

1 Fake News –War Propaganda and Family Disintegration:

2 Cyprian Ekwensi's *Survive the Peace* in Perspective

3

4 *This paper examines the role played by media outlets in the Biafran war of independence, or,*
 5 *the Nigerian civil war, and its consequences on Nigeria as a nation and on its citizens. The*
 6 *focus of this paper is Cyprian Ekwensi's 'Survive the Peace' (1976). Characters in this novel*
 7 *have proven without an iota of doubt, that war victims are not only those who take part on the*
 8 *battlefields but also those that are displaced from their homes as a result of the war. Following*
 9 *this backdrop, this paper examines and demonstrates that news items, usually presented*
 10 *before, during and after the war are frequently erroneous and might lead to more casualties. It*
 11 *lingers as well on the fact that news items depend at times on speculation and presuppositions*
 12 *and then that the target is nearly always to satisfy personal interest first and that of those at*
 13 *the helm of power. New Historicism and Postcolonial theories will guide this analysis.*

14

15 **Keywords:** *Fake News, Propaganda, Disintegration, Post colonialism and New Historicism*

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17

18 Introduction

19

20 The 21st century has brought about an autocrat leader known as the media.
 21 The media has taken over the centre stage and has taken over power over the
 22 average persons in society. Siobhan McGrath in "The Impact of New Media
 23 Technologies on Social Interaction in the Household" asserts that, "The
 24 submersion of new media technologies into society has led to major social
 25 change which has meant that individuals, families and households have had to
 26 adapt in a numbers of ways" (10). S. Coronel concedes that "The notion of the

1 media as watchdog, as guardian of the public interest, and as a conduit between
2 governors and the governed remains deeply ingrained” (1). This implies that
3 the media dictates what is good as well as what is bad for the country. Kirsten
4 Schwarz Sparre acknowledges this view in “Journalists as Peacemakers? An
5 exploration of potential peacemaker roles for journalists” that, “It is generally
6 accepted that the media have the power to contribute to the escalation and de-
7 escalation of tensions in the society” (7). A country might despise war but the
8 media pushes into it. This is exactly what happened in the 1967 -1970 in
9 Nigeria, during the civil war that took thousands of lives and equally created
10 the Biafran separatists, whose idea of creating their own nation is still being
11 debated today. The war could have been short-lived or brought under control
12 within a very short period of time, but the media outlets caused it to spread to
13 other parts of the country. Hence, the victims of the war did not know what
14 caused the war. Lasse Heerten and A. Dirk Moses in “The Nigeria-Biafra war:
15 Postcolonial conflict and the question of genocide” assert that “Biafrans had
16 indeed been victims of genocide” (170). However, those that knew the cause –
17 the journalists- shielded the truth and enflamed the local people with lies. This
18 is what has made the local people around the Iboland (the Biafrans) to pick up
19 arms, claiming that they were fighting against injustice and discrimination.

20 The war equally brought about unabated consequences to the federal
21 militia as well as to Biafran activists. However, the media coverage of the war
22 was full of falsities and unrelated news items. That is, war correspondents
23 depended on imagined facts in order to relate what was happening on the
24 battlefield to their followers. For instance, the journalists who worked in most

1 media outlets were hardly in the battlefield and thus, depended on
2 presuppositions and personal interest for data collected to be broadcast.
3 Schwarre further notes; “Over the years, academics have convincingly argued
4 that it is impossible and at times undesirable for journalists to achieve complete
5 objectivity in their reporting of events in the world” (qtd, 1998).

6 As it, stands, two groups of people fought the war –those who supported
7 the Federal States of Nigeria known as the Federals and the Biafrans who were
8 often called the secessionists. As aforementioned, there were many casualties
9 on both sides but the Biafrans were much affected. This is so because the
10 Nigerian government received support from foreign powers in terms of
11 ammunitions and shell planes. However, on the Biafran side, the only support
12 came the journalists who, with spirit of patriotism, enflamed the young fighters
13 with lies as a way to keep them fighting and as a result, many more were killed.

