

**GHOST CHARACTERIZATION IN AFRICAN PROSE: A STUDY OF
SELECTED NOVELS FROM KENYA, NIGERIA, AND MOZAMBIQUE**

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**A Thesis Submitted to Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Literature
of Chuka University**

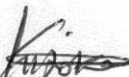
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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

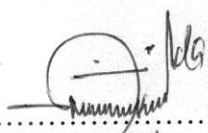
Declaration


This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a diploma or conferment of a degree in any other institution.

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This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with our approval as University supervisors.

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DEDICATION

To my parent, Stanley Kainga and Pauline Kabiro whom I honor so much.

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ABSTRACT

Characterization is an essential element of the African novel. Writers often use characters in novels to put forward their messages. Characters are mostly the mouthpieces of the authors. In Africa, the use of ghosts as characters in creative texts has been a recurrent factor, probably because African fiction has a connection with African oral narratives, which often feature ghost characters. However, there have been little studies on the use of ghost characters in African prose; and how such characters operate to reflect the social and the interpersonal conflicts to reveal the realities in the African continent. This research attempted to fill this gap by examining how ghost characters reflect the social environment and the interpersonal conflicts in the African novels. The study analyzed *Under the Frangipani* by Mia Couto from Mozambique, *The Famished Road* by Ben Okri from Nigeria and *Terrorist of the Aberdare* by Ng'ang'a Mbugua from Kenya. The study has been guided by two objectives; first, to examine how ghost characterization reflects the social environment in the three selected African novels; and second, to examine how ghost characterization reflects the interpersonal conflicts in the three selected African novels. Magical realism theory and in particular Wendy's (2004) strand has been used to interpret the texts. The study has shown that the selected authors have employed the five principles in the Strand to capture the issues of social environment and interpersonal conflicts in African continent. The literature review showed the gap and indicated that characterization is a crucial literary element in communication with targeted audiences. Qualitative research design has been used to elicit responses on the research area. Close text analysis of the selected novels was carried out to show how the three authors' used ghost characters to reflect the social environment and the interpersonal conflicts. The data from the primary texts was analyzed as per the stated objectives. The study comprises of six chapters. Chapter one includes background to the study that highlights the problem, objectives of the study and the research questions. Chapter Two comprises the literature review and the theoretical framework. Chapter Three has methodology and ethical considerations. Ghost characterization in reflection of social environment is captured in chapter four, which established that ghost characters reflect social aspects such as African religiosity, social vices like immorality, superstitions, and taboos. On economic; it revealed issues of corruption, economic exploitation, class conflicts, and poverty, lastly, under the political aspect; it explored political violence, bad leadership, and political instability as entrenched in colonial and post-colonial African countries. On ghost, reflection of the interpersonal conflicts in chapter five it has showed that ghost characters appearance causes tensions among other characters. Ghosts' action, as well as verbal expressions can heighten or lessen conflicts between individuals. The findings in chapter six revealed that ghost characters exhibit the rich African traditions, beliefs and the challenges that engulfed Africans during the colonial and post-colonial period. This has been made possible through the inimitable ability of ghost characters to oscillate in fanciful and phenomenal realms. It also showed that ghost characterization is used to mimic the interpersonal conflicts that results from differences in beliefs, values, goals, and desires for esteem, control, affiliations, and wishes.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

One of the features of fiction is characterization. Authors employ characterization as a literary tool to bring characters to life. A character is the representation of a person in a narrative or a dramatic work of art such as the novel, folktale, play or the film (Baldick, 2001; Childs & Fowler, 2006). Therefore, characters are the modes of communication that convey special messages from an author/narrator to the audiences. This role denotes that characters are the basis on which themes of a work of art and the intentions of the author are founded.

Characters make things happen in a story (Abrams, 1981; Abcarian, 1998). Through characters' dialogues, descriptions of their actions and revelations of their inner motives the plot of a novel is developed. This means that characters form the engine that powers a story to its maturity. Further, they can also be seen as the nerves that connect other elements of a text in order to achieve a smooth story line.

Literary works feature different types of characters. For instance, the use of humans as characters has often enabled authors to link directly with real people in the society, thereby making it relatively easier for the audience to see themselves in the characters. The reader's interaction with human characters in a text enhances their emotional connection with the characters' experiences in life (Gordon, 1997, Foley, 2001 & Akwanya, 1997). Indeed, human characters explore life issues appealingly, making them resonate with the audiences' experiences.

Moreover, human characters are used to represent various qualities that people exhibit in the society. Asiegbor (2020) argues that Achebe in *A man of the People* employs both male and female characters to show how each gender is labeled in Nigerian community. The male characters are portrayed as selfish, sexually greedy, wicked, proud, tricky, optimistic, foolish, ambitious and oppressors in the text. On the other hand female characters are given a double outlook, first they are portrayed as indeterminate human beings, dependent, gullible, voiceless, immoral and people who are stiffened by cultural beliefs while at the same time paradoxically being shown as sublime, perfect, beautiful, brave, caring and nurturing people. The depiction given by

Asiegbor reveals that human characters can be used in two ways in a text, that is, to represent the righteousness and the wickedness of the people in the society.

Authors have also employed the use of animals as characters in texts and these characters often distance the literary world from the real world. The reader has to view animal characters as embodied human beings operating in a literary society but appealing to the real world. The animal characters are given human qualities such as talking, singing, dancing and mimicking the human attributes (Vania, 2018 & Paul, 1989). Certainly, the use of animal characters advances the spectrum of characterization. It gives the author the liberty to explore freely the members of the society without fear of blackmail and intimidation from would-be aggrieved individuals in the society.

In contrary, animals can also be viewed as animal selves. Mierek (2010) says that animals in literature of children can be used either symbolically or as self that is portraying the natural outlook of animals and hence meant to be understood the way they are. This reveals that characterization can take literal and literary dimensions in literature. The self can help the audience experience characters' personal struggles, fears and ambitions in life.

Authors have also used object characters in passing their messages to the audience (Mirus, 2004). Objects are used symbolically to pass a message relating to either of the two forces that control the nature; namely, the good and the evil. These objects can be living things such as trees, or nonliving thing such as vehicles. When objects are used, they appeal to the human imagination as they struggle to connect two worlds that are created when objects engage in a productive conversation with another. Object characters also help to reveal the guarded secrets of human beings; which ordinary human beings cannot recount. These characters are also used this way to reveal the way human beings interact with the surroundings (Hornby, 2013).

In addition, Mecchi (2023) studies cars as characters in Lasseter's film *Cars* (2006) Carpenter's movie *Christine* (1983) and Ducournau's film *Titane* (2021) and says that cars are used to stand for individual human traits. When cars are used, they create situations where exciting new boundary-crossing possibilities manifests and they also

allow for oppressive forces to limit the human body to strict, hegemonic standards. Thus, cars push against this limiting mode of convergence through interpersonal connections and the embracing of queer possibilities. Mecchi's study therefore views the use of cars as tools used by the three authors to break the monotony of human characters, which limits the authors from exploring into all human surroundings, which is made possible with cars.

Notably, African oral literature employed various types of characters. These characters would be used to pass social, economic, and political message to the audience. For instance, they would be used to caution different individuals, ranging from the young to the old, in the society. The characters would be used to inculcate moral and epistemological values to the masses in the process of storytelling (Thiongo, 1981 & Mawere, 2010). This confirms that African oral tradition used characters as a medium for educating the members of the society.

The African novel borrows from African oral tradition in the development of characters. It incorporates the use of humans, animals, objects, and supernatural characters such as ghost, and gods to disseminate messages to the audience. These characters would be used the same way they are used in traditional or oral narratives to explain, artistically, the happenings in the society (Juliene, 1992, Sayad and Dar, 2015). Hence, characterization in the African novel can be viewed as an advancement of the African oral tradition.

African texts use various techniques in creation and development of characters. Authors can use direct characterization in creation and development of a character, which involves creation of characters through a simple report. Here, the author describes the personality of the character him/herself. Further, the author can also use other characters to tell about each other. The thought and perception about other characters is an effective indication of their personalities. Characters can also give more information about their own personality. This happens when they make a confidential confession (Abrams, 1999; Abcarian, 1998 Hoepfer, 1981 & Henkel, 1977). In indirect characterization, the character reveals their personality in their actions, emotions, and conduct (Hoepfer, 1981). The author depicts the characters performing some kind of actions, occupations, and professions. The reader is left to

make a definite inference about the personality of a character when put in these situations. Through the characters' actions, speech, emotions, thoughts, and the simple reports of the author, the reader is able to deduce themes and their interpersonal conflicts represented in a literary text.

In African texts, characters can be used in two ways; namely, figuratively and nonfigurative (Noel 2022). Figurative use of characters implies that the characters in question are seen as symbols and metaphors representing ideas, concepts, behavior, and objects in the contemporary society. Indeed, characters can represent ideas such as greed, kindness, generosity, humility, or jealousy. They can also be used to represent real people in the society by mimicking their behaviors and their attributes. Non-figurative characters are portrayed as individuals who have unique qualities, and can be interpreted as self without necessarily likening them to people in real world. This idea underpins double vision analysis of a character; that is, the "social" and the "self" operation of a character in a text. Owing to the multidimensional implications of characters in a text, it is crucial to examine characterization in African prose.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Characterization has been used as a literary mode of communication between the author and the reader. African writers have employed various characters in their literary works such as humans, animals, and objects, which literary scholars have researched and analyzed. However, scanty studies exist in the study of ghost characterization in African novels. This study examines how the ghost characterization reflects the social and the interpersonal conflicts in African novels by Mia Couto's, *Under the Frangipani*, Ben Okri's, *The Famished Road* and Ng'ang'a Mbugua's, novella *Terrorist of the Aberdare*. The study provides an alternative way of investigating African social issues and therefore adds to the existing Knowledge on human interpersonal conflict.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to interrogate how ghost characterization reflects the social environment and the interpersonal conflicts in the three selected African novels.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- i. To interrogate ghost characterization as a reflection of the social environment in the three selected African novels.
- ii. To examine ghost characterization as a reflection of interpersonal conflicts in the three selected African novels.

1.5 Research Questions

The study intends to answer the following questions:

- i. How does the ghost characterization reflect the social environment in the three selected African novels?
- ii. How does ghost characterization reflect interpersonal conflict in the three selected African texts?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study broadens the concept of characterization by showing that character type selection by the writer is limitless, and that one has liberty to select a character that fits well with the kind of message they wish to convey. The study further enriches African literary scholars with insights on how merging of the two realms which are material and surreal can be used to convey issues affecting African nations and offer a chance to the readers to re-dream the African future.

1.7 The Scope of the Study

The study explores ghost characters in the three selected African novels; namely, *Under the Frangipani*, *The Famished Road*, and *Terrorist of the Aberdare*. The three African novels are taken from East Africa, West Africa, and South Africa.

1.8 Assumption of the Study

The study is based on the assumption that ghost characters combine the natural and the supernatural realms, to mimic the issues affecting African societies based on social, economic, and political situation in the three selected texts. It also assumes that ghost characters exhibit interpersonal conflicts when interacting with other characters in the texts and it is a reflection of human experiences on conflicts.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Ghost/Spirits/Dead:

They are used synonymously to refer to characters that appear after death and they may or may not have a physical body. They interact with both the living and the dead.

Imegeal:

It refers to physical presentations of the characters or the appearances of a character.

Magical Realism:

This refers to a literary movement associated with a narrative mode that combines realism and the fantastic, so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them.

Point of View/Narrative Perspective: This is used to refer to the vantage point from which a story is presented. This can be in terms of the first person, the second person, or the third person narrator.

Self:

The term “self” refers to characters’ personal qualities that make them unique individuals operating in a given society.

Social/Public:

This refers to the representation of characters to reflect people in the broader contemporary society; that is, figuratively or symbolically. It encompasses the social, economic, and political environment in Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of the concept of Characterization

The term character has elicited different definitions from diverse literary critics. Peck & Coyle (1984) define characters as the people in a novel. Characters are assessed based on what the author says about them as well as what they do or say. This is important because doing so avoids loose conjectures about a character and establishes everything from the evidence of the text. They further point out that characters are part of a broader pattern; that is, they are members of a society, and hence the author's distinctive view of how people relate to society will be reflected in the presentation of every character. Indeed, characterization details are not included just for their own sake, but relate to the overall pattern of the novel. This shows that characters can be seen as people in a novel who the authors tell us about. This definition sheds light to this study as it helps in analysis of different kinds of characters, such as ghosts, that the authors have used. It enables the study to view ghosts as personified human beings. Therefore, ghost characters can be analyzed using the established criterion that is used to analyze human characters.

According to Childs and Fowler (2006), characters are fictional representations of the realistic world:

A character is the fictional representation of a person, which is likely to change both as the presence in literature, and as an object of critical attention, much as it changes in society. Ideas of the place of the human individuality and self-determination clearly shift historically; and this is often mimed in literature by the relation of characters to actions or webs of story. The idea of character often attaches, therefore, to the personalizing or humanizing dimensions of literature; thus naturalism, which characters are not self-determining agents but in ironic relationships to larger sequences of force, seems a remarkably impersonal writing (P.23).

In this definition, characters are used to represent realistic human experiences at the literal and the symbolic level. Further, it reveals that character's mimic society and are dynamic as opposed to static; hence, they possess qualities, which are typical to those that people exhibit in a normal societal set up. In a contemporary society, an individual keeps on changing his perception whenever faced with new experiences. This definition has contributed positively to this study, as it has helped in analyzing the dynamics of ghost characters in the three selected texts.

The reader needs to be acquainted with the language of rendition in order to analyze correctly a character in a text. Kahari (1986) observes that, “to understand characterization in novels, it is important to understand the linguistic philosophy of the author and the language she/he uses” (P.40). This is further expounded by Harrison (1998) who avers that “characters may be presented by means of description through their actions, speech, or thoughts” (p.52). This shows that in order for one to do a detailed analysis of any work of art, they should strive to comprehend the language used by the author, and to follow closely the details given about the characters by the author.

Elder (2010) suggests four major positions with regard to the ontological status of characters:

Semiotic theories consider characters to be signs or structures of fictional texts. Cognitive approaches assume that characters are representations of imaginary beings in the minds of the audience and some philosophers believe that characters are abstract objects beyond material reality (P.20).

Here, semiotic theory accords characters another critical role of developing the structure of a text. Thus, lack of characters in a text would result to incompleteness of that literary text. In cognitive theory, characterization is expounded through giving characters’ abstractive elements. The theory denotes that characters do not really exist, but they represent real human beings. These definitions are important because they guide one on how to view characters in a work of art, such as a novel or a play.

2.2 Characterization by Character Roles

Characters as a literary element play different roles within a work of fiction. It is within these characters that an author is able to tell the story. According to Hawthorne (1985), characters can be used to tell a story, to exemplify a belief, or to contribute to a symbolic pattern in a work of art. Readers associate themselves with hero characters that are faced with problems to solve in their lives. They appreciate them and learn from those characters when they successfully solve the problems facing them. This is because characters equip readers with new strategies of solving problems. Characters in texts contend with same fictional situations that are replications of real life situations. When the hero in a fictional novel makes it through by applying right judgment, they confirm their human potential and the possibility of

them succeeding even in difficult situations. This property models people to conform to the qualities exhibited by their heroes, since a story is normally told through the characters. Literature places characterization at the center of storytelling. Hawthorne (1985) shows that a reader associates himself/herself with the achievement of successful characters and dissociates from the failures of characters who fail in fiction. This is because a character acts as examples to the living. This forms an important argument when one is interrogating characterization in prose.

Characterization is meant to maintain a mutual understanding between the author and the reader. Foster (1970) asserts that characterization is anchored on the fact that a writer is able to appeal to the intelligence and imagination of the reader. This assertion is further corroborated by Rukunga (2020) who avers that Characters play a vital role in literature as they control the plot of the story, bring out themes, and arouse and sustain interest. The argument by these critics provides the avenue through which ghost characterization has been interrogated in the three selected texts as the ghost characters are interrogated in this study to reveal the conflict that ensues from their interaction as shown in chapter five.

Fictitious characters are used as the embodiment of customs and beliefs in African set up. Mawere (2011) posits that character development is very important in character driven literature, where stories focus not only on events but also on individual personalities. While interrogating African classic literature by Feso (1956) *Devil's Thorn* and Chakaipa's (1961) *The Only One in Ten Arrows*, Mawere (2010) concludes that these authors use characterization to denigrate African tradition and religion. The effect of it was polarization that led to the change of the African culture to fit the western scientism and modernity, thus, it eroded the African rich traditions and culture. This observation adds a new role characters play in a work of fiction: to bring out various thematic concerns in a work of prose. Interrogation of the three selected texts has shown that ghost characters are used to bring out various thematic concerns.

While examining Chakaipa's *Love is Blind*, Mawere (2010) maintains that before the rise of written literature, characterization featured in orature, especially in folklores among other genres. Characterization was always used as a vehicle to inculcate moral and epistemological values that oriented the African child to the real world. The study

further posits that historically, stories and plays focusing on characters became common in the 19th century Romantic Movement, where character driven-literature rapidly supplanted plot driven-literature that typically utilizes identifiable archetypes rather than proper development of characters. Mawere states:

In African orature before colonialism, characterization served mainly as a didactical mode to perpetuate Africans indigenous knowledge systems and moral values. Even first generation writers continued to use characterization as a didactic tool; but abusively as a tool to downplay African traditional religion and all rational systems that belong to Africa. (P.7)

Characterization therefore played a crucial role in African narratives before the onset of colonization, and it continued to play a pivotal role in literature even after the inception of colonialism. However, sometime characterization in society was used to subjugate the Africans and their culture. This study deviates from Mawere's (2010) study in that it moves away from folklore and investigates characters in prose in order to reveal different roles that ghost characters play in fiction.

Authors can name their fiction characters intentionally to allude to certain thematic concerns that those characters convey. Ndigirigi (2015) in examining character names and types in Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross and Wizard of the Crow* notes that:

Given the social reality Ngugi is depicting, the names he gives to his characters becomes foregrounded feature that draw attention to the specific social traits that he describes. They aid him in the description and analysis of that reality. As such, they are interpretive signposts that allow the readers to see the characters as representative figures; as a part of the larger framework. They act as the basis for the creation of character types (p.50).

In this case, characters are portrayed as an element that stirs the growth of a literary text, allowing the reader to connect with the reality described in the text. Ndigirigi further argues that a cursory glance at the names of the pre-colonial type characters predisposed them to partisan selfishness, greed, sadism, violence and theft, and points out to the fact that these characters would be misfits in a social setting. *Devil on the Cross* is shown as a jungle where only those with carnivorous tendencies survive. Colonialism and later on neo-colonialism helps to satiate these characters' narrow and greedy appetites, like seen through Kihaahu, Nditika, Kimenderi, Mwaura and Gatitu. Ndigirigi (2015) is more concerned in how the name of a character alludes to their

behavior and he observes that Ngugi assigns his characters the names that allude to their general behavior. This study finds Ndigirigi's argumentation relevant in textual analysis because it links the events in a text with a character's name. It also links characters' personal qualities with their names; thus, this study will aid in the interpretation of the ghost characters.

In investigating the complex rendering of the three characters in Beti's *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, Watts (2011) observes that Beti's characters are to varying degrees complicit and critical of colonial projects. Characters are also portrayed as having their own internal contradictions and ambiguities, which demonstrate the complex dynamics and power relations shaping individual roles and identities. Thus, Beti is able to construct a space fraught with ideological complications and contradictions, and within it, no character(s) can resolve their situation happily. Alienation, often leading to exile, is the unfortunate state of any characters awake (or unawake) to the currents of these conflicts. Characters who become aware of the dynamic forces in conflicts cannot extricate themselves from conflicting pulls, nor do they become powerful. From this argument, it is clear that Beti uses characters to show the challenges that bedeviled Africans during the inception of colonialism, as well as demonstrate how most Africans struggled to extricate themselves from the white masters' fabrics of oppression. Noticeably, Beti uses human characters to pass political, social, and cultural thematic concerns. The present examines the representation of social, economic, and political issues using ghost characters and interrogates interpersonal conflicts of ghost characters. by so doing, it adds to the reservoir on studies on relationship between characters and issues raised in the texts.

Characters can be used by the authors to convey aesthetic vision. Ezeugo (2020) examines Mwangi's manipulation of fictional techniques; namely, character and characterization, to reveal his aesthetic vision in *Going Down River Road*. The study concludes that the analysis of Mwangi's delineation of character brings to view frustrated young men whom Angus Colder dubbed "Mwangian man." He observes that most of Mwangi's characters are perfidious cheats, drunks, and prostitutes who lack savior image but need urgent salvation. The study reveals that Ben in *Going Down River Road* prefers prostitutes to girls who are morally upright. Mwangi's characters also symbolize deflated society as we see Ben depreciating from a high

position in the army to an insurance broker then to a casual-work man, swallowing dust at development building. This deterioration of characters is synonymous with that of Kenyan milieu that Mwangi is apprehensive to portray. Ezeugo views characters as a tool, which Mwangi uses to convey his message and the dream. It is worth noting that every author is propelled to write because of a certain issue he/she wishes to address in the society. By interrogating ghost characters, the present study will go further into revealing the role of non-human characters in the modern African fiction.

In assessing characters in Sembene's *Gods Bits of Wood* as they struggle for change and the behavior of characters as they perform their roles, Njoki (2011) divides characters into two classes and explores their relationships with a capitalist set up as regards to change. Njoki's study demonstrates that characters are changed by class struggle and in the process, they effect change in their societies. This change is in the levels of their economic, social, and cultural status. The study shows that each character is a representation of real human beings in a capitalist set up, who can either be looked at individually or communally; and that Sembene's characters include women and children who get involved in strikes indirectly, and play a great role in changing the whole society. Njoki's argument reveals that authors use characters to instill change in the society, and that every character has a specific role they play in a society. The study therefore views a text as a direct representation of the society. Consequently, by reading the text, the reader is able to see the social class struggle in that particular society. This study examines ghost characters in the context of the three pillars of the society; namely, the social, the economic and the political. The study also looks at the concept of conflict within ghost characters but unlike Njoki's study the present study narrows down to interpersonal conflicts.

Njoki's (2011) argument is supported by Baldick (2001) who observes that characters in August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1988) and Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabber* (1891) are representatives of specific positions in social relations of class, gender and the conflicts. Baldick suggests that when characters are analyzed in a text, the reader is able to group them appropriately based on their description. His study reveals that when authors are writing, they are conscious of the nature of the individual they wish to capture in the society. From Njoki & Baldick, it is possible to

categorize ghost characters in the selected texts and analyze them to reveal the various positions they occupy in their realms, which is done in chapter four and five.

Critical analyses of characters in Chinua Achebe's work by Raj (2017) presents a diverse worldview on the use of characters in fiction. It reveals that characters can suggest a worldview that is coherent and unified. For instance, Okonkwo's fate may be seen as part of a general dispensation of justice in the universe. The other worldview is that Okwonko is be ascribed to a random causal amalgam of social conditioning and psychological determination in all those accounts. It can also mean a fate disbursement. The three views, which Raj x-rays characters in Chinua's work, reveal that characters form the embodiment of the society. A close analysis of them brings forth so many societal concerns in a text, which literary scholars should strive to unearth.

2.3 Characterization by Age and Gender

Literary authors consciously design characters based on gender and age to pass their motifs and visions. Mugubi (2012) studies the child character in post emancipation and colonial West Indian fiction to determine the child's position in that society, as well as the roles of a child character as a literary agent. The study examines Hodge's *Crick Crack, Monkey*, and Anthony's *The Year in Son Fernando*, Shinerbournes's *The Last English Plantation*, McDonald's *The Humming Bird Tree*, Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and Roy's *No Black Sparrows*. Mugubi observes that the child character in novels designed for adult readership is employed intentionally for concrete goals. Such children, particularly in West Indian novels are not essentially childlike or gullible and puerile. They are cogently perspicacious and active. Reasonable and cognizant of their surroundings, these children characters are invested with boundless potentials. The study concludes that as metaphors therefore, child characters in Caribbean novels are employed to underscore an array of childhood idiosyncrasies that may restore the muddle of human relationships. Mugubi's observation reveals that characters carry a pithy message. During character analyses, the literary scholar should be keen on obtaining every detail the authors employ to communicate. The present deviates from Mugubi's study in that it interrogates ghost characters reflection of social and interpersonal conflicts in the three selected African texts.

Literary characters can be presented as either male or female. The two genders are depicted as endowed with different capabilities. They are also used to develop different purposes in texts. Stratton (1990) argues that female characters have been figured in a variety of roles, such as gender inequality. The study further says that female characters are portrayed as mothers who are taking care of their households and their husbands. The females' place is seen as in the kitchen, where they perform kitchen chores. This observation is also made by Rami (2016) and Qasim (2012) while investigating Toni Morrison's texts. Stratton (1990) also argues that many male writers have encoded female characters as agents of moral corruption and contamination in their society. Mehta (1997) and Sani (2015) also corroborate that women are presented as lesser beings. The criticism made by the above literary scholars reveals the essence of gender mistrust. The authors attack the social set up that apportions different genders roles. In the analysis of the ghost characterization, this study attempts to find out whether issues of gender are featured in reflection of social and interpersonal conflicts in the three African texts.

Female characters are often seen as goddesses who have lured men to their death. In other instances, they are portrayed as suicidal and murderers (Stratton, 1994 & Sani, 2015). On the contrary, Stratton & Sani agree that Women go through double oppression in the society. This they term as maltreatment and exploitation of women in the society. Stratton and Sani bring to fore the concept of gender imbalances in the society, where one gender is being looked down. Their studies enriches this research in that it is possible to examine whether gender features in ghost reflection of social environment and also whether their interplay contributes to heightening or lessening interpersonal conflicts in the selected texts.

Jerona (2014) opines that Ogola in the *River and the Source* presents a biased image of male and female in the society, and that she uses narrative and descriptive method of presenting her story. Jerona goes on to say that, Ogola presents women characters in a positive way, though she fails to justify the authors' intended positive image. The result is that characters are sketchily presented and therefore not artistically complete. Jerona views Ogola's weakness as in the subversion of the male image at the expense of the female one. This Ogola does by eliminating the male characters through death. The death of Akoko's husband and Nyabera's are the cases that come in mind. In the

case of living husbands like Mark Anthony and Aoro, Ogola does not give prominence; instead, she places them in the background. Jerona concludes that Ogola is therefore biased against her male characters. While the present study concerns itself with gender, it goes further than Jerona's (2014) study by seeking to establish whether gender concerns outplay each other in the spiritual world in interpersonal level, as shown in chapter five.

In addition, character and gender issues play out in gothic movies. Nabi (2017) examines characteristics of the female gothic and the male gothic movies, and the difference between these two genres, specifically by focusing on the function of gender and the characterization of the main characters in Radcliffe's *The Italian*, and Lewi's *The Monk*. In this study, Nabi concludes that there are two main female character roles within gothic literature: the predator and the victim. The male character is portrayed as dangerous yet powerfully attractive. The male character helps portray the pain/pleasure paradox that has come to be synonymous with gothic literature. The female character on the other hand is displayed as fragile and vulnerable, and gives the heroes something to rescue in their endeavors. Males are considered more brutal, violent, rapists and the intense of horror is magnified where they are involved. The current study finds that both male and female characters contribute to ghost characters' reflection of social, economic, and political environment in Africa. It also reveals that the two genders add to the development of interpersonal conflicts in the selected African texts.

Although some female characters in horror movies are portrayed as sexually helpless victims, there are those that show women as powerful and independent. Those horror movies do so to improve the self-esteem of women. These movies still exhibit female characters that are more competent than men are. These characters never back away even when faced by the worst enemy. Kamil et al. (2019) argues that it is difficult to consider women as weak beings in all horror movies. The involvement of gender issues in ghost characterization raises interest on how such characters play out to depict various thematic concerns in a text. This study establishes that these two genders have contributed significantly in the development of the African social, economic, and political environments.

2.4 Human and Non-human as Characters

Literary scholars have analyzed how authors use both human and non-human characters to pass their messages. Ordu (2021) observes that Ngugi's novel *Petals of the Blood* uses human characters as symbols of betrayal. He uses Abdulla as a human character to represent the liberators who were betrayed by political leaders after Kenya attained her independence. Ordu goes on and says that in the struggle by those human characters to regain what is rightfully theirs a class conflict ensues. Though the current study analysis ghost characters, the concept of symbolism helps in examining how ghost characters mirror the social and interpersonal conflicts as they are reflected in chapter four and five respectively.

