in documentaries.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Developing Ideas for the Documentary Film.**

Ideas for the documentary film according to Nworgu (2010) can be generated through any of the following:

- Personal experience.  
We experience sad, happy, bitter, sweet and memorable moments everyday both in our offices, homes, street or anywhere we find ourselves. These experiences can form the basis for a documentary programme.

- Historical events or figures  
A documentary idea could emanate from historical accounts about celebrities or celebrations. Most historical documentary is made up of partly fiction and factual things.
- Strong feelings for or against the society or events. Bad or good feelings can form basis for a documentary idea.
- A change in the societal values, norms, and social order can form material for a documentary script.

Also, the political, economic and social standard can be used for a documentary programme

- The inspiration to produce a documentary programme could also emanate from newspapers, magazines, novels, short stories, drama series etc which one has read.

### **3.2 Research for the Documentary**

The place of research in the documentary film, just like in any other aspect of mass communication cannot be over emphasized. Research provides the basic information needed to produce the documentary.

Research for a documentary programme can be divided into three. Pre-documentary project research, on – the – documentary project research and post – documentary research.

Pre-documentary research is the first research carried out to ascertain basic information concerning the documentary. This is the general phase in which the subject is explored to establish the dimensions of the programme and define areas that need further investigation. General reading is the main tool in this exploratory phase of the research.

The second phase of the research is carried out when the documentary project has been embarked on. This is the stage in which the research seeks answer to specific questions that arise during the period of the general research. This may go on throughout the preparation of the programme. This is because the writer often discovers after he has started his/her script that he/she needs further information before he/she can continue writing the script. Interview is often carried out in this stage.

The last phase of research is the post-documentary project research. It is done to ascertain how far the documentary project writer has farred in his/her work. Question on how far the purpose of the documentary has been achieved is also ascertained at this stage.

What is the attitude of the viewers towards the documentary? Are there areas that need to be improved on in future productions and are there areas where the documentary derived its strengths from? These questions are very necessary if the person(s) behind the documentary would excel in this trade.

Research is therefore important in documentary programme production because of the following reasons:

- It helps in developing the point of view for the documentary
- It helps the script writer to be conversant with the subject matter
- It helps in ascertaining the budget for the documentary
- It helps in finding who is to be interviewed, and how the interview is to be carried out.
- It is through research that the actual resources – both human and material – that will be used in the production are ascertained.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Ideas for the documentary can be sourced from different areas. It can emanate through personal experiences, through historical accounts of people and events, through strong feelings for or against the society, it can also be through a change in the societal norms and values and the finally, the inspiration can come through newspapers, magazines, or journal articles, or through novels, short stories etc. Research is therefore very important if the documentary objectives will be achieved. Research can be carried out before the documentary project is embarked on, during the period of the documentary and after the documentary project has been executed. It is therefore important in the documentary process because the success of the documentary depends on how research is carried out concerning the whole issue to be examined.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the various ways or sources through which ideas for the documentary could be generated. Research as a vital aspect of a documentary project was also discussed.

#### **Self-Assessed Exercise**

Give topics or issues that can be handled in the historical aspect of documentary.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

For a documentary on “Danger of Abortion”, list the sources where you will get information that will guide you in the production. List the questions that will help you undertake the documentary project successfully. Page limit: 2pages

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Nworgu, K. O (2010) *Introduction to Broadcasting*. In K.O Nworgu (ed.) *Mass Communication Theory and Practice*. Owerri ultimate books.

## **UNIT 5      DEVELOPING      THE      DOCUMENTARY OUTLINE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Contents
  - 3.1 Meaning/Functions of outline
  - 3.2 Questions that guide the development of outlines
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

An outline is like a blue-print that guides the production of a documentary. The success of the documentary therefore depends on how the outline is designed. A well laid down outline also makes it very easy to carryout the documentary without mistakes. This unit is designed to help you know what an outline means with regards to documentary and how to develop a good documentary outline.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you are expected to:

- Know the meaning of a documentary outline
- Define the documentary outline
- Understand the functions of a documentary outline
- Know the questions that guide the design of a documentary outline.
- Patterns of organization of a documentary outline.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENTS**

#### **3.1 Meaning and Functions of a Documentary Outline**

A documentary outline according to Nworgu (2010) and Owuamalam (2007) could be described as the presentation of the documentary story in a straight forward simple story format without the technical jargons, like light and camera movements. The scriptwriter presents the dramatic element of the story in a coherent manner and usually in present tense. Documentary outline brings out all the unity of the whole story and also the main points. However, documentary outline is not

the final working script but the scriptwriter's script containing the storyline. It is like a proposal, which tell us what the documentary is all about. It is a simple presentation made to potential producer or sponsor. After the presentation of this script or outline, the producer or director now prepares a script for the production.

Production script, on the other hand, should then have technical jargons like instructions for lighting and camera movements. The director's or producer's script contains conceptualization, visualization and pictorization of the ideas for either radio or television document production. This means that the director adds life or images to the ideas presented in the outline by the script writer.

The functions of the outline given by Nworgu (2010) are as follows:

- Makes clear the direction of the script
- Gives the story some flesh and
- Adds some emotions to the story, thereby injecting excitement which the audience will likely experience after watching the film.

### **3.2 Question that Guide the Development of the Documentary Outline**

Kogah (1999) maintains that the first step in creating an outline is to write down the ideas of the programme in a list without giving any particular thought to order or arrangement. The list should then be guided by the following questions:

- What are the main ideas to be explored in the documentary?
- What is the subordinate points?
- What is clearly the supporting material?

The responses to these questions will guide the writer in setting down the outline. For instance, a documentary "Exodus from Africa" on CNN, shows the inexplicable desperation of African youths, in passing through avoidable difficulties, simply because they desire and seek euphoria of "paradise" in the western world, which in real terms may not be the case. The documentary shows political instability, joblessness and a craven quest for affluence, as the factors that have contributed to the mass exodus of African youths from their countries. It shows the harrowing experience which the youths pass through to achieve their desires, which in most cases come with death, misery and penury in squalor and sordid living conditions. The illegal immigrants most times are repatriated from the countries, where they arrived illegally. The documentary sought to ask the youths in particular, whether the risk involved is worth the trouble (Owuamalam, 2007).

From this short outline of what the documentary “Exodus from African” is all about, you can ascertain whether the three guiding questions in the development of a documentary outline have been answered.

There are certain patterns that are followed while developing an outline. The writer, according to Kogah (1999 :45) may discover that his/her material fits into one of the following patterns of organization of an outline:

- Write the outline in complete sentence because incomplete or single words mask muddy thinking and fail to reveal, that some ideas which seem to be related are not really related after all.
- Make certain that the ideas of the programme are set down in such a way as to reveal their tone relationships. Use a consistent set of symbols to reveal which ideas are the main prints, which are subordinate, and which are equal to one another.
- Restrict the number of main points to a reasonable number.

Most programmes should have no fewer than two main points and no more than five.

- Be sure that the outline does not omit an essential step in the development of the main idea. The writer should also make certain that he/she has enough supporting material to establish his/her main prints adequately.
- Avoid the use of compound or multiple idea sentence. There should be only one simple sentence after each symbol in the outline.
- Express points as positive statements and not as questions.

When a point is introduced in the actual programme, it may be worded as a question. It has already been pointed out that such questions in outlines may hide juzzy thinking or faulty structure.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

An outline entails the presentation of the documentary in a straight forward simple story format without any technical jargons. It is like a short proposal that tells what the documentary is all about. It serves many functions that range from making clear the direction of the script, giving the story some flesh and adding some emotions to the story.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, detailed discussion on what a documentary entails has been provided. The functions as well as the questions that guide the development of a documentary outline were also explained. The patterns for the development of a documentary outline were also outlined.

### Self-Assessed Exercise

Study critically the short story line about the documentary “Exodus from African” aired by CNN. Think of any documentary of your choice, write the outline in a story format.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

In one page, briefly give an outline on a documentary to be titled “Accommodation problems in Nigerian Universities”. Adopt any pattern of your choice.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Kogah, V.C (1999). *Visual Communication, Film, Graphics and Photojournalism*. Owerri: Gust – Chuks publishers.

Owumalam, E.O (2007) *Film and screen Directing*. Owerri: Top Class publishers.

## **MODULE 3            DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION**

There are many programmes produced and aired daily in many television stations throughout the world. The essence of these programmes is to capture and retain the attention of viewers or broadcast audience. Documentary films are part of the programmes aired in most television stations. They are therefore important aspects of a station's programme schedule because they depict societal trends and provide indepth analysis and interpretation of issues to broadcast audiences.

This module is aimed at discussing important topics that will help and guide you in understanding how to produce a documentary film. Proper understanding of the contents of this module will help you in producing a documentary film that will not be rejected by any television station but will be accepted and appreciated by television stations and their audiences. The module is divided into five units as follow:

Unit 1	Documentary film production methods
Unit 2	Documentary Film production requirements
Unit 3	Writing the documentary film script
Unit 4	Production personnel for the documentary film
Unit 5	Getting set for a documentary film production

## **UNIT 1            DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION METHODS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Production methods in documentaries
  - 3.2 The place of story and treatment in documentary production
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.2 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As has been stated in the previous units, documentary films are carefully planned before they are produced. The production follows a

carefully designed pattern because it involves the record of activities that are of interest to the audience (Nworgu, 2005). Usually it starts with a treatment to the production of a shooting script, while adequate provision are made for budget. No matter the type of documentary produced, four methods stand out as the production methods. This is the essence of this unit. It is designed to help you understand the methods involved in the production of documentary films.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you are expected to know:

- The methods of documentary film production
- What studio-produced programmes are
- What specially – produced films are
- How still pictures can be used in documentary production
- The place of story and treatment in the production process

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Production Methods in Documentaries**

There are four methods that can be adopted while producing a documentary film. They are discussed as follows:

- Studio – Produced Programmes

Kogah (1999) emphasized that documentaries produced in television or film studios from completely written scripts were common just after the World War II. Since then, they have been largely replaced by programmes made of tapes or films recorded in the location where the events being portrayed actually took place. This is what documentary represents: capturing real events in the actual places where the events happened. Although documentaries were produced in studios, this is no longer the trend now since most documentaries are recorded in the actual environments where the events happened.

