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Post-Independence Disillusionment in Francis Imbuga's *Betrayal in the City* and *Aminata*

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This article explores the theme of post-independence disillusionment in a selection of Francis Imbuga's plays, namely: *Betrayal in the City* (1976) and *Aminata* (1988). This article involves a critical and analytical reading of the selected texts of Francis Imbuga in their depiction of post-independence disillusionment. The data is collected and presented under headings guided by the research objectives. During both the analytical and discussion stages, the article particularly considered the quantitative elements of recurrence and frequency with regard to the identified variables initially indicated in the textual checklist. This article concentrates on the ways in which disillusionment is depicted, the causes of disillusionment, and the identification of social-political groups affected by post-independence disillusionment. The investigation makes use of aesthetic, ethical and post-colonial literary theories. It scrutinizes several literary elements that make the selected plays aesthetically and ethically appealing. The post-colonial theory gives an insight into the post-independence disillusionment and this in turn connects Francis Imbuga's selected plays to the current Africa. This article concludes that all citizens in post-independence states live under fear and tension since they are uncertain about the future. The leaders have political threats while some other groups of people like the poor and women are highly oppressed and all this is aesthetically presented raising the reader's interest, right from the first to the last play.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to depict the post-independence disillusionment in Francis Imbuga's selected plays. This researcher projected that Francis Imbuga's drama is celebrated possibly because of its aesthetic appeal and the pertinent socio-political and ethical issues depicted in those plays. The task of this article was to establish the ways in which post-independence disillusionment is depicted, the causes of the disillusionment, and the social groups affected by post-colonial disillusionment.

There are several literary scholars who have worked on Francis Imbuga's works for example, Ndegwa (1985), Ruganda (1992), and Gachanja (2006), Wellington (2012) have explored ideas like: *A Comparative Study of the Vision and Styles of Francis Imbuga and John Ruganda. The Politics of Francis Imbuga's Drama, Treatment of Women, and Images of Women in Kenyan Oral Narrative* respectively. It is, therefore, evident that there is no work that has been done on Francis Imbuga's work with a focus on depicting post-independence disillusionment in his plays. This leaves a big gap that the researcher needs to fill hence prompting his study on the Depiction of Post-independence Disillusionment in Francis Imbuga's Plays with the main emphasis being put on exposure of the various ways in which post-independence disillusionment is depicted in the selected plays; tracing the causes of the disillusionment in the socio-political context and identification of the social groups affected and they are affected by the post-colonial disillusionment.

Post-independence deals with the politics of African states in which insurgencies or liberation movements have taken control of the governments.

It analyses the impact on the governance of reforms introduced by these post-independent regimes, their relations with traditional authorities and civil society and relationships within and between competing guerrilla movements. It interrogates the nature of the state that emerges from this process. The 'post-independence' state label is argued to be both meaningful and useful, as part of a larger project of exploring and explaining the post-independent African state, highlighting debates about representation, citizenship, and nation-building.

Post-independent Africa has experienced many conflicts. However, few intra- or interstate conflicts have resulted in the creation of the amalgamation of states. Conflict has been about control of the state, rather than new geographic dispensations (Ayo K 2004).

In Africa, political and economic crises weaken the regime's hold on the state apparatus, force pragmatic alliances and reveal internal divisions (Fabian, J 1990). In dealing with these crises, we see the emergence of a more exclusivist mode of autocratic rule, continuing to draw on tropes of liberation, development, and democracy, but which increasingly appear perverted.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore Francis Imbuga's depiction of post-independence disillusionment, its causes and consequences in his plays; *Betrayal in The City* (1976) and *Aminata* (1988).

The Scope of the Study

This study is based on two selected plays by Francis Imbuga and they include: *Betrayal in the City* [BC] (1976) and *Aminata* [AM] (1988). These plays have

been selected because they are the most studied, they are closely related and sufficiently represent the playwright's craftsmanship. The plays are East Africa's most recognized, studied and performed. The themes in the plays sufficiently reflect the social-political atmosphere of not only Kenya but the entire East African region and Sub-Saharan Africa in general.

Justification of the Study

Scholars and critics of the dramatic works of Francis Imbuga have examined various subjects that he raises in his plays but did not handle post-independence disillusionment, especially in the selected plays. This study, therefore, intends to fill this gap by exploring the theme of post-independence disillusionment in his selected plays. The concept of post-independence disillusionment is a central one in the selected works and therefore requires a unique analysis which I carried out to measure its applicability in the current situation.

Significance of the Study

This study is expected to enhance literary scholarship by offering a detailed analysis of Imbuga's narrative techniques, thematic concerns, and character development. It situates his work within the broader context of African literature, emphasizing the role of drama in critiquing and reflecting societal issues. Understanding how Imbuga addressed post-independence challenges can inspire contemporary writers to explore similar themes in their work. This study highlights the enduring relevance of Imbuga's insights and encourages new generations of writers to engage with socio-political issues through their art.

This study not only enriches the appreciation of Francis Imbuga's literary contributions but also provides a lens through which to examine and critique the ongoing struggles and aspirations of post-colonial societies. It affirms the power of literature to reflect, critique and potentially transform the realities of its time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

East African Studies on Francis Imbuga

Francis Imbuga's drama has acquired a sharp socio-political focus. It manifestly responds to familiar but specific historical developments. This is in accordance with Wellington (2012) in his thesis *A Comparative Study of the Vision and Styles of Francis Imbuga and John Ruganda*. He compares how the prevailing social and political conditions in East Africa, especially in the post-independence period, influenced the dramas of Francis Imbuga and John Ruganda. A close analysis of the dramas of leading East African playwrights like Imbuga and Ruganda reveals the socio-political temper in the society. This originates from its social commitment and reveals that a critic of East African drama must assess its contributions to social development. Such contributions include values, attitudes, vision; and their manner of artistic presentation.

His study concentrates on the premise that East African drama functions as a tool for social change. It explores revolutionary themes, through the use of novel strategies. As skilled artists, Imbuga and Ruganda, the study assumes that they creatively present revolutionary ideas through equally revolutionary dramatic techniques. The study is concerned with how they perceive East African society, and how their perception affects their style of dramatization. He examines the influence of East African reality on their plays and explores some of the dramatic techniques they have adopted for the effective transmission of this reality. He compares the vision of the two playwrights, as well as their techniques of dramatic construction. His assumptions are that social, historical and political realities in East Africa form a creative reservoir of the region's drama. However, in this study, some crucial political, social, and historical aspects of Imbuga's work as far as disillusionment is concerned are not mentioned.