Other than humans, Animal characters are used in literary texts. Animals can be used to reflect on the ethical issues in a society. Bolongaro (2009) examines Anthropomorphism cognition and ethics in Palomar Italo Calvino's last major work of fiction and postulates that:

Animals are characters and usually, the protagonists of the tale. The use of animal characters in this genre is more or less straightforward case of anthropomorphism and allegory, they are made to represent human types and attributes; fox is cunning, the cat is curious, doves represent love etc. (p.109).

The above quotation reveals that the reader should read stories critically to unravel the message animal characters intend to pass because these characters bring out attributes based on human qualities. These human qualities range from good to bad. This assertion informed this research, particularly in chapter five where analysis of the interpersonal conflicts with regard to ghost characters is presented. The current study perceived the conflicts by ghost characters as mimic of human conflicts.

Animal characters can also be used to teach children morals. Dunn's (2011) research on *Talking Animals; A Literature Review of Anthropomorphism in Children's Books* assesses the role and importance of anthropomorphic animals in children's novels. The study reveals that Aesop's fables and various animal trickster tales from around the world had traditionally been moralistic and had been used to teach people how they should and should not behave. It further states that many of the animal stories today teach readers about kindness, respect, bravery, and friendship. The

anthropomorphic animals are considered as favorite characters in children's work of art, and these characters continue to hold a special place in their hearts. This denotes that a character can have educative function in a text. Hence, characters are supposed to be studied not only as an element of a text, but also as instruments that can shape the lives of the readers desirably. The present study examines how the ghost characters are used to shape the thinking of the society based on social, economic, political, and interpersonal conflicts.

Animals can also be understood as animal selves, without necessarily relating them to human characters. Mirek (2010) examines whether animal characters may be understood as animal selves and not as symbolic humans. The research presents two different animal characters: those clothed and/or are bipedal and those presented more naturalistically in activities they are engaged in and in the character's voices. Therefore, this suggests at least two broad approaches by authors and illustrators to animal characters, usually labeled 'symbolic human' and 'animal self.' The study concludes that animals in literature for children can be used either symbolically or as self that is portraying the natural outlook of animals and hence meant to be understood the way they are. Mirek's observation is very important in character analysis as it helps literary critics to broaden their perspectives of character interpretation from merely focusing on characters as symbolic. This means that characters can be interpreted in a literal manner. The current study approached the ghost characters from two perspectives just as Mirek suggests, Symbolic when representing social, economic, and political environment in African environment and both symbolically and selves when reflecting the interpersonal conflicts.

At other levels, animal characters can be used in magical realism. Schwalm (2009) explores magical realist novels from Australia and Canada, as well as the influence of the two seminal Latin American Magical Realist narratives. The study focuses on representation of animal relationships in the post-colonial context. Schwalm shows that magical realism embodies and represents an idea of feral animalist that critically engages with an inherently imperialist, Cartesian humanism, and elusiveness within systems of genre categorization and labeling. The study further observes that it is this embodiment and presence of animal agencies that animates magical realism and injects it with life and vibrancy. The Study posits that in this magical realism, animal

practices are inextricably intertwined with imperialism such as pastoral farming, natural historical collections, the circus, the rodeo, the wildest show, and the zoo. It is also interwoven with alternative animal practices inherently incompatible with European ideologies, such as the Aboriginal dreaming, native North American animist beliefs, and subsistence hunting, as ways of positioning themselves in relation to the Cartesian human subjects. These critics have laid a positive foundation in the study of characterization in literature and they form the premise from which this study is entrenched because the current study uses magical realism theory as the interpretive grid.

2.5 “Mysticism,” Ghosts as Characters

Like human and animal characters, ghost characters have also been used to disseminate message in literary texts. Ghost characters are used by Toni Morrison to respond to slave narrative necessitated by change in historiography stemming from Black power movement of the two decades (MacNaulty, 2015). MacNaulty further argues that Toni attempts to fill the gaps that historical writing left out and she gives voice to those left silenced by the horrific traumatic experiences of slavery. MacNaulty concludes that the novel resembles a palimpsest and response to previous narratives layering of the stories of slavery and expertly provides an invitation for healing within the community in the book and the community of readers as well. The present study has shown that ghost characters reveal the post-colonial traumatic experiences and gives hope for the future generation.

Ghost characters are used in fiction as a preserve of the communities' history. Kristina (2017) examines the role that female ghosts play in recuperating memory and filling the gaps of official history in Erna Brodber's *Louisiana*, Zoë Valdes' *s Te di la Vida entera*, Sandra Cisneros's *Carmelo*, and Maryse Conde's *victoire*. The study observes that the ghost in those novels disrupt a linear temporality and presents a matriarchal mode of remembering, leading readers to reconsider the past outside the dominant historical discourse. The study also asserts that the four novels use ghost figures not only to comment on the past, but also employ it to initiate healing within individual relationships between women. The present study interrogated how the ghost characters represent the colonial and post-colonial history of Africa.

In the context of African-Americans' experience, Khedhir (2020) argues that Jesmyn Work uses ghosts as both a literary trope and a cultural element in order to investigate an erased or distorted past and to assert an authenticated African American cultural identity. Khedhir further notes that cultural haunting in Africa-American literature often translates an inability to reckon with a past that refuses to be buried and a desire to be heard and seen. By coming back to life and intruding the narrative loaded with stories, the ghost of Richie shows that the past still lingers in the present and that it is only by excavating and interrogating an erased and often silenced history that the past's ghostly presence could be exorcised, and a new form of consciousness, identity and subjectivity may be wrought. The issue of identity in African American is so emotive that they seek an alternative way of addressing it. Magical realism that entails creation of imaginary world through which ghost characters have the ability to operate offers this alternative. African past of colonization and post colonization is similarly an emotive issue and the authors discussed in this study seek an alternative medium of presenting the experience.

Ghost characters are also often used metaphorically in a text. Harris (2015) interrogates drama and poetry from Ireland, South Africa, and Caribbean, and notes that theoretical and critical potential of ghost stories in the twentieth century Anglophone plays are metaphorical, and thus these plays afford the resources for ghosts to enter and survive in our land. The current study argues that since ghosts are metaphorical, the reader should interact with them in a text like one interacting with an ordinary human being. Thus, they bring out themes, and interpersonal conflicts that mimic human beings.

Religious set ups of the communities have often been interrogated using ghost characters where ghost characters act as symbols. O'Connor (2006) examines the ghost of *King Hamlet* as a symbol for religious ambience in England during the religious reformation and posits that:

Hamlet cannot be classified as wholly catholic or protestant, rather he mirrors the religious ambivalence that was present in Shakespeare's life as well as that of England during the transitional period of the religious reforms (p.50)

Thus, he appeals to all three prominent views, which are representation as catholic, protestant, and ambivalence of ghosts and spirits that existed during the time he wrote *Hamlet* in order for every member of audience to believe in the ghosts' influence over the events of the play. The study finally observes that ghosts become a symbol for the religious ambivalence prevalent in England during the time *Hamlet* was written because it mirrors the conflicting beliefs and faiths of the religious reformation. The current research borrows insights from O'connor by demonstrating that ghosts are emblems in African religion as discussed in chapter four.

Salih (2020) examines the appearance of ghosts in five of Shakespeare's play: *Hamlet, Julius Caesar, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, and Richard 3*. The study analyzes common characteristics of ghosts' appearances and the scenes. Salih showed that in all five plays, the ghost is an assassin and wants someone to avenge their deaths. The ghosts' job is to alert the play hero to retaliate on their killers and/ or torment their killers. Like in Salih's study the present study looks at how the selected authors use ghost characters for revenge like seen in *Under the Frangipani* where Emerlindo Mucanga reincarnates to avenge against being made a national hero because the country he fought for is in shambles.

Ghost characters have been used to create symbolic tension in a text, especially when the ghosts are involved in conflicts. Becher (2019) investigates Gainman's use of the ghost child motif in *Sandman* (1989), *Caroline* (2002), and *Graveyard Books* (2008) and reveals that three emotional movements for the ghost plotlines are exhibited in those stories; these are from terror to hope; from pity to salvation; and from desolation to connectedness. These atmospheres are created when ghosts conflict with the child in the texts. Becher further observes that Gainman's stories represent the ghost child motif as a symbol for a positive relation with death. Becher's study has enriched the present study by providing a premise upon which Abiku child in *The Famished Road* is analyzed to show how ghosts' interactions in the text create interpersonal conflict in chapter five.

2.6 Point of View/Narrative Perspective in characterization

The point of view is the narrator's position in the description of characters and events. Point of view embraces the angle of narrating in fiction (Simpson, 2010). Thus, a

point of view helps in filtering everything there is in a narrative. It determines the amount of information the narrator shares with the reader, much as it can influence the degree to which the reader can identify with the protagonist. This study reveals that narrators can also be characters in a text and the present study show some of the characters analyzed double up as narrators.

Stories where events rotate around the narrator are considered credible to the readers because the narrator testifies personal experiences. Scotty (2015) probes the narrator in Sherwood Anderson *Death in the Woods*, and observes that the author uses time and memory to construct the consciousness of the narrator. The research further notes that when a story revolves around the narrator, it creates an effect of verisimilitude that makes it a more trustworthy voice. The fact that the narrator testifies to the truth of the story he is presenting makes him more trustworthy to the reader. In this case, the author lays emphasis on the importance of the first person narration. Scotty (2015) informs the present research by ascribing credibility of the issues ghost characters are revealing since, most of them are doubling up as narrators and characters at the same time.

Branton (2019) examines dead narrator in young adult literature in *Allegiant* by Veronica Roth, *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher, *Before I Fall* by Lauren Oliver, and *The Catastrophic History of You and Me* by Jess Rothenberg and opines that:

Observing the dead narrator in these novels show the characters' experiences as a sort of growth in their death. Since most of these protagonists' experience life after death, they can continue developing even after the apparent finality of their death, as most young adult novels do span the entirety of a characters life. The death of the character helps the author accelerate the maturity of the character. In a way, the afterlife becomes the teenager's proto-adulthood and grants them the wisdom that comes with living an entire life within the span of a few months. Though tragic, the deaths of these characters allow them to mature and flourish more quickly than if they were to grow up (P.4&5).

The above quotation demonstrates that a dead narrator plays an important educative function in the lives of the young in the society. Hence, the study of ghost narrators who are assumed to live in oblivion in the selected texts helps in passing important message to the readers.

2.7 Studies Done on the Three Selected Texts

A few literary scholars have analyzed the texts under study. Coetzee (1999) regards Okri's literary work as having been able to negotiate the contradictions of being him to revealing other people in a much complex and fantastic way. 'When one reads Okri's novel, they definitely find the experience instructive' P.67. Coetzee further says that Okri's seminal work, *The Famished Road* (1991), reworks the idea of the African novel in the same manner through a narrative structure that imagines the space of the novel in Okri's own terms. Coetzee agrees with the current study in looking at *The Famished Road* as a fantastic novel, which informed the selection of the theoretical framework for this study.

The Famished Road is considered a text aimed at addressing issues affecting Nigeria using mythical approach. Ernest (2020) observes that Okri uses *The Famished Road* to highlight the post-colonial Nigeria. Ernest interrogates the aspect of politics using ghost characters to reveal political instabilities in Nigeria. Irene (2015) adds that Okri uses oral traditions to enrich his text. Okri employs riddles, proverbs, myths, and legends to present Nigeria's history, present issues, and proffers solutions. These studies enrich character analysis of the selected novels through interrogation of social environment and the second objective concerned with interpersonal conflicts, which is not a concern of Ernest.

Rhit (2019) examines the element of fantasy and folklore as strategies for narrative construction in Ben Okri's *Famished Road trilogy*. The study observes that Okri achieves two important goals; first, he fills in some disconcerting gaps generated by history. Second, he produces narratives of colonial and post-independence histories, which apart from linking past and presents traumatic experiences; disclose possibilities of healing wounds that are still open in Nigeria. Okri's selected novels form an instrument to fight oblivion and use transmitted values to envision a more hopeful future. Rhit's study provides diverse ways in which characters can be studied.

Terrorist of the Aberdare captures social issues concerning environment. Syokau (2013) observes that Mbugua in *Terrorist of the Aberdare* presents the causes and effects of environmental degradation, human-wildlife conflicts, and proposes strategies of environmental conservation in contemporary Kenya. Syokau's study

further reveals that human characters are the main causes of environmental degradation through their means of production; either for sustainability or for production. Generally, Syokau's thesis revolves around environmental issues, and the present study moves further to focus on how ghost characters are used to represent interpersonal conflicts, and the social, the economic and the political situation in Africa.

Ngoveni (2007) interrogates Couto's novel *Under the Frangipani* as an intervention into the problematic memory of post-war Mozambique. Ngoveni's study attempts to locate Couto's -narratives among contemporary writing in Africa. The study argues that Couto's narratives combine allegory and magic realism in their endeavor to highlight the complexity of the Mozambican past, and the need to include a diversity of voices from different sources. The study focuses primarily on the novel, inclusive of narrative approach, which manifests through the coexistence of putative worlds. Further, Ngoveni explores the tension between the ontological assumptions of officialdom and those of the work. The current study differs from Ngoveni's study in that it examines ghost characterization in reflection of the social environment and interpersonal conflicts in the selected texts.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by Magical realism theory. Roh coined the term magical realism in 1925, which developed from expressionism that focused on human universals rather than empirical specifics that characterized capitalism/socialism pre-world two. The present study uses Wendy Strand (2004) that identifies five tenets of magical realism in the works of fiction.

Wendy shows that the magical realism work of fiction presents the irreducible elements of magic, which refers to something we cannot explain according to the laws of western empirical discourse. This means that the magical events, people, and characteristics depicted in magic realist texts cannot be understood by the reader according to logic or to the received belief. It is relatively difficult to understand the nature and form of ghost characters. This tenet helps to analyze a world where every object talks and have the ability to talk to other characters.

Wendy suggests that magic realists' texts often detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world. The magic realist author may provide realistic and highly detailed descriptions of a fictional world that resembles the one we live in. Wendy refers to the theory of Barthes and Roh (1925) to point out that in magic realist texts, mystery does not descend to the real world from some special other realms; but rather, it is a product of detailed descriptions which signal that mystery hides and vibrates behind the real world that is represented by fiction. Wendy's second principle suggests that a magic realist text includes a co-mingling of the real and the magical, such that the magical events are usually grounded in a traditionally realistic manner. This tenet has guided this study by showing how the unreal world created in the three texts emblems the real African environment currently in terms of social, political, and economic situation. Ghost characters interact in a realm that replicates a natural world. The analysis of the realm reveals that African social, economic, and political situations are metaphorically represented.

Wendy observes that magical realism texts present unsettling doubts on the part of the reader to recite two contradictory understanding of events. The reader may hesitate before categorizing the depicted event or occurrence as magic. S/he may experience a tension between two contradictory understandings of events, and hence experience some unsettling doubts about the logic used to depict them. Due to the conflicting demands of both magic and logic, "the reader" has difficulty-marshaling evidence to settle questions about the status of events and the characters in such fiction. However, doubts and disbelief are familiar to scholars of fantasy. According to Todorov (1985), the "fantastic" is a quality, which exists during a story when a reader hesitates between two conflicting beliefs. Magical realist narratives raise the possibility of interpreting their narrative as a dream, warning the reader that what they are seeing may be part of a delirium. In analysis of the ghost novel, a contradiction existed where some characters are portrayed to be in a state of a dream. For instance, Emerlindo Mucanga in *Under the Frangipani* interacts with other characters in this state while Okri makes use of such characters that hover in a state of dreamlike, and through them, ghost characters reveal several concerns affecting their lives, ranging from social to political and economic.

The magic realist narrative presents a merging of different realms. Wendy suggests that magic realist literature demonstrates the intermittent and the uncertain nature of space and time. According to Wendy, we may read this oscillation fantasy journey into the world as characteristically postmodern. The magic realist world suggests there is a magical zone that exists parallel to our reality. This tenet has helped in unraveling how the three authors use ghost characters to create settings that are deviant from the current environment in order to depict the real African environment. In *The Famished Road*, for example Okri creates a spirit realm that Abiku characters hover. In it, they get power to see into future and re-dream a new Nigeria. In *Under the Frangipani* Couto presents, the dead character Emerlindo Mucanga operating in the world of dead where through telepathic abilities observes the happenings in Mozambique. *Terrorist of the Aberdare* has Sonko Wakadosi who operates from the gate of heaven. These novels therefore depict ghost characters that oscillate between magical realm and real phenomenon.

Magic realism reorients not only our habits of time and space, but our sense of identity as well. According to Roh (1984), realism creates “spatial homogeneity [that] abolishes older forms of sacred space” (p.90). Likewise, the new measuring clock and the measurable routine replace ‘older forms of ritual, sacred, or the cyclical time. Ghost characters present a world that is difficult to account for in terms of time and space. The tenets helped to interpret how the three authors created worlds that are devoid of time and space to mimic the African setup in terms of social, economic and the political. It also helped to unravel how the ghost characters are able to portray their identity, which is a crisis in these three texts from African continent.

Magical realism theory, therefore, provides a spectrum through which the ghost novel is analyzed. *The Famished Road*, *Under the Frangipani*, and *Terrorist of the Aberdare* imitate the five strands of Wendy on magical realism. The novels have shown in the analysis that they combine two realms to reveal the African social economic and political situation. The reader has to keep on following the characters’ transitions from real to unreal realms to understand them. Since they already exist in dead state, these characters portray a timeless space for they died and are now reincarnating. Therefore, it is difficult for them to account on the importance of time. The theory helped in analyzing the ghost characters’ interpersonal conflicts favorably

well as it allowed the study to follow the individual characters' eminent interactions between the two realms. These characters depict different interpersonal conflicts in each of those realms. Others are given strange definitions by the authors, and they are only analyzable when looked from an eye of a magic realism theory.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study uses qualitative research design, which involves description and analysis of ghost characters in the selected novels. This approach is considered suitable because it is used to obtain understanding of the ghost characters' social and the interpersonal conflicts. The research deals with descriptions and interpretations of the selected texts, to reveal how they present ghost characters in order to express the social and the interpersonal conflicts in the selected African fiction.

3.2 Methods of Data Collection

This study utilizes close textual reading of the primary texts, and the analysis has concentrated on how the ghost characters' reflect the social environment and the interpersonal conflicts in African texts.

Library research enhanced the study through interrogation of studies on characterization. Thus, library research has provided secondary sources that have aided in the comprehension and analysis of the primary texts. Published and unpublished works related to the gist of the study, especially with characterization that employs various narration modes, have been explored. Internet sources were also utilized.

3.3 Study Population

The population for this study comprised all the ghost novels from Africa. Out of the thirteen, three novels were selected for this study.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sampling Size

The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select the texts under investigation in this study. Three texts were sampled from a population of 13 ghost novels from Africa. These are Couto's (1996) *Under the Frangipani*, Okri's (1991) *The Famished Road*, and Mbugua's (2009) *Terrorists of the Aberdare*. Each text represents a region in Africa; namely, East Africa, West Africa and South Africa. This sampling procedure was crucial because it allowed the researcher to use cases that had the required representation with respect to the objectives of the study.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data from the three selected novels has been extracted and classified as envisioned in the study objectives. The first classification deals with data relating to the ghost characters' reflection on the social environment, while the second discusses ghost characters' reflection of the interpersonal conflicts in the selected African novels. The textual analysis has been done using tenets of magical realism theory by Wendy Farris (2004) Strand.

Chapter four interrogates ghost characterization reflection of the social environment, while chapter five discusses ghost reflection of the interpersonal conflicts. Chapter six summarizes the findings and conclusions of the study and suggests areas for further studies in relation to the types of characters in literature. The data has been presented based on cognitive, analyses, synthesis, and discussions.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

The study fulfilled the ethical and legal requirements to avoid plagiarism. The thesis began with proposal development at departmental level, defended at both department and faculty and forwarded to the ethics committee of the graduate school for approval.

Research clearance was obtained from Chuka University Ethical committee. A research permit was acquired from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), before commencement of the research. The outcomes of the study are reviewed to make the results credible. In addition, these findings were published in academic journals with the view of promoting knowledge and advancement in the area of literature. The researcher has also maintained integrity by acknowledging sources to avoid plagiarism.

CHAPTER FOUR

GHOST CHARACTERIZATION AS REFLECTION OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Introduction

The societies are based on three pillars, which are social, economic, and political aspects. This chapter examines how ghost characters are used to reflect social, economic, and political environment in the three selected African texts. The main argument in the chapter is that ghost characters oscillation and reincarnation from surreal to phenomenal realms mimic the issues afflicting Africans based on the three pillars of the societies.

4.1.1 Synopsis of *The Famished Road* Ben Okri

The Famished Road was written by Ben Okri, and published by Jonathan Cape Publishers in 1991. The novel won the award of the booker prize in 1991. It is set in unnamed urban set up in Nigeria where events unfold in a ghetto set up. The novel features the protagonist Azaro an Abiku child. The Abikus are spirit children, and are always expected to die and return to the spirit world at the age of puberty. Azaro is born in a poor background and he makes a pact with the spirits world to live for long and make his parents happy.

From his birth, Azaro and his family knew he was a spirit child and he manifests his powers in diverse ways. He possesses the ability to see the future through vivid dreams. Frequently, Azaro is able to oscillate between two worlds; that is, the material world and the spirit world. He sees spirits interacting with the material world. These spirits perpetually entice him to leave his body for a long period, during which Azaro appears to be dead. In fact, he acquires the name Lazaro, which was later shortened to Azaro, after the Lazarus of the bible, when he died and later woke up in the coffin. There is a spiritual ritual designed to cut a child's ties to the spirit world, but Azaro's parents cannot afford it.

Azaro grew up learning more about his "gifts." One day, he runs out of their home and prompts his father and mother to follow him in pursuit, just before their house went up in flames. Priestesses have learnt of his true power and have abducted him. However, he escapes and finds himself in the home of a police officer whose son died

and is now a ghost. The police officer's son tries to take up Azaro's body but Azaro helplessly called out his mother who in turn rescues him.

On returning home, his parents throw a feast to celebrate his return. Unfortunately, the celebrants grew out of control and this sunk Azaro's father, Black Tyger, into a den of debts. In consequence, the creditors begin harassing the family. Some takes his furniture and boots to repay themselves, but he fights and embarrasses them by forcing them to return his possession before he pays their money. His landlord brands him a trouble maker. In a twist of fate, Azaro's mother falls sick and is about to die from fever when a local bar owner, Madame Koto, helps to revive her. Meanwhile, Azaro finds himself routinely distracted by spirits; they would lure him into the woods, and get him lost. However, his visions were powerful.

Madame Koto enjoys when Azaro spends time in her bar. She considers him lucky because of his spirit connection. Coincidentally, Azaro's parents are poor and therefore they cannot afford a decent meal. As a result, Azaro has often to rely on Madame Koto for survival.

Interestingly, Madame Koto's bar receives plentiful strange customers the day she hangs a magical ornament (a fetish) above the doorway of the bar. During these bountiful catch of customers at Madame Koto's bar; Azaro sees little midgets' spirits, blind men and half man, half-animal spirit in the bar. One night, a group of spirits closed in on him and carried him out in a sack. Amusingly, he manages to escape by slipping through a hole he had cut and runs away. On arriving home, he was beaten by his angry father, only for him to come down with a bout of Malaria that took him several days to recover.

When Azaro recovers and returns to Madame Koto's bar, he sees a group of spirits intermingling with the living. At this point, he realized that the fetish hung above the entrance door of the bar was attracting spirits. Azaro took it and fled into the night, with many of the angry spirits in hot pursuit. After a long chase, he succeeds in losing them, and buries the fetish deep in the forest.

The novel takes a plot shift where political season is introduced with rival parties of the rich and poor making promises out of loudspeakers mounted on vans. The party of the rich gave out powdered milk, which turned out stale and made everyone sick. When the same van returned later, the villagers attacked it and beat the men inside. The van was set on fire and was left as `landmark` in the village. A local photographer, Jeremiah, who had managed to take pictures of the incident, becomes famous for publishing these pictures in an international paper. Unfortunately, the fame had made him a target of the politicians. They sent men to find him and he was forced to go into hiding. Incidentally, while hiding, the photographer spends most of his time in Azaro`s home. Meanwhile, political thugs have become more prevalent in the village, and rival gangs would engage each other in the streets. One day, Azaro`s mother is harassed at the market place because she supported the `wrong` political party, while in another, the photographer returns to Azaro beaten but unhurt.

As Azaro wanders in the city, he is shocked to see his father working under backbreaking conditions. He carries huge bags of salt and cement, and he is utterly embarrassed when he notices his son looking and calling him.

The plot moves to Madame Koto`s bar that is now upgraded. She has become a supporter of the party of the rich. Owing to this development, more thugs begin to frequent the bar and they harass her `regular` clients. The party`s bigwigs arrive at Madame Koto`s bar and she hires prostitutes to appease them. One evening, Azaro`s father is thrown out of the bar because he had challenged some thugs to a fight after arguing about politics. Amid all these happenings, Azaro had experienced another strong vision of the spirit world in the forest. Madame Koto becomes much richer while many of the villagers suffer, including Azaro`s family. Their landlord raises their rent more than any other tenants paid.

One night while Azaro`s father was arguing about politics, with some prostitutes, Azaro is visited by a three-headed spirit who wants wanted Azaro to follow him to the spirit world. The spirit however become angry as Azaro fails to go and the spirit leaves promising a comeback. Meanwhile, Azaro`s father was prodded to fight by the five thugs in the bar and he managed to fight them all, but told Azaro that they would never return to Madame Koto`s bar.

Azaro is tricked by spirit into breaking the window of a magical Old Blind Man in the village. He follows Azaro home and his parents become angry. Azaro's father beat him so badly that Azaro let himself finally be led by the three-headed spirit into the spirit world. He sees visions and strange places and finally come to a point of no return. He also saw his parents try to wake him but he was too angry to care. An herbalist finally brought him back to his relieved parents, who tried to be optimistic.

Azaro's father starts training to become a boxer (he had boxed previously as a young man) and he ends up being obsessed and worked less and less. The family's money problems become worse. One night, while Azaro is out watching his father train, a man that called himself a Yellow Jaguar challenges him. After a long and grueling fight, in which Azaro's father has to change his tactics many times (and takes a severe beating in the process), the Yellow Jaguar falls back in defeat and disappears into the crowd. He had been a ghost from the spirit world. Azaro's father takes almost a week to recover oscillating in spirit realm and then starts training a new. He becomes more popular. Villagers follow to watch his shadow box around the street. His nickname is Black Tyger.

Madame Koto's bar is upgraded again and connected to electricity. It was a new thing for the villagers to see, since many of them had never seen a light bulb. She also brings herself a new car, raises prizes, and opens another bar on the other side of the town inhabited by the rich. Azaro meets a friend named Ade near the burnt van. Thugs begin harassing Black Tyger and bring a huge man named Green Leopard to fight him. Azaro's father sends him to bet all their money on himself and then he come out for the fight. Black Tyger starts out pummeling his opponent but the green leopard would not fall. Then; the green leopard returns the beating. Finally, the Black Tyger prevails and the Green Leopard is carried away. Azaro's family makes a good deal of money on the bet. Azaro's father spends days in a coma fighting spirits in his spirit realm. When he awakes, he has a passion for politics. He plans to run for offices, his first constituency is a group of beggars. He throws a party, which again turns into a disaster when food runs scarce.

Azaro's father has a final fight at Madame Koto's bar with a spirit man in a white suit. Again, he has Azaro make a huge bet and the thugs' line up to beat him. The fight is

brutal; Azaro's father is beaten to within an inch of his life. The Blind Old Man in the crowd keep distracting him until Azaro and Ade push him away. Then Azaro's father pulls the suit off the 'man' and the man recoils when the people see how inhuman he looks. Black Tyger knocks his opponent out the ring and makes it back to his home to collapse. Azaro's father goes on to fight the forces of evil in his dreams and eventually he defeats them. He awake three days later and speaks of a new day beginning. Azaro feels peace for the first time in months. The spirits are quiet.

4.1.2 Synopsis of the Novel *Under the Frangipani* by Mia Couto

The novel *Under the Frangipani* was written by Mia Couto, a Mozambican, in 1996. The story is told by Emerlindo Mucanga, a first person narrator. The narrator is a dead man who has broken the chains of death and grooms himself to give an amount of life in the underworld. Emerlindo who is the novel's antagonist grumbles because during his time of burial he was given indecent ceremony by the Portuguese because they lacked knowledge of the African cultural practices.