14 Family disintegration was common. The war caused the displacement of
15 some families from one area to another. In the course of this movement, some
16 members of these families, especially in the Biafra Land, were killed and
17 others were forced into exile. For instance, some Biafrans went into exile to
18 neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon
19 where they still live.

20 An endemic flu equally broke out immediately after the war. Like any
21 other war, it was normal that the Nigerian civil war had as one of its aftermath
22 a dangerous flu. This flu was more dangerous than the war itself as it killed
23 both those that were near and those that were further away from the war zone.

1 In fact, so many children died of malnutrition and the elderly people died of
2 yellow fever.

3

4

5 **Fake News as War Propaganda**

6

7 The novel begins in a newsroom with the main protagonist, James Odugo.
8 Odugo, a seasoned journalist, and his colleague are about to go on air with a
9 fake news item. The fake nature of this news is illustrated by uneasy laughter
10 emerging from the newsroom, a sign that what they are about to broadcast
11 lacks seriousness. This is evident as seen in this phrase in *Survive the Peace*
12 that “he knew that in the newsroom, they had developed this habit laughing at
13 that routine lies they were called upon to dish out to the world” (3). This is
14 unethical journalism but they cannot do otherwise. African politicians hardly
15 go close to the masses. To satisfy their consciences, they resort to use the
16 media to fool the masses so as to protect their interest and remain in power as
17 long as they can. Outrageously, the journalist becomes emotional and decides
18 to support his people during the war. Odugo and his colleagues, who work in a
19 makeshift newsroom, are all from Igboland in Biafra. They cannot sit and
20 watch how their kindred are killed unjustly every blessed day. To help the
21 situation and to draw other people’s attention to the war, as they think, they
22 make a collection of some news items on the war casualties and then broadcast
23 wrong figures into the air. This is confirmed when we are told in *Survive the*
24 *Peace* that:

1

2 When the reporter had broken into the newsroom, they had bombarded him with
3 questions. ‘Man how was it, how many...killed?’

4 ‘Twenty’.

5 ‘Make it forty-nine, that’s a better figure.’

6 Wounded-?

7 ‘About forty-five

8 ‘Say hundreds...sounds better on the air.’

9 Three houses completely buried by bombs-‘

10 ‘A whole street of houses would be more graphic. Okay. Now for the news item
11 ... Forty-nine persons were killed and hundreds injured today when a raiding
12 plane dropped bombs...’(3-4)

13

14 The reporter’s main reasons for publishing fabricated and gruesome
15 numbers of casualties are to call the attention of the Red Cross. He knows that
16 if he presents the fact as it is, it will not prick the attention of the Red Cross. As
17 an international body, the Red Cross needs established facts in order to
18 intervene in any conflicting zone. In fact, this body needs funds and food items
19 from its partner countries in order to run its affairs. To be in possession of these
20 items, the organisation must go closer to the media in order to reach out to her
21 sponsors. This is illustrated in thus, “Against the rush to catch the deadline for
22 going on the air with the news... and with each new day something new was
23 added to the Red Cross appeal for more food, more medical aid, more
24 meaningful negotiations to end the fighting” (p. 4). Heerten & A. Dirk assert
25 that, “The crisis drove prominent academics and journalists to mobilize public

1 opinion, prompted a major international relief operation to bring supplies to
 2 starving civilian and exercised the minds of statesmen and women from the
 3 great powers to the UN” (171). This supports the hypothesis that news items
 4 are often doctored in order to please those that paid for it and or to suit the
 5 demand of a group of people and so doing, it transforms news items into
 6 propaganda tools. Here, Stanley Naribo Ngoa in “A Review & Analytical
 7 Narrative of Propaganda Activities: A Nigerian perspective”, defines
 8 propaganda as:

