

ABSTRACT

This is a stylistic study of Margaret Ogola's fiction *The River and the Source*, and *I Swear by Apollo*. The study investigated how the journey motif as a narrative technique elicits social vision in the two novels. Specifically, the study examined the utilization of the journey motif as a narrative technique and the effect the journeys produced on the intellectual growth of the characters in *The River and the Source* and *I Swear by Apollo*. This study also carried out a critical examination of Ogola's social vision for Kenyans irrespective of their gender, as underlined in the selected texts. It is evident from the literature reviewed in this study that a majority of critics have focused on Ogola's presentation of her characters. Hence, the notion of using the journey motif as a liberating mode has not received adequate attention. The study was predicated on the assumption that journeying, as a social phenomenon, has provided a creative resource for the novelist in fulfilling the role of prose as a persuasive piece of art, and therefore creating the desired change in the society. Thus, the quest for social change was founded on the interface between style and theme in the analysis of Ogola's novels. The study's significance is pegged on the author's social vision as the texts cover pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times, thus covering extensive social changes in the Kenyan society. The study was anchored on the Decoding-stylistic Theory developed by the linguist David Crystal (1998), Liberal Feminism and African Feminism as its theoretical framework. The study employed a descriptive design for data analysis and presentation. Using systematic content analysis, there was an in-depth analysis of both primary and secondary data obtained in line with the objectives of this study. Primary data were collected from primary texts, while secondary data were obtained from the library. Also, commentaries on Ogola's works were sought from journals and reviews. This study established that the writer elicited the social vision through the journey of the river from its source, (Traditional Akoko) to its mouth (Modern Akoko and family lineage). The journeys showed the hurdles encountered in the fight for the liberation of women in the home and society and how sheer determination can help transform women into self-confident, dignified, and independent persons. In conclusion, it is imperative to say that Ogola has succeeded as a creative writer in using the journey motif as a narrative technique. This study recommends that the stylistics approach be applied in analyzing the literary works of authors to enhance the conceptualization of narrative techniques applied. It may provide readers with a contextual guide in decoding an author's message and fully understanding and enjoying fiction. The findings provide additional knowledge in the application of the journey motif in eliciting social vision in literature.