

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The media plays a crucial role in transforming society in a globalized world. Over the years, the world has undergone rapid changes in all spheres due to the immense impact of the media. These changes have also influenced and significantly transformed the mass media system. Society has become a place where the instantaneous availability of information, facts, and knowledge is possible due to information and communication technologies. On a broader spectrum, the media can be considered as a combination of content such as music, films, TV, radio, publishing, advertisements, and electronic games, which get along with associated technological devices¹. Over time, what constitutes the media has both expanded and proliferated. This is because the media has been closely related to technological changes, which bring consequences on its content, platforms, and devices on a long virtuous circle. The Media includes a whole host of modern communication systems. They include cinema, television, newspapers, magazines, advertisements, radio, and other interactive multimedia like video games, computers, mobile phones, pagers, texters, and the internet¹.

However, defining the media is not easy because the media constantly changes with the development of technologies. Such development provides various opportunities and new business models. The media and the society are two inseparable entities from time immemorial. The two have functioned alongside each other due to their intertwined nature and interrelatedness. The media holds a distinctive role within society. It operates as an organized institution dedicated to raising public awareness.

Through its provision of information, education, knowledge, motivation, surveillance, and entertainment, the media plays a crucial role in enhancing awareness among people. It is recognized in society for its persistent efforts to promote awareness. Nevertheless, the media is not separate from society; it is a significant component of it². The media is one of the channels of communication that has brought the world into one single unit. The media refers to traditional mass communication systems and content generators as well as other technologies for mediated human speech. This would include traditional publishing (newspapers, periodicals, or books), traditional electronic media (broadcasting, broadband, cable, or satellite), motion pictures, recorded music, and advertising. In the common parlance, the media and the mass media are used almost interchangeably. The term media was first used with the advent of newspapers and magazines³.

The media works as a tool that publicizes information and entertainment to a vast number of populations. Several Internet-based newspapers, journals, and periodicals have already made their presence known to the general populace⁴. The Web newspapers are becoming increasingly popular, and the net editions of almost all the major newspapers are as popular as their print editions. Mass media have helped in creating social awareness and have also provided people with an easy way of living life⁵. Thus, media refers to various means of communication, aiming to reach a very large population, such as the entire population of a country. Media is further seen as a device of communication that is useful to communicate and interact with a large number of audiences in various languages. One cannot separate himself from the media. The media is used for entertainment, communication, dissemination of

information, advertising, marketing, and expressing and sharing views, opinions, and ideas.

Different types of media are accustomed to this day and age. Whether it is children, young people, or adults, everyone has their share of media-related exposure every day. One of the foremost sources of information earlier was the print media⁶. Traditionally, the term print media refers to the distribution of printed works. It includes newspapers, magazines, booklets, brochures, house magazines, periodicals or newsletters, direct mailers, handbills or flyers, billboards, press releases, books, and so on. Print media like newspapers and magazines influence people such as politicians and policymakers who often turn to print media for their news, intended to reach the general public. The second is the electronic media, a kind of media that requires the user to utilize an electric connection to access it. It is also known as broadcast media. It includes television, radio, and telephones. The invention of electronic media was a turning point in the history of the communication process⁷.

The third is social media, or it can be called News media with the emergence of the Internet and mobile technology, new ways of disseminating information started taking place. Today there are several social media sites in the form of blogs, social networks, microblogs, forums, wikis, photos, audio, and video sharing. Due to the advancement in technology, it is noted that it is not only the journalists who become news distributors, anyone can publish news and opinions on the Internet and social networking media. Social media use web and mobile technologies to make communication an interactive dialogue⁸. It allows people with little knowledge about the technology to create and share content⁹. Social media are a group of web-based

applications that enable people to create and exchange information, pictures, videos, and social booking. Social media is one area of communication that allows one to share views and opinions. A major point of difference between social media and conventional media is that the former allows instant responses, which is critical in moments of conflict. However, uncontrolled and irresponsible usage of this media is a great danger to society¹⁰.