9
 10 Any technique, be it in writing, speech, music, film or other means; any
 11 association, plan, activity etc. for the spread of principles and opinions especially
 12 to effect change, reform, or that attempts to influence public opinion or encourage
 13 mass action as in popular support of a policy or programme. (239)

14
 15 The quotation is in line with Odugo’s intentions. Although Odugo does not
 16 overtly mention that he is out to create public awareness on the atrocities of the
 17 federal army on the Biafrans, it is thanks to his news broadcast that Red Cross
 18 agents set up relief centres across Igboland for the benefit of war victims and
 19 displaced persons such as Mr. Ezenta.

20 James Odugo is noticed as routine drunk. He keeps late nights as he drinks
 21 to a point where he cannot longer control himself and often returns home
 22 accompanied by friends and colleagues. This leaves him with an image of
 23 somebody who is not very happy with his job as a journalist. He is conscious of
 24 the fact that what he sends to the air does not reflect the reality in the field. It
 25 shows, as well, that Odugo is aware of the danger that his lies might cause to

1 humanity as a whole and his community in particular. This is proven right as
 2 pointed out in the following statement “Almost every night when the day’s
 3 work was done, Odugo would appear at little palm wine bar and drink himself
 4 senseless and be shown his way home. That way, he would –temporarily at
 5 least –deaden his conscience and his nerves” (4).

6 As a denizen of Biafra, Odugo fails to know that if he uses the media
 7 against the federal States of Nigeria, he indirectly invites the Nigeria friendly
 8 nations for support against the Biafran people. That is, his propaganda
 9 statement that the Biafran are winning the war, indirectly invites other nations
 10 into the scene to the detriment of the Biafrans. This is evident as in an abstract,
 11 Bernard Nnamdi Emenyeonu in “Military Intervention in Nigerian Politics:
 12 What has the press got to do with it” says, “The opinion in some academic and
 13 political circles is that the mass media are responsible for creating conducive
 14 atmospheres under which such crises and destabilisation flourish” (par 1). This
 15 goes in accordance with what a Biafran militia says. That he happily says that
 16 the federal army will not be able to cross Awomama River and renew fighting
 17 with them as they have succeeded in blowing up the bridge. However, he is
 18 surprised to hear his friend laments that the bridge is restored, as white
 19 mercenaries, who support the Federal Army, have reconstructed it. One of the
 20 Biafrans in *Survive the Peace* says “But we done blow that bridge!” but
 21 another ones fumes “Them don cross am...Na mercenary, white mercenary dey
 22 build bridge for them Nigerian soldier. Make we go home war don finish!”(9).
 23 The presence of white mercenaries is further confirmed as one of the militia

1 points out “Russia, take your plane go home, one time! We and Nigeria done
2 finish our fight. He no concern you anymore!” (10).

3 Although war to Nigeria is not a very strange thing, because of the fact
4 that they have had numerous conflicts in the past, the Nigerian civil war of
5 1970 was a moment of confusion as people in “[Nigeria] and the world beyond
6 were governed by the Radio”. That is, “For three years the portable studio had
7 beamed out broadcasts reportedly picked up by listeners in faraway Canada
8 and Japan. Many listeners across the Niger regular fans” (13). In fact, Nigerians
9 depended on the media for information as “the radio was the final authority in
10 moments of doubts”(10). Odugo witnesses how some Biafran militia, tired of
11 fighting the federal army, throw off their weapons in order to put an end to the
12 war. However, the media had not officially announced the end of war and they
13 feel like carrying back their weapons to face the Federal army at the battlefield.
14 This further testifies the authority of the media over the masses in times of war.
15 This is evidenced as one of the soldiers retorts, “But [the end of the war] has
16 not been announced yet!” but the question is “who will announce it?
17 Everybody has run away! A young soldier flared up at the speaker” (p.10).
18 Another soldier cuts in and points out “you people like to deceive yourselves.
19 Have we not tired of deceiving ourselves? When we lost we say we win –all
20 lies” (p. 10). This statement is categorical and it throws more light on the
21 danger that comes along with fake news.

