



Strong Female Characters in the Contemporary Anglophone Kenyan Novels: Socialist Realism Perspective

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Abstract

This paper entitled Highlighting Strong Female Characters in the Contemporary Anglophone Kenyan Novels: Socialist Realism Perspective tried to explore the creation of Strong Female in Anglophone Kenyan novels. In Socialist Realism portraying a positive hero is a crucial aspect in their writing. However, many writers used males as their positive heroes, those Kenyan novels focused on creating strong female characters/ positive heroines/ in their famous works. The research used Socialist Realism Literary theory as a theory and a method to employ this paper. In doing so, the paper aims to show the re-emergence of Socialist Realism literary theory and Socialist Realist authors. After it was considered an outdated literary theory, and how different novelists from Kenya have applied the feature that Socialist Realism is known for. Three novels have been chosen for this study namely; *Dust*, *A Journey Within*, and *Was Nyakeeru My Father?*. All the novels were published after 2000 G.C. To read these novels, a theoretical framework is formed using Socialist Realism's feature theorized by different critics. The study concludes that different novelists in Kenya used the Socialist Realism feature Strong Female Characters associating it with their contexts, connecting it with their respective historical background, shared current statues, commenting on existing economic, social, and political situations. Besides Female Empowerment, Socialist Feminism, and Contemporary Kenyan Females were the approaches to discuss those Strong Characters.

Keywords: Socialist Realism, Positive Hero, Positive Heroine.

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1. Introduction

Many readers believe that Socialist Realism literary theory ends up before half a century ago; as a result, currently, it is difficult to find papers that worked on Socialist Realism literary theory in 21st C. As a result, the researcher on this paper wants to show the continuity of Socialist Realism ideas and wants to show the presence of Socialist Realist writers during the present time in Kenya, specifically by focusing on Strong Female Characters /Positive Heroine/.

According to Raj Kumar Mishra, The matter of fact is that postcolonial women refuse to remain passive

and continue to bear male-oppressive environments. These women need to build themselves through education, struggle, and hard work however; the postcolonial men re-colonized the bodies and minds of their women in the name of preserving their cultural values. Postcolonial feminism is primarily concerned with the deplorable plight of women in a postcolonial environment.

This study has taken up Socialist Realism, Strong Female Characters as a core point of focus because it is one of the emblems that make African literature emerge as a canon in the world's literary practices.

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So, the present-day importance of the study of Socialist Realism has many factors. One of them is the never-fading greatness of a few Russian writers; That was projected by the Soviet theoreticians as exemplars of Socialist Realism in the Soviet. Maxim Gorky's novel 'Mother', published twenty-seven years before the official proclamation of the theory of Socialist Realism, was regarded as a model for Socialist Realist literature when Gorky was called the founder of Socialist Realism.

The choice of characters in the works of socialist realist literature is determined by the inner content of this literature, by its principal aim, which is the affirmation and strengthening of the new socialist relations, the construction of socialism and communism, the struggle against imperialism and its servants, the modern revisionists, etc. (Jakup Mato, Rinush Idrizi, et.al).

Another point demanding attention is that certain canonical elements of Socialist Realism can found in American, Western, Africans, or popular fiction and culture. That suggests that the use of literature and culture for the propaganda of the ideology at power is a common practice in both socialist and non-socialist countries. Therefore, the basic principles of Socialist Realism principle Socialist Humanism are not peculiar only to the Soviet canon. So, the writer wants to show the current implementation of Socialist Realism literary theory, Strong Female Character, in a non-socialist country, Kenya.

In the Socialist Realist novel, the positive hero stands for "what ought to be", while lesser figures represent "what is" and the positive hero must "lead an ascetic life of extraordinary dedication and deprivation" and the character is also stern, calm and serious, with bright eyes, and typically undergoes some sort of martyrdom in the service of the cause. (Clark 1985).