In the first full-length scholarly study of Imbuga's works the doctoral dissertation *Telling the Truth*

Laughingly, The Politics of Francis Imbuga's Drama (1992), the Ugandan playwright John Ruganda describes Imbuga as a master of “transparent concealment- someone who found a way to write socially critical drama in a charged political atmosphere that was essentially antagonistic towards writers in general and theatre in particular. *Telling the Truth Laughingly, The Politics of Francis Imbuga's Drama* reveals that the leadership of post-colonial states is centred on the selfishness of elite leaders. They have made the great independence expectations of Africans bitter and barren. It is therefore the state that makes citizens to become hopeless and disillusioned.

.... Imbuga's political plays focus on the predatory propensities of the ruling elite, through their acquisitive aggressiveness, have squandered the nation's human and material resources. The rosy promise of independence has been turned bitter and barren, and populace has been traumatized into silence and immobility. Extremities of wealth and poverty are rampant and the entire society is suffocating with corruption and rot at its core. The very titles which Imbuga choose for his first political plays, Betrayal in the City and Game of Silence are instructive... (4)

John Ruganda's comment reconnects to John Lye's idea about post-independence literature when he reveals that both the literatures written and the masses themselves are all disillusioned and are covered up with social malice in the courts of the ruling elite.

...with plays which are as provocative as Imbuga's, are plays which accurately vivify the disillusionment of the masses and situate the social malaise in the courts of the ruling elite... (4)

This quotation, reveals that most post-independent citizens are miserable and disillusioned. The new African leaders who they would expect to protect them are instead the ones torturing them. However,

John Ruganda's study does not depict the different ways in which such masses are tortured leading to their disillusionment.

In reference to Outa (2001) in his article “The Dramaturgy of Power and Politics in Post-colonial Kenya” a comparative Rereading of “forms”, in Texts by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Francis Imbuga he examines how power is performed and manifested in some of the dramatic texts by post-colonial African writers, especially in the infamously dictatorial contexts such as Kenya. For example, he portrays one of the most influential characters in *Betrayal in The City*, Tumbo to be practising the same mentality of “...eat and let eat” and this confirms Bayart's idiom;

....in Francis Imbuga's drama Betrayal in The City (1976) where one character strategically named Tumbo i.e., stomach articulates this same mentality as the “eat and let eat”, philosophy.

Such a statement is evidence of Imbuga's craftsmanship which makes him an outstanding playwright.

Joan M. Kivanda (1998) in her thesis *A Comparison Analysis of Nine Plays by East African Dramatists: with a Preliminary Examination of Contemporary East African Aesthetics and Politics of Language* Analyses the Aesthetics and Politics of Language; as a first step towards defining the East African community opinion on theatre and drama aesthetics. She focuses on the nine plays that cover the three main regions of English and Swahili-speaking Africa - Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda. She focuses on *Story* by Joan Kivanda, *The Flying Tortoise* by Tolewa Mollel, *Pullyupullus* by Tololwa Mollel, *Nguzo Mama* by Peninah Mhando, *Aminata* by Francis Imbuga, *The Rainbow* by David Mailu, *Chains of Juukdom* by Okoiti Omtatah, *Operation Mulungusi* by Patrick Mangeni and *The Bride* by Austine Bukenya. She discovers that playwrights use three main ways to interact with politics and the aesthetics of the language in their works. Either they

choose to reject the English language altogether and write in local languages in their works, find ways of mixing English and local languages in their works, or simply choose to write their plays exclusively in English. Whichever way the East African playwrights choose to interact with the English language, language in general is a major factor in determining the elements that define the aesthetics of East African theatre. This study concentrates on aesthetic theory but ignores post-colonial theory which is also crucial.

Gachungu Makini (1985) in his thesis *The Drama of Francis Imbuga* traces Imbuga's development into a leading playwright. The study closely examines the form and content of each of his published works and appended interviews in which he discusses his work and that of others, and his views on the theatre movement in Kenya. The study seeks to identify Imbuga's thematic concerns and literary style and to show the phases that these have gone through since he began writing. It also seeks to identify the events that have influenced his writings over the years and to evaluate his achievements in each play. He reveals that Imbuga had a high sense of creativity and that he was quick at writing plays and novels. He indicated that the *Bachelor* was written in two weeks, *Kisses* in two or three days and this was always done in order for him to meet the requirements of a persistent publisher. He still acknowledges that Imbuga as a dramatist, was possessed with a spirit of drama, as one would put it. When the spirit of creativity stubbornly possessed his mind and then took hold of his right hand spinning him round like a top, the results would leave mouths agape. Imbuga would not take long to write a play. It concludes among other things, that although he has made a significant contribution to the body of socially committed literature, Imbuga has not fully mastered the techniques of playwriting, yet. This thesis appreciates Imbuga's works but does not reveal the vital of post-independence disillusionment which should not be taken for granted.

According to J Roger Kurtz's (1998) analysis of Francis Imbuga's plays and novels in his attempt to provide direct criticism of post-colonial East African politics and society. Through his analysis of Francis Imbuga's *Shrine of Tears* with his focus centred on *The Contradictory Roles of Politicians*, *The Police Forces*, *The Universities of Expatriate "experts"* and *Traditional Cultural Forms* he reveals that Imbuga applies indirect criticism which is not only with survivalist but also with an effectual deterrent to volatile silencing artists by corrupt government machinery. This analysis concentrates on very few works of Imbuga leaving out most of the plays that this study is handling.

As a dramatist, Francis Davis Imbuga was incredibly creative and friendly. He liked sharing everything he got including ideas, with others (Waveney, 2013). This culture of sharing and celebrating his achievements with others may have been passed on from the older generation of poets and playwrights like John Ruganda, Okot p'Bitek, and David Rubadiri among others. These veterans were known to share their achievements openly and cheerfully, for instance whenever one of them published a play which was metaphorically referred to as the "birth of a new baby", he would invite others to celebrate through "swallowing" which was a term used to refer a bottle of beer, all in the spirit of Ubuntu (respect for humanity). Interestingly, they would spend every cent got from their performance in the "celebration".

