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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE VISIONS AND STYLES OF FRANCIS IMBUGA AND JOHN RUGANDA

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BY

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DECLARATION

THIS THESIS IS MY ORIGINAL WORK AND HAS NOT BEEN PRESENTED FOR A DEGREE IN ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY

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DEDICATION

I am profoundly grateful to Prof. Ciarunji Chegeha, my Thesis supervisor, for her promptitude, inspiration and understanding of the subject. Her patience and humility exposed me to the utmost rigor of intellectualism.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of our study is to compare how the prevailing social and political conditions in East Africa, especially in the post-independence period, influence the dramas of Francis Imbuga and John Ruganda. We set out to examine the influence of East African reality on their plays, and to explore some of the dramatic techniques they have adopted for effective transmission of this reality. Thus, our major task is to compare the vision of the two playwrights, as well as their techniques of dramatic construction. It is our key premise that social, historical and political realities in East Africa form a creative reservoir of the region's drama.

East African drama has acquired a sharp socio-political focus. It manifestly responds to familiar but specific historical developments. It is our contention that, a close analysis of the dramas of leading playwrights like Imbuga and Ruganda reveals the socio-political temper in the society. Because of its social commitment, a critic of East African drama must, of necessity, assess its contributions to social development. These contributions include values, attitudes, vision; and their manner of artistic presentation. We proceed on the premises that East African drama functions as a tool for social change. It explores revolutionary themes, through use of novel strategies. As skilled artists, Imbuga and
Ruganda, we believe, creatively present revolutionary ideas through equally revolutionary dramatic techniques. We are concerned with how they perceive the East African society, and how their perception affects their style of dramatization.

The Thesis is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one focuses on the statement of the problem, justification of the study, the scope of the study and definition of the key terms. Chapter Two traces the political motif in the dramas of Imbuga and Ruganda. It is sub-divided into two sections. Section one mainly focuses on Betrayal in the City, Game of Silence and The Floods; plays which deal with Leadership perversion in the society. Section two of this chapter enumerates the effects of leadership distortion. It mainly deals with Man of Kafira and Music without Tears.

In Chapter Three, which is also sub-divided into two sections, we focus on power struggle in the society and its aftermath. The plays primarily analysed in this section are The Successor and The Burdens.

Chapter Four deals with dramatic techniques. The techniques are discussed from four broad categories, namely: characterization, dramatic structure, appropriation of folkloristic material and Symbolic significance.
The conclusion, which forms Chapter Five, is a comparative synthesis of the major aspects of style and vision discussed. It also isolates possible tasks for future research.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The East African dramatist engages in constant dialogue with his environment. His artistic genius is propelled by the social and political realities that govern his surroundings. It is these social and political forces that influence and shape his creative intentions. Thus, drama in this region is used as a mode of expression, the artist's conception of the East African society in space and time. The dramatist in East Africa is committed to the daily struggles of men against challenges which are posed by his immediate surroundings. He operates within the same spatio-temporal consciousness of his society. The total forces operative in the historical development of the African man have occupied a central place in the general artistic creativity of the East African dramatist.

We believe that the East African dramatist creates from experience and commitment to the destiny of his society. His vision and dramatic strategies are appropriated to the burning issues of the day. The general thematic concerns of the East African playwright are prompted by his artistic calling to address himself to the problems, aspirations, and the collective will of his people. His plays are an expression of the values of a people in a certain historical epoch in their social dynamism. The point we intimate here is that, the East
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PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

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African dramatist creates, within a specific dramatic domain, an imaginary universe that corresponds to the reality of his social group.

The import of the foregoing background is that East African drama can be studied with a view to extrapolating the features and qualities that define it. Its individuality is marked by the vision of its creators. It is also distinguished by the dramatists' attempts to articulate their vision. In other words, a close analysis of East African drama would reveal the predominant world view and dramatic styles that characterise this mode of artistic expression. For a critic, this form of literature has to be evaluated within a given period of time and against the setting of its cultural peculiarities and social situation.

In the above belief, we are guided by Sunday Anozie's view that each region:

is endowed with its peculiar creative genius more receptive to certain social, political and economic influences as well as to certain form of literary expression than to others. (1970: 4).

The projected idea here is that, East African drama is a peculiar field of discourse with internal laws that govern its development. Considering the peculiarity of its socio-political influences, it has its original world view.
Our study attempts a comparative study of the works of Imbuga and Ruganda from a socio-political perspective, and how this affects their stylistic choices. The comparison focuses on both their thematic and stylistic elements. In the context of this study, dramatic style shall constitute:

... every means of expression which the artist can command to deepen and widen his implications; every device he uses to make his aim more fully conscious and fully discriminated. (Drew, 1968: 11)

The point here is that content and style are inextricably interwoven. The dramatist creates out of his social universe. The dramatic techniques he deploys for artistic communication are determined by his vision of the society.

Since it is the social setting that forms the dramatist's literary milieu, it follows that the dramatic strategies he evolves are also socially conditioned. Subsequently, any value judgement in drama, like in any other literary genre, can only be made on the basis of the style in which it is rendered. In this, we concur with Styan (1960: 69) when he posits that drama only finds expression in style, for dramatic style is the vehicle through which ideas are transmitted.

1.3. STUDY OBJECTIVES

By comparing the themes and dramatic aesthetics of Imbuga and Ruganda, this study aims at an insight into
their image and conception of society, at a given time and space. We intent to examine their individual contribution to the literary process in East Africa. The vision of the two playwrights, as well as their stand on the themes they deal with, form a basis for our comparative analysis.

This study is guided by the firm belief that, any committed art is inseparable from political and social realities in its function. It is on this basis that a contrast of the socio-political ideas transmitted by the two dramatists, and how these affect their dramatic mode of presentation, form the bulk of our analysis. Their use of drama as a vehicle for evaluating their society, and their vision of the same, are significant to us. In examining their commitment to the welfare of their people, we agree with Soyinka's views (1967: 31), that the artist functions as the record of the mores and experience of his society, and as the voice of vision in his time.

It is hoped that a comparative analysis of the plays of Imbuga and Ruganda would provide the right information and critical guidance for the proper appreciation of their works. It enables us to evaluate the relationship between form and content in East African drama. Our study aims at designing a critical framework within which East African drama can be evaluated. It would also evolve a practical framework for the evaluation of how dramatic craftsmanship operates to interpret the East African social experiences.

A framework of this nature provides us with grounds upon which we can make objective deductions and substantive
statements about East African drama. Given a set of objectives dynamically regulating form and content in East African drama, it is possible to predict its trends. The point here is that, it is possible to determine, on the basis of known facts, the direction of evolution of East African drama.

1.4. STUDY JUSTIFICATION

Imbuga and Ruganda are the most prolific theatre personalities and dramatists in East Africa. They are the most popular playwrights in the region. There is an extent to which they can be taken to represent the East African dramatist. More significant to our study are the parallels manifest in their plays. They share a lot in common, a fact that makes a juxtapositional analysis of their dramas enterprising. They place their dramatic creativity against the East African literary backdrop, and seem to be preoccupied with the same themes in their artistic imagination. Their ideas are vital to us since we are interested in examining the dramatic techniques through which they are projected.

Both Imbuga and Ruganda use the dramatic mode to tackle themes deeply rooted in the East African social experiences. It is fascinating to venture into an examination of their use of drama and theatre as educative and conscientization tools. Equally captivating have been their attempts to synchronise the traditional and modern theatrical techniques in their artistic creativity. It is
their dexterity in appropriating artistic imagination of the East African social milieu which makes a comparative study of their plays viable.

Besides operating within the same spatio-temporal literary universe, the two are contemporaries who have worked closely together, both as scholars and artists. Their plays are time and space specific. They address themes derived from the same region, themes which evolve out the necessities of the history of the East African community. Their artistic voices criticise the status-quo with a view to predicting and shaping the future of their people. Thus, they have been in the forefront in the struggle for social change and the betterment of their society.

As evident so far, this study approaches the works of the playwrights, as artists operating within a specific cosmos, in a particular historical epoch. Like Okello Oculli, we believe that the artist:

... is bound within the walls of the particular time of history he lives in, with in a particular space, within a community of others, within the nature of man and his relations with man, within a complex culture, within life. These walls touch him from all sides and influence his shouts, broodings, his exercises in the art of manufacturing. (Gurr and Angus (eds.), 1974: 30).

Within this premise, it has been prudent to compare how the two artists treat the same social environment. The contrast hinges on how the dramatists, using the same literary mode to handle themes derived from the same universe, differ or concur in their vision and their
dramatic mode of presentation.

1.5. STUDY PREMISES

It is our contention that the East African dramatist is tied to contemporary ideas. He is tied both on the subject on which opinions change, and even his stylization is appropriated to the burning issues of the day. Drama is an artistic medium which uses brief forms, limited by time and space, to transmit ideas drawn from the raw materials of human experiences. The dramatic style is constituted by an interpolation of various dramatic techniques. All these techniques are patterned to convey the overall meaning of the play.

Therefore, Imbuga and Ruganda's perception and artistic presentation of the East African society are of peculiar interest to us. We have focused on the similarities and differences in the various dramatic strategies which they adopt to transmit their world-view. Thus, the themes, ideas, attitudes and the overall vision manifest in their plays are organic to our comparative analysis. The comparison is founded on differences and similarities in their thematic and stylistic aspects.

The two playwrights have written extensively. Although the nature of our study cannot avoid considering most of their published works, we shall focus on seven of their plays. Out of Imbuga's nine published plays, this study will dwell on Betrayal in the City (1976), Game of Silence (1977), The Successor (1979) and Man of Kafira...
On the other hand, we shall focus on three of Ruganda's published plays. These are The Burdens (1972), The Floods (1980), and Music Without Tears (1982).

In this study, emphasis is placed on the linguistic discourse of the texts and the inherent ideas and attitudes in them. The stylistic insight focuses on both the choice of linguistic aspects proper, as well as the para-linguistic elements. Focus is also placed on the theatrical aspects of their plays. In other words, we are interested in comparing how the two playwrights view drama as a performing art. The latter constitutes how they visualise the play on stage, as implied in their stage directions. Their visualization of the play as a performed entity presupposes certain dramatic techniques, designed to achieve specific effects and meaning.

1.6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Any constructive criticism must proceed from a specific framework. In this study, we have adopted a stylo-dramatic theory. This is a synthesis of a theory of stylistics and a theory of drama. As the amalgam name suggests, a theory of stylistics, combined with a theory of drama, deals with style in drama. It focuses on the operations of the principles of stylistics in dramatic criticism. As Fermor (1975: 1) affirms, a theory of drama appreciates drama as a form of art, distinct from other forms of literature. Drama has an individuality inherent in its form which broadly determines its nature.
A stylo-dramatic theory appreciates drama at two fundamental levels. Firstly, it focuses on the content of the play. It recognises the fact that the dramatist uses raw materials drawn from human life, in his artistic creativity. Secondly, as Guerrin, et al (1979: 287) posit, the stylistic aspect of this theory highlights the deliberate choice of linguistic material and its performance in a text.

In other words, the theoretical approach we have adopted in our study accounts for the various levels at which language, and style in general, operate in drama. Within this theoretical frame, for instance, speech and dialogue in a dramatic context inhere a dynamic quality whose power is peculiar to the dramatic art. Essentially, we perceive the dramatic text as a unity of relationships within a stylistic structure. The play thus becomes an infusion of various dramatic techniques, artistically woven to fit within the overall authorial vision. This conglomeration of the technical medium of drama is largely determined by its content.

In its peculiar stylistic rendition, drama thrives on economy of words. This view finds solace in Keir Elam’s (1980) opinion that, the dramatic text is a pattern of words in condensed form, which act as coded symbols. Subsequently, it is only through stylistic analysis that the inner coherence of a dramatic text can be experienced. Thus, the process of play analysis becomes a system of decoding these signals. This process is the very essence
of a stylistic approach to dramatic criticism, hence the justification for a stylo-dramatic approach.

Therefore, our theoretical approach sets a critical base upon which we can evaluate the dramatic style vis-a-vis the content and vision in the plays of Imbuga and Ruganda. It provides a framework within which the mutuality of form and content in East African drama can be examined. In this context, form refers to dramatic methods. The latter embrace all the linguistic, visual or para-linguistic elements, intended to expand the meaning and the total effect of the play. Included also are the techniques of play production, including stage directions, and the meaning articulated through a specific stylistic mechanism. This total view accrues from our firm belief that any appreciation of drama must consider the intended method of production. This is because, as Boulton (1960: 66) rightly observes, the playwright always creates with the consciousness of the stage ever present in his mind.

We are guided by the recognition of the specific elements that peculiarly define the style of the dramatic form. For example, we appreciate drama as the only form of art which is exclusively communal. It requires actors to interpret it and an audience to respond to it. This fact explains why our critical analysis centralizes the dramatic style of production and presentation. It is of prime concern to us how the playwrights weave the dramatic form and theatrical techniques to elicit specific meanings and effects.
The mainstay of our theory is the awareness that the subject matter in drama is only definable on the basis of its artistic presentation. It appreciates drama as a form of art, and as Ngara rightly observes:

"a perfect work of art is a synthesis of reality, subject matter, themes, views, attitudes and ideas on the one hand, and narrative structure, character and linguistic format on the other. (Ngara, 1982: 29)."

The point emphasised here is that, the style of an artist cannot be divorced from the ideas and themes which he propounds.

In a nutshell, suffice it to propose that our theoretical approach to the comparative analysis of the plays of Imbuga and Ruganda helps to reveal their thematic concerns and social vision. It shows the background that motivates and shapes their artistic concerns and aesthetic presentations.

1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW

Goodlad (1971) provides a definition of the sociological theory of drama. This theory emphasises the functional nature of drama in society. Goodlad (1971: 5) observes that, within this utilitarian theory, drama is seen as serving a pure expressive role in society. Although he does not define the functional theory in reference to East African drama, his definition is useful to our study. This theory, as perceived by Goodlad, dominates most of the critical studies done on East African drama in general, and the plays of Imbuga and Ruganda in...
Michael Etherton (1982) gives an account of the development of African drama. His book is the major write up on African drama, although from a general perspective. Although he offers a little attention to East African drama, his ideas accord us a broad backdrop against which to discuss drama in East Africa.

Coming closer home, most of the critics of East African drama have mainly concentrated on its sociological aspects. Most of these critical works are dominated by the thematic concerns of the East African playwright. There has been a tendency to either totally neglect, or marginally pay attention to the stylistic elements of East African drama. By the same token, most of the studies on Imbuga and Ruganda have projected their thematic concerns at the expense of the dramatic style through which they articulate ideas. At the same time, most of the critiques have treated each dramatist independent of the other. Thus, this study has tried to go a step further, by comparing the plays of the two playwrights, more so from a stylistic perspective.

In her Ph. D dissertation, Ciarunji Chesaina focuses on the position of women as reflected in African drama. Her dissertation is a revisitation of the same topic which she had handled in a seminar paper presented to the Literature Department, Kenyatta University, entitled: "The
treatment of female characters in Francis Imbuga's dramas. While Chesaina's study does not lay a lot of emphasis on the dramatic style, it helps us to focus on some of the central issues in African drama. However, in her study, Imbuga and Ruganda are just some among the many playwrights discussed; and only a few of their plays are analyzed.

Gachugu Makini's M.A. dissertation (1985), dwells on the thematic concerns of some of Imbuga's plays. His study barely touches on the style of the plays he handles. Although he helps us to apprehend some of the central issues tackled by Imbuga, he does not accord a lot of attention to the mutual relationship between form and content. It is this relationship which forms the core of our study. Similarly, Baingana Dusaidi, in his M.A. dissertation (1981), gives a sociological analysis of the plays of Zirimu, Ngugi, Imbuga and Ruganda. His study does not venture into any detailed examination of the style deployed by these dramatists. However, Baingana's work is significant to our study in that it forms a base upon which we can examine the various issues addressed by these leading playwrights.

My undergraduate dissertation (1989) does not escape the temptation of treating themes as the be all and end all of literature. My extensive emphasis on the utilitarian nature of Imbuga's plays only contributes to the present study by setting a backdrop against which the mutuality of content and form in drama can be evaluated. Equally ensnared by the bait to investigate the thematic aspects of
East African drama *per se* is Lumire (1990). His is an attempt to appropriate the traditional content of Imbuga's plays to the oral tradition of the Abaluhyia. His research helps us in examining how the East African dramatist uses folk theatre material as a source for creative manipulation in modern theatre.

Obyerodhyambo's M.A. dissertation (1990) makes a positive contribution to our study. He examines how Ruganda uses folklore material to create symbols in his stylistic rendition. The study is limited by attempts to treat Ruganda's plays as historical treatises. It tries to establish a one-to-one rapport between incidents in Ruganda's plays and Uganda's historical events. However, the study is useful to us in so far as it recognises the inextricable relationship between form and content in drama. He explores how a specific dramatic style is used by the playwright to communicate his ideas. The only handicap is his total isolation of symbolism as a dramatic technique from all other forms of style. We hope to move further by evolving a framework within which both Imbuga's and Ruganda's vision and style can be examined.

Imbuga's Ph.D Thesis, 1991, is quite useful to our study. His research offers useful ideas on the thematic concerns and dramatic techniques in Ruganda's dramas. He also gives helpful views on East African drama, especially the historical, political and cultural base which gives rise to it. In analysing Ruganda's works, Imbuga at times shows his own attitudes towards his society. He also
reveals ideas that explain the creative genius behind some of his plays. For example, he confesses that some of the socio-historical materials in The Floods are similar to those he used in Man of Kafira. It is our intention to move further and compare how Imbuga and his counterpart exploit their socio-political history for artistic creativity.

Many critics have written guides for secondary schools on East African drama. These include Bukenya's, A Guide to John Ruganda's "The Floods" (1986); Chesaina's, A Student's Guide to Francis Imbuga's "Man of Kafira" (1984); Erapu's, A Student's Guide to Francis Imbuga's "Betrayal in the City" (1989). However, considering the academic level for which they are intended, these works are not thoroughly exhaustive in criticism. This notwithstanding, they help us to comprehend some of the predominant aspects of style and content in the two artists' works. The implication issuing from our Literature review is that this study is a pioneer of sorts. It is the first attempt to carry out an inter-authorial comparative study between Imbuga and Ruganda from a thematic and stylistic context; using a stylo-dramatic theoretical framework.

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection for this study has been library research, followed by discussions and interviews with authorities in the relevant areas of study. Basically, as is characteristic of any valuable critical study, broad readership of theories of stylistics and drama have been
organic to our research. We have laid express emphasis on the mutuality of message and style in general. However, the principal focus has been on all works done by/on Imbuga and Ruganda in particular, and works from/on the East African dramatic scene in general.

1.9. **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

Since a work of art is the product of the artist's imaginative world, it also constitutes his vision. This is also because the writer creates the artefact from a personal perception of social realities. Thus, in the context of our study, we perceive vision as the artist's recreation of his surroundings. It involves his ability to understand the truth underlying social and historical facts, and his use of such knowledge, creatively, to transcend the stifling present. Therefore, the writer's visionary insight forms the core of his creativity and his perception of the truth.

Wole Soyinka defines Literature of vision as:

> a creative concern which conceptualizes or extends actuality beyond the purely narrative, making it reveal actuality beyond the immediately attainable, a concern which upsets orthodox acceptances in an effort to free society of historical or other superstitions ... Revolutionary writing is generally of this kind. (1976:5).

In other words, vision is the highest ideal. It is the peak of perfect social order, which the writer craves for his society. It is to this ultimate vision that the artist appropriates all his elements of creative strategies.
As a constituent of the writer's vision, a work of art is, of necessity, about society. In this regard, it reveals the artist's conscious reflection of reality and penetration of the meaning of social relations. This view is shared by Wellek, et.al. (1986:23), who intimate that, "a large majority of the questions raised by literary study are ultimately or by implication social questions". Essentially, the writer's vision implies his concern about how his society can move from its present puzzling problems towards perfection.

To that end, the plays of Imbuga and Ruganda tend to explore revolutionary themes, aimed at creating change in society. In their commitment to the good of their society, the dramatists have used the most appropriate medium of communication. As Chidi Amuta rightly observes, drama, unlike other modes of Literature:

is addressed to a group mind, is a collaborative art. It relies on action for its actualization and appeals to a combination of senses thus exploding the barrier of literacy that shackles the other forms in their written expression. By its nature also, a revolution is a collective activist phenomenon with far reaching implications for the social, political and cultural lines of society.


It is thus our contention that, the dramas of Imbuga and Ruganda are revolutionary. They address themselves to the plight of the downtrodden. Their works aim at creating mass awareness and stirring the majority into full realisation of their environmental realities. However, we do not use the term revolutionary to mean precipitate action. Rather, we adopt Peter Nazareth's, (1978:
Preface), definition of revolution as "a qualitative change in society .... a long term process involving the majority of people". By its intrinsic nature, a revolution is a progressive mass experience.

The revolutionary tone in Imbuga's and Ruganda's plays becomes sharper when they are dealing with the woes and shattered dreams of the contemporary East African society. Their creative genius draws inspiration from their society, and attempts to give voice to the victims of social evils. Thus, the two dramatists relate the struggles of today to a vision of tomorrow, and strive to create change and show the way ahead, by heightening the consciousness of the people. To achieve this objective, the dramatists integrate themes with materials of traditional heritage and folk theatre.

Therefore, the playwrights respond to the sense of disillusionment and disappointment prevailing among their people. They recreate, on stage, the history and sense of uncertainty in the society. This they attain through exploration of African cultures, myths, legends, moralities, allegories and folk tales. These elements of folk theatre are synthesised with modern dramatic techniques.

