

## Representation of Loss and Dislocated Identity in Intizar Husain's *An Unwritten Epic*

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### Abstract

*The role of communication in conflict resolution remains pivotal in societies plagued by violence and unrest. This study explores how drama, as a form of traditional communication, is deployed in addressing conflict and promoting peace, using Ojo Rasaki's Drums of War (DOW) as a case study. The paper applies the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) to analyse how characters in the play shift their communicative behaviours to either escalate or de-escalate tensions within a war-driven narrative. Through a qualitative, text-based analysis, the study highlights how the play captures the devastating effects of war, political manipulation, ethnic tension, and the marginalisation of the masses. It also foregrounds the significant roles of women and civil society in promoting peace through collective action and advocacy. Findings suggest that traditional African media, especially drama, holds immense potential as a tool for peacebuilding, social re-orientation, and conflict resolution. The study recommends leveraging indigenous communication platforms to promote national unity and sustainable development in multi-ethnic societies like Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Conflict resolution, drama, traditional Media, peace building.

### Introduction

Man and war seem so synonymous. It is either man is fighting a war within himself, or he is fighting another man. This resonates with the assertion of Guanah and Okowa-Nwaebi (2023) that “conflicts are inevitable in any society” (p. 201). Conflict is, therefore, said to be innate “in the relations between two individuals, two different groups or classes, one group or class trying to be in control over the other, mostly regarded to be less powerful” (Coser, as cited in Obi 2012, p. 55).

Stories of conquest of Great War generals, like Alexander the Great, are replete in the historical development of man and the world in general. It got to a head in the 1900s when the nuclear bomb was developed and deployed during the first and second world wars, two wars that left the world devastated, and victims psychologically traumatized. Omoera (2023) attests that “Africa as a continent has been ravaged by conflicts and wars that have caused untold hardship, and delays to its development. In the last few decades, African nations have been bedevilled by conflicts that have threatened and continue to threaten regional peace and stability, with women and children psychologically and physically bearing the brunt of these wars” (p. x)

In all, while these wars were fought to remove tyrants and despots, it has been proven to have more devastating effects than first thought about. Today, Libya and Iraq are no more stable countries due to war. They were ruled by tyrannical leaders, who held sway in both countries

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for several years with unwillingness to relinquish power. Both countries were invaded by the West led by America, Britain and France in the guise that they were both terrorist sponsoring regimes, and that they harboured nuclear weapons (Rawlings, 2011). Saddam Hussein and Moamar Gadaffi were attacked, dethroned and killed. Plans were hatched to rebuild these countries that were ravaged by these invasions.

However, today, the ruins and effects of the wars still plague these nations, and they have become hot beds for various terrorist groups. These scenarios fit well into the definition of conflict by the duo of White and Bednar that “conflict connotes the interaction of interdependent people or groups who perceive incompatible goals and interference for each other in achieving these goals” (as cited in Onuselogu, 2012, p. 30).

Bringing it home, Nigeria is currently engaged in a fierce war against the Boko Haram terrorist group, and the effect of this war on Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States leave so much to be desired. The nation is also grappling with the farmers and herders conflict in the North-Central States of Benue, Taraba, Plateau and Kaduna. Bandits and kidnappers are also having a field day in different parts of the country. All these have left so much physical, psychological, emotional and economic pains in the lives of those who are affected. According to Onokerhoraye (2006), community conflicts can escalate to national or regional levels if not addressed locally. To this end, one can say that conflict is a violent and destructive value for survival.

With the fore going it is safe to say that wars and conflicts have not left pretty sights in their wake therefore nipping them in the bud has become essential. This is where communication comes in as a means for resolving conflicts. Although there are various forms of communication, drama, which is recognised as an arm of the traditional media, is considered here, as playwrights have taken it upon themselves to document these wars and their effects. Hence the play (drama) written by Ojo Rasaki titled *Drums of War (DOW)* is x-rayed here.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is based on the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). This theory, developed by Howard Giles, explores how individuals adjust their communication style to gain social approval and create a sense of belonging (Dragojevic et al, 2015). The theory is based on four main assumptions:

1. Speech and behavioural similarities and dissimilarities exist in all conversations.
2. The perception of the speech and behaviours of another person influences our evaluation of the interaction.
3. Language and behaviours can communicate social status and group belonging.
4. Norms guide the accommodation process, which varies in its degree of appropriateness.