According to Waveney Olembo (2013), in his work titled *Power and Gender Identities: Re configuring the Gendered Disparity in Kenyan Drama*, he reveals that there is gender disparity in most African societies even though they have attained their independence. He furthermore, reveals that women have been positioned in an inferior class originally by the traditional culture thus restricting women to only concentrate on domestic chores.

.... *Many of these societies are grounded on traditional patriarchal systems of governance. The place of women in many of these African*

societies for a long time is culturally defined, therefore restricting women to do domestic chores and specified places of operation... This leads to women marginalization. (99)

This quotation shows how society is covered with male chauvinistic tendencies. This finding is also reflected in Ruganda's, *Telling the Truth Laughingly, The Politics of Francis Imbuga's Drama* (1992) when he reveals that the play Aminata dichotomizes gender politics and explores the polarity of dominance (10), since the play pits Jumba, the village headman against Aminata, his niece and his late brother Pastor Ngoya's daughter. However, this study concentrated on very few works of Imbuga and did not concentrate on the social groups affected.

Odera G (2001), in his review entitled; *The Dramaturgy of Power and Politics in Post-colonial Kenya*; A comparative rereading of "forms", in Texts by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Francis Imbuga. He still comments that the play Betrayal in the City is a microcosm of the corruption of the continent of Africa. It is set in Kafira (an anagram for Africa), an imaginary "independent" African state, which represents the whole continent. Betrayal in the City is actually a study of African political systems. Kafira is a microcosm of the continent in which vices like nepotism, corruption, neo-colonialism, repression, cultism, and dictatorship have taken a firm hold. Imbuga depicts these through his parody of the leader, civil vice, intellectuals, and general populace of Kafira. The idea of betrayal is the central focus around which the shortcomings of Boss's regime are criticized. Betrayal is portrayed at different levels. Betrayal parodies the loss of individual freedoms in Africa. Jere asks,

Has it ever occurred to you that the outside of this cell may well be the inside of another? (21)

The above quotation indicates insecurity, throughout the whole nation. The idea that the whole of Kafira (Africa) is a big jail brings out the disillusionment with Uhuru (freedom). The

euphoria of the post-independence years has worn out, and dependence no longer means anything, least of all freedom. The emptiness that has remained is equated to the everlasting wait for the Kingdom of God:

For years we waited for the Kingdom, then they said it had come. 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? (31).

When African nations achieved independence, much was expected by those formerly under colonial rule. These hopes and illusions were shunned by the entrenchment of neo-colonialism. However, this study does not show the social groups which are disillusioned.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative approach. The ways in which disillusionment is depicted are described, and further, a description of the causes identified from the selected plays and later, the social groups that are affected by the disillusionment. In this, the researcher had to describe the incidents in which such groups were affected. This kind of description helped to vividly describe the data collected.

Procedure for Data Collection

The identified literary texts were bought. Then I started a close reading of both the major texts and other relevant works such as newspapers, articles, magazines, journals and research reports accompanied by note-taking around the key events and ideas in each text.

Data Collection Methods, Instruments, and Devices

The researcher obtained data by reading the texts closely. These texts included the primary texts (Francis Imbuga's plays being researched) and the secondary texts (other relevant works from other

scholars). The data was collected under headings guided by the research objectives.

The study involved the examination of documents guided by a textual checklist as the major research instrument. The checklist is comprised of aspects that helped to internalize the key variable which is post-independence disillusionment. These aspects include; Economy, Governance, Gender Relations, Domestic Relations, Personal Relations, Cultural Values, Religious Values and Education.

The recording tool used is note-taking. The researcher summarized the content from both the primary and secondary texts. The researcher then paraphrased the collected material to create detailed notes on specific passages that did not require exact wording. Some information was quoted and transcribed accurately using quotation marks and accurate page numbers. This was done with the help of note cards that I created. They entailed both the ideas that support my argument and those that are against it.

Finally, personal notes were made. I wrote notes during the research reading and these were important in supporting my arguments at the stage of data presentation, analysis, and discussion.

Data Processing

The data was recorded, transcribed, and edited. After all the required data had been attained, checking, and editing of the entire lot took place. The raw data was then checked for completeness, accuracy, and uniformity, to eliminate obvious discrepancies and other mistakes in the recording. The large amounts of data were also reduced to manageable proportions. All this was done with the guide of the textual checklist and the objectives of the study.

Data Analysis

The textual analysis technique was used to interpret and categorize the collected data. During both the analytical and discussion stages, the study particularly considered the quantitative elements of

recurrence and frequency with regard to the identified variables initially indicated in the textual checklist, namely: Economy, Governance, Gender Relations, Domestic Relations, Personal Relations, Cultural Values, Religious Values and Education.

Data Interpretation and Discussion

Data was categorized into themes and sub-themes derived from the objectives of the study. The data analysed was categorized and edited to suit the set objectives with the help of the textual checklist aspects. The information attained was then coded and grouped, this helped to give an overall view of the given data that entailed the textual checklist aspects with their frequency within different set objectives of the study. Such information was then interpreted and discussed and a conclusion whether the study achieved the set objectives or not was made.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Ways in Which Post-independence Disillusionment is Depicted

Dialogue

Imbuga intelligently uses dialogue to expose the disillusionment. It is from the conversation among Juser, Tumbo and Regina in *Betrayal in the City* (1976) that the audience is made to understand the existence of high poverty rates in the post-independence states. Most people are poor. This explains why they live a miserable lifestyle. A few that get opportunities to develop still cannot take them on because they are always financially and materialistically vulnerable. For example, Tumbo, a government official in later life, is given a scholarship but ends up selling it because his family is very poor and cannot support him.

Tumbo: (a bit embarrassed) actually, I Well, I was never there really, but I mean... I qualified alright but my family was so poor that I decided to sell the scholarship.

Jusper: I had no idea that this kind of thing had a long history (44)

Even when opportunities are given to the citizens, they still cannot utilize them. They are left hanging until they are taken up by the rich individuals who in this case are very few. Such an act leaves the majority of the population in a dire state because they cannot attain what they need due to the stinking poverty that they are subjected to.

In addition, when speaking with Jere the soldier, the old man Doga, father of the murdered Adika, hands over a small pocket Bible to him as the only property left for him and his entire family to offer. This is a sign of poverty citizens like Doga are exposed to and this is tactfully enhanced by the dialogue between Doga and Jere.