As Louis James correctly points out:

In situations as explosive as that of Africa today, there can be no creative Literature that is not in some way protest, in some way political. Even the writer who opts out of the social struggle of his country and tries to create a private world of art, is saying something controversial about the responsibility of the artist in society. (Pieterse and Munro, (eds.), 1969:109)
James's view is that political events in Africa have become a major preoccupation of the committed artist. It is our premise that, the socio-political contradictions and conflicts in post-independence East Africa occupy centre-stage in the region's drama. In the context of our study, we use the terms contemporary, modern and post-independence synonymously. From chapter Two, we set out to analyze the plays of Imbuga and Ruganda which directly deal with contemporary East African society.
2.1. INTRODUCTION

The most committed East African dramatist deals with a specific reality drawn from his society. He uses social, economic and political contradictions prevalent in the East African community as his creative source. The dramas of Imbuga and Ruganda are thus an integral part and parcel of East African history, and especially the history of Kenya and Uganda, from where they are derived. The plays of these two dramatists focus on the moral, social and political issues that permeate the East African society. However, among the numerous issues arising from this society, the one of political turmoil has been a major preoccupation in East African drama.

Both Imbuga and Ruganda are committed to the revelation of the socio-political injustices suffered by the common man at the hands of his leader. The overriding concern in their dramatic creativity is a dramatization of the plight of the African man in a hostile environment. Thus, in recreating the East African reality, all their plays assume an overt political tone. The reason behind their political obsession is that:
the overriding contemporary reality, in the East African region, as in many other parts of Africa, has been the one of political restlessness as evidenced by the coups de't'at, civil wars and attempted coups that have taken place in Kenya, Uganda, Zaire, Ghana and Liberia... it is not surprising therefore that most of the plays from these countries reflect the particular political reality of each country's situation. (Emphasis supplied). (Imbuga, 1992:12)

Against the foregoing background, it is easy to comprehend why both Imbuga and Ruganda have dedicated their creative genius to the socio-political events in their society. Their major thematic concern is the exploitation of man by man. They also seek to suggest possible ways of alleviating social problems. A close examination of the dramas of the two playwrights shows that they are based on specific regimes in East Africa, at a precise historical epoch. They examine the dehumanizing nature of such regimes. Thus, political turbulence, occasioned by leadership failure, forms the bulk of dramatic creativity in the region.

In an interview with Sunkuli, Ruganda shows the link between his fictional world and his physical surroundings. He believes that:

"every creative work must take root where it is created; but good literature must also go beyond the geographical borders." (1986: 77-83).

For him and his contemporary, Imbuga, their works take root in the East African Society. However, their general concern appeals to the African continent in the contemporary period, and the third world countries in general. To that end, their works constitute an art of
commitment. Both of them perceive Literature as a means of analysing the society.

The subject of the responsibility of the artist to his society has expansively been treated by the African artist. One of the artists, who is in the forefront in the campaign for committed literature, is Chinua Achebe. He summarizes the overall views of the African artists on the art of commitment when he asserts that:

any African writer who tries to avoid the big social and political issues of contemporary Africa will end up being irrelevant like the absurd man who leaves his house burning to pursue a rat running from the flames. (Achebe, 1975:8).

From the preceding paragraph, it is evident that art has always been an integral part of the African way of life. This has always been the case in both the traditional and the modern African society. The modern artist functions like the traditional Griot. He is well versed with the history of his people, whose collective experiences he accurately records. He gives voice to their response to the pressures mounted on them by the environment. In this regard, East African drama has evolved with the dynamisms of its society. In the contemporary period, it functions to reflect life as it is, which is mainly political. The increasing social and economic conflicts in the East African region have creatively been reflected in the post-independence theatre.
2.2. **THE BACKWARD GLANCE**

In their treatment of the post-independence East African society, Imbuga and Ruganda are overtly concerned with the dilemma of the masses. It is the disillusionment of the latter group, as a result of betrayal by their leaders, which has taken central foci in their works. The general atmosphere created in the plays is that of total disenchantment with the present status quo. Their plays are marked by a strong undercurrent tone of nostalgia and wish for the past. This nostalgia and sentimentalism is reflected through brilliant backward glances, mainly set in the characters' mental eye. Most of the characters tend to keep on looking backwards, with a sentimental attachment to their glorious past life, which is no more.

Faced with an unbearable present and an uncertain future, the characters constantly look back for spiritual regeneration. In exploiting the backward glance, the playwrights seem to adopt a comparative approach in their evaluation of the society. This comparison hinges on a juxtaposition between the past and the present African society. The present is the express focus of their creative writing. Its contradictions are contrasted with the peace and harmony of the traditional African society. While theirs is not a drama of despair, and indeed points to the future, both Imbuga and Ruganda are totally dissatisfied with contemporary African leadership. The expectations of the masses who fought for independence have completely been shattered. In a strong biblical allusion,
Imbuga refers to the attainment of independence as the coming of the Kingdom. Christians believe that the second coming of Jesus, which would mark the coming of the Kingdom of God, would bring joy to mankind. The ironical allusion to the Kingdom, in *Betrayal in the City*, symbolizes the post-independence leadership, which has abdicated its divine responsibilities to the people.

It is thus the view of the East African dramatist that the attainment of independence in his society, in the 1960s, did not bring the desired changes. The fruits of independence have remained an illusion and a non-existent dream for the majority of the people. Mosese's retrospective glimpse clearly shows this dismay. In *Betrayal in the City*, Mosese, using the collective "we" voice, shows the dilemma of the African man when he laments that:

> It was better while we waited. We have nothing to look forward to. We have killed our past and are now busy killing our future. (pp. 31 - 32).

The nostalgic feeling here indicates the apparent contradictions between the past and the present East African community.

Disenchanted with the present and its attendant imperfections, the people, after being betrayed by their leaders, feel there was much hope in the struggle. The liberation movement which gave birth to independence was always a constant source of hope. The motivating factor was the wish of the people to determine their own fate and destiny, to fashion out a social order in line with their
wishes in life. Such dreams have now been totally shattered by the black messiahs. The black messiah is defined by Ngugi, in *The Black Hermit*, as the bunch of traitors with whom the people entrusted their future, and who have thrown them into the current political quagmire.

Indeed, Ruganda recaptures this sense of betrayal more dramatically through Kyeyune's backward glance in *The Floods*, (p. 12). In a retrospective glimpse, Kyeyune revisits the past in an attempt to decipher the confounding present. The present dilemma of the African is artistically contrasted with the glorious and confidence-instilling past. Perhaps, the past that the characters constantly allude to needs to be defined. We perceive this past generally to be in reference to the pre-colonial African society. It was marked by peace and harmony, the two crucial elements which maintained a cordial relationship between man and his fellow man, and between man and his environment. At any rate, the past could also mean the colonial social set-up. The point projected in the two dramatists' vision is that, any social structure preceding the contemporary African community, at least gave the people hope for a better future. Life in the past was rather predictable.

As Kyeyune recounts, life in the traditional society was not a bed of roses. It was punctuated by natural catastrophes such as droughts and floods. In spite of such mishaps, the people were still sure of the future. They had total control of their lives and governed
themselves. They exploited their environment, practising economic activities such as fishing and tilling of the land for sustenance. This aspect of man's dominance over his surroundings is the hallmark of civilization. Kyeyune's mental picture of the past, which was full of confidence of tomorrow and the day after, constitutes what Ngugi defines as the tenets of civilization in *Writers in Politics* (1981). In other words, civilization is marked by man's ability to harness his surroundings for personal benefit.

However, this civilization outlook of the traditional society has been disrupted by contemporary leadership. In *The Floods*, Kyeyune decries the turn of events when he states:

> now we are no better than a drunkard's Cockrel - unsure of ourselves any one moment. Each dawn is as surprising as it is painful. We welcome dusks with partial sighs of relief and the nights with vigils wrought with wails and squeal of terror. The ogre has turned against its kindred. (p. 12.)

(Emphasis added).

In this symbolic folklore motif, the playwright uses the image of the ogre that feasts on its offsprings to show how contemporary leadership has betrayed and disillusioned its subjects.

The collective "We" voice, which is persistent in Mosese's and Kyeyune's speeches, epitomises mass disappointment with the post-independence status quo. It is this political motif which forms the creative material for both Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City*, and *Game of*
Silence and Ruganda's The Floods. We group these plays together because they are directly concerned with the effects of leadership distortion in the East African Society. They mainly focus on the unbalanced relationship between the leaders, who perpetrate evils in society, and their subjects; the bulk of the society who are the actual victims of such evils.

The Floods is an artistic recreation of the history of Uganda under Amin's totalitarian regime in the 1970s. Set on an imaginary island, on the shores of Lake Victoria, the play recapitulates the carnage and plunder orchestrated by the dictator who ousted Milton Obote from power. In terms of setting, the play is specific in both historical timing and geographical location. The island represents Uganda, which geographically sits on the shores of Lake Victoria. It is also a symbolic microcosm of the African continent, seen against the background of military activism which rocked it following the ascendancy of the likes of Amin and Bokassa to power. Osotsi Majola, (Weekly Review August 5, 1980:47 - 48), shares in our views on The Floods. He describes it as a portrait of, "Suffering as a result of the selfish and egocentric manoeuvre of power, luxury and blood seekers; men living on the sweat of others".

The atrocities machinated by Amin in Uganda are creatively projected through the corpse-full, blood-ridden atmosphere; together with the doom, gloom and uncertainty which pervade the entire play. In fact, the murderous
instinct, characteristic of Amin's and Bokassa's regimes, is highlighted through the brutal and nerve-chilling imagery of the dead Brigadier. The emotive language and raw register used to create a vivid picture of the dead army officer shows the playwright's disgust. In a stylistic manner which is expressly designed to satirise the wanton destruction of human life in his society, Ruganda imprints on our mind a picture of a corpse with three nails on the head, and genitals stuffed in the mouth. It is this image of the devaluation of human life which cuts across the play, and largely dominates its structural development.

Significantly, Betrayal in the City is also set against the background of Adika's death. The events preceding his death, as well as the ones following it, dictate the structure of the play. Adika is the living spirit behind Jusper's militancy, the same way the dead Brigadier in The Floods haunts and propels Kyeyune's conscience. The death of Adika, and that of the Brigadier, symbolize the erosion of human dignity in the dramatists' fictional world. It is a society where, as we learn from Kyeyune's speculation, people are killed for trivial reasons. Through Kyeyune's speculations, the playwright intimates that people in his society are killed for absurd reasons. For example, the Brigadier was possibly killed because of: possible criticism of Boss's regime, competition over wealth or his knowledge of Boss's private ambitions. Thus, as Jusper says in Betrayal in
the City, in this society, "It is as if it's a crime to have eyes and ears" (p.50).

Therefore, the 1970s period is portrayed as an era of bloodshed, characterised by power struggle, Mass killing and violation of human rights. It is depicted as an era of leadership paranoia and insensitivity. Egocentricism among leaders appears to be responsible for human suffering. In The Floods for instance, Bwogo deceptively courts the islanders into a boat, masquerading as a rescue operation. He later blows up the boat with the islanders aboard, all for the sole objective of eliminating Nankya. The Headman exhibits similar inconsiderate attitude towards Kyeyune. However, Kyeyune is used as a satirical instrument against the hypocrisy of the leaders. In a symbolic reference, Kyeyune regards the Headman as a fish net. The implication here is that the Headman is actively trapping ignorant masses and consigning them to death chambers.

In reiteration, we need to point out that the backward glance is an approach used to contrast the traditional human values with the perverted ethics of the contemporary society. Kyeyune represents the old social order and its world view. He is juxtaposed with Bwogo and the Headman, agents of the autocracy responsible for the rupture of the social fabric which held the traditional society together. Kyeyune's speeches are used by the dramatist to castigate contemporary leadership. When he confronts the Headman, his speeches are loaded with satirical undercurrents. Thus he asks the headman:
Youngman, who do you think you are talking to? ... You who, only yesterday, were licking your own mucus and kneading soil with your own urine. Has your brief stay on the Island taught you how to frown at our wrinkles? (p. 5).

Ruganda seems to lament, with a nostalgic insight, the passing order, represented by Kyeyune. He takes a swipe at the emerging crop of leaders, who defile the moral values of the society and abdicate their conventional responsibilities. The same peace and order of the traditional society, which is threatened with disintegration by the young crop of generation, is recreated by Imbuga. Thus, Nina and Doga stand for the passing order of the society in Betrayal in the City. In an open confrontation with Jere, Doga satirically reminds him that he (Doga) shared the same knife with his (Jere's) father at circumcision; "What devil makes you look me in the face?" (p.15). The sharing of the knife signifies the bond of brotherhood which should not be broken. It represents the traditional order which is now threatened with disruption by the new leaders.

Alienation is perceived as the end result of leadership arrogance and indifference. Personal whims, rather than the welfare of the people, take precedence in national policies. The laws are designed to harass the citizenry, instead of protecting them. The rules that govern the people are mechanised and the masses are treated as voiceless robots, always on the receiving end.

In implementing such laws, the ruthlessness of the state
agents has no due regard for the plight of the common man. A good example is the autocratic approach adopted by the Headman, when he is put in charge of the evacuation operation in *The Floods*. His dictatorial bragging that, "I am in charge of this operation and won't tolerate this" (p.15), meaning delay, epitomises the overall despotism of the regime in power.

Mulili exhibits the same autocracy as that of the Headman. In an incident parallel to the one discussed above, Mulili confronts Nina and Doga, and echoes the Headman's sentiments. He tells the old couple that Adika's shaving ceremony cannot continue, because, "duty be duty and we are on duty now. We must do what is expected of us" (p.19). The irony of the actions of state agents like Mulili and the Headman is that, national service excludes the plight of the people.

Imbuga extends the satirical irony by showing the emptiness of the so-called national planning programmes. In Kafira, the most crucial planning agenda is the shedding of alien names. Indeed, Boss takes lead by adopting a name that many tongues would bleed in an attempt to pronounce. Boss's action is representative of the mysticism created by the leaders, so as to drift further away from their subjects. The shedding of foreign names indicates the void Africanisation programmes which have only ruined, rather than helped, independent states.

The alienation of leaders is aided by hypocrisy and deceit. In *The Floods* for instance, although the Islanders...
are threatened by the ravaging floods, Boss has to be accorded priority. The navy, we are told, will only come back to rescue the islanders after escorting Boss on an international peace-keeping mission. Ironically, Boss's foreign peace venture is prompted by the political turmoil in his society. Thus, contemporary leadership is bent on creating a favourable international image, overlooking the cries of the suffering subjects.

Imbuga recapitulates the same view in *Man of Kafira*. Although president Jere disregards the Kafirans' objection to Boss's return, he is peculiarly concerned about the international community. He feels threatened by the foreign journalists' discovery that Boss is back in Kafira. He accuses the foreign press of, demonstrating a knack to "destroy the image of this peace loving nation" (p. 67). It is significant to note that peace is an elusive term used by independent states to clothe their hypocrisies. In *Betrayal in the City*, for example, Mulili purports to cancel Adika's shaving Ceremony in the interest of peace, prompting Doga to enquire, "whose peace?" (p. 15). Thus, peace has no meaning to the common man. It is a blanket term used by the leaders to perpetuate oppression and exploitation.

Evidently, the distortion of peace is responsible for the atrocities meted out to the people. This perhaps explains why Mass carnage is the order of the day in The Floods. The crocodiles in lake Victoria are said to be overfed, while the fish bowels are filled with undigested
human fingers. In an emotive and blood-curdling imagery, Ruganda paints a picture of genocide in Uganda where:

the lake can't complain though. It has been the tomb of many men ... lorryfuls of wailing civilians, driven to their deaths, over the cliff, at the point of bayonets. The crocodiles have never been more thankful. (p. 19).

This vivid image is a dramatic recreation of a real historical and locatable incident in Amin's regime. Like Imbuga rightly observes, lake Victoria was used as a dumping ground for his political opponents. Besides, there was an actual incident in the 1970s when all the beggars and cripples, on the streets of Kampala, were rounded up and thrown into Lake Victoria.

Giving a historical account of Amin's notoriety in mass tribal killings, settling of political and private scores by murder and the wanton elimination of public figures, Dennis Hill says:

Bodies were ferried in lorries to be thrown like sacks of maize into the Nile at Karuma falls or into Lake Victoria. One day I came across dozens of corpses heaped at the water's edge beside Kasubi school. (Daily Nation, September 6, 1992: Lifestyle: 12).

A pertinent point to note from the foregoing elucidation is the fact that both Imbuga and Ruganda use historical facts for creative purposes. They integrate historical factual material with material of imaginative vision. Imbuga (1991:43) confesses that he uses some of the historical material in The Floods as the basis for his creative works. He intimates that Man of Kafira focuses on most of the historical occurrences in Uganda manifested in The Floods. He gives an example of Boss in the two
plays, and clearly states that his character is modelled on Amin.

Like Ruganda, Imbuga decry the mass carnage which afflicted Uganda during Amin's bloody reign. It is even striking to note that Regina's words, in Man of Kafira, echo Bwogo's description of the bloody lake in The Floods. Thus, Regina Laments:

... I love Kafira inspite of the dark coffin that it has been turned into. One great coffin in which advocates of truth lie. (p. 41).

Once confronted by such an overwhelming blood bath, the characters resort to a recollection of the glorious past. These perpetual backward glances, as Ruganda explains, in The Burdens, are intended to, "make the present tolerable and the future worth waiting for" (p. 11).

It is against the background of Ruganda's definition of the backward glances that Mosese's and Kyeyune's retrospective glimpses should be understood. For example, unable to come to terms with the overwhelming genocide in The Floods, Kyeyune reminds Bwogo that:

We lived on this island tolerably well before the ogre came on the scene, heralded by fronds and frenzied shouts. (p. 12).

In other words, Kyeyune tries to find meaning in life, by recalling the perfect harmony that existed between man and his environment; before the emergence of military rule.

Military rule is not perceived as an evil in itself. Rather, it is its attendant elements of social maladies which make life under its leadership intolerable. For instance, corruption and nepotism are conceived as the
trade marks of post-independence leadership. Nankya's award of the J.F. Kennedy literary prize epitomizes how deeply entrenched into the moral fibre corruption and nepotism are. The decision to award her the prize is shown as extra academic, and an arbitrary one in that. Nankya is a literary quack whose research papers are mediocre and unimpressive. In a dramatic play-within-a-play, fused with sporadic role-playing, Bwogo, acting as the master of ceremonies, declares:

Ours has not been easy at all ... But after very sharply divided deliberations, the panel has decided, by a vote of seven to four, to award to miss... Elizabeth Nankya. (p. 12).

Ironically, Nankya does not deserve the prize at all. Her only merit is that she is favoured by Bwogo, with whom she has had "the real big do" in posh hotels. Alongside that, she is portrayed as an immoral academician, who has unfairly risen to professorial status through cheap sexual affairs with university dons.

In an almost similar plot style in Betrayal in the City, Imbuga recapitulates and ridicules corruption at the leadership level. Turnbo's affection for Regina prompts him to arbitrarily declare Jusper the winner of the play writing competition. Turnbo refuses to hold genuine competitions and awards Jusper the prize, so as to win Regina's Love. In a satirical tone, Jusper jokes that, "out of more than eight plays submitted, Jusper Wendo's play came first" (p. 51). Surprisingly, Jusper is only entitled to a third of the prize, for as Turnbo explains, the other two thirds are supposed to put the records
straight. In our contemporary society, incidents where leaders award government contracts to their allies, so as to get commissions, are not uncommon. It is thus evident that the two playwrights view post-independence leadership as both corrupt and immoral.

Nepotism and tribal chauvinism are conceived as the perpetuators of corruption. Bwogo, for example, is affluent because of Kith and Kinship. The Floods revolves around Bwogo's amassing of property and power due to his blood proximity to Boss. Because he is Boss's cousin, and in spite of his weak intellectual abilities, Bwogo gains rapid, but underserved promotions. He is the chairman of the building society, as well as the head of the State Research Bureau; the terror force responsible for oppression and repression. Like Mulili in Betrayal in the City, Bwogo terrorises the populace with impunity.

Strikingly, Mulili shares character traits with Bwogo. He is Boss's cousin and the head of the peace and order maintenance force. Like Bwogo, Mulili unleashes terror on the citizenry, simply because:

My future depend on this. If I keep law and order, a big farmer I become when I retired ... Boss promised that. (p. 18).

It is also prudent to note the similarity in the backgrounds of the Headman, Mulili and Bwogo. All of them are army drop outs; showing how unsuitable they are for their present posts. This perhaps accounts for the political turbulence in the society.
As a matter of fact, Imbuga proceeds to show the results of the ill-preparedness of contemporary leaders. Jusper's "Betrayal in the city" is a story about the eventualities of corruption. The story revolves around an army cadet who, although he hardly knows how to handle a gun, is corruptly and rapidly promoted to the rank of captain. He ends up shooting his colleague dead during a pass out parade. The central idea, which is projected through this story, is the naivety of leadership.

Perhaps, it is the above level of corruption which helps to explain the uninhabitability of the island in The Floods. The land, in the words of Nankya:

is caving in with corruption. The atmosphere hangs heavy with various grievances. Men deprived of the land which they fought for, by Boss. Merceneries terrorising the populace. (p. 29).

The social order vividly imprinted on our minds is that of a "man-eat-man society". Bwogo states that there is no room for humanity or purity, for to be pure is to be a failure. Since the society is full of failures, for one to succeed, one needs to be, "hard and remorseless and unfeeling. That is the gospel according to Saint Success" (p. 31).