Kenyan writers during the 20th century mainly focused on colonial and post-colonial literary themes. For example, they focused on 'cultural dominance,' 'racism,' 'quest for identity,' 'inequality' along with some peculiar presentation styles. But in 2001, the researcher believed that this year of the millennium is the beginning of the 21st century. So the researcher will check the presence of a thematic shift from the previous century. On the other hand, the researcher believes that Kenyan contemporary writers are influenced by Socialist Realist principles. And features; such as creating Strong female Characters, however, Kenya follows Capitalist ideology. And Socialist realists also criticized the deficiencies of the capitalist system. So this paper explicitly shows the continuity of socialist realism trends in the contemporary Anglophone Kenyan novels.

The researcher selected three novels. These three novels are Elizabeth Kabui's "*Was Nyakeeru My Father?*", Yvonne Owuor's "*Dust*", and Florence Mbaya's "*A Journey Within*" which are published in 2015, 2014, and 2011 respectively.

2. Objectives of the Study

2.1. General Objective

The writer in his paper tries and shows the re-emergence and the current (the 21st Century) implementation of Socialist Realism literary theory specifically by focusing on Strong Female Characters/Positive Heroine/, in the selected contemporary Anglophone Kenyan novels.

2.2. Specific Objectives

Literature is always on a collision course with the autocrats, not because writers always speak for freedom but because they create in their work people who could observe reason and make essential choices themselves. (Per Wastberg 1986). As a result, authors use their character ideology as their voice, representation, and ways of showing their attitude toward something else.

Autocrats wish that their people should feel unworthy of justice, private life, and independent thinking. Good literature tries to counteract people's belittling and despising of themselves, and that means trouble. One of literature's tasks is to help people understand their nature and make them realize they are not powerless. Therefore, it is not only writers who hit by censorship but most of all the readers. Just as one can store nuclear weapons, one can, by silencing truth, store hypocrisy, stupidity, immorality; so that they are glued together into a wall hard to penetrate. And that creates endless individual suffering.

As a result, the specific objectives of the study have listed below:

- ✓ To explore the creation of Strong Female Characters/Positive Heroine/ in the selected novels
- ✓ To compare and contrast the appearance of Strong Female Characters/Positive Heroine/ in the selected novels.

3. Significance of the Study

This study will help critics to understand the application of Socialist Realism principles and theories for analyzing other literary works. Besides, this research would benefit the critics in explaining the ideological orientation of the writer by analyzing the Socialist Realist element, Strong Female Characters, presented in contemporary Anglophone Kenyan novels. Moreover, this study will provide an opportunity for other researchers;

who plan to conduct literary research in the ideological assessment of literary works; by making themselves reference material.

4. Scope of the Study

The study is limited to reading and examines three Contemporary Anglophone Kenyan novels. That published after 2000, from the perspectives of Socialist Realism Literary theory, Strong Female Characters. The researcher looked at the novel portrays to tell about socialist realism on the periphery of Kenyan society and the techniques used in discussing this ideology. My focus is on the analysis of socialist feminism and fiction; and the effectiveness of terms in telling the ideas of people on the margins of society.

5. Methodology of the Study

Socialist realism is understood as a method in the art. The term 'method' implies a mode of procedure. Procedure in any field may be set down in terms of specific steps or a set of rules. In the good and well-articulated literature, the subject of Socialist Humanism as a set of rules can be found, stated with a variety of emphases but capable, perhaps, of being compactly defined. The Soviet definitions of socialist realism employ a system of standard concepts which are by their nature sufficiently open to leave a great deal of room for the expression of the personality of each practitioner in this school of literature. (A. I. Revyakin, 1959)

Besides, the researcher used a qualitative research approach for analyzing these Contemporary Anglophone Kenyan novels. Qualitative research may involve a range of data collection instruments such as storytelling, narratology, thematic perception, and the like. The paper also used a deconstructionist reading approach which helps to find out the literal and the underlying meanings of the text. And through the process, he investigates Socialist Realism ideologies and practices which are found in the novel.

As the analysis of the researcher focuses on three Anglophone Kenyan novels. The major procedure for data collection is critical reading and analysis of these three novels Elizabeth Kabui's "*Was Nyakeeru My Father?*", Yvonne Owuor's "*Dust*", and Florence Mbaya's "*A Journey Within*" which are published in 2015, 2014, and 2011 respectively. For analysis, theoretical sources relevant to the topic scrutiny gathered first. In this phase, the researcher of this research collected relevant literature on critical works on Socialist Humanism together with some other useful local and international researches. To make the analysis clear and resourceful, the researcher focuses on extracts that reveal the Socialist Realism ideology from the novels. Finally,

analysis and interpretation of the extracts made to arrive at a finding and conclusion.

