



Representation of Renewed Sense of Urgency in Contemporary East African Fiction: The Dramaturgy of Francis Imbuga's *Man of Kafira* and *The Green Cross of Kafira*

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ABSTRACT:

Analysis of how a literary text is written and what it conveys is, in most cases, a simultaneous activity as form and content are inseparable. Drama, which is as old as human history, has been a significant tool for social commentary in East Africa. Contemporary East African drama provides a fertile platform for exploration of formal uniqueness in literary art; the East African experience, particularly a renewed sense of political urgency, is canvassed through the deployment of distinctively dramatic techniques. It is against this background that the study proposes to undertake a formal analysis of Imbuga's *Man of Kafira* and *The Green Cross of Kafira* to determine how the art and/ or technique of dramatic composition and theatrical representation explored by in contemporary East African Drama. This study relies on the tenets of Russian formalist literary theory. An analytical research design has been adopted in this study. Primary data for this literary analysis has been drawn from Imbuga's two plays. We have undertaken a close reading of the two selected plays for purposes of extracting primary data. To corroborate our findings, we have obtained secondary data from a review of relevant related literature on form and content in East African Drama. Using the principles of formalist literary theory, we have conducted a textual analysis will primary data we extracted from the trilogy. The formal uniqueness of the two plays analysed in this paper demonstrates that Imbuga has undoubtedly earned his place as one of the most celebrated writers in East Africa. He has prolifically experimented with drama as a genre of literature. The two plays we have critiqued in this paper have provided rich data for exploring the formal uniqueness of Imbuga's drama. The most dominating stylistic elements that generate the plot in *Man of Kafira* include: play within a play, foreshadow, satire and oral traditions such as songs. The dramaturgy of Imbuga's works facilitates calls for urgent political action in post-independence African societies. The two plays are action-packed; Imbuga deliberately structures in this manner to give prominence to his renewed call for political action. The results of this study enrich literary scholarship on East African dramaturgy, particularly the formal uniqueness through which meaning is brought out in African drama. To ensure that this research is conducted in strict compliance with ethical standards, we have duly acknowledged our data sources.

(Key words: Dramaturgy, East African Drama, form, formal elements, stylistic elements, style)

1. Introduction

A work of art is intended to satisfy the readers, build an interest in them by retaining their undivided attention to the work that culminates in the accomplishment of the author's mission. By arresting the reader's attention, the literary artist is able to communicate effectively. This uniqueness in packaging information sets the literary writer apart from other authors. To make a literary work more interesting to read requires some unique skills in the structure and presentation of the work. Imbuga is one of the contemporary East African writers who strive to compose his artistic works in this manner. The literary artistry employed in his plays is particularly compelling captivating. What makes his plays so fresh and timely is his mastery of this artistic skill. Imbuga is a master of wordplay and circumlocution, and we have attempted to demonstrate the best use of it two of his plays *Man of Kafira* and *The Green Cross of Kafira*.

Imbuga's ability to manipulate language through skillful characterisation, folkloric exaggeration and deft play has earned a revered stature in East African literary circles. His strategic and creative use of language made it easy for him to get away with anything especially back in time when authors would get into trouble for pointing fingers at the frailties of political regimes and for directly or indirectly questioning the post-colonial administrations or their policies. This study, therefore, is interested in Imbuga's creative ways of writing and examines the formal elements that he deploys in the two plays. The primary focus in this paper is on form or structure and contents of the two selected texts. This study acknowledges that Imbuga's political texts are embedded with more formalistic features which make the selected target population significant for the achievement of the set objectives and collection of sufficient data.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by formalist literary theory. This theory emerged in Russia and Poland in the 1910s as a literary movement and a school of literary theory. In Russia, it was started and developed by linguists such as Roman Jakobson and Viktor Shklovsky from Moscow University. Formalism focuses on formal means such as rhyme, cadence, meter, grammar, and literary work rather than content of a scholarly work (Hasa, 2020). These scholars agree that how something is said is more important than what is said. The formalists treat literature as a special use of language which achieves its distinctiveness by deviating from and distorting practical language. Practical language is used for acts of communication, while literary language has no practical function at all and makes us see differently. Literariness is an integral aspect of Russian formalism. The Russian formalists advocate for the exploration of the literary qualities innate in a literary piece. According to Pilkington (2000), the term can be analysed from the perspective of 'formal linguistic and structural properties of texts, or in terms of socio-cultural codes of conventions.'