The gospel according to saint success, is founded on exploitation and power abuse. Guided by power and wealth mania, the agents of the dictatorial regime are always ready to go to all extents, to attain their whimsical goals. The fake weather reports in The Floods, for example, are exploitative strategies used by Bwogo and the
Headman. They use media channels to cause fear and despondency among the citizens. In the ensuing confusion, the death-bound islanders are robbed of their few earthly belongings.

In a significant incident, the Headman rummages into the small basket of the fisherman. He robs him of his smoked fish and starts to fill his big basket. The linguistic contrast between small and big represents the larger exploitative relationship between the leaders and their subjects. Ruganda uses self-incriminating speech patterns to satirise leadership hypocrisy. In a pretentious speech intended to ridicule him, the headman alleges that, "I hate exploiting other people's misfortunes" (p. 7). Ironically, he is doing precisely that.

What constitutes national economic structure has been a major concern for the East African dramatist. Tax payers' money and government revenue have been thorny issues in state leadership. The artists feel that public funds are spent on grandiose projects, which have no national benefit. In The Floods for example, Nankya accuses Boss of spending money on useless expeditions. Africa's economic woes are compounded by her blind dependence on foreign aid. This, as Walter Rodney correctly observes in How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, is the source of stagnant economic development in the third World countries. The J.F. Kennedy Award in The Floods represents the illusory concept of progress adopted by contemporary
leaders. It stands for the blind aping of alien values and western ideologies, by the Africans.

Because of imbalanced economic growth in the society, the leaders live in constant fear and suspicions of their own people. They always tuck their money in foreign banks, hoping to flee their country should their regimes be overthrown. It is perhaps for this reason that Bwogo, in *The Floods*, keeps his money in Switzerland, and gold in Bengal. Boss, his cousin and superior, also runs business north of the Equator. Similarly, Boss, in *Betrayal in the City*, has ruined Kafira's economy. He has siphoned millions of money from his country and tucked it away in foreign countries. Gafi, in *Man of Kafira*, also uses the tax payer's money to host the exiled Boss. Gafi buys Boss a golden bed, for which he pays in foreign currency.

Once a society commercializes its ethics, the value of human life is drastically marginalized. There is an illusory belief among the illiterate wealthy leaders in *The Floods*, that money can buy human life. For example, the T.P. tycoon hires mercenaries for only two thousand shillings to liquidate the headmaster. In a strong nerve-chilling language, the playwright recounts:

> the tycoon clicked his fingers once and, the SRB boys were on the spot. They bundled him out of 'the imperial' and that was the end of him. His corpse was found floating on the lake a week later. (p. 58).

In this pathos-invoking incident, the playwright laments the callous exchange of human life for a pittance.

Imbuga (1991:52), correctly observes that road
accidents are frequently used to obscure official assassinations of prominent personalities in East Africa. This experience has inspired its creative focus in East African drama. A good example is Kabito's death in Betrayal in the City. He is killed by Mulili, through a fake road accident, due to rivalry over a university milk tender.

Media agencies are also used as cover up instruments. In The Floods for instance, the islanders are courted to the fatal-destined boat through fake weather reports, broadcast over the radio. Similarly, the print media lied that Mukanga had been run over by a tractor, while in actual fact, "he was dragged out by the SRB" (p. 8). In a related hypocritical manner, Bwogo, after ordering the blow up of the islanders, claims that they were killed by guerillas, who allegedly took advantage of Boss's absence. It is for this reason that the island is contaminated by:

- rotten corpses,
- ... flood victims,
- mutilated bodies of army deserters,
- unidentified corpses of the enemies of the system. (p. 34).

However, in spite of its nostalgia for the past, The Floods is not a play of despair. Ruganda does not create a society locked up in a fatalistic cage, from where man cannot salvage himself. He shows the way ahead for his people, and restores hope and optimism to his society. The play in itself is a conscientization creation, intended to enlighten the people on the undesirable status quo. There are indications in the play that change is about to be realized. The growing revolutionary spirit is shown as
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the driving force for social transformation. Nankya tells Bwogo that:

The dead are no longer dead Bwogo, they are up in arms to right their wrongs. They have risen from the deep slumber at the bottom of the lake and are carrying shrouds of vengeance towards you. For seven years you have resisted their beckoning, for seven years you have added weight to their number. They are tired of waiting, waiting without having you in their midst. (p. 46). (Emphasis supplied).

Thus, the revolutionary spirit exhibited by the dead, constitutes Ruganda's envisaging of change.

In a more symbolic incident, Ruganda dramatises Mass uprising against the totalitarian regime. Bwogo's stabbing of the anthill cranium with an umbrella epitomises the wanton destruction of life by the regime in power. But from Nankya, we learn that the masses are fighting gallantly for their rights:

the soldiers in the anthill are putting on a full bloodied battle. They die by the dozens but will not surrender. They fight with spears and pangas to defend their national boundaries. (p. 59).

In this polarised struggle, Ruganda identifies with the oppressed. His play becomes a celebration of the spirited battle against the forces of evil. The authorial voice projects itself, cheering the masses on, "fight on gallant ones fight on. Defend your rights"(p. 59).

Indeed, there is evidence that change is achieved in The Floods. The death of the Queen Mother represents the 1979 toppling of Amin by the coalition forces. The beneficiaries of the unpopular regime are now fleeing away. The signing of new pacts and diplomatic ties heralds the birth of the 'second republic'. Throughout the play, the
background is characterized by guerrilla activities. Bwogo, for instance, blames Boss for deserting the country in the face of guerilla incursions. These military activities result in the eventual collapse of the wall that alienated the haves from the have-nots. The final arrest of Bwogo by the new regime stands for change in society. Ruganda's visionary insight is marked by the symbolic view that no one can date his destiny. In other words, change is inevitable.

Although The Floods transcends the stifling present, Ruganda's portrayal of the cyclic events in his society weakens his vision. He seems to bestow too much faith in the army. It is the trigger-happy-boys who call the shots in his fictional world. As will be argued later, the groups of individuals expected to alter the status quo remain complacent throughout. For example, although Kyeyune is aware that the present regime is anti-people, he is simply docile. Indeed, he languishes in pitiable superstitions and looks upon the oppressors for respite.

As a matter of fact, there is absolutely no individual or group political awakening in The Floods. Even the artists and intellectuals, whom Imbuga regards as agents of change, are negatively perceived by Ruganda. Nankya, for instance, uses her artistic prowess and brains to corrupt her way to fortunes. The complacency exhibited by Nankya weakens Ruganda's vision, making the revolutionary sentiments in the play sound contrived.

In Betrayal in the City, Imbuga dramatizes the social
and political contradictions in contemporary African society. The play shows the disillusionment of the African masses as a result of the hypocrisy of the leaders. Right from the beginning, Imbuga sets out to show the contrasts between the traditional and the modern African society. Nina and Doga, like Kyeyune in *The Floods*, represent the wisdom of the days gone. Like *The Floods*, *Betrayal In the City* is precise in terms of its geo-historical setting. It derives from the reign of terror unleashed by Amin in the 1970s, and also laments the betrayal of the majority of Africans by the post-independence leaders, who masqueraded as black saviours. It is the failure of the leaders to live up to the expectations of independence which constitutes the 'betrayal' that forms the nerve centre of the play.

It is imperative to point out that, both *Betrayal in the City* and *The Floods* are an examination of post-colonial leadership in Africa. This is unlike the other plays which, as will be shown later, deal with the results of misgovernance in contemporary African society. The two plays are characterised by a foregrounding of the Leaders' advisers, rather than the leaders themselves. Throughout *The Floods* for instance, Boss, who is the real head of State, is only mentioned. He is a silent character who influences events in the play in absentia. Indeed, it is his agents, like Bwogo and the Headman, who are used to epitomize the brutality of Boss's regime.
central fictional creation who is almost marginalized. Our ability to judge him as a character, as well as his leadership, is largely dependent on what the others say about him. The first time we meet him in person is towards the end when Mulili goes to the palace to betray Kabito. However, it is striking to note that, both playwrights use the image of 'Boss' as an image of contemporary leadership. In terms of visionary insight, the depiction of Boss by the two artists shows total disenchantment with post-colonial leadership. They perceive it as a political era dominated by the advisers. This perhaps explains why villains like Mulili and Bwogo dominate the actual events which unfold in their dramas. Significantly, all social maladies seem to have been heaped on these political advisers. In The Floods for example, Bwogo is arrested by the military men while Boss is spared the same wrath. Similarly, Mulili in Betrayal in the City is killed by Jusper while Boss is spared. As a matter of fact, Boss is depicted in Man of Kafira as having regained power in Kafira. It is thus evident that, both Imbuga and Ruganda squarely blame political advisers for the turbulence that has persistently rocked the contemporary society. However, the irony in their visionary outlook is that they spare Boss, the leader who is behind the anti-people machinations perpetrated by his agents.
Imbuga perceives the post-independence East African leadership as hypocritical and deceptive. Tools like the mass media are portrayed as channels for state propaganda. The state in Betrayal in the City, in the words of Jere, operates like a meteorological department, who tell people to spread their clothes out then rains begin to pour. It is the same meteorological department and the mass media which are used to scare the islanders in The Floods, so as to trap them in the boat. Similarly, Odie uses the radio and the newspapers in Music Without Tears to broadcast Wak's death. In so doing, he intends to inherit his father's piece of land. Given these incidents, it is easy to comprehend the playwrights' view of how the leadership transforms instruments meant for public service into terror machines.

Betrayal in the City creatively presents leadership alienation and social stratification as the most cancerous diseases in the society. In a microcosmic incident, the playwright shows the tragedy of Boss's blind overreliance on his advisers. Kabito's betrayal by Mulili, and his subsequent death, are highly unjustified. Although Boss rates Kabito as "one of my most loyal subjects" (p. 62), he is quick at sentencing him to death. The actual reason for Kabito's death is due to his rivalry with Mulili over the university milk tender.

To that end, materialism is perceived as the actual cause for human suffering. In the words of Jusper, social stratification in Kafira has created selective breeding and
progressive layers of humanity. It is the same social division which dominates *The Floods*. The wall that separates Nankya and Bwogo, symbolises the gap between the oppressors and the oppressed. In Imbuga's view, in *Betrayal in the City*, solidarity among the masses is the only way "to beat selective breeding" (p. 31).

Mosese's persistent backward glances recapture the people's nostalgia about the past. Through his mental pictures, the past of Kafira is portrayed as assuring, unlike the uncertainty of the present times. Thus, Mosese describes the past as, times "When I never fetched my umbrella at the sight of clouds, however dark. Now that is only a thing of the past" (p.26). Mosese's nostalgia resembles that of Kyeyune in *The Floods*. Kyeyune prides in having been a reputable fisherman until, "something strange happened to me" (p.9). What actually happened to him was his realization of the brutality of the ruling regime. Such experiences tend to form a conscientization process in East African drama. In *Betrayal in the City* for example, Jere explains that he was a soldier until, "I came face to face with reality" (p. 27).

In a manner that seems to account for the abundant exploitation of the backward glance in East African drama, Imbuga, through Jusper, intimates that, we can never have a future unless we see it in the past. The past, in this context, assumes both positive and negative implications. The past, as we have so far indicated, stands for the peace and harmony prevalent in the pre-colonial African society.
On the other hand, the past is a collection of past experiences, upon which the future of the current society is to be built. The significance of the past is emphasised through Mosese wa Tonga, a name that means, remember the past.

Just like the island in The Floods, Kafira, in Betrayal in the City, is a society riddled with nepotism and corruption. The infiltration of social decay is represented by the entertainment committee which is charged with the responsibility of preparing for the state guest. The state visit is used satirically at several levels. It ridicules leaders who grandiosely use the tax payer's money, in vain attempts to build a favourable international image. The committee is allocated a quarter million shillings for entertainment, which it misappropriates.

At another level, the state visit reveals the hypocrisy of national planning forums. For Tumbo and his colleagues, the size of the potato, meaning the sitting allowances, takes precedence over the services rendered to the people. Through Kabito, (p. 56), we learn that the members of the committee prolong sessions and defer important national policies, so as to accumulate money. Thus, leaders only pay lip services to national development. This perhaps explains why Tumbo insists that Jusper write a play and, "Make sure that the words 'progress' and 'achievement' are on every page" (p.53).

Further, the hypocritical image of the leaders is
manifested in the entertainment arrangements. The prisoners are supposed to take part in the play so as to give an impression of unity in Kafira; prisoners actively involved in national development. Ridiculing this hypocrisy, Jusper sarcastically asks, "so it will take a state visitor to release political prisoners in Kafira? What an act of clemency?" (p. 40). To that end, the leaders use their offices for exploitative purposes.

Valuable human resources and manpower are wasted on meaningless self-gratification political manoeuvres. A simple state visit is enough to declare a national holiday, and in Mulili's words, "every movable adult to line the road" (p. 59). It is acts like this, in Imbuga's vision, which ruin Kafira. The dictatoral attitude shown by Mulili is a bottleneck to national progress. As Kabito tells him:

You are the people who choke Kafira. How do you expect to force grown ups to do things they don't believe in? What do you think would be the long term consequences? (p. 59).

Thus, he views the totalitarianism of the contemporary society as counter-productive.

Apart from power mania, the East African dramatist shows the survival instinct and opportunism as the most cancerous social maladies. The ego-centricity and self-centredness exhibited by Tumbo indicates the moral bankruptcy in the society. He cherishes the maxim that, "Education no longer matters these days" (p. 45).

Corruption, rather than merit, becomes the sole criterion for leadership selection. Ruganda best dramatizes the
effects of such a materialistic world view in *The Floods*, where, as Nankya says:

> the land is caved in with corruption.
> Graduates grovelling in dustbins in search of sustenance; the civil service sore about MPs' salary hikes. (p. 29).

Therefore, the island in *The Floods*, and Kafira in *Betrayal in the City*, are what Jusper, in the latter play, terms as, "a man-eat-man society" (p. 45). It is a society where individualism has superceded majority welfare. This selfish attitude is shown by Tumbo. He, for example, tells Jusper to "learn to fight for yourself and when your presence is felt, you can risk shouting for others" (p. 45).

Ego-centricity, power mania and leadership craze constitute what Imbuga terms as a travelling political disease. Ironically, people who pose as freedom champions, like Mosese, harbour secret political ambitions. Imbuga exposes Mosese's secret political agenda, as it were, by laying bare his sub-conscious machinations. Using a political motif, combined with psychic insight, the playwright shows Mosese's intentions to wrest power from the current regime. Mosese imagines a jubilation session, where people grant him power. However, Imbuga seems to condemn Mosese's double-standard character. In self-satirising words in his speech, Mosese admits that he is crazy, and that is why he accepts the post of a Prime Minister in Boss's new regime in *Man of Kafira*. His power mania earns him death at the hands of Boss in the latter play.
As a result of power mania, the common man in *Betrayal in the City* languishes in utter hopelessness and helplessness. This sense of despair is exhibited by Nina and Doga, the representatives of the masses. In a pitiable retrospective glimpse, Doga intimates that they have no hope. Their hope died the day Adika was buried. Explaining the sources of the people's disillusionment, Jusper laments that, they get the fruits of independence second hand. In other words, it is the leaders who are the primary beneficiaries of independence. To make matters worse, the people are totally overwhelmed by brutality and state oppression. Tumbo observes that:

> we have no choice. Like caged animals, we move, but only inside the cage. It has become infectious, this desire to eliminate others. (p. 65).

However, the playwright attributes such suffering to the complacency exhibited by the likes of Tumbo. He blames the recipients of state brutality for indifference and insensitivity to their suffering. Mosese aptly projects this vision when he tells Jere:

> we all know what should be done, but we dare not talk beyond Whispers. We are dictators of ourselves. Why do people sit and watch in silence as the disease spreads deep inside? (p. 32).

Mosese's political awakening indicates the dramatist's attempts to conscientize the people. His use of the collective "we" is intended to direct the society to more humane realms. It is for this reason that Imbuga blames Kafirans for watching helplessly as soldiers beat up Regina, forcing her to bear false witness against her
brother, Mosese.

One social malady that has preoccupied East African drama is the indiscriminate destruction of human life in the society. We have given the example of Kabito's death at the hands of Mulili, over the university milk tender, in *Betrayal in the City*. Most of the murders are basically political, although the killers feign absurd excuses. A good example is the murder of the Headmaster by the T.P tycoon in *The Floods*. It is significant to note that the T.P. tycoon kills the headmaster for simply feeling left out in an entertainment session.

In a dramatic linguistic manipulation, the playwright recreates the pathetic incident:

... the tycoon blew up. "What do you think your doing? What you spoking Toilet paper? You laughtering me? This toilet paper man go fixing you if you don't quiet. Do you heard? No laughtering and drunkening and talking like Queen Zabeth? Do you thought because of your Dengris you can embrought your England here? You goes toilet now if you don't quiet. And I goes make you eat it proper. So you quiet. You heared me? Stop biting your England here, I am talking to you. I can emboughted you twice complete and also. And no mosquito can zwing about yours Dengris". The headmaster was stunned and simply said, "What have I done now? What have I said that annoyed Mr... Mr... Mr... what has annoyed you sir?. She just told me you manufacture toilet paper and I said GREAT. Was that an insult?" That did it. The tycoon clicked his fingers once and, in a second, the SRB were on the spot ... that was the end of him, His corpse was found floating in the lake a week later. (p. 57).

In this emotive picture, Ruganda decries the grisly destruction of human life. It is significant to note that, both Mulili and the T.P tycoon are illiterate state agents.
They are creatively used to show the proliferation of genocide in post-independence African states.

The plight of the Headmaster is reminiscent of Dennis Hill's description of real life events in Uganda under Amin's rule:

Karuhanga, a quiet boy who had helped me to run the college library was roped to a tree and shot by firing squad infront of his family. The dismembered body of Kay Ardroa, a small jolly girl who had left my English class to get married to Amin as his third wife and had borne him children, was found in a gunny bag in August 1974. (Daily Nation, September 6, 1992: Lifestyle: 12).

However, the vivid portrayal of the disillusionment of the Africans notwithstanding, Imbuga presents a ray of hope for his society. He seems to have a lot of faith in the elite group and the youth; as well as the artists. Adika, Mosese, Jere and Jusper represent the intelligentsia group, which is bestowed with the powers of bringing about change in society. Jusper is an artist who is committed to the welfare of the majority. It is his play, "Betrayal in the City" which facilitates the toppling of Boss. This group of artists and intellectuals is politically awakened. It is also endowed with the ability to sacrifice their lives for the welfare of the majority. In the same vein, Jusper is aware of the need for solidarity among the masses for the purposes of liberation.

In fact, compared to Ruganda, Imbuga seems to delineate his characters in line with his visionary insight. Characters in Betrayal in The City grow with political consciousness. Jere and Mosese are transformed as
a result of the experience they have gone through. It is their political awakening which propels their revolutionary spirit. Jusper too is goaded into militancy by the overwhelming force of brutality meted out to his family by Boss. But in The Floods, characters like Nankya, who are both artists and intellectuals, are devoid of any urge to act. Even the masses, who are represented by Kyeyune, are aware of the dictatorial nature of Boss which they do nothing about.

Thus, unlike Imbuga's characters, Ruganda's characters, though politically aware, are devoid of any action. Nankya, for example is at home with Bwogo, the death architect. In the same manner, Stella in Music Without Tears, flirts with Ali, the SRB leader who consigned her father to death. Both Stella and Nankya are the opposite of Regina's revolutionary spirit in Man of Kafira.

In spite of the difference in characterisation, the two playwrights concur in their vision. As will issue at later stages, the two dramatists perceive change as inevitable and the altering of the present status quo as a mandatory necessity. It is significant to note that both The Floods and Betrayal in the City use the gun to bring an end to the unpopular regimes. Boss in the former play is toppled by a military force. In the latter play, Boss' end is facilitated by the use of violence. In terms of vision, the two playwrights seem to subscribe to the maxim that violence breeds violence. Indeed, Imbuga drum this
message home at the end of *Man of Kafira* when, through Regina, he says that, "Boss has killed Boss" (p. 71). However, since the end justifies the means, as it were, it is important to note that, irrespective of the methods used, both playwrights share in the disillusionment of the East Africans. They use their plays as a pointer to the way ahead; as well as instruments for mass conscientisation.

In *Game of Silence*, Imbuga further examines the disintegration of the East African society due to failure of leadership. His perception of his society is the same as that of *Betrayal in the City* and *The Floods*. These three plays form a trilogy of a dramatic pattern that revolves around the maladies of post-colonial leadership in Africa. These dramas are motivated by a desire to evaluate the credibility, or otherwise, of government management in Africa. Imbuga himself describes *Game of Silence* as:

more of a psychological study of the fears of the educated and more of the members of society in relation to their dealings with individuals who are politically aware. (Dusaidi: 1976: 102).

In other words, the play is a psychological exposition of the inner feelings, contradictions and hypocrisies of the individual.

*Game of Silence* is an extension of the society Imbuga created in *Betrayal in the City*. As Makini correctly notes, the play:

can be seen as a continuation and a development of the condemnation that Imbuga began in *Betrayal in The City* against anti-human and anti-democratic forces and tendencies that abound in the third world. (1985: 50).
The society is depicted as riddled with inhumanity and abject poverty. At the beginning, the stage is said to be filled with beggars, madmen and cripples, an image reminiscent of Soyinka's Madmen and Specialists. Although the society proliferates with numberless paupers, the leaders are so distanced from their subjects that they ignore their plight. Bango, for instance, does not hear the voice of the downtrodden. As Raja tells him, "You do not hear common noises, only the unique, the uncommon" (p. 2).