5.1. Structure of the Study

Structurally, this study is organized into three parts. The first chapter deals with the background, introduction, objectives, and methodologies. Then the second chapter of this paper concentrated and analyzed feature of Socialist Realism, Strong Female Characters in different selected novels. The third part has summary of the paper.

Accordingly, this study based on a close textual analysis of these three novels is Elizabeth Kabui's "*Was Nyakeeru My Father?*" Yvonne Owuor's "*Dust*" and Florence Mbaya's "*A Journey Within*" were published in 2015, 2014, and 2011 respectively. The researcher examines how these novels expressed Socialist Realism literary theory and focused on the significance of the plot, dialogues, settings, and character's inner thoughts how they contribute to the depiction of socialist realism ideology.

5.2. Bases of selection

The novels in today's Africa and the 21st C phenomenon have different types of genres that are put in different ways. So, 2001 is the beginning of the new century. The novels are also dialogic with many voices. In a single novel, the researcher found more than three voices.

And, novels like *Dust*; work to organize, manage, and neutralize modern relations as they evolved over the postmodern era, providing the capitalist and the working class with blueprints for the social, cultural, and economic architecture. This sustained inequality in political, social, and economical power relations besides with Kenyan 2007 general election discussed. The other *Was Nyakeeru My Father?* is written in the form of a first-person point of view. The story narrates from a single-person angle. So the selected novels have such unique features.

6. Analysis of the selected novels

6.1. Females Empowerment

Bringing women into power is the current fashion in African politics. Such kinds of ideas are developing through fictional works. In the novel, *A Journey Within*, the author portrays some strong females' character in the novel. Monika is a strong character in this literary work. As many scholars define, women's empowerment is promoting women's ability of self-worth. Promoting them to decide their own choices and the capacity to influence social change for themselves and other social groups. In the novel, there is an extract that describes the power of women, and it initiates them to take a position over some social issues.

"Sorry, but Daniel doesn't want me out of sight," Stella whispered, glancing furtively over her shoulder. "He's not even taking any alcoholic drink. . ."

"He has not indicated that you should not drink, has he?"

"No, he hasn't, but . . ."

"Forget it, Stella," Monika tugged at her arm. This is our night. Do not let the man dictate your life. Besides, you're not married to him yet. (Mbaya's, 2011, p, 40)

In the above, Monika encouraged her friend, Stella, to do whatever she wants, persuading her to decide that night by only her own needs and wants. That shows how the author tried to develop the power and the confidence of females and Kenyans young generations.

The other female empowerment is seen on farming land as seen in the novel *Was Nyakeeru My Father?* The author at the beginning of the story mentioned a woman who is very strong and dedicated to her grandsons. The narrator of the story (first-person point of view), James, was expressed his grandmother at the beginning of his story as follows:

"She always went out of her way to give us treats. Roast maize was my favorite, and I wondered where she always got the green maize. Even in the harvest season when all the maize was dry, she still managed to find some green maize to roast for us." (Kabui's, 2015. p, 1)

As mentioned, the woman has good and amazing characteristics for her grandson. She brings green maize in the harvest season. Such a woman's character shows the strength of the woman in the farming land. The woman was too old to farm on the farmland, but by recruiting farmers. She managed it well, and that is the reason she roasts green for her grandsons.

The other female empowerment states in the novel *Dust*. After the main characters, Odidi and Ajay's first vision of the school had been as a space demarcated from the rest of the universe by a massive black gate and an overgrown, almost dark violet kai-apple fence that covered a thick wall. Their school was a misshapen world of gray stone edifices, a piteous tribute to an obscure English public school. These two young students didn't see such a school when they were in their homeland. This school headmaster was a female. The narrator of the story expressed her character as follows:

The headmistress, Mrs. Karai, M.Ed.
Calabash-shaped. Stumpy. Stern. Ice.
Yellow-brown, thin legs, faux-pearl

necklace, and horn-rimmed spectacles. After her New Year new-student assembly speech, on the morning of their second day, she summoned Odidi and Ajany to her office.