- Existing Film Tape

Many television documentaries are made up in whole or in part from film obtained from government archives, newsreel cuttings or other sources. In this regard, they are termed existing tapes. Programmes with a historical focus are the ones most likely to use this type of material. A film on the Nigerian Civil war can best be made using reviewed episodes in the civil war. In like manner, programs dealing with the lives of historical figures such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo, are also compiled largely from existing film, much of it being produced originally for newsreels at a time they were

making powerful speeches at political rallies, during symposia, parliamentary debates, or even budget speeches. There may also be film on the independence day celebration and the accompanying important speeches by the then President of Nigeria.

- **Specially-Produced Film**

One other major ingredient in television documentaries is film specially produced for the programme. Many documentaries are composed entirely of material made to order in this way. People who were eye witnesses to great events may be brought before a camera or microphone to record their comments. A typical example may be the Nigerian Constitutional Conference organized by the late Abacha regime. In some instances a camera or tape recorder is taken into the field to picture scenes or to capture people in situation acting just as they would, where no recording is being made. This brings to the fore, the word, actuality, which is a term often used to designate this type of documentary. In order to permit natural responses in the situation even though the artificial element of a camera has been introduced, producers developed the cinema verite technique, which makes the cameraman part of a given situation for a relatively long period of time and requires that he/she uses his/her camera unobtrusively as possible.

- **Still Pictures**

Some television documentaries utilize a succession of still images as the primary visual element. Biographies of prominent international figures like Abraham Lincoln and others have been presented in this way. Still pictures have also been employed as a secondary element in a number of programmes. Van Gogh's paintings were effectively used to tell part of that great artist's story. Still pictures can even be made to move through manipulation of camera trigger and use of special camera like boulex and proper application of Roget's theory of persistence of vision which gives an illusion of motion based on the standard rate a given number of picture frames can be passed in a second.

### **3.2 The Place of Story and Treatment in the Document Film Production Process**

The story is the basis of most films because every film starts from a story. It is the message of the film. The storyline therefore, is the representation of a plot in a cohesive and progressive manner. It introduces the subject, deals with its details and draws a reasonable conclusion from the events, emanating from the events, (owuamalam, 2007). It is a creative construction of events in a logical manner, designed to enhance believability and acceptance, from the consumer of the artistic product. A story line simply, represents the plan

through which actions and activities are executed and appreciated, in a creative work of art. But treatment describes the characters, the setting and of course, the actions. It is the first stage of a screen story.

The shooting script contains both the treatment and the story line. It is the responsibility of the director to prepare the shooting script out of the story line given to him/her by the script writer.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Documentary films as creative works of art, could be produced from still pictures, from the studio and from existing film tapes. Some documentaries can also be specially produced for a particular programme, depending on the nature of the issue involved.

Every documentary starts with a story. This story is portrayed in the story line which acts as the representation of the plot in a cohesive and progressive manner. The treatment refers to the description of the characters, setting and actions involved in the story line.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the methods of producing a documentary film. The four methods that may be adopted while producing a documentary were given detailed explanation. The meaning and significance of story, storyline and treatment were also explained.

#### **SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE**

Give brief explanation of the four methods of producing a documentary programme. Give examples of an issue that could be treated in each of the method.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT.**

Attempt a two-paged storyline for a specially produced film to be titled “keep your environment clean,” or “Stop Naria Abuse”.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Kogah, V.o (1999). *Visual communication, film, Graphics, and Photojournalism*. Owerri: Gust-chuks publishers.

Nworgu, K.O (2005). *Mass communication: A handbook of terms and concepts*. Enugu: New Generation Books.

Owuamalam, E.O (2007). *Film and Screen directing*. Owerri: Top class publishers.

## **UNIT2      DOCUMENTARY      FILM      PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objective
- 3.0 Main contents
  - 3.1 Requirements for a documentary film production
  - 3.2 Features to be included in the documentary
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.2 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A documentary is a properly researched story of a subject matter, event or person. There are therefore some requirements that aid the production of a very good documentary. This unit is designed to help you understand those things you need to produce a good documentary.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorials in this unit, you are expected to know:

- The requirements needed to produce a documentary.
- When to book interviews for a documentary
- The necessity of securing a good narrator
- The production crew in case of actual production in the studio or elsewhere.
- Features to be included in the documentary.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Requirements for a Documentary Film Production.**

Onyechi (2010:239) outlines the basic things needed by the producer for the execution of a documentary film. They include:

- Research into the viewership of the medium where the documentary is to be aired. The audience of the programme must be known because their likes, dislikes, attitude, opinion etc should be considered while deciding on the nature of documentary to be produced for them. A thorough research should also be carried out on the subject matter and on the

nature of interview to be conducted. This will help in ascertaining who the interviewees will be and how to reach them on the appropriate time.

- Scripting by the producer to cover 1/3 of duration with catchy title should also be made available.
- Interviews, interviewees and schedule for meetings should be identified and booked early for recording. Written questions should be given to the resource persons in advance.
- Back to base, the producer may need to adjust the script, creating spaces for an information obtained from the field e.g input from resource persons.
- To secure a good narrator, and select good theme, and bridge music as well as visual inputs, actors and actresses may required to re-enact the unrecorded events (archival materials not available) or events of pre-era or a docu-drama.
- A virgin tape of excellent quality should be obtained for actual production in the studio. Script (shooting script) and the production crew (graphic artist, floor manager, act or interview clips, archival library shots, location, visuals etc) should also be made handy.
- Finally, the unedited documents which have been recorded, should be edited, captioned and made ready for airing.

### **3.2 Features to be Included in the Documentary**

Onyechi (2010) gave a list of four major features to be included in a documentary film. They include:

- **Narration:**

The success of most documentaries depend on the narration. A good narrator must be hired to voice the documentary where necessary. A narrative, which deals with the soft aspect of news with some elements of drama, is necessary. The narrator, with a good voice quality, is the main character in a documentary. Actor's voice and music effects are also used to play the parts of people who are already dead or too faraway to be recorded.

- **Entertainment**

Facts must be selected, refined, ordered, organized and dramatically presented to the audience. Music, serialized drama, comics, songs etc should be included as light entertainment elements. This will help to win and sustain the interest of the audience thereby popularizing the station and the producer.

- **Sound Effects**

Apart from the narrator's voice, other forms of sound and human (actuality) lyrics, verses etc should be added to add glamour and

improve the aesthetic quality of the documentary.

- Actors and Actresses must be used where necessary. This will help to re-enact dialogues which actually took place.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

A documentary is properly researched and this means bearing in mind certain requirements that must be met before producing a documentary. The requirements range from research of the subject matter, audience, narrator, scripting to the actual production in the studio and who the production crew members and actors/actresses would be. The features to be included in the documentary are narration, entertainment, sound effects and actors/actresses dialogues where necessary.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the basic requirements needed by the producer to have a good documentary. The features or elements to be included in the documentary were also explained.

#### **Self-Assessed Exercise**

Study the requirements needed to produce a documentary. It will help you a lot in coming up with your own documentary.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Choose any documentary title of your choice, and list the requirements needed to execute and produce that documentary.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Kogah, V.O (1999). *Visual Communication, Film, Graphics and Photojournalism*. Owerri: Gust-Chuks Publishers.

Nworgu, K.O (2005). *Mass Communication: A handbook of terms and concepts*. Enugu: New Generation Books.

Owuamalam, E.O (2007). *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri: Top class publishers.

## **UNIT 3      WRITING      THE      DOCUMENTARY      FILM SCRIPT**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Writing the documentary script.
  - 3.2 Principles of the documentary script
  - 3.3 Synopsis versus shooting script
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

It has been mentioned and emphasized severally in the previous two units that the success of the documentary depends on how well the script is written. The script is like the blue-print that guides the entire production process. The producer, as well as other members of the production team, all need to know what the documentary is all about. The script is the only document that will give this detail. This unit is designed to help you understand the importance of script and how to write a documentary script.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorials in this unit, you are expected to know:

- What a broadcast script means
- Principles of a documentary script
- How to write a synopsis
- How to write a shooting script
- How narrative can reinforce the documentary effect

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Writing the Documentary Script**

The actual writing of a documentary script may be a major or minor job depending on the nature of the programme. If it is composed of film shot in the field or interviews with authorities, little work will be required. The creative work is done mainly by the production team. In any case notwithstanding the approach taken, the documentary script

is a manual conveying the programme idea. It is a broadcast script that contains both the dialogue, presentation style and the instructions that will aid in the production of the documentary (Nworgu, 2010)

### **3.2 Principles of a Documentary Script**

Script writing entails a creative presentation of an idea that brings conceptions to the bare for the mutual benefit of the source and the receiver. There are principles to be adopted and adhered to if the scriptwriter wants to deliver a script that will vividly tell the story. These principles as outlined by Kogah (1999) are as follows:

- **Gaining Attention:**

How can the scriptwriter gain the attention of audience through the script? It is through depicting the subject of the documentary in the most powerful terms he/she can device. He/she must make it vital and meaningful to an average viewer. There must be an aura of excitement and suspense in the story line. The teaser technique is frequently used in documentaries to focus the attention of the audience on the problem. The teaser may be a brief dramatic scene, or an exciting sequence excerpted from the body of the documentary.