According to formalists, literary language is different from everyday language. Studying literature involves an analysis of a work's constituent parts – its linguistic and structural features – or its form. Form comprises the internal mechanics of the work itself. These internal mechanics or what the formalists called devices, comprise the artfulness and literariness of any given text, not a work's content. Russian formalism focuses mainly on form rather than the content or context. It is the study of the text without considering any external influence. This study, however, will look at the contents of the texts simply as what is in display in the text or what the text conveys. The Formalists believe that a proper study of literature leads to neither a reflection of the life of the writer nor the historical and cultural environment in which a particular text was created (Hussain, 2022). Rather than worrying about the author's background or the reader's reaction to the work, formalism emphasises on evaluating the work based only on itself through close reading which requires taking apart a text and looking at its individual elements such as theme, setting, plot and structure. This study examines the two plays by examining the form which is the general style of the texts inclusive of formal elements and stylistic devices employed in the plays and their meaning as revealed through a combination of formal elements and stylistic strategies.

Initially, Shklovsky, who adopted an approach seeking to define the techniques which writers use to produce certain effects, called this 'defamiliarisation' which also means 'making strange.' Russian formalists distinguish the story (Fabula) and the plot (Syuzhet) with the view that the story is simply the chronological sequence of events whereas plot is the order of presentation. The plot was strictly literary whereas the story was the raw material awaiting the organising hand of the writer. The meaning should be extended with the aid of defamiliarising things. Plot must have the arrangement of incidents and must be based on the story and the artful disposition of the incidents which make up a story. Formalists, therefore, often link the plot with the notion of defamiliarisation which has a two-fold function; it is intended for the reader to take some time to understand the meaning and it makes the reader realise that meaning in literature is a theatrical performance.

The manner in which these formal components interact is thought to comprise the significance of a text. Formalism demands a careful scanning of the text, a detailed analysis often called close reading. Close reading entails examining a piece of literature closely seeking to understand its structure, looking for patterns that shape the work and connect its parts to the whole, searching for uses of language that contribute to the effect (Gilespie, 2010). This theoretical framework aligns with the intentions of the researcher because the study's main data collection method has been conducted through close reading of Imbuga's trilogy. Formalists believe that the best interpretation of a text can be found through close reading which should mirror the text and be supported by proof from the text and only the text, nothing off the page. This theory encourages close, attentive reading which sharpens a reader's critical reading and thinking skills. It requires that interpretations be validated with specific examples from the text as it will be done in the thesis chapters of this investigation. Formalism demands textual evidences to back up assertions which reinforce a central characteristic of all effective persuasion.

3. Methodology

This study takes an analytical research design. This type of research design demands critical thinking skills and evaluation of facts and pieces of information relevant to a study. Analytical research design allows a researcher to establish the accuracy of an idea or confirm a theory. It helps to identify a claim and find out whether it is true or false (Omair, 2015). It is often used because it provides more definitive information in answering research questions. We have purposively sampled the Kafira trilogy for this study: Imbuga's three plays, *Betrayal in the City*, *Man of kafira* and *The Green Cross of Kafira*. This sample size represents twenty-five percent of the total number of plays Imbuga published. This study involves a collection of primary data through a close reading of the two selected plays. According to Burke (2017), close reading is thoughtful, critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of the text's form, craft and meanings; it is a key requirement of a text which directs the reader's attention to the text itself.