In the contemporary world, the media plays an important role as a source of information about everything, including human rights. For most people, television, radio, and newspapers are their only sources of information. The media possesses power to select issues and events in the world, it decides what constitutes news, filters and frames issues, and also contextualizes the problem. It sets the political agenda, and creates the consciousness on matters that include human rights¹¹.

The media are generators and sources of information where reporters gather, process, and present most of the information we receive about everything, including human rights. In addition to just processing information, the media are political and moral agents, deciding to highlight a particular story, taking clear editorial positions, and calling for something to be done. The media are the carriers of information generated by human rights organizations like NGOs and national human rights commissions; they act as the most powerful gatekeepers between these organizations and the wider public¹¹. The media has also proven the power it holds in building up public opinion on different subject matters. An old proverb says "The pen is mightier than the sword," which has been proven since the advent of writing and the development of the media.

The social responsibility that lies on the media today is not just confined to the traditional idea of transmitting news and entertainment. It has tremendous power in going beyond these basic responsibilities and reaching out to society in achieving positive peace, which is one of the main goals of the media. The media are in an advantageous position to achieve this goal, because they have the power to influence the attitude and behavior of the people and are able to reach out to a large number of audiences at the same time.

Historically, the media did play an important role in diplomacy, bringing normalcy and peace to the society. The Media function as a channel of peace that clarifies all the misunderstandings and misperceptions on the socio-political life of the people. It frames and analyzes the conflict, identifies the interests, defuses mistrust, and provides opportunities for emotional outlets. The media thus becomes a facilitator of positive social change rather than a professional reporter¹².

The media is one of the major tools for shaping and reshaping public or societal opinion, disseminating programs and policies of governments, influencing behavior of the general public, maintaining peace in society, facilitating development at the grassroots level, providing human rights education, highlighting social changes, and promoting democracy and good governance, which are essential for societal development. The role of the media in shaping public perceptions and opinions about significant political and social issues has long been a subject of speculation, argument, and research. It is widely accepted that what is known about, think, and believe about

events in the world, outside of personal first-hand experience, is shaped, and some would say orchestrated, by how these events are reported in newspapers and communicated through the mediums of radio and television¹³.

Recent world events have shown that social media can act as a tool for widening democratic space, but on the other hand, it can lead to destabilization. The media can be used to spread propaganda and hate speech and incite violence. Any debate about the role of social media must therefore be grounded in the larger debate between information flows and the stability of the state. These changes in attitude might include adopting the most prevalent ideology expressed within the community. Social media and, more generally, the Internet allow the publication and diffusion of extremist ideas and material that may lead vulnerable individuals to recruit themselves, sometimes without any intermediary. During the second Israeli-Lebanese war in 2006, Thomas Mayfield carried out several information warfare activities through social media¹⁴.

Mass media create an impact by playing the roles of change agent, reflector, and reinforcer of policies and laws protecting rights¹⁷. The media also plays a critical role in facilitating social change and shaping public opinion and attitudes. Through its reporting, the media can highlight critical developments that impact people's lives, bringing to the fore issues often ignored and marginalized voices. The media's agenda-setting function influences debate, thinking, and priorities within society¹⁸. Statistics have shown how the media reinforces stereotypes, especially on issues of gender, religion, and culture. Women are often portrayed in subordinate roles to men. When journalists seek sources for their stories, they often gravitate towards powerful individuals in any community, who are mostly men. Women are often portrayed in

traditional roles as wives, mothers, and caregivers, while men are depicted as powerful, resourceful leaders associated with power¹⁹.