It may yet be a statement by a person whose name and face are attention getting in themselves. Celebrities are not the only ones who can gain attention. Sometimes, the so-called “common-man” can do it if he is presented in the right way. Miscarriage of justice or abuse of human rights, for instance, can catch attention effectively by opening with a man telling the audience in a simple yet poignant way that he has spent ten years in prison for a crime he did not commit.

- **Introducing Conflict**

The documentary form does not provide an obvious opportunity to use conflict for holding attention as drama does. However, a creative and an alert scriptwriter can make use of this principle to build interest in the documentary. One method is to alternate interview with people who hold clashing opinions on a subject. Another method is to provide face-to-face confrontation between opponents. This particular method permits the development of the highest degree of conflict. It is however not so easy to control when compared to the conflict that arises from interviews recorded separately.

- **Introducing Emotional Appeals or Values**

The principal means of arousing emotional appeals to a documentary is to present the issues as they affect individuals. A writer who is content by merely making general statements is likely to leave his/her audience involved. A good example would be the ugly incidence of kidnappings in the south-Eastern part of the country. Instead of mere

telling about the consequences of kidnapping, the scriptwriter can depict it through the eyes of a survivor who narrowly escaped being killed, even after the family has paid the demanded ransom. He could be pictured walking down the scene of the incident where he was kidnapped, while two or three actors could dramatize how he was kidnapped, while his voice recorded over the scene, tell the horrible event, his pleas and cries and moans as they kicked him into their car and zoomed off. It must be a pathetic and memorable moment.

- Narration

Narration in this instance is written after the editing process is completed. This is because only then can the writer know what material needs narrative support. Narration can reinforce the effect of a documentary in a number of ways (a) it can clarify the meaning of the tape and pictures especially if the film was shot silent, that is, without sound (b) it can provide explanation but the writer should avoid saying too little or saying too much, (c) it may also provide interpretation which enriches the contribution of a filmed or taped excerpt, (d) it serves as the transition from one idea in the documentary to another; (e) finally it also enhances the emotional effect of a scene or a taped insert with a vivid sentence or an appropriate quotation.

### 3.3 Synopsis Versus the Shooting Script

The synopsis as captured by Owumalam (2007) could be likened to an abstract which summarizes the entire creative work, in an impressive form, structure and sequence. But the shooting script, captures and consists of shot numbering, camera instruction, action to be formatted and the anticipated accompanying sound.

“Never Again” is a

Storyline adapted from Owumalam (2007:137) showing example of a script.

#### NEVER AGAIN

*The world can be peaceful, in the absence of robbers, bandits, terrorists and brigands. Mark was once a humble boy, who grew in the high brow area of Duke form. He lived at Bon Plaza on the 4<sup>th</sup> street. His parents are wealthy. So, Mark lacked nothing. He always shows generosity to the less privileged members of the community. One day, Mark met Alice and John who led rascal lives that offend society. They talked Mark into smoking. They even brought alcohol for Mark and took him to clubs and casinos. They told him the benefit of belonging to secret cults and the essence of becoming a “big-boy” or even a “boss” peer.*

*Mark followed their directions at home where he smoked behind closed doors, and in toilets. At school, he joined a cult group of his choice. Some evening's he went to club with Jane. The difference was a continuous one for Mark who has just turned 25 years of age.*

*Suddenly, Jane's parents become worried that their daughter was frequently sick and vomited mornings. Jane had started being absent from school, while their examination was fast approaching. Her teacher was worried and asked other students why Jane was no longer regular at school.*

*Six months later, Jane was discovered to be pregnant. The school expelled her. Mark was involved in robbery. He was caught and paraded before the press and the community. His father fled town, blaming Mark's woes on his mother who was always protective of their son.*

*Three months later, Mark was convicted of armed robbery and sentenced to death by a firing squad. His mother was heartbroken. She watched her only son in chains, as he was taken away by the police.*

*Jane delivered her baby in a squalor, after being isolated and abandoned by her parents. There was no Mark to rest her shoulders. Her child wept ceaselessly, of deprivation as hunger set in to tell the story.*

### **3.3.2 “Never Again” as a Synopsis**

“Never again” by Emman-owums Owuamalam, is a social documentary on societal plot. The film is a story of petting, romance and self-deceit, which blossoms into deviant behavior, unwanted pregnancy and crime. It is an irony of Mark's sheltered life, which affected his response to the peer group influence of John and Alice, resulting in unwanted pregnancy, for Jane and his involvement in brutal crimes. It is a tragedy, which society should strive to eradicate in today's youths, who will be the leaders of tomorrow.

### **3.3.3 Shooting script for “Never Again”**

	Camera	Action	Sound
01	CUT CAM.1. pos. “A” L.S. BON PLAZA, Pan left to Right.	People and cars passing. BON PLAZA	Usual Street noise

02	CUT CAM.2 pos. "B" M.S. BON PLAZA	Car parked in front of the beautiful environment of a duplex where Mark lives.	
03	CUT CAM. Pos. "C" CU Marks parlour. Zoom into dinning room.	Mark and parents eating at the dinning room.	Clogging of cutleries

It could be noted that each camera has a specific role, which it has to play in imaging and provision of the appropriate audio-visual experience. The nature of shots expected are indicated as LS (Long shot) M.S (medium shot) and CU (close up shot). The transitional devices of cut, fade, dissolve and wipe, for instance, enable the movement from one picture frame to another.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The script is a manual conveying the programme idea. It contains the dialogue, presentation style and the instructions that will aid the production process of documentary. There are principles to be adhered to when writing the documentary script. They include structuring the script to gain the attention of viewers, introducing emotional appeals and using narration to reinforce the effect of the documentary.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit examined the meaning of a script and thereafter defined the documentary script. The principles that guide documentary scriptwriting were listed and discussed. The synopsis was also differentiated from the shooting script. Samples of straight forward ,synopsis and a shooting script were culled from Owuamalam (2007.142) and x-rayed to guide you while writing documentary scripts.

#### Self-Assessed Exercise

Study the three scripts sampled in this unit. Could you identify differences in the scripts.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write a straightforward script for any documentary film programme of your choice, the synopsis from the storyline and thereafter,

develop the shooting script. Page limit 3 pages.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Kogah, V.C (1999) *Visual Communication: film Graphic and Photojournalism*. Owerri: Gust-Chuks Publishers.

Nuorogu, K.O (2010) “ *Introduction to Broadcasting*” in K.O Nuorgu (ed) *Introduction to Mass Communication: Theory and practice*. Owerri: Ultimate Books.

Owuamalam, E.O (2007). *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri: Top class publishers.

## **UNIT 4      PRODUCTION   PERSONNEL      FOR      THE DOCUMENTARY FILM**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main content
  - 3.1    Production personnel in film production
  - 3.2    Problems associated with documentary film production
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Production department is an essential department in any television station. It is often headed by men and women who are talented and are professionals in various fields in film production. This unit is designed to provide you with the details of who these men and women are, their job titles and responsibilities in film production.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorials in this unit, you are expected to know:

- The personnel in every film production
- The technical crew members
- The Non-technical crew members
- The functions of all the crew members
- The difficulties encountered in documentary film production

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Production Personnel in Film Production**

The production personnel refer to the people charged with the responsibilities of producing the film. Basically, two categories of artistic charge in the production process of every film. They are the technical (Below-the-line) and non-technical (Above-the-line) artists or personnel.

Non-technical or above the line personnel consists of those who create or enable the development of the plot as the basis for an artistic production. They are therefore conceptual artists. The artists in

this category are the scriptwriter, the producer and the director. The director also belongs to the technical group, reasons for this will emerge as we give detailed explanation of the functions of each of these artists.

- The Scriptwriter

The scriptwriter is the person who conceives the idea for the film production. The scriptwriter, guided by the objectives for the film production, writes the script that will guide the entire production process and gain the attention of his/her audiences.

- The Producer

The producer is responsible for the business and financial aspects of the film. But in recent times, the producer is often responsible for the entire organization of the film including selecting the script, sourcing for fund for the production and choosing the director, crew and cast. From all indications, a producer is normally regarded as the owner of the production, be it feature, documentary or any other type of film production. He is responsible for everything about the production starting from day one to the final stage, (Kogah, 1999).

- The director

The director as has been mentioned, belongs to both technical and non-technical groups. As a non-technical artist, the director acts as a conceptual artist who creates movements in the production, assigns roles to performers and animates the script. As a technical artist, the director acts as the interpreter of the production idea, through plot and script interpretation.

- In summary, the major functions of the above – the – line or non-technical artists include: production planning, performance supervision, production monitoring, product publicity and promotion as well as presentations (Owuamalam, 2007)
- The technical crew members include the scenic designer, lighting and sound specialists, camera-men, make-up artists and wardrobe managers, talents and other production assistants.

The scenic designer as the name implies is responsible for various scenes that will be used in the production while the job of the lighting and sound specialists is to provide appropriate equipment that will be used in the production like microphones, cameras and sound systems.

- The camera – man liaises with the light and sound specialist in the selection of cameras, and other gadgets that will help in the shooting of the film.

- The job of the make-up artist and the wardrobe managers include making sure that the costumes of the talents depict the mood and characterization of the entire film. Talents refer to actors/actresses or the stars featured in the film. They are the ones who pass direct messages and convey the theme of the film to the audiences.

### **3.2 Problems Associated with Documentary Film Production**

The following are the problems experienced by the production personnel while executing the production of a documentary film. These problems, as captured by Nworgu (2010) pose as challenges that may mar the entire production process if not handled effectively. They include:

- **Lighting Problems**

In documentary shooting, especially for television, light is needed in the right proportion whether it is for outside studio shooting or for interior shooting. There is need to provide adequate lighting equipment. Power failure or irregular supply of electricity by government agency in charge of supply of electricity in Nigeria, should be anticipated. For this reason, provision should be made for a stand-by generator.