Ruganda symbolically recaptures the same leadership alienation in Music Without Tears. The Queen termite, which symbolises the leader, is accused by Odie of insensitivity:

"Your Highness. Having a royal nap, Your Highness are you? A royal nap in spite of the shooting and the killing outside ... Are you deaf, your Highness? Or is it that you have no ear for the onslaughts of man by man? No fear for the human cries of woe? (p. 2)."

Thus the alienation of leaders from their subjects has become a major preoccupation for the East African dramatist. It is the do-not-care attitude adopted by the leaders towards their subjects, which is responsible for the woes of the common man.

Brutality and carnage are portrayed as the central trade marks of contemporary leadership. Those in power derive pleasure from shedding human blood. Absence of justice and social order have given rise to genocide. Bango, the agent of state brutality, tells Raja that, "I
have known whole families swept off the surface of this earth in one fateful second" (p. 5). Bango's words echo those of Bwogo in The Floods, who, indifferently, recounts how civilians are dumped into the lake. The same steel-nerved attitude is demonstrated by the Askari in Betrayal in the City. The latter prides in having killed a man and also having witnessed people being hanged for trivial offences. This mass murder explains why Kafira, in Man of Kafira has become a grave yard; or why the crocodiles in The Floods are constipating.

Imbuga creatively exposes the inequalities existing in his society. The contrast between Raja's and Bango's backgrounds, just like the one between Nankya's and Bwogo's in The Floods, projects the deep-seated social stratification. Indeed, there is evidence that, Raja's society operates like a caste system. One's position in society is hereditary. Raja brings it out clearly when he tells Bango that:

"my background demands silence of me, except at night when the belching of the men that matter drowns my moanful protest." (p. 5).

This culture of silence is revisited by Ruganda in The Floods. In a retrospective glance, Nankya relives her past vis-a-vis that of Bwogo. Nankya's family, who were serfs to the Bwogos, were never supposed to talk, not even to mourn their dead.

Social stratification gives rise to corruption based on nepotism. The tall relatives found in Kafira assume a more symbolic significance in Game of Silence. Raja tells
Bango that:

You talked of your family's net height. Your father, you said, is seven feet one inch; your mother six feet seven. Your brothers and sisters put together would be twenty-four feet two inches. (p. 7).

The point emphasised here is the role played by nepotism in social corruption. Bango, like Bwogo in *The Floods*, has had an easy life in school, as a result of his family's prowess. Raja tells Bango that his tall father brought him up to live well without knowing why. To add insult to injury, Raja's mother and daughters have been killed by machinations designed by Bango. Raja's fate is similar to that of Jusper in *Betrayal in the City*. Jusper's family is killed by Boss, and just like Raja, he is kept in a mental asylum because of his political sensitivity.

The contradictions arising as a result of misgovernance occupy centre stage in East African drama. Education in society is supposed to be the foundation for national development. Ironically, it is the illiterate, rather than the elites, who benefit economically. Employment is based on kinship, rather than educational merit. As a result, poverty afflicts the educated and the uneducated alike. The world of meaningless education in *Betrayal in the City*, and that of graduates grovelling in dustbins in *The Floods*, is once more recreated. Raja recounted this paradox when he explains:

the kid was hungry. Well, we all were, in spite of our education. The tragedy of coming from the wrong womb. Have to start right from the very bottom and face the whole damn ladder hoping to get to the top some day. At the bottom, a whole tribe of hangers-on sits, waiting and hoping. They
Therefore, the paradoxical point here is that, education, which is seen as a liberation tool, has no value in a world bedevilled by corruption and nepotism.

The satirical tone that is prevalent in East African drama shows the playwrights' crave for justice. The tyrannical regimes in the region are notorious for their devaluation of human life. As Imbuga intimates in *Game of Silence*, dictatorship has reduced people into "non-belivers in the value of human life" (p. 30). Like Bwogo in *The Floods*, Mulili in *Betrayal in the City* and Ali in *Music Without Tears*; Bango dishes out death to the masses with impunity. In examining state brutality, the dramatists show evident disgust towards such brutes. In *Betrayal in the City*, the leader-subject relationship is likened to a cat and mouse game, a game in which the mouse, meaning the subject, will end up between the teeth of the cat. Referring to the mass genocide, Jusper compares the leaders to hawks who, "pounce on you like hungry leopards" (p. 36).

The same negative image of the leaders is recreated in *Game of Silence*. Those in power are referred to as the man-eaters of Tsavo. It is this same picture, of the ogre that has turned against its kindred, which Ruganda uses to describe contemporary leadership in *The Floods*. In the latter play, Kyeyune sarcastically asks whether there is mercy in the jaws of a crocodile. In other words, the brutal regime has no consideration for the masses.
One idea that dominates virtually all political plays in East Africa is the depiction of how independent states use terror machinery to sustain power. Bango and Zumaka, in *Game of Silence*, man research stations designed for political intimidation and repression. These despotic strategies are meant to control divergence in political outlook. Bango's psychological studies are intended to help him monitor Raja's political activities. The state allocates huge chunks of money to the torture chambers and political monitory networks. These psychological experiments are created to confine political opponents, invent diseases for them and convince them that they are sick.

However, Imbuga exposes the state hypocrisy by showing the actual role of these spy mechanisms. For example, Bango is paid to spy on Raja, whom the state regards as a political activist. The state hypocritically disguises the torture system as being good for the welfare of everyone. But through Emma, Imbuga castigates this hypocrisy:

... beggars limping away to death, pregnant women dying of starvation and exhibition of bloody bandages to frighten people out of their wits. Is that what you call the good of everyone? (p. 28).

The research stations in *Game of Silence* resemble those existing in Kafira in *Betrayal in the City*. Bango's and Zumaka's experiments on human psychology are similar to the ones carried out by Odie in *Music Without Tears*. These researches are the monitory mechanisms through which political opponents are tracked down. In *The Floods and
Music Without Tears, the atrocities carried out by the SRB boys are reminiscent of the murderous activities of Mulili and Bango in Betrayal in the City and Game of Silence respectively.

Imbuga exposes the brutality of the regime. Mass carnage is shown as a common phenomenon. A pathetic example is Raja's daughter whom Bango's security network silenced, although she was barely eight years old. It is for this reason that the spectators at Edna's funeral lament about the massive deaths suffered by the people at the bottom. Both Imbuga and Ruganda are extremely concerned about the plight of the peasants who are dying by the numbers.

Therefore, Game of Silence is an overt condemnation of man's inhumanity to man. It is intended to create awareness among the masses, a precedent that would lead to change in the status quo. It is for this reason that Imbuga ridicules the complacency and apathy among the oppressed. Some of the ignorant masses attribute their suffering to the will of the gods. An elder in Game of Silence perceives Edna's death as divinely ordained. This belief in the supernatural world and religious mythologies are seen as retrogressive forces in East African drama.

Imbuga dismisses the myth of supremely ordained human suffering as void. It is his belief that, if God is responsible for the wanton destruction of human life, then that God, "is a notorious God" (p. 30). Unlike Samuel
Beckett and Albert Camus, the proponents of existentialism, which regards man as bound by fate, Imbuga believes that man is capable of determining his fate and destiny. It is the same superstitious belief that deprives Kyeyune of any fighting spirit in The Floods. Instead of facing Bwogo, the real architect of his suffering, Kyeyune attributes his suffering to Kagoro, the god of flashes. The same apathy results in the death of the islanders who Kyeyune likens to "Cows heading for the slaughter-house" (p. 13).

Flora in Game of Silence, is an epitome of the complacent attitude perceived by Imbuga as responsible for the people's misery. She dies while trying to marry Jim, the son of the head of state responsible for the suffering of her people. She is like Regina in Betrayal in The City whom Jusper tells:

... the street disease has caught up with you. You have lost your fighting spirit like everyone else in the street. As we marched up and down, some of them shouted abusive words at us. Beggars leaning on street walls told us we were wasting time. (p. 37). (my emphasis).

Notice the satirical tone Imbuga adopts in the underlined words in ridiculing the apathy among the oppressed, which he calls street disease.

Raja's avowed militancy and determination to fight against the massacre of his mother and daughters is reminiscent of Jusper's zeal to avenge the death of his family. In Betrayal in the City, Imbuga gives a clear picture of what he regards as true revolution. To be able to affect change, he seems to suggest, intellectuals like Raja and Jusper need to sacrifice. Indeed, he perceives
bloodshed as necessary if the society is to be cleansed of its sins. In Man of Kafira, he sets a clear vision of the role of the liberators. Kafira, he suggests, needs men who:

will be prepared to destroy life in order to give meaning to it. Men who will kill ten in order to save the lives of one hundred. Yes, (it) will need strong willed men. (p. 29). (my addition).

Thus, men of conscience like Raja are described, not as blood seekers, but mirrors of their society. But as the dramatist continues to say in Betrayal in the City:

... it is not enough to provide only a mirror. No. We must learn to sacrifice ourselves for a better future. A future where these events that now take place need not be repeated. (p. 76).

The message above is too much in the nude to need any belabouring. However, to be able to liberate themselves, the oppressed have to contend with state anarchy. In Game of Silence, Zumaka is deployed to keep the records of corpses and to monitor those on death track. To be able to discharge his responsibilities, Zumaka says that, "You need a hard heart here" (p. 28).

There is a striking similarity here between Game of Silence and The Floods. Nankya's occupation, like that of Zumaka, is, "Census officer. Counting corpses" (p. 42). The parallel incidents in both plays show the state of anarchy under military leadership. Zumaka's requirement for hard-heartedness, as the prequalification for his murderous activities, resembles that of Bwogo's gospel according to Saint Success. The latter too needs steel nerves to succeed in a man-eat-man society.
The torture chamber station manned by Zumaka is an obstacle which advocates of democracy must fight against. It is in this chamber where death is traded to the advocates of truth. An example is the woman's brother whom Zumaka says was killed seven months ago. Significantly, Zumaka tells Emma that Raja is listed to "sing", a term that is equivalent to "facing the music", in *Music Without Tears*. The terms apparently refer to the torture of political opponents. It is this group which, unless cowed by the system, is set to alter the status quo.

There is a striking resemblance in the characterisation of Bango in *Game of Silence* and Odie in *Music Without Tears*. Both are agents of state intelligence security unit. They are assigned on political opponents, for while Bango spies on Raja, Odie spies on his brother, Wak. As an agent of the State Research Bureau, Odie reports that Wak:

"... is becoming a bit of a nuisance ... Threatening to give talk on democracy ... "THE INEVITABLE ROAD THAT WILL LEAD US TO DEMOCRACY" ... always seething with discontent, these intellectuals ... they must be hirelings of foreign forces ... Extremely dangerous ... will arouse public wrath against the government. (p. 102)."

Similarly, out of Bango's tape recorders, Raja is seen as a threat to state security. Zumaka tells Emma that her husband, "is a man of violent nature. He is anti-establishment. He would like others to follow his footsteps" (p. 32). Explaining the state wrath he must face, Raja says that his desire to avenge his family is the
reason why:

... the officials thought I was dangerous, because I had energy and wanted to find the answer to that why. They set spies on me but that didn't bring them results. (p. 11).

The point highlighted here is that, both Imbuga and Ruganda envisage the intelligentsia as agents of social change.

All in all, Game of Silence portrays change as a collective responsibility of the masses. The play ends on a note of hope, with the masses symbolically dancing "the dance of the future". In Raja's revolutionary poem, we learn that, "the bottom sleeps no more" (p. 52). The latter intimates mass political awakening, a vital prerequisite to social transformation.

So far, we have been examining the texts that deal directly with the pitfalls of leadership in contemporary East African Society. The two playwrights have set a comparative scale, through which the harmony prevalent in the traditional society is contrasted with the disillusioning present. Below, we shall see how the two playwrights examine the psychic make up of a fallen leader. Man of Kafira and Music Without Tears, which are sequels to Betrayal in the City and The Floods, respectively, constitute a post-mortem analysis of post-independence African leadership. In short, the two plays evolve around psychosis, the travelling political disease of power absolutism responsible for the political turbulence hitherto discussed.
2.3. THE TRAVELLING DISEASE

Both *Music Without Tears* and *Man of Kafira* are set in the post-Amin totalitarian regime in Uganda. The plays retrace a historical event during which Tanzanian forces and Ugandan rebels jointly ejected the dictator from power. In these plays, Ruganda and Imbuga review the psychology of the fallen dictator. Although overthrown, the power maniacs still cling to the old images of themselves.

There is intimation that *Music Without Tears* is an examination of what makes a murderer tick. In the play, we are introduced to the actual psychic structure of the leadership that orchestrated the atrocities in *The Floods*, *Betrayal in the City* and *Game of Silence*. In the latter plays, all we get is a story of political perversion, told from the point of view of the recipients. As stated earlier, these three plays do not show the actual practises of the leaders in power. Boss, the symbol of post-independence leadership, remains in the background throughout.

Although the president is not an actual participant in *Music Without Tears*, his regime is explored thoroughly through the penetration of Odie's mind. It is also explored through the dyrmistification of the files of his secret intelligence services - the SRB. It is his craze for power which Imbuga regards as as, "the travelling disease" (p. 43), in *Man of Kafira*. Imbuga defines the travelling disease in this play as, "that process by which men are exiled. A disease that they carry on their heads
forever" (p. 43). This is therefore a political disease, a psychotic obsession in which the fallen leaders perpetually wallow in egocentricism, guilt conscience and fantasies. This unquenchable thirst for power has given rise to Man of Kafira. This is because, in so far as Boss is concerned, "Kafira has produced only one man, and that man is me" (p. 43).

In Music without Tears, Ruganda defines the travelling disease as, "the hunger for power" (p. 25). The hunger for power dehumanizes both the leaders and their subjects. Odie represents the effects of power mania at two fundamental levels. He is a product of Amin's brutal decade-old regime in Uganda. He narrates how he was brutalized by the military men, following Wak's exile. As he confesses, one doesn't forget such things so easily (p. 17). Thus, his psychological traumas are attributed to the humiliation he suffered at the hands of the soldiers. At another level, he is used to expose the psychology of the brutal leaders. His experiments are torture mechanisms used to silence political opponents.

Music Without Tears is a retrospective diagnosis of the society created by Ruganda in The Floods. It explores the effects of state brutality on both the leaders and their subjects. Insecurity and political turmoil still persist, for the general environment is punctuated by gun shots and guerilla insurgency. Thus, political turbulence in East Africa is depicted as a cyclic historical pattern.
record of the coups, counter coups and military activism which pervaded East Africa, and especially Uganda, in the 1970s and early 1980s.

The play uses historical facts creatively to show the contradictions in Uganda. Ruganda sets out to show the rivalry that prevailed between the exiles, represented by Wak; and those who remained and survived Amin's decade-old reign of terror, represented by Odie and Stella. The playwright explains the historical inspiration behind this play, saying that:

those times I was in Uganda I could gauge the antagonistic feeling between those who had returned as Liberators, or the euphoria between the pro-Lule and the skepticism of those who were inclined towards a different kind of policy. (Imbuga; 1991:60).

As we shall demonstrate later, the East African dramatist is preoccupied with the plight of the refugees in his creative imagination. Imbuga, for instance, traces the results of political turmoil and the woes of refugees in The Successor.

In Music Without Tears, the incumbent military regime is yet to rid society of its crippling corruption. The opening stage directions hint at extreme corruption at the leadership helm. The play is set in Odie's double-storeyed room packed with, "the kind of furniture that comes free to men of position from favour-seeking men of foreign firms" (p. 1). Evidently, those in power use their offices to acquire wealth, using crude and unscrupulous means. They use their status in society to protect their property. As a result, leaders are isolated and remain
aloof, quite drawn away from the people they lead. This alienation of leadership is symbolised by the king termite who is having a royal nap, in spite of the woes of his people under terrorist attacks.

Brutality and protective politics are seen as the hallmarks of post-independence East Africa. Odie, for example, explains how Boss in Music Without Tears used security network to silence political opponents. In Odie's words, once the SRB boys open fire, "the enemy is liquidated. Leaving no traces" (p. 3). A fine example of such carnage is Odie's narration of how doctors are dragged from their operating theatres and gunned down in front of their patients (p. 27). Incidents of cold bloodedness like this one are reminiscent of the genocide that we have already shown as existing in Game of Silence, The Floods and Betrayal in the City. In fact, Moses's assassination by Boss in Man of Kafira, on suspicions of plotting to topple him (Boss), clearly demonstrates the protective mechanisms of dictatorial regimes.

The wanton destruction of human life recreated in the dramas of Imbuga and Ruganda should be understood against the social realities of the historical period that informs their works. The senseless murders depicted in the artists' plays remind us of the operations of secret security forces during Amin's rule. James Namude aptly summarises the terror unleashed on the citizenry by Amin's militia men. He recalls that:

Uganda's brutal dictatorship of the seventies that left thousands dead was manned largely by
youthful killers who seemed to derive pleasure in killing, maiming and torturing, just like Adolf Hitler's Youth Brigade in Germany. (The Standard, September 8:8).

It is in the context of Namude's revelations that Odie's activities should be understood. Although we have been told stories about the effects of the torture chambers in the plays so far discussed, Odie's activities introduce us to their practical operations. In Game of Silence for example, we get an insight into the confinement centres manned by Zumaka and Bango, which deal with invented diseases of political sensitivity. However, Odie in Music Without Tears shows the various torture mechanisms used on political malcontents. Such research stations are used for intimidation. As Odie tells his victim:

You've refused to talk haven't you? Refused to cooperate. But before long you'll be jibbering like a chatter box. (p. 7).

Obviously, Odie fulfills his duties as an agent of the state with extreme enthusiasm. From Stella, we learn that he engages in these sadistic activities for sport. The society in Music Without Tears is a world where, as Imbuga says in Man of Kafira "being a little inhuman never did anybody any harm" (p. 3).

Having been unable to elicit any information from his victim, Odie resorts to the use of bunsen burner. The latter is a symbol of violent torture mechanisms used on suspected enemies of state. This brutal method is supposed to make the traitor:
Given this background, it is easy to understand why Jusper in *Betrayal in The City* and Raja in *Game of Silence* were kept in solitary confinement and mental disease coined for them.

Using a parody technique, Ruganda, in *Music Without Tears*, satirises the contradictions of independence in Africa. In an episode that acts as an indication of the region's political history, the playwright shows the futility of independence. Thus, the 'Primer' elections conducted by the three characters in the *Music Without Tears* show the two phases of the society's history. In a democratic election by proxy, Wak triumphs over Odie as the Chairman, by two-thirds majority. However, Odie uses force to usurp powers from Wak. This episode reflects how Africa's democratic governments are short-lived in the face of trigger-happy boys. It is this sea-saw battle between civilian and military regimes which is responsible for political instability in East Africa.

Indeed, Ruganda satirises the turn of events in his society. He shares in the disillusionment of the masses, throwing a retrospective glance which is characteristic of *Betrayal in The City* and *The Floods*. He feels strongly that his society has never achieved anything from independence. In a collective 'We' tone that laments the mass carnage in the works we have so far dealt with, he states, in *Music Without Tears*:

break the silence. Talk like a chatter box. Incriminate others whether he likes it or not. Expose the ring leaders of this underground movement of theirs. (pp. 7-8).
twenty years of the so-called independence and we have nothing to show for it except enough corpses to feed billions of vultures. (p. 64). (Emphasis supplied).

The corpses referred to here could be the "Iorryfuls of wailing civilians fed to crocodiles" in *The Floods*, (p.19). They could also be the advocates of truth who pervade the one great dark coffin into which Kafira has been transformed in *Man of Kafira*, (p.41). These corpses could also be the murder victims in *Betrayal in the City*, or the bottom dwellers in *Game of Silence*, who die by the numbers.

The absurdity and hypocrisy of the state is best dramatised by the activities of the state intelligence unit. The SRB is contemptuously painted as a mediocre force which thrives on lies and trivialities. For the first time, we are exposed to the contents of the secret agency files. These SRB files are described as disgusting, treacherous and deceptive. They are false statements founded on indecent human greed. Some of the absurd accusations levelled against political opponents are:

Peter spat on the president's portrait in a public bar!" Judgement. Let him face the music at once. And report back that it's been done. No investigations carried out. No witnesses called, just the auctioneer's final hammer on his table. (p. 77). (My Emphasis).

The emphasized words above are an exact description of what transpires at the palace in *Betrayal in The City*, when Mulili goes to accuse Kabito. After a one-sided story, told only from Mulili's point of view, Boss simply tells
him, "You know what must be done. Come report to me that he is silent" (p. 63).

All the brutal incidents in *Music Without Tears* point to the 1970s decade of bloodbath in Uganda, or the genocide orchestrated by Bokassa in the Central Republic of Africa. In an apparent reference to this period, the dramatist describes Uganda's history as, "ten years of dire violence, where every second was a nightmare and life unpredictable" (p. 10). Explaining the nature of Amin's leadership, Dennis Hill says that, "Amin was a black Nero, governing his tiny territory, like a village tyrant, by fear" (Daily Nation, September 6, 1992: Lifestyle 12).