The narrator's main concern is lack of ability to transcend to the next level of the dead, which is to become ancestors. He associates his frustrations in death with grave interference that happened during his burial ceremony and a contravention African culture. To him the Portuguese did not follow the right procedure, which entailed bending his knees, and clasping his hands. Instead, they buried him with metallic object; hence summoning curses among the living. He associates, the cause of the negligence with the fact that he died and was buried in a distance place away from his people. The narrator, Emerlindo Mucanga, became a ghost and therefore he had the ability to roam among the living. Though he had accepted his captivity, he was disturbed once more in his grave by the living. Upon consulting the anteater (Halakavuma) who was prying into his grave, he comes to realization that the living want to make him a national hero. He detests the position, alleging that heroes are never loved and are perpetually disturbed in their death during the national events. He therefore seeks advice from his longtime friend, anteater that has the ability to communicate with both the living and the dead. He informs him that to avoid becoming a national hero he had to relive his death. The only way he could achieve this was to ghost himself as a night spirit (Shipoco) to someone who was about to peg out.

The deal is stricken and Emerlindo Mucanga has to ghost himself as a night spirit (Shipoco) in the body of Izidine Naita, a police inspector. The inspector was sent on a mission to investigate the murder of Vastome Excellency, a Mulatto who was the director of the old people's refugee camp at Sao Nicolau and is chosen because of his ability to sniff at misdeeds, which drip with blood like a dog. Sao Nicolau, which is the Old Portuguese fort, is cut off from the rest of the places because of the many mines that were planted on the way to it. Emerlindo Mucanga accompanies Inspector Izidine Naita to Sao Nicolau, whilst in his small part of his mind.

The inspector had been given six days to investigate the murder and then fly back to the city of Maputo. However, the spirit and the anteater (halakavuma) were aware that the inspector was predestined to die within those six days and therefore his body was chosen to be appropriate to be occupied by Emerlindo Mucanga in the form of night spirit.

The first person to give a confession of the cause of the Vastome Excellency's death is Navaia Caetano. He begins by refuting that he had tampered with the inspector's bag, but instead deceives him that he murdered the Excellency. He befuddles the inspector by revealing to him that he suffers a curse of premature age. He reveals that he is a little child who grew old the moment he was born. To this effect, he is forbidden from telling his story because he would die. Navia Caetano alleges his reason to kill the Excellency was that he refused the refugee to carry out the ritual, which would eventually result to the restoration of his health.

The second confession is from the Old Portuguese Domingo's Mourao. He is one of the whites who were left behind when other Portuguese returned to Europe after declaration of the independence of Mozambique. In the fort, they refer to Domingo Mourao as Sidimingo. Domingo lies to the inspector and says he killed Vastome Excellency. Domingo attributes his actions to illicit love affair he had developed with the Excellency's wife Ernestina. Domingo accuses the Excellency of beating him and tormenting Ernestina in his presence. He reveals that he did set a trap of a stone on Excellency's walking path to his room, which resulted to crushing and killing him instantly. Both Old Gaffer and Little Miss No confess to have killed the Excellency Vastome.

Marta Gimo and Old Gaffer reveal how the old suffered in the hands of Excellency Vastome. He is linked to the death of Salufo Tuco; a man who used to help him hide all the merchandise that arrived in the fort. He used to receive the aid and hide it to resell later. Upon exposing his merchandise, Vastome gets embittered by Salufo Tuco beats him leaving him almost dead. He summons all his strength and ask his old folk to tie him in a wind vane where he breaths his last.

Marta Gimo reveals that the government had resulted to end the Mozambique's culture through negligence of the old because they were the custodian of the culture. Marta Gimo also says that Excellency Vastome was killed by war because he had hidden the weapons of war in the Old Portuguese chapel. The old people led by Little Miss No throws the weapons into a pitiless hole in the chapel. The hole is created magically by the old woman. The government officials from Maputo arrive in a helicopter to collect the weapons. They unfortunately do not find any and they result to killing Vastome in revenge.

The old witch warns the inspector that he will be killed by the same people that sent him to investigate the cause of death of Excellency. They let him know that the same people who killed the Excellency and covered the murderer will in turn kill him.

Towards the end of the novel, the spirits/ghosts assume a full human body and save the inspector from death. The narrator informs us that Navaia Caetano and all the Old Portuguese were all ghosts just like him. They all accompany Emerlindo Mucanga to the grave.

4.1.3 Synopsis of Terrorists of the Aberdare by Ng'ang'a Mbugua

The novel begins with Sonko Wakadosi encountering a new place after his death. This is after he was trampled by an elephant while he was guarding their cabbages in Kinangop Aberdare Ridges with his friend, Doe Madirari. Sonko Wakadosi is the first man to arrive in the gates of heaven. He simply compares the place with his village back there at home, where the chirruping of birds and the chill of mornings is the first thing, he experiences in Kinangop.

Sonko Wakadosi engages in a discourse with his fellow dead people while they are awaiting the heavens gates to be opened. His conversation with the other two characters brings out how human and wild life conflicts have intensified in the country. The old Maasai man reveals that he was killed by a Nyangau (hyena) in his house, while awaiting his wife to prepare him supper in the kitchen. The small girl joins in the conversation and reveals that her death was because of an attack by a crocodile in River Tana where she had gone to fetch water before going to school. The characters stop their conversation shortly after the crowd begins to form at the heaven's gate, and Sonko Wakadosi excuses himself and moves to a much safer place out of the fear of being trampled over by a surging crowd.

A funeral service for Sonko Wakadosi on the other hand continues. Doe Madirari reveals the proceedings of the burial through a stream of consciousness. He is sarcastic about the ability of the catholic priest to lead the service. He compares him to a hoarse elephant with a cold. He later halts from finding faults as this is a special day for his friend and instead begins to accuse himself for doing little to save the life of his friend.

The desire to love and to be loved is attributed to be the main cause of Sonko Wakadosi's death. He had cultivated cabbages in Kinangop with the intention of raising enough bus fair to go to Kericho to see the love of his life, Penina, who had shifted to the place to seek green pastures after trying to no avail to make a living in Kinangop. It would be a tall order for Sonko to just sit down and watch Kanywaji and his troop devour all his life's dream and ambitions. This force pushed Sonko to make one of the deadliest moves in attempting to attack an elephant with a Simi.

Penina had struggled to make a living through selling of samosas, a business that had proved futile. One fine day, she decided to throw her samosa Jiko to the river. Informing her friend Ursula that she intends to go to Kericho to pick tea and start a new life there. Penina's conversation with Ursula further reveals that, she is skeptical towards Sonko Wakadosi's love. She believes true love cannot put food on table, and therefore she cannot marry a broke man like Sonko Wakadosi.

The biting poverty pushes Doe Madirari and Sonko to reinvent a new strategy to raise money for Sonko to go to Kericho and tell Penina that he loves her. They result to farming cabbages in the border of Aberdare. This puts them into conflicts with the elephant, which resulted to his death.

The priest's sermon during Sonko's death leaves, Doe Madirari, with so many questions about the reasons why they had to go through such pain and poverty in life. He draws parallels with the life of Jonah who had refused to obey God's message, and had consequently been swallowed by the fish and stayed in its stomach for three days before being vomited in Nineveh, the land that he was sent. Doe wonders whether their suffering was because of failing to hearken to what God expected of them.

In a stream of consciousness, Doe Madirari, flashbacks on how one day Shufa Nandefe perplexed the village by saying he saw the operation of Jesus' virgin Mary on a flame of hurricane. Later, this was proven untrue, and that it was just the illusions of the flame. He also told of how one day the young Kanywaji attacked him while he was carrying his potatoes to the market, and he ate them all. Since he was regarded as a man of jest, only few people believed him.

The origin of enmity between people and the elephant Kanywaji is revealed through Chomelea Karae. He attributes this enmity to the torture the young elephant went through in the hands of poachers, after the elephant witnessed his mother get shunned off life by Marimari, who had laid a snare for him. From that day, the animal treated human beings as their greatest enemy, and could always wish to revenge at all costs. The bull elephant was given the name Kanywaji as it raided mercilessly the people of Kinangop, often to quench his thirst from the Tembo, famously known as 'busheshe'. Every first Saturday of the month, the elephant would show up for a drink at mama Pima.

When the area M.P and a minister, Hon Nyoks Ndarafufua, is invited to address the mourners, the narrator reminiscences over how he offered to buy Sonko's coffin yet he never helped him when he was alive. Hon Nyoks tells them that the main cause of human wildlife conflict was the massive invasion of the forest by the human beings, leaving elephants with no food. The animals in search of food invade the neighboring

farms and to prevent that from occurring another time he tells the mourners that he has asked the government to construct a fence around the forest to prevent perpetual conflict between humans and the wild animals.

Immediately after Sonko's burial, Kanywaji as usual comes to quench his thirst in Mama Pima's place. Out of the bitterness held by the mourners, they charge forward, surround the animal and Mategwa Kunona shoots him. The whole village skins the animal alive and feast on its meat amidst a heavy downpour, which marks the end of both Sonko Wakadosi and Kanywaji's lives. The novel ends with Sonko Wakadosi visiting Doe Madirari, his longtime friend in a dream. Sonko informs Doe that the suffering he went through was out of poor decision making in life. He tells him that the love of his life was Ursula. That he feared to tell her the truth, and that he wished to marry Penina because she came from a rich background.

4.2 Ghost Reflection of Social Aspect in Selected African Prose

The three novels discussed here explore the African social aspects using ghost characters. According to Collins English Dictionary (1994), the phrase "social aspect" can be defined as the commonalities among people within a specific culture. This commonality may include the norms, the language, and the rules. This delineation has provided a spectrum through which the social is analyzed in this study.

Through their dialogue, actions, and thoughts, characters in literary works directly or indirectly aid the author to develop thematic concerns (Gordon & Kuehner, 1999). Okri in *The Famished Road* explores social aspects of the Nigerian community through a ghost boy character named Azaro. Azaro is endowed with exceptional ability to exhibit his social life and that of the other characters in fanciful and phenomenal realms. The text begins by exploring the theme of filial obligation. Killer (2006) defines filial obligation as the special duties children have to their parents based on gratitude. Azaro attests that he had been born many times, and when he is born a second time, he makes a pact with the king of the spirit expressing his ambition to live to please his parents. He reports:

How many times had I come and gone through the dreaded gateway? And how often to the same parents? I had no idea... (p.5) but this time, somewhere in the interspace between the spirit world and the living I chose to stay. This meant breaking my pact and outwitting my companions... it wasn't because of the sacrifices, the burnt offerings... I wanted to make happy the bruised face of the woman who would become my mother (P.6).

Azaro's major social role is pleasing his parents. He is born as a spirit child but he has to struggle to bring joy to his parent. He understands the number of times he had been born but left his parents in pain because he was a spirit. Okri's use of a ghost child enables the reader to understand birth as a morbid process to the Abiku children. This study also amplifies the pain of loss to the mothers when a child dies. Lastly, Azaro teaches that children have a responsibility of bringing joy to their parents.

Additionally, Okri depicts Azaro in a constant struggle to fulfill his filial obligation. Although he is a child, he plays a pivotal role in advising his father on how to fight with his opponents. He explores the privilege of having supernatural powers to understand both realms to interpret the physiological and psychological state of his father's opponents. Once he is able to understand his father's opponents, he informs the father how to fight them. Azaro instructs his father, "Black Tyger, use your power" (P.408), an indication that Azaro struggles to please and maintain relevancy to the parent. According to Killer (2006), children owe their parents gratitude and care. Azaro, though young, strives to ensure his father is safe whenever he engages in a fight. When he realizes that, his father is being overwhelmed by the man in white suit during a fight, Azaro advises his father, "Black Tyger, dirty his suit" (P.541) which reveals son-father love. Azaro focuses on how to please and save his parent from death. Okri uses a ghost character because such characters have special powers over the ordinary people, and are able to detect the strange features in other characters.

Mbugua in *Terrorist of the Aberdare* explores aspects of filial obligation. He employs the use of ghost character, Sonko Wakadosi, whom in reminiscence on his past, heightens the critical role he played to his parents and his siblings when he was alive. Sonko Wakadosi says:

After a few months, shame, anger, and despair forced Sonko Wakadosi to drop out of school to help raise some money to feed his brothers and sisters, who were too young to fend themselves and his mother, who

had suffered an emotional concussion after the death of her husband and the cruelty of her in laws. (P.72)

Sonko Wakadosi is shown as responsible enough after the death of his father and their subsequent eviction from their land by the uncles. Sonko promotes the theme of filial obligation when he intervenes to help both the mother and the other children.

Okri uses Azaro to explain the myths and supernatural in African set up. Norbeck (1961) sees supernatural, as that which is not natural, that which is regarded as extraordinary, not of the ordinary world, mysterious or unexplainable in ordinary terms. Okri attempts to explain the reasons and the causes of death. First, he paints the ghetto community as a society of Abiku, the spirit children, which helps the author to explain why majority of people in the story, dies. Azaro is depicted to be struggling with his companions who grumble that they are missing him and they would like to have him back. Azaro reports:

The spirit, ten eyes widened leant its central head closer to me, and said:
“They told me to bring you with me.”
‘Who?’
‘Your friend’
‘What friends?’
‘In the spirit world. Your companions.’ (P.347)

However, Azaro puts unmatched struggle to dodge those spirits. Azaro struggles to remain alive while he is being called back by other spirits companions in their world. Okri portrays all humans as undergoing unequivocal struggle to maintain equilibrium between the two realms. He reveals that one has to be tough enough in order to sustain life. Okri ascribes death with the spirit, which beckons one to their spirit realms. Azaro as a ghost character is able to bring this issue out well because he has the ability to oscillate between the two realms

Couto in the *Under the Frangipani* explores the concept of myths and superstition surrounding death in African community using ghost characters. King (2013) observes that African communities view death as a natural transition from the visible to the invisible or spiritual ontology whereby the spirit or the essence of the person is not destroyed, but moves to live in the spirit ancestor’s realm. Therefore, in his death

Emerlindo Mucanga is portrayed as grumbling about the unprecedented and indecent death he underwent. He says that:

Though I was an upright citizen while alive, my death was inglorious. My burial lacked both ceremony and tradition. There wasn't even anyone to bend my knees. People are supposed to leave the world just as they entered it, curled up as if saving on space. The dead should be humble enough not to take up much of the earth. But I wasn't given a small grave. My resting place stretched from one end to the other of my whole length. No one unclasped my hands, as I grew cold. I crossed over into death with my fists clenched, summoning curses upon the living. And to make matters worse, they didn't turn my face towards the Nkuluvumba mountains (P.1).

The burial given to Emerlindo Mucanga contravenes the precepts and norms of his society. As a result, he feels offended in his grave thus fails to be promoted to the level of the ancestors. Couto's illustration of Emerlindo Mucanga's state of dilemma borrows from the rich African beliefs that are embedded in unfounded myths and superstitions surrounding the dead. This shows that Africans respect the deceased and it is expected that they be given burials that uphold their beliefs and other laid down norms and ethos.

In addition, Couto, through the help of ghost characters reveals social aspects on rites of passage as poignant in African traditional beliefs. Baloyi (2008) posits that rituals are forms of expressions and connections performed by individual, groups of people or communities in communication with the living-dead and supreme beings. Within the traditional African thought of death, the grieving process is characterized by rituals such as the shaving of the hair of the bereaved family members, and the slaughtering of a domestic animal. It is crucial to note, however, that different rituals are performed depending on who is dead. Emerlindo Mucanga's major complaints include failure by his mortician to adhere to his community's customs on interment. He says, "Though I was an upright citizen while alive, my death was inglorious. My burial lacked both ceremony and tradition..." (p. 1). The mention of lack of a ceremony portrays the weight attached to the celebration of rite of passages. Death is one of those rites that are celebrated in the absentia of the host. The host is perceived by the African beliefs to be monitoring these processes in spirit (Baloyi, 2008). Couto is strengthening the belief by using a dead narrator that is complaining because this

process was done in a haphazard manner, thus rites in African society are highly esteemed.

Mbugua in *Terrorist of the Aberdare* depicts the weight laid upon the aspect of rites of passage in Kenyan communities. His novella unfolds at the gates of heaven; a revelation is given by a ghost character named Sonko Wakadosi. The novella later unfolds around his burial ceremony. Unlike Emerlindo Mucanga in *Under the Frangipani* who complains about his burial process that disobeyed the African customs, Sonko Wakadosi is calm about his burial ceremony. The narrator Doe Madirari reveals that Sonko's burial is conducted by Christians and a preacher whom he feels attacks his life and that of his friend Sonko Wakadosi on several instances. He reveals the importance given to the burial rite as attested by the great personalities that attended the ceremony.

Look at all these people who have come for the funeral today. In all the ten days of the wake, they gave lots of money to meet the funeral expenses. Hon Nyoks Ndarafufua, CGH, EBS, even offered to buy the coffin. But where were they when we were struggling to save the seed money? Why didn't they come to us and say: 'Hey guys, you are doing a wonderful job? How can we be of help? Can we be in this together?' none came. None offered help. None even knew the anxieties that tormented Sonko Wakadosi's heart every day and every night. (P.78)

Doe Madirari here criticizes the sincerity of the general masses and political leaders. Though he portrays them as hypocritical, he still emphasizes on the special place that is accorded to the burial rites. He reveals that Africans are particularly responsive to death than to a person's life. The writer therefore uses fiction seems to question misplacement of priorities in the life of an African.

Ghost characters provide the basis through which the religious and superstitious nature of the African community can be understood. Babbie & Mouton (2001) observes that an indigenous African may not categorize their lived worlds in terms of a distinction between the supernatural and natural, but may view these worlds as inextricably linked as noted in the theory of magical realism by Wendy (2004) when she says that magical realism narratives presents a merging of different realms. Okri in *The Famished Road* presents Azaro in an inexplicable situation in which he is

unable to differentiate between fanciful and the phenomenal realm when he finds himself in the shrine. Azaro says:

I could feel the intense gaze of an ancient mother who had been turned into wood. She knew who I was. Her eyes were pitiless in their scrutiny. She knew my destiny in advance. She sat in her cobwebbed niche, a mighty statue in mahogany, powerful with the aroma of fertility.... behind her dark classes; she seemed to regard everything with equal serenity. She gave off an air of contradictory dreams. I was mesmerized by the musk of her half divinity (P.334).

The above quotation explores the African complex religiosity that is relating relatively well with the Hindu religion. Okri creates wooden idol woman that is worshipped in the shrine. Azaro is quick to notice that the idol is a spiritual being that is capable of gazing at him, as he exists in two realms. The spiritual aspect in Azaro connects with the idol woman instantly underpinning the worship of idols as a spiritual bound. The text therefore reveals the African cultural aspect, which Mbiti (1969) describes as being notoriously religious.

Okri also uses Azaro to mock the hypocrisy exhibited by the newly converted African Christians. He observes from a distance a congregant assembled at Madame Koto's bar praying, worshipping, and rebuking her as a great whore of the apocalypse. When the rain falls heavily the congregant, disperse leaving the head priest who continues to hurl insults to Madame Koto. However, when Madame Koto appears with other rich people the narrator reveals that:

The bar door was opened, and they all went in. Only Madame Koto came back to give the head priest umbrella. Shamelessly he took it. She limped back into her bar, walking stick in one hand, while the head stick resumed his imprecations and denunciations of her. It was at this point people began jeering at him (P.432)

Okri uses the ghost character to reveal the rot associated with religion duplicity. This assertion is supported by Robert's (2017) observation that Nigerian people are highly religious yet the country has the highest level of social vices, and attributes the scenario with religion hypocrisy. Through Azaro, Okri further reveals the zeal for the religion in Nigeria as when he is adventuring in the forest, he encounters African worshippers in the forest.

I passed prophets emerging from the forest with dew and leaves in their hair, cobwebs meshing their beard, their eyes demented with visions. I passed sorcerers with machetes that crackled with flames in the morning lights making sacrifices at the dawn of red cocks ... I came to another familiar place; the passionate chants of muezzin roused the Muslim world to prayer (P.134).

Azaro's adventurous nature enables him to witness all the mysteries of material and immaterial realm. The description given about worshippers shows something absurd about their true worship nature. This enables the reader to make out a picture of the state of Nigeria as a country inhabited by religious fanatics. The use of spirit child, which helps to explore places without fear, as, would not be witnessed by just a normal kid is an important aspect in African literature as it helps readers to see through the eyes of such characters into the technicalities of social aspects that exists in the society.

Mbugua in *Terrorist of the Aberdare* exhibits a society that is torn in between two segments; the Christians converts, who are the majority; and the conservative, who cannot define their religion. This argument is supported by Luce (2017) who observes that Kenya has a diverse religious set up with over eighty percent being Christians and 20 percent other religions and atheist. The ghost character, Sonko Wakadosi, and his friend Doe Madirari seem to grope in the darkness in matters of religion, while the preacher and other funeral attendants are fully subscribed to Christianity. In the funeral, Doe Madirari says:

But besides that, I can see where this man is going with his argument. And I am not amused at all. He is trying to blame us for something we had no control over. "My friends," he is saying, "why are you struggling today? Why do you find yourself in the belly of a whale? Have you departed from the path God had intended you walk?" were it not for the fact that this is my friend's funeral, I would have walked away. I do not like the way people are throwing glances at me. Even they can see that this man is attacking me (P.30).

The quote shows how diverse the community is on matters of religion. The mourners feel that Doe Madirari and his dead friend are being attacked by the preacher. The mourners link Doe Mandirari and Sonko Wakadosi suffering with failure to convert and become ambassadors of Christ here on earth. The text helps not to just expose how variegated the Kenyan religion environment is, but it also reveals how religion

can be incriminating making some people feel excluded like seen through the narrator.

Okri displays Nigerians as people who are entrenched in taboos and superstitions. Oduyale (1985) and Idowu (1962) note that in the Yoruba society, traditional taboos and superstitions were supported and encouraged because of their contribution to the growth, renewal and the development of the society. Okri endeavors to portray how these practices were bone and marrow of the Nigerian people. Azaro returns home sick after he was stolen by the ghost albinos and meanders into the forest, we read:

“Leave him alone. Can’t you see that he is shaking?”
‘So what?’ Am I shaking him? He probably went and walked on all the bad things they wash on the roads. All those witches and wizards, native doctors, sorcerers, who wash off bad things from their customers and pour them on the road, who wash diseases and bad destinies on the streets. He probably walked on them and they entered him. Look at his eyes.’
‘They have grown big!’
‘He looks like a ghost, a mask.’ (P.141)

Azaro’s sickness is associated with interfering with foods meat for sacrifice and stepping on prohibited areas. The fear instilled by the parents through taboos and superstitions serve to control their son and stop him from eating strange food, exploring dangerous places; but instead to maintain peace with the physical and spiritual realms through preserving their sacrifices.

Azaro is further shown as the epitome of superstition. Being a spirit child with ability to look into two realms lucidly, he plays the role of interpreting the effects linked to superstitions; and secondly, using them to influence the flow of things to his favor. During the three fights, his father engages himself in Azaro works with superstition to help him win. The first instance is when his father fights with Green Leopard, Azaro realizes that his father is losing the fight because of the distractions made by the old blind man; his laughter and offensive music weakens Black Tyger. Azaro throws objects to the old man who finally says, “Take me away from here. The spirits have started attacking me in broad daylight” (P.458). This shows Azaro has the ability to interpret and use superstition to make his father win. Another instance is during his father’s fight with the man in white suit. Azaro, with the help of his friend Ade, realizes Black tiger is losing the fight. Azaro request for a spell from his friend Ade to

sway things, but Ade informs him that spells do not work on people in white cloth. Therefore, Azaro tells his father, “Black Tyger, dirty his suit!” (P.541) when the father heeds to his son’s advice and tears the suit of his opponent, he wins the fight giving weight to the superstitious belief system. It can be argued that ghost characters are purposely used by the author to bring out such systems.

Couto in the *Under the Frangipani* also explores the social aspect of taboos and superstitions. Emerlindo Mucanga in his grave enumerates the obnoxious implications associated with breaking or disobeying any of them. He reports that:

I wasn’t just denied a proper funeral. Their negligence went even further: as I had no other possessions, they buried me with my saw and hammer. They should not have done that. Metal should never be allowed into a tomb. Iron takes longer to rust away than a dead man’s bones. And what’s worse, a shiny object attracts a curse. With my tools by my side, I risk being one of those dead people who wreak havoc on the world. All these upsets happened because I didn’t die in my rightful place (P.2).

Emerlindo Mucanga links a burial with a hammer and a shiny object next to him as the causes of curse among the living. Although critically these objects have no effects on the dead, Couto explores this area to show how Africans maintained fidelity to their customs as a way of preserving their culture.

Under the Frangipani further captures the aspect of superstitions and religion through various interviews that Izidine Naita, the police inspector carries out with the refugees at Sao Nicolau. Navaia Caetano confesses:

I navaia Caetano, am the victim of a curse that weighs heavily upon me: I suffer the illness of premature age. I’m a little child who grew old the moment he was born. That is why I am forbidden to tell my story. When I finish my tale, I shall be dead (P.22).

The excerpt shows African communities’ retention, and subscription to taboos and superstitions are veiled in their blood stream. Navaia Caetano, who exhibits a dual existence as both a spirit and in physical body, is portrayed as entangled in a labyrinth of taboos and superstitions. The beliefs weigh him down to an extent he concedes that if he tells his story, he will die. Couto uses ghost characters to tell the African tales in a mysterious and bizarre manner.

Couto also uses Little Miss No as an embodiment of myths and legendary superstition. Her confession to the inspector leaves the reader astounded and mystified by her capability to interweave and fabricate falsehood about her abilities and strengths. She says that:

Every night I turn myself into water, I take the shape of liquid. That is why my bed is a bathtub. The old folk have even borne witness: I lie down and begin to perspire abundantly, so much so that my body is rendered down into sweat. I drain away into liquescence. It is so painful to watch that the others withdraw in fear. No one was ever able to stay until the end when I vanished into transparency in the bath. You don't believe me, sir. Come and watch, then. This very night, after this talk of ours. Are you scared? You have nothing to fear. For when morning comes, I immediately return to my former substance. First, my eyes take shape, like fish submerged in some makeshift aquarium. Then my mouth, my face and the rest are reformed (P.79).

Reading this story thrusts the reader's faculties of imagination to the fanciful realm. One has to struggle to extricate themselves from the essence and reality exhibited by ghost characters. There is the likelihood of the critical readers regarding Little Miss No's confession as lies and deceit used by the Africans to command respect and maintain order. What is revealed about the character is that she is highly feared in the refugee camp because of the belief she possesses supernatural powers.

Okri uses ghost characters to explore African beliefs in witchcraft, sorcery, and magic. Motshwari (1998) observes that it is impossible to ignore witchcraft, sorcery, and divination when dealing with the concept of magic because these concepts are often used to create or counter misfortunes. For instance, Madame Koto asks Black Tyger to allow Azaro to be staying in her bar because she had realized that he has magical powers, and hangs a charm above the door. At one point, a conflict ensues between Azaro and Madame Koto and the following conversation takes place:

'What sort of a child are you?' she asked.
I began to pick up benches.
'Maybe you bring only the bad luck,' she said. Since you have been coming my old customers have gone and there are no new ones.'
'I am hungry,' I said.
'Attract customers, draw them here, and then you will have food,' she said going to the backyard (P.100)

Madame Koto knows that Azaro is a ghost and therefore he has magical powers to bring customers to her bar. When she realizes that Azaro is reluctant to use his

powers, she punishes him by denying him food. Koto wishes to become rich quickly and she contemplates outwitting competitors in the business by use of magic. This shows the beliefs that Africans have about magic and the extreme desire every African has concerning the control of nature.

Madame Koto in *The Famished Road* is used to develop the theme of witchcraft and sorcery; she possesses a juju (fetish) in her bar to attract customers. This is considered as witchcraft by other members of the society who often fear her. According to (Mair 1969), witchcraft can be considered as the use of magic-charms and spells and objects believed to have mystical power. Thus, Koto is regarded as a witch. Azaro's dialogue with his mother reveals this:

‘How is Madame Koto?’

‘She is fine.’

‘Does she ask about me?’

‘No’

‘What does she do all the time?’

‘She stays in her room. Today she had a lot of strange customers. She puts up a juju on the wall. A madman came into the bar and ate a lizard and pissed everywhere.’

