

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF WOLE SOYINKA'S SEASON OF ANOMY FOR  
CONFLICT STUDIES IN NIGERIA**

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.29332.65925

**Abstract**

*Season of Anomy mirrors a Nigeria in Turmoil in the sixties. It captures the ethnic violence of those years that took place in the Northern part of Nigeria. It is a description or representation of Nigerian life and could, therefore, help to visualize ethnic conflicts, which most often cannot be directly observed. It is able to help in visualizing ethnic conflicts because it is a representation of reality and details, perceptively, in the reader's mind, why ethnic conflicts occur. In its informative engagement with the reader, the reader identifies barriers to settlement, and may indicate procedures to manage or resolve the disputes. This paper, therefore, examined the wider implications of the work for conflict studies in Nigeria. The paper problematized the functionality of the text by arguing that the text alone could not achieve functionality without the pragmatic involvement of the reader or scholar. Most formalists have insisted that the text has no business with anything outside of it. They, however, agree that texts can humanize us or make us better persons; but they have not told us what to do with the state of being humanized or being better persons. The paper demonstrated to a very large extent that the scholar of the text, Season of Anomy, could mediate in Nigeria's ethnic conflicts through textual experience.*

**Keywords:** Ethnic Conflict, The Functionality of the Text, Formalists, The Scholar, National Orientation and Development

**Introduction**

In Wole Soyinka's *Season of Anomy*, one is exposed to the nature of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria. In the work, one sees the applicability of Furlong's (30), circle of conflict theory, which looks at the values, external factors, data, relationships

and the structures that fuel conflicts –be they ethnic, interpersonal, organizational, etc. Therefore, in studying *Season of Anomy* as conflict story, the paper examined inherent values in the work in relation to the Nigerian Society, the nature of ethnic relations, the external factors, stored negative and positive information (stereotypes) as well as institutional structures that have the capacity to fuel ethnic conflict in Nigeria.

In Nigeria today, if one tuned in the radio or turned on the television, the first thing one hears is corruption. Therefore, in terms of value, every Nigerian agrees that it is a negative value. In *Season of Anomy*, it is the value that dragged the country down the path of bloodshed. It is a value represented in the Cartel; for when Ofeyi subverts the interest of the Cartel by hiding ironies and counterpropaganda in his promotional adverts for the Cartel, it is because he believes the Cartel's humanity is no longer redeemable: it is enveloped in corruption; but confronting the cartel openly was going to be the undoing of Ofeyi.

Corruption in the given society has become so endemic that it has lost its identity as a negative value. It has become rationalized, because it is legitimized by the ethnic groups in order to strengthen their ethnic interests. This rationalization, as Peter Ekeh has argued, is as a result of the two public realms created by colonialism (108). That is, ethnic or primordial and civic or modern realms. Both the primordial and civic realms relate differently to the private realm in regard to morality. The primordial public realm is based on the cultures and traditions of the different ethnic groups and they reflect for the ethnic groups a high moral standard rooted in their cultures, while the public, civic realm is associated with illegitimate and exploitative colonial rule. This realm has no moral connection to private realm; in other words, it is amoral, because it sees the state as something that has to be exploited for the benefit of the primordial realm, that is, the ethnic groups (Ekeh 108). This amoral attitude toward the colonial state is transferred to the post-colonial state, and as Attahiru Jega has argued, 'it defines the parameters of relative non-commitment to the Nigerian nation-state and commitment to other levels of primordial identity' (43).

Ofeyi's desire to do that which is right portrays him as an honest man, and honesty is a positive value desirable in any society. When the Cartel sends a trouble-shooter to hunt Ofeyi down, it is because they believe he is ruining business for them. The people at the top, like Zaki Amuri and Chief Batoki, who are supposed to be doing everything within their power and within the bounds of the constitution to improve and ennoble the lives of people under them, rather

spend their years in government embezzling public funds, leaving the poor masses wretched and impoverished.