Korsten (2012) has noted that the very phrase 'close reading' came to prominence through the work of the New Critics. An important goal of the Russian formalists was to consider the work of art as an autonomous object and not as a derivative of extra textual circumstances. Formalists protest against the tendency to explain art without having understood or having paid real attention to what the work itself is. Their desire is to have a better understanding of, or to acquire knowledge about, the object of art through the object itself. Close reading, in this paper, is the study's main data collection procedure as it is in line with Russian formalism from which the theoretical framework of this study has been developed. We argue that a detailed interpretation of a text can be achieved through this close reading as it facilitates identification of textual proofs. The paper focuses on the dramaturgy of Imbuga's *Man of Kafira* and *The Green Cross of Kafira*.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Contemporary East African drama is rich and presents unique forms and Imbuga offers intriguing platforms for exploring the formal uniqueness of drama. Imbuga's *Man of Kafira*, to begin with, is one such example. It is a play revolves around Boss, the ex-president of Kafira, who first appeared in the Kafira play that preceded this, *Betrayal in the City*. Boss appears to be delusional and paranoid and also self-absorbed throughout the text. He thinks himself loved and wanted back by the people of Kafira who in reality despise him. President Gafi is surrounded by people who are hell-bent on convincing him that he is loved by the people. One of these people is Bin-Bin, who ensures that Boss hears and sees what he wants to. Boss has demanded an audience with the Pope's representative to pray for him and Roving-Eye is the man he asks to be sent to Kafira on a mission to collect information about Kafira, what the world leaders and Kafirans think of him. Bin-Bin asks Osman, a professional theatre director, to provide them with a Pope's representative and Roving-Eye, which he does. The two roles are well played by Grabio and Taget respectfully. They are professional actors under Osman's leadership who truly represent the originals and Boss, oblivious of the fake act, is pleased. He is convinced that all is well and plans for a journey back to Kafira where he faces his untimely death.

In Imbuga's final play – *The Green Cross of Kafira* – which was published posthumously, he presents the dramatic dialogue of his characters as 'mind games.' Besides using a narrator, Sikia Macho, to fill his readers in on the broken politics of Kafira, revolving around detention without trial, Imbuga intentionally delays the inciting action, the formation of the Green Party of Kafira which then challenges the hitherto political monolith called the National Party. The candidate of the new party, former detainee Pastor Mgei, wins the election, consequently dethroning Kafira's dictatorial regime led by the so-called Chief of Chiefs. We argue that in *The Green Cross of Kafira*, Imbuga, with a renewed sense of urgency, bullishly confronts the challenges of authoritarianism in Africa, and completes his trilogy of the Kafira plays which starts with *Betrayal in the city* and is sequenced by *Man of Kafira*.

One element that sets Imbuga's *Man of Kafira* apart from other works is the artistic way with which he builds the plot of the story. Francis Imbuga uses a chronological type of plot where the story starts from the beginning to the end with the usual arrangement of the order of the plot. Even though the room keeps changing decorations to fit the scene of action, the story takes place in one large bare room. The plot structure is presented in four parts, the exposition beginning in part one and ending in part two, part three sees the rising action building up to the climax in part four and is quickly followed by the falling action and denouement of the plot.

According to Hamilton (2022), there are eleven different plot structures which an author can adopt in their work: the Fichtean Curve, the Three Act Structure, the Hero's Journey, Freytag's Pyramid, the Five Act Structure, Save the Cat Beats, The Snowflake Method, Dan Harmon's Story Circle, The Seven Point Story Structure and The Story Spine. Of all the structures illustrated and explained by Hamilton (2022), Freytag's pyramid suits the structure of the plot of Imbuga's *Man of Kafira*. Freytag's Pyramid, which almost takes the form of the Five-Act Structure, is best used when writing tragedies, or other works heavily inspired by classical literature. Hamilton (2022) contends that Freytag's Pyramid is one of the oldest story structures ever identified. It was invented by Gustav Freytag in the 1800s, and focuses primarily on the structure of classical literature and tragedies such as those written by Shakespeare. Although some debate whether there are five or seven steps to Freytag's Pyramid, the original work only included five: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution or catastrophe.