‘If it is like that you must stop going there.’ (P.109)

The quote unveils a brewing conflict between Azaro's mother and Madame Koto due to different societal belief systems. Middleton (1967) and Beildeman (1971) opine that a mere accusation of wizardly can do nothing except worsen social relationships, particularly between the accuser and the accused. It is also likely to divide the community along two sides between those who doubt and those who believe. This scenario is witnessed between Azaro and his mother where the mother is opposed to him going to Madame Koto's bar since she is a witch, but Azaro is not bothered.

In *Under the Frangipani*, Little Miss No is displayed as having magical powers associated with witchcraft. She is highly revered by the refugees in the camp. As opposed to the case of Madame Koto in the *Famished Road* where people hate her because of witchcraft, the refugees look upon Little Miss No for the mysterious solutions in the camp. Little Miss No is shown as possessing white witchcraft which consist of socially useful performances, such as healing, fortune-telling, or finding lost property through sorcery or incarnation, as opposed to black witchcraft which is

associated with causing harm (Mair, 1969). For instance, when the refugees realized that the weapons are kept in the old fort church, Marta Gimo tells the inspector that:

And the witch led them over to the chapel. She opened the doors with a mere brush of her fingertips. The old folk watched Miss No's gesture, and even now can hardly believe what they saw. She unfastened her capulana from her shoulders and laid it down on the floor of the chapel. From a bag, she took out a chameleon and made it walk across the cloth. The reptile changed colors, rotated its eyes, and started to swell. It puffed itself up like a ball. Suddenly, it burst. It was then that the world rumbled and rolled, and all the darkness in the clouds overflowed. The old folk coughed, waving away the dust with their hands. Before their very eyes, they beheld something fantastic, happen: there, where the ground had been, was a bottomless hole, the entrance to emptiness itself, a hollow within a void. They immediately got to work and threw the arms into the depths (P.141).

This account presents the African art as a reflection of their beliefs. At some point, one comes to the realization that all these characters are ghosts who have incarnated into various human bodies, and therefore providing an appealing ground to capture all superstitions and magical aspect of the African community.

Ghost characters are used to unmask the social vices in the society. Ghost characters reveal immorality, the effect of drunkenness and debauchery in Nigerian clubs. Okri employs Azaro as a mouthpiece to articulate and reveal the unthinkable rot in the society. Azaro's spirit nature enables him to introspect into other characters' minds, soul, attitude, and their motif. His strategic positioning at Madame Koto's bar gives him an opportunity to give firsthand information on the filthy nature of the customers. While the party is lively and everyone was dancing and drinking, he says, "I could see a man's hand under a table searching between a woman's legs (P.315)." Okri is criticizing the immorality done during the day. African culture generally shuns sex in public, and this amounts to extreme profanation of the social values

Additionally, Azaro presents Madame Koto's bar as the epicenter of all the social evils that haunt the village. The bar is used as a trap for men and women. The ghost narrator recounts that women came to the bar during the day to gossip. He says, "The women sometimes came by in the afternoon. They were mostly hawkers of sun-bleached goods. They talked about their children or their husbands..." (p. 90). This

depicts the stereotypical position of women as gossipers. He also reveals the bar as inhabited by strange customers. He tells Madame Koto that,'

The moments I saw them as spirits, drinking palm-wine without getting drunk, confused about the natural configuration of the human body, everything made sense. And then I became certain that Madame Koto's fetish had somehow been attracting them. I was confirmed in this notion by the fact that they seemed to cluster most thickly beneath the fetish. I knew what I had to do. I went outside and said to Madame Koto:

'Your bar is full of spirits'

'Leave me alone' she shouted. (p.161)

The spirits are troublesome and they represent the real bullies in bars that are unsanctioned. Okri uses ghost characters to address these bullies in a distant way. Vices such as sexual immorality, bullish behavior like refusal to pay Madame Koto's bills, among others are revealed through the ghost character oscillation into the phenomenal realm, which leaves the reader perplexed in distinguishing between the physical and phenomenal realm as observed in one of the Wendy's tenets on magical realism theory.

Azaro's observation reveals violence that rocks the local Nigerian communities. It represents how violence erupts in entertainment joints such as bars and other social gatherings. Because of drunkenness and individual misunderstanding, the carpenter fights to protect his name and his life:

The bandaged man, who had clearly been spoiling for some confrontation all evening, made a great show of tearing off his agbada. Then he unceremoniously jumped on the carpenter. They both fell on a bench. A lantern rocked on the table. They wrestled, rolling, on the floor. One of the lanterns fell and broke and set the table on fire. The women streamed, grabbed their handbags, and fled outside. Madame Koto got her inevitable broom and whipped the fire. Her broom began to burn. The two men went on fighting. (p.260)

This quote displays the effects of alcohol in the society. Azaro gives the experiences of the alcohol abuse and its consequences to the users such as physical harm and property destruction out accidents caused by drunkenness. Azaro reveals that drug abuse is the genesis for most social vices in the society.

Azaro describes so many other fights he encounters in his daily experiences, some that were caused by spirit counterparts with an aim of landing him in eminent danger. They attack him unawares and bay for a trouble. Azaro says:

When I heard the voices, I was afraid. The wind dropped. When I answered the voices, they changed and began singing my name in twisted melodies. I challenged the voices to come out, to show their faces. I was of the opinion that they were not spirits but children mocking me in the darkness. I got angry and threw bits of wood and balls of wet paper at them. But to my surprise they threw stones at me. One of them got me on the shoulder. So I put down the ogogoro bottle and threw stones back at them swearing and cursing. I got so involved with throwing stones, angry at not hitting them, at not hearing them cry out, that I didn't notice when the voice stopped. The next thing I heard was the breaking of glass. I had shattered a window. (P.364)

The quote shows conflict between real human beings and the spiritual realm occurs in the real world. Azaro is tormented by spirit companions whom he is not in a position to see. He can only rely on fighting them by throwing stone and other objects. At the end, he breaks a neighbors' glass and this further complicates the conflict as the old blind man hunts for him. The oscillation of the ghost characters causes fears among the living. This is seen as the representation of how strange culture from the western people caused tension among the Nigerians.

Okri uses ghost characters to develop the concept of sickness, pain, and suffering. The three social challenges haunt the entire village at different times and at varied degrees. Azaro spiritual and physical existences enable him to solve the riddles surrounding the three concepts. He links his suffering with his spiritual companions who troubles him because he broke a pact with them. They are portrayed as always working to make sure he returns to them:

I was ill afterwards and spent most of the time in the other world trying to get to reason with my spirit companions, trying to get them to leave me alone. What I didn't know was that the longer they kept me there, the more certain they were making my death. It was only much later, when I tried to get back into my body and couldn't, that I realized they had managed to shut me out of my life. I cried for a long time into the silver void till our great king interceded for me and reopened the gates of my body. When I woke up, I found myself in a coffin. My parents had given me up for dead. They had commenced my burial proceedings when they heard my fierce weeping. (p.9)

This encounter reveals the mystery of being a spirit child. Azaro symbolically attributes human suffering and sickness to forces beyond their control. Okri utilizes Azaro since he has the ability to see into the two realms to underpin his assertion firmly, henceforth, solving one of the mysterious concepts that defeat a normal human contemplation in Nigeria.

Okri uses the ghost character to bring the question of African aestheticism. Moussa (2012) observes that magical realism is used to show the rich aesthetic culture in Africa. Okri is able to explore magical realism in two realms, physical and fanciful, in order to compare their aesthetic. Azaro is used as a decisive test to compare the two realms. Azaro assumes admiration tone when describing the land of the spirit. He says:

In the land of the beginning spirits mingled with the unborn, we could assume numerous forms. Many of us were birds. We knew no boundaries. There was much feasting, playing, and sorrowing. We feasted much because of the beautiful terrors of eternity. We played much because we were free (P.1)

The quote reveals that the land of spirit was enjoyable and comfortable to live. It metaphorically represents the kind of Nigerian nation the author wishes to have. It is a dream of a free nation. MacNaulty (2015) observes that ghost novels act as palimpsest for stories layering the experiences of slavery, and provides healing within the community in the book and the community of the readers as well. The creation of a free space where ghost characters romp freely and joyously is a dream to have a healed nation that has forgotten its past and one that enjoys the true meaning of liberation.

Azaro contrasts the spirit world with the land of the living, which he assumes a condescending tone, which shows dislike and rejection of the living world. The physical world is associated with pain suffering and heartlessness of the human beings and their leaders:

There was not one amongst us who looked forward to being born. We disliked the rigors of existence, the unfulfilled longings, the enshrined injustices of the world, the unfulfilled longings, the enshrined injustices of the world, the labyrinths of love, the ignorance of parents, the facts of dying and the amazing indifference of the living in the midst of the simple beauties of the universe. We feared the

heartlessness of human beings, all of whom are born blind, few of whom ever learn to see. (p.1)

This quote metaphorically reveals the challenges that surround African nations. The narrator does not wish to be born because he fears to go through human suffering. The story represents the state of things in Nigeria. Okri shows that even with the coming of liberation, social vices exist in Nigeria, making it difficult for people to realize freedom. Thus, the fear of the narrator to be born reflects the fear that engulfed the local people of Nigeria after liberation.

Mbugua in *Terrorist of Aberdare* uses the ghost character, Sonko Wakadosi to compare the aestheticism of the two realms; namely, the physical and the spiritual. In revealing the spiritual, Mbugua alludes to biblical description of heaven. He adopts an admiring tone when describing heaven borrowing from Revelation 21:21:

He could not believe that the place could get so chilly, just like the slopes of Kinangop where he had lived all his life. He had always imagined heaven to be a warm and sunny place. By peering through the golden grills, he could see white mist rising from the flower gardens and manicured lawns, just as he used to see it rise over the Aberdare Forest every morning. The sight pleased his eyes. It filled him with elation. In a way, it reminded him of his earthly home. The only difference now was that there was peace in his heart and the weariness that had tormented his soul all his life had been lifted, leaving him with a light spirit. There was no soul in sight. Only birds could be heard whistling the most wonderful tunes that Sonko Wakadosi had ever heard. (p. 1-2)

Heaven is here imagined as a peaceful and beautiful place to be and resonates with the bible, which underpins that heaven gates are made of pearl. The great street of the city was embellished with gold, as pure as transparent glass. It also symbolizes attainment of freedom after going through the turmoil of the real world. The author figures heaven to give hope to less fortunate and suffering in African society. Being in contact with the spirit world therefore the ghost characters are used in *Terrorist of the Aberdare* to assert the religious perceived nature of heaven, which is also spiritual. It is read here as a social aspect because going to heaven is assumed to bring comfort in the souls in the departed which is a social encounter.

In contrast, Sonko Wakadosi uses disdainful tone while describing the physical world, which represents the state of the matter in the Kenya nation. The country is portrayed as going through difficult moments that affect the social lives of the characters:

As he waited for the angels to open the gates and usher him in, he reminisced about the troubles he had to endure in Kinangop. He was relieved that his dying had set him free from his endless and often futile struggles in his quest for happiness and comfort. He did not understand why he had gone through so much pain, why he was always frustrated at every turn. Maybe he would understand it in the sweet by and by, as they used to sing. First, he had to get answers from his maker. He could not understand why the almighty, who had the power to turn him into anything he ever wanted to be could leave him to his own means to be buffeted by life's storms. (P. 3-4)

The author here reveals the challenges involved in living in the real world. The narrator exhibits the optimistic nature of Africans to lead a better life when they die which resonates with the Christian teachings. That is why Sonko Wakadosi is depicted as relieved when he dies. He also hopes to ask his maker why he had to undergo all the suffering when he was alive. While the Christian teachings emphasizes that human beings desist from questioning God's will Mbugua here utilizes the spirit world, under the confines of fiction to allow characters are able to question their existence on earth. This demonstrates that the spiritual characters are strong beings that can help seek answers about social aspects without going against the Christian ethics; they are beyond the human world. They relive in interspace and cannot be questioned easily which Wendy regards as the intermittent and the uncertain nature of space and time.

Ghosts portray friendship that is loyal and trustworthy. Friendship is a relationship between people who are friends or relation of direction and interpretation (Macmillan Dictionary 2002, Cocking & Kennet, 1998). This kind of friendship shows how human interact in their daily life experiences for instance Okri uses ghost characters to develop the social aspect of friendship. Azaro develops friendship with madam Koto who uses him to attract customers to her bar. In repayment, she feeds him palm wine and pepper soup with yams (p.89). Azaro's family has also close friendship with Madame Koto. His father, Black Tyger, takes pepper soup and palm wine most of the time in her bar, and she does not ask for money. The narrator's mother also has a close friendship with Madame Koto. The whole family of Black Tyger appreciates

Madame Koto and she loves them as well. Azaro says the following about Madame Koto:

Madame Koto turned her disquieting gaze on me. She studied my stomach. The merest hint of compassion crossed her face...Then she unwounded her wrapper and untied the big knot at the end. I had never seen so much money in my life. She had a thick wad of pound notes at her wrapper end that could easily have choked a horse. She unwrapped several notes and gave them to me. At the first, looking over Ade, I refused. But she pressed them on me, shutting my finger tightly. 'If your mother asks, tell her you found them in the forest.eh? (P.424)

Madame Koto act of generosity geared towards helping Azaro's parent shows her unwavering friendship with the family, and further reflecting social relationships in the society. Through Madame Koto, Okri gets out the ideal characters of friendship in times of need.

Ade and Azaro are the two ghost characters in *The Famished Road* who explicate a utility kind of friendship. While referring to Aristotle, Ann & Julia (1977) observe that utility form of friendship arises when one or both parties are benefiting from the other. The friend is liked as far as he/she is providing some service or gift to the other. Azaro and Ade both spirit children and have supernatural powers. The two collaborate to help Black Tyger whenever he is involved in a fight. Ade uses a black spell to help Azaro's father during the battle with the green Leopard. Further, during Black Tyger's final fight with the man in white suit, Ade offers invaluable advice to Azaro. He tells him: "it doesn't work when the opponent is wearing white," (P.539). This Azaro advises his father to tear the man's white suit and win the battle. This sort of friendship is depicted to be reliable and the author uses it to expose the cooperation that exists in the spirit world. However, the relationship between the two ghost characters can be read as the relationship between the two ghost characters can be read as the authors choice to make a commentary on real world and propose ideal acts that the living should borrow from acts of being kind to each other and giving assistance where it is needed.

Ann & Julia (1977) observe that Aristotle considers a complete/perfect friendship as a friendship by virtue. It is formed from goodness and characters of excellent people who perform actions in line with their rationality and moderate emotions. Such

characters pursue goals out of desire of good for its own sake. The close friendship between Sonko Wakadosi and Doe Madirari enthralls one to think critically about how far friendship can go. Doe Madirari does everything to help his friend Sonko Wakadosi to win Penina's heart:

“We can raise the money for you to go get her and make her your wife.” I could not believe the excitement that my words generated in Sonko. “You know, sometimes you make good use of your brains,” he said. “We should start clearing the land right away.” (P.26)

Doe Madirari helps his friend Sonko Wakadosi to grow cabbage so that he could raise enough money for his transport to his girlfriend's place in Kericho. During the night that Sonko is killed by Kanywaji, Doe desperately watches it without any help, but he later blames himself for doing nothing to save the life of his close friend. Doe interacts with Sonko at night in a form of a ghost and he informs him the reason as to why he had actually suffered that much when he was alive (p. 96). This is an indication of true friendship, which one has to sacrifice for the happiness of his friend. Doe Madirari stands with his friend in everything. He does not disappoint him in any way throughout his life.

In Under the Frangipani Couto also explores the friendship by pleasure and utility using the ghost character. Ann & Julia (1977) observe that Aristotle views pleasure friendship as a friendship that is based on enjoyment one derives from another. Emerlindo Mucanga the dead man is portrayed as having a close friendship with the 'Halakavuma' anteater. This animal gives the narrator comfort in his grave, and advises him to travel as a Shipicco in the body of the inspector to distract his coronation as a national hero. He says, “You'll take the form of a Shipicco, a night spirit” (p. 7). The author's consultations with the anteater shows a friendship based on benefits. The Emerlindo further says that, “I've got an anteater with me, just as I had a dog when I was alive. It curls up by my feet and I use it as a pillow” (P.5). The quotation exhibits a pleasure friendship; that of deriving joy for one another. Emerlindo uses halakavuma as a pet. Generally, pets are used for fun. The interaction of ghost characters in the fanciful realm offers a platform to examine how people relate in the society in a bid to create beneficial unions. This is characteristic of the African societies that thrive on peaceful coexistence and friendliness.

Ogbenika (2020) observes that every aspect of traditional African societies was marked with one festival or the other. Festivals in traditional African societies are in form of rituals, sacrifices, and ceremonies. Okri uses Azaro's family and Madame Koto as the epitome of such functions by showing three parties that take place. The first celebration is held when Azaro returns home after the kidnap and reveals that, "the old man made a libation at both posts of the door and prayed for us and thanked the ancestors that I had been found and asked that I never be lost again" (P.51). This party is geared towards severing the family from any spirit that is troubling the narrator. Okri shows the richness of the culture through ghost characters because Azaro's disappearances provide a platform on which the author is able to show how the Africans value the festivals and the beliefs linked to them. such festivals are seen as areas for social existence.

The second ceremony is held by Black Tyger to celebrate his victory after he fought and killed Green Leopard, the ghetto terrorists. Azaro reveals that:

But to our chagrin instead of saving the money he had made from the fight as mum had suggested, he immediately let be known that he was throwing a party. He invited the compound people, Madame Koto, the Blind old man, Ade's, father, and the herbalist who had treated him. The word went round that the man who had conquered the great leopard was having a party to celebrate his victory. Dad invited only a few people, but the whole world came (P.472).

The party reveals that Nigerian community believes in celebrations, which offer them an opportunity to interact and strengthen communal cohesion. Okri borrows from magical realism theory whereby a strong presence of the phenomenal world is presented with ghost characters acquiring normal positions of ordinary human to mimic the rich social aspect of the vast of the African societies based on celebrations, which strengthens their bond.

The third party is organized by Madame Koto whereby she is to be promoted to status of the affluent after she accumulates immense wealth. The narrator reveals that, "outside, we heard rumors that the party was being thrown to celebrate Madame Koto's attainment of new power, the installation of electricity, the consolidation of her party connections, and to widen the sphere of her influence in this and other realms" (p.515). Ogbenika (2020) reveals that festivals among the Yoruba people of

Nigeria are structured around ritual ceremonies and worship, but they also serve as a source of entertainment and cultural display. Madame Koto's party is used to declare to the whole community that she has moved to another level in the society. It is unfortunate that her party ended abruptly after a fight arose between Black Tygre and the man in white suit. Since African's ceremonies often were sealed with sacrifices, her diker dashes out and gets lost leaving the ritual incomplete. According to the Nigerian, culture this represented bad omen, a possibility that Koto's power would never bring good tidings.

We also see the old folks organizing a party meant to mock the police inspector, Izidine Naita in *Under the Frangipani*, which initiates him into the African way of life, after having been alienated. They ridiculously force him to wear Marta Gimo's (a district nurse) dress and tell him that they have fully initiated him into their culture, which signifies the high level of mockery to the government officials and their authority at large. This kind of ritual brings the old folk together to pour their scorn on their leaders and undress them in public places. It serves to fulfill the Old's desire to revenge the wrongs they underwent in the hands of the whites and the black leaders during colonization and post colonization. The police officer in this case exists in duality; that is, as the spirit, and as a real human because Shipicco spirit of Emerlindo Mucanga has incarnated in his body. Therefore, the spirit or ghosts are used to reflect into such human activities as festivities and other celebrations. Ghost characters are able to show how human beings value ceremonies. Ghost characters heighten the effect of the celebrations by depicting both the spiritual and the physical through their capability to oscillate into the two realms.

Ghost characters are depicted as undergoing changes just like any other normal human being in the phenomenological world. The changes can take many forms ranging from personality to overall maturity and realization of oneself. Though most of characters presented in ghost novels seem to possess some magical and supernatural elements that give them an upper hand over other normal human beings, they are also exhibited as undergoing so many human processes. Okri presents a ghost character, Azaro, who grows as a normal child. His interaction with normal human beings makes him have many resolute decisions about life. First, he decides to break the pact that existed between him and his spirit counterpart:

How many times had I been born and died young? And how often to the same parents? I had no idea. So much of the dust of living was in me. But this time, somewhere in the interspace between the spirit world and the living, I chose to stay. This meant breaking my pact and outwitting my companions. (p.5)

The illustration shows that ghosts enjoy normal state of thinking just like human beings. However, they have exceptional power to will the direction of their life. Azaro, as a ghost character, has all the power to dictate the direction of his life. This time round, he has the power to outwit other ghost characters so that he can please the parents who bore him. The exceptional ability of ghost characters to mutate their forms represents how people change to fit into changing societal roles and expectations.

The second change we experience with Azaro is change of mind to accept and go to school in spite of the fact that he hates school. He later comes to know how to read; hence, becoming a great instrument to his father when he buys books on politics. Azaro also changes from being a fun of Madame Koto to total hatred of her after she mistreats him with juju in the house. It takes the intervention of his mother and persuasion of Madame Koto to accept to visit her bar again (P.107). This portrayal of spirit child undergoing dynamic changes in life just like a normal human being reflects what Bontempeli (1927) referred to as normalizing a supernatural atmosphere by describing it in a precise realistic detail. Okri's portrayal of ghost characters exhibiting normal human being qualities relieves the tension in the mind of the reader who would be struggling with coping with a new world that is created by the spirit characters.

Sonko Wakadosi is also presented as undergoing change of mind. He regrets his youthful decisions, when Doe Madirari appears as a ghost to his friend:

'I now realize I was wrong, Sonko Wakadosi told me in a dream about a week after we had buried him. "Penina was not the love of my life...." "Mhh...Go on," I sad to Wakadosi. I thought he was kidding me, so I was still speaking to him in jest. "All along, the girl of my dreams was Ursula," Wakadosi said. Although he had sounded so earnest, I could not help laughing. "What? You have now changed your mind?"' (P.95-96)

It can be argued that Mbugua seeks to reveal the cause of human suffering using ghost characters. The change of mind by Sonko Wakadosi affirms that human suffering is not fate. Using ghost characters, the writer is able to merge the fanciful and the phenomenal realms to poke holes on the existence of human fate. He claims that success or failure of an individual is decision bound. Sonko's failure resulted from a string of wrong choices he made while he was alive. It is unfortunate that Sonko learns this while he is already dead which in a way show Mbugua uses ghost characters to underscore the importance of embracing change in life to accommodate dynamics, which are inevitable in real life situation.

In *Under the frangipani*, Couto employs a ghost character Emerlindo Mucanga to exhibit the theme of change. Though Emerlindo had been grumbling about indecency of his burial, he seems to change his mind when he is offered an opportunity to interact with the living. When he is returning to the grave after having witnessed the horror of the death that reminded him of his own death, he says:

Little by little, I am losing the language of men to take on the earths' dialect. Up there, on the terrace, bathed in its luminosity, I bequeath my last dream, the frangipani tree. I am merging with the sound of stones. I lie down, more ancient than the earth. From now on, my slumber will be deeper than death itself (P.150)

This time round, Emerlindo is contented with his life in the grave. He accepts his fate. He fears the horror of human heartlessness. Couto amplifies the state of disillusionment that engulfed the African societies immediately after the independence particularly the civil wars that condemned many to become refugees. The use of ghost character is able to achieve lucid picturesque because the author has the ability to compare the two realms. Emerlindo's preference of the grave over the living shows the deterioration of the human heart and promotion of social evil in the society.

Ghost characters give a lucid picturesque of beliefs, values, vices, superstitions, taboos, religions, and cultural practices using their exceptional qualities such as reincarnation, oscillation, mystic powers and their clairvoyant eyes which merges the surreal and phenomenal realm bringing to light the most rich social aspect in African set up.

4.3 Ghost Characterization as the Embodiment of Economic Situation in African Prose

Since the 1950s, magical realism has been used as a weapon, particularly by post-colonial writers to represent the realities of the post-colonial African countries (Diller (2016). The three authors have endeavored to portray the economic instability of the most African nations using magical realism. They have painted a picture of the poor Africans living in dilapidated state, while the rich continue to shine throughout their journey at the expense of the general populace. The three authors under study use ghost characters to amplify this case in a concealed manner. This enables them to express truth, without the fear of being accused of mentioning specific communities and their leaders, which may lead to intimidation and harassment from the political class.

Okri employs ghost characters to introspect the African economic situation and paints a horrifying image of unpalatable living conditions of Nigerians slums dwellers. Azaro recounts how the single room they live in had several challenges:

The rain swept down so badly that I could no longer sleep on the floor and had to share the single bed with my parents. When more holes opened above us, we had to keep moving the bed round the room. It got so awful that we couldn't find a place that wasn't leaking. We ended up settling for having the water drip on our feet. Dad complained to the landlord, but he merely threatened to increase the rent further if he fixed the roof. We couldn't afford the rent as it stood so we had no choice but to settle for being soaked through at night (p.357).

The quote reveals the dire state of poverty in postcolonial Nigeria. It portrays poverty as a chronic and a constant phenomenon perpetuated by the rich political leaders, affecting the less fortunate in the community (Guariso & Rogal, 2017). Okri mounts a critical eye on how poor people hurt under the watch of the rich. A family of three is so large as to spend in a single room that unfortunately leaks when it rains. He therefore roots for economic changes that would see every African benefit.

A state of poverty had reared its ugly head in Azaro's family as revealed in the conversation between Azaro and his mother:

'Your father has gone mad,' she said.

'Why?'

'He is training to be a boxer, eh?'

We both watched him attacking the mosquitoes and the flying ants. He was sweating and his face was screwed up in absurd concentration.

'You see how poor we are,' mum said. 'How are we going to feed a boxer, eh? (P.362)

The quote depicts the state of poverty in Black Tyger's home. Gordon (1999) observes that characters in a text, either directly or indirectly, aid the writer in developing some aspect of style through their manner of speaking or action. As they do this, they develop or strengthen some thematic concerns in the texts. Through Azaro's dialogue with his mother, the theme of poverty is brought as he directly confesses that they are poor. They grumble that they cannot afford to feed a boxer; an indication that the family is not able to cater for their basic needs. Okri portrays ghost characters operating in a phenomenal realm as ordinary people revealing the economic situation in Nigeria which Wendy (2004) described as strong presence of the phenomenal world.

Azaro in *The Famished Road* finds himself in problems at school. His parents, being poor, struggle to pay his school fees. The narrator often contends with issue of going to school hungry. When he arrives at Madame Koto's bar, he relies on myths and superstitions from his mother to suppress the hunger. He says:

When I went to Madame Koto's bar after school, the place was empty. I was hungry. Sitting near the earthenware pot, I kept telling myself that I didn't have a stomach. I slept and woke up. Flies had come into the bar. I went to Madame Koto's room to ask for food (P.98)

It is quite disquieting for the child to go without food as Azaro's mother accepts her young son to serve in a club in return for his basic needs such as food. This displays the glaring poverty that had handicapped the parents, and that there was little hope for them because it took the effort of Madame Koto to feed Azaro in the afternoons after school when he arrives there very hungry thus indicating the suffering the majority of the Africans went through after the independence.

In *Under the Frangipani*, Couto uses magical realism to capture the bizarre state of poverty in Post-independence Mozambique. He uses a ghost character that acts as a narrator and tells the story from an interspace position. Emerlindo Mucanga's in-between position offers a comparative state of things in the fanciful and phenomenal realms. He reveals the following about the state of life in a refugee camp:

At first, I almost gave up. I would go into a room and be hit by the stench of putrefaction. I asked what the source of such smells was. The old folk pointed to their open mouths. The stench came from their pillows, from the nightly dribbling of the toothless. I even believed it. Afterwards, I saw it wasn't true. The smell came from the leftovers of food they were hiding under their bolsters. They were guarding these crumbs for fear of being robbed. Folk made up so many stories that sometimes they would invent food under their bolsters they didn't even get near to having (P.125-126).

The above quotation reveals how life was at the infirmary, the Old Mozambicans and some Portuguese are seen to be starving. Any time they get a chance to have food, they guard it jealously; not risking losing it because they are afraid of starvation. Couto's portrayal of the refugee camp suffering represents the pain that engulfed Africa after the attainment of independence. The poverty increased rather than decreased. The ghost character observes these things while hidden in the body of the inspector. Couto uses the ghost character to reveal these things in order to appeal more to the African people and particularly the leaders because Africans have special place for the supernatural over the natural (Finnegan 1970). Since majority of the Africans are semi-literate, magic would appeal more to them and would manipulate their thinking.