Jere: They took him away and asked us to come and guard the grave.

Doga: If Jusper killed Chagaga, then he is not mad. We lack a name for his illness. But days have changed. Kaleka's son, I have nothing else to offer you; (handing him a pocket Bible) take this. May God open your eyes to the suffering of your people. Nina, tears are for the young, our own wells are dry. Come let us go away. (Doga and Nina leave.) (17-18)

Doga is a representative of the suffering masses living in misery. They have been robbed of all they have, both property and their peace, by the prevailing leadership, hence making them feel that they have nothing more to offer to evil leaders like Mulili. This shows that they are highly disappointed because they have lost all the hope that they had.

This kind of poverty is best reflected in the play Aminata (1988) through Ababio, the drunken nephew of Jumba the Headman of Membe and the brother of the dead pastor Ngoya, who has to sell a bull to facilitate the cementing of his father's grave. He uses the first amount budgeted for the above-mentioned purpose to buy alcohol for himself. After the money is done, he prefers selling another bull so

that he can pay the workers since he does not have any other alternative source of income.

Jumba: No, you should know graves don't talk, elders do. That is why we must pay Nuhu well before any meeting of the land circle.

Ababio: Don't let that worry you, uncle. As I said, I can sell another animal... (27)

This illustrates that the majority of the population struggles to have a better life but due to poor living conditions enhanced by the post-independence states, such citizens still live in misery and suffering.

Setting

Francis Imbuga uses the setting to show how bad governance within the post-independent states contributes to disillusionment, for example in *Betrayal in The City*, there is increased murder of innocent citizens. Adika is murdered in cold blood while leading the demonstration on the street accompanied by very many other University students (place setting) and it is believed that he was murdered intentionally during the strike. Francis Imbuga uses this setting of a street and such a big crowd to show how insecure the post-independent states are. Adika's death makes his entire family live in dismay for the rest of their lives because the state that they expect to protect them is the one killing them. This leaves them uncertain about the future.

Doga: Suddenly, the shooting broke out. People fled in all directions, but my son's lonely body lay in the middle of the street. Only four bullets were fired that day. Adika had four bullet wounds in his chest (10)

People are killed even when they have not committed any crime. This is mainly because most of them have lost their sense of humanity and have resorted to killing for fun and self-satisfaction.

Characterisation

As far as aesthetics is concerned, Francis Imbuga uses comic characters who are in many instances, tasked with the duty of revealing indigestible truths. Imbuga makes these characters transparent and usually poses a challenge to the existing authority. For example, *Aminata* Agege, who is termed as the village idiot, is posited against the Headman Jumba in Membe village.

Diction

The biased language that men use against women leaves them disillusioned with a high inferiority complex. Another illustration is shown through Jumba's insulting statements which include:

Jumba: Women's talk. I have grown up with it... (4)

Jumba: Enough of this female talk! ... (3)

Jumba: Go on then, be fooled...Nuhu, is it women's gossip that Aminata drove away Ababio's wife? (12)

The words underlined above are used as insults and are meant to place women in an inferior position within society. Women are considered to be a weak sex and therefore have no part to play as far as the dead are concerned. This explains why they are considered not to know the cultural practices and are thought to be inferior, as exemplified by Jumba's own wife:

Rosina: He that would bury his dead provides a coffin. Pastor Ngoya had a son and in you he had a brother but all of you male heads let his daughter buy him a coffin. Was that in keeping with our ancestor's laws? No one here can deny that Aminata buried her father. Yes, the weaker sex buried an elder of Membe. You refused to listen to me then as you do now. So what happened? Aminata, a daughter of Membe, buried Pastor Ngoya... (5)

Even though some men are drunkards, reckless, poor, and helpless, they are still considered to be more important and significant than the female ones;

Jumba: Ababio's drinking problems should not be used to deny him his rightful position in our family (6)

Ababio is considered to be more important than Aminata despite the fact that he lives a miserable and disillusioned life. This places Aminata in a second-rate position just because she is female.

Dramatic Irony

Imbuga also employs dramatic irony to show how women are disillusioned within the post-independent states. In *Aminata*, Men use terms connected with women to pour out insults and abuses to each other. For instance, Agege, a master of odd jobs, reacts furiously after having been called a woman. He becomes very angry and threatens to rebel against Jumba's orders. He feels terribly devalued in being referred to as 'a woman', an insult he considers the worst that he has ever heard.

Jumba: Stop that ranting, you idiot. I was talking to men.

Agege: Men? And me? Me you call woman? Too much fire! All right show me breast of woman on my body now. Show. (7)

It is from this insult that he protests and threatens to refuse to accept the orders given to him by Jumba.

Agege: This that if you call me idiot, why send me also? And also you call me woman in addition. Idiot and woman, double. So I say, two plus two is four, and I refuse. ... (8)

Such abuses and insults place women in an inferior position within the post-independent states and yet they also deserve their human rights.

In the play *Betrayal in The City*, tradition has deep roots in the lives of people. Traditional practices like the ones performed on the dead are crucial and

very significant. These traditions, such as the shaving ceremony, are usually carried out after someone has died. For example, Adika's parents (Doga and Nina) have to prepare the shaving ceremony carefully and with due regard to tradition since it is a final rite for the deceased as demanded by custom. This brings out the fear that in case some practices are not performed, then the living and the dead will not be at peace.

Nina: But if they should know what has happened, they will whisper and say we ignored tradition. They will boycott my son's shaving ceremony... (9)

Nina is made to tremble in fear after she discovers that her son's grave has been tampered with by the killers to protect themselves against being haunted by Adika's ghost. This affirms Doga's belief that the dead can revenge in case they have been murdered. This is why he has to call upon the spirit of Adika to haunt any person who might have had a hand in his murder. This is an indicator that there is no peace and stability in this post-independent state of Kafira.

Conflict

Imbuga employs both interpersonal and societal conflict to depict disillusionment. In the new state, indigenous culture still conflicts with the new religion, as illustrated by Jusper who feels that imported religion has lost significance in the Kafira state and he believes there is a need for them to abandon it and return to their traditional practices.