Glatch (2021) provides an explanation for the five steps of Freytag's Pyramid. The exposition part of the story, according to Glatch, primarily introduces the [major fictional elements](#) – the setting, characters and style. In the exposition, the writer's sole focus is on building the world in which the story's conflict happens. The length of the exposition depends on the complexity of the story's conflict, the extent of the world being written, and the writer's own personal preference. The exposition is the part of the story that draws readers in. The exposition in Imbuga's *Man of Kafira* begins from Part I to Part II. In *The Green Cross of Kafira*, Imbuga largely builds this world in Act One, Scene One, which he titles 'Mind Games.' In *The Green Cross of Kafira*, Imbuga demonstrates a renewed sense of urgency in the structuring of the play. Despite the fact that Act One, Scene One is expository; the atmosphere Imbuga creates in the introductory pages of the play is a politically tense one. In the words of the main, who is introduced in this Scene – Sikia Macho – Kafira attained her 'self-rule more than three decades ago' (Imbuga, 2013, p. 2), but there is nothing to show for it. The previous regimes have presided over political disasters, but what is being witnessed today is 'the most nervous regime our country has ever had': heightened surveillance as 'walls have ears,' political leaders fear for their safety which an indication that the lives of ordinary citizens are in greater danger, reconciliation meetings are treated as 'top-secret,' there are 'no reporters and no bodyguards' and these are orders from above, from the 'Chief of Chiefs' (Imbuga, 2013, p. 3). This is a call for urgent action.

In *Man of Kafira*, Part I (pp. 1-23) is initiated when Osman, the professional director of theatre is watching over his crew as they practice a play to be performed soon for Boss and his audience. The play within a play is quite controversial, reflecting a mirror presentation of Boss's life, his doings, beliefs and those of his wives. The play is meant to target 'the subconscious mind, that part of our brain that refuses to be cheated' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 8). Grabio and Desi are uncomfortable with the contents of the play. They are afraid that the scenes will upset Boss. Grabio says 'the actions of this scene relate rather closely to the alleged atrocities in Kafira during his rule' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 10). They feel that they should scrap off the play and sing songs instead. This illustrates the fear that characterises dictatorial regimes in post-independence East African region. Osman manages to convince them to rethink their decision. As they are about to resume the acting, Bin-Bin, jack of all trades interrupts them announcing that Boss no longer wants the play; instead, he wants traditional wrestlers who will fight till the death. This reveals how erratic this regime is.

Grabio and Desi are relieved that they no longer have to perform the play. Bin-Bin asks Osman to 'go to the maximum prison and ask for four of the strongest prisoners' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 16). Bin-Bin then engages in a conversation with President Gafi (Imbuga, 1984, pp. 18-21). Their discussion is centred on Boss's demands and formulation of plans on how to go about it. They finally decide that Osman produces a Roving-Eye and a Pope's

representative for them. They also talk about recruiting Regina to do their bid of getting rid of Boss: 'There has to be an honorable way of getting rid of him. Death by natural causes, suicide...just anything that will satisfy the world,' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 19) Gafi says. Bin-Bin suggests that Regina, Boss' third wife, could make a good recruit since 'she hates him with all the marrow in her bones' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 20). Part I comes to an end when Amina, Gafi's wife tells him how Regina tried to commit suicide but failed. It is revealed from the conversation that Regina and Boss never really married, 'she was abducted from her house and forced across the border at gun point' (Imbuga, 1984, p.22) as revenge against Mosese, Regina's brother who tried to overthrow Boss. She is convincing Gafi to get rid of Boss because 'The whole of Abiara is bubbling because of this man's continued presence...' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 22).

The exposition in *Man of Kafira* further extends from page twenty-four to thirty-eight. It begins with Bin-Bin and some workers decorating the room and him, gracefully making the bed in which Boss comes to lie. Boss and his wives are hopeful to find peace in this room so that they can put him to sleep 'If I do not find peace here, prepare for a long journey soon' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 25). The wives sing Boss to sleep instead of attending to their children. He is delusional and self-absorbed thinking that he cannot be killed by a female gun, how the world would tremble with the news of his death. He still thinks himself the president (Imbuga, 1984, p. 26). In his paranoia, he accuses his first wife, Mercedes, of cheating on him with President Gafi and thinks his wives are actually ganging against him (Imbuga, 1984, p. 27). Bin-Bin arrives and introduces Roving-Eye to Boss. Together they feed Boss's ears with what he wants to hear and not the true facts. Taget, now playing Roving-Eye, tells him how the world thinks him 'a great man... Hitler, while others think you are Shaka, the great warrior of the South' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 28).

