CHAPTER – III

BETRAYAL IN THE CITY
Post-colonial literature powerfully records a diverse body of literary responses to the challenges presented by de-colonisation and the transitions to independence and post-independence in a wide variety of political and cultural context.

Francis Imbuga has emerged as a powerful voice in East African drama in English dealing with the ideas concerning the socio-political problems in post-independent Kenya. Kenyans, like other Africans, expected that independence would liberate them from all negative aspects of the colonial rule. However, their hopes were shattered as the hard-earned political independence culminated in the vices like neocolonialism, nepotism, corruption, repression, cultism and dictatorship. It is not an exaggeration to say that the same situation prevailed in most of the countries of the African continent. This reality must have prompted Francis Imbuga to write this play which reflects the realistic situation that was prevalent in Africa. The other African playwrights like Wole Soyinka and Ngugi, are also opposed to the post-independent regimes which were tyrannical and corrupt. In the words of a critic,

_The African writers have also expressed their resentment against the corruption in the independent African states, and they have protested against the authoritarian forces_
which are trying to misuse the freedom gained from the colonial powers.

Betrayal in the City is an incisive and thought-provoking analysis of the problems of the independence and freedom in post-colonial African states. Kafira is an independent African state, which is ruled by Boss, a dictator. Absence of popular government, suppression of freedom and subjugation of citizens by the ruling class form the theme of the play. Kafira is a microcosm of the African continent in which vices like nepotism, corruption, neo-colonialism and dictatorship have taken a firm hold. It is the dictatorial governance by Boss and his final overthrow along with his cohorts that form the focal point of the play.

Betrayal in the City runs into two Acts. In Act One, scene one, one notices the description of a grave and its surroundings. As the curtain rises, Doga and Nina, the parents of Adika, a slain student leader, are in deep distress because they find their son's grave defiled. Adika has been killed by the aides of Boss, the head of state of Kafira, for his participation in a student demonstration against the influx of expatriates into the country. Jusper, the brother of Adika, has also been arrested for his becoming wild at the funeral, singing songs of vengeance. (p.10) He has been released after three months and he is psychologically upset.
Doga and Nina suspect the killers of their son to be the culprits behind the defilement of the grave in a bid to burn the dead body, so that they can escape the vengeance of Adika's ghost. However, Doga resolves:

The ceremony must go on as planned. I do not want the spirits of the dead to turn wild with anger on account of a ceremony unperformed. (pp. 8-9)

These words of Doga reveal the strength of African traditional roots.

At this moment, Jere and Mulili, the two soldiers now on duty, enter the scene and declare that the ceremony is cancelled in the interest of peace. (p.14) However, realizing the injustice done to them, Jere permits the ceremony to take place much against the law. In course of their conversation, Jere reveals to Doga that his second son, Jusper, has also been arrested for his alleged killing of Chagaga, the sub-chief's brother.

The next scene is set in a prison cell. Jere is thrown into prison for having violated the law in permitting Doga to perform the shaving ceremony (p.9). In the cell, he meets Mosese, a university lecturer, who has been imprisoned for possessing an illegal drug, opium. The actual reason for his imprisonment is his speech at Adika's funeral.
This only shows that the rule of Boss is so tyrannical that the people of Kafira do not have freedom of speech. It also shows that even the intellectuals are crushed under the weight of neo-colonialism in their own country.

Askari, the prison warder, informs Mosese and Jere that the old parents of Jusper are found dead and Jusper is going to be released. Jere and Mosese want to meet Jusper before his release. He also tells that a certain head of state is due to visit Kafira in a few weeks. Boss has decided that a play is to be performed for the visiting head as part of his entertainment. He wants the play to be enacted by the prisoners. If the exercise is a success, he has promised to release 600 prisoners. But Mosese does not like to act in the play because that would be equivalent to kneeling in front of Boss and pleading for mercy. (p. 31)

However, Jere as a realist, persuades Mosese to act in the play in order to rescue others from inevitable misery. He says:

Just think of those six hundred families that will be re-united. (p.30)

This scene ends with Mosese becoming mad in a fit of rage against the cruel regime.
In scene three, Jusper is full of revenge against Boss. He emotionally says:

How can I ever rest with the death of my entire family on my mind? (p.37)

On the other hand, Regina, his girlfriend, thinks that it is almost impossible to checkmate the moves of Boss. She wants to adopt a soft line until the expected time comes near. She tries to reason with him reminding that he and her brother, Mosese, are her only friends left in the world. She advises them not to go for any hasty action which may result in grief.