During the mayhem against the people from across the river in *Season of Anomy*, the church minister is attacked, and Aliyu, who now shares a sense of brotherhood with him (his church pastor), rushes at the mob and attacks them with his staff – and a few curses too. Although Aliyu is their kinsman, yet good conscience and a sense of brotherhood makes him understand that the pastor is his brother, not just the other stranger: It is by comparing the values, both positive and negative, like honesty, healthy conscience, sense of brotherhood, corruption, and so on, which are all in the work and those of the society it is reflecting, that one sees another human dimension in conflict resolution through literature: Aliyu has proved himself to be a genuine human being, because he shows solidarity towards human suffering in the form of the suffering of his church pastor, who happens to be a stranger in Cross River, the symbolic North in the novel. Aliyu therefore represents the sense of one being one's brother's keeper. Therefore, the need for Nigerians to achieve authenticity as human beings like Aliyu is highly desirable.

The killings and maiming of the people from across the river, a symbolic terminology for the people of southern Nigeria, particularly, the people of the southern eastern Nigeria, the Igbo, is for Aliyu an absurdity, hence his revolt: the kind of revolt Unah makes reference to in his study of Heidegger's Existentialism (42-3). He has shown by that singular act of protest that Nigerians could make their lives have meaning by loving and supporting one another in their country, and working together to create their common humanity by building a nation that will fulfill the needs of all. Their humanism should consist in the mutual recognition of their human needs and of their right to their satisfaction (Lowen 59-60).

The killing of the church minister is as a result of the fact that he belongs to an ethnic group which is hated in Cross River because they possess positive traits that is needed for the development of any society; but for which they are envied. Already the people from across the river have been described by the clerk of Zaki Amuri as strangers and blaspheming *kafiris*, unbelievers all because they do not subscribe to the Islamic code of existence. But being members of the same country, they are supposed to coexist under the same ideal so that as Chinua Achebe argues, the end to which unity is directed will be seen as unimpeachable; otherwise the clamour for unity in Nigeria, for example, will simply be a hollow sham (12).

It is believed by many that fiction is solely for entertainment. Although this is one of the uses of fiction yet fiction is capable of instructing us on values and even healing us and the state. Most fictional works as *Season of Anomy* reflect the conflict situations in our societies. It shows how prejudice and other factors play a big role in fueling ethnic conflict. But we still take it for granted that fiction can have such capacity. That, essentially, is the problem.

The aim and objectives of this study were to show that a text as *Season of Anomy* could help to expose the nuances of conflict in Nigeria and that the scholar of the text can actually be very relevant in conflict studies and conflict resolution in Nigeria.

Historicism is a critical approach to textual analysis which recognizes that writers of texts belong to society and that they portray the state of their societies in texts as well as their objective experiences of the societies in question, which were at once only Western Societies. However, with New Historicism, the marginalization of texts of non-western societies came to an end and the need to involve not only the objective engagement of the writer, but also his subjectivity as well as the objectivity and subjectivity of the reader of the text became rather very important. Both Historicism and New Historicism became alternative ways of literary appreciation and criticism that are not Marxist in nature and approach.

The fact that we can historicize societies in appreciating texts and the fact the even as readers we can engage the text objectively and subjectively makes it rather obvious that the scholar of literary texts can apply his humanized self to bringing solutions to the numerous problems that present themselves in our various societies.

In the twenty-first century, scholarship should be functional. If one immerses oneself in four years of pragmatic liberal education and even in some cases four years of practical liberal education, as in Drama and Theatre Studies, it is expected that one's life is affected in certain ways. In literary scholarship, for example, texts deal with a lot of issues so much so that one can talk about the various faculties of literary scholarship. For example, there is eco-criticism, conflict studies, gender and cultural studies, etc., inherent in literary scholarship. Anyone who has engaged himself with the texts of these various faculties of life can actually be an advocate in those faculties.

The method of approach used in undertaking this study was both inductive and deductive –it was essentially qualitative but very pragmatic.