- **Personnel**

Personnel in documentary as described in this unit under section 3.1 refer to the talents available for production. For every documentary production, the two categories of personnel are needed. Both below-the-line and above-the-line artists are required for a successful shooting. Getting the right talent for a documentary has been a problem to many producers. Since documentary involves real life situations, it is necessary that real people are used in natural setting.

- **Outside Services Problem**

This problem may arise when the need to obtain certain services arises. There may be a need to obtain such services as editing, shooting, sound recording and track, projecting facilities etc.

- **Costume**

As a producer, there may be a need to obtain or design the necessary costume for the talents. Costumes are selected to match the mood or events or scenes involved in the documentary.

- **Library Materials**

There are times when one may experience scarcity of books or tapes needed for the successful execution of the production. It is therefore advisable to include this when embarking on the pre-production research. The reference materials not found in this stage, may be

difficult to get at other times.

- **Shooting Schedule**

This problem arises when the shooting script or outline is not made available before shooting is commenced. There may also be the problem of not acquiring appropriate shooting locations. Some actors/actresses may also come late to the locations of the shooting time-table is not strictly adhered to. There is therefore the need to make talents time conscious by giving them the shooting schedule on time and by adhering to the time-table.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The production process of every film entails that certain persons are behind the responsibility of executing the production. Two categories of personnel emerge as technical and non-technical artists. The non-technical artists also known as above-the-line artists include the scriptwriter, producer and the director. They are the conceptual artists who create and conceive the entire production process. The technical artists or below-the-line artists handle the technical aspects and include the camera-man, costume or ward robe designers, sound and lighting specialists, scenic designer and other production assistants.

These artists experience certain problems that range from lighting, personnel, costume, shooting problems to lack of library or reference materials as well as other the problem of not obtaining outside services for editing, recording and projection facilities.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit has successfully discussed the personnel behind the production of every film. Technical and non-technical crew members were listed and their functions discussed. The problems which may be encountered during documentary film production were enumerated and solutions to the problems proffered in some cases.

#### **Self-Assessed Exercise**

Go through all the artists described in this unit. Which one do you fit into if given an opportunity? What makes you think you can fit into that category?

#### **6.2 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Choose between being a scriptwriter, a producer and a director for a documentary film to be titled “Echoes of Nature”. In a two-paged

write-up, enumerate how you will carry out the chosen role. List out your job specifications as either a scriptwriter, a producer or a director for the film.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Kogah, V.C (1999). *Visual Communication, Film, Graphics, Photojournalism*. Owerri: Gust-Chuks Publishers.
- Nworgu, K.O (2010). *Introduction to Broadcasting* in K. O. Nworgu (ed.) *Mass Communication Theory and practice*. Owerri: Ultimate Books.
- Onyechi, N. (2010) “Announcing and Performance” In K.O Nworgu (ed.) *Mass Communication, Theory and Practice*, Owerri: Ultimate Books.
- Owuamalam, E. O. (2007). *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri: top class publishers.

## **UNIT 5 GETTING SET FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Getting set for a documentary film production
  - 3.2 Editing the shot scenes
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Having gone through module 1, units 1- 5, module 2, units 1 – 5 and now module 3, units 1 – 4; this last unit in module 3 is to guide you in the actual practice of what you have been taught so far in this course. The essence of this unit is therefore to guide you on how you can produce a documentary film.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you are expected:

- To know how to produce a documentary
- To submit a VCD containing a recorded documentary shot by your study group

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Getting Set for a Documentary Film Production**

The essence of this course is to put you through the actual processes of documentary film production. Your expertise is not what matters now but your ability to practice what you have been taught. I therefore urge you to contribute your own knowledge during the process of documentary production by your study group.

Your class tutor or even the class representative or course representative should help in dividing the class into five or ten groups consisting of three or five students at most. Each group will produce a documentary. Here are tips on how you can do that.

- Assemble together and think of one issue to be handled.
- It must be an issue in your immediate environment.
- You can decide on either “Garri making process in your state, palm-wine tapping in Enugu State, Bead-making, menace of erosion, indecent dressing among undergraduates, Nature of Federal Government Roads in your state, State of Public Primary or Secondary schools in your area, or any other subject that may interest your group.
- Each person in your group should be given a deadline on the submission of a script based on the subject or theme of the documentary. The script should be both the story line, synopsis and a shooting script for the documentary.
- Assemble together and read and study all the scripts by each member. Select the best script that best describes what you want to do.
- Decide whether an interviewee is needed and decide on how to contact him/her and book appointment with the person.
- Decide on the shooting of the film. Will a professional be hired to do the shooting for you. One person in your group must be the narrator.
- You can use any smart phone to do the recording, both for audio and video recording. Decide on the locations to be used. You must select yourselves as actors/actresses where necessary.
- Do the recording with your phone. In the case of Garri-making or palm-wine tapping, you must go to where the action is taking place, involve in the process with the assistance of the women who are involved in the garri making process. You can interview one or two of them for an elaboration on how to process garri starting from the harvesting of cassava tubers from the farm until you have the finished product, up to the point where a student will be shown eating the garri with soup or “drinking the garri” as the case may be.
- Allow the camera of the phone or any other device, to tell the story while the narrator lays emphasis where necessary.

### **3.2 Editing the Shot Scenes**

There may be unnecessary scenes or mistakes made while recording. Don’t worry about editing the shots. You are still an amateur at this stage and the mistakes you make now will definitely be stepping stones for better productions in future.

Submit the recorded shots in your phones to any good studio or even an experienced compugraher in a business centre. They will synchronize sounds with pictures and “burn” it into a VCD. Label your

documentary with the names of students in your group and then submit to your class tutor.

NB: the class tutor will then fix a date when all the submitted tapes will be viewed in the class by all the groups. A provision should be made for a VCD machine, TV monitor and a stand by generator. The class tutor will then point out mistakes where editing is necessary and point out other errors in the production. Students will then be instructed on how to improve in the next production.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

You cannot gain mastery of how to produce a documentary film without giving it a trial. The convergence of media forms has made it possible for you to even use any smart phone for recording. Even an amateur can handle these phones. The production guide given to you in this unit will definitely prove useful while embarking in the production process.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused on brief guide on how you can successfully embark on a documentary film production. It gave a step-by-step guideline on how to start and progress until you finish the entire production process.

##### **Self-Assessed Exercise**

Critically study the documentary film produced by your group. Is the effort worth it? Are you happy with the production?

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

By now, you must have completed the shooting of your film. Submit it to your class tutor whose job it is to assess your production.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Owuamalam, E. O. (2007). *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri: Top class publishers.

## **MODULE 4 EDITING IN DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCTION**

The main aim of this module is to provide you with the basic knowledge on how to edit a film. This aspect of film production is necessary because no film is ever produced without being subjected to an editing process. Something must be removed or added as the case may. Editing provides you the opportunity of removing unwanted portions while adding necessary details that will add glamour and clearly convey the message of the film.

This module which is made up of five units provides you with the meaning of editing in film production, editing principles, purposes of editing and the meaning of similar concepts used in editing of films.

The five units that make up this module are linked together and are as follows:

Unit 1	Meaning and definition of editing
Unit 2	Modes or processes of editing in film production
Unit 3	Functions of editing
Unit 4	Editing principles
Unit 5	Basic effects in editing of films.

### **UNIT 1 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF EDITING**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Meaning/Definition of editing
  - 3.2 Three decision-making areas in cutting a film
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The inevitable clichés about editing are true: “this is where the real magic of film making happens, this is where the film comes alive, and that you can’t make a silk purse out of a cow’s ear”. Yet stories abound of films botched in their conception and shooting that were made substantially better in the editing.

This unit is designed to help you in understanding what editing is all about especially as it concerns film production.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorials in this unit, you are expected to know:

- The meaning of editing
- Various ways of defining the act of editing as it concerns films
- Three decision-making areas in cutting film.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Meaning/Definition of Editing**

Editing is also referred to as the cutting of film. It is defined as the process of selecting the parts of the shots that are good and that serve the needs of the film and eventually discarding the rest, (Mamer, 2009). It therefore requires extensive knowledge of the mechanics of cutting. It is the process of choosing creative materials that fit a subject matter and the blending of various photographed frames of a film, in a convincing manner, in order to transmit the message to the audience of the artistic work, (Owuamalam, 2007).

Each scene must have generally been photographed and recorded several times with each filming being regarded as a take. During the filming exercise or shooting exercise, the director decides which takes are good enough to print. The printed takes therefore form a work print with which to work with during editing (Kogah, 1999).

Film editing involves the use of plot in arranging the presentational sequence of the story line. The strategy enables the idea of the creative work, as conceived, to be actualized, through a technical process. The process requires the use of equipment, and script, to match the interpretative capacity of the editor. The editor applies skill, knowledge and experience, to produce the synergy called film.

### **3.2 Three Decision Making Areas in Cutting a Film**

Mamer, (2009:347) outlined three decision making areas in cutting a film. They include cutting picture, cutting sound, and determining optical effects like dissolves, fade, special effects etc.

For pictures, editing entails going through the shots and determining their specific order, then deciding on the precise transition point from one shot to the next. The order of shots may be predetermined in a narrative film, through that order may not be as rigid as first assumed. In documentary and experimental film, you may have to devise the

order yourself.