"Stand."

They stood.

"No fighting, no stealing, no politics. Do you know how to use a toilet?" . . .

(Owuor's 2014. p. 13)

As discussed above, the general appearance of the woman was not beautiful. However, she was the head of the school. In today's time, such kinds of females are not assigned for such positions unless they are educated. The woman was educated. And her order was very serious.

Unlike the previous works in the above novels, females are exercising different power. For example, in the first novel, *A Journey Within*, the main character talking about free women, who were not dictating by men. In the next novel, *Was Nyakeeru My father?* the major character raised a strong woman. And in the last novel, *Dust*, the head of the school was female. So in Socialist Realism, females represent strong characters. But the previous novels that were published before 1999, didn't have many characters.

6.2. Socialist Feminism

According to Raj Kumar Mishra, The matter of fact is that postcolonial women refuse to remain passive and continue to bear male-oppressive environments. These women need to build themselves through education, struggle, and hard work however, the postcolonial men re-colonized the bodies and minds of their women in the name of preserving their cultural values. Postcolonial feminism is primarily concerned with the deplorable plight of women in a postcolonial environment. The author of *A Journey Within* states some extracts in the novel that are directly related to her sympathies for females. The author used her narrator as a voice for females who are highly oppressed by men. In the novel, there is a character, Muland, who had a lot of problems with another female character, Helen. He was a teacher. He abused his student and made her pregnant. Finally, he left her.

"Helen was pregnant. She was out of school, and her parents had chased her away from home. How was he to face his students and colleagues and be able to justify the moral principles to which they all had to adhere? Why had it happened to him? He had asked himself all the usual questions that one does during such moments, but he had found no answers. He could not just send her

away, because she had nowhere else to go . . .” (Mbaya’s, 2011,p, 76)

At the crux of Socialist, Feminists thought the understanding that not only a single system of oppression is at the heart of women’s subordination; but also that is a mixture of systems related to class, gender, race, sexuality, and nation. As mentioned in the above extract, the author or the narrator of the story expresses her deep sympathize with the character, Helen. She shared Helen’s commiserate. Besides all this, such expressions are a way of struggling against men’s oppressors in society. But in socialist feminism, should focus on a full range of expressions, not simply the sex/gender system.

The author expressed her feeling towards her character, continues:

“ . . . As fate would have it, Helen became pregnant again six months later. It became a case of jumping from a frying pan into the fire itself . . .” (Mbaya’s, 2011,p, 76)

The above extract directly opposed with feminist struggle, and it published a document in 1969. In their document, they mentioned seventeen statements that help to increase females’ power in their society. But many of them are not implemented even in 21th C in Africa, Kenya. The author reflects his/her environment. No art is not far from the truth.

Among the statements the second one is directly related with the above extract and how was abused by Mr. Mulandi. The statement said “*people’s control over their own bodies . . . i.e. access to safe, free birth control, abortion, sterilization, free from coercion or social stigma . . .*”

So the above extract mentioned how Helen suffers badly by ignoring her human rights. She wouldn’t have a right on her body at all. Her body is controlled by someone else. The author used figurative language to state her stage of ill-treatment by saying her life goes from a frying pan to the fire itself. The narrator told us after she is getting pregnant with her second child, she is not going back to school. The author again shows abuse of her right to be free; public quality education integrated with work and community activities for people of all ages.

The other strong feminist perspective stated in the novel is, in the character, Monika. When she talked with her boyfriend, Max, previously colleagues she used some strong expressions.

“Max, listen to me.” She said, swallowing with difficulty on a lump in her throat, “this is my house, and nobody around here has the right to tell me who should, or should not, visit me. Mr. Mulandi and anyone else, has a right to come here if he wants. If that makes you unhappy,

please just stay away.” (Mbaya’s, 2011,p, 84)

In the above extract, the character highly emphasized how she had confidence and reaction to avoid males’ oppression against her own life. She focused that no one has the right in her own house except herself. She fought with her lover, Max, for not surrendering herself for his love.