## **Hypothesis**

If the essence of studies in the humanities is to be humanized, then it is almost impossible for one in such condition or state to remain passive. Somehow we influence our immediate environment one way or the other. Therefore, hypothetically,

- a) Season of Anomy is a conflict story in which we can locate the causes of ethnic conflict

### **Discussion**

- a) Season of Anomy is a Conflict Story

*Season of Anomy* represents the morbid state of ethnic relations in Nigeria, especially in the North, where so many skilled and unskilled workforces in the south migrated as a result of the vibrant economic activities in Kano, one of the cities created by the colonizers during the colonial period. In other words, social mobilization gives rise to inter-ethnic relationship, especially in Nigeria. Such movements come with advantages and disadvantages. It could be imagined that the people from across the river, as they are referred to in *Season of Anomy*, migrate to the north because they know that they will fill the vacant positions there since they are better educated and most of the jobs there require qualifications. In other words, they are educationally at an advantage. If that is the case, should not the cross river people be made to understand the values and advantages of education? Should they not be made to look beyond the horizon of reading the Koran and going to the mosque?

In historicizing the text, *Season of Anomy*, one cannot but appreciate the fact that the reason for the sorry state of education in the northern part of Nigeria is traceable to the period of colonialism. Charles Jarmon argues that the highly theocratic Fulani-Hausa system is left intact and that Muslim leaders achieve concessions with respect to exercising control over the penetration of western influence in the area. He argues that Christian missions and schools are limited and education continues to centre in koranic schools and reflect Arabic teaching (108-9).

The need to make sure that cross river people or the Hausa-Fulani get education should not necessitate the implementation of policies which would deepen the existing ethnic conflicts instead of resolving them. For example, critics of governmental policies believe that the term federal character as a governmental policy, initiated by the federal government headed always by people from cross river in *Season of Anomy* and the Hausa-Fulani-Kanawa-Kanuri or the North in the reality of the Nigerian condition, has been used as a subterfuge to unleash

unprecedented injustice on the people from across the river in *Season of Anomy* or the people from the south, particularly the Igbo and the Yoruba, in the reality of the Nigerian ethnic condition.

Federal character principle is a term that was invented by the Constitution Drafting committee inaugurated by the military head of state of Nigeria, General Murtala Mohammed, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1975, to promote national unity (Afigbo and Toyin, eds., 423). While ethnic conflict theorist, G. William, believe on the one hand that “the federal character of Nigeria refers to the distinctive desire of the people of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty, and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of the ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist” (151), Donald Horowitz insists that “modernisation theories of ethnicity commonly also stress that the benefits of modernity are not equally spread among ethnic groups; this uneven distribution of economic and educational opportunities in the modern sector is an important source of group tensions” (103). He argues further in order to answer the how and why question by stating that “one answer given by modernisation theories is that, because some groups gain a head-start in the competition for the rewards of the modern world, the social classes that emerge tend to overlap and reinforce ethnic group boundaries, thereby making ethnic groups confrontations more intense” (103).

However, Ike Udogu believes that one of the ways of ensuring that peaceful coexistence is achieved among the various Nigerian ethnic groups is for government to guard against its application of federal character. This policy ensures that very good students from the so-called educationally advantaged states in the southern part of Nigeria are denied places in the federal universities, while their counterparts in the so-called educationally disadvantaged states with much lower test scores are given places. This can only imbue a sense of injustice and marginalization in the people so treated (63). Udogu states that “if the diverse marginalisation experiences of Igbos and oil-producing minorities teach anything, it is that ethnic grievances do not go away until a government acts affirmatively, via an effective reconciliation policy to remove those grievances (63). In other words, merit and hard-work should be encouraged so that marginalization, which encourages ethnic conflict, could be eradicated from the body politic of the nation-state. Marginalization is a negative value. By marginalizing others or giving preferences to someone from one’s ethnic group

or race, one would be encouraging injustice, disregard for merit, and hard-work as well as unhealthy racial or ethnic competition.

In *Season of Anomy*, it can be deduced that the cross river people could not compete in the open market economy, because they lacked the necessary skills needed to be able to compete with others in the modern world. They are educationally disadvantaged probably because they are suspicious of western education, which, however, holds the key to success in the modern world in which countries like Nigeria finds itself. They probably also see the colonialist as the victorious Christian invaders of a Moslem society. And because the people from across the river may be predominantly Christians, the cross river people consider them and the colonizers as infidels.