Even as they converse, Tumbo, a government official and Regina’s landlord, arrives. He tells Regina that Boss has appointed him chairman of the visitor’s entertainment committee. He has ordered a play be staged as part of the entertainment. Regina introduces Jusper to him as a playwright. Immediately Tumbo asks him to write a play that will outline our achievements in black and white and ignore dark side of the picture. (p. 51)

He is so corrupt that he finalises Jusper’s play as he feels that it will have a good potato in it. Incidentally, he reveals the cruel personality aspects of Boss.
At the beginning of the next scene, it is known that besides Tumbo, the other government officials, Kabito, Nicodemo and Mulili, are on the committee. They discuss the arrangements for the visit of a certain head of state. One can notice that their concentration is more on their share of money they get than on the arrangements. Mulili prides himself for getting the tender for milk for which Kabito has desperately tried. The statement of Kabito, not to take university students to play the role of primary school kids, angers Mulili. With his little knowledge of English, he thinks that Kabito has called him a primary school kid. He insists on an apology from Kabito, which the latter bluntly refuses.

Act Two takes place outside the palace of Boss. It deals with Mulili poisoning the mind of Boss about Kabito in order to take revenge. Mulili tells him that Kabito has openly declared that he has robbed him of the milk tender. Boss, according to him, has hidden millions of dollars in a foreign country. Boss grows furious and orders Mulili to come back and report to him that Kabito is silent. This scene ends with the discussion by the committee members about the sudden death of Kabito.

In the last scene, the stage is set for the final rehearsal of the play. When Jusper and Tumbo are busy making arrangements for the rehearsal, Boss surprises them by his sudden appearance. When Boss enquires about the play, Jusper informs him that the title of the play is
Betrayal in the City. It is about an army cadet who has been promoted to the rank of captain within six months of his enrolment. As he doesn't know how to handle a gun, he accidentally shoots his colleague during a pass out parade. In the climax, people discover that he is not a relative of the army commander as they thought. Boss orders the rehearsal to begin and he himself partakes in it in place of a character, who has fallen sick. When Tumbo says that the guns are not ready as the carpenter has not made the guns, Boss foolishly orders the three guards to place their guns on the floor near the actors, for props. Jere and Mosese, as part of the rehearsals, take hold of the guns and do not lose the opportunity. Jere threatens Boss to remain seated or he will be shot. Immediately Mulili, for fear of life, holds Boss responsible for the mis-rule. Boss looks astonished at the sudden development. But Jere says that they will not kill Boss because Kafira needs each one of us you included. (p.76) Jusper takes the gun and shoots Mulili, declaring:

I did it for Kafira. I did it for all of you people

(p.77)

The play ends with the appearance of the ghosts of Doga and Nina, the dead parents of Jusper.

There is no doubt that the playwright has succeeded in his attempt to expose the maladies of post-independent Africa. At the same time, the plot of the play suffers from certain improbabilities. For
instance, the climax scene is so loosely constructed that one cannot believe the way the events turn in favour of the prisoners. The very idea of Boss to get the play enacted by the prisoners which will signify national unity and also make them actively involved in nation building, appears to be ridiculous on the part of a dictator, who always threatens people by comparing himself with fire that burns them. The rehearsal episode in which Jere and Mosese hold Boss at the gunpoint, is not preplanned and there is not even a single word or a scene in the play to convince the audience that they are going to carry out a coup. It is well-known in the play that Jere and his party's target is Boss, a dreaded dictator, with all sorts of vices. But when they get a golden opportunity to crush him, he is left with all honour. This appears very odd for a political plot, which normally believes in wild justice. The event in which Jere, after threatening Boss like a tiger, himself becomes a deer in front of the tiger, is superfluous. He says:

Your Excellency, I now offer myself. Here, shoot me. (p.76)

This is how the plot suffers from some improbabilities.

In spite of the fact that none of the few characters in the play is fully developed, all of them revolve round the powerful presentation of the themes of the evil effects of neo-colonialism and dictatorship. In the character of Jere,
Imbuga presents us with the most manifest illustration of his belief in man’s ability to change.

Jere, an ex-service man in the Kafiran army, witnesses the reality of the situation, when he is sent to restore law and order in his home village. At first, as a representative of the oppressive rule, he orders Doga and Nina that they should not perform the shaving ceremony. But, in a few minutes, as a humanist, he comprehends their agony and is for the ceremony to take place. He bitterly argues with Mulili:

I looked in that old woman’s eyes and I saw the futility of calling ourselves citizens of Kafira. We must allow them even if it’s against the law.