Jusper: Just a short prayer for our nation. That's all. We asked God to help us drop our Christian names. (43)

This is an indicator that the citizen's expectations of Christianity are in vain. In fact, it acts as a source of misery to the entire nation. This explains why most people regret having joined it since it has not turned out to be a blessing as expected. This has made people feel helpless and pessimistic about the future.

Furthermore, whereas culture demands maximum respect for the elders in society, the young and stubborn tend to disregard this just because they believe they are superior and above all the traditional beliefs. For example, Mulili, the other soldier in the play, is not scared of seeing Nina's nakedness when she threatens to strip herself naked. In fact, Mulili confesses to having seen more naked bodies far beyond Nina's expectations and still, he has not yet lost his sight. This shows that culture has lost value in the community and the elders are no longer respected. This leaves them to be disappointed with the new lifestyle that the youth have adopted. It is out of this disgrace and disappointment that Doga as an elder in Kafira curses Mulili (10) and the latter dies the same way Adika did (74).

According to Membe culture in the play *Aminata*, women are denied their rights to inherit property. They are considered to be very weak and therefore unable to manage their parent's property compared to men. This explains why Aminata is denied her right to become her father's heir, despite the fact that her father Pastor Ngoya in his will had allocated some piece of land to her.

Jumba: That is nothing compared with what is in her heart. Even if she was an ordinary woman, I would not let Membe enter the future as the only clan to have offered land inheritance to a woman (22)

Jumba consistently ensures that Aminata does not inherit land since she is a female. In the arguments with Rosina, Jumba constantly reminds her how he is the head of the family. This reconnects to Aminata's brother Ababio, who also believes that men are superior to women.

In this play, Jumba represents culture while Aminata represents modernity and religion. Jumba does not accept change and the intervention of the new era; this explains why Jumba has to lose all his dignity. He currently has no say as far as the community affairs are concerned. The traditional

practices have lost value and this is a result of the introduction of the church and Christianity within the village of Membe;

Jumba: Now our hands are tied. Our only consolation is that with the coming of the church and government, our stool of rule is no longer what it used to be. It is more there in name... (69)

This quotation is a clear indicator that the roots of tradition and culture within Membe have completely been demolished by the intervention of the church. The latter has in turn taken over tradition and culture by weakening it leading to its loss of respect and value within the Membe community.

Jumba's wife Maama Rosina and Nuhu, one of the elders of Membe stool, are confused about which path to follow. They are puzzled whether to maintain their culture or adopt Christianity as a sign of modernity. This is brought out in the conversation between the two:

Rosina: Stop it! (Pause) which of your two feet is stronger? The one that goes to church or the one that dances with Membe's elders of the stool?

Nuhu: Now you accuse me unfairly. I may be Nuhu but I am also Rabala. I have never locked horns with the church. And if the father of your I mean your husband here, if he had not misled us, I would have been the first to close my eyes in prayer before we began this work. (3)

This reveals that both Rosina and Nuhu are torn between cultural and Christian practices; they have not decided on what they are supposed to follow and what they should ignore.

Jumba as the head of the stool fights hard to protect the tradition against being inflicted by religion and he goes on to condemn every elder who is diverting from the traditional practices.

Jumba: The ways of a witch are many, but she is deceived if she thinks she is fighting me. No one fights our laws of ages and lives.

Nuhu: In what way is Aminata fighting our laws of ages?

Jumba: Now hear him. (Sarcastic) Words from the lips of an elder of Membe! Yes, that is our plight, eating each other's words while the ground is stolen from under our very feet. Nuhu, do you want us all to follow their shadows of religion? (12)

This shows that it is them (traditionalists) against religion. They are therefore ready to fight and restore the dignity of their culture despite the fact that Christianity is taking over. This explains why Jumba takes another step to curse Membe's elders who decide to oppose the tradition and their ancestors.

Jumba: If Membe's elders have decided to fight against their ancestors, then may the red bird strike them ... (7)

This shows the kind of determination within Jumba to fight and protect his diminishing traditional beliefs. However, much he fights hard to protect his beliefs against church intervention, he also finds himself already trapped in the same religion which he is fighting against. This is mainly because his brother Pastor Ngoya is the one who started Christianity in Membe village. Moreover, Jumba himself is baptized as a Christian.

Jumba: Yes, I have been thinking. I was a Christian once, wasn't I?

Rosina: You are still baptized.

Jumba: Me?

Rosina: Yes, Aberenego Jumba.

Jumba: No, I dropped that one, and you know it. That is what created the mountain between me and Ngoya. (60)

Jumba tries to trace his origins but still, he cannot deny the fact that he once committed himself to Christianity, an ideology that he is now against. As a representative of the other traditionalists he represents, they are completely disappointed in him since their expectations are never attained and the only option before them is to struggle and defend their culture against Christianity.

Character and Characterization

Imbuga also uses group characters to expose the disillusionment within the elites. The education standards of the post-independence states are extremely low. The demonstrations against the government are on the rise. These are spearheaded by the University students who are unemployed and yet the country's top jobs are being occupied by the foreign expatriates who have displaced the natives, thus leaving the majority of them unemployed. These demonstrations lead to the death of Adika who is their leader in the struggle after having been shot by the government guards.

The educated personalities are extremely disgusted with the post-independent government. For example, while in prison, Mosese the university lecturer sits showing his back to Jere the soldier and Askali the prison warder. When he is asked why he is sitting in such a position, he reveals that he has no front; but deep within himself, he knows that he is being mistreated by the government because he is currently in prison on forged charges. It is from this that the elites (Mosese and Jere) who have been imprisoned with no clear cause feel disillusioned, thus leading to their decision to create a play with the hope that, given a chance, it would restore sanity in the entire nation.

Francis Imbuga further uses character and characterization to enhance aestheticism. This is done through characters like Agege who represents the illiterate people. This is mainly because the post-independence communities expect everyone to be educated. This is why Agege ends up doing petty work like digging the grave, lighting the fire, cutting

the grass, fetching water, feeding the dog, feeding the cow, and the hens. This shows that he and other people of his class are expected to live such kind of life which is heavy and always followed by insults from their bosses.

Jumba: Shut up you porcupine!