The other extract which shows the positive impact of female characters in the novel is seen when Monika was in dilemma to go back to her home or to stay at her new work as a teacher. She was uncomfortable with the situation she faced at one Kenyan rural district, Murwet. She hated the environment at the beginning, but she didn’t want to get back.

“ . . . It was a short and hectic term, with end of year and national examinations. With all that she was going through in her private life, she made a dedicated decision to concentrate on her work and end the year on a note that would help define her work in Murwet. It could as well be a deciding factor, whether she was going back to come back or not . . .” (Mbaya’s, 2011,p, 94)

As shown in the above extract, especially around the world, women have the right to influence the decisions that affect their lives. Monika strongly decides on her future life based on the situation she faced at the working place.

The other strong female character, a minor character, is seen in the novel “*Was Nyakeeru My Father?*”. The novel is written in the form of a first-person point of view. And the narrator narrates his story throughout the novel. He had a grandma. When he describes him:

We did not mind this arrangement especially because Grandma, in spite of her aging, had decided that her sole purpose in life was to ‘spoil’ her grandchildren. She always went out of her way to give us treats. . . . (Kabui’s, 2015. p, 1)

So as it stated, his grandma treats those like his parents’ think that she was spoiling them. But she is not spoiling them; rather she treats them like a king and a queen. The other strong female character is seen when James asks his mother about him being her biological child. She gave an answer that was short and clear with concise expression. She told all

things in one breath. She gave him all the information he needed.

... She heaved a sigh and said, "I don't know what you are thinking, but no, you are not adopted. You are my son, born on March third at 7:00 am at Ngirigasha Hospital," she gave me a searching look and pushed the trolley to the cashier's counter. (Kabui's, 2015, p, 12)

As it is put on the above, the author forced the readers to appreciate and glorify the character, James's mother. Because she remembered every detail, the readers like her and accept her as a good model of a strong woman. On the other hand, she held this story for fifteen years without telling James. James accepted his stepfather as a father for fifteen years, but his mother knows that his father is not his biological father. She keeps this truth till the end of the story however, James found it by himself.

The other Socialist feminism is seen in the novel *Dust*. The author brings the conversation between Ajany and her friend Justina dialogue to show the strong feminist character. This Justina was a prostitute who lived around Ajany and Odidi's district. She met Odidi at a nightclub, and they discussed and danced together till Odidi thought about the pain of his illusions of Kenya numbed. During this time

"... Justina knew she would never leave Odidi Behind."

- - - - -

A sobbing cough from Ajany.

"I fed him," Justina says. "He was so hungry." (Owuor's .2014, p. 97)

As mentioned above, even though she is poor, she helped Odidi with what she had. And when the conversation continues, this girl had a child, and she made such things for her child.

Night fall.

"I'm going to work," says Justina.

"Now?" Ajany sniffs.

"When?"

Ajany walks in the direction of the door and sits on the ground in front of it. She watches Justina.

"A prostitute's child needs the same things other babies have," Justina says. . . (Owuor's .2014, 197)

In the above extract, Justina believed that all babies should be treated equally whether they are born from rich or poor families like prostitutes' babies. Ajany was confused about Justina's work at the beginning. She didn't expect her to leave her home at that time because it was at night. Then in the conversation, she discussed how she could have the capability to protect Odidi. "He lived here?" . . . "Those dogs could never find him." *Pride*. "I protected

him." (*Ibid*). Justina had confidence and a strong commitment to defending Odidi from the mass. She gave their nickname by saying 'DOG'. They were too elementary and little to her; she didn't consider them as human beings. Because their deed is wrong and unacceptable on her side, she didn't even think of them as a human.

In general, Socialist feminism was discussed in the above novels. All the novel's female characters stood either for females or for society. In the novel, *A Journey Within*, the major character was standing for female students who were harassed by their teachers. And she defended them from another trouble. On the other hand, in this novel readers saw how the main character reacts against her men colleagues. In the other novel, *Was Nyakeeru My father?* the major character's mother was so positive, and her ability to remind things was excellent. In the novel, she tried to save her boy from depression. At the end of the last novel, *Dust*, we saw the prostitute when she defended the major character of the story. In the previous literary works, prostitutes didn't have such a positive role in a literary work. However, in this novel, the author gave much attention to the prostitute and forced the readers being prostitution is a profession that she did for a living. So in Socialist Realism, such kinds of portraying characters encourage females' readers to participate in their society for good deeds.