CAT elaborates on the human tendency to adjust behaviour while interacting, emphasising the influence of past experiences, social status, and group belonging on the accommodation process. It identifies two main types of accommodation: convergence, where individuals adapt their communication to be more similar to their interaction partner, and divergence, where they emphasise differences in communication (Communication Theory, 2016). In the context of this paper, the CAT is relevant for analysing how characters in the play "Drum of War"

adjust their communication patterns to either reduce or escalate conflict, and how these adjustments relate to social dynamics and group belonging within the dramatic context.

. For instance, the theory could be used to examine how language, accent, or nonverbal cues are employed by the characters to either converge or build rapport or diverge to express individual or group identity. By applying the CAT, one can gain insights into the role of communication in shaping and resolving conflicts within the dramatic context of *Drum of War*.

### **Drama and Communication**

Drama and communication are two important aspects of human interaction that are closely related. Drama refers to unnecessary or manufactured conflict that can arise in relationships due to issues such as a need for control or an inability to communicate (NerdLove, 2015). Communication, on the other hand, involves the exchange of information and ideas between individuals. Healthy communication is essential for avoiding unhealthy drama in relationships, as it allows individuals to express their feelings and needs in a clear and calm manner (Athar, 2024).

However, some individuals may be addicted to drama, seeking out intense conflict and emotional turmoil in their relationships (Relationship Institute, 2022). This can lead to disempowering roles and hurt relationships. It is important to recognise the signs of drama in relationships and work towards healthy communication and conflict resolution to avoid unnecessary conflict and promote peace and harmony (Fileta, 2022).

Drama is a typical mass media genre that can address conflict. Obi (2004) sees conflict as human and social contradiction, thesis and antithesis, leading to man's inhumanity to man, violence, turning point, or crisis that can lead to psychological, physical, or outright war. He adds that conflict involves simultaneous actions, such as between human needs or school authority and employees. Drama can capture the attention of diverse audiences regardless of religion or ethnicity. Drama, like traditional media, can promote peace.

Drama is powerful and transforms society, making it important in national debate and social commentary (Guanah, 2018). Drama has sharpened society, and its good benefits on people and society are overwhelming (Guanah, 2012).

Thus, Guanah and Okowa-Nwaebi (2023) suggest using African communication channels like drama, music, and dance to resolve conflicts and spread important information, especially in Africa, where citizens are familiar with these channels. The play “*Drum of War*” uses drama to warn against conflict.

### **Conflicts and wars in Nigeria**

*Drums of War* is one of the plays in the Nigerian theatrical space that embodies the African mode of theatre, combining, masterfully, dance, music and acting to tell a story that was peculiar at the time the play was written. The play is very relevant in these times, as we are still witnessing inter-community wars, inter-nation wars, and the likes. *Drums of War*, as an anti-war play, was inspired by the Zango-Kataf crisis of 1992 experienced by the playwright. It shows the danger of engaging in war, which at the end does not leave any winners, as both

warring sides suffer huge casualties. The play serves to show the world that beating the drums of war, and dancing to their beats is not a guarantee that the winner will leave unscathed.

About two decades before the play was written, Nigeria had fought a bitter civil war that claimed millions of lives. A civil war given an ethnic colouration, as the Igbos of the Eastern Nigeria, led by Dim Odumegwu Ojukwu, attempted to secede to establish a sovereign nation called Biafra. This is not the only war fought in Nigeria, as there have been several inter-ethnic wars that have littered the history of Nigeria. In Delta State, there was a bitter inter-ethnic war between the Itsekiris and the Ijaws in the late 1990s, and till date, there is still a suspicion between both ethnic groups.

In the North Central part of Nigeria, we hear and see gory stories and pictures on social media about the communal clashes between the nomadic Fulani herdsmen and farmers. These killings have now become an everyday occurrence, with government doing little or nothing about them. Although these clashes and wars have been prevalent for a very long time, they have, however, taken a different dimension these few years. All these show the relevance of the issues Ojo Rasaki discussed in his *Drums of War*.

### **Synopsis of the play**

Starring a king who thrives on conquest and an expansionist campaign, Ojo Rasaki presents in *Drums of War*, a story littered with apprehension, force, intrigue and ultimate penalty. King Onome is a blood thirsty expansionist, who fans the embers of hate, and ethnic cleansing, using all available means, including religion and suppressing tendencies, to hoodwink his people to think that their neighbours are their enemies and therefore must be conquered and subjugated to his rule. Tired of losing their husbands, sons and uncles just to feed the ego of one man, the women of Abakpa decided to stage a No-War-Campaign, and entreat their sons, husbands and uncles against continuing in the war. They succeeded in getting them to declare a cease-fire, this allowed the warriors of Ibuji, the town that was in the agenda of conquest by King Onome, to escape unhurt.