Cutting or editing sound includes a number of approaches such as cutting sync tracks in conjunction with the picture, determining the relationship between music and picture and building complicated, layered sound effects after the picture is mostly or completely cut. Optical effect indicated a graphic effect that is created in the lab. Optical effects include split screens, keyholes, freeze-frames, spines, wipes and a host of other effects executed by the lab at the filmmaker's instruction and done prior to the final printing. They are difficult to get right and may take several tries to obtain the precise effect.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Film editing or cutting of the film refer to the process of selecting the parts of the shots that are good and serve the needs of the film while other shots which do not serve this need, are eliminated or discarded. Three important decision-making areas in the process of editing a film include: cutting the picture, the sound and determining the best optical effects.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused on brief discussion of the meaning and definition of film editing. Emphasis was laid on the three basic decision-making areas on film editing.

### **Self –Assessed Exercise**

Attempt your own definition of the concept of editing.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Refer to your first documentary film produced under module three, unit five. List out areas where editing was necessary and state what you would have done to make it better.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

Kogah, V.C (1999): *Visual Communication Film, Graphics, Photojournalism*. Owerri: Gust-Chuks publishers.

Mamer, B. (2009). *Film Production Techniques, Creating the Accomplished Image*. California: Wadsworth engage hearing.

## **UNIT 2      MODES/PROCESS OF EDITING A FILM**

### **CONTENT**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Contents
  - 3.1 Modes/Process of editing a film
  - 3.2 Types of film editing
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.2 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Editing involves the process of carefully selecting those shots that are good, that will help the director or the producer in achieving the major objectives of going into the documentary film production. It therefore involves a thorough knowledge of the mechanics of cutting. This unit is designed to help you understand the modes or processes of editing a documentary film.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorial in this unit, you would be expected to understand:

- What real time editing means
- What post production editing means
- Types of film editing.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Modes /Process of Editing a Film**

Editing involves the use of plot in arranging the presentational sequence of the story live. The strategy enables the idea of the creative work, as conceived, to be actualized, through a technical process. These process or modes as outlined by Owuamalam (2007) are real time editing and post-production editing. Real time editing mode makes it possible to present live shows and programmes as the events happen. The editing process involves the use of materials from various sources and blending them synergically to produce the screen experience, known as film. For example, the news coverage of the visit of president Jonathan to Anambra State in 2012, to flag-off the formal

opening of Orient Petroleum in the State and to Launch the inclusion of Anambra State among oil Producing States in Nigeria, can show the following arrival ceremonies, as a live Programme: the Presidential jet is seen touching down the airport runway; another

scene is shown where government officials are waiting in front of a red carpet, laid for the president; activities inside the VIP lounge, showing journalists in the front seat, where the president is to address them, traditional or cultural dance troupe outside the arrival hall, entertaining the crowd etc. It is a blend of the various scenes and sound, as a package, that produces the live programme, which is enjoyed on the television screen.

Post-Production Editing deals with the arrangement of shots or picture frames, obtained from a performance. It is an after- performance production, designed to match the plot and storyline with what the audience is expected to watch on the screen. It is not as time-pressured as the real time editing, which happens simultaneously as the event is recorded for transmission. It takes a longer time to achieve them real time editing. It is therefore time determined so that the edited version of the film fit into a specific time frame, as desired by the director, without losing any major aspect of the work.

### **3.2 Types of Film Editing**

There are two basic types of film editing. They originate from the equipment and process that are applicable in realizing the editing objective. The type considered and used, is a matter of convenience and available technology. The two types or forms of editing are linear and non- linear editing.

In linear editing, video tapes are used for playbacks and recording. It is a tape-based recording system, whether analog or digital. The sequence of review is orderly and Progressive. Continuity of events takes place in a specific order, which is not to be altered. In linear Editing System (LES) two videotape recorders (VTR) are required. One plays back the recorded tape while the other is used in recording selected shots from the former, according to the editing plan. The shots to be selected can be identified from the recorded tape, using the tape counter to find the exact location of the said shot, in the produced tape. The editor notes the numbers and arranges them according to the takes, desired to produce the finished product. The editor uses two monitors-the preview monitor and the final view monitor. The preview monitor is used to watch and select shots or takes, from the review VTR. It is the pictures on this monitor that enable the editor to pause the review tape and select shots. The other monitor, shows the recorded images from the editing VTR. It is the picture shown on this

screen that tells the editor if the plot and storyline have been followed as indicated by the technical desire of the director and the expectation of the producer.

The Linear Editing System is largely manual in operation. It follows a considerable analogy format in reviews and selection. Also, the location of pictures, based on the numbering plan, can be digitized. The editing system does not allow for the jumping of any shot, in order to get at any other desired one. There is therefore, no random access to shots, as produced on the tape. It insists on guided access which selects shots from tape, in the order of recording, onto another, as may be desired. The system copies the desired shots in a specific order and places them, in a predetermined sequence on another tape. The linear editing system therefore, is copy oriented.

The Non-Linear Editing (NLE) system is disk based. It uses the computer for storage, reviews and the editing of video and audio data files. The system allows one to jump from one shot or take, to the other, irrespective of the location of the desired shot in the file. One can jump from, say shots 1 to 7, without assessing the shots in between the shots 2,3,4,5, and 6. The capability of random access is created since one can jump and access any desired shot at will.

In the NLE, the programme to be edited is converted digitally into electronic signals and recorded in a disk. The disk is loaded into a computer's disk drive, which enables the system to accept and respond to commands. The shot identification takes place, within the shortest imaginable time frame. It provides one, the opportunity of taking editing decisions that enable the shots to relate and blend with each other, to produce a thrilling synergy, which tells the story of the plot.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Editing involves two modes- the Real time and Post production editing mode. Real time editing deals with editing of live shows and programme as the events happen while Post Production editing deals with the arrangement of shots or picture frame obtained from a performance. Two types of editing –Linear and Non-Linear editing forms are involved in the process of editing a film. Non-linear editing is the digital aspect of editing a film which involves the use of a computer while the linear editing form follows a considerable analogue format and is largely manual in operation.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit has successfully discussed the editing modes or processes involved in film editing. Non-linear and Linear editing forms were also discussed and examined.

### **Self –Assessed Exercise**

Study the editing modes discussed in this unit and select the one needed in your production carried out in module 3 unit 5.

## **6.0 TUTOR –MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Critically study the editing modes and types of editing discussed in this unit. In a two-paged write-up, enumerate the contrasts between the two editing modes and the two types of editing.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING**

Owuamalam, E.O. (2007). *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri. Top class Publishers.

## **UNITS 3    FUNCTIONS OF EDITING**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Contents
- 3.1    Functions of Editing
- 3.2    Purposes of Editing
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.2    Tutor-Marked Assignment.
- 7.0    Reference/Further Readings

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

The functions of editing in a film cannot be overemphasized, No film is ever produced and shown to the audience exactly the way it was shot. Some scenes may be omitted and others added in error, editing makes it possible to add the missing scene and remove unwanted ones, even after the production has been completed. This unit is designed to expose you to the functions of editing as well as the purposes of editing any film.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorials in this film, you are expected to know

- The functions of editing in a film
- The purposes of editing a film

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    Functions of Editing**

Owuamalam (2007) gave the under listed points about the functions which the act of editing performs in any film as follows:

- Editing facilitates the removal of film footage that can destroy society, like racial or ethnic inciting scenes; derogatory gender scenes, offensive stereotyping; obscene and lurid scenes; that debase morality and legally blamable scenes. It enables the producer to correct impressions that could affect the image and reputation of the production adversely.
- Editing trims the footage to fit into a specific duration as dictated by the medium of presentation (television or film theatre/cinema).

- Editing combines shots in a spectacular way, in order to achieve an understanding of the film. It brings discretely shot scenes together, in a convincing manner, through the use of appropriate transition devices, in order to express an idea convincingly.
- Editing enables a film to be constructed from various sources and camera takes. For example, a documentary about say, “Iraq after Saddam Hussien,” can be built from various video and audio sources. A portrait of Saddam Hussein as a still photograph, in his days as the president of Iraq can be shot and obtained on a tape; his trial, conviction and death, can be obtained as video clips, the increase in American casualties in Iraq as well as the insurgence in that country, can also be obtained as video clip, (Owuamalam, 2007:219). The editor can use a myriad of takes from various sources, as shot in different countries of the world, particularly in Iraq and United States of American to show life in Iraq, before, and after Saddam Hussein. The editing process will address the combination of the various scenes in a specific manner and order, so as to articulate the major idea of the plot and tell the story, in a convincing and believable manner.
- Editing eliminates waste and overshoots and makes the
- creative composition to remain, within the provision of the storyline, in a lucid and comprehensible manner.
- Finally, editing serves as a structural transformer, which provides the salient aspect of a work, in a clear and focused way, within a specific length of the film, adjusted to suit viewership interest.

### **3.2 Purposes of Editing a Film**

Editing is basically done to fit film images or shots together. One can create beautiful image, but if there is no plan to their organization and employment, the outcome will generally be flat and uninvolved, (Mamer, 2009).

It is carried out to correct any observed mistake in previous takes, prior to the final production and to organize the whole shots in a meaningful order that will convey the message of the film.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The functions of editing in a film can never be under estimated . It facilitates the removal of all unwanted film footages and enables the film to be constructed from various sources and various camera takes. The basic aim of editing a film is therefore to fit images and shots together so that the storyline can be conveyed more meaningfully to the audience.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has achieved the basic objectives set abinitio. It has discussed the functions of editing as well as the purposes of editing a film.

### Self – Assessed Exercise

Critically study the functions of editing in a film. Do you think editing is necessary in any film? Give reasons.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

In one paged-write-up, articulate how editing could help you convey the intended message in the documentary film. State the purpose of editing that documentary film produced by your study group.

## 7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READING

Mamer, B. (2009). *Film Production Techniques: Creating the Accomplished Image*. California: Wadsworth language learning.

Owuamalam, E.O (2007). *Film and Screen Directing* Owerri: Top Class Publisher.