22 Odugo witnessed a group of Biafran troops disarmed themselves yet he
23 goes on to produce a news bulletin that says the contrary of what he has
24 witnessed. He knows very well that most people in Biafra and beyond believe

1 and depend on his news for information but he gives them the contrary of what
 2 they expect. This is evident in *Survive the Peace* as the very last news, goes
 3 thus, “Gallant Biafran forces today flung back an enemy attack on the
 4 Umunevo Bridge”. The reporter lays more emphasis on the news bulletin as he
 5 goes further to say “...(To end the news, here once again are the main points:
 6 Biafrans troops today beat back an enemy attack on the Umunevo River. The
 7 Biafran casualties were light while the enemy suffered heavy losses...” (12).
 8 Much excited, some people, for whom the news meets their expectations, start
 9 “cheering in the market square” (12). Little do they know that an eminent
 10 attack by the Federal army will soon take place in the same market. Soon,
 11 “People were running in all directions with their half-packed, open boxes,
 12 women grabbed their children, their hair uncombed and unplaited, their panic-
 13 stricken faces without make-up”(12). This demonstrates the extent to which
 14 fake news causes damages to people who depend on it as the only source of
 15 information.

16 As aforementioned, the desire to be noticed for a role played to liberate
 17 one’s community might expose one’s kinsmen into more danger. Victoria
 18 Ezenta, fondly call Vic, goes on air, in the makeshift newsroom to broadcast
 19 against foreign countries that keep sending aids in the form of weapons to the
 20 federal army (Nigerian military men) to fight the Biafran troops. However, she
 21 fails to know that by reporting against the white mercenaries, she leaves her
 22 people with nobody willing to support them. This is evident in *Survive the*
 23 *Peace* thus:

24

1 Vic's voice came through, mellow and cool. Today's commentary is on The
2 Villainous Big Power Involvement In Africa's Internal Affair'.

3 Odugo choked with anger. Was this the time for International Morality? Could
4 she not see what happening outside, and save her life before all the talk? He
5 gesture to her to come out but he might as well have been speaking to an Enwonu
6 statue. The commentary went ahead and talked about the supply of sophisticated
7 weapons to warring African countries, about mercenaries, about hunger, and
8 relief politics, and the hypocrisy of BIG Power interest

9 As long as there is oil in any country, so long will Foreign Powers seek to pay
10 one faction against the other... (13)

11

12 In this quotation, Vic exposes white mercenaries who play the hide and
13 seek tactics in warring areas in Africa and in Nigeria in particular. In her own
14 opinion, the immediate cause of the Nigerian –Biafran war is the oil reserve in
15 the Biafra land. She thinks that the white men are using divide and rule tactics
16 on the conflicting camps in order to exploit the oil reserve. This is apparent, as
17 Fanon notes “Europe has multiplied divisions and opposing groups, has
18 fashioned classes and sometimes even racial prejudices, and has endeavored by
19 every means to bring about and intensify the stratification of colonized
20 societies” (10). This can be seen in the title of her commentary, “The
21 Villainous Big Power Involvement in Africa's Internal Affair”. Hence, Nigeria
22 is the victim of circumstances. That is, she pays the price of white men's
23 interest in her oil reserve.

24 The reality of what is happening on the battlefield keeps contradicting
25 Odugo and Vic's news bulletin. Odugo finally stops Vic from cautioning the

1 world with moral lessons in her commentary and leads her out of the danger of
 2 the approaching attackers (the Federal Army). His first idea is to take her to
 3 Obodonta where he intends to keep her with his friendly villagers and then
 4 moves onto Ifitenu where he hopes to meet his wife and children. Contrary to
 5 his own recent news bulletin which goes that the Biafran troops have
 6 succeeded to push away their enemy, “He had not seen his children for many
 7 months because the roads were hazardous and everyday brought news of more
 8 villages overrun by the Federal troops” (16).