(p. 18)

He is overruled, arrested and thrown into a prison for disobedience. There is fire outside, is his observation when he comes face to face with the reality of unrest and bitter opposition of the people to the wicked regime. He vows to fight against nepotism rampant in their society. He exhibits pure optimism to neutralize the tremendous emotional feelings of Mosese about violence. He only says that things will change. He is very pragmatic to drive away the idealistic approach of Mosese when the latter says that he will remain loyal to his principles.
without any action to achieve them. He convinces Mosese to act in the play that is planned to enact for the pleasure of a certain visiting guest.

Change will never come that way. You have to make up your mind to take part in that play. That way you will have an opportunity to meet face to face with Boss. That way, you will have given him something to feel ashamed of.

(p. 32)

Mosese is a university lecturer, who is full of idealism, aspires to see Kafira developed with citizens slowly emerging out of the mire of poverty. His first statement on his appearance is *I have no front.* (p.7) He thinks that he is a man of principles and is prepared to die to defend his principles. He campaigns for political reforms and he has dreams of victory over Boss’s authoritative regime. However, he does not have any fixed programme or strategy to achieve his aim. There is a striking similarity between his vision and that of Wamala in John Ruganda’s *The Burdens.* They are dreamers who do not know how to really bring out a revolution. Thus, Mosese is a

*lecturer languishing in despair in his prison cell,*

*waiting hopelessly for the birth of a savior.*

He does not believe in the theory of *selective breeding* and he declares:
blessed are the poor for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven! (p.31)

He is firm about his idea of opposition to the rule of Boss. He informs Jere:

buying my release by acting in front of a visiting head of state would be to betray our cause. (p32)

Thus, he is more conscious of his principles in mere words, than to transforming them into realities. He is frustrated with the way Uhuru (freedom) is misused by the dictators like Boss. He is reminiscent of the airman in W.B. Yeats's An Irish Airman Foresees His Death, when he says:

Our king had come at last, but no. It was all an illusion...... Now we have nothing to look forward to. We have killed our past and busy killing the future. (pp. 31-32)

But the airman’s despair reflects the futility of the struggle for political freedom for Ireland.

The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death}
The character of Regina is portrayed in a delicate manner. She is the sister of Mosese and in heart opposed to Boss. But she is gentle and cannot think that Boss can be overthrown by means of a coup. She has been severely beaten up by the soldiers who force her to give false evidence against her own brother who has been implicated in a case of possessing an illegal drug. In spite of this, she decides to meet Boss personally to secure the release of her brother, Mosese. In the process, she mercilessly escapes from the sexual harassment of Boss. She doesn’t want Jesper to talk of revenge but to remain calm till conducive conditions prevail. She tells him that if any thing goes wrong they will be wiped out. However, the part played by Regina in the furtherance of action in the play is insignificant. Her role is limited to persuading Jusper to write a play and co-operate with Tumbo.

Boss, the ruler of the country, is another important character for whom politics is like acting. Also in his view, art has no purpose beyond the banal entertainment of his state visitor. He proudly declares to Mulili that he is like fire that burns. In the words of Tumbo, Boss is not at all that bad at heart. His main problem is that he gets scared far too easily. That is why his advisers are, in fact, ruling Kafira and the worst of them is Mulili. Exactly in conformity with this opinion of Tumbo, Boss is frightened with the mere words of Mulili about Kabito who is quoted as a
bitter critic of Boss. He frantically becomes self-conscious about his own corrupt acts. He says,

Just how much does Kabito know about my private life?... That is no excuse... When a man plays with fire, he gets burned. (pp. 62-63)

He immediately commands Mulili, his cousin, to silence the opponent and report the same to him.

Thus, Boss, as a tyrant, orders things to move according to his whims and fancies. Jusper's old parents, Doga and Nina, are murdered before his release from prison. Because of his mindless administration, Kabitos, Tumbos, Mulilis and their likes have become native ruling class opening the flanks of African nations to mass exploitation by foreigners. Boss manages to create a perfect police state in Kafira. In this way, Boss represents exploitation, corruption and tyranny. He boasts of his abilities in a hyperbolic tone:

They should have known my arms are long. My eyes see far, and my ears are the sharpest on the continent. (p.70)

Here, we are reminded of king Ozymandias in P.B.Shelley's Ozymandias, when he boasts of his greatness:
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!  