## **UNIT 4     EDITING PRINCIPLES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Editing Principles
  - 3.2    The basic rules in editing
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.2    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/ further Reading

### **1.0   INTRODUCTION**

A number of principles influence both shooting and editing. These principles as enumerated by Mamer (2009) merit discussion. This is the essence of this unit. It is designed to enumerate and discuss those principles which are considered while editing a film.

### **2.0   OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorials in this unit, you are expected to have mastered:

- The principles considered while editing a film
- The meaning of transition in film editing
- The meaning of economy and pace in editing
- The basic rules in editing.
- Meaning of invisible editing

### **3.0   MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    General Editing Principles**

The general editing principles refer to a number of factors that affect shooting and editing. They are therefore considered very important since they influence the decisions taken by the editor while editing a film. Such principles as enumerated and discussed by Mamer (2009: 348) include the following:

- Transitions

This term is used to describe shots that bridge one setting to another or that mark the passage of time. The term covers a wide range of

approaches, but often transitional shots have the added burden of being establishing shots as well. The common approach is to show a setting, establishing both the place and, by extension, the time of day.

There are many ways of handling transitions but editors are advised to find those that are effective but not predictable.

- **Economy and Pace**

These terms refer to employing each of the individual shots for the shortest time possible i.e their economy while still allowing them to achieve their purpose. This is because each individual film, scene and shot demands its own pace. Achieving economy and pace is attained through control of the physical lengths of the shots, though many other elements affect the sense of a film's internal rhythm. Usually, it is a question each individual piece of film should be on screen. For instance, if a point cannot be made in two seconds, it certainly does not need to seconds devoted to it. But some film makers like Late Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni, as described by Mamer (2009:349) exploited both a slower pace and the psychological intensity of the close-up. The long-lingering close-up shot of the main character can be used to force the viewer to identify or experience some contemplative and environmental effects that emphasize spaces in between dialogue. But a film can be kept lean and efficient depending on the desired visual presentation and amount of weight the scene should have in terms of the rest of the film.

### **3.2 Basic Rules in Editing**

Some films are cut so that their editing is as seamless as possible. This is what is known as invisible editing. In his approach, any cut that is abrupt or calls attention to itself is considered a bad cut. The rules that guide editing of films have their genesis in this conventional method. The rules apply not only to editing but also to how the shooting of a scene is approached. They are as follows:

- **There must be a reason for a cut.**

This is the great overriding, unbreakable rule. When you cut from one image to another, you must have a purpose for that choice. It may be show a response or to emphasize an action or to keep shots from being too long or too static.

- **The 30-degree rule**

The 30-degree rule says that if you want to cut to a closer shot of a subject, the second shot should vary by at least 30 degrees from an axis drawn from the original camera position to the subject. The bottom line is that you should not move the camera toward the subject in a straight line, the possibility of a disagreeable jump is great if you

do.

- **Emphasis**

Cutting on a subject or an action exaggerates the significance of that subject. In essence, the implicit message is that this subject is important enough to warrant more than a single perspective. If there is a shot of an object on a table –say a knife–followed by a cut to a close-up of the knife, the implication is that the knife is an important element.

- **Visual interest**

In the whole film, there must be shots that are not visually interesting. if you film a dance rehearsal, for example, there will be parts in which the dancer is turned from the camera or is framed poorly or parts in which the action is just not engaging select the segments in which what was in front of the camera interrelates with the film frame in a visually exciting way.

- **Variety**

Your shots must employ a variety of approaches. Vary between close-ups and long shots , low angles and eye level shots, images with different balances of compositional interest , moving and static camera, and so on. In other words, use the camera resources available to you.

If a film is composed entirely of long shots, it risks becoming visually dull and predictable. If the area of interest in all of the compositions is in the same part of the frame, the same problems can occur. Obviously there are exceptions. Several films that were done largely in long shot have been successful and also some films shot exclusively in close-up shots were successful. But few of them are exceptions. They do not represent the kind of explorations and experiments that provide useful learning experiences for beginners.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

General editing principles refer to a number of factors that influence the editor's decisions while editing a film, such principles are transitions, economy and pace. Apart from these principles, some basic rules are applied while editing a film. Such rule as the 30- degree rule, variety, visual interest, emphasis and unbreakable and overriding rule of giving a reason for a cut, must be adhered to while editing a film.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the general editing principles that affect not only editing but shooting of films as well. Some concepts that are related

to the rules which are adhered to while editing films-invisible editing and visually interesting shots-were explained. Finally, this unit x- rayed and laid emphasis on the basic rules that generally guide the editing of films.

### **6.1 Self –Assessed Exercise**

Study the rules that guide the editing of films. Which ones do you think are the most important ones and why are they very important?

### **6.2 TUTOR –MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Describe how you would achieve variety in your documentary and explain how you would lay emphasis on a subject or object in a film. Pages limit: 2pages.

### **7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING**

**Mamer, B. (2009).** *Film Production Technique: Creating the Accomplished Image*. California: Wadsworth Language Learning.

## **UNIT 5 BASIC EFFECTS IN EDITING**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main contents
  - 3.1 Effects in editing
  - 3.2 Distinguishing optical sound track from magnetic sound track
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.2 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

There are some terminologies that are referred to as effects in the process of editing a film. Many of these effects can be created in camera but the norm is to plan them in editing and have them executed by the lab in the final print. This unit is designed to expose you to these effects.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVE**

At the end of the tutorial in this unit, you are expected to know

- The effect in editing of films
- The meaning of dissolve in film editing
- The meaning of fade in and fade out in editing
- The optical effect in film editing
- The meaning of superimposition in editing
- The different between optical and magnetic sound track

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENTS.**

#### **3.1 Effects in film editing**

There are some actions that are taken with the aid of camera, computer, optical printer etc that aim at achieving some kind of effects in the film. These effects as discussed by Kogah (1999) and Mamer (2009) are enumerated as follows:

- Fade-out and fade-in.

A fade-out is simply an effect in which the scene is gradually taken out or the picture fades to black. It is usually followed by a fade-in

during which a new scene gradually becomes bright enough to be seen clearly. Fade-out and Fade-ins are used as transitional devices, either to get from one location to another or to signify the passage of time. Occasionally, filmmakers fade to shades and colours other than black.

- **Dissolve**

This is a technique in which one shot is faded out while the next shot is faded in on top of it. In this process, the screen is not completely dark as one scene replaces another. This is used to signify a change of time or place, just as in fade-out. Dissolve is not used frequently because it is mainly used to soften an otherwise terrible shot.

- **Superimposition**

This is composed of one shot overlaid on another. It can be achieved in the camera while shooting or, more common, during editing and final printing process.

- **Optical effect**

These refer to all graphic effects created in the lab. Optical effects include split screens, keyholes, freeze frames, spins, wipes, etc. They were produced on an optical printer prior to the digital age. The optical printer is a projector that has a camera shooting straight into it. Both the projector and camera can be advanced one frame at a time. The camera can also be repositioned to focus on specific parts of the projected frame. The projected image can be manipulated in terms of both coloration and the speed of the film going through the gate. The camera and projector can be controlled separately in order to allow frames to be repeated, skipped, run in reverse, or held for many frames, an effect known as freeze-frame. The optical printer can equally be used to enlarge or reduce a particular film gauge depending on the desire of the filmmaker. The digital non linear editing (NLE) has made it possible to achieve any effect and completely eliminate generation problem but the optical printer is still used in creating many visual effects and can be an exciting tool for beginning filmmakers.

### **3.2 Distinguishing Optical Sound Track from Magnetic Sound Track**

The optical sound track is produced photographically and used on all standard print. At one edge of the film, a close observation will reveal some wavy lines or variations in the density of the film strip depending on the particular process that was used when the film was manufactured.

Inside the projector also is a sound head which has a photo electric cell and an exciter lamp. The film is threaded in such way that the optical sound track passes between the exciter lamp and the photo cell. The light falling on the cell varies according to pattern on the sound track thereby creating an electric current which, when amplified, reproduces the original sound.

The magnetic sound on the other hand, uses a specially produced film stock with a sound strip running along the edge of the film. The sound strip consists of the same iron oxide particles always used in audio recording. The recording and reproduction processes are identical with those used for audio tape.

Tiny recording head inside the camera selectively magnetizes particles on the sound track during filming. Inside the projector also, an identical head figuratively reads the track as the film runs. At the same time, it generates tiny electrical signal which when amplified, is an exact reproduction of the originally recorded sound. Both are faithful to each other.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Effects are created in the camera but the norm is to plan them in editing and have them executed by the lab in the final print. Most commonly created effects are Fade-in and fade-out, dissolve, superimposition and optical effects. There is a difference between optical sound track and magnetic sound track. While the optical sound track is produced photographically, and used on all standard prints, the magnetic sound track uses a specifically produced film stock with a sound strip running along one edge of the film.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused on the discussion of the most commonly created effects used while editing a film. Emphasis was laid on the distinguishing features between optical and magnetic sound tracks.

##### **Self-Assessed Exercise**

Study the explanations of effects given in the unit and identify the most commonly used effects in television stations or in Nollywood films.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Distinguish the optical sound track from the magnetic sound track.  
Explain the concept of optical effects. Limit : 1½

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Kogah, V.C. (1999). *Visual communication: Film, Graphics, Photojournalism*. Owerri: Gust – Chuks Publication.

Mamer, B. (2009). *Film production Technique: Creating the Accomplished Image*. California. Wadsworth Cengage learning.

## **MODULE 5      PERFORMING CRITICISM OF THE DOCUMENTARY FILM**

The main aim of this module is to provide you with a thorough knowledge of how to assess, review or evaluate a film. Criticism in a work of art, especially film is a scholarly endeavour and so, requires your attention. It is therefore necessary to begin tutorials in this module with a quick look at what film criticism is all about.