Taget even goes ahead to tell him that Jere, the president of Kafira, is 'Looking for a suitable successor to hand over power to... a knowledgeable veteran like you' (pg. 30). He thinks he deserves it because 'I was a fair ruler' (Imbuga, 1984, p.31). Shortly after, Grabio, disguised as the pope's representative, arrives. He sprinkles the air with some liquid to cleanse it before beginning his conversation with Boss after Bin-Bin and Taget leave. Boss goes ahead and tells Grabio about his dreams where he is visited by both God and Allah 'like twins, they will come and say to me in one voice, 'Sir, your day is here' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 33). He says that he knew the pope's representative would come to see him because he saw him in a dream. He also says that he has also foreseen the day he will die. Grabio commends him for his 'supernatural powers' and Boss is quite flattered (Imbuga, 1984, p. 33). Grabio proceeds to pray for Boss' imminent return to Kafira and takes his leave. Boss demands Roving-Eye to be called back in but is annoyed when he is told that he left already 'I shall have him flogged before the palace staff' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 36). He is overcome with his own self-importance and imagines swaying the Kafirans with his speech. Mizra and Regina come to sing him to sleep; however, Mizra has to leave since her baby is crying. Left alone, Regina fastens the door and approaches Boss, raises the knife and is about to stab him when someone knocks the door (Imbuga, 1984, p. 38). This marks the end of the preliminary action and beginning of the rising action.

The second stage in the development of the plots of the two plays, the rising action, intensifies the urgency as set by the climate of fear in the initial action. In *The Green Cross of Kafira*, Imbuga names Scene Two of Act One 'Seeds of Discord,' reifying dissenting voices within Kafira. Beyond human action, there is need for divine intervention. Although the freedom song is sung in 'a low tone,' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 8) it is a welcome reaction in a political environment that does not accommodate diversity of opinions. It is, therefore, small wonder that the activities of The Green Cross Church, headed by Ben'sa, are alarming the Chief of Chiefs' government. In accordance with Glatch (2021), the rising action explores the story's conflict up until its climax. Often, things 'get worse' in this part of the story: someone makes a wrong decision, the antagonist hurts the protagonist and new characters further complicate the plot. For many stories, rising action takes up the most of the story's pages. This part of the story explores the conflict and complications. In rising action, the reader often gains access to key pieces of back story. As the conflict unfolds, the reader should learn more about the characters' motives, the world of the story, the themes being explored, and the foreshadowed climax as well.

Part III of *Man of Kafira* sees the rising action building when Bin-Bin enters wondering why the door was shut and Regina has to lie that it was Mizra who did it. The rising action starts from page forty and runs up to half part four where the climax is. Regina complains about her life in the hands of Boss, being far away from her parents and brother, Moses. She believes that if Boss is guilty then so are his wives, friends, children and all. Her hopelessness is brought out when she says that Jusper and Mosese were her only hope but now Mosese is dead and Jusper 'has become a vegetable' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 41). She informs Bin-Bin of Boss' paranoia and how he accuses Mercedes of infidelity with Gafi. Bin-Bin writes the details down for a chapter in the book he says he is currently writing. Regina suggests the title 'Man of Kafira,' he likes it and urges her to join him in writing since Boss 'murdered' her book (Imbuga, 1984, p. 43). This topic reminds her of Jusper, her fiancé then, who was passionate about writing but was termed 'crazy' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 44). Suddenly Boss wakes up from his bed, still asleep and sleepwalking. He is talking to Lum-Lum, the ghost of a dead archbishop.