Like Ozymandias, whose own words serve as a mockery of his statue in ruins, Boss’s arrest at the end of the play, also appears to mock at his vanity.

Thus, every event in Kafira takes place according to the orders of Boss. But it is surprising to know that such an important character appears only twice in the last scene. Earlier in the play we hear about Boss only from the government official, Tumbo.

The characterization is weak as none of the characters in the play is well developed. But its strength lies in the effective presentation of betrayal at different levels in a country where there is no popular government. For example, Boss’s Betrayal is exhibited in his order to kill the innocent people like, Adika, for his mere participation in the student demonstration against the influx of expatriate personnel into the country. He betrays the people of his country by his mindless killing of the old parents of Jusper, Doga and Nina, as part of a psychological war against him. Moreover, the fact of his betrayal is revealed in his command of Mulili to kill Kabito, the other government official, and also in his keeping millions of public money in foreign banks. Tumbo corrupts the play-writing competition by pronouncing Jusper a winner without even actually organizing it. Thus, Tumbo betrays the confidence of the
people rules of natural justice and fairness. The competition between Kabito and Mulili for the award of the milk tender

is a manifestation of the jungle philosophy of the survival of the fittest.⁶

The most blatant show of betrayal lies in Mulili's denunciation of his cousin, Boss, when the latter was overthrown.

Thus, every character in the government has betrayed the hope and trust that is vested in them by the people, and every other character outside the government has worked against such betrayal. This aspect of action of betrayal and reaction against the betrayal, makes the political theme strong, and in a way contributes to the tautly-knit structure of the play.

Imbuga employs certain dramatic techniques to make his play theatrically vital. The play-within-the play and the madness of the characters are some of the techniques successfully tried by him.

The last scene of the play is presented as a play-within-the play. It is a rehearsal of the play to be staged by the prisoners for the pleasure of a certain visiting head of the state. It acquires significance in the play because it is the rehearsal where Boss is taken a prisoner and the government is toppled. Thus, the technique serves as the climax scene and turns out to be a trap-play similar to that of Shakespeare as in Hamlet.
Madness is another dramatic technique employed by the playwright successfully. The technique has powerfully served as a stylistic device for characterization. Jusper is mad in the sense his speech lacks logical progression of thought, but certainly fraught with reality. Jusper himself says:

People say I am mad...... I know the difference
between Sun, Jupiter and Jusper. .......
Justice! — Absent sir. ..... Jupiter and Justice
are one and the same (pp. 10-11)

These words outwardly appear mad, but the reality is that Jusper mockingly draws a parallel between justice and Jupiter; both are distinct and invisible to the naked eye. This only indicates that justice for the people is greatly compromised. So, it is proved beyond doubt that Jusper's madness is merely a label that Imbuga has created only to present the facts in the guise of madness.

The technique is also employed to educate the audience to what extent the national mismanagement can destroy its people. Jusper's madness can be taken as the reflection of the fury of his generation and the problems in his society. This idea is clearly expressed in Jere's words:
When a madness of an entire nation disturbs a solitary mind, it is not enough, to say the man is mad. (p.35)

In this way, Imbuga’s experimentation with madness as the technique is perfectly suited to express complex ideas and situations in the play. Here one is reminded of Hamlet who pretends madness in order to know the truth about the murder of his father.

Being an African dramatist, Imbuga expresses traditional practices in his dramas. Tradition is expressed through the dialogue between Doga and Nina. Early in the morning they come to Adika’s grave and find it defiled. In spite of this, Doga says that the shaving ceremony must go on and the crack on the grave must be filled up at once. Doga says:

The ceremony must go on as planned. I do not want the spirits of the dead would turn wild with anger. (p.9)

After the death of Adika, the ceremony is to be performed. A small bowl is kept on the grave in which money is placed. The tradition is that the soul of the dead will be appeased when silver coins are placed in the bowl. There is also a reference to the practice of
circumcision to be performed on a boy by his father. In spite of the slow spread of modernization, traditions have not changed in African society.