Irked by this brazen show of cowardice, Akogun, the general of the army of Abakpa, tried ordering the soldiers to continue the war, but he met stiff opposition from the women, and defiance from the soldiers, who chased him out. Celebration in the palace was interrupted when he runs into the palace where the issue of the war is being discussed. Opposed to the war is Beleku, a seeming opposition to the king. He was duly executed by the order of King Onome for his stance. All entreaties made to the King to end the war fell on deaf ears. He disrobed his Akogun. He tried appointing Gbeje and Jeje to be his new Akogun, but they declined. Gbeje suggested he named his son, Orighoye as his Akogun. He reluctantly accepted, knowing the danger he was putting his son.

Orighoye led the army to the battle front, but the warriors of Abakpa were summarily defeated by the warriors of Ibuji. Orighoye was killed in the process. On getting the news, the queen, Otubu, who had joined the women earlier in their No-War-Campaign, and has also tried to make her husband stop the war, committed suicide. King Onome was deposed. He killed himself eventually.

### **Roll Call of Characters**

The playwright used the creation of his characters to drive home his message; these characters are discussed in the section.

### **King Onome**

He is the King of Abakpa land. His major preoccupation is his thirst for conquest and kingdom expansion. He fans the embers of hatred for his neighbouring communities amongst his people and painted them as their enemies. He attacked other communities unprovoked all in the name of his expansionist campaign like in the mood of King Menelaus of Greece in the Illiad by Homer. His war campaigns brought so much death and impoverishment to his people, but that does not deter him as he must achieve his objectives no matter the cost.

Even though he had people who opposed his thirst for war, like Beleku and his wife, he silenced them by killing Beleku and shutting up his wife. He did not mind that his soldiers have already downed tool, which affected their psychological preparedness for any war, he still insisted that they go on to fight, disrobing the protesting Akogun, and appointing his son, Orighoye, heir-apparent to his throne as the new general of his army, although reluctantly. All these were as a result of his quest for power.

Unfortunately, his army, led by his son, was defeated by the people of Ibuji. His son was killed in the process. His land sacked. The virgins of the land were taken as slaves. On hearing the news of the death of Orighoye, Otubu, his wife, committed suicide. He stepped down as king, went into the forest to kill himself.

King Onome is a perfect example of leaders who can do anything to gain and retain power. They do not mind the price they will pay, all their preoccupation is to gain power by every means, even if it means sacrificing their loved ones in the process. Deaf to all the pleas to stop the war, he soon found out the hard way that war is not a friend of anyone, it consumes even the instigators who think they are safe in the confines of their palaces.

He also portrays the political leaders who would rather use the children of other people to prosecute their political wars, while grooming and preparing their children, safely in foreign countries, to come take over from them when they want to leave the scene.

The cause of his downfall was his stubbornness and zest for power and conquest. Not satisfied with his own land, he went about beating the drum of war, creating enemies for his own people. It is his penchant for dancing to the rhythm of the drum of war that consumed him afterward.

### **Otubu**

She is the wife of the king, and one of his antagonists. She was never in support of her bloodthirsty husband. She joined the women of Abakpa land in the No-War-Campaign, and was instrumental in initially persuading the warriors to drop their weapons and embrace peace. She was unbiased in the conflict of the play, and decided to side with the public against her husband. She tried without much success to talk her husband out of the idea of continuing the war. Her son was killed in the war, after leading the army to the war. On hearing the news of the demise of her son, she committed suicide.

### **Beleku**



Beleku is one of the strong oppositions to the senseless wars of King Onome. He was staunch in his opposition to the king, and even in the face of death he never flinched for one second. He took his opposition too far though by challenging the king to a duel. He was summarily executed on the order of the king.

### **1st Woman and 2nd Woman**

They were the leaders of the No-War-Campaign. They were able to get the soldiers of Abakpa to down tool and embrace peace initially, but they could do little to stop the war which was restarted by the order of the King. 1st woman lost her son, Kayode, during the course of the war. The 1st Woman and 2nd Woman were also part of the group that went to the palace to ask that King Onome stepped down from being king.