From their conversation, it is revealed that Boss killed archbishop Lum-Lum because he did not allow Boss to have his wedding in church because for one, he was already a married man and two, he is Muslim. However, Lum-Lum says that he has forgiven Boss for it all. Boss hears the song of the Golden bed (Imbuga, 1984, p. 46). From the song, Boss is informed that the 'beds of feathers and beds of gold are no place of rest'. He then sees a vision of two men on the ground, Drunk and Sober lamenting about hard life 'three square meals for the transparent man and not a single triangular one for us' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 47) 'we must show the transparent man that he is transparent. I will die and return to teach him the relationship between the mouth, the stomach, the heart, the mind and man's general existence' (Imbuga, 1984, p.48). Sober then proceeds to commit suicide in the backyard of the transparent man. Suddenly, the ghosts of Drunk man with several other creatures dressed in black appear. They attack the empty bed and scatter the beddings to their satisfaction then burst out laughing and congratulate one another (Imbuga, 1984, p. 49).

Now Boss sees footsteps which Lum-Lum tells him to follow 'pick up your people and follow the footsteps' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 50). Boss traces the footsteps back to his bed and resumes sleeping. Lum-Lum leaves him a parting shot by echoing the words 'the path is clear and the people await your return' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 50). Suddenly, Regina conjures up an idea 'The right place, the right time, the correct mood and an audience that should inspire my courage, an audience that will understand the bitterness of a lonely woman' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 50). When they both leave, Boss wakes up with a

deafening scream. He tells the wives that he has had a special dream and tells them to prepare for a journey back to Kafira (Imbuga, 1984, p. 52). This marks the beginning of the climax of the plot. He asks Bin-Bin to cancel the wrestling match and have someone write a good speech for him to deliver to the Kafiran people 'something really emotional from deep down his heart' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 54).

The peak of political activism is the climax of both plays. Glatch (2021) has argued that during the climax, the story's conflict peaks and readers learn the fate of the main characters. A lot of writers enter the climax of their story believing that it needs to be short, fast, and action-packed. While some stories might require this style of climax, there's no strict formula when it comes to climax writing. Whether the climax is only one scene or several chapters is up to the writer but the climax is not just the turning point in the story's plot structure, but also its themes and ideas. This is the writer's opportunity to comment on whatever concept is driving his story's narrative, giving the reader an emotional takeaway.

The climax of *Man of Kafira* runs from page fifty-two till almost half of chapter four which begins with shouting and restlessness of the people at the gate who certainly received the news of Boss' arrival in Kafira. Zefa and Kasim are decorating the room with Kafiran National flag colors. They wonder why Boss has returned. Zefa thinks he is back out of love for his country while Kasim thinks that he has an eye on the Chairman's post 'perhaps the Chairman wants to forgive and forget, you know, recruit him back to the fold... perhaps the man has reformed' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 57). Zefa tells Kasim that 'it would take Jesus himself to change him' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 50). They are interrupted by Rama, president Gafi's wife, asking for the whereabouts of the Chairman, with her, is a nervous security man. When Zefa and Kasim leave she asks the security man how Jusper managed to escape from his place of confinement. That is when it is revealed that Jusper knows about Boss' coming to Kafira and so 'he broke through one of the windows in the toilet block and jumped over the fence' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 59). The security man urges Rama to speak with Jusper because only she can calm him down. She accepts reluctantly but asks him to stay close, just outside the door while she speaks to Jusper.

Jusper is agitated and refuses to sit down. He is asking about the plane that brought 'the people's prisoner' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 60). At first, Rama pretends not to know what he is talking about. Instead he asks him why he left when he was 'already showing signs of recovery' (Imbuga, 1984, p.61) to which Jusper responds that 'boldness, courage, bitterness and otherwise warm heart' is no sickness (Imbuga, 1984, p. 61). He reveals that Gafi never loved him like Rama does and that it was his decision to have Jusper put away 'he took me and made me a patient, a permanent mental case' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 62). He begins to sob asking Rama to stop lying to him and that is when she caves. She admits that Boss is in Kafira but asks him to go tell the people at the gate that Boss has not yet arrived and if he does that then she will let him see Regina. Jusper refuses to be blackmailed.