Additionally, Couto sees the poverty menace as a disease that inflicted the Africans and derailed their progress for instance a conversation between Navaia Caetano and the Izidine Naita, whose body Emerlindo Mucanga occupies, Couto reveals the level of poverty in the refugee camp:

But now let me ask you: was anything taken? It's just that the old folk here are all takers. They don't steal. Just take. They take things without even getting as far as stealing them. Let me explain: here in this fort, no one owns anything. So if there are no owners, there's nothing to steal. Isn't that so? Here, it's the grass that eats the cow. I deny any theft but I confess to the crime (P.21).

Couto humorously scorns the creation of refugees, which left many Africans poor and miserable. In general, the old people are expected to be at their homes being nursed by their children. They are expected to have accumulated wealth during the days of their youth. However, these old timers are rotting in refugee camps in dire poverty. Couto uses Emerlindo Mucanga one of the liberalist who succumbed while fighting for the freedom of Portuguese to reveal the disappointment the engulfed the liberalist. He stands a better place to unravel these ugly turnouts of events after the independence. He does not give a biased picture because he is angry with the leaders and other opportunistic Africans who got a chance to control resources of the country leaving the majority, like those Portuguese poor.

Sonko Wakadosi in *Terrorist of the Aberdare* is used to depict the poverty in most of the post-independence Kenyan people. He is depicted as undergoing intense pressure from the poor governance. After the death of his father, Sonko's family is evicted from their father's land by their uncles, and they have to cope with a rented single room. Their finances diminish and he relies on his friend Doe Madirari for accommodation until he is able to secure a piece of land for his family in which they settle. The two friends are presented to be facing many challenges in their lives. Sonko's poverty denies him a chance to marry a girl of his dreams as revealed in the following conversation:

“She is gone,” he said bitterly, addressing me. For a minute there, his words filled me with foreboding. Was Shufa Nandfe right after all?
“Just because I am poor, she has decided to leave,” Sonko was saying.
“What shall I do to get her back?” (P.25)

Though Penina loves Sonko, she refuses to marry him because they are both poor and Penina fears for her future. She tells her friend Ursula that, “Love makes the world go round, Ursula, but it does not put food on the table” (P.18). This underscores the effect of poverty in a family set up. Women fear risking living with poor people, which has resulted to the rise of a new generation of girls in Kenya who prefer old rich people often referred to as sponsors in the society to the poor youth.

Despite penina's hard work, she is unable to disentangle herself from poverty. She sells *samosa* as a way of sustaining her life. Unluckily, she is unable to extricate

herself from poverty because she makes minimal earnings. In a conversation between Ursula and Penina, the following ensues:

“What are you doing Penina?” her companion Ursula asked.

“I am tired, Ursula,” she said matter-of-factly.

“I will never sell *samosa* again. It is a pointless as crushing water with a mortar and pestle.” (P.17)

Mbugua uses a commonly known Gikuyu proverb to explicate the economic constraints Penina is undergoing. The failure of her business forces her to move to Kericho where she seeks the casual job of tea picking. Poverty forces two lovebirds to stay apart and the frustration Sonko feels renders him insane. He eventually decides to fight with “the elephant” using a *Simi*, which eventually results to his premature death.

Okri interweaves magical realism and African myths to reveal the rot in the society through Azaro; Okri uses the mystic powers of ghost characters to see into all unimaginable human secrets. He creates an allegory of the road and the workers:

‘The road is their soul, the soul of their history. That is why when they have built a long section of it, or forgotten the words of their prophet and begun to think they have completed it, land quakes happen, lightning strikes, invisible volcanoes erupt, rivers descend on them, hurricane tear up their earth, the road goes mad and twists and destroys itself, or people become distorted in spirit and start to turn the road into other things, or workers go insane, the people start wars, revolt cripple everything and thousand things distract them and wreck what they have built and a new generation comes along and begins again from the wreckage.’ (P.378-379)

The road is used symbolically to represent African nation, particularly Nigeria. The workers are Nigerians and the prophets are the liberators. Okri alleges that Africans had a dream of building a free and economically stable nation, but unfortunately, the countries are faced with people who ruin others. They work but the same leaders misuse the resources. The leaders watch Africans struggle to build a good nation, but they take all the resources. Okri is skeptical whether Africa would attain economic stability with the so many distractors that attack her.

In addition, Okri endeavors to exhibit a strong presence of phenomenal realm whereby he uses Azaro operating like an ordinary human to convey the heartlessness

and the cruelty of the rich. Azaro narrates the oppression mounted to his family by the landlord who hiked the rent for his family as a way of evicting them from his houses:

While we were eating, there was a knock at the door.

'Come in', Dad said.

It was too early for visitors. We were struck by the sight of the man in ragged clothes who came in, looking around furtively his eyes yellow, his complexion pale, his mouth bitter. He was from the landlord. He was the bearer of a message. We were informed that our rent had been increased. Apparently, we were the only ones to suffer an increment in the compound. After he had delivered the message, which included an option to move out if we didn't like the new rent he was gone (p. 275).

Okri portrays a society that is occupied by indifferent people. He criticizes the rich in the society for continuing their mission of exploiting the poor after independence. The rich grabbed land, constructed rental houses and charged hefty rents to the detriments of the poor. Majority of African leaders took advantage of the ordinary people to grab and consolidate large tracts of land leaving the masses in squatters.

Corruption and bribery rocked majority of the African nations after the independence. Couto in *Under the Frangipani* uses ghost character to unravel the horrifying situation that unexpectedly struck the Africans who had hoped for the freedom of mind, economy, and politics. He employs a dead and buried narrator Emerlindo Mucanga who reincarnates to tell the happenings in the world of the living. In a conversation with halakavuma (anteater), he says, "Don't you want to be a hero? But a hero of what, beloved of who? Now that the country is a harvest of ruin, why do they call for me, a humble carpenter?" (p.6). The narrator hints on the oppression and corruption that surrounded the Portuguese country. Bone (2017) notes that the conflicts in Africa are caused by few individuals who want to continuously control the resources. Couto criticizes such leaders in a harsh way because they took the leadership of Mozambique and instead of improving the welfare of the citizens; they exploited them financially making the country collapse no wonder the dead narrator says the country is in state of ruins.

Furthermore, Couto kills some characters to pave way for the analysis of their corrupt misdemeanor. It is through the death of Vastome Excellency that the rot of his character is brought to light. In a letter seen by the police inspector, Izidine Naita, who is investigating his death, the following is revealed:

When I came to the refugee, I came face to face with my husband's wickedness. Excellency was selling the provisions destined for the refugee. The old folk weren't even fed the basic necessities so they were wasting away. Sometime I had an impression they were dying skewered by their very bones. But Vastome really did not care about their suffering. (P.102)

The quote explains Vastome's extremities of corruption. His callous attitude towards the refugees who were fighting for the country's liberation is recounted. Williams (2017) observes that in colonial government people were united against their ruler, the white. However, when the liberators took over, only a few people benefited. Majority read about freedom in books and did not experience it in reality. This is evidenced by corrupt people such as Vastome Excellency who shows little concern for people.

Magical realism mode gives an author an opportunity to create a unique interphase where forces of class conflict in the society square it out. Okri in *The Famished Road* creates such an in-between environment where the rich and the poor can muscle. The narrator reveals that:

'Your father got into the car and went to the village. Your grandfather treated his wounds and soothed his spirit. Then he travelled to Ughelli to buy the perfume that would get rid of the bad smell of poverty. Then he went to the moon. Then he travelled to the land of spirits far away. Many lands. I heard his voice crying out in the sky. They refused him entry to heaven. They sent him past hell, past spirit lands where our ancestors ask one another impenetrable riddles all day long. He came to a country full of palaces, a country of dreams, where the people are invisible, where wisdom and joy are in the air. He went to law courts of the spirit worlds. I heard him crying for answers. Then he came back and a war broke out and they shot him on the road that he had built (P.550).

The quote is an illustration of the reckonable force that Black Tyger fights. In the text, Okri creates a world that is neither spiritual nor physical, where Black Tyger is fighting for his economic liberation. The realm has the ancestors where the grandfather comes in aid of Black Tyger. The author emphasizes the pain and struggle one has to go through in modern Nigeria to succeed in life. In the past, Nigerians struggled to attain independence from the whites, but after they left another struggle emerged; the struggle for economic freedom, which now Black Tyger is going through.

Okri gives the text a sense of human touch by withdrawing from the conflicts of the spirit world. He displays human conflict in the physical world and attributes such conflicts to class discrimination. When Madame Koto hosts a party to celebrate her new economic class promotion, she leaves Black Tyger out among the invitees. This causes a kerfuffle to break out at her tents entrance when Black Tyger confronts the guards at the entrance. Azaro says:

He went to the bouncer and knocked him out with a single roundhouse punch. 'If its only gatecrashers you respect, then I am coming in,' Dad said. The thugs fell on him. He threw one of them on the bonnet of a car. He winded a second with a punch to the solar plexus. He was quivering with energy; his eyes had a manic glimmer. Someone screamed. Madame Koto came out, saw what was happening, told the thugs to stop fighting, and very politely asked Dad to come into the party (P.520)

This discrimination based on social class irritates the less fortunate in the society and Black Tyger is depicted fighting to overturn the status quo. In addressing the concept of class, Marx (1863) argues that a capitalist society is made up of two classes; namely, the bourgeoisie, or business owners, who control the means of production, and the proletariat, or workers, whose labor transforms raw commodities into valuable economic good. The two are always at conflict where the workers wish to overturn the business owners. Okri subtly portrays the conflict where Black Tyger is shown fighting for his recognition in a place where the rich only are welcome. He succeeds to be brought on board, representing the state of a revolution that Marx talks about in his theory.

A similar class of individuals is revealed by Mbugua using ghost characters. These individuals widen the gap between the proletarians and the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie seem to dominate all the sectors of the production leaving the proletariat to languish in crude poverty (Max 1980). Sonko Wakadosi suffers untold pain, while his neighbors, Hon. Nyoks Ndarafua, CGH, EBS, and Mategwa Kunona, continue to enjoy a lavish lifestyle up the economic ladder. It is reported that:

There are people in this life who have to struggle more than others do. And my friend Sonko Wakadosi was one of them. Come to think of it. What have the likes of Nyoks Ndarafufua or Mtegwa Kunona done to deserve the favor of the elements that my friend Sonko Wakadosi or myself have not done? What did we do to deserve the punishment of

poverty, yet we have done our best to escape from it without success?
(P.78)

The quote reveals the bitterness that surrounded the less fortunate in Africa, particularly Kenya after independence. The poor live a life full of struggle at the expense of the few who dominated the country's resources. Mbugua attacks such groups of people and campaigns for fairness in wealth distribution to prevail in Africa.

Education is presented as an illusion for the poor and the less fortunate in the Kenyan society. Mbugua presents a society inhabited by a majority that cannot afford to pay school fees. Sonko Wakadosi dropped out of school the moment his father died. The narrator reveals:

After a few months, shame, anger, and despair forced Sonko Wakadosi to drop out of school to help raise some money to feed his brothers and sisters, who were too young to fend for themselves and his mother, who had suffered an emotional concussion after the death of her husband and the cruelty of her brothers' in-law (P.72).

Thus, the quote explicates the economic challenges the vast of the Africans underwent after independence. Sonko Wakadosi who is a spirit character is used to bring to lucidity such struggles and pains. A Similar fate befalls Penina who had to drop out of school in form two after his father falls off the building and broke his spinal cord, confining him to the wheel chair. The narrator says, "And if he had not stopped building, Penina would not have dropped out of secondary school" (P.76). This mess happens in full glare of the rich in the society and they refuse to do anything to help. Mbugua attributes the extreme poverty in African nations to illiteracy levels that are damn high. He agitates for a change of things.

Ghost characters are also used to develop the theme of unemployment. Majority of characters suffer due to inability to secure a reliable job. In *The Famished Road*, Azaro's family suffers because of lack of stable employment. Black Tyger has to put up with weird jobs in order to sustain his family. He is hired to carry heavy loads of cement and salt every day, leaving his back peeling off. The narrator reports that:

I heard the voice briefly and I sought the face. And then I saw Dad amongst the load-carriers. He looked completely different. His hair was white and his face was mask-like with engrained cement. He was

almost naked except for a very disquieting pair of tattered shorts, which I had never seen before. The loaded two bags of salt on his head, he cried ‘GOD, SAVE ME!’ he wobbled, and the bag on top fell back into the lorry. The men loading him insulted his ancestry, wounding me, and Dad kept blinking as the sweat and salt poured into his eyes (P.174)

The pain he is undergoing makes him contemplate quitting his job, but he is unable because there are no jobs available (P. 202). The narrator’s mother warns the narrator, Azaro, not to refuse schooling because after independence, educated Africans will secure good jobs while those who are not educated will find it hard to cope with the state of the economy. He would probably continue to cope with hard times and the usual economic challenges just like his dad.

Okri further portrays the narrator’s mother as going through hard economic times. She engages in unpromising business of selling provisions. The narrator recounts that most of the times her provisions would end up not having been bought. The narrator says:

That morning she brought out her little table of provisions to the house front. She sat on a stool, with me beside her, and dispiritedly crooned out her wares. The dust blew into our eyes. The sun was merciless on our flesh. We didn’t sell a single item (P.61)

It is evident that majority of the Africans went through hard economic times after independence. Okri uses a spirit child character who tells the story naively. The innocence of a child makes the story acquire a sense of truth as children rarely tell lies.

It is evident that ghost characters are used to reveal the economic situation in Nigeria whereby they reincarnate and interact with phenomenal realm as humans who possess mystic powers to see all the ills that engulfed African nations during colonization and post colonization. The existence of Ghost characters is crucial when mirroring the economic situation since they are able to compare the situation in the fanciful and the phenomenal realms in which the fanciful is shown to be economically stable while material realm is not.

4.4 Ghosts Characterization as a Representation of the Revelation of the Political Climate in African Prose

Political climate is the aggregate mood and opinions of a political society at a particular time. The expression is generally used to describe a state of mood and opinion that is changing or unstable rather than at equilibrium. The phrase traces its origin to both ancient Greece and Medieval- era France. Okri in *The Famished Road* uses Abiku to display a climatic mood that is changing and unstable in Nigeria. He depicts Nigeria in the transition of independence.

Okri uses myths that encompass reincarnation, as well as a biblical allusion of Lazarus (Azaro) to portray political realities in Nigeria during colonization and post-colonization. Nigeria, just like other African countries was engulfed with numerous political woes perpetuated by the ruling class. Just as Abiku child comes and goes, Nigeria is politically unstable. The narrator says:

The spirit is unwilling adventurer into chaos and sunlight, into the dreams of the living and the dead. Things that are not ready, not willing to be born or to become, things for which adequate preparations have not been made to sustain their momentous births, things that are not resolved, things bound up with failure and with fear of being, they all keep recurring, keep, coming back, and in themselves partake of the spirit-child's condition. They keep coming and going till their time is right. History itself fully demonstrates how things of the world partake of the condition of the spirit-child (P.558).

The excerpt demonstrates that Nigeria is an Abiku country that keeps on going and coming. Oko (2020) argues that; Nigerians authentic independence, which is linked to Abiku', has not yet been achieved. He associates this instability with failure of Nigeria to be fully prepared for birth and adds that the main problem that haunts African nations is that majority of them attained independence when they had not matured enough to govern themselves.

Okri employs ghost characters oscillation from surreal to material to represent the possibility of Nigerian political stability. Okri uses Ade, a living pessimistic Abiku who reasserts the above illustration when he says that, 'Our country is an Abiku country. Like the spirit-child, it keeps coming and going. One day it will decide to remain. It will become strong. I won't see it' (P.547). The quote reveals that Nigeria has hope of functioning as an independent, mature, and reliable country with robust

systems and polices. However, Ade unfortunately will not be present to witness these changes. Ade represents the liberators who labored to see a free Nigeria but the jaws of death gnashed them before this realization. Overall, he dreams of a better future where he says Nigeria will choose to stay.

Nevertheless, the Abiku employs their mystic powers to see into the future of political stability in Nigeria whereby they argue that Nigeria political stability will never be attained peacefully. Ade tells his friend Azaro that:

Suffering is coming. There will be wars and famine. Terrible things will happen. New diseases, hunger, the rich eating up the earth, people poisoning the sky and the waters, people going mad in the name of the history, the clouds will breath fire. The spirits of things will dry up; laughter will become strange (P.547)

The quote above portends an oppressive atmosphere that will hover in Nigeria as the people fight to regain their second liberation. Okri intimates that the first liberation of Nigeria was from the chains of the white people; and therefore, he prophesies a second liberation, which will set people free from the chains of the black self-imposed masters.

The freedom above is achievable if the ghost characters stop being reincarnated. The ghost characters are used to represent incompetent, unreliable and oppressive political leaders whom Nigeria as a country has to stop breeding and nurturing. The intimation by Ade that soon he is leaving indicates a possible new dawn for political atmosphere in Nigeria. He says, 'My time is coming. I have worn out my mother's womb and now she can't have any more children' (P.547). The illustration shows that no worse leadership will be elected. The Nigerians will now understand themselves, and will chose good leaders and their country will become politically stable.

This is informed by the fact that the Abiku children are portrayed as bad and evil. They represent the forces detrimental to Nigerians. Madame Koto asks Azaro that, 'why were you staring at my stomach like that with your bad luck eyes' (P. 530). Madame Koto is aware that Azaro is a bad luck to her parents (Nigeria). Though narrated in a superstitious way, Okri tries to underscore the challenges facing Nigeria on persistence of people who are not willing to struggle to help Nigerian grow

holistically. Oko (2020) observes that Azaro is likened to the echo of independence and its attendant's problems, and the embodiment of a Nigerian nation that has been born.

The description given about the three-spirit children Madame Koto is carrying in her womb has a great meaning about the future of Nigeria. Azaro's supersensory telepathic and clairvoyant power enables him to merge the fanciful and phenomenal realms and brings their nature to the reader's attention. He says:

And I saw Madame Koto was pregnant with three strange children. Two of them sat upright and the third was upside down in her womb. One of them had a little beard, the second had fully formed teeth, and the third had a wicked eye. They were all mischievous, they kicked and tugged at their cords, they were the worst type of spirit children, and they had no intention of being born (P.530).

The three spirit children represent Nigeria. Their refusals to be born represent the inability of Nigeria to become an independent and autonomous country. Nigeria is not fully prepared for the monstrous birth. Their forced birth would result to an outbreak of a terrible war that Ade portends later in the text when he says, 'Suffering is coming. There will be wars and famine.' (p.547). Therefore, Nigeria like other African countries is faced by eminent war in case they explore the route of seeking a second liberation. Okri further presents a nation that is inhabited by self-fulfilling leaders. Through mystic magic sight of the herbalist, the following is revealed:

Too many roads! Things are CHANGING TOO FAST! No new WILL. COWARDICE everywhere! SELFISHNESS is EATING UP the WORLD. THEY ARE DESTROYING AFRICA! They are DESTROYING the WORLD and the HOME and the SHRINES and the GODS! THEY are DESTROYING LOVE TOO.' (P.437)

Okri capitalizes some words in the lines above to reemphasize the meaning they carry. The words carry weight behind the rise of leaders in Nigeria who do not seek for her stability; rather they are interested in self-aggrandizement. These leaders keep on acquiring wealth, which they cannot use after all. Okri's assertion is further buttressed by Achebe (1983) who notes that:

The trouble with Nigeria is simple and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, water, air, or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leader to rise to the responsibility. (P.1)

These arguments open a platform where a critical examination can be directed with the intent of unearthing the rot surrounding the Nigerian people. Both Achebe and Okri agree there is need for Nigeria's rebirth in which new leadership takes over and causes reforms.

Okri further mocks the unprofessionalism of the police officers in post-colonial Nigeria. Generally, the autocratic governments in Africa have been known to use police officers as a weapon to propagate their despotic rule. In a minor conflict between the landlord and the tenants, the police officers are shown to take that chance as a golden opportunity to exercise their inhuman feats. The narrator reveals that:

The reinforcements meanwhile lashed out everything in sight, unleashing mayhem in a drunken fever. When they had finished fifteen men, three children, four women, two goats and a dog lay wounded along the battleground by our area. That was how the riot started (p.12).

The horrific scene emblazoned in the mind of the reader exhumes the police officers as inconsiderate. Okri in this case uses a ghost young boy to reveal the crime in the crudest way conceivable because children are presumed innocent and free of biases and exaggeration.

The brutality of the police officers is further aggrandized by the beating of narrator's father. This is evidenced through this quote:

Dad was there, imprisoned for taking part in the riots. They managed to see him. He had been beaten by the police and there was an ugly cut on his forehead, bruises on his face, and his arm hung beside him like a diseased appendage. The next day, after much begging and some bribery, Dad was freed (p. 36).

Okri attacks police officers and the overall leadership in Nigeria through the ghost character that is able to have clairvoyant view of the happenings without his physical presence. The police officers are shown as corrupt and oppressive. They are the extension of the oppressive government. Black Tyger's remand is an exhibition of injustice. He was detained without a fair trial. Furthermore, it is ironical that the police officers come when the houses are burning and instead of helping people salvage their belongings from burning, they beat them up severely leaving many

wounded. This subjugation is a representation of a tyrannical-sort-of leadership that Okri is shown to be against in contemporary post-colonial Nigeria.

Two political forces are shown to be antagonistic with each other: the party of the rich and the party of the poor. The spiritual, telepathic, clairvoyant eye of the Abiku child reveals the struggle for dominance that originates from the spiritual realm and cascades downwards to the material world. The narrator reveals that:

That was when I understood that conflicting forces were fighting for our future of our country in the air, at night, in our dreams, riding invisible white horses and whipping us, sapping our will while we slept. The political parties waged their battles in the spirit spaces, beyond the realm of our earthly worries. They fought and hurled counter-mythologies at one another. (P.568)

The quote exhibits unpalatable thirst for leadership. This urge is aimed at ensuring they get power, which they would use against each other. The party of the rich wants to stamp its authority, while the poor wishes to overthrow the rich and distribute the resources to uplift themselves. This assertion is supported by Reno 2019 who avers that independence of African countries is a curse because it gives some people power to rule and oppress the rest. This can be deduced as the real phenomenon unfolding in Nigeria.

The political violence in Africa is a mechanism to disrupt the attempts to change the economic situation (Duursama, Twagiramungu & Gebrehiwot, 2019). This assertion is evidenced in *The Famished Road*. Okri exhibits a society that is hit by turbulence of political turmoil. During the campaigns at the narrator's compound, several wars break up. The narrator reveals that:

The politician went on with his claim, and suddenly a stone smashed the van's window and undammed the furry of angry bodies. Several hands clawed at the van; someone cracked the politician on the head and he screamed into the loudspeaker. The driver started the vehicle; it jerked forward and knocked a woman over. (P.181)

This is a representation of unstable political situation. There is mistrust between the poor and the rich which results to political turmoil in Nigeria. The author reveals that Nigeria is yet to achieve political stability after the attainment of independence.

The oppression meted by the rich to the poor is evident when the party of the rich feeds the poor with rotten milk, seen in Azaro's words "last night. Everyone was asleep. Then the insect flew out of the milk," (P.155). Azaro's third eye enables him to see into the cause of plight of the people in his village. The discovery by the villagers that they were poisoned by the party of the rich is received hilariously and revenge is organized. This makes the political mood in post independent Nigeria extremely tense.

Political deception and corruption in Africa is dominant. The political leaders make promises to the electorate but when elected they behave like others and fail to fulfill them (Mbandwa, 2020). Okri depicts Nigeria as a country that is ever deceived politically. When the party of the rich visits his village, Azaro says, "They only remember us when they want our votes" (p. 145). This shows disillusionment of the voters concerning the promises made by these political parties. The citizens are used to such promises, which are never fulfilled.

The two parties strive to woo the electorate to their sides using all manner of dubious methods. The party of the rich makes a myriad of promises to the crowd. Azaro says:

The man in the van spoke for himself. VOTE FOR US. WE ARE THE
PARTY OF THE RICH, FRIENDS OF THE POOR...
'The poor have no friends,' someone in the crowd said.
'Only rats.'
'IF YOU VOTE FOR US....'
'...we are finished,' someone added.
'...WE WILL FEED YOUR CHILDREN...'
'...lies'
'...AND WE WILL BRING YOU GOOD ROADS
'...which the rain will turn into gutters.' (P.145)

Okri uses capital letters for the lines said by the rich to show how important those words were sounding to the ears of the distance listener when uttered, and to let the audience know that those were the challenges the poor faced; yet they would never be fulfilled. He also uses the modal verb "will" as a subject rather than "shall" which lessens the possibility. In addition, the politicians use the first person plural "we" rather than "I" which makes the responsibility of the commitment collective rather than individual. One would expect them to use first person "I" for the purposes of commitment. The author also uses small letters to show the humility of the poor. The

small letters under tones the resistance because the masses do not seem to agree with the leaders this often happens in many postcolonial African societies. This skeptical portrayal of the antagonism between the rich and the poor is captured by Marxist (1863) who introduced the concept of the class conflict and its implication.

Both the party of the rich and that of the poor are politically hypocritical. Okri uses the ghost character Azaro to exemplify their lies. He reports:

The men of the compound talked about politics, about the party of the poor. They too had come with loudhailers and leaflets and had promised a lot of things and had won considerable support because they said they would never poison the people. (p.177)

Okri is cynical about the promises that are made by these political parties. He reflects on the challenges facing the people in the compound and juxtaposes them with the promises that are made by the parties. When the two are analyzed, what comes out clearly is a complete ugly situation, which is a mockery to their promises. This is a confirmation that the two parties have been lying to the local Nigerians throughout their lives.

Black Tyger's dream foreshadows the future role he will play towards liberating the poor and the community at large. The following conversation with his son, Azaro, reveals this:

My son, I dreamt that I had set out to discover a new continent.
What is it called?
The continent of a hanging man '
What happened?
'When I landed with my boat, I saw mountains, rivers, and a desert. I wrote my name on a rock. I went into the continent. I was alone. A strange thing happened. You're too young to understand this, '
'Tell me '....
I have just discovered this place. It is supposed to be a new continent. You are not supposed to be here.'
"We have been here since time immemorial, "he replied. 'And then I dreamt them away. And then a shepherd came to me and said;
"This continent has no name" (p.500).

Black Tyger's dream of a new continent is symbolic. It represents the critical role that he will play towards redeeming and restoring the lives of the poor who are in this case represented by him and the beggars. In his dreams, the people who are not like him

represent the whites. When he dreams them away, it signifies the end of their rule or leadership in the new continent. The new continent represents African continent that had no name before the coming of the Europeans. When the shepherds tell him that people do not name their own continent, it is symbolic of the authority that the white took to name African Continent. Ben Okri therefore uses the dream to show what was happening in Nigeria; more particularly, the Yoruba community.

Nigerians political liberation is shown to be going through intensive metamorphosis. Okri dexterously employs Black Tyger's rebirths to signify how Nigerians freedom movements are reborn. Black Tyger is engaged in three fatal fights. In each of those fights he win but the aftermath of them is disastrous because he is left oscillating between the spirit world and the physical world. He fights with the spirit of Yellow Jaguar, which he wins but after the war, the narrator tells us that:

We kept the business of our dad having fought a dead man to ourselves...dad was in his condition. If I had said that a fully-grown man, bearded and big chested, married and with a son, was being born as certain huge animals are born, I would probably have been chastised by all the grown-ups around (p.411).

This quote reveals that Nigerian's are undergoing transformation politically. It is a rebirth of the second liberation. The narrator says an old man is being reborn to show that though Nigerians had attained independence, there was need for the country to restart afresh by shedding off her old self.

The second fight between Green Leopard and Black Tyger metaphorically signifies the Nigerian awakening on matters of politics and finances. After black Tyger lingers between dead and the living for several days, he is reborn a second time. When he wakes up, he says he wants to become a politician. This is met with sharp criticism from his wife:

'You used to hate politics,' Mum said. 'What has happened, eh?
'I've been thinking.'
'So it took Green Leopard to start you thinking, eh?
'Where there's politics, there's money,' Dad said. (P.471)

This shows that majority of Africans fought to liberate themselves from the jaws of poverty. The major motive for the fight was self-gain. This claim is buttressed by

Boone (2017) who observes that the fight for leadership in Africa is ever targeted to control the countries existing resources and exploit the economy.