They represented the suffering masses, who bear the brunt of the misrule of the leaders. It is their sons, husbands and uncles who are killed in the course of the war. It is their farms and barns that are burnt down, thereby taking away their sources of livelihood. They represent the masses who must now stand up and ensure that the right things are done. They must demand good leadership that is visionary and development driven from their leaders. It is them that must ensure that peace reigns supreme in the land which will engender a progressive society.

### **Akogun**

He is the Army General of Abakpa land. He was bent on following the orders of the king initially, but was resisted by the people and the warriors. He was chased out by them. He fled to the palace. After seeing the execution of Beleku, he had a change of mind, now knowing that the war is senseless. He also voluntarily resigned his position as the army general. He was eventually replaced by the son of the king, Orighoye.

### **Thematic Concerns of Drums of War (DOW)**

Just as every communication has information to pass across to its audience, so has Ojo Rasaki successfully used DOW to communicate vital messages, which are discussed here under: Political Discourse, Peaceful coexistence for development, Women and Civil Society Organizations in Peace promotion, and Leadership factor.

#### **Political Discourse**

The playwright masterfully mirrors the society through the creation of his major characters, giving different roles to society's players in a bid to drive home his points in the play. One of the key elements of the play is the creation of strong characters who did not flinch or change their positions even in the face of stiff opposition, whether negative or positive. We see King Onome staying true to his ruthless self, that because of his lust for power and subjugation of the people, he gave up his heir-apparent to lead his army, even though reluctantly.

GBEJE: Your highness, there is a man here who surpasses any of us in strength and courage. A man who has intelligence and the natural stamp of authority....Orighoye. Let him lead the war (p. 71).

KING: Orighoye! My son...no...no...no. He that carries sheabutter does not go near a fire. Orighoye is my only son. You know what happens when a king does not have an heir to succeed him...He can only be a King and not an Akogun. We cannot expose him to unnecessary danger (p. 71-72).

GBEJE: But Your Highness, is this war an unnecessary danger? (p. 72).

JEJE: Does the war become dangerous only when some people are involved and not when others are? Gbeje has just been asked to become the Akogun when everybody knows that he is the only son of his aged parents. Our people say that the dog loves breast feeding his child, but also loves devouring the child of the grass-cutter. Kabyesi, if this war is just, we must all...all be prepared to make sacrifices (p. 72).

This dialogue reveals so much about the King, who can be likened to our political leaders of today. He is comfortable to send the children of people to the war front, where they are likely to lose their lives, but he is unwillingly to send his own child to the battle. In our political space today, young people are used by politicians as political thugs, fighting their political wars for them, while their children are safely sent outside the country, away from the battle ground. While these youth are killed and maimed, the children of the politicians are groomed and prepared in the comfort of their palaces abroad to come back to take over power from their fathers.

KING: No, Orighoye. We cannot joke with your life. And your mother must not hear of this. You know how she is. A prince, the heir-apparent, never goes to war (p. 72).

The children of the political overlords are the heir-apparent to their political dynasties and so, their lives cannot be “joked with”. But this is not so with the lives of the poor man’s children; they are dispensable and so it doesn’t matter if they die in the course of furthering the political ambitions of their political lords. Ojo-Rasaki was making a huge political statement here. Calling on the young people who have, over the years, been led to their untimely death by these politicians, to down tools, and not be involved anymore in the political wars of politicians. This is very important, as the perceived political enemies of the politicians are actually their kith and kin, their own brothers.

AKOGUN: (A prolonged laughter) Woman, I admire your guts and vigour. But is it possible for you to shave my hair when I am unavailable? No. Remember it was the king who declared the war and only him can withdraw his soldiers (p. 61).

2ND SOLDIER: Then tell him the soldiers are calling for peace in the interest of our people (p. 61).

AKOGUN: Is it so? (p. 61).

ALL: Hun un! (p. 61).

1ST SOLDIER: Tell him the people of Ibuji are our brothers, our sisters and above all fellow human beings and we shall no longer spill their blood for whatever reason (p. 61-62).

### **Peaceful Coexistence for Development**

Not forgetting that this play is an anti-war play, the writer’s major preoccupation was to show the horrors of war to the public, which will make them to decide either to embark on ethnic conflicts or not. Inter-ethnic conflict is a major security concern in Nigeria, especially given the suspicion and distrust that exist among the ethnic nationalities This has ensured that any little flash of violence between two people of different ethnic groups escalated to a greater dimension that, most often than not, lead to ethnic violence.