The language used by different characters speaks of their own mentality. Doga, a native African, speaks with a traditional mind and the words of his native language cannot be missed. He says that *a mouse does not share bowl with cat.* (p.29) At the same time, he thinks that a *cloudy sky does not always cry rain.* (p.9) Jusper, on the other hand, is very emotional. He wants to take revenge on the Boss for the murder of his parents and his brother. He says, *how can I ever rest with the death of my entire family on my mind.* (p.30) He tells Regina that she has lost her fighting spirit like every one else in the street. On the other hand, Mosese is a dreamer who does not know how to bring about a revolution. Most of the time, his words are very soft. He speaks in a philosophical manner. He says:

> Our kingdom had come at last, but no. It was all an illusion. How many of us have set eyes upon that kingdom? What colour is it? *(p. 31)*

The language of Mulili is according to his background – that of a low educated rugged fellow. When Jere allows the ceremony to go on, Mulili shouts:
...... what you thinks you do? You shall pays for it. (p.20)

About the tender awarded to him as per Boss's orders, he says:

You knows who speaking? It is me, me Boss himself, no bloody vice deputy. (p.57)

Poisoning the mind of Boss against Kabito, he tells Boss, that one, he be a green grass in the snake. (p.62) The language reflects what kind of man Mulili is. The language of other characters is also according to their roles in the play.

Imbuga also employs parody very well in the play. The present situation in Kafira is a parody of loss of individual freedom in Africa. It does not help simply if a person is put in prison, because his mind cannot be changed. Boss and his aides think that all will be well if dissidents are put in prison. There is parody when Jere asks:

.... has it ever occurred to you that the outside of the cell may well be the inside of another? (p.21)

It simply means that those who are physically in prison are freedom loving people of the nation. Referring to birds' chirping near his brother's grave, Jusper says that at least, they are free to exercise
their prerogative to be heard. There is an ironic tinge in Jusper’s words when he is jealous of the freedom enjoyed by the birds. It only indicates that Mosese has been imprisoned for his expression of speech. The loss of freedom in an independent nation results in an emptiness that is equated to the everlasting wait for the kingdom of God. Mosese says:

How many of us have set eyes upon that kingdom? What colour is it? (p.31)

This way, parody used by the playwright amply reflects the ongoing reality in many African states.

There is symbolism brought out in the play. The very title of the play, Betrayal In the City, is symbolic indictment of the ruling elite’s predatory propensities, acquisitive aggressiveness, squandering the nation’s human and material resources, rampant corruption, politics of double dealing, the ruler’s ignorance and the intimidation of the public. The Kafiran society is divided into they and us. They are represented by Jere, Jusper, Mosese, Regina and the students. Us are the betrayals – Mulili, Boss, Tumbo and Kabito. National security is only a cliché to stifle any kind of criticism. Symbolism is also reflected in the chirping of birds as well as the dirty crumpled red shirt worn by Jusper. At the grave of Adika, as a bird sings, Jusper says:
I like that bird for its bravery, comes to the
wrong place and does not even bother to keep
quiet about it (p.11)

While chirping of birds symbolizes freedom and happiness, Jusper's crumpled red shirt reflects his revolutionary nature. Jusper's throwing of Chagaga's body into the river symbolizes sifting up the river with the discarded evil, represented by the likes of Chagaga.

The playwright does not hesitate to depict the element of exploitation by a few neo-colonialists. For his personal advantages, Kabito betrays the tacit agreement between the patron and the client and turns treacherous exploiting common masses. Similarly, Mullili realises that his chances of furthering personal advantage will be endangered and nullified by the deposition of Boss. Immediately, he disowns and even betrays his own cousin and his former benefactor. He not only distances himself from Boss by referring to him as only his distant cousin, but actually suggests that the revolutionary forces should kill the Kafiran president.

Even the government officials do not hesitate to comment on the insidious corrupt practices. Mullili strikes terror among his fellow-government officials. He even orders the murders of Jusper's innocent parents and also sends his fellow-soldier, Jere, to prison without following order and rules. He is always guided by the promise of
economic benefits and he takes recourse to callousness and to excess. Similarly, Tumbo is an incorrigibly corrupt official with his dictum of *eat and let eat*. (p.47) He unlawfully declares Jusper the winner in a play writing competition. Kabito bribes the university staff to get the milk contract. Ruganda rightly observes

*Tumbo’s boast about his material possessions
such as the block of flats, his Jaguar car and
loads of money that he does not know how to
spend, exemplified his corruption as well as the
regimes conspicuous consumption.*

He retains two thirds of the money intended for playwriting competition. He also bribes the officials to make everything appear on the right lines. He tells Jusper and Regina:

Now, of the six hundred pounds that was to finance the competition, I give one third to the two of you. The other two thirds will be used to put the records straight. (p.52)

