

## Opponent's Review on the Doctoral Thesis

<b>Doctoral student's name(s) and surname</b>	<b>Amina Lami Akorede, MA</b>	
<b>Degree programme</b>	<b>P 8206 Visual Arts</b>	
<b>Degree course</b>	<b>8206V102 Multimedia and Design</b>	
<b>Mode of study</b>	<b>Full-time Acad. Year</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>
<b>Thesis Title</b>	<b>EXPLORING ANIMATION FILM IN A POPULAR AFRICAN FOLKLORE, THROUGH VIEWS EXPRESSED BY A SELECTION OF HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS IN NIGERIA AND CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	
<b>Supervisor</b>	<b>Prof. akad. mal. Ondrej Slivka, ArtD.</b>	
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### Theoretical part:

The written work by student Amina Akorede was a pleasant read from start to finish, with interesting insights into the workings of Nigerian and African culture of telling stories. The work is written with the knowledge of own culture and animated film and also sincere hope for the animated film as medium that could work as a great educational tool for purposes of smoother intercultural understanding.

As root of this hope she views children, who are the next generations and can make a difference that we might have failed to make just yet. The work shows concern for children losing touch and interest into their own cultural roots, making it easier for commercial culture, west consumerism and influence to infiltrate and worst case eradicate the "social glue" that local culture works as in respective countries. It is a sad truth of today, where children are more interested in fast spectacle of technology. Animated film is a good way to catch back their attention and make them more aware of not only their own, but various cultures and the wisdom of experience without living through it. Erasing fear of the previously unknown or alien can lead to peaceful relationships and pride into own roots. Amina emphasizes the importance of telling stories that are a well of knowledge and truths. She also provides us with quotes and appropriate on spot information from other written works as sources for supporting her closures, analysis and deduction.

She is searching for similarities and differences between Nigerian and Czech/Slovak storytelling, what connects us and what makes differences and the communication difficult. The work suggests that there are internationally common practices or beliefs, or ones tied to a specific area of the world where one idea or custom spreads through borders of neighbouring countries.

The reader is led into the theme with ease, step by step, without any unnecessary jargon or detours, same with introducing us on how her movie was made. The text is written and divided into logical and well-written sections that lead us to final conclusions and answer, that animated film has potential to make a difference in intercultural relationships. The way it is written is nonviolent and clear. She also provides us with accompanying pictures, screen-shots, charts and data gathered and produced for her research. At the end, shows great promise and hope for the animated film as a tool to spread awareness between different cultures and making them grow in understanding toward each other.

The data has been gathered on two schools, from 40 pupils, half from Nigeria, half from Czech Republic and almost hundred percent of children had shown both, interest and understanding in Amina's movie - not looking for superficial qualities, but liking the educational message and a particular night-scene in the story.

### **Practical part - Movie:**

Amina Akoredes movie lasts 4 minutes 44 seconds and has been created thanks to a combination of graphic tablet painted characters, divided and prepared for a digital cutout animation in Adobe After Effects. Amina studied the software during her stay on school and learned how to make the 2D digital cutout work in motion. She had shown some trouble with a wished character design and storyboard phase, but at the end she was able to overcome all the obstacles.

The result is a movie with a clear message, presented with same clarity and simplicity that is suited for educational, morale teaching theme. It has elements of humor as well and feels fun. The animation focuses on cycles and character animation. The walk cycles work well, albeit the animation in general would benefit from richer movement or action or maybe bigger variety of angles and more brave layouts. Also variety of camera placement - most of the takes were from profile, either medium shots or closeups.

What I appreciate as a fun playful element that makes almost TV series feeling is the monkey hero that greets the viewer at start and end of the movie. Also used voice-over and music works well with the visuals. The way Amina worked with the character animation - the gestures, timing of facial expressions, movement of arms, expression of eyes - has been done quite well for working first time with digital cutout animation. For next projects I would advise to not be afraid using even more of these elements to make the characters even livelier or more distinguished from each other in terms of movement and character of movement. She still managed to add great deal of personality to expression and motion and also humorous elements through it - like the donkeys cheeky facial reactions, the shock of the man who protected the donkey from overwork, the boys curious child face... the troubled exhausted father.

Sometimes the moving characters would be placed too close to the edge of the screen, which did not make a nice crop of the picture.

The art direction is using a warm and friendly color palette that might attract child eyes. There is still a sense of depth. What I feel the film could benefit from is not using preset brushes for

creating leaf or grass patterns, but drawing them by hand to give it less technical or default look. Nevertheless, the result has very friendly aura and does not distract from the theme and messages.

Amina proved that she is able to produce a whole animated short by her self - as director, scriptwriter and animator. I want to commend her also on fighting her way from Nigeria to Czech republic to study at university, in a country where animation is not a big industry and women have hard time to follow their ambitions. Amina sets a very clear goal at the start of work, leads us and is very thorough in her explanation process.

I have to pay very big respect to Amina for have started her journey of film-making and animation from a hard place and for having set an admirable goal for the future - to use animation as tool to bring people closer together, get to know other cultures without merging and teach children to be tolerant to create a more peaceful and same tolerant society in the future, once they stand in our places. She has worked hard and done research to follow the goal and managed to bring a nice result. I see potential because there is a big spirit and real heart behind. So I wish the author to be brave and good luck on future endeavors in animation and art.

The effort and result I deem as success and approve of Amina Akorede 's thesis work and movie to be accepted for the doctoral degree.

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