Agege: Porcupine? Now that is double twice. Idiot, then woman, then the porcupine also. Call me anything but my mouth is for truth. me also. Aeheh, to much fire! Every day, every day, Agege light fire, Agege cut grass. Agege dig grave, Agege fetch water. Every morning, Agege feed dog, Agege feed cow, Agege feed hen! Why? I am not machine without bloodless! Even machine drink petrol also. So, from today now I am for respect me and I respect you back ... (8)

Imbuga uses informal language to expose how disillusioned most leaders and their subjects are. For example, Mulili uses a language of marginality to explain the adverse contrast of the comic villain and to critique the pretence and arrogance of the privileged and the intellectuals in *Betrayal in The City*. He has also foregrounded the brutal deeds of President Boss' cousin to urge the audience to adopt militant attitudes against all forms of oppression and restriction. Yet, at another level, Mulili's bag of linguistic infractions is paradoxically an act of defiance against the language of oppression as much as it is a direct by-product of it. It is in that sense that the comic villain is both a victim and victimizer, a manipulator of codes of dominance, but also a scapegoat of their strategies.

Women have no sense of belonging on their ancestral land. When they get married, they lose their ancestral identity and are forced to adopt their husbands' and the new society in which they are married. This explains why their relatives do not respect their ideas concerning their motherland.

Jumba: Aminata may have bought a coffin for her father, but that does not make her a woman

of Membe. No, she is a married woman with a home of her own, a husband and children to look after. What does she want here? How many times have you yourself gone back to your father's clan to bandy words with elders there?

(5)

Such acts of segregation tend to put women in a miserable and inferior position.

Post-independence communities are gender biased. They value men at the expense of women and exhibit a high level of male chauvinism. Women are denied inheritance rights, for example in the play *Aminata* (1988) women are not allowed to inherit property from their parents. Pastor Ngoyi (Aminata's father) left behind a will which allocates three and a half hectares of land to Aminata. After his death, Jumba the head of the stool and a brother to Ngoyi connives with Ababio (Aminata's brother) to deny Aminata her rights to inherit this land. This is because it is against Membe culture which endorses men be the only heir (22).

This act reveals that even when women are stronger and capable, they still cannot be appreciated by society. For example, Aminata had to bring water close to every household in Membe and took a step to train the village choir but despite all this, she is still not considered to be important in her community since she is a woman and culture forbids her from being appreciated.

In addition, men associate women with evil, insults and disobedience. It is considered an insult for a man to be called a woman. This explains why Agege is disturbed by Jumba when he (Jumba) comments that he is speaking with men (7). With this, Agege interprets it as having been called a woman which makes him rebel against Jumba's orders. This affirms Olembo's (2013) belief when he comments that;

there is gender disparity in the most African societies even though they have attained their independence ...many of these societies are

grounded on traditional patriarchal systems of governance. The place of women in many of these African doctrines for a long time is culturally defined, therefore restricting women to do domestic chores...

Olembo's belief is relevant because women in post-independence states are tasked to produce and look after their husbands thus leaving them with no chance to involve themselves in other responsibilities. This explains why they tend to lose their identity immediately after they have gotten married. They no longer belong to their parent's homes but to their husband's families. Tradition expects them to concentrate on the given roles of domestic work and reproduction only. This is why Aunt Kezia in *Aminata* has to confront Mulemi and blame him for having given freedom to Aminata to do all that she wants like the usage of family planning so that they can produce few children. Kezia strongly condemns it and advises Mulemi to get a new wife. This therefore confirms Loomba's argument;

...Post-colonial nation itself is a ground of dispute and debate, a site for the competing imaginings of different ideological interests... (173)

Men have taken up a step to show how low women are. All the torture and the abuses that women experience are a result of men who believe that they are superior to women. No wonder men in AM give comments like women's talk and female's talk which show that they completely do not have any respect for women since they are after all following the traditions which place women below men (3). For example, women are not expected to eat chicken while such a dish is highly enjoyed by men. This reconnects to Ruganda's (1992) comment;

...the play Aminata dichotomizes gender politics and explores the polarity of dominance (10)

However much Aminata and all her women's rights activists may try to fight for their rights, they still cannot beat culture. Even when Jumba and all the

other elders have agreed to give Aminata, her inheritance she still does not attain it. On the last handover ceremony, Ababio is pronounced dead after having committed suicide thus making them unable to complete the handover practice. This means that culture still beats up religion and modernity, which is an indicator that women will still struggle and live under disillusionment in this post-independent state.

Citizens in *Betrayal in the City* are pessimistic. This explains why Doga in *Betrayal in the City* has to hand over the pocket bible to Jere as the only property left for him and his entire family to offer. This is an indicator that the masses are not being cared for. They are living in poverty-stricken environments with low standards of living characterized by poor health facilities and high levels of exploitation. Yet to the contrary, the leaders in power are extremely prosperous and comfortable. Leaders like Mulili in *Betrayal in the City* have tenders and hectares of farmland. This presents the inequality that exists within the post-independence states leaving the poor more miserable and the rich more prosperous and this shows that the majority are disillusioned.

Causes of the Disillusionment Within the Socio-Political Context of the Plays

Nepotism

Nepotism is highly practised by post-independent leaders. Relatives of the leaders are the ones who are given the priority to enjoy first-hand privileges and opportunities at the expense of the others. For example, Mulili, a cousin to Boss, is promised to be given a farm as long as he becomes an eye and ear for him. This explains why he is determined to report everything to Boss whether they are right or wrong and he does all sorts of evil just to achieve his target.

Jere: Boss will not know it. No one need know.

Mulili: My future depends on this. If I keep law and order, a big farmer I become when I retired.

Boss promised me that and you know ... I be his eye and his ear here. I say no ceremony.

Jere: The ceremony is on.

Mulili: Me count out. I doesn't want to lost that farm. Boss promised many acre of farm and grade cattles (18)

When Mulili's tender for supplying milk to the university is terminated, he reports to his cousin Boss the head of state, who orders the university to renew it and it is renewed without any hesitation.

Tumbo: Tender, did you say?

Mulili: Yes, my tender for supply of milk to university. They gives it to unknown small man. So this morning, I says okay, we see if university authority know who man be head and neck of Kafira. So I wakes up, I go to my cousin to explain him.

Tumbo: You are sure you were with Boss?