The ten years implied above refer to the nature of society already demonstrated in *The Floods, Betrayal in the City* and *Game of Silence*. The society is Marooned in uncertainty and unpredictability, as demonstrated by Kyeyune's and Mosese's retrospective speeches discussed earlier. The society's dilemma is further complicated by senseless genocide for materialistic reasons. Through Odie, we learn that men are liquited, "for a match stick as easily as for a shop" (p. 12). The wanton killing is combined with plunder, raping and all forms of atrocities. Dennis Hill recaptures the trauma experienced by the Uganda citizens under Amin's regime. He says that cases of corpses being dumped in swamps and individuals disappearing mysteriously were a common phenomenon (Daily Nation, September 6, 1992: Lifestyle 12).
As a result of misgovernance, people are constantly insecure. The state, we are told, is riddled with roadblocks, inflation and "all forms of Murder Mechanisms" (p. 13). It is such state of affairs which gives rise to egocentricism and selfishness. Odie, for example, betrays his brother Wak and uses the mass media to broadcast Wak's death; so as to inherit his father's land. He is a puppet who worships the very system that once brutalized him and killed his father. He also epitomizes the corruption prevalent in his society. He bribes the lands office so as to have his father's title deed transferred to him.

Therefore, Odie is a representative of State bureaucracy, as well as an epitome of its brutality. In the leader-subject play-within-a play episode, the same brutality and state hypocrisy are clearly projected. In the face of guerilla invansion, the subject (Stella) advises the leader (Odie) to kill the ring leader by arranging a small accident, instead of a direct murder and then:

when you learn of his untimely death, declare the day a day of national mourning, give a state funeral with full military honours. Name one of the back lanes after her. (p. 46). (Emphasis Supplied).

Strikingly, Kabito, in Betrayal in the City, is killed through a fake road accident. Subsequently, Mulili hypocritically intimates that, "Boss is tears in his eyes. He says that one road is to be Kabito road" (p. 66). The obvious satirical intention in these similar incidents needs no emphasis.
Using a strong symbolic approach, Ruganda projects his vision for a better future in his society in *Music Without Tears*. The guerrillas' and liberators' activities, whose gun shots persistently rock the background of the story motif, symbolize change. The leader of the liberators is depicted as a man of strong political conscience. In spite of the mass plunder and carnage occasioned by the state, he goes on a hunger strike. His revolutionary spirit, which resists state intimidation, sets a prototype for social transformation. The liberators possess a strong and militant spirit, their driving maxim is:

> If their political system is to make us meekly carry our crosses and turn us into soulless robots and silent observers, mine is to purge my specimens of their timidity and servitude; make them talk and scream at the top of their voices that ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. (p. 9). (Emphasis in original text).

In other words, through speeches like the above, the playwright craves to restore human dignity by preventing cruelty to people.

Similarly, the eclipse of Major General Ali symbolizes the dawn of a new era in the society. He is described as the most wanted criminal, having caused insecurity and fear in the society because of his atrocious activities. However, Ruganda calls for unity in his society. His revolutionary catch line through his characters, is that, "a people united can never be defeated" (p. 37). It is thus the collective responsibility of the people to fight for social change. Imbuga proposes the same immortal spirit in *Man of Kafira*, where men do not die but live on
eternally. This collective bargain is demonstrated by the soldiers in *Music Without Tears* who:

have joined hands with the guerrilla forces and internal malcontents who are tired of hunger. They are formenting a general uprising. The situation is pretty bad. (p. 39).

This is a recreation of the joint war fought by Tanzanian soldiers and Ugandan rebels to oust Idi Amin in 1979.

In *Man of Kafira*, Imbuga uses art to creatively penetrate, "the subconscious mind, that part of the brain that refuses to be cheated" (p. 8). Like Chesaina aptly observes, the play is an examination of:

the way in which those in positions of political leadership conduct themselves in the public world and how these positions affect their characters and public relations ...Imbuga uses drama to show how leadership affects human conditions. (1985:18).

In this play, the leadership created in *Betrayal in the City* is creatively recreated. Although our concern here is not to show how *Man of Kafira* is a sequel to *Betrayal in the City*, it is significant to note the time lag that separates the two plays. Among other things, Boss in *Man of Kafira* seems to have regained the power he lost at the end of *Betrayal in the City*, and then lost it once more to Jere. He has since been exiled to Abiara.

Once more, historicity is used as a resource material for dramatic creativity in this play. The central focus is on the overthrow of Amin from Uganda, and his subsequent exile in the Middle East. The play exploits time and space for specific purposes. It is set in the close of the 1970s
in Kafira, a twist-turvy of Africa, (which is transcribed as Afrika in Kiswahili). Its fictional world extends to Abiara, an anagram of Arabia, where Amin is actually said to have sought refuge after his downfall. The playwright distances Boss from his homeland so as to explore the psychology that propelled him to throw his state into total disarray.

The play-within-a-play which opens Man of Kafira, is the play Jusper wrote for the visiting Head of State in Betrayal in the City. In a twist of fate, while it is Boss himself who was the host to the visiting Head of State for whom the play was intended in Betrayal in the City, he is now the visiting Head of State, of sorts, who orders for the play in Man of Kafira. The play is a dramatic device through which Imbuga explores Boss's psychology. This is much so since it is Boss who asked for the play. Its contents reflect his beastly mania and thirst for power. However, Boss's animalistic instinct is juxtaposed with Imbuga's vision of society. Thus, the audience for the play is Boss himself and as such, the play-within-a-play offers a significant confrontation between the poet and the king.

Irony assumes a significant space in Imbuga's satirical recreation of the state of anarchy authored by Boss in his society. The collective 'We' is used as a device to prick the conscience of the masses. The playwright identifies with the downtrodden, who have been dehumanized to a level of laughing at the dead. It is the
state of plunder and carnage, which characterises the plays previously analyzed, which Imbuga ridicules. Confronted with overwhelming brutality, he asks, "what did we do that we must for ever float on waters of this turbulent sea" (p.6). However, the dramatist urges his people on, implanting in them a revolutionary spirit. Though the body can be annihilated, he suggests, the fighting spirit, which is man, is eternal. Thus, the play presents Boss with, "a practical demonstration of the futility of your violent actions here on earth" (p. 8).

In a biblical allusion that quotes Jesus's proverb on hypocrisy, the play clearly pours contempt on the hypocritical nature of contemporary leadership. This is symbolized by the cup which is clean outside but dirty inside. It is such hypocrisy which the play intends to reveal for as Osman says:

"this drama penetrates through man's external camouflage right into the remotest corner of his conscience. It is the human soul with the possibilities of its rottenness that we are now putting to test." (p. 9).

While people like Helna are frightened by the sight of a corpse, Boss is expected to enjoy it. Obviously, this beastly depiction of Boss marks the playwright's contempt for contemporary leadership.

The historical setting of the play is clearly delineated by the playwright. The play focuses on, "atrocities in Kafira during his (Amin's) rule"(p. 10), which led to his downfall. As an artist, Imbuga feels that he has to be committed to the truth. His creative aim is
intended to enlighten contemporary leadership on the value of human life and love on earth, (p.10). In a retrospective and rhetorical debate, the playwright feels that we cannot, "preserve the dignity and value of human life by numbing our artistic Sensitivity" (p. 10). Therefore, the artist seems to justify his open criticism of the brutal societies in The Floods, Betrayal in the City, Game of Silence and Music Without Tears. He attributes the problems in these societies to the artists who, "played the blind for too long" (p. 10). However, Imbuga isolates state and self-censorship as the greatest handicap for the artist.

In Man of Kafira, Boss's brutality is attributed to the agony of the common man. He, for instance, demands to be entertained by wrestlers, so as to prove that, only the fittest survive in his society. Ironically, the recipients of Boss's brutality are docile and devoid of action. Bin Bin is an epitome of the survival instinct which had kept Boss in power. Rather than fight for his rights, he opts to operate like a robot. He tells Osman that he can be:

deaf, dumb or blind at the push of a button from within me. So heed my words and save yourself. Go and find our good traditional wrestlers. (p. 16).

Bin Bin's subservience is contrasted with Osman's revolutionary spirit. The latter contends that, there are no men in Abiara, ready to die cheaply, just to amuse Boss's murderous instinct. The intended use of prisoners to hack each other to death so as to entertain Boss is reminiscent of the way prisoners in The Floods are fed well
and then given axes to liquidate each other.

Abiara, Boss's exile state, is not any different from Kafira. Gafi is as corrupt and brutal as Boss was during his reign in Kafira. He only pays lip service to human dignity, which he proclaims in his bedroom and in public media, Gafi has spent millions of the tax payers' money to host Boss, whom he has bought a bed. Describing the golden bed, Bin Bin states:

Pure gold, no imitation. As for the cost of making it don't ask me. I would grow grey hairs calling out the figures. It was all paid for in foreign currency by our leader, President Gafi. (p. 24).

As a result of the extravagant reception accorded to him, Boss lives in a world of fantasy, created around power. He believes that a toy female gun cannot draw blood from him; only a grenade can. Ironically, he eventually meets his death at the hands of Regina, a woman who only uses a knife.

As Imbuga (1991) aptly observes, there are historical facts showing that both Bokassa and Amin drunk blood from human skulls. This image is recreated through Boss whose ancestors are said to have been cannibals and who boasts:

Who, in this world, has lived on a more special diet than I. Now you name it, liver, tongue, lungs, kidney, spleen and all ... who else but I can boast of having fed on the breast of a brown gorrilla. (p. 26).

His speech reflects his habitual practises. He has an instinct to kill any one who opposes him in any way. For instance, only the fact that they are in a foreign land stops him from murdering Mercedez, whom he suspects of
having an affair with Gafi. He tells her that:

You are lucky. Very lucky indeed that we are not back on Kafira soil. No grave in exile is good enough for one of Boss's own family. No, not even you. (p. 27).

Boss's words constitute a confession about the atrocities he unleashed in Kafira during his leadership days.

Boss's murder instinct is reminiscent of Amin's and Bokassa's brutality. Namude (The Standard, September 8:8), says that both leaders' fascist dreaded secret service, which consisted of young men mesmerised by the immense power they wielded, enjoyed seeing people cower in their presence. Namude describes Amin as the brutal killer said to have "occasionally eaten human flesh". He continues to observe that Amin threw an iron curtain of terror around the East African community as he sought to rule for life.

Namude also describes Bokassa as the "Central African butcher" who ordered the killing of primary school pupils. Both Amin and Bokassa used troops and intelligence service for staying in power. Their agents gleefully perpetuated terror against the people.

The travelling political disease that afflicts Boss leads to a psychotic pre-occupation with power. He regards himself as "the greatest man on earth", (p.27). It is his distorted ego that makes him easily gullible and vulnerable. Due to his inability to come to grips with his present position, he clings to his old shadow of power. He is still convinced that Kafirans crave for his return. For this reason, Roving Eye is faked as a messenger assigned to assess the populace's attitude.
towards Boss's continued stay in Abiara. He likens himself to Shaka, the great warrior of South Africa and terms Kafira as, "my own country snatched away from my rule for a while" (p. 29).

Although Boss has been ejected from power, there still seems to be no respite for the Kafirans. Like the unpopular regime that has taken over in Music Without Tears, Jere, in Man of Kafira, has not facilitated any changes. Thus, the playwright perceives a cyclic pattern of events in the contemporary East African Society. Jere seems to have forcefully wrested power from Boss. Target describes Jere as a man of:

No politician's blood, but he is holding the country together. I think he could do with the helping hand from knowledgeable veterans like you. Infact, rumours have it that he is looking for a suitable successor to hand over power to. (p.30). (Emphasis Supplied).

The tone of succession suggested here foregrounds the power struggle motif which we will discuss later. However, it is significant to note that Imbuga seems to have mapped out the motif for The Successor, at this stage.

Later, we shall demonstrate how The successor is preoccupied with power struggle in the contemporary African society. This theme is already hinted at in Man of Kafira, with tribalism seen as one of the causes of this power strife. For example, Mosese was killed by Boss because he plotted to overthrow him. Mosese is said to have been, "led by disgruntled, power hungry youths of Akasen tribe" (p.31). On his part, Ruganda perceives power struggle in
Africa as instigated by the western countries. Wamala's abortive coup in *The Burdens* is said to have been influenced by the Americans. Be it as the case may, the dramatists attribute the region's political turmoil to both internal and external forces. While Imbuga blames it on tribalism and ethnic chauvinism, Ruganda pins it on neo-colonialism and imperialism.

Boss is afflicted by the same psychological disease as Odie in *Music Without Tears*. Both of them are living shadows of themselves, haunted by their past glory and powers. Boss for instance believes that he has "absolute powers even in exile," (p.31). However, there is evidence, in *Man of Kafira*, that Boss's exile is a deliberate strategy by the playwright. In the works previously discussed, it was established that the leaders are totally alienated from their subjects. In this regard, Boss's exile is seen as a learning process. Just like Odie, Boss suffers persistent mental traumas. He himself testifies to the effects of exile when he laments:

> It is strange what exile does to a man's mind. It gives you time to look back, to reflect and see where you went wrong. Yes, it gives you time to read and write from a new perspective. But above all it maddens a man. Yes, I am mad. So mad that I could even mastermind the third world war if I chose to. (p. 31).

Thus, *Man of Kafira* is a conscientization process for the contemporary leaders. It is intended to incite them to reflect on their activities. But for those who cannot face the realities of their past deeds, they become victims of the travelling disease, like Odie and Boss. Indeed, exile
is depicted as a practical learning experience for the leaders. There are indications that, given a chance, Boss would reconsider his leadership approaches. He confesses this fact when he says that:

I have been born again you see. That is what a leader needs. To be born again, to be given a second chance. Nobody could even deceive me now. No, my experience forbids it. (p. 32). (My Emphasis).

The visionary insight intimated here is that, society could only be salvaged if both the leaders and the citizenry realized their mistakes. Unfortunately, rather than accept changes wholly, Boss and Odie run amok, haunted by the memories of their past brutalities.

The power mania and egocentricism which Boss exhibits is reminiscent of Amin's delusions in Uganda. Boss languishes in illusory self-importance; equating himself with God and Allah. He perceives his barbaric rule in Kafira as having been divinely-ordained. It is these two, he claims, who have guided him against:

the numerous attempts that have been made to eliminate me. That is why I know that when my day comes, they will come, the two of them. Like twins they will come and say to me, in one voice," Sir, Your day is here". (p. 33).

Given his perverted political vision, Boss can never face the realities of his present predicament. He hangs on his illusory image of, "His Excellency, President Boss, past and future Head of the Republic of Kafira" (p. 36).

Through powerful flashbacks and reflective glances, Imbuga manages to close the time and space gap between Betrayal in the City and Man of Kafira. The shift of
geographical setting from Kafira to Abiara, and the
prompting circumstances, are recreated through Regina's
introspective reflection. It is through her narration that
we learn of Mosese's assassination by Boss, and her own
abduction to Abiara. It is also through her mental
pictures that the effects of Boss's regime in Kafira are
evaluated. She describes her mother country as:

One great coffin in which the advocates of truth
lie... The innocent have become criminals in
their own land, while the criminals sit at table
and laugh dry laughter over delicacies that they
do not deserve. Hunted people, that is what "We"
are. (p. 41). (Emphasis supplied).

Having analysed the dehumanizing events in the contemporary
East African Society, in the works discussed before,
Regina's vivid summation of the state of anarchy in her
country becomes all too clear.

Such vivid images of brutality are pinned down to
historical realities, as exemplified by Lum Lum's episode.
The latter is a recreation of the murder of Bishop Luwum by
Idi Amin. Boss's conscience is haunted by his brutality,
and especially Luwum's death. He tries to disclaim
responsibility, and instead blames the Bishop for his own
death:

You were wrong, and rude too. You refused me to
wed my second wife in your church... I was above
church laws, but you chose to cross my path. You
killed yourself the moment you denied me the
services of your church. (p. 45), (Emphasis
added).

However, Boss betrays his guilt conscience soon after. In
a speech that satirizes him, he shows remorsefulness. He,
claims to have mourned the Bishop with the rest of the
world and feigns friendship (p. 45).

As a matter of fact, Boss's dream reveals his secret intention to beg for forgiveness for his past mistakes. In a rhetorical monologue, he asks, "What shall I do to convince them that I meant well. What shall I do to prove to them that I am a changed man?" (p. 45). While Boss's words give a glitter of hope, the dramatist presents an image of cyclic political turbulence in his society. Jere reveals that he is not any different from Boss. Like Boss, Jere regards Jusper's political sensitivity as mental illness, and condemns him to an asylum. The people's collective past experiences are meaningless to the leaders, for as Jusper says:

We fought and freed Kafira from the claws of hyena. But now, even as we talk, that hyena is back among us, having been welcomed with both hands. What then is the meaning of sacrifice? Is it as temporary as it seems? (p. 62).

Through Jusper, the disillusionment that characterizes the contemporary East Africa society is clearly projected. In a despairing tone that reflects mass betrayal, Jusper decries the disenchanting status quo, lamenting that:

I fought hard and nearly lost my own life, yet those who merely stood and watched now sit in easy chairs belching power to the left and power to the right! Mama Rama, I want my share of the national flag. (p. 63).

Thus to Jusper, it is simply incomprehensible that Jere would accommodate Boss, who has killed the cream of Kafira. Despite the numerous contradictions which afflict his society, Imbuga still shows the way ahead for his people. The death of Boss at the end of Man of Kafira, because of
the sins he has committed against his people, gives an optimism of change in society. In the same way, Ruganda creates a sense of hope for his society, when the Liberators topple the brutal regime in *Music Without Tears*. However, power struggle remains the greatest anathema in the East African Society. It is this power struggle, and its effects, that gives rise to *The Burdens* and *The Successor*, as we shall demonstrate in the next chapter.
3.1. **POWER STRUGGLE**

All the plays discussed previously are set against a background of political activism. They are punctuated by power struggle and military infighting. However, the impending coups and counter coups are only reported to us. It is in the *The Successor* where Imbuga shows the practical drama of power struggle. The play revolves around power juggling, a social anathema which creates the perverted and turbulent political situation dramatised in East African creative fiction.

*The Successor* focuses on the politico-historical events in East Africa in general, and particularly Kenya, in the 1970s. Interviewed by Baingana Dusaidi (unpublished material), Imbuga intimates that:

> The *Successor*'s conception goes as far back as 1976 when the change-the-constitution group sought to block some people from succeeding should the president die. I got interested in the political heat that drives people to get together to start plotting. (Emphasis Supplied).

The political heat referred to here perhaps alludes to the process through which Boss, in both *Betrayal in the City* and *The Floods*, assumed and lost power. The same political heat is the reservoir of dramatic creativity in *Man of Kafira*. In the latter play, Boss survived a Coup de’tat organized by Mosewe, before losing power to Jere.

Further still, as we shall show later, this very power juggling is the source of the past and the present of Wamala, the conflicting time scale in the fictional world.
Although motivated by the political activities in Kenya in the 1970s, The Successor recreates the cyclic political scenes which have characterised the contemporary African states. The sea-saw battle between civilian and military governments is always justified on the basis of righting the wrongs in society. Unfortunately, the succeeding regimes turn out to be more evil than their predecessors. It is this hypocrisy which gave birth to the change-the-constitution-movement in Kenya, which aimed at:

making it impossible for the Vice president (Moi), who was not a member of Kenyatta's family, (tribe), to gain access to the throne. (Ochieng, et al, 1980:8). (Stress and addition mine).

Thus, the playwright uses historical events to creatively recapture the political history of his society at a particular historical era. For this reason, The Successor is set in the period when the trigger-happy boys reigned supreme, as exemplified by the coups in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya; among others.

As will issue in chapter four, folkloristic transposition occupies centre stage in the dramatic creativity in The Successor. Set in the semi-modern state of Masero, the play offers a chronological contrast and a comparative insight into the traditional administration vis-a-vis the modern one. This way, the political turmoil in Africa is traced to its tap root. The past is represented by the monarchy leadership of Emperor Chonda's father. Traditional African beliefs and superstitions are depicted as an integral part of the traditional control
system. Thus, the owl symbolizes the imminent danger threatening the lives of the people. The supernatural world, as represented by the shrine of the god of peace and fertility, was linked with life in the physical world. The perfect peace and harmony that prevailed in the traditional world has now been defiled, as symbolised by Zira's politicized pregnancy.

Therefore, the constant reflection of the past by Dr. See Through is designed to compare the peace of the past with the political turbulence of the present society. Dr. See Through constantly reminds his people of the peace of yester years, for as he tells them:

> remember the morning walk through the path of peace. And don't forget the dew under your feet.

(p. 2).

In other words, the modern society, regardless of its turbulent life, should recall the peace of yester days, which has hardly dried from their feet. The modern society is represented by Zira. Her suffering, as a result of, "defiling the holy ground of the God of peace" (p. 2), represents the plight of the African man, who has defiled the aspirations of independence.

Earlier, we had pointed out that, both Man of Kafira and Music Without Tears explore the psychology of a fallen leader, or his agents, who unleash the kind of terrorism that afflicts the East African Community. In The Burdens especially, we are introduced to the psychology of the villain, and the effects of his political fantasies. The Successor is a toss up battle in the search for suitable
leadership. In a symbolic signification, Imbuga uses Chief Mulemi as a representative of his society. It is Mulemi's inability to appoint his successor (and thus Africa's failure to elect credible leaders), which has brought bloodshed. The late Chief Mulemi:

* died before he named his successor. Now, by failing to name the man who would take over, he gave much hope to too many people. That is why at his death, every rich Sub-Chief wanted to become the new Chief. *(p.9)*

This incident alludes to the political situation in Kenya in 1978, following Kenyatta's death. Reports of competition within the cabinet were quite common. It is significant to note that, the term 'Chief' has assumed a symbolic meaning in East African drama. Just like Boss, it is used to refer to the people of power. In *The Burdens* for instance, Wamala is referred to by his peers as Chief. Kanagonago is also said to be a retired Saza Chief; giving the title Chief a touch of power wrangle.