9 It is paradoxical that Biafran troops should succeed to push away the
 10 Federal army whereas Odugo and Vic are running away and Odugo has not
 11 been able to see his children given the fact that most of the villages in his town
 12 are overrun by the federal troops. More evidence of this paradox is found in
 13 *Survive the Peace* in the quotation below:

14

15 As Senior Reporter News Odugo now saw for himself the gap between the news
 16 at the microphone and the news in the field. It was miles apart. Here was the
 17 whole of Biafra in flight, yet if he had been at the radio station, he would have
 18 been putting out a bulletin diametrically opposite to what was really happening.
 19 In many cases, he might not even know what was happening until he saw the
 20 refugees with his own eyes. Then it would be too late and remorse would grip
 21 him and he would go and bury his sorrows in the palm wine bar and pray that one
 22 day this whole tragedy would blow away. (24)

23

24 The quotation suggests that the news items presented at the news bulletin
 25 are often far different from what is actually happening in the field. Sometimes,

1 with the quest for personal interest and public anticipations, the journalist is
2 forced to produce false information, which contradicts the whole issue at hand.
3 Odugo knows the danger that his false news has caused his people and that is
4 the reason why he spends his time in the bar feeling remorseful all the time.

5 Sometimes, when Odugo lacks news items to present to his anticipated
6 listeners, he prays for war to provide him with necessary data. Like every other
7 journalist, Odugo at one point is happy with the start of the war between the
8 Federal Government of Nigeria and the Biafran troops because he knows that
9 it provides more followers and more people who believe in him as a senior
10 journalist. Without this war, he might not have items to develop for his news
11 bulletin and likewise for his followers. This claim is clarified thus “[The
12 eventuality of this war] was that time he and his colleagues had prayed for; but
13 it was not entirely how they had imagined it” (24). This is further seen as we
14 hear “Odugo ... He had heard about air raids, had reported them on the radio,
15 but this was the first time he had been a living target. From this moment on, the
16 war acquired a new meaning for him” (42). As a matter of fact, “Another
17 journalist of his broke into tears the day bombs buried four houses in one street
18 just when he had grown tired of waiting for something to happen” (61). These
19 statements show that Odugo and his colleague’s previous and recent news
20 bulletin are full of falsity and baselessness. Captain, one of the Biafran’s troops
21 confirms it as he says, “[Odugo] you told us lies...for those lies, many of us
22 could have committed suicide (70).

23

24

1 **Interrogating Ethics and Deontology in Journalism**

2

3 Most people who have once built interest and equally considered Odugo
 4 and other journalists as role models are beginning to question journalism.
 5 Odugo is bold enough to tell the world that journalists should not be held
 6 accountable for the fake news they send on air because they are often directed
 7 on what broadcast. Here he says:

8

9 The job of a radio-journalist. A thankless job. People exploit your talent for
 10 word-power. They use you to fool and control the public. You are not supposed
 11 to speak with your own voice, but the voice of others. You know what you are
 12 writing or saying maybe either a complete lie, or half the truth – (165)

13

14 The quotation suggests that journalists in and around the world are
 15 conscious that most of what they broadcast or prepare for broadcast lacks
 16 evidence from the situation on the ground. In fact, most of what they broadcast
 17 can be considered fake news. This is so because they often depend on what
 18 people tell them to write and broadcast to the public without fact checking.
 19 Thus, most of what they write cannot be seen as complete truth. Victoria
 20 compliments this fact when she says, “So you [journalists] sometimes
 21 broadcast the truth.” Here, Odugo replies, “We broadcast the truth always, but
 22 we make the world see how horrible that truth is so they can stop the war” (44-
 23 45). Odugo’s statement shows how ambiguous journalism is. Hence, believing
 24 in news items nowadays is like believing in falsity.