6.3. Contemporary Kenyan Women

Florence Mbaya's, *A Journey Within* moves to provide a window to show how young women like Monika perform nationhood; Mbaya throws some light on the challenges facing young women in their endeavor to take up careers in Kenya today. Mbaya seems to have discussed 'her-story; the story of women in contemporary Kenya. Her story acquires prominence as a mode of the understanding of women's selfhood. It seeks to examine how women's writings foster women's identity concerning the nation. The semi-autobiographical nature of *A Journey Within* perhaps moves the author's story and fleshes out an important engagement of women in Kenyan issues in the 21st Century. Monika, the main character, the author portrays the struggles that faced young women. Women in their effort to chart selfhood and nationhood in Kenya in the 21st Century discussed in the novel.

Monika has a Degree in Bachelor of Arts. She is living with her sister, Miriam, besides searching for a job. The understanding of Mbaya's narrative penetrates the main character, Monika, and her ways of overcoming her changing issues. Being in a society full of school drop-outs and being jobless persons, her level of education makes her feel alienated. To be part of society, she opts to pass off

as an "O" level school-leaver. The author describes her as

"Quiet and with a pleasant disposition, she has that aura of confidence about her that is very admirable. After graduation Monika had to stay with Miriam, while she waited for any opportunities for employment" (Mbaya's, 2011,p, 3).

This explains her ability to cultivate a sense of belonging, for her adornment of amiable, flexible temperament enables her to fit into her sister's community. She identifies with the others.

"although she was a university graduate, she identified with them in as far as she was unemployed, and like them she sees through new and old newspapers for those popular 'Situations Vacant-Situations Wanted' columns day in day out, rather hopelessly" (Mbaya's, 2011,p 3).

However, she stays alien to the people in her sister's community; she involves their singing without understanding the meaning, listens to their gossip without adding, and joins in their laughter without clearly understanding their jokes. The researcher focused on the text as an enabling site for the reader and the critic to get another dimension of women's realities in postcolonial Kenya: self-determination and self-fulfillment in the nation. Monika, the main character, is 'I' in the novel whose narration takes a first-person narrative way. This first-person point of view speaks on the behalf of the collective 'we' and states duplication of potential responses to the central question of the female stand-in Kenya. The novel focused on the definition of the modern educated postcolonial Kenyan woman that is expected to create a new dimension for female representation. The author engages in stating about women's self-determination and the relation between national identity and women. And also, she is portraying women in the country, Kenya, today as having self-expressions problems since their 'self' is understood in the image of the 'other'. There is no regard to the self as fundamental to the inquiry of self and national identity that women's self-agency. The nation and its individuals have many things in common. Some of them are forgotten in the self/other dichotomies. The people, including women, should share in the past and present glories of Kenya. Women have to be standing together with the nation by involving in Kenya's national activities. In this way, the author describes the female self in the postcolonial country in her writing. Additionally, she backs the female in the nation and liberates her from men-domination notions that undermine her selfhood. The female self in Kenya understands as a dialectical model

that unites both the woman and the country that she lives. This relationship is expected to employ any differences and equivocal between the female self and the nation. Mbaya's Monika, the major character, development of nationhood as an ongoing process from her life at the university to the story that she takes up a teaching job. These main character experiences in Kenya influence her self-identity, and she also pushes what is happening in Kenya. Besides, she changes herself, Kenya, and indicts women's otherness.

The other contemporary African woman raises in the other novel, *Dust*. Here, African women are popular by women as mothers. They work through different world views. And they are building and practicing for their desires, for their failure, and their curiosity, rather than for survival. In the novel *Dust*, after the researcher saw Akai-ma inside Odidi's projections and memories. She is introduced in the novel when Nyipir and Ajany bring Odidi's body to their home. She presented as solid, worst, and mad with reality. She emerges with the Land Rover, and she comes with Galgalu.