Villains like Oriomra are ready to go to any extent in pursuit of power. For Oriomra especially, tribalism and paternalistic pretences are tools of trade in the game. After failing to convince Dr. See Through, he poses as a benevolent father. He lies to him about how he pleaded for mercy for Dr. See Through, from Chonda; and how he corrected the bad image painted of him. Oriomra demonstrates the same tribal chauvinism when he tells Sasia that their mothers hailed from the same clan, a fake relationship he exploits for political ends. He even pretends that his grandmother and Sega Sega's were
sisters. But once he realizes that his disguised tribal
whims are inefficient, Oriomra resorts to violence. The
only way he can wrest power from Jandi, Chonda’s heir
apparent, is to assassinate him. He feels that, "a hungry
man will do it for an egg" (p. 25).

In a parallel incident in Music Without Tears, the
subject advises the leader to hire mercenaries to
liquidate the leader of the opposition movement. Mapping
out the strategy, the subject instructs:

then one day when she is crawling back to her
abode, we give a hint to a kite or two. That
will do. Everything neat and proper. Done in
style. (p. 45).

Therefore, the dramatist in East Africa decries the
devaluation of human life as a result of power mania. In
an emotive imagery in The Floods, Ruganda recounts
Rutaro’s nerve-chilling murder by Bwogo. In a tone that
criticises the debasement of contemporary leadership,
Nankya Laments:

two thousand shillings and a man goes tumbling
down the stairs to his death. "Most wanted
criminal killed while trying to escape". (p. 32).
(Emphasis mine)

It is also significant to note that Odie justifies the
assumed death of Wak, in Music Without Tears, under the
prettext that he was aiding guerillas fighting his mother
country.

So far, it is evident that the East African dramatist
has no faith in post-independence leadership. But in
apportioning blame, a lot of it seems to be preserved for
the political advisers. In Betrayal in the City, Mulili
is killed while Boss is spared to reform another regime in
*Man of Kafira*. At the end of *The Floods*, Boss flees the
country while Bwogo is arrested by the new militia.
Similarly, Odie in *Music Without Tears* blames the 'Head'
for having fled and left him to face the wrath of the
invading liberators. In *The Successor*, Imbuga clearly
projects the view that it is the political advisers who
are responsible for the turbulence afflicting the society.
They are responsible for the alienation of Leaders from
their subjects. It is this alienation, as we have shown,
which leads to the suffering. This message is emphatically
projected by Dr. See Through when he advises Emperor
Chonda:

>beware of your advisers. They so crowd around
their Emperor that they blind him. You cannot
see beyond them. *So What You Know of Your people
is what they choose to tell you. In their midst
your majesty, you are a solitary ruler.* (p. 38).
(Emphasis Supplied).

The visionary insight at the end of *The Successor*
eventually sheds a light of hope for the people. The
symbolic signification of the shrine of the God of peace
assumes a wider meaning. Initially, we argued that the
people of Masero are suffering as a result of defiling
this Shrine of harmony. However, Imbuga creatively
restores the society to its democratic realms. Emperor
Chonda leads the people back to the Shrine of the God of
peace, to shake hands with the truth. The fall of Oriomra
is a glitter of hope for the society too. It is the
psychology of the failure of the villain and power
schemer, Like Oriomra, which forms creative inspiration
for Ruganda's *The Burdens*.

*The Burdens* focuses on the plight of an ex-Minister's family. Wamala, a contemporary leader, fell from power and served a ten-year jail sentence for plotting to topple the government. His present life revolves around his attempts to adjust himself to slum life. It is the power mania exhibited by Oromra in *The Successor* which has condemned Wamala to his present predicament. *The Burdens* thrives on Uganda's political history in the 1970s. Published a year before Amin toppled Obote, the play predicts the outcome of political turmoil in the East African society in the '70s. Ruganda foregrounds the prophetic vision in the play. He states that:

Wamala refers to the revolution later as the second coming, which actually took place with Amin toppling Obote. *The Burdens* was published in 1970 and shows what was to take place later. Already at the time one could see that things were going the wrong direction because of the mistake of uprooting a whole cultural tradition in the confrontation between the Kabaka and the republicans sent by Obote. This is still plaguing Uganda. (Imbuga, 1991: 29-30).

Notice that, both *The Burdens* and *The Successor*, issue from practical experiences in the 1970s East African history. Similarly, the two playwrights are uncanny prophetic writers, capable of predicting things long before they happen. They use the historical setting in their society, at specific times, to predict its possible directions. *The Floods* for instance, predicted Amin's overthrow in 1979. It was published a month before he was toppled. Again, in *Man of Kafira*, Imbuga predicted the psychological reaction of Amin and Bokassa to their eclipse
from power. Like Boss, the main character in the play, Bokassa and Amin have been quoted as living in delusion. They have been unable to reconcile themselves to their fallen positions, and always crave to regain their lost powers. Given such prohetic insight in East African drama, it is safe to conclude that:

these predictions certainly confirm the view that a sincere analysis and interpretation of current events by a writer endowed with insight and foresight, is bound to foretell, fairly accurately, the future consequences of those events. (Imbuga, 1991:31-32).

Like Boss in Man of Kafira, Wamala is unable to outgrow his past. Explaining the psychology of a fallen political villain like Wamala, Ruganda intimates that:

... Once you Surprise Yourself with the find you are not only unable to forget your former self, but you also keep on looking forward to bigger surprises. (p. v).

It is such shadow image, built on fantasy, which makes Wamala wallow in delusions. He languishes in self-pity and myopic ambition; and as the playwright explains:

the play tries to diagnose the symptoms and damage of modern cancer-empty-headed ambition and its attendant spirit, self-pity. (p, vi).

Thus, it is due to this modern cancer that Wamala is unable to adjust to his new life. His failure to provide for his family is representative of the failure of contemporary leadership to live up to the people's expectations.

Indeed, the Tinka-Wamala strife is used to represent the leadership struggle in society. Their tug-of-war revolves around the provision of a bed for Kaija, the medication for the T.B.-inflicted Nyakake, and other
domestic responsibilities. It is thus a struggle for leadership accountability, a theme which has pre-occupied modern creative writing. The East African political history is recreated through a folk tale. In Tinka's oral tale, the contemporary society is symbolised by the hill, from which ran a maze of paths. The palace on the hill, which was wretched by the storm, represents the disruption of harmony, in the post-independence states, by power wrangling. Tinka's symbolic guns, which play drums, represent the gun era in East Africa. Ironically, each power transition occasions a short-lived glitter of optimism for the people.

Materialism is perceived, in The Burdens, as a motivator to power struggles. Those who ascend to positions of power amass wealth by exploiting the downtrodden. For example, the clerk at the Public Employment Board cheats Wamala out of his money. The Clerk is a neo-colonial agent, who collaborates with multinational companies to exploit his people. International companies, such as the Associated Matches, are propelled by, "monopoly mania and exploitation mentality" (p. 20). Ruganda defines the exploitation which has crippled his society as:

Luxury. The opium of the bourgeoisie. Big business, big mansions, big bottomed wives. An endless search for extras that one doesn't really need. That is Luxury. The cornerstone of exploitation...it is exploitation through and through. They are bent on sucking the blood out of us until we drop dead. (p. 23).
Wamala finds the slum life stifling, and his present existence meaningless. He looks at his past and its glories with nostalgia. The rigid leadership cadre has made his life miserable. He describes his society as:

"hell let loose. It is ruthless. It breaks one. Everyone orders you to walk with your tail between your thighs... It gives them a feel of power. They want you to know they are now on top, sitting on your head. And you beneath their buttocks, suffocating... this crowd full of power-hungry bastards with twitching hands-hands eager to grab and get rich, get rich quickly."

(p. 35).

Confronted by this overwhelming life, Wamala only finds meaning in the, "glorious past" (p. 37).

Majority of the slum dwellers are helpless drunkards who take beer to steal themselves away from social realities. According to Wamala, the contemporary regimes have produced "a nation of desperate alcoholics and sycophants. Sycophants flaunting their hypocrisy to absent-minded elders" (p. 37). In other words, the leaders, who are represented by the elders, are responsible for the people's frustrations.

However, Wamala is used to show how political opportunism has ruined the post-independence African society. His present life is a result of his past malpractices as a leader. His marriage to Tinka was for purely political reasons. He married her, not out of love, but because he wanted to use the influence of Tinka's father, who was a church elder, to win the independence elections. Thus, he represents the crop of Africans who, posing as black messiahs, assumed power on the eve of
Apart from personal power mania, Ruganda also blames neo-colonialism for the political woes in his society. Wamala attributes his political failure to the Americans, who cheated him to attempt an overthrow of the government. Besides, the same neo-colonial agents are responsible for the alienation of the leaders from their subjects. For instance, the white secretary, who is deployed to, "frustrate the bad boys" (p. 43), puts a wedge between Wamala and the old veteran. In a symbol intended to criticise the neo-colonial link, the playwright describes its indispensability complex as, "trusting a black Lamb to a white Lioness" (p. 43).

It is Ruganda's vision that his society should shed off the flag independence myth and assert its autonomy fully. In a strong collective "we" voice, he asks his people:

for how long are we going to carry the sins of the whiteman? God! will we ever take ourselves seriously and man our show? This is sad! (p. 43).

Thus, Ruganda shares Franz Fanon's views, in _The Wretched of the Earth_. It is the feeling of Fanon that, if we want to model Africa on European culture, then we should leave our destiny to Europe. The Europeans, he continues to observe, will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us.

During his hey days, Wamala lived on corruption. After his downfall, the society he languishes in thrives on corruption and nepotism. In the Kanagonago parody, we
learn that corruption has eaten deep into the moral fibre. One needs a tall relative to be able to make ends meet. Kanagonago explains the exploitative situation, stating that:

> You know how it is these days, every Little thing needs a middleman, A contact in the chain-link ladder. (p. 55).

Kanagonago's sentiments are echoed by the Askari in *Betrayal in the City*. The latter tells Jere:

> here, tea with milk, yet you don't belong to my tribe. You need a tall relative to get anything these days. (p. 31).

However, Ruganda uses a Marxist approach and symbolic signification to show the inevitability of change. The Kanagonago-Wamala confrontation symbolizes the inevitable struggle between the oppressor and the oppressed. It is significant to note that, in this incident, Wamala assumes a collective "we" voice. His actions represent mass uprising against the exploiters. At the end of the play, the arrest of Tinka, who assumes the image of a villain, is symbolic of the dawn of a new era in society. The only misgiving in the ending of the play is that it sounds rather contrived. The entry of the soldiers to bring about change in the society is rather rehearsed. It is not prepared for by the plot. This weakness notwithstanding, it is evident that *The Burdens* is a highly optimistic play.

As pointed out earlier, both *The Burdens* and *The Successor* derive from the same historical period. Imbuga, in *The Successor*, focuses on the psychology of power maniacs. He is interested in the forces that led to the
political turbulence in East Africa in the 1970s. On the other hand, Ruganda, in The Burdens, takes off from where Imbuga's The Successor stopped. While The Successor ends with the downfall of Oriomra, The Burdens moves a step further. It traces the lives of the victims of political struggles. The point we project here is that, there is a creative coherence in East Africa drama. One element of social reality, tackled by a playwright in a particular work of art, gives rise to another, and thus extends the momentum of creativity in the region. Having dealt with a variety of evils revealed in East African drama, we shall, in the next section, examine some of the effects of political turmoil, which find expression in the regional drama.

3.2. THE AFTERMATH OF POWER STRUGGLE

So far, we have attempted to draw a comparative link in the dramas of Imbuga and Ruganda. Betrayal in the city, Game of Silence and The Floods form a set of East African plays, whose major focus is political perversion in the contemporary East African society. The main concern of these plays is an examination of leadership, as well as its effects on the common man. The general setting of these plays is pervaded by an atmosphere of despair and disillusionment. They portray the political situation in the post-independence East African Society as characterized by carnage, plunder and human agony. Thus, the overriding aim in this set of plays is the effect of misgovernance on
However, leadership analysis in the three plays mentioned above is from the victims' point of view. In other words, it is through the people that we learn about the results of distorted leadership in independent Africa. For the first time, we are introduced to the psychology of the leaders responsible for human sufferings, in *Man of Kafira* and *Music Without Tears*. As pointed out in the previous chapter, these plays are a sequel to *Betrayal in the City* and *The Floods*, respectively. The playwrights use the former two plays to carry out a post-mortem examination of the brains behind the atrocities prevalent in the latter ones. Throughout the works cited above, the regime in power is perpetually under siege from guerrilla and liberation movements. There are constant reports of background military and political activism. It is these political machinations which give rise to *The Successor*. The play offers an insight into the mental structure of political villains and power jugglers. When Oriomra is arrested at the end of *The Successor*, it is obviously evident that his failure has come. Oriomra's existence in power limbo is recreated by Ruganda in *The Burdens*.

Coincidentally, Wamala's causes of failure seem to explain why Oriomra plotted to topple the government in *The Successor*. Wamala claims to have been influenced by the Americans, who propelled his power-thirsty ego. Thus, Wamala's slum life is like an extension of the political world of Oriomra, in *The Successor*. To that end, both
Imbuga and Ruganda have vividly presented a psychological insight into the forces that cause instability in the society. The hierarchy of their works discussed so far constitutes a movement of drama through which the socio-political history of East Africa in the post-independence period can be vividly recaptured.

We have already discussed a variety of problems facing the East African Society, which are associated with misgovernance. However, the refugee problem is one disastrous issue which is articulated in East African drama. Imbuga attributes the influx of refugees to the social disintegration occasioned by leadership failure. This view is registered through Grabio's cry in *Man of Kafira*:

> father...hear the united voices of son and daughters of Kafira crying out begging for a leader who will return peace, love and dignity to their troubled motherland. (p. 34).

The evident view of disenchantment with contemporary leadership is all too obvious to be emphasized.

In the post-independence theatre, the refugee influx is dramatized as a crippling experience for third world countries. Imbuga decries the disruptive social situation occasioned by power mania. In *Man of Kafira*, he laments that, Kafirans:

> are dotted in all dark corners of the world, homeless. For how long shall we leave the fate of these children in the hands of their exile host. (p. 35).

Notice the choice of the word, "dotted," to allude to the proliferation of refugees in the society. The intensity of
the destabilization of the society is so strong that dramatists have tended to utilize it as a creative resource in their artistic imagination.

Ruganda perceives refugee status as a dehumanizing process. In *Music Without Tears*, he feels that:

there is nothing as abominable as being a refugee... You are shouted at. Your dignity is lowered... a refugee! God! It's hell Man. From the sweeper to the highest official, they subtly remind you that you don't belong. You are an alien, a third-rate citizen, cheap labour...

(pp. 75-76).

A refugee is dehumanized and lives an uncertain life. He is in constant fear of repatriation or losing a job. And as Wak laments, "you can never do anything wrong once you are a refugee" (p. 76).

In *The Successor*, Imbuga recapitulates the uncertainty of the life led by refugees, as a result of political turmoil. Dr. See Through and Jandi are exiles from a state which was torn by factionalism and rivalry, following the death of Chief Mulema. The political disease, the process by which leaders are toppled, is counter-productive. Apart from producing psychologically warped leaders, it annihilates the masses, leading to destitution. Through Dr. See Through, the plight of the refugees is vividly presented. Explaining his fate, See Through States:

When I rode high on the wings of fate from my motherland, I had no place to take my wife and children to. I had gone to seven different lands but had been refused entry to all of them. I have learned to walk softly on hard grounds and to smile while I should be frowning and to sing with spirit when my eyes are filled with tears. That, if you want to know is what it means to be a refugee. I am a shadow of my previous
In *Man of Kafira*, Imbuga attributes all the problems crippling mankind as occasioned by the travelling disease. He explains that, "the process by which men are exiled is a disease. A disease they carry on their head forever" (p. 43). As shown in our analysis of *Man of Kafira, Music Without Tears* and *The Burdens*, the leaders carry a disease of self-delusions and perverted fantasies. On the other hand, the masses, especially the refugees carry a load of dehumanization and perpetual agonies.

We have opted to treat the refugee issue so extensively because its intensity has drawn creative attention in East African drama. However, one needs to point out that, all the social evils so far discussed are as a result of power struggle. In other words, all the social ills afflicting the society are mainly promoted by power mania. In the preceding chapters, we have dealt with a cross-section of problems attributable to power struggle in the East African society. Therefore, the dramatist in this region attempts to use power struggle, together with its results, for artistic creativity. As evident from our study, all issues emanating from the political situation in East Africa form a central preoccupation for Imbuga and Ruganda. Having detailed the thematic aspects of the works of Imbuga and Ruganda, we shall move a step further in Chapter four. Since literature is a synthesis of style and content, we set out to discuss the dramatic strategies adopted by the playwrights to transmit their ideas.
CHAPTER FOUR

DRAMATIC STYLE

1. Introduction

Geoffrey Leech (1981:10) defines style as the way in which language is used in a particular context. Style is the most essential element of a play; for it is the vehicle through which communication is achieved. It is through dramatic style that the playwright transmits his ideas and articulates his message. In other words, as Drew (1968:11), rightly observes, style constitutes all the means of expression used by the dramatist to expand his meaning. Dramatic style refers to every device used by the playwright to make his aim known to his audience or readers.

We believe that any action, event or occurrence in drama is arranged according to a controlling idea, whose meaning is made apparent by the dramatist's stylistic rendition. We concur with Ngara's view (1982:19) that any perfect work of art is a synthesis of form and content. It is the balance between reality, subject matter, themes, views, ideas and attitudes, and all elements of style. Our discussion of dramatic style in this section will proceed from four broad perspectives. These will be: characterization, dramatic structure, appropriation of folkloristic material and symbolic signification.

1.2 CHARACTERIZATION

Emmanuel Ngara (1982:16) defines characters as the participants who populate the artist's fictional world, and
through whom the artist tells his story. These participants are the artist's imaginative creations who interact with one another, who participate in the action of the work of art, and who are used as the writer's agents in communicative process. Character realization is therefore the dramatist's conscious attempts to create images of imaginary persons in a credible way, so that they exist for the reader as real, within the limits of the playwright's world of fiction. In a nutshell, character realization constitutes the artist's portrayal of imaginary persons, participating in a work of art. Through the characters' actions, the artist develops his plot, conflicts and his overall creative objectives.

In the plays of Imbuga and Ruganda, there is a tendency to have characters, or a group of characters, who stand for specific ideas. In other words, the dramatists project their views, as well as social contradictions, through characterization. In Imbuga's plays, the characters are grouped in specific categories, in line with the central ideas. Similarly, Ruganda fashions out his characters in line with his vision. The only significant distinction is that, while Ruganda's dramas are characterized by economy of characters, Imbuga populates his dramas with a huge cast.

Thus, Ruganda uses minimum characterization, in what Kenyatta, (1986), calls the controlled experiment. Two or three characters are confined in a limited space, mostly a room. Their actions are also governed by controlled time-scale. For example, the action in Music Without Tears is set in Odie's room. There are only three characters involved in the actual playwright's fictional world. However, through role-playing,
Flashbacks and mental imaginations, other characters and scenes are alluded to. Examples of characters who are either marginalized, or totally absent, are Stella's father and General Ali. It is through the conflicts build-up between Odie and Stella that we learn of the brutal way in which their father met death at Ali's hands.

Character development in Imbuga's dramas is a technique appropriated to the development of ideas in the plays. Take The Successor for instance: each character in the play is used to represent a certain element, or elements of social reality. Through inter-character contrasts and conflicts, the major social contradictions evolve. Oriomra, the villain responsible for social instability, is juxtaposed with Jandi and Dr. See Through. Although Oriomra is a leader born in Masero, his inability to live up to his responsibilities is contrasted with the competence of the exiled refugees.

However, a basic mark in the characterization style of the two playwrights is that, most of the characters are depicted as types. It is possible to discern a group of characters who are created in accordance with certain ideas. The Image of Boss, for example, has been used as a technique to evaluate post-independence leadership. All the character traits attributed to Boss are a representation of the quality of social leadership. Indeed, Boss is used as a representative of the bunch of leaders, who, masquerading as black messiahs, ascended to power on the eve of independence. Such leaders are portrayed as having abdicated their responsibilities. This explains why Boss is accorded negative qualities in Betrayal in the City, Man of Kafira and The Floods. In all the plays, Boss, and hence
temporary leadership, is depicted as the sole architect of evils afflicting the people.

In *Music Without Tears*, post-independence African leadership is represented by the Queen Termite and the Head. It is through their activities that we are able to evaluate the quality of leadership in the society. *The Burdens* refers to a crop of leaders as Chief or the veteran. In other words, though the titles used vary, there is abundant evidence that all the plays are intended to examine leadership in the post-independence society. Except in *Man of Kafira* and *The Successor*, the leaders are markedly absent from the actual events of the plays. We are only able to assess their quality of leadership through the eyes of the victims of their governance. Irrespective of the titles used, all the plays uniquely present leadership negatively. It is this unfavourable depiction of leadership which marks the playwrights' disillusionment with post-independence African leadership.

While the leaders are kept in the background of dramatic action, their political advisers take centre stage. The advisers are perceived as villains, and the actual agents of moral decadence. For example, the brutal machinations of Lili in *Betrayal in the City* are similar to those of the madman and Bwogo in *The Floods*. They are the agents of post-dependence leadership who are deployed to brutalize the citizenry. They embody the level of corruption, nepotism, and all forms of evils associated with the contemporary society.

This group also lie, Bin Bin in *Man of Kafira*, Oriomra in *The Successor*, Zuma and Bango in *Game of Silence* and Odie in *Music Without Tears*. They share the unenviable tag of perpetuators...
state atrocities. In the vision of the dramatists, it is this group which is actually responsible for the political turbulence in the society.