1 Pa Ukoha continues with this doubt as he laments the death of his son,
 2 Samson. He illustrates his doubts as he asks, “But Odugo, I wonder...you
 3 people [Journalists] who were near the rulers, why did you allow
 4 yourselves...how did this war start and then pull all of us inside?” (58). Pa
 5 Ukoha in this statement accuses journalists like Odugo for having enflamed the
 6 war. By questioning Odugo, Pa Ukoha indirectly questions the Ethics and
 7 Deontology of journalism as a whole. However, Odugo does not sit quiet. He
 8 tries to defend his profession by saying:

9
 10 The responsibility is not yours, or mine. I was just a radio journalist. I worked in
 11 Lagos. I am not a military man. I am not interested in politics. But it is impossible
 12 for a journalist to hide his head from public issues. Suddenly you find yourself in
 13 the middle of things. People expect you to speak up, yet you are not the cause of
 14 anything. They believe you know more than they ... I tell you this, we radio
 15 journalists of today, we write the news as directed. After all who pays the piper
 16 calls the tune, as white man says.” (59)

17
 18 In as much as Odugo tries to defend his profession, it is very clear that
 19 self-interest has much influence in journalism than any other profession. It is
 20 normal that every living being works in other to earn a good standard of living
 21 but it becomes questionable when emotion plays a greater influence on one’s
 22 profession. By accepting that journalists are given directives on what to write
 23 and broadcast, Odugo indirectly acknowledges news does not exist at all.
 24 Hence, news is a personal creation and every journalist creates and presents it
 25 the way it suits the intellect of his employer. They care very little about the

1 masses that listen and believe in it. This is further clarified as Odugo points
 2 out, “If I do not write what I am told to write, who will pay my salary?... why
 3 should the journalist begin to care what use people are making of his talent?
 4 The ruler are our employers, we are their employees. If I go back to the radio, I
 5 will be told what to write and I’ll write it or be fired” (59). Here, Macdonald
 6 assets:

7
 8 Leaders make decisions. Decisions are based on information. Therefore, if the
 9 information upon which an adversary makes decisions can be distorted, altered or
 10 even just garbled, it can give a significant advantage to the deceiver. Operations
 11 that seek to deceive adversaries in international relations and war have been
 12 extraordinarily effective throughout history. (70)

13
 14 Although, Odugo does not bow down openly to Pa Ukoha’s dissections of
 15 falsehood in journalism, he actually feels remorse and disappointment as he
 16 says, “It was true what the old man said. [I am] a disappointed man”. However,
 17 he does not give up immediately. He thinks that the leaders, rather than
 18 journalists, should be blamed for the distortion of facts in order to suit their
 19 campaign strategies. This is seen as he says, “No. the answer does not lie in the
 20 subordination of journalists, Odugo decided. It lies in the complete change of
 21 attitude by leaders” (60). He further makes this point clear as he points out:

22
 23 *Fact is sacred went the diction, comment is free.* All falsehood. Fact is not sacred,
 24 and can be distorted to suit your own ends, whether the fact applies to political

1 campaign or to an ideology. Once you have the reins of power securely in your
2 own hands, you can make the press create fact. (60)

3

4 This quotation suggests that there is nothing like fact. That is, those in
5 power decide what people see as fact. Thus, they can transform false idea
6 factual and then transform factual ideas into falsity. This is in line with Edward
7 Said's understanding on the distortion of facts as he points out:

8

9 On a visit to Beirut during the terrible civil war of 1975-1976 a French journalist
10 wrote regretfully of the gutted downtown area that "it had once seemed to belong
11 to ... the Orient of Chateaubriand and Nerval." He was right about the place, of
12 course, especially so far as a European was concerned (Said 1)