In the real world, similar things play out: the economic prosperity of the southerner, especially the Igbo exposes them to the envy and jealousy of other ethnic groups. The domination of all aspects of life by the Igbo would definitely perpetuate for the Hausa-Fulani the humiliation of colonial experience and even make it seem probable that they were going to be further colonized again. As Otite and Albert put it, "there is need at this point to shed some light on why the 1953 and 1966 ethnic hostilities occurred in Kano it was more against the Igbo than the Yoruba or any other group [...]. The Igbo dominated the economy of Kano and were the most easily blamed for the "colonisation" of the city's economy" (283) Furthermore, they argue that "to further complicate the matters, the Igbo were found by their Kanawa hosts not to be receptive to Islam and the social practices that predominated in Kano; on the one hand, some of the Yoruba immigrants who were Muslims were easily disposed towards Hausa-Fulani socio-cultural practices" (283).

The nature of ethnic relations as portrayed in *Season of Anomy* in regard to its informing society which is Nigeria is a clear case of ethnic relationships in an unranked society. In the reality of its informing society, the Igbo and the Hausa are perfect examples of unranked ethnic groups. For as Horowitz points out that "in unranked systems, on the one hand, parallel ethnic groups coexist, each group internally stratified. Unlike ranked ethnic groups, which are ascriptively defined components of a single society, parallel groups are themselves incipient whole societies and indeed may formerly have constituted more or less autonomous whole societies" (22-23).

The Nigerian ethnic nations were all autonomous whole societies before colonization. Toyin Falola had made several important points that Professor Adiele E. Afigbo had made about the make-up of pre-colonial Nigerian society in

his researches, which showed that southern Nigeria, the subject of his research, was made up of largely autonomous societies in pre-colonial era. However, policy makers in Nigeria have repeatedly closed their eyes to that fact, which would have really helped Nigeria to fashion a system that would have ensured justice and equity among its citizens.

The writer, Wole Soyinka, a courageous critic of the various Nigerian governments acknowledged this when he said that partly because the human factor was the most demonstrable determinant of social changes, he would caution himself and try substituting peoples for nations, for it was better to believe in people than nations. In moments of grave doubts, it was essential to cling to the reality of ethnic groups, for such realities hardly ever vanish: they cannot be questioned, because they exist. Soyinka believed that for the truly independent thinker it was always easy – and often necessary – to recall the artificiality, the aristocratic arrogance, the exploitive motivations which went into the disposal of African peoples into nationalities. Soyinka was of the opinion that the sense of humiliation that accompanied the recollection of such a beginning would be overcome once one established one's essential identity as that which went into creating the entity of a people. He could not see that essence as part of the entity of boundaries. He argued that Judgment in its basic ethical sense could only be applied to ethnic groups, just as loyalty, sacrifice, idealism, and even ideologies were virtues which were nurtured and exercised on behalf also of ethnic groups. Therefore, any exercise of self-destruction solely in defense of the indestructibility of temporal demarcations called nations was a senseless imitation of idealism. For Soyinka, 'Peoples are not temporal because they can be defined by infinite ideas. Boundaries cannot (175).'

One would have expected that after the great wastage of human lives in a civil war just to keep Nigeria one, issues of ethnicity would have been overcome. But the years of oil boom gave the naïve leaders of the Nigerian state a false sense of accomplishment whereby they believed that their sudden wealth meant eternal solution to questions of ethnicity in Nigeria. But with wealth came modernity and industrialization. Nigeria witnessed a proliferation of cities. These cities became again gathering points of the ethnic groups of Nigeria. Whenever a member of each of the ethnic groups moves to the city, he or she first of all seeks out his own people. He or she joins their various unions, as was the case with the people of Umuofia in Chinua Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*, where they resolve to be of help to their members. They also articulate their interests there. Apparently they would become more and more alike and their tangible interests would