He is carried away in a vision that sees him and Regina getting married. Rama takes the role of Regina and takes vows with him. At the end of the vows, he walks away holding hands with an imaginary Regina. Surprised by his exit, she strikes the gong to summon the security man and orders him to go after Jusper and ensure he does not join the crowd (Imbuga, 1984, p. 65). Jere enters shortly after, annoyed that the people do not think him capable of doing the right thing. He wants Boss to face trial for his crimes but 'the mob out there are demanding for the head of their ex-head' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 66). He informs Rama about 'stories circulating abroad that I personally shot Boss dead at the airport' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 66) so he wants to clear the air. He lets the journalists in 'to see Boss and his family alive' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 67) he allows them to take pictures but not interview any of them. Just then Jusper is brought in; Jere informs the journalist that he is their adopted son. Jusper begins to rant about how Jere deceived him by not giving him the position he promised, lying about his illness and accuses him of inviting the enemy back to share power with him. Jere wants him taken away by guards but Rama asks Jusper to come stand with her reminding him what she had promised him, he obeys (Imbuga, 1984, p. 68).

Boss and his wives are brought in at Jere's command. Boss is happy to answer questions from the journalists even though they were warned not to. He asks Jere to arrange for him to address the people as soon as possible (Imbuga, 1984, p. 69). Although Jere does not encourage the idea for his safety, Jusper asks that Boss be 'allowed to go and rub shoulders with the people' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 69). That is when Boss and Regina recognize Jusper. Tension builds as Regina crosses the floor going towards Jusper while Boss is angrily yelling at her to come back (Imbuga, 1984, p.70). When she finally decides to go back, she has drawn out a knife concealed from everyone and suddenly leaps and at Boss stabbing him on the chest. He falls down and dies bringing the plot to the falling action. The denouement or conclusion of the plot is marked when Jusper confirms to the audience that 'the man is actually dead. Boss has killed Boss' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 71).

In falling action, Glatch (2021), states that the writer explores the aftermath of the climax. The writer ties up loose ends from the main conflict, explores broader concepts and themes, and pushes the story towards some form of a resolution while still keeping the focus on the climax and its aftermath. The resolution of the story involves tying up the loose ends of the climax and falling action. Sometimes, this means following the story's aftermath to a chilling conclusion—the protagonist dies, the antagonist escapes, a fatal mistake has fatal consequences, etc. Other times, the resolution ends on a lighter note. Maybe the protagonist learns from their mistakes, starts a new life, or else forgives and rectifies whatever incited the story's conflict. Either way, the writer uses the resolution to continue his thoughts on the story's themes giving the reader something to think about after the last word is read.

Smith and Glatch (2022) have identified foreshadowing as one of the elements of plot in drama. Readers like to watch for signs of future plot development. The potential for a plot's development is clued in the text, but not stated so openly that readers know what happens next. Therefore, foreshadowing is a clue in the text that hints at events to come. In this case, the reader is not aware that an event was foreshadowed until after they reflect on the text-but this reflection, and the employment of foreshadowing in literature, makes a text richer and truer to life. MasterClass (2021), states that foreshadowing is a key tool for writers to build dramatic tension and suspense throughout their stories. Foreshadowing makes readers wonder what will happen next and keep them reading to find out. Foreshadowing is also a great tool to prepare readers emotionally for big reveals that leave them surprised and/or satisfied. According to both MasterClass (2021) and Smith and Glatch (2022), foreshadowing can be represented through use of dialogue, character trait/action and use of setting.