Black Tyger's last fight with the man in white suit is a climax of his political freedom and that of Nigeria. When he lastly wins the fight, his son Azaro (Nigeria) gets freedom. Azaro says:

The air in the room was calm. There were no turbulences. His presence protected our night space. There were no forms invading our air, pressing down on our roof, walking through the objects. The air was clear and wide. In my sleep, I found open spaces where I floated without fear. The sky was serene. A good breeze blew over our road, cleaning away the strange excesses in the air. It was so silent and peaceful that after sometime I was a bit worried. I was not used to such a gift of quietude (P.574).

This quote is a portrayal of a country's rebirth, which Black Tyger has been fighting to obtain. Okri uses the images of spiritual realm to signify how Nigeria had been in constant struggle to attain her liberty. Abiku children have been used to give the author the ability to pry into spiritual realms. Like an Abiku child whose existence is unreliable, Okri had been able to show the unreliability of Nigerian's independence.

The media is a powerful tool for political socialization, mobilization, and community development in both Kenya and Nigeria (Edego, Eze & Anunike 2015, & Omwoha 2016). Okri uses an Abiku child to reveal the prominent role media plays in Nigerian politics. Azaro relays that the photographer, Jeremiah, was literally present and taking photos whenever there would be a function or political rally. When the party of the rich is distributing the rotten milk, the narrator says:

The intrepid photographer appeared with his camera and took pictures of the miserable landlord and the surging crowd. The landlord got up in a great fury, shook his fists, swore at the party and, covered in mud and dried milk, his clothes in tatters, his pants all twisted, he stormed away down the street, a solitary figure of wretched defiance. The photographer went on taking pictures. The men on the van posed in between doling out milk, smiling in weird fixity at the camera, while the crowd jostled (p.147)

The presence of Jeremiah with his camera represents the media. The media started taking roots in post-independence African countries. He takes pictures, which later he would parade to the whole country to let them know the happenings of the country.

Media has been used in Africa to distribute crucial information to the masses despite perpetual harassment by the political leaders. It is used as a weapon to unmask the political turmoil as shown by Okri in Nigeria through the eyes of ghost character Azaro.

In addition, media publicity affects politics of the government either negatively or positively. Jeremiah's photos are later on used to shape the political direction when he publishes the thugs of the party of the rich distributing stale milk to the poor. These pictures in the newspapers tilt negatively the popularity of the party of the rich. The narrator says:

For the first time in our lives, we as a people had appeared in the newspapers. We were heroes in our own drama, heroes of our own protest. ..There were news stories about the bad milk and an editorial about our rage. People crowded into our rooms and talked about her fame, how she could use it to sell off her provisions, about the thugs, who had sworn terrible reprisals, and about the landlord, who was furious that his own tenants had partaken in the attack on his beloved party (p.184).

Featuring the news article about the violence perpetrated to the poor by the rich party affects their vote by over ten million people, as Azaro says. The landlord is embittered by the facts that his tenants attacked him. The people are able to read all this in the newspapers. Thus, media acts as the watchdog of the government.

Government censorship and indirect control of media organizations remains in African countries (Kamau, 2018). This assertion is buttressed in *The Famished Road* by Okri. Azaro's superhuman abilities reveal how in the night of the war, the thugs come looking for the photographer to kill him because he took their pictures and published them. He is also arrested because of the same. The narrator tells us that: "And it was only when the police were pulling away that we saw the faces of those taken in for questioning. The photographer was one of them. He had managed to get rid of the evidence that was his camera" (p.183). The lines above show how the African government oppressed the media. The media is not given freedom of expression and therefore they are faced with numerous challenges. Okri mocks the authoritarianism of the African government.

Couto in *Under the Frangipani* employs magical realism to attack the post independent African leaders. He uses a dead narrator who emerge and tells a story of the grave and the spirit world. The narrator says, "I am the dead man. If I had a cross or a slab of marble, the name Ermelindo Mucanga would feature on it, but I passed away along with my name nearly two decades ago," (p.1). The narrator tells the story from the grave point of view. This makes the story to enthrall, and at the same time to scare the readers as they experience and hear malapropism of their fellow humans. Moussa (2012) buttresses the assertion of magical realism when he observes that, the choice of magical realism is informed by authors' dissatisfaction with social realism, satire, and other forms, which have revealed their limits vis-à-vis the post-colonial African leadership crisis.

The dead narrator Emerlindo Mucanga in *Under the Frangipani* is used to portray the white hegemony. Ermerlindo's acerbation reveals the oppression perpetrated by the white. The description given about the cell that he is locked in tells it all. He says:

I went back to my hut. I shut myself away in total darkness, as was my custom. There was no clothing in my room. The door and curtains were made of wood; there was not a ray of light that could penetrate the room. That night, I could hardly contain myself. My eyes gazed into the distance to the point where they harvested ancient sadness. My eye lashed flooded, soaked with sorrows but what was I crying for? (p. 118).

This excerpt explicates the psychological torture the black liberators were subjected to by their white masters. Keeping one in a darkened room that has no light tortures one health wise and emotionally. Generally, human beings are social beings. It is unfortunate that the colonizers would lock one in an isolated place withdrawing him from the rest of the people. These painful episodes can only be told by reincarnating the dead to give firsthand information.

Ghost characters are used to unmask concealed cruelty of the white colonialist. He depicts the colonialists as rapists and killers of the Africans. For instance, Emerlindo Mucanga's reincarnation brings to limelight how his death occurred. He professes that he had developed an affair with a woman whom he had never seen face-to-face. Once he comes to know who the uninvited visitor in the cube was, she decides to kill him. He says:

Her hands touched me and I felt that familiar shivers electrify my body. I knew what was coming and offered my neck. I was waiting for her lips, her teeth, and her tongue. The woman lingered in a caress. Until I felt her hot breath moistening my ear. That was when her teeth plunged violently into my flesh. What surprised me mostly were my own screams. I didn't know whether anyone heard the other howls. I failed to stifle. For this latest intruder, I discovered too late was my executioner (p.120).

This is indicative of the government plans to exterminate all the Africans who were involved in insurrection like Emerlindo Mucanga. It is more worrying to learn that he was killed by the wife of the supervisor. This shows extra judicial killing and maiming of most of the African people. The author mocks and scorns the whites for their elaborate hypocrisy when handling affairs of the Africans. They maimed, killed, and oppressed them while pretending to help. Couto attempts to merge the immaterial realm with material through reincarnating Emerlindo Mucanga to address the hidden violence that an ordinary person would not recount. Emerlindo is able to bring this to light because he reveals his own experiences.

Through the ghost narrator, a glaring picturesque of racism during colonial period is portrayed. Ernestina express how her husband would mistreat Domingo Mourao in the process of trying to cover up the fears of being accused of racism. She says:

You don't understand his wickedness, do you?
No.
It's because you're white. He has to mistreat you.
Why?
He's scared he'll be called a racist (P.48).

Ernestina is used here as a mollifier and cleanser of her husband's evilness. The hegemonic attitude corrupts the real human attributes converting the whites into savage beasts that are capable of exploiting mercilessly other human beings. Vastome uses his skin color to give him an upper hand over his counterpart the black.

In addition, the conversation between Old Gaffer and Domingo's Mourao elicits a lot of concern on how the Africans regarded the whites. Old Gaffer seems to be so enthralled when he kicked and fought a white man. He thanks Mourao, a white man, for giving him a chance to fight him. He tells him that:

Sidimingo, my friend, I'm more than grateful to you.
Why?
I would have met my maker without ever having hit a white man.
You call that hitting. All I felt was a brush of your fingers...
Nonsense, I knocked you around good and proper (p.59).

Old Gaffer proceeds and says that he would have probably died without having beaten a white person. This indicates that the whites are regarded to be more superior to the blacks. Old Gaffer also goes ahead to discuss the private matter between the whites and the blacks on prick sizes. Old Gaffer confirms the fears of the Old Domingo Mourao by telling him that actually the whites have a small prick than the blacks. This shows that there is competition for the supremacy between whites and blacks.

Couto uses ghost characters to explore political mendaciousness in Mozambique by giving a dead man a voice to speak from a grave. Emerlindo Mucanga expresses his dissatisfaction with the current ruling government in Mozambique and terms their move to give him a promotion as a national hero as a deception:

Until one day, I was awoken by a thumping and shaking. Someone was interfering with my grave. I pried into their conversation and understood: the governors wanted to turn me into a national hero. They needed a hero, but not just any old one. They wanted one of my particular race, tribe, and region. To satisfy discord and placate the aggrieved. When I realized what was happening, I didn't know what to do. ..I had to undo their deception (P.4).

Through the ghost narrator, Couto is able to attack African hypocritical leaders in Mozambique. The ghost character makes their deception more real and appealing as opposed to allegations, which could be laid against the leaders by their subjects, who could probably be considered fallacious, thus Couto uses magical realism to create fanciful realm inhabited by ghost characters and uses it to mock the phenomenal realm.

Moreover, Couto ridicules poverty, incompetence, and negligence in leadership using ghost characters. Unwillingness of the novel's protagonist Ermelindo Mucanga to return as a Shipoco (night spirit) to the world of the living speaks much about the situation in Africa. When instructed by Halakavuma that the only way he would avoid being made the national hero would be through becoming a Shipoco (night spirit), he tells him:

Don't you want to be a hero?
But a hero of what, beloved of whom? Now that the country is a
harvest of ruins, why do they call for me, a humble carpenter? The
anteater began to prey upon my interest.
Wouldn't you like to be alive again?
No, I wouldn't. Not in the state, my country is in. (P.6)

The complaint shown in the quote mimics the cry of the African liberators whose lives were cut short by death before independence. When fighting, they had a dream of a free and economically viable county, but unfortunately, those who took over the leadership failed their expectations severely. They perpetrated vices beyond human imagination (Moussa, 2012). Couto results to the use of magical realism that can only bring out those vices in the crudest way possible since ghost characters are in a realm where they cannot be questioned and that is why they can comment on the state of the nation freely.

The reincarnation of the dead reveals the effects of war in post-colonial Mozambique. Ermelindo Mucanga outlives the death, thus figuring horrific effects of war in his country. He reveals that the war has destabilized the country. It is reported that:

The culprit you seek, my dear Izidine, isn't a person. It's war. The war is to blame for everything. The war killed Vastsome. The war torn to shreds the world in which elderly folk could shine and had a role to play. These old timers who are rotting away here, were loved before the conflict (P.123).

The quotation above reveals that the effects of war in African countries are disastrous. They make the country ungovernable and underdeveloped. Couto employs ghost characters, which come in the mode of magical realism to depict this sad picture. Ngugi (2001) in an interview with Bronwyn argues that socio-political situation in African has reached a point where the novelist's imagination must go beyond realism if he/she is to adequately represent it. He suggests fables and fantastical worlds as the best method of presenting it. Similarly, Couto adopts a magical realism theory that helps him paint the effects of these wars as clearly as possible.

Couto uses a ghost character to depict the woes of post-colonial government that was marred by political assassinations. Little Miss No who lingers between life and death has the ability to pry into the cause of Vastsome Excellency's death. She tells the

police officer investigating his death that, “It was they who murdered Vastome Excellency. It was them, the same people who are going to kill you, inspector. Tomorrow, they’re going to come and kill you” (p.142). “They” here represents the government officials who would land in a helicopter. The government officials murdered Vastome because he lost the war weapons. This is an attack on the government’s irresponsible manner of handling the people. Couto achieves to reveal all this using characters that have the ability to oscillate the two realms and bring out the happenings.

The same fate of extrajudicial killing would befall inspector Izidine Naita. The ghost Little Miss No using her third eye foresees his death. She also has the ability to see the government killer. She reveals how violent and insincere the government officials have turned. She says:

Be careful! I can see blood!
Blood! Replied the policeman, alarmed.
They will come here. They will come to kill you.
Kill me? Who is going to kill me?
They will come tomorrow. You are already losing your shadow.
It will be tomorrow. I can see the killer. It’s the pilot. The same man who brought you in the helicopter. That’s the one who’s going to kill you. Not because he wants to. He’s been given a mission: to remove you from this world. Izidine, Izidine: you have put yourself in a bees’ nest. This fort is death’s depository (P.139-140).

In order for the government to hide their evil, it kills all the people who know the truth. This is a typical representation of some of the African post-colonial government. Some individuals turned from hurting animals to hurting their fellow human beings. Couto attacks such individuals using ghost characters that have the ability to see deep into their motives.

Mbugua uses the death of Sonko Wakadosi to explore the theme of poor leadership. The area MP Nyoks Ndarafufua in *Terrorist of Aberdare* is an example of a bad leader. Mbugua presents him as having neglected his people and only shows up during the events such as burials. He says:

Look at all these people who have come for the funeral today. In all the ten days of the wake, they gave lots of money to meet the funeral expenses. Hon Nyoks Ndarafufua, CGH, EBS, even offered to buy the

coffin. But where were they when we were struggling to save the seed money? (P.78)

Mbugua regards Nyoks Ndarafufua's gesture to buy a coffin for Sonko Wakadosi as hypocritical. The author mocks him for his failure to identify the pain and challenges facing the people of Kinangop. He portrays him as having neglected his responsibilities like road carpeting. He shows Doe Madirari reminiscence with nostalgia how the road to Aberdare ridges used to be smooth. However, since Hon Nyoks coronation, the road is not motorable. This is an indication of bad leadership.

Couto further uses Sonko Wakadosi's death to show how the poor are oppressed by the government. For instance, his family is paid only thirty thousand and the author feels that they could have been paid more than that; he says:

And if ever there was justice in this world, why should Sonko Wakadosi mother get a Ksh 30,000 cheque from the Kenya wildlife service as a compensation for the death of her son? Is a man's life worth Ksh 30,000? Just think about it (p. 78).

The excerpt underpins how the government took lightly deaths of the poor. It portrays callousness of leaders who collect money through government's parastatals like wildlife for their personal gains. They find it difficult to give a decent compensation to Wakadosi's family in the fear of spending so much and end up depleting that they would wish to embezzle.

Mbugua uses a ghost character to amplify Kenyan police oppression, and harassment of the innocent citizens. Though he portrays the dead going through transformation in the new realm, the speckle of bad memory still haunts them in the spirit realm. The reader is able to learn the weight of the matter when a character in this level is shown to be emotional. He reports:

Kijana kuja hapa," they had shouted fiercely. Sonko Wakadosi started shaking. He had never been so startled before. The officer accused him of spying with intent to commit a robbery. His protests that he had been waiting for his girlfriend fell on deaf ears. The three police officers handcuffed him and said; "utaenda kusema mbele" (p.2).

This conversation shows the reluctance of the Kenyan police to give an audience to the citizens. It amounts to unfair treatment and torture to the innocent poor citizens

by the police. The ghost character creates a new environment different from the usual real ones. This makes the events stranger to the imagination of the reader.

Elephant Kanywaji is referred to as the terrorist of the Aberdare. This title is symbolic of the oppressive nature of the government. The elephant represents leaders who continuously propagate their oppressive policies by robbing their citizens the little they have earned just like the case of elephant Kanywaji. Mama Pima is recorded saying, "Somebody, please do something! Today is the first Saturday of the month and that elephant is coming to drink my liquor!" (p.91). This elephant is representative of the Kenyan officers, and particularly the chiefs who always appear to mama Pimas' in the village to collect their bribes every month so as to allow them practice their illicit business.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how ghost characters are used by the three African authors to portray the social environment in Africa using magical realism theory. It has revealed that ghost characters are used to explicate the familial role of the children in the family by creating a fanciful environment. They explore the mythical and superstitions environment in Africa through their ability to oscillate between the two realms of operation and in doing so exhibit the richness of the African religion and customs. The chapter has shown that using the spiritual endowment that is unique with ghost characters they are able to interrogate economic oppression and exploitation of the African people. The telepathic, clairvoyant, and third eye of ghost characters amplifies the level of economic and social class conflict in Africa.

Lastly, ghost characters have been used to show the political situation in Africa. It reveals ghost characters are used to interrogate the political oppression, bad leadership, aristocratic leadership, racism, and effect of wars. Ghost characters achieve to explore this using their ability to reincarnate from death, telepathic abilities which enable them to see and foresee the future of the African countries. Therefore, the use of ghost characters is an effective tool to narrate the African postcolonial history, contemporary and the prospects of future in a magical realm as opposed to the real.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTION OF INTERPERSONAL CONFLICTS THROUGH GHOST CHARACTERIZATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analysis ghosts characterization to reflect interpersonal conflicts in the selected African texts. The three authors present characters that can be analyzed to depict their personal qualities, which in their interaction results to conflicts. Thus, the chapter uses Walter's (1927) three elements of characterization in a bid to explore how the selected authors have been able to display the ghost characterization. These are characters' physical appearance dilemma, characters action, and lastly characters' dialogue. The interference of any of those elements of the characters results to conflicts. The chapter uses the five tenets of magical realism theory by Wendy (2004) as the interpretive grid of the three proses.

5.2 "Physical and Identity Dilemma," Ghost Interpersonal Conflict

Sociologically conflict is defined as a social process between two or more people (or groups) where one party attempts to remove the other by destroying it or making it powerless (Johnson 1981). This means conflicts stem from the desire to outsmart one another. Interpersonal conflict is regarded as a conflict felt from struggle between two or more interdependence individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals or over differences in desire for esteem, control, and connectedness (Wilmot and Hocker 2011). In this regard, the three selected texts exhibit characters that are undergoing crisis in relation to the precision of acceptability both physically and in connectedness. The extraordinary appearance of ghost characters is seen to stupefy both ordinary people they interact with and other ghost characters. Their exceptional forms enable the characters to oscillate between the two realms that is the immaterial and material world as proposed by Wendy (2004) in magical realism theory. Waiter (1997) observes that characters physical appearance denotes the material and immaterial, which offers specific and imageal details of a character's appearance. It is the direct method of characterization which the author exposes and explains the demeanor of the character (Pickering & Hooper, 1981). The three selected texts have employed this technique of characterization to bring out the physical appearances of ghost characters. It shows that their strange

appearance makes them cause conflict between themselves and human in the three selected texts.

Okri in *The Famished Road* reveals that the birth of Abiku children causes tension among the living. Beecher (2019) observes that appearance of ghost characters causes symbolic tension in the text. Okri depicts Abiku children who struggle to conceal their identity to avoid being noticed as revealed through Azaro who is a ghost narrator. He confesses that parents would make marks on their bodies in order to differentiate them from other normal children. This was meant to make it easy for the parents to prepare themselves psychologically for the fate that awaited such group of children. To conceal themselves the narrator reports that, “those of us who died while still children tried to erase the marks, by making beauty spots or interesting discolorations of them,” (p.5). This enlightens the reader that these kinds of characters are crafty and would always device a trick to ensnare and outwit the living from rejecting them from the onset. This is an indication that ghost characters caused conflict between themselves and the parents they interacted with. Actually, the narrator reveals that, “If we didn’t succeed, and were recognized, we were greeted with howls of dread, and the weeping of mothers” (p.5). This reveals that ghost characters caused great tension to the parents. This tension changes the mood of the text where the reader lives in suspense unable to predict the next move of such characters. It also sustains the flow of the magical realism novel. Metaphorically, this study argues that it represents the interpersonal conflicts Africans faced in accommodating those who embraced the alien cultures and beliefs.

The enigma of the ghost characters’ appearances stirs acrimony between other ghost characters like Azaro. He finds it difficult to define his spiritual companions and ends up rejecting them. Wendy (2004) regards such depiction as reorientation of characters’ identity. The narrator reveals that:

There was a man standing near me. I noticed him because of his smell. He wore a dirty, tattered shirt. His hair was reddish. Flies were noisy around his ears. His private parts showed through his underpants. His legs were covered in sores. The flies around his face made him look as if he had four eyes. He made a violent motion, scattering the flies, and I noticed that his two eyes rolled around as if in an extraordinary effort to see themselves. I noticed him staring at me...I finished water, wrapped up the bread, and hurried off (p.21).

Azaro hurries away from such strange looking characters he encounters in his new realm. The depiction of these characters as endowed with strange appearances builds the concept of interpersonal conflict. Azaro find it difficult to connect to such people around him. Okri is seen to be addressing how people relate in the society. It is common to find people running away from unclean and indecent people around them. He manages to create this picture using an Abiku child Azaro who is able to see in not only the physical but also the spiritual aspect of this man.

Okri further reveals that a character's physical appearance can cause conflict. Azaro describes Madame Koto's customers in the bar as exhibiting bizarre appearances, which shocks and troubles him. He says, "I realized for the first time that many of the customers were not human beings. Their deformations were too staggering and they seemed unaffected by their blindness and their eyelessness, their hunched backs and toothless mouths" (p.161). Azaro's description of these ghost characters shows how difficult it is to define their forms. Azaro though a ghost character cannot connect with them. Wendy (2004) supports the description given by Okri when she says that magical realist narrative reorients the character's identity. Thus, Okri has been able to show how various individuals in society judges one another based on their appearance. These prejudices based on appearance stirs incompatibility which results to interpersonal conflicts.

Azaro also relates how he is troubled by his spirit companion because of his double existence. He remembers how he followed spirit to find himself dead. He says, "it was only much later, when I tried to get back into my body and couldn't, that I realized they had managed to shut me out of my life" (P.9). Azaro as a child seems to be confused about his identity. When his counterpart locks his spirit from accessing his body, he struggles much to return causing him to conflict with them. It surprises the reader how an individual can lose his body unaware only to discover much later that they are dead. This identity crisis represents the struggle and opposition from other individual when one tries to acquire independence in a society.

Mbugua in *Terrorist of the Aberdare* presents ghost characters that are in a state of delirium. Sonko Wakadosi, the young girl, and the old man who were killed by 'Ngangau' (hyena) are facing physical appearance dilemma. They are all perplexed

and confused about their physical forms. The old Man is the first one to learn that his wounds are no more. He realizes he no longer relates with the living in terms of their new body. This quality is attained through the character's transfiguration upon death. This is confirmed through a discourse involving the three characters at the gate of heaven:

You see these scars, 'the elderly man asked as he pointed to his arms. However, the scars had disappeared. He had a new body. His skin was as smooth as that of a child. His teeth were milk white. His eyes shone with the radiance of jewels. 'Entauwo', they have disappeared,' he said in amazement. 'So have mine' a small girl who had just joined the two men said in a soft voice. 'Ooh no, don't tell me yours disappeared as well.' Sonko Wakadosi said to the girl as he lifted her in his arms. (P.8-9)

This transformation of the whole reveals healing and restoration of one's life, which compares relatively with the changes human beings, go through in the material world. Life is dynamic so as the ghost characters. The assumption of a new body shows the changes ordinary people face in order to be accepted in new places. Changes can be accepted or rejected. Sonko and his companions finds themselves engaged in interpersonal conflict in the process of trying to understand their new bodies though finally they accept their new bodies, which can be argued as the manner in that people adjust in real life situation whenever they are confronted by difficult life experiences.

The transformative nature of ghost characters in *The Famished Road* confuses Azaro and exposes him to identity dilemma. This is evidenced when Azaro steals fetish from Madame Koto's bar. He narrates that, "Pods exploded from on high and one of them fell on my head, like a mighty knock, and I dropped to the ground. In the silence and darkness that come over me, I found myself driving invisible horse of the night. I rode through the trees. All around me was silent figures in great masks. All around me were ancestral statues. Whenever I rode, I saw immemorial monoliths with solemn faces and beaded lapis lazuli eyes..." (p.163). The description above depicts a state of confusion to the narrator Azaro. He finds it difficult to define his physical body and his surroundings. In his new form, he assumes power, which he uses to fight his opponents who reject him. Okri uses ghost characters' transformation and the struggle to control their environment to explicate how humans struggle to master and control

themselves when they acquire power. There are those who oppose their new acquired power and this causes interpersonal conflicts.

Okri presents that the Abiku children face cultural shock when they cross over to the material realm. They lose their identity and they live in a world of hallucination and dreams. Thus, the Abiku children detest the forces that make them be born. They differ because to be born was considered unfavorable. Azaro reports that, "we were happy most of the time because we floated on the aquamarine air of love. We played with the fauns, the fairies, and the beautiful being" (p.4). The narrator contrasts the material world and the spirit (immaterial) world. He gives a glaring discrepancy when he says that, "we disliked the rigorous of the existence, the unfulfilled longing, the enshrined injustices of the world, the labyrinth of love, the ignorance of parents, the facts of dying, and the amazing indifferences of the living in the simple beauties of the universe" (p.3). With this kind of comparison, the author exhibits ghost character's interpersonal conflicts based on two levels, that is, ghost characters' conflicts with the forces of nature because they are forced to be given birth since they lose their identity as spirits. Secondly, they are aware that they face conflicts with humans in the material world. They detest the experiences of material world, which they consider full of troubles. This is symbolic representation of how people struggle to control their surrounding in vain. The forces of fate tend to shape an individual's destiny. However, ghost characters' hate to be born into a world full of struggle and pain they seem to have little they can do to stop the unfavorable treatments.

Couto uses Navia Caetano superstitious nature to reveal his identity crisis. Wendy (2004) notes that Magical realism texts present reorientation of characters' identity. Caetano suffers because he is considered to have broken the expected chain of values. His interpersonal conflicts predate his birth. He says, he suffers from the curse of his mother and therefore he cannot grow old. This is evidenced through this excerpt:

I, Navia Caetano, am the victim of a curse that weighs heavily upon me. I suffer the illness of premature age. I'm a little child who grew old the moment he was born. That is why they say I'm forbidden from telling my own story. When I finish my tale, I shall be dead. Or, who knows, maybe not. Can it really be true that I am condemned to suffer such a fate? (p.22)

A critical analysis of the character unravels his mythical perspective and superstitious nature that culminates to interpersonal conflicts with his mother who cursed him. The curse of the mother denies Navia Caetano freedom of self-expression. He lives in limbo uncertain of his identity. This is evidenced by the fear of death if the narrator reveals his story. The perplexing issue is that the character himself is not sure whether after narrating his story would die. This is unlikely of a character who poses himself to be exhibiting the duality of existence. One would expect the character to be familiar with the facts of both realms and not bother them when death is mentioned. Therefore, the contradictions created in the text mirrors the African community myths that web around the supernatural.

5.3 Ghost Characters Actions in Reflection of Interpersonal Conflicts

Actions in characterization denote passages describing incidence which are made to occur before reader's vision. Stated otherwise, action is dramatized movement, which limits and describes a fictional personality. Such movement is usually made the focal point of reader's attention (Walter, 1997). These actions in some cases are repulsed by other characters in the text bringing about the aspect of interpersonal conflict. Johnson (1981) observes that conflict arises in a situation where one party actions results in blocking, obstructing, or otherwise interfering with the actions of others. The three African authors have presented ghost characters that engage in their daily activities of interactions and in the process; they end up arousing interpersonal conflicts.

Azaro's courageous move to steal a fetish from Madame Koto's bar provokes interference conflict. Wilmot & Hocker (1995) perceives interference conflict as a type of interpersonal conflict, which a character feels the actions of other characters interfere with theirs. Azaro's freedom is interfered with by the ghost characters in Madame Koto's bar. He conceives a method, which would stop this interference and resolves to steal the fetish that used to bring those bothersome ghost characters. This move provokes conflict between Azaro and his companions as they struggle to stop him from running away with the fetish:

I climbed on a bench and prodded the fetish with the stick. I had lifted it off the nail and was bringing it down when one of the spirits saw me from the other end of the bar and gave a piercing cry. I got down hastily. The fetish fell from the stick. There was a terrible silence in the

bar. Then the disguised spirits who had shouted, pointed at me, and in a voice of command, cried, seize that boy (p.162)

Azaro takes this courageous and bold step as the only method to deal a blow to all the spirits that had invaded the bar. The spirit in the club had become bothersome and a threat to him. He reminisced how they had captured him, put him in a sack, and ran with him only to discover himself in the deep depths of a river. Therefore, this was the only way he could guarantee his safety in the bar. Madame Koto had refused to cooperate to throw away the fetish from the bar. The experience captures differences that exist between people in the ordinary society. Okri uses ghost characters to capture interpersonal conflicts by creating different characters that operate in a unique way in an ordinary realm as observed by Wendy (2004) who says that magical realism exhibits strong presence of phenomenal world.