The result of war was aptly captured in the denouement of the play.

KING: People of our land, I want you to know that I grieve with the families of those gallant sons who paid the supreme price. It is never cheap to defend the fatherland. No matter how painful it is, we must be prepared to.... (p. 75).

1ST WOMAN: (Furious) What is the man talking about, people? See my son, see my Kayode. What do you know about pain? You drove my son into an untimely death. Why, tell me why? You murderer.... (Holds the king. People separate them) (p. 76).

2ND WOMAN: We told you to abandon this war. No, you must satisfy your ego. Now, see what you have done. Look all around you. See the bodies of young men who have not reached their prime. Do you know that the Ibujis have carried our virgins away? Do you know our farms have been destroyed and barns ransacked? In the name of the gods, why? Tell us why? (p. 76).

War only leaves in its wake destruction of lives and properties. It leads people into slavery. It cuts down a generation and brings wailing. Houses are destroyed. Farms are burnt down and livelihoods are taken away from people. This is why war is never an option, even when there is dispute. In a bid to further enlarge his kingdom, King Onome of Abakpa lost his own kingdom. He not only lost his heir-apparent, but he also lost his wife. All these would have been averted if he had heeded to all the entreaties made to him to call off the war. But his sole desire to harness other towns and perpetuate his rule was too strong for him to back down.

Peace is sacrosanct to development. This message was strongly passed by the playwright; without peace there can't be development. Leaders in every sphere, whether political, ethnic, or religious, are expected to preach peace instead of violence. They are expected to preach healthy communal living instead of war. They are expected to preach respect for the human life instead of a disdain for it. Everyone must embrace peace because, according to Stagner, destructive conflict destroys morale, creates divisions and differences; it leads to reduction in national development projects; it encourages in-by-all-means-necessary attitudes; it hinders progress in the society; it encourages individuals to resort to unfriendly environment, and it creates suspicion and distrust.

1ST WARRIOR: Enough. Whip us with words no more, old one. We have only yielded to the pleas from our women to end this protracted carnage and restore peace in our land (p. 59).

2ND WARRIOR: Akogun, the respected General of Abakpa's army, we mean not to cause any damage whatsoever to the image of our land and bring the integrity of our noble king to disrepute. But the nation perish where the leaders lack vision. The blindness of those that lead us have put us in a pit of death and destruction. We are a people who have lost any direction, any goal. We, as warriors, have then come to an agreement with our people that this war is senseless, purposeless and has brought untold hardship to our people. Hence a cease fire declared by us (p. 60).

1st WOMAN: Go and quench the thirst of your matchet with your blood, Akogun. We put you there, the Chiefs and the King, to be our light, to lead us aright and make the world a better place. But what do you do as our leader? You set us against our neighbours and make us fight senseless wars, instead of concentrating our efforts on meaningful development. We wake up every morning suspecting our neighbours, preoccupying our minds with the next strategy to use in bringing our so called foes on their knees, we live in perpetual fear, our hearts now live in our throats, we live in perpetual fear because we know not who the next arrow will hit. Akogun, go and tell your King and his chiefs that we, the people of Abakpa say we no longer want war (p. 60-61).

ALL: Yes (p. 61).

1ST WOMAN: What we now demand is peace and love with our neighbours and meaningful development for our land (p. 61)

ALL: Yes! Yes! Yes! (Song 1 rents the air once again) (p. 61).



The price of peace is cheaper than the prize of war. Beating the drums of war and dancing to its rhythm is more devastating than embracing the sweet breeze of peace. War is never an option, and so must be jettisoned by people. People must demand peace, and this must be followed through by all in Nigeria. According to Ojo-Rasaki (2013):

The situation of Nigeria in terms of conflict and conflict management efforts is unparalleled. There has been a high level of ethno-religious conflicts, among the highest in the world. This is not surprising when one considers the fact that there are about 500 ethnic groups that either belong to the Christian or Islamic religion. The casualty toll, which is the consequences of these conflicts are equally overwhelming. Since independence the number have grown beyond two million and still counting (p.5).

This is why peace must be given a chance to reign instead of the persistent violence and carnage that we are witnessing in the country.