increasingly be in conflict. However, this interaction of the ethnic groups in the cities ought to really engender the production of a third culture, for they would begin with contrasting perceptions and behavior. The interaction should definitely create a unique environment for a genuine relationship to develop, for in the coming together of their separate cultures, a more inclusive third culture ought to be created, which would enable effective communication among the ethnic groups, harmonizing the composite parts into a coherent whole (294). This is possible, because, according to H.J Blackham, who was quoted by Jeaneane D. Fowler in her Book, we are born potentially human but we become human in a society; that is, we are bred in a culture and in so far as we never know anything that is not mediated through the culture, we remain imprisoned in it. When, however, we become aware of other cultures, other ways of being human, we may begin to separate ourselves from the culture in which we were bred and begin to identify ourselves as man or woman. This independence is largely relative because we are always dependent on society and largely influenced by the culture in which we are bred; however, (142).

Once one is able to identify oneself as man, having separated oneself from the culture in which one was bred, one could be said to be tolerant; therefore, tolerance, which is a very positive value in every relationship, is also inherent in that third culture that would evolve once people have succeeded in separating themselves from the culture in which they are bred. This, however, does not seem to be the case in Cross river, the symbolic northern Nigeria in *Season of Anomy*.

### **Mass of stored Information (positive or negative) as causes of conflicts**

In *Season of Anomy*, Ofeyi is shocked by that great exhibition of intolerance by the Cross-river people in refusing to accept the fact that the people from across the river have the right to choose to stay different in that part of the country. The people from across the river do not need to be Muslims to live their lives in Cross-river. Such intolerance on the part of the people of Cross-river gives force to the great destruction of life and property in the Cross-river pogrom. The coming together of the people from across the river and the Cross river people in the same environment makes it possible for them to find a way of comparing themselves regardless of the fact that they are all coming from different cultural, historical and psychic backgrounds. In comparing themselves, stereotypes, of course, crystallize. These stereotypes definitely affect the way the ethnic groups relate to one another.

Relating this to the reality of the Nigeria condition, it is exactly the stereotype of the Igbo being too aggressive in business and money-loving that leaders as Zaki Amuri, the leader of Cross-river detests. He feels that if land is sold to the people from across the river –who symbolize the Igbo and possibly the Yoruba –with their sharp business acumen, they could take complete possession of the whole land. But people as Zaki Amuri in Nigeria ought to be taught that human perception does not depend solely on the senses and the mind. For if they say that the people from across the river are strangers and unbelievers, then their judgment, which does not depend solely on the senses and the mind, has definitely imposed categories of thought on the people from across the river as objects for them to be able to make sense of what they sense. Therefore, they become aware of these groups as strangers and unbelievers because they have perceived what they believe as realities through the lens of preconceived categories existing in their minds.

In an editorial in the newspaper, the former minister of the federal capital territory of Nigeria, Mallam El'Rufai, was said to have said that although 68 percent of the land in Abuja was allocated to the 19 northern states, Abuja being part of the north, yet the Igbo own 73 percent of landed property in Abuja. The same applies to all the cities in Nigeria. He therefore praised the Igbo enterprise and contribution toward the social and economic development of the capital territory. Therefore, Zaki Amuri's fears are not necessary in a country where positive values reign. But then the fears prompted his hostility to the people from across the river.

Therefore when the people of Cross- river initiate ethnic violence against the people of the south, Ofeyi, at the gory sight of the great human wastage, muses that differences in culture and material envy alone are not enough to justify such hideous wastage of human life, because a relish has colored those actions, a deep desire for perversion such that seems as if they seek to balance unnatural shortcomings, their human failings with a vengeful outrage on the face of humanity (*Season of Anomy*, 275-6).

### **Natural Resources as External Factor in fueling Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria**

Like in Nigeria, where the presence of natural resources has been contributing to ethnic conflict, in *Season of Anomy* some of the causes of the ethnic conflict are also the presence of natural resources. While it is about crude oil in Nigeria, it is about Cocoa and land in *Season of Anomy*. All the same it is an acknowledgement that external factors play a big role in the escalation of ethnic conflicts. Soyinka

may not have used them as direct sources of ethnic conflict, but the need for them by the cartel, who exploits the poor masses, exposes the nature of ethnic conflict in that given literary society, which is symbolic of the Nigerian society.