Okri uses Azaro's curiosity to delve into character's interference conflict. In his innocence of usual child developmental processes, Madame Koto accuses him of disturbing her peace through intrusion. This is despite the existing knowledge that children are curious during their early years of development (Kharl 2012). Azaro unfortunately finds himself being beaten by Madame Koto. He reveals that:

It's me Azaro,' she stops and for a long moment peered at me. Her face darkened and she sped round the counter, grabbed me by the neck, and slapped me on the head. Why did you stand there like a thief?' I am not a thief. 'So why did you stand there?' 'Nothing.' 'Why did you stand there eyeing my money?' (p.289)

The quote displays Azaro as a child who is undergoing normal developmental process just like an ordinary child. However, Madame Koto fails to realize these changes and she confuses Azaro for a thief. The disagreement between the two causes interpersonal conflict. Okri blends Azaro to other ordinary children in the society that are led by desire. The text further links well with the Wendy (2004) theory, which states that a character magic realist texts often detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world. The characters captured in the quotation operate in a real world though Azaro and Madame Koto exhibit duality of existent.

Okri uses the irreducible element of magic as observed by Wendy (2004) in *The Famished Road* to build on Azaro has expressed struggle with Madame Koto. Wilmot

& Hocker (2011) regards expressed struggle as an element of interpersonal conflict, where a character holds different thoughts and feelings about him/her as well as to the others. Azaro struggles to seek redress from Madame Koto concerning the strong presence of ghost characters in the bar and unfortunately, he learns that she is less concerned about it. Azaro becomes irritated when Madame Koto retorts to him. He says, “your bar is full of spirits;” “LEAVE ME ALONE!” she shouted. I left her, went round to the front, and searched for a branch that was forked at the end. I went down the widening paths and found sticks, but they were either not long enough or strong enough” (p.161). The reader learns that after Azaro steals the fetish they become enemies with Madame Koto. Azaro returns home and refuses to visit her bar anymore. Therefore, the interpersonal conflicts between the two characters bring mistrust and suspicions between the two. Okri intentionally uses Azaro because his ghostly ability puts him at an elevated position to introspect into the nature of Madame Koto’s customers and finds that they are all spirits. Okri uses this illustration to relay to his audience the different attitudes people have in the society. Azaro holds a disdainful attitude towards ghost characters in the bar while Madame Koto is less concerned about them.

In a party held by Madame Koto Azaro dances wildly with her when they two get drunk. This makes him encounter sharp criticism based on failure to uphold the moral values of the society. Watzlawick (1967) identifies contravention of the society’s values as one of the causes of interpersonal conflict. Though young, Azaro comes to note that there are rules in the society, which he ought not to break. It also brings him into conflicts with other customers in the bar. He reports:

Then a thick set man, who had come between me and the woman, took one look down at me, and very loudly, so that no one could possibly miss it, said; ‘watch your woman –O! There is a small boy here who wants to fuck!’ the woman burst out laughing. Their large hungry eyes sought me out. I fled into the crowd and hid my embarrassment behind the counter. (p.313)

The mention of Azaro fleeing to hide his embarrassment indicates a self-realization, which brings him into sharp conflicts within himself and other people in the society. Azaro learns that a dance with old woman is ridicule to the society’s morals and it is an indication of rot. It is expected that Madame Koto should imbue moral values to Azaro instead of eroding them. Okri therefore ridicules the new dawn established by

the inception of the European culture in the African countries as an epitome of interpersonal and cultural conflicts.

In *The Famished Road*, the aspects of emotions of the ghost characters are used to develop the interpersonal conflicts. This is evidenced through the fearful nature of Azaro. He is faced with emotional instability in the bid of mastering his surroundings. His inner self is troubled by the ghostly illusions he sees surrounding him. He is disturbed when he faces a proposal of marriage from a strange spiritual creature that is only seeable by him. He reveals:

Then she repeated what she had said. ‘Will you marry me?’ I blinked, ‘No,’ I replied. She smiled. Her lips widened as if they were made of elastic material. Then she drew her head and back and startled me with the sudden force of her ironic laughter, her tongue too freckled, instead of teeth, she had a coral beads. I screamed. She began to weep. I bolted, crashing against the counter. Producing an ugly sound from the instruments (p.316)

In an effort to exhibit Azaro’s, character as fearful, Okri brings to stage the different horrific creatures that inhabited Madame Koto’s club and how they evoked conflicts with Azaro. Azaro can see all these happenings because he is able to merge the two realms, which is supported by Wendy (2004) who notes that magical realism merges different realms in the process of narration. These creatures destabilize Azaro’s self-peace and he is forced to struggle to sustain it. In this case, Azaro attempts to flee from some of the creatures that constantly hunt for him. The happenings leave the audience pitying Azaro who has little ability to free himself from his clairvoyant abilities that expose him into these experiences of interpersonal conflicts. Azaro’s experiences here with a strange midget woman represent how issues of love cause interpersonal conflict particularly when one party is in love while the other is not. Azaro’s conflict with this strange midget woman is a replica of the common situation in African societies where we see love differences lead to violence or even murder.

In addition, *The Famished Road* employs the irreducible element of magic as stipulated by Wendy (2004) to express the ghost characters’ struggle to control others. Witzlawick (1967) identifies desire for control as one of the causes of interpersonal conflict. A character strives to acquire a superior position over the others who are not willing. Azaro’s experience in the forest reveals strange abilities of his surroundings

which he struggles to suppress. He learns that the trees and the other inhabitant of the forest possess supernatural powers. They acquire a distinctive quality that enables them to dialogue with him as he runs in the place. He says that:

The spirits were all over the place. They gave every tree a voice. I saw a rusted machete on the ground and picked it up. The man with the bloated eye pouched on me and I smashed his arms with the machete and he did not utter a sound nor did he bleed. I dug a fetish into his bad eye and let me go, blinded by Madame Koto's powers. (p.163)

In the quotation, Azaro is seen to struggle for his freedom against an environment that seems to conspire against him. The interpersonal conflict is witnessed when a man with bloated eyes tries to stop Azaro from running away with the fetish. Okri creates an environment that is invaded by uncanny ghosts and Azaro victory is highly noticeable. The ghosts in the forest have the powers to control the nature, and therefore this ability places them at a position that is above the ordinary beings in the ontological hierarchy as described by (Mbiti 1970). All these are revealed through Azaro's quest to control and subdue his surroundings. Thus, ghost characters are used to capture human conflicts that arise in the process of expressing their quest for power.

The mischievous quality of Azaro sets stage for further need of control of his father's fights. Watzlawick (1967) argues that interpersonal conflict occurs when a person's needs of control are incompatible with another's needs for control. This happens when a persons need to control others or events is very high. Azaro desire to control his father's fights is very high. In the process of struggling to attain it, he meets with sharp criticism from other members of the society. Upon realizing that his father's strength is hidden in the life of tied duiker waiting to be sacrificed, he makes a swift move to set the duiker free to save his father and control the fight again. He narrates:

Their faces were animated by the new spectacle. As I pushed through them, I again noticed their hoofs, their goat legs, their spidery legs, and their beastly skins. I crept towards the duiker, and untied it from the pole and released it from its sacrificial captivity. A mighty wail erupted from dad. He stood up in a great burst of manic energy and sent the men flying. The duiker bounded from the backyard into the tent. The wind made the tent sway, as the lights began going on and off. A frightening cry rose from the bewildered crowd. (p.534)

Azaro's action paints him mischievous and cunning. He is shown as well informed on the right moves to make in order to control the fight and save his father. He releases the duiker and in return his father's energy is restored and he is able to fight his adversaries. However, this action causes chaos in the party and strong accusations against one another. Actually, the action renders the party end prematurely. The captivity of the duiker symbolizes the captivity of his father's power. The only way he could set his father free was to set the duiker free. Okri uses Azaro's behavior to encapsulate the dangers of human excessive desire for success in life.

Black Tyger engages in a struggle to gain control of the spirit realm. The spirit inhabitant blocks his ambitions. Luthans (1981) perceives conflicts as a condition caused by the existence of conflicting powers. These forces are based on human desire. Black Tyger feels his desire to control realms is curtailed by his spirit adversaries. His bold acts to fight for the fulfillment of his desires are recounted in the following narration, "Then the seven-headed spirits attacked me. I fought him for nine nights. I only managed to cut off one of his heads" (p.465). This fight takes place in the spirit world. Thus, Black Tyger has the ability as well to transform into a spirit, because you can only fight spirits if you are a spirit as well. The courage that Black Tyger emits to face these spirits portrays him as an ardent and brave fighter who is not ready to relent and lose a fight at any cost. The appearance of his dad the king of the road to help him fight portrays the ancestral intervention to the living in aid to fight forces beyond their control. Hence, Okri uses Black Tyger qualities to show that for one to be regarded as powerful, there are two forces of nature one has to overcome. That is, the spirit and the material or physical world forces.

Azaro's puerile nature exposes him into sharp conflict with another character he names as stranger in the text. This relationship conflict is reinforced through Azaro's demeanor. Azaro exhibits his childhood ignorance and spies on a stranger urinating on a van. This makes them engage in a bitter verbal exchange. Azaro and the stranger seem to disagree in terms of their opinions on morality. Robbins (2007) explains that conflict is a process of interaction that occurs due to a mismatch between two opinions that affects the parties involved both in positive and in negative. The narrator reports that:

I was thinking about the photographer when I saw a man go behind the burnt van. I thought it was dad. When I got there, I encountered a perfect stranger urinating on the door of the van. His urine steamed. 'What are you looking at?' 'Nothing.' 'Get away from here, you badly trained child.' 'I am not badly trained.' 'Shut up.' 'No.' 'What?' he shouted? Then he cursed. 'You made me piss on myself.' I laughed and backed away (p.364.)

This quotation conveys interpersonal conflicts that arise because of Azaro's exploration of idiosyncrasies of childhood. He engages in defensive side throughout the interaction with the strange man. Azaro's stubborn aspect is reiterated when he keeps on retorting rather than apologizing for the wrong deed. Okri uses Azaro's behavior to satirize the experiences of childhood.

Okri uses Azaro hot-tempered trait to heighten the aspect of perceived incompatible goal conflict. Wilmot & Hocker (2011) regards perceived incompatible goal as one of the aspect of interpersonal conflict. They define it as differences people have concerning wants and goals in life. Azaro views his wishes different from his parents. He holds a different opinion concerning his leisure time. His father wants him to remain in Madame Koto's bar or at home while Azaro feels he needs space to loiter around and enjoy nature. These differences make his parent punish him, which Azaro does not take lightly. Azaro feels so angry and starts to will his death. He says:

It was when mum returned exhausted from hawking ...that dad suddenly pounced on me. He whipped out his belt from his trousers, locked the door, tore the shirt off my back, and flogged me mercilessly...That evening I watched them eating. Later, mum relented and gave me some food in secret, but I refused it. Dad slept peacefully that night, snoring like a bully. The next day I refused to go to school. I refused to play. I refused to eat, and I stayed in bed, growing in stature, full of vengeance. That is how I went into the curious state of beings. (p.373)

This quotation shows the climax of Azaro's interpersonal conflicts with his father. His personality that is easy to irritate worsens his prevalent anger. He explains that he refused to eat for several days and he started being enticed by the spirit world to return to them. They managed to hoodwink him that the parents of the material world are so cruel and would rather linger and return to the spirit world where he is loved and cherished. Azaro easily concedes because as a spirit he enjoys abundance of freedom, which he is denied when existing in physical body. Okri therefore employs

this kind of conflict to show differences that exist between the parents and the children in the society based on desires and ambitions.

The Famished Road unravels affiliation conflict between Azaro, Ade and the Old Blind Man. Schutz (1966) argues that affiliation conflict occurs when our needs for closeness are not satisfied. We feel frustrated and experience feelings of interpersonal conflicts. This is especially when others have behaved in ways that are incompatible with our own desires for warmth and affections. Azaro and Ade feel rejected by the Old Blind Man. He opposes them and supports the opponents of Black Tyger whenever he was fighting something that make them feel uncomfortable. The two decides to wheel him away from the fighting arena between Black Tyger and the Man in white suit during their fights. The old man feels dejected and begins to fight for his position to remain among the spectators. The narrator says:

Dad was absorbing monstrous punishments. The blind old man kept chuckling. Whenever dad mounted another futile attack, the blind old man would make a curious sound, a dissonant croak as a sort of dampening anthem. I decided to get the rid of the old man. I went out and begged Ade to come and help me. We stole back in and very gently wheeled the old man's chair out of the tent. In the intent excitement and concentration, no one noticed us (p.540).

The quotation displays a worsening relationship because of differences in terms of affiliations. Azaro feels that the Old Blind Man hates him and his father by supporting their opponents. This happens despite the fact they are neighbors at home. The aspects of human attitudes of dislike are well reiterated in the excerpt. Thus, ghost characters are shown to exhibit affection just as ordinary people and they dislike any move that make them feel unappreciated.

Okri presents unsettling doubts in the text when he exhibits a contradictory nature of characters as observed by Wendy (2004) in the theory of magical realism. He gives the ghost character Azaro human personality. These personalities bring the aspect of affiliation conflicts. He depicts him as emotional. Although he is a spirit child, Okri gives him some human qualities of feelings. He recounts how he was engulfed by strong emotions when his mother said that she would hang herself:

Her face took on her bizarre immobility of a mask. Her eyes didn't move and they seemed to stare past the window in an uncanny vacant concentration. 'I'm tired of this life anyway,' she said, eventually I

want to die.’ Suddenly I had a vision of death. It came and went so fast and it left me perplexed... one of the many promises I made before birth was that I would make her happy. I had chosen to stay; now she wanted to die. I burst out crying. I threw myself on the floor, thrashed, and wept. The demon of the grief seized me completely (p.266)

The excerpt relays interpersonal conflict provoked by love between Azaro and his mother. Azaro remembers that she is the only reason that made him want to stay. The death of his mother would mean his death as well because he would have nothing else to live for. Okri employs this character to reveal the strong bonds of love in human life that arouse interpersonal conflicts whenever provoked by threats of separation.

Okri uses supernatural powers of Azaro as the basis for developing interdependence conflict. Wolmot & Hocker (2011) regards interdependence conflict as an aspect of interpersonal conflict whereby characters are generally engaged in a struggle and feel annoyed with each other because of their mutual reliance. Azaro relies on Madame Koto for food while Koto relies on the Magic powers of Azaro to attract customers into her bar. When Azaro fails to attract the customers into her bar, Koto refuses him food creating a state of emotional instability between the two characters. The narrator reports that, “I’m hungry,’ I said. Attract customers, draw them here and then you will have food,’ she said, going to the backyard” (P.100). Madame Koto’s move to hire Azaro in her bar, particularly with an objective of drawing customer reveals her inner desire for quick wealth. Okri thus ridicules the human vices of selfishness and greed using Madame Koto and the ghost child narrator Azaro.

Character versus character quarrels are revealed through the physical assault between Azaro and Ade. Azaro stirs up a fight with Ade when he finds him standing on the van. The war of supernatural powers erupts. The two issue threats to each other based on what their fathers can do in terms of their supernatural powers. The two characters come to learn they are unique beings after the fight. He reports:

On another day when dad was training, I saw the boy standing on the top of the van again. I went over. ‘Come down from there!’ I said. ‘No’ I clambered up again. He didn’t move. ‘My father,’ he said, ‘he has given me something special!’ ‘For what?’ ‘If you touch me...’ ‘Yes...’ ‘And I hit you...’ ‘Yes...’ ‘You will fall down seven times and then die.’ ‘Who is your father?’ I asked him. ‘My father is a great cobbler and carpenter,’ he replied. ‘My father,’ I said, ‘is Black Tyger.’

and then I hit him with fist in the face. He hit me back. Nothing happened. I began to laugh. (P.421-422)

The conflict captured in the quotation above reveals more about the qualities of ghost characters as they exhibit human qualities such as anger, fear, and joy. The conflict also helps to reveal the childish aspect of both Azaro and Ade. Okri presentation of the characters overreliance on the protection from their parents underpins that these characters are independent on security from their parents. It also reveals the perception children have concerning their parents. Children view their parents as all-powerful and can shield them from any form of an attack.

Hooper (1991) observes that indirect characterization is involves the author placing himself outside the story by giving the opportunity to the characters so that they can show their characterization through their dialogue and action. Black Tyger's actions depict independent and boldness, which brings him into sharp interpersonal conflicts with his landlord. This is shown when he refuses to succumb to the threats issued against him by the landlord who belongs to the party of the rich while Black Tyger the party of the poor. The two oppose each other publicly whereby the landlord threatens his tenants that whoever will not vote for his party shall be evicted from his house. He tells his tenants, "I have told this to all my tenants. Anybody who wants to live in my houses, under this roof that I built with my own hands should vote for my party" (p.232). These threats from the landlords are meant to persuade his tenants towards ensuring that the party of the rich wins the election. However, Black Tyger is able to break all odds and protest against them publically and persuades his fellow tenants not to vote for the party of the rich thus putting him at loggerhead with his landlord, hence underpinning that ideological differences can cause interpersonal conflicts between individuals in the society.

Okri further uses the element/technique of characters' action to exhibit interpersonal conflicts between Black Tyger and his attackers. He brings out Black Tyger as troublesome and revengeful as he struggles to preserve his self-esteem. Watzlawick & Beavin (1967) identifies issues of esteem as one cause of interpersonal conflict. Black Tyger picks a fight with the men who had accosted him one night on his way

home and considers a second fight with them would give him a victory thus restoring his injured self-esteem. In a dialogue, Black Tyger says:

‘You coward!’ Dad shouted standing up, pointing quite unmistakably at the man who had sneezed and who had an ominous scar near his left eye. ‘Who are you calling a coward?’ The man asked, rising. ‘You! It was you and your friends who attacked me the other night. ‘You are a coward!’ ‘If you are so brave,’ dad said in a thundering voice, why don’t you fight me yourself, alone, now!’ (p.345 & p.448)

The provocation for a fight shows high desire by Black Tyger to prove that he is powerful over other characters. This is aggravated by the unforgiving and vengeful nature of Black Tyger that compels him to provoke an interpersonal conflict at only nick of an opportunity. Black Tyger is seen as the representation of the Africans who majorly enjoyed their pleasure time wrestling and boxing and would always grab any opportunity that would prove them more powerful over their counterparts.

Wilmot (1995) argues that interpersonal conflict is connected with emotions. Black Tyger in *The Famished Road* pours out his outburst of anger to his son Azaro after he breaks the Old Blind Man’s window. His temper makes him lose the fatherly touch to his son. Azaro feels caged and makes up mind to face his father’s violence. He says:

You are a stubborn child. I am a stubborn father. If you want to return to the world of spirits, return! But if you want to stay, then be a good son!’ I gave up running round the room and collapsed in a heap near the door. I no longer felt the pain. Not once did I cry out. He wanted evidence that his punishment was being felt. I did not give him that satisfaction. His anger increased. Therefore, after a long time, when I was no longer sure whether he was still punishing me or whether I was merely dreaming the pain, he stopped, gave up, held his arm, and lifted me to the bed. ‘Don’t give him any food tonight!’ dad thundered, getting up (p.373).

The excerpt depicts the quest for Black Tyger to tame the wild aspects of his son. He endeavors to bring up his son as a well-behaved child, who is admirable in the society. In this quote, the reader is stupefied by this unusual happening of the events where the parent would discipline a child whom he knows is a spirit. Beating a spirit is unheard off. Therefore, this mode of narration presents human qualities in a different way as observed by (Moussa 2012) who says magical realism is a method for challenging ideas by making people aware of alternative possibilities. Ideally, this is possible unique way of depicting characters and conflicts in a society.

Okri also uses Black Tyger's action to depict him as a roisterer's character. He stirs interpersonal conflicts with other members of the society. He is involved in a struggle to maintain a high self-esteem among his people. During the parties he organizes, he calls out people to come and challenge him in a fight. The narrator says, "At the house front, dad had begun to stride up and down the street, bare-chested, his battered gloves on, calling himself the champion of the world, and inviting all the challengers" (p.473). The roisterer's nature of the Black Tyger compels him to organize parties geared towards publishing his great fits he accomplishes. He also brags a great deal about those achievements and dares the villagers to challenge him in a fight irrespective of their number. None of the villagers braces to pick a fight with him for they fear to face a serious beating that would probably leave them half dead as the case of the other men he fights. Hence, Black Tyger portrays how individual struggle in the society to achieve recognition by other members.

Black Tyger is used to exhibit the two folds' coin aspect of conflicts. He is used to incite a conflict and resolve it. He beats Azaro because he refuses to cooperate and tell him the true source of the lump sum money, he gave them. The reader is aware that Azaro was given money by Madame Koto who had instructed him to lie about its source. The narrator says, "Then dad broke out of the imperturbability and threatened to beat me if I dint tell the truth. I went on lying. He got so impatient that he slapped me on the face. I stared hard at him. My body suddenly became serene" (p.425). At this level, Black Tyger introduces conflicts, which he realizes his son is so weak to face off. He quickly withdraws and resolves the conflict through apologizing. Scher (1996) argues that apologies are common utterances and they are appropriately offered when an individual has violated a social norm or offended another. In this case, Black Tyger feels that he has offended his son. He apologizes because he fears that his son might will his death. The narrator says, "Then he held me to his chest and swayed and said, "Forgive me my son. I did not mean it. But we are not thieves in our family. We are loyalty. We are poor but we are honest" (p.425). Black Tyger blends both discipline and love to his son. He beats him to warn him against lying and apologizes as he instills the valuable virtues to him of loyalty and honesty. This exhibits a unique approach to child upbringing that Okri wishes to convey to his readers using ghost characters.

The ghost that invades Madame Koto's bar is portrayed as disruptive and bothersome. They cause interpersonal conflict with customers and Madame Koto. The ghosts ruin Madame Koto's entertainment. They cause chaos and provoke conflicts and fights. These spirits are seen by their counterpart Azaro as evil. The narrator reports:

The mutant customers made the bar feel entirely different. They conferred on everything a dull yellow light. The bar itself gave the impression that it had been transported from its familiar environs of our area to somewhere under the road, under the sea to a dimly remembered and unwanted landscape (P.157-158)

The ghosts in the bar appear to cause anarchy and confusion resulting to fear and threats, which destabilize the peace. The ghost brings about the atmosphere of tension in the text. They explicate the troublesome customers in places of entertainment in the society.

Madame Koto in her wild actions causes interpersonal conflicts with her customers and neighbors. When the chaos erupts in her bar, it is reported that she is able to control it although violently. This can be associated realignment of a female character in the horror stories as Kamil et al (2019) avers that a woman can be shown as courageous and daring to face eminent dangers in horror movies. In this case, the courage of Madame Koto is evident because when the chaos erupts in her bar, the narrator reveals that:

She picked the broom and began to beat people using it. Madame Koto fetched a new broom, waded into the crowd of the bodies, and began lashing out, thrashing everyone with such viciousness that the commotion in the bar became incredible. She wiped the thugs and their guests pursued them to their door, she turned and plugged the carpenter and chased him round the bar, then she attacked the compound people who had come to help and who fled screaming that she had gone mad, she lashed me on the back and neck and I run outside. (p.269)

Koto violence causes fear and interpersonal conflict with her customers. It is an indication of establishment of authority of a woman during the colonial and post-colonial African set up. She gathers enough courage to lash unto men who are causing chaos in her bar.

The Blind Old Man is presented as vengeful and troublesome. He is a kind of man who also possesses supernatural powers and he becomes a threat to the boy narrator

for he exists in both spirit and physical form. When Azaro is returning home after he was set to buy ogogoro by his father, this man attacks him at night in the form of the spirit and an interpersonal conflict of control ensues. They fight to regain control over supremacy as it is revealed in the following quotation:

Then the blind man, moving forward, stumbling, arms stretched, confused by the unfamiliar room, working his mouth, said; 'where is the boy? Bring him here! I went and hid beneath the bed. 'We want you to pay for the windows; the woman said. 'Glass is expensive.' 'Bring him here, let me hold him, came the blind old man a cracked, unnatural voice (p.367).

This blind old man here is shown as full of vengeance. He wishes that he could seize the narrator so that he would revenge. The audience knows through a flashback that their enmity does not originate purely from the broken window but it is connected with a prior fight they had in spirit world. It is perplexing that the old blind man noticed that Azaro broke his window because he could see when he wants to. This creates tension in the story when one is reading it. This is supported by Ngoveni (2007) who notes that use of ghost characters in a text create a tension between ontological Hierarchies of being. This represents how humans struggle to revenge the wrong doings in their lives. Okri uses ghost characters that merge the two realms to amplify that human desire for revenge is deep rooted in them as Azaro and the old blind man holds revenge both in physical and in the spiritual realm.

Okri uses Azaro's family to exhibit feelings conflicts. Deutsch (1973) views differences in feeling as a source of individual conflicts. Azaro's mother disagrees with her husband's decision to deny Azaro food as method of punishment. The narrator says, 'don't give him any food tonight!' Dad thundered getting up" (p.373). Though the mother at the beginning seems to agree with her husband's command, latter she rethinks about it and the narrator says, 'mum relented and gave me some food in secret, but I refused it (p.373). Azaro refusal for food intensifies emotional conflict in Black Tyger's family. Okri creates this set up to encapsulate how bitterness intensifies conflict in the society.

Okri presents an urban set up that is inhabited by thugs that are violent and inhuman in their actions causing constant trouble to the people. During Madame Koto's party, a pandemonium ensues because people wish to join the function is curtailed. Deutsch

(1973) avers that conflict results from perception of incompatible wishes. The villagers' wish to be included among Madame Koto guest is denied; as a result, they manifest anger and frustration, which is repressed oppressively by the thugs. The narrator reports:

The inhabitants in their fury at being left out of the glittering party turned on the beggars. The beggars fought back, lost the initial battle, and fled into the tent. The thugs threw them out. The thugs and the bounces had horsewhips after they had tossed the beggars out; they stormed on us, lashing out in all directions, indiscriminately whipping the inhabitants and the beggars as if we all, finally belonged to the same fraternity. (p.518)

This kind of indiscriminate thrashing of the people paints the thugs as quiet violent and inhumane. Okri uses their example to depict the discrimination that took shape between the rich and the poor in the dawn of African independence. He shows that the gap between the haves and have not continued to widen and brought about social class conflict as argued by (Karl 1848). The effect is animosity between the two sets of the classes, thus mimicking the differences that exist in the society in terms classes and how they increase interpersonal conflicts.

Mbugua expound on human wildlife conflict using Sonko Wakadosi. He portrays how he fearlessly faces the herd of elephants invading their cabbage farm. His determination though taunted by his companion Doe Madirari reveals that he fights without relenting in life. Sonko and the elephants conflicts over their ambition. Sonko feels that his love life is tied on the cabbages while the elephants are driven by pawns of hunger to eat the cabbages. Sonko in the moment of the struggle loses himself and he faces the elephants using a mere machete. The narrator reveals that:

Deep down in his heart, Sonko Wakadosi had Great Spirit. He was a man of courage even in the most desperate of times. And, when I think about it now, my friends' strength was his greatest weakness because he did not know when to back down. Even the Swahili say, mwenye nguvu mpishe, which means that one must know when to yield to a stronger opponent (p.12).

The quotation unravels negative interactions between human and the elephants. IUCN (2020) says this kind of interaction have undesirable consequences both for people and their resources. Sonko Wakadosi and his friend Doe Madirari crops are destroyed by these animals. The conflict further underpins Sonko Wakadosi excessive desire to

get money to pay for a trip to Kericho to see his girlfriend. The narrator taunts Sonko's impulsive desire to meet Penina. He attributes such uncontrollable affection to a woman as disastrous to man and intimates that love should be based on rational thinking rather than instinctive affection.

5.4 Figuring interpersonal Conflict through Ghost Characters Dialogue

Characters in a text reveal their qualities through speech/ dialogue. How they communicate with other characters can establish not only how they feel, but also descriptions such as where they come from and their relationship with the character to which they are speaking (Reams 2015). A character who speaks softly and kindly to the narrator is obviously perceived as gentle. One, who speaks very eloquently, with formal grammar and carefully chosen words, will come across as scholarly and possibly distant. Loud or coarse speech conveys just the opposite; that a character is aggressive and probably unintelligent. An accent can serve as a distinctive feature just like any physical trait. Dialogue, much like thought, allows an author to develop their character organically within the story (Walter 1927). The character's speech thus can be used to decipher conflicts.

Okri uses the element of irreducible element to depict Azaro as being involved in interpersonal conflict on the perception of physical existence. Robbins (2007) says that a conflict occurs due to a mismatch between two opinions. Azaro holds different beliefs concerning live, this makes him, conflict with his spiritual companions. His assertiveness towards live is revealed through this dialogue. He says that:

I came to realize that they were the voices of my spirit companions. 'What are you doing here?' One of them would ask. 'Living,' I would reply. 'Living for what?' I do not know.' 'Why don't you know? Haven't you seen what lies ahead of you?' 'No!' Then they showed me images, which I could not understand... I would start shouting, daring them to do their worst (p.9).