### **Women and Civil Society Organisations in Peace Promotion**

The role of women in ensuring peace and conflict resolution was also highlighted in the play. It is instructive to note that it had to take the women to lead the campaign against the war for the men, the warriors, to even give peace a chance in the first place. The No-War-Campaign of the women of Abakpa raised the awareness of the dangers of the war. They were ably supported by the wife of the King. This emphasised the fact that women are key in maintaining peace in the society, as can be seen from the role played by Otubu, the wife of the king:

OTUBU: Like the water from the snail's shell, our job as women has always been to cool the heat that runs in our men's veins and melt the rock in their hearts when it matters. I am not surprised that you women of the land have taken this giant step, and I want you to know that I am solidly behind you (Jubilations). Don't be surprised that I, Otubu, the King's wife is supporting you in stopping this war declared by my husband the king. I have always told my husband that he should promote love and peaceful co-existence with our fellow mankind. But trust men, he will never listen to the advice of a woman. So, when I heard that you women have embarked on a No-War-Campaign I said I must be here to show my solidarity (Jubilation). This war must stop (p. 58-59).

The No-War-Campaign is also akin to the efforts of Civil Society Organisations who are campaigning against violence and war, with the women playing a leading role in the campaign. This emphasises the fact that if there must be peace in the society, citizens must not sit idling by. They must pick up the gauntlet and advocate for peace. People must arise and speak to power, especially the ones fanning these sectarian crisis, to sheathe their swords and give peace a chance to reign; for "He who does not oppose evil, commands it to be done" (Leonardo

Da Vinci in The News Matrics 2). The News Matrics also expresses the views of Desmond Tutu thus: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor" (2); and Ginette Sagan is quoted as saying that "Silence in the face of injustice is complicity with the oppressor"(The News Matrics 2). Therefore, individuals and civil organisations must utilize every channel of communication available to preach against conflicts, wars, and other ills of the society.

Also discussed in the play is the seeming directionless government that we have. The ruling class, instead of leading us aright, fostering peaceful co-existence that engenders development, tends to be dimming our lights and bringing the people into abject poverty.

According to recently released data from the World Bank, today, Nigeria is the poverty capital of the world (Kazeem, 2018). This would never have been the case if our leaders had focused on developing the nation, and providing opportunities for every citizen to harness their obvious potentials of wealth creation.

Nigerians are hardworking people, and given conducive environment, will naturally do great things, but, instead, Nigerians are made to suffer lack of all basic amenities that would have helped them to prosper their lives. Even though this play was written in 1992, the issues that were highlighted then are still plaguing us, including the issue of bad leadership. There have been a protracted lack of vision, and that is why we are not moving in the right direction; the 2nd Warrior stated this fact in the play. We must get our leadership right for us to move forward as a nation. Whether political, religious or ethnic, leadership must be at the forefront of a thriving country, economically and socially.

### **Conclusion**

It is true that conflict cannot be totally eradicated in human affairs, but it can be avoided, curtailed, or radically reduced if the right conflict resolution information are communicated through the right channels, and this calls for the utilisation of the various African communication systems at our disposal, especially drama as used here by Ojo Rasaki to communicate a salient point.

Drums of War is a very interesting and symbolic play. Its major preoccupation is the communication of peace among ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The playwright used various theatrical elements to accentuate his position. Music, dance coupled with drums, and other forms of the traditional media through which communication is passed, were constant features of the play. Drumming in the play symbolises the fanning of the embers of war. Throughout the play, there was drumming, and this communicates the fact that no matter what those opposing the war did, whether trying to persuade the king, or putting up a campaign calling for a cease fire, or trying to challenge the king to a duel, or even stepping down as war general, the war will still take place. The beating of the drum which is accompanied by song continued till the play ended.

In the course of the play, we saw the playwright representing different ethnic groups in one community. While the name of the King (Onome), his wife's (Otubu) and son (Orighoye) originates from the Urhobo ethnic nation, some other characters in the play like Aleke, Gbeje answer names from the Yoruba ethnic nation. Even the greeting of the king, kabiyesi, is also from the Yoruba speaking nation. This symbolizes that ethnic crisis is not peculiar to any ethnic nation, but it is prevalent in all ethnic nations. The playwright also used this to symbolise the need for a united nation that will be inclusive and tolerant, that we are one and the same people. Instead of killing ourselves, we should embrace peace and live as one people.

### **Recommendations**

1. African communication systems like drama, music, dance, etcetera, should be used in settling conflicts, and in passing across other important information among the people, especially in Africa where the citizens are familiar with them.
2. Every secondary school in Nigeria should establish dramatic societies that compete with each other yearly with peaceful coexistence as its theme.

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