This module is made up of five units. You will be introduced to the concept of film criticism, types of film criticism, functions of a film critic and actually, who a film critic is. The five units that make up this unit are linked together. At the end of this module, you would have acquired enough knowledge in the general concept of film review or how to assess a work of art. The units that make up this module are as follows:

Unit 1	Understanding film criticism
Unit 2	Types of criticism
Unit 3	Functions of the film critic
Unit 4	Tips for film criticism
Unit 5	Writing the criticism: the three basic steps.

### **UNIT 1      UNDERSTANDING FILM CRITICISM**

#### **Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Defining film criticism
  - 3.2 Who is a film critic
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.2 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Film criticism is an important aspect of the filmic experience. This is because the audience of a film expects to derive enjoyment from the content and presentation of the film. This enjoyment or satisfaction is derivable from the emotional and intellectual assessment of the work. It therefore implies that there is a template which the individual uses to appraise a work of art, so that a valid judgment, from

a rational perspective, can be made.

This unit is simply to expose you to the concept of film criticism, its various definitions given by different scholars as well as the important explanations that will help you in appreciating the need to master the art of reviewing or assessing a film.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Know the meaning of criticism
- Identify various definitions of film criticism as given by different scholars
- Know who a film critic is

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Defining Film Criticism**

There are various definition offered by some scholars on criticism. Nwosu (2001:137) defines it as “the appraisal of a literary work by a critic”. This definition, though relevant, concerns itself with literary work mostly. Okenwa (1998:13-14) sees it as “the act or art of analyzing and judging the quality of literary or artistic work”. Okunna and Omenugha (2002:196) define it as “the act of making judgment concerning art, literature and a variety of other creative productions like drama, film, fine arts etc”. World book Encyclopedia sees criticism as analyzing, interpreting evaluating and communicating ones responses to a work of art. Criticism as noted by Anunike (2005) is not meant to soil the work of an artist, but to discuss the negative and positive aspects of it. It is not to attract, pull down or single out for ridicule the pitfalls in any work of art.

These definitions, show that criticism of any literary work, deals with principles which underline creative activities in artistic presentations, like films. It considers rules of structural unity of the work, based on specific established norms of presentation and rules of production. It comments on compliance or conformity to established standards. The essence is to ensure that an objective commentary is made on works of art, since the basis of such judgments can be ascertained, analyzed and verified.

### **3.2 Who is a Film Critic**

The critic is a person who deals with a work of art as a concept. He/She investigates the appropriate use of production elements, in order to achieve an understanding of the work and enhance aesthetic

appreciation, in the production and uses specific templates, as standard, to evaluate work. He/she therefore, sees artistic composition and presentations very clearly, records and evaluates them meticulously, (Owuamalam, 2007)

The critic is a technically proficient commentator on artistic performance. He/she understands the theatre and its production principles. A critic knows the structural outlay of plots and their classification, as genres, based on observed specific characteristics. He/she must therefore understand the significance of a production and the essence of direction as a co-ordination of the various aspects of the performance. He or she is knowledgeable about postproduction exercises, like editing and previews and understands how artistic performance should blend in a production to produce the intended message that will help in work. His/her major concern is to see how the work conforms or deviates from known, defined and acceptable standards.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Film criticism deals with principles, which underline creative actions in artistic presentations, like films. It considers rules of structural unity of the work, based on specific established norms of presentation and rules of production. A critic therefore uses specific templates, as standard, to evaluate the applied principles in the work. The essence is to achieve an understanding of the work and enhance aesthetic appreciation.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused on the discussion of the concept of film criticism. Emphasis was laid on its definitions and features as presented by various scholars. Description of a film critic was also produced in this unit.

#### **Self –Assessed Exercise**

Study the definitions of film criticisms of various scholars mentioned in this unit. Examine whether there are differences in their definitions. Bring out common features in the definitions and come up with your own definition.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Attempt a definition of film criticism in your own words. State what you will do as a film critic if given a film to evaluate. Page limit: One page.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- Anunike, O. (2005). "Film Criticism: Theory and Application" In V. Agbanu and C. Nwabueze(eds.) *Readings in mass communication Global Perspectives on Communication Issues*. Owerri: Top Shelve Publishers.
- Nwosu, O.(2001). *Literary Appreciation: Critical Insights and Concept Analysis*. Owerri: Africa- link Communications Ltd.
- Okenwa, N.(1998). *Specialized Writing Techniques*. Enugu: Zik Chuks Communications.
- Okunna, C. S. and Omenugha, K. A. (2002). Critical writing and Reviewing in S. C. Okunna (ed.) *Teaching Mass Communication; A multi-Dimensional Approach*. Enugu: New generation Books.

## **UNIT 2      TYPES OF FILM CRITICISM**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Types of Film Criticism
  - 3.2 Characteristics of each type of criticism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.2 Tutor- Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION.**

There are many ways of categorizing the class into which a specific critique fits. It shows the approach which a critic may adopt in the execution of the creative exercise of criticism. This unit is aimed at discussing two major types of criticism.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the tutorials in this unit, you are expected to have known:

- Two types of criticism
- What a prescriptive criticism is
- What a descriptive criticism means
- Characteristics of each type of criticism

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Types of Film Criticism**

Classification of the approach which a critic may adopt while evaluating a film is based on the perspective adopted while treating the artistic work. Based on this, there are two major types of criticism, prescriptive and descriptive criticism.

- Prescriptive criticism is based on the fact that specific rules and laws guide activities and actions. The law may be that of nature, like the use of canoes and boats, as transportation modes in riverine areas. For instance, the rule stipulates that people must paddle the canoe, if movement is to be achieved in the river. The rule explains why walking on the river is abnormal

and can only be achieved through a supernatural approach, which may pass as a miracle.

- Descriptive criticism on the other hand, deals with a detailed account and evaluation of the work, so that vital and valuable information about the film can be achieved and obtained. It gives an insight into the reason behind actions. It is designed to articulate how the elements of artistic composition have been presented to produce a synergy, called the film.

### 3.2 Characteristics of Film

The characteristics of prescriptive criticism as listed by Omuamalam (2007:291), is as follows:

- It lays down rules of artistic performance and rises the rules to assess how the work has conformed or deviated from them. It therefore uses rules to set the boundary of compliance as the index for evaluation.
- It evaluates the logic of structural and organic unity, based in the reasoned deductions. In this way, the sequence, progression and development of plot, character and language are reviewed and assessed.
- It assesses the activities of characters, to deduce if their actions can be rationalized in a logical manner.
- It is authoritative and command based, since it deals with order and compliance to given instructions.
- It evaluates the work of the director in the film, using knowledge of production principles.
- It relies on the characteristics of the genre, as the template for classifying works and assessing their conformity to the class.

Descriptive criticism has the following characteristics as well:

- It deals with genre classification to see how the film fits into a film type.
- It organizes detailed information about the film in a sequential order, as contained in the film, so that strong line becomes appreciable.
- The presentation of the critique adopts a systematic approach, so that the audience can access useful and reliable information necessary for the rationalization of artistic decisions.
- It lays emphasis on the structural unity of the various artistic elements evident in the work. It believes that a disorganized structure makes the work incoherent and confusing.
- It substantiates organic unity in content, based in character and

language. The approach observes the consistency of characters in the plot and their language use, through their motives and consequences of their activities.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

There are two major types of film criticism prescriptive and descriptive criticism. Prescriptive criticism believes that specific rules and laws guide activities and actions and therefore must be adhered to while carrying out a critique of the film. Descriptive criticism is not based on any law or rule but deals with a detailed account and evaluation of the work so that vital and valuable information about the film can be obtained.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit dealt with the classification or the types of film criticism. The two types of film criticism-prescriptive and descriptive criticism were discussed. The characteristics of each type of criticism were also discussed.

##### **Self-Assessed Exercise**

Study the two types of film criticism and select one that is more convenient for you. Outline its characteristics.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Adopts one form of criticism for your documentary film. Outline areas where you will lay emphasis in your criticism.

#### **7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING**

Owumalam, E.O (2007). *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri: Top class publishers.

## **UNIT 3      FUNCTIONS OF A FILM CRITIC**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Functions of a film critic
  - 3.2 Three basic roles of a film critic
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked Assessment
- 7.0 References/further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The critic is a technically proficient commentator on artistic performance who understands the theatre and its production principles. The critic knows the structural outlay of plots and their classification based on observed specific characteristics. These are the few reasons why a critic is important in the world of films. This unit is therefore designed to expose you to the specific functions which a critic performs in the world of films. These functions as x- rayed by Owuamalam (2007:303) no doubt will help you appreciate the importance of the art of criticism in films.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

The end of the tutorials in this unit, you will be expected to know:

- The functions of a film critic
- The three significant roles of a critic.
- How the critic evaluate a film
- How the critic assesses a film
- How the critic reviews a film

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Functions of a Film Critic**

The functions which a film critic performs are outside the theatre. His/her duties involve creative imaginations, in the mental realm. The critic produces an evaluative report, which facilitates an understanding of the work and provides the information, which the audience uses to discuss the work. The critic performs three basic rules of: (a) evaluating the film based on specific standards (b) of assessing

the film and (c) reviewing the film. Details of these roles are discussed in the next sub-heading.

### **3.2 Three Basic Roles of Film Critic**

A film critic performs the three basic roles of evaluating assessing and reviewing of a film.