13

14 The journalist main objective is to give credit to the West. He knows that
15 if he presents the Orient as a "romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and
16 landscapes, remarkable experiences" (1) it places, the Orient as inferior and
17 suitable for white tourism. Hence, he regrets noticing the process of change
18 that is about to take place in this part of the "West invention" (1). This is what
19 Said describes as "distortion and inaccuracy, or rather the kind of inaccuracy
20 produced by too dogmatic a generality and too positivistic a localized focus" (8)

21

22

23

1 **Family Disintegration**

2

3 This part examines disintegration in Ekwensi's *Survive the Peace*. It
 4 explores and demonstrates that disintegration starts from home and runs across
 5 the society. The social construct is made up of the family, the community and
 6 the people. When family, which is its foundation, shakes, the community as
 7 well as the society become disintegrated.

8 The novel commences with a shattered bomb that separates Victoria
 9 Ezenta from her sister Anna. Vic, Anna and Odugo are at the market square
 10 when the military air raids target them. As Vic and Odugo take cover in order
 11 to stay safe, they completely forget that they are with Anna. It is until the
 12 shelling bombardment is over that they look and Anna is nowhere to be found.
 13 The war has separated two sisters, Vic and Anna. This is evident in this
 14 statement:

15

16 Vic was the first to cry out, 'Plane! ... They have come! War planes they were
 17 two of them, silver-plated, diving towards them in a no nonsense swoop... What
 18 has happened to Anna...they began to search among the dead, minding nothing
 19 of the air-raid, which might not really be over. (40-41)

20

21 Anna is dead. She is one of the victims of the Nigerian federal military air
 22 raids against the Biafrans. Her death marks the separation between her and her
 23 elder sister Vic as she is "counted among the dead" and not among the living.
 24 This is shown in the quotation above as Vic and Odugo go helter-skelter

1 searching for Anna everywhere without minding the imminent arrival of
2 another shell plane.

3 The aftermath of the war has pulled family all over the Nigerian territory
4 apart. Odugo laments situation of his family. This is evident as Odugo prays,
5 “O lord,’ he prayed, ‘I have survived thirty months of war, let me now survive
6 the peace. Show me what to do, how to gather my scattered family, how to
7 save my friends, where to hide, how to disappear from sight before the killing
8 start” (11). Here, it is clear that not just family members have been separated
9 from each other, as friends and colleagues have lost their friendships.

10 Victoria Ezenta thinks that white mercenaries-“British and Soviet backers
11 and arms suppliers” (Nnamdi Adinuba, par 1) are the cause of this war. She
12 equally thinks that if Nigeria and the Biafrans are apart as per the course of the
13 war, it is because of the white man’s system of divide and rule. “As long as
14 there is oil in any country , so long will Foreign Powers seek to play faction
15 against other...”(13). Hence, Vic’s commentary as mentioned above is to
16 sensitise the Nigerian community and the world at large on what is going on.
17 Though timely as her commentary may be, it is too late to achieve a concrete
18 goal. The war has started and might not stop anytime soon until the white
19 mercenaries have achieved what they want. Thus, Vic is rather exposing the
20 makeshift radio station and herself to federal air raid rather than educating her
21 people. This is seen as Odugo laments, “Was this the time for International
22 Morality? Could she not see what was happening outside, and save her life
23 before all the talk?” (13).

1 An appalling reason for white importation of war into Nigeria is that they
 2 want to disperse the local people and as such render them powerless. The logic
 3 they might put forth is that they want to face less restriction when they are
 4 exploiting the local resources. Pa Ukoha laments as he tries to clarify this
 5 point. Here he says, “Now who has won the war? Is it not those Foreigners
 6 who make the guns to sell to us? ...We have lost everything by this war (54-
 7 57). And like fools we buy the aeroplanes and the rockets with which we kill
 8 our brothers and sisters”. He further lays emphasis as he asks, “People of
 9 Obodonta, what was the war about” and in response, he says:

10

11 Yes, the war was fought to scatter our families and leaves us without sons and
 12 daughters, wives and husbands. That is all! When the families are scattered, we
 13 cannot progress...Yes that is how we are going to be independent. That is how
 14 we shall rule ourselves! We will kill ourselves and scatter our families, while
 15 other countries sell arms to us and make their ways forward into the world. (54)

16

17 The quotation demonstrates that white men do not mean to reunite the
 18 Biafra land with the federal republic of Nigeria. Rather, they prefer that the war
 19 continue to separate families in Nigeria while they smuggle her rich resources
 20 to Europe. White men are conscious of the fact that if Nigerians remain united,
 21 under one government, they might grant free access to their resources. Thus, by
 22 putting them at loggerhead, white mercenaries easily crave their ways to hoard
 23 of Nigerian resources.

24 The war disperses the local communities in Biafran land and exposes them
 25 to looters. As the warplane approaches in Umunevo, both the Biafran militia

1 and innocent population run helter-skelter for their dear lives. However, looters
 2 brave the odds and stay behind to loot what the dispersed people might have
 3 abandoned as they run for safety. A clear evidence is given thus:

4

5 The town was full of moving lights and hurrying groups of men and women.
 6 They moved everywhere and some came and peered into the car to see if it was
 7 occupied or lootable.

8 The restlessness in the town showed the state of fear in the minds of men and
 9 women. Everything was fragile, primed to explode and cascade into streets,
 10 killing the innocent.

11 Women were carrying their children on their backs, and beds on their heads,
 12 looking for some corner in which to rest. (20)

13

14 The quotation above indicates that as war is the moment of depression to
 15 some people, it is seen as an opportunity for others to have what they might not
 16 have had in the absence of war. It suggests as well that the vulnerable and the
 17 innocent usually suffer great losses during war and those that do not really care
 18 about their lives become the opportunists as they go about looting stores and
 19 houses. Odugo confirms this as he witnesses “an exodus more incredible than
 20 he had seen at Umunevo market” (23).

21 Ukoha loses his son Samson into forced conscription. As mentioned
 22 above, when war breaks out, the innocent ones suffer a lot. Meanwhile, the
 23 Nigeria military uses air plane to scatter family members, the Biafrans raid the
 24 local community of Ubodonta in order to recruit young men to fight the federal
 25 soldiers. This is evident as the narrator points, “Samson had been conscripted

1 into the Biafran army one afternoon when the conscriptors raided Obodonta
 2 village” (26). Ukoha’s final separation with Samson, his son, comes when he
 3 hears that Samson is dead. Here, he says, “So this is how Samson has left us...
 4 the little boy of yesterday. Samson had no quarrel with the people he killed.
 5 The people who killed him did not even know his face. That’s war” (58). In
 6 fact, “The war which had divided them had been a fight among power seekers
 7 with professionals as the weapon bearers” (36)

8

9

10 **Conclusion**

11

12 This paper has demonstrated that White mercenaries and media outlets
 13 amplified Nigeria civil war of the 1970s. Two groups of people fought the war.
 14 The Nigerian central army, otherwise known as ‘the federals’, versus the
 15 Biafrans, known as secessionists. White mercenaries were interested in the oil
 16 rich Biafran land and, to achieve their goal, they created a rift between the
 17 Biafra people, who were eager to secede from the Igbos and Hausas’ central
 18 government of the federal republic of Nigeria. For fear of being defeated by the
 19 Biafran minority, the central government sought aids from friendly nations
 20 such as Russia, France and Britain. However, at that time, a few media outlets
 21 were controlled by Biafran denizens (journalists). Therefore, to express their
 22 dissatisfaction with the central government, these journalists decided to use the
 23 media against the central government. This has consequently led to more
 24 hatred between the two camps. The focus of this research was therefore to

examine and demonstrate the role that the media in this war. This paper has unravelled and thus concludes that the media has a greater role to play in propagating warfare in killings.

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