Since the discovery of Crude oil in the Niger Delta of Nigeria in 1958, the nature of ethnic conflict in Nigeria has taken another dimension. It is such that even policymakers, who are also participants in the affairs of their societies, may even entertain hostile feelings toward members of other groups. If they do not entertain such hostile feeling towards members of other groups, they at least have a view of inter-group relations that sees ethnic conflict as necessary for the advancement of the interests of their group (see Horowitz, 564), hence, the disproportionate derivation policies, which leave meager 13 percent mineral revenue to the oil-producing states. Ogoni and other Niger Delta groups are demanding 50 percent total control of their resources. However, the Nigerian Federal Government could adopt only 18 percent increase in the revenue accruing to the oil-producing states at the National Political Reform Conference in 2005-2006 (Policy Briefing, International Crisis Group, 18 September (2008).). It should be recalled that Zaki Amuri had ordered a clean sweep of cross river of everything supposedly alien.

Apart from the presence of natural resources, the availability of overwhelming human resources in some part of the country, in terms of highly educated professionals, has also engendered discriminatory policies that in themselves fuel ethnic hostilities and hinder innovation.

Furthermore, the people from across the river, symbolic for the South, being an advanced group in a backward region, Cross river or the North, they are likely to export surplus capital and population outside their region. Their prosperity will generate investment that does not respect regional boundaries and their education will of course create a talent pool in search of opportunities (Horowitz, 250). However, it is their envied positions in the country as well as the putative qualities associated with their positions- ascribable qualities that crystallized out of association in a common environment- that will engender ethnic conflict in their given environment.

It is interesting to note that although Zaki Amuri, the powerful tyrant from Cross-river and Chief Batoki of Gborulu are both leaders of the cartel, whose loyalty to a sodality transcends mere regionalism, yet Zaki Amuri sees the people of across the river, to which Chief Batoki belongs, as strangers in his Cross-river. Their genuine economic adventures in his Cross-river is suspect to him and his folks, hence the debriefing of the prisoner by the clerk in the manner expected of

the Cross-river elite, who seems always to be taking advantage of the educational backwardness of their people in enriching themselves. But then again, Chief Batoki believes that the only true party that transcends local boundaries is the party of the mint. That means that he is not so much troubled that his people are being butchered in Cross-river.

In Nigeria while the ruling elites engineer ethnic hatred and conflict among the ethnic groups, they share among themselves the gains of dividing the people and ruling them in sodalities that transcend ethnicity. Isaac Albert and Onigu Otite have noted at their methodical appendix that in the course of their research on the causes of ethnic conflict they had sought to know from their informants how they thought ethnic or religious conflicts could be managed; that the impression they got was that the people had a good knowledge of how to live together in peace among themselves in spite of their ethnic differences but that there was no serious institution put in place to galvanize their knowledge into concrete policies. They also said their informants believed that the conflicts were politically motivated by the elites (306). These elites have become strong political forces who seek to pull together the largest coalitions –be they ethnic, religious or regional –which would guarantee them access to power. These political forces know that in the process of living together in a common environment, groups build up stereotypes against one another. They also know that the pieces of information the groups store up for themselves in regard to others are more often than not pieces of information gathered from what other groups say about them or from what other groups feel about themselves in regard to others. But rather than emphasize the benefits of Nigeria’s cultural diversities, they exploit the advantages of the conflict these diversities cause.

### **Institutional Structures as causes of Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria**

In *Season of Anomy*, there is Cross-river, there is Aiyero and there is Aiyetomo, the state from which Aiyero broke off and there is Gborolu. From the knowledge of contemporary Nigerian history which the novel represents, Aiyetomo is, possibly, Nigeria. Cross-river is, possibly, Northern Nigeria. Aiyero is, probably, South-eastern Nigeria, while Gborolu is, most likely, South-western Nigeria. Each of these regions is different by reasons of culture, language and location. Furthermore, each of these regions contains ethnic minorities; as such, ethnic conflict has been fore-grounded in the founding of the geographical entity called Nigeria. Measures have been taken by various regimes at restructuring governmental apparatuses as well as the territorial constitution of the country.