The conversation brings out the narrator's quality as firm because he had made a decision to live and nothing would deter him from enjoying the world of the living. That explains the reason why he threatens and dares his spirit companions to do what they regard as the worst to him thus, causing interpersonal conflict. The ghost detests Azaro's living and they wish to have him back to world of living. The two seem to disagree completely thus causing tension between the two parties. This contradiction

in behavior exposes Azaro to danger as the spirit companion struggle to influence his thinking about life. Okri uses ghost characters to show different attitudes people hold in life. Azaro represents optimistic attitude while the ghost that attacks him represents pessimistic attitudes.

In *The Famished Road*, Okri depicts Azaro and his mother as involved in expressed conflict with his father. The secretive nature exhibited by Azaro and his mother put them at logger head with his father who feels as the head of the family he deserves to know everything about their lives. The conflict makes Black Tyger to beat Azaro's mother. Azaro says, "mum started towards the kitchen and dad pounced on her and grabbed her neck and pressed her face against the mattress. 'Leave mum alone,' I said. 'Shut up! And where have you been anyway?' Dad asked, glaring at me" (p.202). The dialogue represents family feuds that take place between husbands and wife. It results from breakdown of communication. Muttaqin (2018) avers that conflict in family set up emanates from failure by individuals to express themselves well to their partners. Okri strives to reflect conflict in African countries and attempts to unravel their sources.

The suspicious nature of Jeremiah in *The Famished Road* presents a character that is troubled and struggling to overcome a prevailing danger in life. He is involved in interpersonal conflicts with thugs from the party of the rich. He becomes so tense and develops mistrust with everyone. Azaro says:

The photographer's face appeared at my level. He was crouching and he said, in a voice spiked with fear. 'Go away!' 'Why?' 'Because I don't want people to know I'm present.' 'Why not?' 'What if I don't go? 'I will knock your head and you won't sleep for seven days.' I thought about it. 'Go!' he cried. 'What about the men?' 'What men?' 'The three men?' 'Have you seen them?' he asked in a different voice (p.206).

In this dialogue Azaro, bothers Jeremiah with a torrent of questions all geared towards exposing the state of mind of Jeremiah. He questions to invoke the mind of Jeremiah and to find out what is worrying him and at the same time warn him against the dangers that may be looming in his life. This is affirmed when he alerts him about the men seen talking with Madame Koto. Already, the audiences are made aware that Jeremiah has animosity with the thugs of the party of the rich and therefore he is in

hideout. In the end of the dialogue, Jeremiah requests Azaro to let him know if he sees the thugs around his compound house. Okri uses the illustration to exemplify the heinous effects of conflicts in the society. He reveals that interpersonal conflicts causes fear and suspicions among the members of the society.

Wilmot (2011) says that conflicts erupt where characters are involved in different wishes. Okri portrays this scenario where Azaro and Black Tyger feel their wish to win the game are not achieved. A verbal conflict erupts where Azaro insults the man. He reports that:

Dad increased the bet and his head started bleeding again. His opponent, a huge man with a small head, kept staring at dad with such contempt that I wanted to bite his fingers. He turned to me with his small drunken eyes and said; ‘Your father doesn’t know how to play.’ ‘Shut up,’ I snapped. There was a startled silence. ‘What did you say?’ He asked incredulously. ‘Nothing.’ ‘Dad said.’ ‘Leave my son alone. Play the game. Use your brains, not your mouth. (p.43)

In the quotation, the personalities of the characters are portrayed. Azaro is shown as hot tempered. He also exudes unique courage to challenge even the old. This can probably be explained by the fact that Azaro possess supernatural power that gives him strength over the ordinary people in the society. Therefore, ghost characters are used to exhibit bullish tendencies in the African societies.

Azaro’s abusive tendency worsens the affiliation conflict with the landlord when he engages in a bitter verbal exchange with the landlord. His courage is unwavering even when facing the mighty and powerful in the society. He confronts and abuses the landlord without flinching. The quarrel between the two creates tension in the story. Becher (2019) buttresses the concept of conflict and says that conflicts between ghost character and other characters in a text create a mood of tension and suspense. Azaro says, “The photographer was very pleased with the results and quoted prices for copies... The landlord said: ‘I look like a chief.’ Thief,’ I said. Mum knocked me on the head. ‘Your son looks like a goat,’ the landlord said” (p.108). Azaro expresses his hatred to the landlord by calling him a thief. This can be attributed to the ill treatment the landlord was giving to his parents. Though, the mother struggles to instill the moral sense to him by knocking his head the damage the landlord had caused remains indelible in the mind of the narrator, thus, becomes difficult to hoodwink him to

appreciate the landlord. Therefore, Azaro provides teaching to readers that children learn much from the parents and they should be handled with outmost care to avoid bringing up bullish individuals.

Ream (2015) avers that character's communication with other characters reveals their feelings over subject matter. Okri develops verbal conflict between Azaro and his mother over opinion on his personal desires. The two disagree about Madame Koto behavior and attitude towards school. The following dialogue evidences that, 'If it's like that you must stop going there.' 'I don't want to.' 'Why not?' 'I don't want to.' 'How was school?' 'I don't like school.' 'You must like school' (p.109). The excerpt illustrates deep obsession of Azaro to the bar. The attachment makes him begin to dislike school. The mother struggles to persuade him to appreciate school and to stop going to Madame Koto bar. This conversation brings out interpersonal conflict between Azaro and his mother. This conversation enables one figure out the situation that engulfed Africans after the immediate departure of the colonialist. That vast of the children preferred staying idle at home just like the case of Azaro who become obsessed with Koto's bar and shows a relatively high dislike to schooling to the extent of causing conflict.

Black Tyger feels offended when he fails to convince the women in the bar to like his party. A conflict based on disparities of political ideology ensues. He becomes irritated and insults the women. The narrator reports that, "Rubbish! Dad said, while sucking his teeth" (p.341). This irritates the women who retorts to him. The woman says, "It's people like you who eat rubbish!" (p.341) Okri underpins that political differences can cause individuals to have difficult time in resettling those differences.

Jeremiah bravery exhibits his interpersonal conflict in the text. The dialogue between him and Azaro reveals how he had struggled to fight and win against his adversaries. He tells Azaro that in one of the relatives where he used to stay had discovered that some strangers would spy on him and he decided to run away and return back home. However, unfortunately on his way home he met two people who jumped on him and cut his head with cutlass. He says that, "I fought them and won and managed to proceed home to face the music" (p.222). This dialogue shows him as powerful and strong. He has the ability to fight two people and win. He also stops fearing and

returns home to face the music which means to face any form of eventuality in his life. Jeremiah represents the brave Africans who face their opponents courageously.

Cauto in *Under the Frangipani* similarly employs the element of dialogue that enables the critical reader to cite instances of interpersonal conflicts in his text. The character's extrinsic element in a text and their values colligate to and helps the reader understand the characters well (Nurgiantoro's 2009). Cauto has managed to reveal several interpersonal conflicts as being heightened by characters' personalities in his text *Under the Frangipani* though dialogue.

Couto uses ghost characters to illuminate on the conflict in the refugee camps. The Old Gaffer through flashback recounts how he differed with the Excellency Vastsome. He attributes those differences with moral beliefs. He tells inspector Izidine that he killed Vastsome because of Marta Gimo. He says, "That scumbag had hurt the woman I adored. Rage decided the matter for me: I had to snuff out that scoundrel's life" (p.67). Wilmot (1995) argues that conflicts are connected with emotions such as anger and hostility. Couto portrays Old Gaffer as full of anger because the girl he loved had been hurt. The struggle between the two characters reveals the heartlessness in people in the society. Older Gaffer feels that Vastsome is callous and therefore he should revenge callously. He hatches a plan to eliminate the Excellency. Although the reader is made aware of the cause of Vastsome, death at the end of the story the dialogue helps one to interrogate the character's attitudes toward each other in the text. These attitudes can be linked with the feeling that people have towards others in the African society.

Couto uses ghost character Emerlindo Mucanga to pry into conflict between Inspector Izidine Naita and his colleagues in the government. The two differ in terms of values. This is revealed through the telepathic powers of the Little Miss No. She tells him that, "the truth is this; you should leave the police. You are a good fruit on a rotten tree. They will gobble you up before you cause them any discomfort" (p.139). The study finds that disparities between people's perception of morals can cause interpersonal conflicts. Little Miss No foresees the Inspectors death because he stands for the transparency while his colleagues prefer dubious method to succeed. Couto

mirrors the African society's leaders who snap the innocent people because they stand for truth and oppose their evil desires.

Furthermore, Couto attributes differences in what one considers right as the source of conflicts that explodes to commission of murder. Vastome the Excellency disagrees with Salufo Tuco on the importance of the weapons that are kept in the old chapel. In a flashback, Little Miss No recounts how Salufo Tuco would bury the weapon that used to be kept in the church on the places surrounding the chapel to keep away any intrusion. Unfortunately, when Vastome discovered that some weapons were missing in the chapel he beats Salufo Tuco to death. The narrator says, "Vastome grabbed the old man by his patches and demanded an explanation for what he had stolen. Salufo had no time to answer. Vastome fist was already crashing with all its strength into his mouth. Salufo fell. Kicks rained down on him" (p.111). In this excerpt narrated by the ghost character, it captures an interpersonal conflict that builds up to violence. Couto uses this conflict to explore on human emotions and temperaments. He ridicules the element of hot-tempered as it can cause more harm in the society.

Vastome is further shown to involve himself in verbal carelessness, which stirs emotional pain to other characters in the text. He tells Sindmingo that, "Do you really want to die, old timer? Or isn't it the case that you are already dead and just haven't been told?" (p.46). Sidimingo reports that, those words wounded him as if they came from an animal's gullet. It is quiet paradoxical that the man who is supposed to be feeding and encouraging the refugees works on wounding and dismantling the little remaining hope in the hearts. Sidimingo as a character represents the crude picturesque of the unpalatable condition that surrounds the obstinate Africans who are refugees.

The portrayal of Sindmingo as revengeful exhibits the long existing interpersonal conflict with the Excellency Vastome. He says he killed the inspector as a way of revenging. He narrates how Vastome the Excellency used to discriminate against him because he was a white. Ernestina tells him that, "You don't understand his wickedness, do you? No. It's because you're white. He has to mistreat you" (p.48). Vastome punishes Sidimingo through beating, which he hates. He holds so much hatred that he confesses to the crime of killing the Excellency Vastome. He attributes

his actions with the urge to revenge because he was beating his wife Ernestina whom Sindmingo had also fallen in love with. He says, “I set a trap for him up above. I brought a large stone and left it up on top; ready to fall on Vastsome Excellency” (p.50). This confession reveals hateful attitude Sidimingo had towards his master. Couto uses these characters to reveal that discrimination can cause interpersonal conflicts in the society.

Under the Frangipani presents characters that differ over scarce resources. Coser (1956) argues that conflicts can occur due values and claims to scarce resources. Sidimingo fights with Old Gaffer over a frangipani tree that is only in the refugee in the fort Nicolau. Sidimingo loves the tree and owns it. When Old Gaffer attempts to cut it a conflict occurs where Sidimingo tells Old Gaffer that, “What in heaven’s name are you doing? –can’t you see? I’m cutting down this tree. -Stop it, Old Gaffer, you worthless wretch, that tree’s mine. –‘yours? Be off with you, whitey, and don’t bother me” (p.57). This dialogue reveals the opposing attitude posed by the two interlocutors. Sidimingo believes in environmental conservation whereby he prevents Old Gaffer from cutting down the frangipani tree. According to Old Gaffer, a tree is not that important and therefore he is swift to cut it. Couto stereotypically portrays ridicules to environmental insensitivity in the society while promoting environmental consciousness through creation of interpersonal conflicts. This is evidenced by the two divergent opinions that are portrayed by the two characters.

Couto in the under frangipani explores magical realism whereby he uses a dead narrator Emerlindo Mucanga to hold a divergent opinion with the country’s leadership. This is inferred through the dialogue with the other characters both in spirit and in material world. The use of this ghost narrator gives a lucid picturesque of both material and immaterial world, which a living human being is not capable of revealing. Emerlindo Mucanga is involved in interpersonal conflict when he says:

But a hero of what, beloved of whom? Now that the country is a harvest of ruins, why do they call for me, a humble carpenter? The anteater began to prey upon my interests. Wouldn’t you like to live again? No, I wouldn’t. Not in the state, my country is in. (p.6)

Emerlindo is interrogating the essence to be a hero when the state of things in his country is upturned down. He feels that the leaders have mutilated the economy and it

would be shambolic to be regarded as a hero just to cover the interests of a sect of people in the country. He considers his promotion as a national hero as diabolic and hypocritical. He therefore seeks the help of halakavuma on how to stop it. This reveals him as skeptical and critical on the existing regimes of the government. This covers how Africans freedom fighters conflicted with the government that took power since those governments failed to meet their expectations, which made them fight.

Fear can be viewed as a manifestation of interpersonal conflict. Emerlindo Mucanga is afraid of interacting with human because of physical existence. He says that; “I was afraid, as afraid as the living feel when they imagine dying” (p11). The fear of coming to material world shows that there is existing mistrust between the living and the dead. Couto amplifies this suspense. He creates a mental picture to the audience concerning the uncertainties of the realms. This shows him as suspicious and fearful character. This builds upon the rich African community perception about myths.

Couto reveals differences in belief system using Superstitious nature of Emerlindo Mucanga. In their conversation the reader is able to decipher the believe position of the narrator that contradicts those of Halakavuma. He seems to be worried so much about the dangers of reliving his death. He says:

I called halakavuma and told him I had decided not to cross over into life. He must understand; a crocodile’s strength is water. My strength was to be far away from the living. I had never known how to live, even when I was alive. Now, if I plunged into another man’s flesh, I would be chewed by my own nails. –Look here, Emerlindo; go, the weather there is beautiful, and moistened with good rains. I should go, and wrap my soul in green. Who knows, I might find a woman and stumble into love. (p.10)

The excerpt shows Emerlindo Mucanga as a superstitious character, it also reveals that individual difference is a normal human experience. Luthans (1981) argues that conflicts are inevitable since it is tied to human communication. Emerlindo contradicts Halakavuma advice on reliving because he holds different fears about live. Therefore, ghost characters are used to amplify the concept of conflict as inherent to human and they should learn how to live with it.

Mbugua in his Novella *Terrorist of the Aberdare* uses dialogue to reveal the interpersonal conflicts of the characters. The arrangements of the words in these dialogues constitutes his imaginative rendering of whatever thoughts, emotions, situations or characters he has chosen to create and communicate (Cohen 1973). Mbugua uses differences in ambitions and opinions to illustrate interpersonal conflicts. Sonko Wakadosi cannot win the love of Penina because she holds a different perception about love. She tells Ursula, “love makes the world go round, Ursula but it does not put food on the table” (p.18-19). Penina approaches love from material aspect as opposed to Ursula who believes love can make change in someone world. This difference makes it difficult for Sonko to win the love of Penina since the two views it from two contrary perspectives. This study argues that *Terrorist of the Aberdare* captures the contemporary issues in Kenya. Mbugua seems to be reflecting how the society views the concept of love.

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter has analyzed ghost characterization in reflection of interpersonal conflicts. It has used Walter (1927) elements of characterization to show how ghost are used to reveal human interpersonal conflicts in the society. The chapter has shown that ghost characters are used to emblem the aspect of interpersonal conflicts through their identity crisis, characters actions, and dialogue. The study thus, concludes that ghosts’ characters’ interpersonal conflicts destabilizes their inner peace and causes tension and suspicions among characters in the texts.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of Findings

This research set out to examine the ghost characterization in African prose and analyzed selected novels from Kenya, Nigeria and Mozambique. In chapter one, the study has given the background to the study, gap to the study words that have acquired different definitions have been explained. The study has also identified its purpose and objectives, and defined the scope. In chapter two the review of relevant literature from books, articles, theses journals in the areas of characterization by character roles, age, and gender has been done. The chapter has also reviewed studies on non-human as characters, ghost characters, point of view, and lastly, studies done on the three selected texts to reveal the literary gap on ghost characters' reflection of the social and the self in selected novels from Kenya, Nigeria, and Mozambique.

The study has adopted magical realism as the theoretical framework to examine ghost novels from Africa. This thesis is composed of six chapters that form the body of analysis. The first objective of the study has examined how ghost characters reflect the social environment in the three-selected African proeses.

The study has established that the ghost characters reflect the African social environment. Okri in *The Famished Road* uses Abiku children to tell the realities of the world from a spiritual perspective. The Abiku child such as Azaro has been used to develop indirectly the theme of filial obligation right from his mysterious birth. The same concept is developed by Mbugua where he uses Sonko Wakadosi self-sacrifice to care for his mother after the death of his father.

Ghost characters have been used by the three authors to build on myths and supernatural in the African set up through their ability to transcend into the two realms. In the same breath interrogating the aspects of the rites of passage and building on their supersensory abilities to pry and explain the need for such practices.

The study has explored the rich African religiosity using the ghost characters. The three authors subdivide the African religious background into three, which are,

traditionalist, atheist, and Christianity. Okri particularly uses Azaro to attack Christianity by describing it as teamed up by hypocritical worshippers. In addition, they explicate taboos and superstitions cupped up with African entrenched concept of sorcery, witchcraft, and magic. They as well develop the social aspect of aestheticism, friendship, tradition, and individual changes in African countries. They achieve these through their eminent powers to reincarnate and oscillate the two realms.

The three authors have used ghost characters to envision the economic situation in African countries. Through their third eye, they have pried into the concept of economic oppression, corruption, class conflicts, education, and unemployment as illusion to the poor. The use of ghost characters has been shown to create a unique interspace where these characters operate.

Political climate in the sub-Saharan countries is displayed using ghost characters. Okri uses Abiku children to portray the political instability in Nigeria. He associates the unwillingness to live by the ghost character with the inability of Nigerian government to mature enough for self-rule. He achieves this through the supersensory, telepathic, and clairvoyant powers of ghost characters.

Similarly, Couto in *Under the Frangipani* has used ghost characters to explore the political situation in Mozambique. Through the reincarnation of Emerlindo Mucanga, he is able to reveal the white hegemony. He regards the whites as enjoying a color privilege. He also unmask the concealed cruelty of the white colonialist. He is able to reincarnate and come to tell how he met his gruesome death.

Ghost characters are shown to exhibit the political hypocrisy in Mozambique. Emerlindo is shown to refuse to return to the living world because it is ruined. The ghost complains that the war has caused all the misery in Mozambique. The war has resulted to refugee camps, and death of prominent people like Vastome. Couto attacks the prevalent political assassinations through creating characters with supersensory powers like Little Miss No, whom he empowers to reveal that Vastome was assassinated and the police officer Izidine is the next in the line of assassination because, the government wants to hide their evilness. Therefore, it has been shown

that Couto creates a universe without limits in which he is able to air all the evils inflicting people in Mozambique.

It has also been revealed that Mbugua in *Terrorist of the Aberdare* uses ghost characters to interrogate the theme of poor leadership. He uses Sonko Wakadosi's death to show how irresponsible leaders are. He attacks leaders such as Hon. Nyoks Ndarafufua who show up during only important functions such as deaths to represent how Kenyan politicians are hypocritical.

Mbugua uses Doe Madirari the narrator to further attacks the political oppression perpetuated to the poor by the government. Doe complains because Sonko's mother was paid merely thirty thousand as compensation for the death of her son. Mbugua has also been shown to ridicule the Kenyan police harassment through giving the voice to the death to remember the pain they went through when they were alive.

The second objective of this study has interrogated ghost characterization in reflection of interpersonal conflicts. The objective used Magical realism as theoretical framework for the interpretation of the three selected texts. The study establishes that Walter (1927) elements of characterization that is, characters' physical description, characters action, and characters dialogue have been used to develop the concept of interpersonal conflict. The chapter reveals that different aspects of interpersonal conflicts as identified by Wilmot & Hocker (2011) are captured in the three selected African texts to emblem African society. The chapter establishes that ghosts' characters faces physical appearance dilemma. Okri in *The Famished Road* reveals that the birth of ghost characters by human beings causes tension among the living and that the mothers struggle to put marks on such children for easier identification because they cause much trouble to parents by their unwillingness to live. The ghost characters' complexity of appearance that Okri describes as bizarre causes destabilization of the existent peace among the other characters in the texts. The chapter further reveals that the transformation and complexity of ghost characters' appearance in the three texts is a replication of the transformation that human beings undergoes in their processes of development both physically and materially. The study reveals these normal human development causes conflict among other

characters who may feel that the presence of their partners or opponents curtails their freedom thus causing interpersonal conflict.

The study also established that ghost characters' actions in the texts stir interpersonal conflicts among the other characters. Okri in *The Famished Road* employs Abiku children such as Azaro and Ade to develop the aspect of interference conflicts between Madame Koto and the spirit. Azaro feels that Koto's ghost customers interfere with his freedom in the bar. Thus, Azaro struggles to sustain his inner peace by throwing away the fetish hang in Madame Koto's bar. Ghost characters are used to develop interpersonal conflicts based on morality. Azaro differs with customers in the bar over moral issues concerning the way he dances with Madame Koto. They accuse him of involving himself in indecent behavior. Ghost characters face emotional fear in an attempt to understand themselves. The study has shown that Azaro is troubled whenever he enters the forest because he discovers that everything is capable of talking, thus troubling him as he keeps on daring them to face him. It has also been shown that conflicts arise where there is incompatible goals and desires. Azaro conflicts with his parent because they deny him chance to roam around the village freely. The study reveals ghost characters struggle to preserve self-esteem in the society. Azaro and his father Black Tyger fight their opponents in order to win respect among other members of the society. Mbugua uses ghost character Sonko Wakadosi to capture the human wildlife conflicts. Sonko has been shown to fight to protect his cabbage farm from being destroyed by the elephants that are led by Kanywaji. It is revealed he loses his life in the process. Similarly, the villagers kill the elephant as a way of revenge intensifying human wildlife conflict in the text *Terrorist of the Aberedare*.

The study has also shown that ghost characters in their verbal interactions have developed interpersonal conflicts. Through their dialogue, disagreements have been registered that culminates to conflicts. Okri has shown lack of openness in the family is the recipe for chaos in the society. Azaro differs with the parents when he refuses to open up the source of money he gives them. The differences result to physical violence. The study has also shown that ideological differences particularly based on party affiliations results to conflicts in the society. Jeremiah in *The Famished Road* cannot stay in his house because he fears to be killed by the thugs from his opponent

party. It has also been established that use of abusive words can stir conflicts in the society where Black Tyger insults the prostitutes in Madame Koto's bar and a conflict ensues thus representing the state of things in clubs. Couto is shown also to use ghost characters to illuminate the interpersonal conflicts in the refugee camp. Old Gaffer and Sidimingo are also shown to differ from each other when Old Gaffer attempts to cut the only frangipani tree in the camp. The two are shown to graduate from verbal exchanges to physical fights as Sidimingo warns Old Gaffer against cutting the tree thus represent ideological differences based on environmental conservation. Couto also shows the integrity conflicts where the Inspector stands for the truth, while the government officials are led by greed, and they conflict where they hatch a plan to exterminate him but he is saved by the Emerlindo Mucanga who resides in him as a Shipoco (night spirit) hence representing how the post-colonial governments are marred with violence. Mbugua has also shown through characters' speech the concept of conflict where Ursula and Penina differ on the concept of love. The two reveals that Sonko cannot win the love of Penina because he is poor and Penina does not believe in love without money thus representing the emergence of a new generation of women in Kenya who are highly materialistic and give little attention to true love.

6.2 Conclusion

In view of the objectives, analysis and findings, it can be argued that ghost characters form the framework upon which magical novels exists. Largely, the use of ghost characters by the three authors have shown the lucid picture of the happenings in pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Africa. It can be argued that the three authors adopted the approach of using ghost characters to reveal, that which could not be recounted by normal human beings. They are able to reveal the most mysterious weaknesses of people in the society that only the dead can tell.

Through ghost characters, the authors are able to bring into view the happenings of the spirit world making human imaginations more real to the living. The writers seem to be challenging the readers to retrospect the two worlds with an aim of assessing, which is more suitable for them; this is in bid to satisfying the curiosity the majorities usually have concerning the spirit world.

In the analysis of the reflection of the social aspect in sub-Saharan Africa, the authors portray the three texts as having revealed both the positive social aspect and the negative social aspects. The authors show that there is interference in social aspects by the western culture.

In terms of economic, there is widening gap between the haves and the have-not because of social vices such as corruption, exploitation of the poor and high levels of unemployment brought about by bad leadership. The poor are portrayed to be reawakening and are claiming their rightful positions as evidenced by Azaro's father Back Tyger.

Politically the three authors exhibit citizens who were subjugated by their leader ranging from the white masters to their black counter parts. The citizens are seen to begin to claim their freedom through organizing coups to their oppressive leaders, as is the case in *The Famished Road* by Okri when Black Tyger defeats all his opponents.

In the second objective, the study concludes that ghost characterization is used to capture the human interpersonal conflicts. These conflicts are used to mirror the society and can be used to identify various sources of animosity that exist in the society.

In ghost physical appearance dilemma, the authors reveal characters that are facing difficulties to be accepted in the society. This can be argued to be the challenges different people encounter in the process of appreciating the divergent appearances people have. The study of appearance crisis can be used to shed more light on the concept of the personality clash and help the literary critic to appreciate that we cannot all be alike.

The study also concludes that character's actions can aggravate conflicts between individuals or among the members of the society. Taming some actions among members can lessen the conflicts. Members of the society feel chocked when their actions are interfered with by other people in the society.

It also sums up that dialogue helps one easily identify the conflicting members of the society. Verbal exchange can either worsen or lessen the conflicts among the individuals. The three authors have used dialogue to either heighten or lessen conflicts in their texts.

In summary, the study concludes that the reflection of ghost characterization is important to examining the social and the interpersonal conflict in ghost novels. The approach has exhibited the state of African countries. Various African countries have merged their culture with that of the western thus becoming the basis for both interpersonal and cultural conflicts. African communities are also organizing themselves politically and they are struggling to liberate themselves both economically and in terms of politics.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Studies

During the course of the research, it has been realized that some ghost characters, exhibit differences in terms of their gender. In addition, these ghost texts have employed different styles to develop their characters and themes. As a result, further study is recommended on:

- i An interrogation of gender disparities in African novel using ghost characters: A case study of novels from Kenya, Nigeria, and Mozambique.
- ii An examination of the literary styles in the three selected novels from Africa.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Thesis Statistics

Total Number of Words	52,791
Pages (excluding preliminary pages and appendices)	143
Total Books Analyzed	3

Appendix 2: Chuka University Ethics Review Letter

CHUKA



UNIVERSITY

CHUKA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTION ETHICS COMMITTEE

Telephones: 0612304004

P.O. Box 109 - 60400

Fax line: 020 2310302

Chuka

REF: CUIERC/ NACOSTI 181

TO: Kiriimi Joseph Kainga

Dear Sir/madam

RE: The Ghost Novel In Sub-Saharan Africa ;Reflection Of The Social And The Self In Selected Novels From Kenya , Nigeria And Mozambique


This is to inform you that *Chuka University IERC* has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is *NACOSTI/NBC/AC-0812* .The approval period is 28thSeptember 2021to 28th September 2022

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;






- xl.iii. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used
- xl.iv. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by *Chuka University IERC*..
- xl.v. Death and life threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to *Chuka University IERC* within 72 hours of notification
- xl.vi. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to to *Chuka University IERC* within 72 hours
- xl.vii. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- xl.viii. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- xl.ix. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to *Chuka University IERC*.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely


Chair, IERC

**Appendix 3: National Commission for science, Technology and Innovation
(NACOSTI) Research Authorization**

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	 <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>
Ref No: 856381	Date of Issue: 15/October/2021
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr. JOSEPH KIRIMI KAINGA of Chuka University, has been licensed to conduct research in Tharaka-Nithi on the topic: THE GHOST NOVEL IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: REFLECTION OF THE SOCIAL AND THE SELF IN SELECTED NOVELS FROM KENYA, NIGERIA, AND MOZAMBIQUE for the period ending : 15/October/2022.	
License No: NACOSTIP/21/13524	
856381	
Applicant Identification Number	Director General
	NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
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