Mulili: ... One God! When I tells him, he take automatic direct telephone wire to university... (57)

Imbuga employs this dialogue between Mulili and Tumbo as a technique to show the inequality that exists in post-independent states, where a few benefit at the expense of the many. The citizens are very poor to the extent that the cripples and beggars are all over the streets (1). Pregnant mothers die because they cannot afford proper healthcare and, to make matters worse, at their burial ceremonies, the mourners are starved since the families of the deceased cannot afford to buy food for them. Such situations make the lives of people extremely unbearable since they cannot find any means to survive in such a post-independent state.

Lack of personal integrity

Imbuga also employs the technique of nomenclature, to reveal the causes of disillusionment. This is further enhanced by the names that Imbuga has given to the major

dramatists. For example, in *Betrayal in The City*. Boss, whose name signifies extravagance, self-imaging and an obsessive hunger for command and control, lacks personal ethics like Tumbo, whose name reflects excessive greed and inauspicious grabbing of wealth. The author uses personification in giving names like Boss, and Tumbo which are deliberately metaphorical and therefore can have various connotations. This shows the selfish desires that the post-independent leaders have and this in turn makes them mistreat their subjects.

Tradition Customs versus Christianity

Failure by some individuals to accept and appreciate new change has led to their disillusionment. Traditionalists like Jumba in *Aminata* are not ready to adjust to the new changes. They still believe in customs such as women are not supposed to eat chicken, they are not expected to buy coffins for their fallen parents and are not allowed to inherit the land. This explains why he ends up conflicting with Aminata and the elders who believe in change and new ways of life. Jumba believes that by refusing to accept such changes, he is protecting traditional customs;

Jumba: The ways of a witch are many, but she is deceived if she thinks she is fighting me. No one fights our laws of ages and lives. (12)

The above quotation shows the determination that Jumba as ahead of Membe stool has to protect his tradition and yet he is unable to protect it by himself in this changing world. This makes him clash with different personalities whom he would have not collided with if he had been flexible enough to accept change.

The establishment of Christianity has led to the destruction of the original African traditional practices. It has resulted in a clash since different personalities fight hard to defend their beliefs. This is summed up by Amata, an elder of Membe:

Amata: ... I saw it with my own eyes. The city is busy eating our ways of ages and we are being left behind (53)

It was identified that economy and governance are the main aspects that contribute to the causes of disillusionment. Education, cultural values, personal relations, domestic relations, and gender relations contribute equally towards the causes of the disillusionment while religious values do not appear.

When modernity fights hard to conquer culture, there is a big clash that develops from traditionalists like Jumba with modernists like Aminata, they can never at any one moment work together since they all struggle to maintain their own beliefs. In fact, it is out of such struggle that they all end up being disillusioned since they cannot attain their satisfaction. This is borne out in Mbembe's (1992) comment:

.... We need to go beyond the binary categories used in standard interpretations of domination such as resistance V passivity, autonomy V subjection, state V civil society, hegemony V counter- hegemony These oppositions are not helpful rather, they cloud our understanding of post-colonial relations (3).

This results in the causes of disillusionment within the post-independent states in that autonomy V subjection is reflected through the male chauvinistic tendencies over the women whom they expect to be subjective. Resistance V passivity is also connected to ambitious leaders.

Corruption

Corruption tendencies and compromise of personal integrity are highly evidenced in Francis Imbuga's plays. Nepotism is evidenced through leaders who favour their relatives at the expense of others. For example, Boss in *Betrayal in the City* has to employ Mulili his relative to act as his spy. He offers him tenders to supply milk at the University and supplements this with a big farmland. People who

try to rise from the lower ladder to the upper ladder are completely destroyed thus widening the gap. The masses were totally disappointed with their post-independent states because during the struggle for independence, they expected to enjoy equally all the fruits of independence but this was more of a dream than a reality. This makes such citizens to be disillusioned.

The Social Groups Affected by Post-independence Disillusionment

Prisoners

In the post-independent states, prison cells are a key component of governance. The act of imprisonment leads to the destruction of people who are imprisoned whether guilty or innocent. The arrests are conducted in an inhuman way with the aim of breaking down strong personalities, so prisoners end up being tortured, mistreated, and sometimes killed. For example, in *Betrayal in The City*, some prisoners are always killed in the cells.

Askari: You are not fit to live above the ground, you mole! And just in case you didn't know, I have once killed a man in this very cell.
(33)

The leaders who are thought to be better in this post-independence regime are also struggling with leadership threats since they are exposed to many challenges which they have to fight against if they are to maintain their authority. This also leaves them disillusioned and miserable.

Women

Women are always insulted and described as a group of people who do not think beyond their beds. This is shown when Doga's comments that;

Doga: The sub-chief! ... Women!! Women will never think beyond the beds upon which they hide for the night ... (9)

In this play *Betrayal in The City* women are still considered as a marginalized group this is shown

through Regina who tries to hang herself to overcome the misery that she is exposed to by Boss right from the time she is kidnapped and during her exile with Boss.

Amina: I see that even your reputed information network is beginning to let you down. Regina tried to kill herself this morning....

Her attempt to commit suicide shows how disgusted she feels towards Boss and the entire leadership of Abiara and it is a sign that life has lost meaning to her. This shows that women are also disappointed with the post-independence leadership since their rights have been violated leading to their disillusionment.

All females are forbidden to eat chicken. It is an abomination for women to taste chicken; it is only reserved for men. Aminata is severely condemned for having eaten chicken despite the fact that she was still a child when she did so.

Jumba: Must I trust Aminata's evil deeds under your very nose before you can see them? Tell me, on that day when women tore at each other's breasts in their fight for children's heads, who was it who first tasted the soup? Was it not Aminata?

Ndururu: But she was only a child then.

Jumba: Only a child: yes but where did she get the courage from? Some of our women took to their heels, didn't they? What made Aminata accept the bowl? ... (12)

Indeed, it takes a social eccentric like Agege the master of odd jobs to rank a sober girl above her drunken brother, as in the following speech:

Agege: I know, but still two matters. First, dead Ngoya is father of Ababio. Second, today is grave cement day. So me I have one question. Why is Ababio in drink place? You see, because of that, me I say also that Aminata is first son born of Pastor Ngoya (10)

There are high levels of bribery; the citizens are given bribes at the expense of their valuable lives. This may be illustrated by Doga's following remark:

Doga: What money is more precious than life? Only a handful of coins cost us a son, killed in the city. (10)

This is after Adika has been murdered in cold blood and as a ritual a few coins are brought to his grave just to silence his ghost. Such an act of pretence and an attempt to bribe the deceased is a great disappointment to the parents.