After independence, the first Nigerian republic, which was from 1960 to 1966, was made up of three regions, the Northern region, the Western region and the Eastern region. These three regions were dominated by the three major ethnic groups: The Igbo, Hausa and the Yoruba. As such, in the opinion of Horowitz, 'the dominance of the three major groups in their regions weakened the representation of minorities by opposition parties. Patronage, coercion, and the apportionment of seats worked together to over-represent the regional majorities.

The first republic was terminated by a military coup of January 15, 1966, whose executors, being largely Igbo, were accused of being ethnically biased in the execution of the coup. At the failure of the coup, Major General Aguiyi Ironsi, another Igbo became the head of state. His unification policy was again misconstrued as a ploy by the Igbo, who already were over-represented in the professions, administration, trade and commerce, to dominate Nigeria. The reason for the Igbo presence in almost all sphere of Nigerian life is already known. The prevalent ethnic distrust engendered a Northern counter coup which aimed at checking the presupposed Igbo domination of the country. Consequently, the North took over the affairs of state, and the aftermath of all this is the civil war that lasted for three years from 1967.

Once in power, the Northern military head of state with his cohorts attempted to restructure the existing quasi-federal system. In 1967, they carved out twelve states from the three regions in order to counter the Biafran charge that Nigeria was dominated by the large Northern Region as well as secure the loyalty of Northern minorities strongly represented in the army, and wean the eastern minorities away from Biafra. In other words, the state took upon itself the responsibility of resolving conflicts. And because, politically, power always somehow manages to remain with the north, state involvement becomes biased accordingly, repressing the political expression of other cultural identities. These cultural identities take recourse to ethnic clientelism, differentiation and polarization.

From the first republic to the present republic thirty-six states have been created in Nigeria and the regional strongholds have supposedly been destroyed, yet ethnic and intra-ethnic conflicts have persisted. Alternative systems to the quasi-federal system have been suggested –systems as confederation and true federation and even a reversion to the old regionalism, which, in the main, was federal in structure and practice.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Clearly, *Season of Anomy* should be seen as more than just a simple mirror of the Nigerian multi-ethnic society, because by reading the work, one experiences the dangers of ethnicity and sees the need for the ethnic groups to respect their cultural diversities. One would also see the need for the ethnic groups to copy whatever good values there are in their respective cultures. One would also see the need why the ethnic groups should respect the need for each one of them to preserve their identity; in other words, there is need to respect one another's need to stay different in whichever part of the country the individuals of the various ethnic groups find themselves, just as the people from across the river desire to stay different in Cross-river. As William Zartman puts it:

Perceived collective need that is denied is the basic condition for conflict. Denied need can refer to a broad range of grievances, from relief from political repression to redress for economic deprivation. These needs can be codified as rights, but they are ultimately subjective; it is not possible to establish a hierarchy of needs [...]. Needs are flexible and are satisfied at different levels under different circumstances; needs satisfied at one time do not always remain so, and need satisfaction – like other satisfactions – is a function of expectation, which are themselves manipulatable (141).

Therefore, it behooves the scholar articulating the conflict story to make the people of the different ethnic groups of Nigeria to understand that ethnic conflicts are outgrowths of the diversity that characterizes their thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and social systems and structures; that it is as much a part of their existence as is evolution (see Weeks, 7). Once they are able to understand this, they would conquer their fears of being dominated by any group; for the only cause that is beyond mere differences in culture, beyond material envy is fear of domination which is always an offshoot of assimilated information reproduced as negative knowledge; for example, the people from across the river, symbolic for the Igbo in the context of *Season of Anomy* in regard to Nigeria, being an advanced group in a backward region, are seen by the Cross river people as highly motivated, diligent, intelligent and dynamic. And because they are seen as such, they believe themselves to be all those things; and if they are all this, it can only be assumed that the people of Cross river will see

themselves as they are seen by others outside of their group, that is, as indolent, ignorant and failures (Horowitz 233).

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IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities. Vol. 7. No. 4. (2021)  
ISSN: 2488- 9210 (Print) 2504-9038 (Online)

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