. . . She flows like magma, every movement considered, as if it has come from the root of the world. Tall, willowy, wasp-waisted, her breasts still large and firm, she is made of and colored by the earth itself. Something ferocious peers out of dark brown eyes, so that even her most tender glance scalds. Her voice, a bassoon-sounding, gravel-colored afterthought. At unpredictable moments, for nameless reasons, she might erupt with molten-rock fury, belching fire that damaged everything it encountered. Akai was as dark, difficult, and dangerous as one of those few mountains where God shows up, and just as mystifying. (Owuor's 2014, p.33)

The platitude is not avoided; the author tries to compare Akai with the motherland. The mother was represented as a land. The land is the place where we live and which can carry every blessing and curse. So Contemporary Socialist Realists writers give much attention to the mother. Mothers are good in every aspect. The above extract expresses mother as a land of magma; unsteady, volcanic, and dangerous. There is no symbol of productivity, affections, and honesty to anyone but indecipherable, mystery, and madness. The narrator continues and shows her reaction as follows

. . . Scratches and tear marks on her face. Blood cakes her body in thin strips. One of Nyipir's AK-47s, the four-kilogram 1952 with wooden built stock and hand guard, is strapped to her body, cradled in a green kanga with an aphorism written on it: Udongo Uwahi Umaji,

“work with wet clay”... (Owuor's 2014.p. 33)

The above extract shows how Akai arrived at home and her feelings about Odidi's situation. The writer tries to describe what her cosmos looks like. She was armed, mad, and sad. And the extracts also show what she looks like in general, and it's evocative.

And the novel continues and discusses her madness and crazy act in the below extracts. She didn't want to accept the truth; rather she denied it and faced her husband, Nyipir. She was nagging him to bring her son, Odidi, alive.

... Nyipir enters the breach. “Our son.

Odidi.” He bows his head.

Akai asks, “Who is it?”

“Odidi.”

“Who?”

“Akai...” pleads Nyipir.

“No!” she explodes...

“where is my son?” She won't wait for his reply. She returns to the coffin, clutching her waist, scratching her left arm... (Owuor's 2014, p. 35)

In the above extract, she is totally in confusion and dilemma. The truth is the death of her son, Odidi, but she didn't want to accept it. In front of the coffin, she wanted to see her son alive, but he died.

The other contemporary female characters are seen in the novel *Was Nyakeeru, My Father?*. The narrator of the story, Jimmy mentioned some business areas which are held by women. So we understand that the Kenyan Contemporary Women are highly participating in business, and they are running their own business by themselves. Because they are the owners of the business, they use their name as the name of the business/shop.

Unlike the alien names of some of the shops at Baraka, the vegetables stalls bore the names of the proprietor, most of whom were women. So there was Mama John, Mama Njeri, and other familiar names... (Kabui's, 2015. p, 92)

As discussed above, Socialist Realism believes in gender equality, and it gives equal chances for society. That the writer wants to show contemporary Kenyan females' participation in many businesses. They administer their own business, and they give their name for the business.

As mentioned in the above novels, *Was Nyakeeru My father?* In *A Journey Within* and *Dust*, the female characters are strong, and they tried to be a symbol and model of society. They resemble contemporary African women, who are strong physically as well as psychologically.

To sum up, in the above discussion that focuses on Contemporary Kenyan Women, the researcher tried to show the confidence of female characters in

each novel. In the first novel, *A Journey Within*, the main character's confidence and self-sufficiency are discussed in different ways. On the other hand, in the second novel, *Dust*, the female character is seen with her full armor. She held a gun and other weapons. She looked like on the front line of war. And in the last novel, *Was Nyakeeru My Father?* we saw another strong female who opposed neo-colonialism. Many business centers used foreign names for their shop, but this woman used her indigenous name. So as mentioned above, Contemporary Kenyan Women have confidence in recent literary works unlikely before.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, the novels were highlighting Strong Female Characters /Positive Heroine/ in the Contemporary Anglophone Kenyan novels. Unlike the previous novels, which are written post-2000 are portraying strong female characters. Females' empowerment, Socialist feminism', and Contemporary Kenyan Women were discussed in this paper accordingly to show the presence of Strong female characters. Bringing women into power, women are confident and self-sufficient, and their stands for society are stated in all three novels.

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