The Deceased

The rights of the dead are violated, their graves are disposed of in a hurry and their wishes are not fulfilled. Before they die, they make their wishes but they are not always fulfilled by the individuals they inform. This is because such individuals prefer to satisfy their personal desires and some convenient cultural dictates. This is evidenced by the way Rosina criticizes Jumba for having refused to fulfil Ngoya's dying wishes.

Rosina: Your late brother's dying wishes. Was it not Pastor Ngoya's wish that his grave should not be cemented?

Jumba: How am I to know? Have you been talking to the dead?

Rosina: Aminata's messenger is not dead.

Jumba: Aminata's messenger?

Rosina: Yes she heard rumors of your intentions and sent a messenger too late.

Jumba: (Almost to himself) it was her father's fault, confiding in a daughter when he had a brother and sons. (4)

Another dying wish of Pastor Ngoya is that Aminata his daughter should inherit the piece of land he has previously given her. This wish is not honoured by Ngoya's male kinsfolk:

Jumba: Nuhu, are you a stranger here? Have you not stopped to wonder how she has survived the numerous curses that have been hurled upon her head? How come none of the curses has caught up with her? (11)

This refusal to honour the dead amounts to dishonouring those very dead.

The Elite

The elite, who include the university students and their lecturers, are always tortured and mistreated. Students like Juser and Adika with their ex-lecturer Mosese in *Betrayal in The City* are considered to be the source of all demonstrations within Kafira state. This is why Adika was shot dead during the demonstrations, just because the entire community believes that the University students are the source of all trouble in Kafira. They end up putting on their university gowns and moving to the streets to demonstrate against poor leadership. And thus, Tumbo the government official:

Tumbo: Yes. Red guards is my name for rioting University students. When will you learn to concentrate on what you went there for? Marching up and down the streets chanting a dead student's name will never improve things in Kafira. Never! (42)

The post-independent states do not consider the young generation to be in any way important. The leaders feel that the young have no contribution to make towards the development of the state. They are not considered to be in any way important. This is revealed in the following remark by Juser:

Juser: You have put your finger on it. The younger generation can only be spectators at most. We'll never have the opportunity to join in that nation-building. (45).

Beggars and pregnant mothers are in a worrying state.

Traditionalists

Traditionalists in *Aminata* (headed by Jumba) are the obvious group affected by the clash of religions in this play. However much Jumba is restrained, he still tries to fight against the new practices of religion and modernity. For him, *Aminata* is the embodiment of the new religion that champions the status of women:

Jumba: only a child: yes, but where did she get the courage from? Some of our women took to their heels, didn't they? What made Aminata accept the bowl? Ndururu.... (12).

Jumba bitterly regrets having welcomed the bringers of Christianity to Membe:

Jumba: That much I will not deny. But this church is evil. Aminata is evil too. That is why she escaped unscathed. When I think back, I curse myself for the part that I played in welcoming the robed strangers here. I was a foolish young man, all ears and no brains. Attracted by the toy with the tag of God on it.... (13)

He also believes that it is because of religion that his son Mbaluto becomes mute (13).

The majority groups disillusioned are classified under governance and gender relations then followed by cultural values. It is therefore observed that economy, education, and religious values contribute equally towards the social groups affected by post-independence and it is observed that personal and domestic relations do not reflect any social group affected by post-independence disillusionment.

There are very many different groups of people disillusioned. This is because, during their struggle for independence, they all had many different ambitions which they did not achieve. This explains why disillusionment affects not only an individual but also the masses. This is proved by Ruganda (1992);

...with plays which are as provocative as Imbuga's plays accurately vivify the disillusionment of the masses and situate the social malaise in the courts of the ruling elite...

In accordance with Francis Imbuga's plays, disillusioned masses including University students like Adika in *Betrayal in The City* are murdered in cold blood. Citizens like Doga and Nina in *Betrayal in The City* are denied their rights to perform traditional rituals leading to their imprisonment and murder. Workers like Agege in *Aminata* are abused and insulted by being referred to as women which is a great insult to them. They are not happy with their working conditions; they are uncomfortable and desperate but they have no escape route.

The deceased also have their rights that need to be respected. On the contrary, in the post-independence states, people have ignored such rights. For example, Adika and Ngoyi do not receive the expected rituals on their graves. Parents of Adika in *Betrayal in The City* are stopped from practising the final rituals on his grave and Ngoyi's grave in *Aminata* is dressed in a hurry. Ngoyi's will is not respected by Jumba, this is against their wish and rights thus leaving the dead disillusioned.

Since the post-independent leaders are uncertain about tomorrow, they have all resorted to the use of prison as a tool to intimidate and break down strong personalities who appear to be a threat to them. This explains why prison cells are full of prisoners the majority of them being innocent while some of them have proved to be stubborn. For example, Mosese and Juser in *Betrayal in The City* are imprisoned but at the end of their prison life, they are either killed like Mosese or destroyed and left desperate like Juser.

Women like Aminata in *Aminata* and Regina in both *Betrayal in The City* are all disillusioned because they do not get the fruits they expected out of their struggle for freedom.

CONCLUSION

The findings reflect that Imbuga's work vividly and tactically reveals the post-independence disillusionment which has affected every individual right from the highest-ranking personality to the lowest. They are all living under fear and tension since they are uncertain about the future. The leaders have political threats while some other groups of people like the poor and women are highly oppressed and all this is aesthetically presented raising the reader's interest, right from the first play to the last.

Recommendation

This study concentrated on the depiction of post-independence disillusionment in Francis Imbuga's selected plays. Francis Imbuga is a very prominent writer with very many works like plays and novels with very many themes. This research has only concentrated on one theme, that of post-independence disillusionment and not in all his works but in just a few selected ones. There is a lot of scope for other researchers who may choose to concentrate on new unidentified areas within the same texts or maybe the same theme but in other untackled texts.

Imbuga's plays are to be added to the different syllabi within Uganda and East Africa at large for the Ordinary level, Advanced level, and University this is because they are highly educative to both the young and the old.

Francis Imbuga's plays should be adopted for the stage so that as many people as possible watch them, particularly politicians, policymakers and implementers.

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