In the play, *Man of Kafira*, foreshadow contributes to the buildup of the plot through action, dialogue and traits of some characters in the story. To begin with, Boss is represented as quite paranoid and delusional about his reputation and situation in Kafira. His delusion is increased by Grabio and Taget who feed him with lies about the real situation of Kafira and what its people think about him (Imbuga, 1984, pp. 28-36). Imbuga employs dramatic illusion to enhance the main theme which is truth vs. illusion when Boss has a dream in which he sees, Lum-Lum, the ghost of the dead archbishop whom he killed, telling him that 'the path is clear' and the people 'await for your return' (Imbuga, 1984, pp. 45-50). Boss is also indecisive in nature. He wants a play performed for him but he cancels it for a wrestling match (Imbuga, 1984, p. 15). Now because of 'a special dream' he cancels the wrestling match and replaces it with a grand farewell variety show (Imbuga, 1984, p. 54). He abruptly decides on a journey back to Kafira (Imbuga, 1984, p. 52). The action of the character Boss foreshadows his rush decision making such as going back to Kafira. Through this, the tension of the plot builds up since readers know that Boss is unwanted in Kafira oblivious to him that he could be in danger. This creates suspense and tension as readers wait for what comes next when he finally arrives in Kafira.

The actions and words of the character of Regina foreshadow the imminent reversal of fortunes, the fall of the Boss. Foreshadowing, as a dramatic technique, provides textual hint about the possible outcomes of characters' actions contributes to the development of the play's plot. Regina is an orphan, her brother Mosese is dead and she was forcefully married to Boss thus losing her beloved fiancé Jusper (Imbuga, 1984, p. 22). Regina is a disillusioned character. She feels hopeless now that she has no one with Mosese dead and Jusper has become 'a vegetable' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 41). Since she has nothing to lose, she attempts suicide but is stopped when one of the workers find her in time and rescue her (Imbuga, 1984, p. 21). She is, however, planning something big and doing it in front of an audience that will understand the cries of a lonely woman (Imbuga, 1984, p. 41). Her strange talk of death annoys Boss when he involves her in a game of guessing what kind of letters Boss had received in a dream and she says 'letters of condolences' (Imbuga, 1984, p. 37). Regina's words and actions reveal that she is capable of anything dangerous, especially towards the man who has made her life miserable, taking her away from Jusper whom she remembers fondly (Imbuga, 1984, p. 44), killing her parents and brother and also murdering her book (Imbuga, 1984, p. 43). She hates Boss with all the marrow in her bones (Imbuga, 1984, p. 20). Not to mention the incident where she almost killed Boss when she was alone with his asleep self (Imbuga, 1984, p. 38). Luckily enough Bin-Bin knocked the door and interrupted what could have been a potential murder scene. The character of Regina is presented as disturbed, devastated and hopeless from her conversation with Bin-Bin and that makes her dangerous.

The dénouement is best illustrated in Act Two, Scene Four of *The Green Cross of Kafira*. This scene is perfect fit for Act Three. Acknowledgement of the urgent need for political action finally bears fruit as the despotic regime of the Chief of Chiefs is dethroned. The atmosphere is electric as preparations for the swearing-in of the new president of Kafira is under way. This new political dispensation ushers the dawn of era, an era of 'Natural Wisdom,' 'Humility and Selflessness' (Imbuga, 2013, p. 56). Imbuga packs the two plays with intense political activity to demonstrate that redemption from political mess in post-independence African societies calls for sustained action. Kafira, which is recognised as a country in play as opposed to fluid identity he accords her in *Betrayal in the City*, is an anagram for Africa. These political gains have to be protected by all means necessary; in the words of Sikia Macho: 'It is always sad when a good thing comes to an end. But the end of a thing like what we have just witnessed is always a reminder of where we have come from, where we are, and where we are going. It is indeed from such reflections that we derive the energy to live on and on. Yes, it is joyous sadness, so help us God' (Imbuga, 2013, p. 56)

5. Conclusion

The formal uniqueness of the two plays analysed in this paper demonstrates that Imbuga has undoubtedly earned his place as one of the most celebrated writers in East Africa. He has prolifically experimented with drama as a genre of literature. The two plays we have critiqued in this paper have provided rich data for exploring the formal uniqueness of Imbuga's drama. The most dominating stylistic elements that generate the plot in *Man of Kafira* include: play within a play, foreshadow, satire and oral traditions such as songs. The dramaturgy of Imbuga's works facilitates calls for urgent political action in post-independence African societies. The two plays are action-packed; Imbuga deliberately structures in this manner to give prominence to his renewed call for political action.

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