- As an evaluator, the critic uses the rhetorical approach to deal with issues pertaining to evaluations. He/she considers the methods and techniques as vital strategies for the realization of the objective of a production and as approaches through which the communication intent of the work is achieved. He/she applies the theory and practice of argumentation, which facilitate a better understanding of a work of art, so as to enhance aesthetic appreciation. For instance, as an evaluator, the critic sees how the scriptwriter has been able to create a message about life and living conditions, through actions and activities of the characters in the film. He/she notes how the systematic approach of the film guides role assignment and performance, in the accomplishment of the activities permitted by situations and circumstances in the film.
- As an Assessor, the critic uses theme, subject or topic of
- discourse, to assess a film. He/she ascertains the theme as indicated by the scriptwriter. It is his/her job to observe how a plot fits the theme and how the characters perform, in order to achieve the import of the theme. The critic uses the theme to ascertain the significance and relevance of the work to the society. The order of the events in the film, the arrangement and use of language and action, are important in the determination of the value of a work.
- As a reviewer, the critic expresses opinions, based on rational reasoning, as deduced from the performance. This is because, a review simply means a commentary made after matching or seeing an artistic performance. It is an assessment of the film, as perceived at the time of presentation. He/she analyses the film to discuss the issues like conflicts, ironies, suspense, surprise, dilemma and other plot strategies, that can excite and retain audience appreciation or patronage of the film. As a reviewer, he/she provides artisites information about a film, in an entertaining and educating manner. He/she is therefore a guide to aesthetic appreciation of film.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The critic is not only relevant to the film industry or to the world of arts in general, he/she is also relevant in the society at large. This is evident

in the functions/roles the critic performs. The critic, as has been shown in this unit, provides an illuminating and thought-provoking conclusion, as a judgment on the film, so as to stimulate viewership interest. In this way, he/she brings people to appreciate a specific work through audience engineering. He/she therefore reviews, assesses, and evaluates all works of art, film inclusive.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused attention on the functions of the film critic, emphasis was laid on the three specific roles of evaluating, assessing and reviewing the film.

### **Self-Assessed Exercise**

Study the three roles of the film critic and note how they overlap.

## **6.2 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

In just one page, describe how the film critic acts as a guide to the aesthetic appreciation of the film.

## **7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING**

Owuamalam, E.O (2007). *Film and Screen Directing*. Owerri: Top Class Publishers.

## **UNIT 4     TIPS FOR FILM CRITICISM**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Tips for film criticism
  - 3.2 Questions that guide film criticism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Exercise
- 7.0 References/further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Bordwell (2004) gave a summary of tips for film criticism. The tips and guides are recommended for all film critics. This unit is designed to expose you to the tips for effective critique of a film.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you are expected to know:

- The tips for film criticism
- What to avoid in film criticism
- The questions that guide film criticism

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Tips for film criticism**

Film criticism as emphasized by Bordwell (2004:15) is “a judgment about the value or worth of a film, giving enough information to support your judgment”. The following tips serve as a guide to critics while performing the act of film criticism:

- Avoid extreme judgment e.g “the film is totally bad “or “the film is extremely good.” The critic is expected to take and expose both the good and bad aspects of the film into account in his/her job.
- Always give brief plot/synopsis, suggesting the main conflicts and character developments in the film.
- Mention striking aspects of the film e.g impressive set, costumes, colour, design, music, sound effect, editing, with

- a particular attention to acting.
- Compare the film with other films that belong to the same genre, which are made by the producer or director or which raise similar thematic issues.
- There is need for brevity. Two or five pages of double line spacing is recommended.

### **3.2 Questions that Guide Film Criticism**

The film is a visual medium of communication which uses light and shade as well as words and music to create an effect, (Wainwright, 1982). The critic must therefore answer certain questions that throw light on the leading roles and how well or otherwise they are portrayed, (Baldock, 1996). These questions as summarized by

Bordwell (2004:17) include the following:

- Have you somewhere indicated your judgment of the film?
- Have you provided brief plot, or synopsis of the film which support judgment?
- Have you described these quickly and vividly, using concrete language and metaphor?
- Have you qualified your judgment by balancing positive and negative aspects of the film?
- Have you started the criticism with an attention-grabbing opening?
- Have you concluded it with a striking statement?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

A film critic is an umpire hence he/she should be objective and emotionally detached from the work. This is the reason why this unit was designed to expose you to the tips and pertinent questions that should guide film criticism. A critical look at the tips indicates that the film critic must avoid extreme judgment in all cases and must be balanced in his/her criticism.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit dealt with specific tips that guide film criticism. Emphasis was laid on the questions that need to be answered by the critic while evaluating assessing or reviewing a film.

### **Self Assessed Exercise**

How would you avoid passing extreme judgment in a film? Think about that and put down your answers in your study note book.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSESSMENT**

In two pages, do a critique of a film given to you by your class tutor.

NB: The class tutor is advised to distribute the documentary film produced by the groups to students to critique. He/she should make sure that students write on films produced by their fellow students- not their own production.

## **UNIT 5      WRITING THE CRITICISM: BASIC STEPS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Basic steps to criticism writing
  - 3.2 Indices for criticism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As has been stated in this module, there is no straight jacket rule or principle for film criticism but there are three basic steps to critical evaluations. There are also indices used in the criticism of a film. This unit is designed to provide you with knowledge of the basic steps to film criticism and the indices used in film criticism.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you are expected to know:

- The steps to film criticism
- The questions about plot
- The questions about theme
- The questions about characters
- The questions about language, acting and design elements.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Basic Steps to Criticism Writing**

Kernodle cited in Anunike (2005:61) lists three basic steps for film criticism as follows:

- Begin with asking what the film sets out to do. This entails unraveling the purpose or objective of the film.
- Then ask how it had done or achieved the set objectives.
- Finally ascertain how well it was worth doing.
- Under the first step, the critic explains what the scriptwriter and the director attempt to do in the film and the directorial approach/interpretation respectively. Secondly, the critic goes

into personal appreciation as to what extent the filmmaker, actors, actresses and director have succeeded in what each set out to do. In the third step, the critic makes personal judgment as to the value or worth of the film.

It is pertinent that the critic at the first paragraph gives his/her overall impression or assessment of the film. This is followed with comment on plot and performance at the body of his/her work. He/she finally writes the final impression in the film in the last paragraph.

### **3.2 Indices for Film Criticism.**

Omanney and Schanker in Anunike (2005:61) gave designed questions that help in assessing a film. These questions are treated under the indices used in the critique of a film.

They are as follow:

- The Theme.

The theme is the central idea which is communicated in the film. These questions need be answered concerning the theme:

- (a) Is the fundamental idea true or false in its concept of life?
- (b) Is the theme adversely affected by warped or limited experience of life?
- (c) Does seeing the film add something positive to your understanding and experience?
- (d) Are you in agreement with the philosophy of the film?
- (e) Do you think the film is consistent with the setting and plot and characters in the film?
- (f) Should the general public be encouraged to watch the film, should it have been produced?

- The plot

The plot is the story structure, the plan, arrangement of the shots, scenes, episodes, incidents, acts in the film. These questions show what is expected in the plot:

- (a) Is the arrangement of events in the film clear? (b) Does the plot rise to a strong climax?
- (c) Do you think the suspense held until the end?
- (d) Are you satisfied with the final outcome or do you think another would be more satisfactory?
- (e) Which do you find more interesting, the events, the people, the style or the shock value of the film?

(f) Is the story emotionally stirring?

- Characters

Characters are the human beings gods, spirits, animals etc about which a story is told (Mgbejume, 2002). These questions aid the understanding of the role of characters in the film.

- (a) Do you consider the character credible and true to life?
- (b) Do the actions of the characters fall in line with their motives?
- (c) Do the characters fit into the social and geographical background of the story?
- (d) Do the characters arouse sympathy, amusement, affection, disgust, admiration or hatred?

- Language

Language refers to the scriptwriters method of communicating the film to the viewers (Duruaku, 1997). These questions should be asked about the language use:

- (a) Is the language brilliant and entertaining?
- (b) Do you consider the language consistent with the characters and setting?
- (c) Does the language advance the plot?
- (d) Do you think people of the social class represented by the characters in the film would speak that way in real life?

- Acting

The actors /actresses are assessed based in the following questions:

- (a) Do you believe the actors interpreted their roles well?
- (b) Has the actor made the character living individuals?
- (c) Do you think the actor is natural or artificial?
- (d) Does the acting grip emotionally?
- (e) Is the actor's voice pleasing?
- (f) Does the actor distinguish between the character depicted and himself/herself?
- (g) Is the actor consistent in character
- (h) Does the actor relate well with others in the film?
- (i) Does the actor fit into style of the film?

- Design Elements

The design elements are evaluated based in the following questions:

- (a) Do you consider the set, costume, make-up, lighting, prop etc proper in the film?
- (b) Does any of the design elements draw attention to itself?

- (c) Do you consider the design elements conducive to the emotional reaction of the film?
- (d) Are the costumes, make up and props in harmony with the background?
- (e) Is the setting proper for the social class or other classes of people depicted in the film?

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The basic steps to the writing of criticism of films begin with ascertaining what the filmmaker attempts to do, how well he has done. The indices upon which the assessment or circulation of film are based include asking questions on the theme, plot, characters, language, acting and the design elements.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused on discussions concerning the three basic steps that guide the writing of film criticism.

Also, this unit laid emphasis on the indices upon which film criticism are based. Such indices as theme, plot, character, language, acting and design elements were x-rayed and examined.

#### **Self-Assessed Exercise**

Critically study the guiding questions posed under the plot, theme, acting, language and design elements.

#### **6.2 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

In one page writing, typed in double line spacing, do a critique of your documentary film using only the guiding questions raised under the plot and theme, discussed in this unit.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

- Anunike, O. (2005). "Film criticism: Theory and Application" in V. Agbanu and C. Nwabueze (ed.) *Readings in Mass Communication Issues* Owerri: Topshelve publishers.
- Duruaka, A. (1997). *A handbook on drama and theatre*. Owerri: colon concept Ltd.
- Mgbejume, O. (2002). *Dramatic TV, and Film Scriptwriting*. Jos Redeemer House Publishers.