Pitted against the leaders and their henchmen is the group of masses, the recipients of the evils perpetuated by the leaders. The common man is the buffer zone for all state evils. For instance, Kyeyune, in The Floods, stands for the majority of the people, who are weighed down by state brutality. His plight is shared by Nina and Doga in Betrayal in the City. A striking similarity in the depiction of the common men is that, they are all impotent of any action.

In Game of Silence, the bottom dwellers, who form the bulk of the majority, die by the numbers without raising a voice. Although they are aware of their predicament, this group of masses cannot initiate any action to salvage themselves. They have the capacity to impotently put up with state atrocity, unless they are rescued, or led to salvation by other people. This mass docility is symbolized by Flora, in Game of Silence. She is killed while, paradoxically, she tries to solve her problems by marrying Jim, the Son of the Head of State responsible for the death of her people.

However, the greatest contrast offered in the two dramatists' works is their perception of the revolutionary group. This category of characters includes the youth, the intelligentsia and the artists. These are the members of society whom Imbuga endows with the ability to salvage the society. In Betrayal in the City for instance, this group of sites is represented by the dead Adika, Jere, Jusper and Moses, Tonga. Indeed, Jere's transformation from a soldier, serving
the state, to an advocate of the truth, languishing in prison for political reasons, is a symbol of the inevitable revolution in society. As Jere confesses, he was a soldier, "until I came face to face with reality" (p. 28). Mosese's transformation, after witnessing state hypocrisy and brutality during Adika's funeral, is also a symbol of the revolutionary spirit vital for social change. It is this character delineation in Imbuga's works which is lacking in Ruganda's The Floods.

The Floods uses both Kyeyune and Nankya as agents of social change. However, the two characters are depicted as egocentric and devoid of action. Nankya is discredited by the playwright, who presents her as a literary quack and an immoral and insensitive artist. She is accorded the same image like Stella in Music Without Tears. Both Nankya and Stella are flirting with Bwogo and Ali respectively, two state agents responsible for the death of their people. Flora exhibits similar complacency in Game of Silence. The latter is killed by the system, as she tries to marry Jim, the son of the head of state. It is the same political ignorance exhibited by Regina in Betrayal in the City.

In contrast, Regina assumes a revolutionary temper in Man of Kafira. As she says, she is willing to, "go down fighting before I am consumed by the fire" (p. 37). To that end, we can argue that, Regina represents Imbuga's characters who seem to develop and politically grow with the intensity of social contradictions. On the other hand, Ruganda's characters like Nankya, Kyeyune, Stella and Tinka, tend to reconcile themselves with the oppressive system. Even when they appear to fight, it is more for egocentric and individualistic purposes, than for the welfare of the majority.
In fact, the politically conscientized elites, like Wak in *Music Without Tears*, only pay lip service to liberation activities. Wak is seen as an intellectual and an artist who gives revolutionary Marxist lectures on, "the inevitable road that will lead us back to democracy" (p. 102). However, Wak's public lectures, just like Nankya's Marxist rhetorics in *The Floods*, are purposeless. Wak is only a man of empty words, who opts for external comfort, rather than fight the enemy.

As artists and intellectuals, both Nankya and Wak are the opposites of the same category of characters in Imbuga's plays. Raja in *Games of Silence*, for instance, is committed to the welfare of his people at all costs. So is Jusper in both *Man of Kafira* and *Betrayal in the City*. Similarly, the people of Masero, in *The Successor*, owe their lives to Zira and Dr. See Through, both of whom are artists. The two artists are used as creative decoys for Oriomra, the villain. Their commitment to the truth saves the people of Masero from Oriomra's machinations.

In Imbuga's vision, the ability to transform society is a collective mass activity. Having gone through a conscientization process, the people are depicted consciously fighting to alter the status quo. For example, *The Successor* ends with the masses going to the shrine of the God of peace, a symbol of change in society. Similarly, in *Game of Silence*, it is the optimistic people's, "dance of the future" (p. 54) which closes the play. In *Betrayal in the City*, the people unite to topple Boss. Although it is Jusper who kills Mulili, the advocate of brutality, he says, "I did it for Kafira. I did it
In all of you people" (p. 77). In Man of Kafira, it is the mass uprising that leads to Boss's death at the hands of Regina. It is, as it were, Boss who, "has killed himself" (p. 70). That is, the death of Boss, because of his sins, is a purification process for the Kafirans.

Therefore, while Imbuga feels that it is the people themselves who should fight for social change, Ruganda seems to bet his faith in the army. In The Floods for instance, it is the soldiers who arrest Bwogo. The ending of play signals an ascendency of yet another military regime to power. In The Ordens too, it is the police boots which set in to bring about change. This same ending is revisited at the end of Music Without Tears. Thus, there is a cyclic pattern of military leadership in Ruganda's world view. This notwithstanding, it is safe to assert that, the end justifies the means. Although the two playwrights suggest different methods of bringing about change in their society, they perceive it as inevitable.

All in all, characters in the plays of Ruganda and Imbuga are ideational. Their development is determined by the overall vision of the playwright. Ruganda uses a limited number of characters, who actually participate in his fictional world. However, he expands his character involvement through role-playing. The characters are able to diversify their action and transcend the narrow space and time schemata through an interfusion of varied dramatic techniques. The supplementary scenes are mostly played in the characters' imaginative mind.

On the other hand, Imbuga populates his fictional world with a host of characters. His ideas are basically developed through character delineation. Thus, the manner in which characters are
developed, influence, to some extent, the structure of the play.

4.3. DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

Play structure is comprised of elements which are organized according to some principles of order and association. The play text operates at different analyzable units, such as theme, plot, action, episode, characters, time, and space. The fusion of these units constitutes the dramatic structure. Thus, structural analysis seeks to establish the relatedness between the various units in a play. The scene is the basic unit in play construction; and as such, dramatic structure has to do with how scenes in a play relate, how they are organized. As Levitt (1971:1) aptly points out, "dramatic structure is the place, relation and function of scenes in a play-text".

As structural units, scenes, in East African drama, help to account for the when, how and where of the dramas. By indicating change in time and space, scenes help to locate the setting of the play. This is an aspect which is characteristic of Imbuga's plays. He uses scenes to locate the environment of his fictional world. The playwright tends to delineate each scene clearly, so that each can be distinguished as an independent entity, playing a specific role in the structural whole of the play. It is mainly through the interplay of scenes that his ideas and meaning are transmitted. In The Successor for example, the events have a causal relationship, with the events of one scene giving rise to the next.

On the other hand, dramatic action and scenes, in Ruganda's works, are built around conflicts. It is the inter-personal relationships which basically determine the rise and fall and
the scene patterning of his plays. His characters are able to transcend their controlled environment through use of backward glances, flashbacks, role-playing and retrospective and introspective glimpses. The Burdens, for example, shifts in time and space, moving forwards and backwards, so as to define the present. Most of the scenes are thus set in the character's imagination. Most of the events which occasioned Wamala's present life are thus recreated through the character's reflective mind. Similarly, in The Floods, most of the scenes which offer insight into Bwogo's and Nankya's past life are set in their minds. Thus, while Imbuga creates and magnifies the scenes in his works, Ruganda's fictional world is diversified by the characters themselves.

The point emphasized above is that, Imbuga creatively sets and shifts the scenes that constitute the structure of his plays. He uses a multiplicity of characters, episodes and events, all of which he clearly delineates and categorizes. It is only in Game of Silence where he attempts to economize on his characters. Most of the scenes in this play, like in majority of Ruganda's dramas, take place in Raja's pictorial mind. Raja's mind is used as a telescopic device, through which all the structural elements of the play are harmonized. Indeed, in Game of Silence, he adopts the controlled experiment prominent in Ruganda's works. His fictional world and the central action are extended through techniques such as the dream motif, flashbacks and psychic insight.

The plays of the two dramatists at times tend towards psycho drama. Ruganda, for example, seems to use drama as a form of psychotherapy. His creative genius seems to be bent on
revealing the inner and concealed contradictions of his characters. In *The Floods*, for example, Bwogo's innate murderous instinct is exposed to us through his sub-conscious actions and words. Similarly, the hidden political ambitions harboured by Wamala, in *The Burdens*, come to the surface through his unconscious utterances. It is, however, in *Music Without Tears*, where Ruganda presents himself as a psycho-dramatist. The actions of Odie, which are tied to his psychology, are intended to expose his innate brutal nature. Imbuga uses the same psychotherapy device, in revealing the actual character of Boss in *Man of Kafira*.

Otherwise, the setting of Imbuga's plays, unlike that of Ruganda's, is always defined and shifted by the playwright himself. He sets his scenes and controls the fictional world in which his characters operate. On the other hand, Ruganda's use of controlled experiment is appropriated to the characters' creative potential. There are moments, like in *The Floods* and *The Burdens*, when we ride in great suspense, Wandering in an imaginary world created by the characters themselves. It is thus possible to talk of the fictional world of the playwright, and the world of fantasy created by the characters themselves. This is unlike Imbuga's plays where characters tend to operate within the world created by the playwright for them.

In terms of plot and the ordering of events in the play, Imbuga's dramas tend to have a tri-modal structure. All elements of the play structure, especially the scenes, are patterned to build up to a single overall climax. It is at the peak level that the gradually built up tensions are resolved. Thus, climaxes in Imbuga's works are build around the story
line. All episodes and events are structurally patterned to build up to a single crescedo. In Betrayal in the City for example, the main story motif is the let down of masses by their leaders. At the initial stage, we are introduced to the problem of the masses and its causes. We then proceed to the intermediary stage, where the forces of the evil are pitted against the liberation forces. The third stage is the open confrontation which leads to Boss's downfall. This traditional story-telling motif is also used in The Successor. Like the proverbial Ogre, Oriomra's activities build up to a climax, which leads to his downfall. This tri-modal dramatic structure is also used in both Man of Kafira and Game of Silence. Significantly, Imbuga's climaxes are attained at the resolution level, which marks his visionary outlook. He structures his plays in such a way that the kind of society he envisages is created at the climax stage.

On his part, Ruganda plots his plays in a series of sub-climaxes, which revolve around the characters. In most of his plays, Ruganda hardly ever builds shattering climaxes. Instead, he builds high points for individual participants in his fictional world. Each scene in his plays offers a fresh angle to the central story line. In The Burdens, for instance, the Kanagonago scene attains a crescedo, which is different from the climax build up as a result of the Tinka-Wamala domestic tensions. Also, the retrospective glimpses through which Tinka and Wamala in The Burdens, and Bwogo and Nankya in The Floods, relive their past, offer varied creative moments for climax set ups. These sub-climaxes, need not, of necessity, be part of the overall climax at the end of the play.
In terms of setting and the surrounding atmosphere, the playwrights make explicit use of stage directions. The opening stage directions are mostly utilized to set the central tone and the general mood in the play. In *The Floods* for example, the stage directions at the beginning map out the uncertainty that cuts across the fictional world. Thus Ruganda sets *The Floods*:

an island in Lake Victoria, Intermittent growls of thunder and flashes of lightning. The sky is dark with clouds of rain off stage: shouts, cries and all manner of noise from stampeding men, women and children - the last batch that is fleeing the island. (p, 1).

The image created by the playwright is that of a rapid and uncontrolled occurrence of events. It is this gloomy and terrifying picture which runs across the entire play. The imaginary impending storm is the driving force on which the story motif is founded.

Similarly, *Betrayal in the City* is set against Adika's death. The play opens with a vivid description of his grave and a clear illustration of the varied reactions to his death. The sense of loss and doom exhibited by his parents cuts across the whole play. The dramatic activity is centred around his death. Adika represents the disillusionment that Kafirans are grappling with. He is the motivation of the revolutionary spirit and militancy of Jusper and Mosese. Although absent, he influences virtually all the events and episodes of the play.

Imbuga describes Masero, the setting of *The Successor* as a semi-modern state. His choice of the word, 'semi-modern', offers a comparative insight into his social perception. He uses Masero to compare the past and the present of the African society. Similarly, *The Burdens* is set in a semi-permanent
house. Again, the semi-permanency of the setting stands for the comparative evaluation of the past and present life of Wamala. It is this contrast which is the basis of dramatic activity in the play. In the same vein, Music Without Tears is located in Odie's room. It is described as an affluent surrounding, showing the wealth of men who get rich through unfair means.

The beginning of the play sets the tone of contempt against leadership, which marks the concern of the whole play.

However, Ruganda is distinguished by an expansive use of the role-playing technique in his works. He uses this technique to diversify his imaginative world, which is otherwise confined by his use of the controlled experiment. For example, the satirical presentation of the futility of democracy in the society, is recreated through this technique, in Music Without Tears. In the mock election incident, Wak and Odie play the role of political candidates. Stella takes up the role of the corruptible returning officer. The parody elections of a 'primer' end up with a majority victory for Wak, who is shortly afterwards toppled by Odie. In another incident, Stella and Odie re-enact the leader-subject relationship. Stella, who plays the role of the subject, advises Odie, the leader, to eliminate the leader of the opposition force. In this microcosmic incident, the playwright satirizes leadership hypocrisy.

The J.F. Kennedy Award scene, in The Floods, presents a clear example of role-playing as a dramatic technique. Nankya and Bwogo assume a multiplicity of roles. They variedly take up the roles of the journalists, the members of the panel, as well as playing their own roles. Role playing is also used to
dramatise the Kanagonago scene in *The Burdens*. In this episode, Tinka and Wamala relive their past life, by re-enacting the shadow images of themselves. Similarly, Bwogo and Nankya, in *The Floods*, give an insight into their past life, through the same technique. A good example is their joint re-enactment of how they met at zebra crossing.

Whereas Ruganda makes an explicit use of the role-playing technique, Imbuga overtly employs the play-within-a-play technique in his dramas. The play-within-a-play technique aims at facilitating:

the discovery of a hidden truth or secret which is crucial for the resolution of some of the conflicts within the main play. (Imbuga, 1991).

In *Man of Kafira*, Imbuga uses this device to explore the murderous regime orchestrated by Boss in Kafira. The opening scenes of the play are used to create the central conflicts and the overall atmosphere, which dominate the main drama. Similarly, in *The Successor*, Imbuga combines the play-within-a-play technique with a powerful flash-back, to relive Jandi's banishment by Emperor Chonda. This scene is the central punch line in the play. It is the point of attack for, through it, the central contradictions in Chonda's leadership are projected.

However, the most dramatic play-within-a-play technique is used in *Betrayal in the City*. Imbuga uses Jusper's play, "Betrayal in the City", to facilitate the overthrow of Boss by Jere and Mosese.

One peculiar structural element which distinguishes Ruganda's works is his explicit manipulation of dramatic asides. He uses dialogue to contrast his characters, a device upon which the transmission of his ideas is highly dependent. The central
story in his play is normally extended through digressions, analogies and irrelevancies. The playwright uses cross-purposed dialogical patterns, through which characters tell stories, seemingly unrelated to the core story line.

However, the parallel stories, which normally take the form of inter-personal attacks, are intended to diversify the playwright's fictional world. In *The Floods*, *The Burdens* and *Music Without Tears*, the inner lives of the protagonists, as well as the major contradictions in the drama, are projected through inter-personal attacks. Thus, Nankya and Bwogo, as well as Tinka and Wamala, thrive on personal vendetta. The domestic tensions which characterize their lives are creatively manipulated to highlight the broader socio-political conflicts in the society.

Imbuga's creative strategies are distinguished by his psychic insight approach. He uses the mental set up of some of his characters to put across certain ideologies. The psychological traumas which afflict his characters are designed to project his visionary outlook. A good example is Jusper's insanity, which runs across both *Man of Kafira* and *Betrayal in the City*. Jusper's mental illness, as well as that of Raja in *Game of Silence*, is used to clothe the playwright's revolutionary sentiments. While the mental disorders of Jusper and Raja are creative techniques to articulate the writer's revolutionary vision, Boss's psychotic disease, in *Man of Kafira*, shows the guilt-ridden conscience of a haunted brute.

Imbuga combines the psychic insight device with a dream motif technique, so as to reveal the inner selves of the characters. For example, Moseso, in *Betrayal in the City*,
reveals his political ambitions in a dream. It is also through the dream motif that Boss's disturbance, by Bishop Luwum's death, is revealed to us in Man of Kafira. However, all these modern techniques, as we shall show below, are synthesized with elements of traditional theatrical material.

4. APPROPRIATION OF FOLKLOISTIC MATERIAL

The East African dramatist uses folk theatre material in his stylistic rendition. Genres of oral literature such as proverbs, dances, songs, myths, legends and folk tales are used as creative material. The folk tale motif has even become a basis for the creation of play structure. In other words, the plots of most plays take the pattern of oral tales. The story line in The Successor takes the resemblance of the structure of traditional stories. Oriomra is modelled on the traditional ogre. The ogre is a popular symbol of destruction in the traditional tales of most of the African communities. Traditional stories have a triangular structure. They begin with the introduction of man and his peaceful environment, then the conflicts occasioned by the entry of the ogre, and finally the salvation of man. The ogre is greedy, selfish, blood thirsty and anti-people. These are the characteristics attributed to the leaders in East African drama. Thus, like the folk tale, The Successor starts with the recapitulation of the harmony of Masero, the entry of the villain and trickster and finally, the downfall of Oriomra.

In fact, the story telling motif is a trade mark of Uganda's dramatic creativity. The Floods, for instance, is set against a traditional world view. It is the story of the ogre
that has turned against its kindred (p. 12). Kyeyune represents the traditional African beliefs and superstitions. His speech patterns open with the starting formula of oral tales. Once upon a time, as he says, he was a reputable fisherman. It is the supernatural world of the gods which, in Kyeyune's belief, is responsible for the suffering of the masses. The supernatural world is represented by Kagoro, the god of fate.

The traditional African society was mainly governed by beliefs and superstitions. The life of the African Man, and his world view, were basically regulated by his belief in the supernatural beings. It is this superstitious world view which forms the creative resource in *The Floods* and *Betrayal in the City*. Kyeyune's traditional world view, in the former play, resembles that of Doga and Nina, in the latter play. The shaving rite and circumcision practice, to which Doga clings zealously, and to which Mulili is hard-set against, is symbolic. It represents the discrepancies, in cultural outlook, between the traditional and the modern African community. However, the pertinent point to note is that, the traditional African setting has been a major source of creativity in East African drama.

In *The Floods*, the story of Nyamgondho's defilement of Malubale is symbolic of the political situation in the society. It symbolizes the disintegration of ethics of human value, which held the society together. In a parallel incident, in *The Successor*, Imbuga shows the effects of moral degeneration. He attributes the suffering of the people of Masero to the violation of the will of the God of peace. Life in Masero, the setting of the play, is regulated by beliefs in the supernatural
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being. The violation of the will of the Gods, which occasions the suffering of the people, is symbolized by Zira's pregnancy. Zira's problems, which are caused by her violation of the will of the gods, is representative of the plight of the masses.

Similarly, the story of Ngoma, in *The Burdens*, has specific symbolic implication. At one level, it represents the illusory life led by Tinka and Wamala. At another level, the playwright, in a foregrounding technique, uses it to predict Wamala's murder by Tinka. In a powerful flashback, and in a retrospective trance, Tinka recounts the happy days with her parents. Tinka recounts stories told to her by her mother, "of drunken men stabbed to death by their jealous wives in the dead of the night" (p. 11). Tinka's story motif is intertwined with her psychic set up, for she ends up killing her husband precisely that way.

However, the most symbolic story motif is that of the palace on a hill which was razed down by the storm, heralded by a strong wind. The palace was full of happiness and contentment before the leper climbed the tree and brought down the gourd that enabled him to marry Nyenje's beautiful daughter. In this story, the palace and its harmony represents the African society in its peaceful days. The storm and the strong wind represent the disintegration of the African society due to political turbulence. The leper is thus an image of the evils that have eaten deep into the moral fabric. Nyenje's beautiful daughter is a symbol of the virtues of society, which have been eaten by power hungry maniacs. The message is enunciated through use of song and dance, represented by the song, "Guns to play the Drums" (p. 15). The song is a symbol of the military activities
which have caused havoc in the contemporary society.

The playwrights also tend to mix English Language with the African idiomatic expression. In *Betrayal in the City*, Doga's speech is both proverbial and philosophical. He uses proverbs such as, "when dry thunder tears the sky before our eyes, do we forget the storm of yesterday?" and "a cloudy sky does not always cry rain" (p. 9). Similarly, Kyeyune's speeches, in *The Floods*, are not only proverbial, but also full of the traditional African wisdom. There are even instances, in *Game of silence*, when Imbuga combines the English Language with Swahili. Therefore, language in this drama, defines both the setting of the play, as well as the characters and their social status. Mulili, in *Betrayal in the City*, is a good example of how Language is creatively appropriated to the characters. Like the T.P. Tycoon in *The Floods*, Mulili's language satirises contemporary leadership, which is dominated by illiterates.

Linked with folkloristic transposition in East African drama is the use of historical facts for creative purposes. The historical foundation of the East African drama has been pointed out earlier on. Perhaps, what we need to highlight here is how the dramatist's overall vision of his society is represented, even at the title level. Contemporary leadership has been depicted as the ogre that feasts on the blood of its own offsprings. Thus, the play titles are creatively used to summarise the playwright's overall concern in each text. "Betrayal in The City" shows the disillusionment of the majority of the Africans whose dreams about independence have been reduced to nightmares. It simply focuses on the betrayal of the masses by their leaders.
"The Floods" is a symbolic signification of the overwhelming wave of terror which rocked Uganda during Amin's reign. The forceful floods stand for the brutality and excessive oppression and exploitation of the Africans by dictatorial and military regimes. It is the failure of the leaders to live up to the people's expectations of democracy which led to the betrayal we have highlighted. These floods are a symbol of the power mania represented by "Man of Kafira". Explaining the meaning of the title, Imbuga intimates that, in the eyes of the leaders, they are the only men the world has ever produced. This power mania is the succession motif summarised by "The Successor".