The playwright makes an attempt to portray the neo-colonial inclinations of the Kenyan leaders. Boss is desirous of being seen through the eyes of the neo-colonizers. He is still bonded to colonial strategies psychologically and culturally to the extent that he feels the
legitimization of his identity and the amelioration of self-esteem and, therefore, of those of Kafira can only emanate from the ex-colonizer. This is evident from his flooding of the public and private sectors of Kafira with expatriate personnel. Moreover, he himself is surrounded by personally appointed foreign advisors. In most of the strategic institutions like the army, the prisons, the university etc., most of the expatriate staff work, thereby leading to the subjugation of the natives intellectually and morally. Colonial Trentianian, the Governor of French Sudan, has categorically elaborated on how the mind of the indigenous people could be twisted in favour of the coloniser. In the words of the colonial,

\[\text{we must attract those people to us, interact regularly with them, so that we can take away their spirit, impose our ideas upon them and brand them with our particular stamp.}^{8}\]

Boss has become a stooge in the hands of neo-colonialists. The performance of Jusper's play is supposed to signify his renunciation of barbarism and savagery and to proclaim his readiness to embrace tenaciously the enlightened and civilized ways of his visitor. As far as Boss is concerned, this conscious shift from traditional orator whose audience is indigenous to literature, whose unilateral audience is the all important impersonal visitor, constitutes the neo-colonial bent of mind of
Boss. Boss earnestly feels that the successful performance of the play will propel him to closer proximity with the guardians and legislators of aesthetic values and launch Kafira into the club of developing nations, far away from the mighty industrial states in the world. Frantz Fanon calls this glorification of colonizer’s culture, the oppressed colonial African having

judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his language, his good habits, his sexual behavior, his ways of sitting down, of resting, of enjoying himself, he flings himself upon the imposed culture with the desperation of a drowning man.\(^9\)

Boss obviously indulges in self-abnegation and self-contempt particularly in his understanding of art and its functions. In Lacan’s words, Boss, in seeking to see himself reflected on the mirror of the neo-colonial eye, fails to see the incongruity between

the I which perceives and the perceived image, I.\(^10\)

Boss proclaims unashamedly his neo-colonial attitude when he deliberately sends:
an order of the three hundred more expatriate personnel, just to put the students in their place. (p.71)

In the play, Imbuga puts forward education in positive terms as an essential instrument of wisdom that leads to social and economic development. The Illiterate are the main obstacles in the way of healthy growth of African society. Tubmo tells categorically that education no longer matters these days. (p.45)

Askary, the prison warder, says,

you need a tall relative to get anything these days. (p.31)

While the officials devaluing the importance of education, they paradoxically rely heavily on expatriates to give meaning to the data. (p.22) The manner in which Imbuga has caricatured Tumbo as a little embarrassed about his lack of university education and the inefficiency that he displays in the way he handles the committee meeting and the play writing competition suggests that he does not favourably see Tumbo, or his other colleagues, as effective or desirable figures of authority, worth banking on in Kafira.

Similarly, Imbuga's outrageous portrayal of Mulili as a murderer and as an ignoramus who has never stepped inside a secondary school
classroom, (p.59) suggests that the dramatist sees a literate, formally educated intellectual, has better bargain if the problems of Kafira are to begin to be solved.

Kabito and Nicodemo, the corrupt incompetent bureaucratic functionaries, who are semi-educated are non-starters. In Mosese, the university lecturer, Jusper the university student, and Jere, the teacher-cum-soldier, Imbuga sees the potentialities for selfless and able leadership for cleansing their society of major maladies.

It is evident from the play that Imbuga, as a committed writer, has tried to drive the point home that the hard-earned independence by the African nations from colonial rule has culminated in neo-colonialism and dictatorship. Thus, the futility of independence and the devastating effects of one-man rule are powerfully dramatized to prove his point that dictatorship is a great hurdle in the way of all-round progress of these nations. Imbuga has mirrored the ongoing reality of.

the continued economic exploitation of Africa’s total resources and of Africa’s labour power by international monopoly, capitalism through continued creation and encouragement of subservient weak capitalistic economic structures, captained or overseered by a native ruling class.  

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The playwright's feelings and aims are clearly reflected in the words of Jere:

Our wish was not to swim in human blood, but to provide a mirror for Kafira. A mirror that will reflect the real faces of Kafiran front men.... 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)

Thus the point, which Imbuga emphasises in the play, is that a tyrannical political system is the major obstacle in the way of social and economical equality and all-round development of a country. This aim of the playwright is elucidated in explicit terms in his next play, Game of Silence.
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