On the other hand, "Game of Silence" is a summative indication of a totalitarian system where the downtrodden, who are referred to in the play as bottom dwellers, are reduced to a mass of voiceless creatures. The bottom lot is regarded as "The burdens" by the leaders, who isolate themselves from their subjects, regarding them a nuisance. Cornered like caged animals, the masses have to face "Music Without Tears". This means that the majority of the people are no better than caged animals. They are always at the beck and call of their leaders. The masses are at the receiving end, suffering without bitterness.

Song and dramatic poesy are other creative techniques used by the playwrights to transmit their ideas. The song of the golden bed, in Man of Kafira, is a satirical tool. It is used to scorn at leaders who naively imagine they could buy peace. The symbolic signification of the song, 'guns to play drums,' in The Burdens, is a juxtaposition of two world views. Drums
have been depicted as an integral part of the African cultural heritage. The peace and order existent in the traditional society is now under pressure from the gun-totting militia men, represented by the guns.

Indeed, Diviner See Through's speeches in The Successor are poetically structured. This is in keeping with his philosophical stature. In the same play, Ademola and Demokola are characters whose communication is basically through songs and dance. It is through music and dance that the masses collectively celebrate their triumph over the forces of evil in Game of Silence. The mass revolutionary campaign is a result of Raja's revolutionary poem, which shows that, "the masses sleep no more" (p. 34). In The Floods, Bwogo's poem, "Being Fulfilled", shows the immorality of the contemporary leaders. The songs and poems are part of the folkloristic transpositions in the works of the two dramatists. These folkloristic transpositions are supplemented by a series of symbols, as we shall demonstrate below.

4.5. SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICATION

Symbols are expansively used as means of projecting meaning in East African drama. Symbols are part of the African dramatist's attempts to appropriate foreign languages to his indigenous experiences. As Emmanuel Ngara, aptly points out:

the success of the African writer depends on the systems of symbols and myths that he chooses and his sensitivity to the issue of language, to his ability to mould the foreign language into a fit medium for expression of the national culture, national aspirations, the African temperament and the expression of the human predicament as seen through the African eye. (1982: 24).

Thus, symbols stand for or represent something else. A symbol
Is something that stands for itself and yet stands for, or suggests or means something else. Symbols transform a phenomenon into an idea, through associations, contrasts and comparisons. This way, symbolic signification enables the writer to extend his meaning to other frontiers. Most of the symbols used in East African drama are derived from the social environment. The technique of symbolic signification presents the reader with ambiguity and a multiplicity of possible perceptions and interpretations of the dramatist's ideas. The symbolic signification is interpreted within the context in which it has been used.

The red colour has multifarious symbolic meaning in East African drama. At one level, it represents the level of blood bath which characterizes the society. In Man of Kafira, Boss tells of his dream that four angels carried him in a sedan chair and led him to a cream coloured box full of messages. This is a historical recreation of the 1972 event when Amin was carried shoulder high by four whitemen. Boss explains that, "the colour red has always been my favourite colour" (p. 38). In this inverted satirical tone, the playwright reveals the murderous instinct which led to the wanton destruction of human life in Kafira. To that end, the colour red represents the brutality of rulers.

In the context of The Floods and Betrayal in the City, the red colour is a symbol of revolution. The red gown worn by Jusper represents his revolutionary spirit. It is a symbol of identity for those who are committed to change. When he is told by his mother, and later by Regina, to remove it, Jusper refuses, saying that, "I can't take it off. It will make him
angry" (p. 46). The 'him' in this context refers to Adika, Jusper's brother whose death he is bent on avenging. The red colour is seen as a symbol of revolutionary solidarity among the University students. As Tumbo explains, "red guards is my name for rioting University Students" (p. 42). Significantly, the Headman in The Floods accuses the old one of craving for "dirty piece of red cloth" (p. 5).

However, it is in The Burdens where the red colour is clearly defined as blood. Using Kaija's psychic set up, Ruganda foregrounds the death of Wamala and the impending bloodshed in his society. Kaija's dream is depicted as his sub-conscious witness to Wamala's murder by Tinka. Besides Wamala's death, Kaija's imaginary vision of blood represents imminent danger posed by the military regime which takes over at the end of the play. It is also used to reveal Tinka's guilty conscience. In a dramatic cross-purposed speech pattern, the ecstatic scene between Tinka and Kaija proceeds as follows:

Kaija: ... Where's father's spear?
Tinka: He took it
Kaija: Not during the emergency
Tinka: He took it
Kaija: I can see blood
Tinka (frightened, quickly checks her dress) Where?
Kaija: Horrible stains of blood
Tinka: (Sharply) Where?
Kaija: Here, there, everywhere
Tinka: Where? Show me
Kaija: If father goes out with a spear, what do you expect? (p. 75).

Therefore, Tinka thinks that she has betrayed herself, while in actual fact, Kaija is projecting the impending doom as a result of power struggle.

The potato in Betrayal in the City, is a symbol of the economic benefits which accrue from national independence. It is tied to the Kingdom, a biblical allusion symbolic of the
African's expectations of independence. The potato is used as an image of food, a basic need for mankind. Imbuga uses the potato image to highlight the suffering of the common man. He blames the leaders for denying their subjects their inalienable human rights, thus reducing them to beastly levels of existence. The potato marks the level of competition in Kafira. As a result of exploitation and misuse of public funds, Kafirans like Jusper et the fruits of independence second hand. There are indications that those in positions of power, like the entertainment committee, are the forces behind economic strangulation in the society.

The leader-subject relationship is symbolically signified in the biblical story of Pontius Pilate, who had the chance to see Jesus' (the king's) naked buttocks. Pilate is a representative of the oppressed, while the image of Jesus presents the oppressors. The picture of a common man caning King portends the revolutionary zeal which leads to social transformation. In The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, the playwrights present a similar symbolic recreation of the master-servant relationship; which takes an imagery of the horse and horse rider. Like Imbuga, the playwrights use this image to show social contradictions, and to show the inevitability of change.

Bwogo's poking of the anthill with his umbrella symbolizes the level of state brutality. This symbolic image is creatively inted by the playwright, as Bwogo pricks:

orange peels and rotten pears with the tip of his umbrella and slashing the flowers with it, like a drunkard executioner. Just to please his wanton pride. (p. 57). (my emphasis).

rough these separate incidents, that is, Bwogo's pricking of the orange peels and rotten pears and his stabbing of the
anthill cranium, the murderous mania among leaders is projected. Indeed, Bwogo's activities are symbolic of the blood bath and mass carnage in the society. The persistent wanton destruction of life is symbolized by his squashing of bugs with his thumbs. It is the same image of bloodshed which is symbolized by Mosese's intimation in *Betrayal in the City*, that cocks are slaughtered every day. In *Music without Tears*, Odie's experiments symbolize the terror forces behind this form of bloodshed.

Social stratification and inequality are symbolized through the great wall which separated Bwogo's affluent family from Nankya's peasantry background. It is the crumbling of this wall of division between the have and the have-nots, at the end of *The Floods*, which heralds an era of change. This sense of optimism is reinforced by the child to be, who is an offspring of Nankya and Bwogo. The child marks the dawn of a new society. In fact, the man-woman relationships in Ruganda's works normally assume a symbolic political dimension. The love affair between Nankya and Bwogo in *The Floods* signifies the marriage between the leaders and their subjects at the dawn of independence. The leader-subject relationship was initially intended to be closely knit. It promised brotherhood and harmonious co-existence. However, the hopes of brotherhood have now been shattered by the hypocrisy of the leaders.

Therefore, the suffering that Nankya is subjected to by Bwogo is symbolic of the betrayal of the people by their black messiahs. The Burdens clearly projects the same notion of political marriage in the Tinka-Wamala affair. Tinka is a representative of the masses in the contemporary society whose
dreams of independence have been completely shattered by their masters. It is this disillusionment which Stella suffers at the hands of Ali in Music Without Tears. The price she has to pay for her love for him is the death of her father, executed by Ali's agents.

While it is possible to highlight numerous symbolic instances in the individual texts, we shall point out certain symbolic images that cut across the works of the two playwrights. The boots, for example, have a central preoccupation in the regional creative temper. This is much so in Ruganda's works, where they come in eventually to alter the status quo. The revolutionary spirit in the two playwrights' works is normally symbolized by certain dramatic episodes or character's activities. In The Burdens for instance, Wamala's imaginary confrontation with Vincent Kanagonago is symbolic of mass uprising. Using a Marxist perspective, the playwright depicts Kanagonago as the capitalist exploiter, who must, of necessity, face the wrath of the small man, the slum dweller, represented by Wamala. In a foregrounding technique, the dramatist presents the inevitability of change, which is symbolized by Wamala's strangulation of Kanagonago.

The Floods projects the same revolutionary spirit through the mass uprising of the termites in the anthill. Just like in The Burdens and Music Without Tears, the insurgency of guerrillas, liberators and militiamen signifies the birth of a new society. Juper's activism, in both Betrayal in the City and Man of Kafira, is seen as the symbol of revolution. He is the most sinned against Kafiran, with all his family members having been executed. Thus, his killing of Mulili at the end
symbolizes the eradication of evils in the society. Regina portrays the same revolutionary zeal in Man of Kafira. She confesses that, "When death is on my mind, it is life I seek to protect" (p. 37). Her killing of Boss at the end of the play again marks the beginning of a new social order. On the other hand, the fall of Oriomra, the villain, in The Successor, and the mass movement, herald a new chapter in society. It is the same collective triumph which closes Game of Silence. Therefore, it is evident that both playwrights end their works on a symbolic note. The protagonists and Villains are eradicated at the end of each play. This is in line with their vision, that change is inevitable in a society riddled with evils.

Drama in East Africa is highly partisan. It takes sides. The writer is always on the side of the downtrodden. He wears the collective "we" mask, so as to create an egalitarian society, founded on the will of the majority. It is for this reason that social, political and historical contradictions have become a major stumbling stone for the dramatist. The dramatist uses real episodes to create the disorders that have afflicted his society. The dramas of Nebuga and Regina are specific, in terms of space and time. Virtually all the plays we have analyzed in our study deal with the political situation in East Africa. They focus on the political developments, especially in Uganda and Kenya, in the early 1960s.
CONCLUSION

The East African dramatist functions like the traditional bard. He is the reservoir of the historical memoirs of his society. He is at peace with his people, whose problems and environmental challenges he creatively registers, with an uncanny precision. The regional playwright is always at the forefront in the struggle for the restoration of human values among his people. The reality of his surroundings, and the truth of the challenges facing his society, are the basic materials for his play construction. The dramatist puts his imagination at the service of the people. He uses the reality of their spatio-temporal existence to give voice and identity to the common man.

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The dramas of Imbuga and Ruganda are specific, in terms of space and time. Virtually all the plays we have analysed in our study deal with the political situation in East Africa. They focus on the political developments, especially in Uganda and Kenya, in the '70s' decade.

It is, indeed, the atrocious reign of Amin in Uganda, in the 1970s, which has been the major preoccupation of the two playwrights. The blood bath which characterised Amin's rule is
the basis of the fictional world recreated in The Floods, Game of Silence, Man of Kafira and Music Without Tears. True to the historical reality of Amin's regime, these plays, which are appropriated to his leadership practises, are distinguished by brutality, and all forms of human suffering. However, in spite of the fact that the two dramatists deal with Amin's rule, their works have a wider implication.

In fact, the focus on Amin's leadership is used as a microcosmic representation of post-independence leadership in Africa. The overall concern of these playwrights is an examination of the status quo in the East African post-colonial period. Their dramas are bound together by a comparative time scale, which offers an insight into social contradictions. This comparative outlook is marked by the artistic juxtaposition and contrast between the past and the present of the African Society.

In Chapter two, we explored the significance of the past of the East African Man. The backward glance, prominent in the creative works, we said, is used to highlight the contradictions in the contemporary era. The major concern of the artist is an examination of the value of independence. The dramatist in East Africa shares Achebe's views, in The Trouble with Nigeria, that, the trouble with independent African states emanates from poor leadership. They perceive the problems prevalent in their society as resulting from failure on the part of the leaders, to live up to the expectations of the masses.

Disillusionment, a deep sense of despair and disappointment, mark the plays of Imbuga and Ruganda. In their veiw, their society has not benefitted from independence. It is
for this reason that they portray the leaders negatively. Earlier, we showed that the image of Boss is used both as a satirical tool against leaders, as well as an ironical mask to expose leadership contradictions. He is a symbol of the betrayal and disillusionment of the masses by their leaders.

Thus, all the works we have dealt with perceive contemporary leaders as corrupt, egocentric, brutal and insensitive to the welfare of the people. The leaders are aided by a bunch of blood-thirsty illiterate advisers. The latter group is comprised of villains and state agents, whose blind services to the unpopular regimes is for material reasons. This group is responsible for the carnage and plunder in the society. Such villains include: Bwogo in The Floods, Wamala in The Burdens, Oriomra in The Successor, Mulili in Betrayal in the City, Odie in Music Without Tears, Bin Bin in Man of Kafira and Zumaka and Bango in Game of Silence.

Evidently, the express aim of the two playwrights is to re-direct their society to decency and humanism. Their dramas are a conscientization processes for their society, the leaders and their subjects alike. By exposing the evils and contradictions inherent in the society, they seek to create awareness. They aim at altering the anomalous status quo. Their target audience is the African in the Independent African States. It is the intention of the two artists to create a society founded on mutual human respect. Imbuga advocates a society in which:

- the people are actively involved in shaping their own destinies,
- a world where they manifest their opposition, even if only vocally,
Therefore, the two playwrights are committed to change in their society. In Imbuga's dramas the artists and intellectuals are perceived as the champions of change. But in his treatment of the same group of characters, Ruganda is rather apprehensive. He presents elites and artists like WaK and Nankya as politically awakened. However, they are incapable of effecting change due to timidity, naivety and ego-centricity. In fact, it is mostly the militiamen whom Ruganda endows with qualities of altering the status quo.

However, this difference in perception notwithstanding, the two dramatists view change as inevitable. Their works tend to be revolutionary, always creating change at the end. Although they concur in their vision, Imbuga is rather overt. He explicitly prescribes the nature of society to be build, as well as the method to be used to facilitate it. Ruganda, on his part, contents himself with change for the better. He is rather covert when it comes to the actual nature of society he advocates. All in all, the two dramatists envisage an egalitarian society, where human virtues blossom.

It is clear, from our discussion so far, that East African drama is a literature of vision. It functions to reconstruct the past for the purpose of social direction. By using historical facts as the basis for its creative resource, it serves to consolidate the bond between social reality and literary medium. Imbuga and Ruganda are visionaries of their own time and space. Their artistic medium recreates the past and the present of the East African society, with a view to moulding a brilliant future.
Their dramas re-examine how the African man and his environment are posited at a specific historical epoch. They attempt to expand and replace the anomalous social propositions with others, fashioned out in line with their resolving and visionary genius.

Our intimation is that, East African drama is committed to. It mirrors the present of its society and paints a picture of the future, by offering possible vision of how the present can be improved. The regional dramatist's criticism of society constitutes a desire for a perfect environment, in which human values predominate. His visionary insight is thus aimed at reshaping the society and re-directing it to new avenues of self-examination and purposeful ventures.

Irrespective of their publication dates, the plays we have discussed show a consistent coherence in their visionary outlook. The Floods, Betrayal in the City and Game of Silence revolve around the effects of perverted leadership in Africa. They form a set of East African drama, which directly examines the brand of post-independence leadership. Music Without Tears and Man of Kafira constitute what we term as psycho drama. They are a form of psychotherapy, to reveal the actual mental structure of the leaders behind the atrocities meted out to the people. The central story line is built on a psychological travelling disease. As we pointed out, this disease is a form of mental trauma, occasioned by power mania. Its result is the kind struggle for power epitomised in The Successor. When the power maniacs fail to achieve their political ambition, they live in miserable fantasies and dreams. The Burdens offers an insight into the disillusioned life of Wamala, one of the power
maniacs, whom political fervour has condemned to eternal suffering.

In the view of the East African dramatist, independence has failed to bring about fundamental changes. Since it has failed to alleviate poverty and obviate political oppression, independence has become highly suspect. This, perhaps, explains why majority of Imbuga's and Ruganda's plays are pitted against the era of independence in Africa, which is characterized by coups de'tat. Their central creative motif is the broken promises of independence. It is for this reason that history, the pervading sense of despair and uncertainty have become a subject of dramatic creativity.

In terms of dramatic style, the playwrights use a generic mode of characterization. Their characters are ideational and typified. In other words, specific characters represent certain ideas. They are modelled on the traits of real personalities beyond the creative world. Thus, characterization in East African drama is appropriated to the overall vision of the playwright. Characters in this mode of drama function as structural devices. It is through character juxtaposition that meaning is rendered. Thus, dialogue, especially Ruganda's cross-purposed speech pattern, is a measure of character contrast. It is through this contrast that the playwrights project the conflicts and contradictions in the society.

Play structure was shown in Chapter four as a technique of projecting the playwright's vision. In their play construction, the dramatists synchronize all the structural units to fit within their overriding vision. However, we
Imbuga's plays have a causally related scenic structure. All the scenes in a particular play point at the climax, which is normally the resolution stage. On the other hand, Ruganda's plays have a series of autonomous scenes. He builds his mini-climaxes around individual characters or episodes. Unlike Imbuga's plays, the end of Ruganda's dramas is not, of necessity, a result of the overall scene pattern in the respective text.

Ruganda is distinguished by use of the Furgadian style of dramatic rendition. He uses economy of characters, setting and time schemata. His use of the controlled experiment enables him to exploit other dramatic techniques. His characters are able to transcend the confined fictional world in which they operate through role-playing, flashbacks, retrospective and introspective glimpses. Their inner selves are recreated through an expansive exploitation of cross-purposed speech patterns. On the other hand, Imbuga does not limit his characterization or setting. He populates his fictional world with a host of characters; whose interaction is mostly designed by him.

In their use of folk media, the two dramatists show originality in creativity. Their dramas exploit elements of traditional theatrical elements such as songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, myths, legends and cultural beliefs. The rich African cultural heritage forms a basis for their dramatic creativity. Some of the folk theatre material, as was shown in the previous chapter, are used as symbolic signifiers.
The advantage of using the techniques of folkloristic transposition and symbolic signification is simple. Such devices help the dramatist to extend his worldview. Folk media and symbolic elements create ambiguity. They create a multi-vocal and a multi-focal basis for the artist. In other words, the dramatist is able to speak to his readers in many voices, on aross section of issues. The point here is that, use of folk media and symbols is open to a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations. It is for this reason that the East African dramatist exploits them, especially when tackling the highly sensitive politics of his society. It is through these techniques that the dramatist links his creative imagination with the East African worldview.

We therefore contend that, East African drama in general, and that of Imbuga and Ruganda in particular, is literature of social vision. It addresses itself to the welfare of the majority and promotes ideals of humanism. It sustains faith in life, by presenting man as capable of taming his environment and determining his fate. The voice of the dramatist advocates for sensitive values in society, while at the same time it shows something indignation for all forms of evil. Through techniques that appeal to the conscience of man, East African drama craves excellence in social relationships. The dramatist seeks to influence history through conscientization of the oppressed.

In a nutshell, suffice it to say that, the East African dramatist posits a vision of perfect conditions for the
development of human personality. He recreates man, always working towards the betterment of his social well being and the improvement of his condition. The success of his vision is marked by his creative portraiture of man transcending his stifling surroundings. Thus, the dramatist truthfully places events in their proper historical, political and economic context. He follows it up with a vivid depiction of man's triumphant struggle against the barriers imposed by such forces.

All in all, Imbuga and Ruganda's plays focus heavily on the political actions of the ruling clique. They examine how the contemporary leaders have destroyed both human and material resources. They perceive independence expectations as bitter and barren. Their dramas portray the population as having been traumatised into silence and immobility. They are preoccupied with the portrayal of mass disillusionment and social malaise at the king's palace.

In terms of vision, their works constitute didactic or instructive theatre. They are aimed at sensitising the oppressed and making them aware of their political power to effect change. Their plays suggest that man has the capacity to change his material condition and imply that change is inevitable. Increasingly, their vision has become informed by the political praxis of East Africa. They fulfill the messianic function of the artist in society. As Soyinka aptly states, the artist contributes to the well-being of his society by extending the horizons of his people's perception (Africa Report, vol. 32 No. 4, 1987: 47).
The two playwrights' dramas instil in the masses a renewed perception of themselves as agents of change. Their plays tend to respond, almost to a pulse, to the significant socio-political events in their countries. They are indebted to their history and oral traditions in their search for novel techniques and authentic dramatic style. They synchronise traditional and modern theatrical techniques in their dramaturgy.

Having examined how East-African socio-political milieu influences its creative drama, we intend to proceed further. It would be curious to compare how the environment influences the dramatic creativity in East and West Africa. It would be fascinating to compare the works of Imbuga and Ruganda, with the creative genius of literary heavy weights, like Wole Soyinka, and J.P. Clark. One significant area for further research is a comparative analysis of how the dramatists appropriate their creative style and themes to their politico-cultural world.
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