The media performs its functions based on guiding principles of fairness, accuracy, diversity, and balanced representation. However, the effectiveness with which it performs these functions depends largely on political and legal environments in any country. Where the legal framework is conducive, there is a proliferation of media organizations and products, a plurality of voices, and access to information. In cases where the legal framework is stifling, there is a lack of diversity of media, bias, and blatant political interference. Political interference can polarize and significantly confuse the way the media functions. The media is regarded as the watchdog and a mirror of society. It acts as a watchdog by focusing on the people's interests and setting the social, political, economic, and cultural agenda for keeping society vibrant and the nation progressing. The freedom of the media is the freedom of people, as they should be informed of public matters. The media's new role today includes reporting, analyzing, and commenting on burning issues and enlightening the people about the real facts. The media is crucial for modern society and serves as a primary means of communicating information from person to person. The media influences human life in various forms, providing information and entertainment across the globe. Thus, The media is acknowledged as a tremendous force in society. The task of disseminating information cannot be successfully accomplished without the media. Therefore, the developmental roles of media in international, national, and regional spheres must be well recognized globally²⁰. In today's world, the media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and directly impacts the values and norms of society by covering a large part of society and providing new ways of life. On one hand, the media is effective in shaping the mental structure of people in society. On

the other hand, it regulates people's behavior and influences them to express calculated behavior regarding social phenomena²¹.

Media representations and stereotypes exert a significant influence on society, shaping identity formation, social attitudes, and systemic inequalities. Stereotypes can lead to self-stigmatization and distorted identities, perpetuate biases and prejudices, and reinforce existing power imbalances²². Mass media (visual, print, or audio) exist primarily to deliver message content, entertainment, information, and advertisements, to a vast and mass audience. Media act as a fourth pillar of the state, delivering messages to a mass audience through various platforms. Thus, mass media is communication, whether written, broadcast, or spoken, that reaches a large audience²³. Furthermore, since the media act as channels of communication, it is important to determine whether they are politically biased in their presentation of information. If they are biased, they may distort the concept of originality, serving to manipulate rather than illuminate social problems. Media should be thought of as both carriers and delivery systems. They carry advertisements and deliver them to individuals who buy or choose media first based on the kind and quality of entertainment and information, and second on the kinds of advertisements they deliver. Advertisers find the media convenient and relatively inexpensive delivery systems compared to direct mail or other channels that do not carry entertainment and information. This definition applies to online media as well as traditional mass media, the banner ads on websites and the sponsored links that accompany paid search keywords serve the same function as commercials and printed advertising in traditional media²⁴.

The media has become an integral part of our lives, shaping our perceptions, beliefs, and values. From television shows and movies to news coverage and advertising, media plays a powerful role in constructing and disseminating representations of

individuals and groups in society. These representations are often fraught with oversimplified and generalized portrayals based on characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and more. The impact of media representations and stereotypes on society is profound, influencing various aspects of life, including identity formation, social attitudes, and systemic inequalities. Media representations significantly influence how individuals perceive themselves and others, shaping their sense of identity. Particularly for marginalized communities, exposure to stereotypical portrayals can lead to self-stigmatization, reduced self-esteem, and a distorted understanding of their own identities. When the media consistently presents certain groups according to established stereotypes, individuals within those groups may internalize these representations, hindering the acceptance and celebration of diverse identities²⁵.

In contemporary African literature, the intersection of media, social issues, and economic policies offers a rich terrain for exploration, particularly within the framework of historical events such as the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes* serve as crucial narratives that delve into the complexities of this conflict, capturing not only the human cost of war but also the intricate role of the media in shaping public perception and policy. Both novels underscore the media's influence in propagating certain ideologies, reflecting biases, and sometimes perpetuating stereotypes, thereby shaping the discourse around socio-cultural and political issues.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the novel analyses Adichie paints a vivid picture of how media propaganda and reporting during the Biafran war influenced both local and international perspectives on the conflict. The portrayal of the media as a double-edged sword, capable of informing the public and swaying opinion while also being

manipulated by those in power to serve specific agendas. Similarly, Iyayi's *Heroes* offers a critique of the Nigerian media during the civil war, highlighting how it often mirrored the interests of those in authority, thereby complicating the public's understanding of the war and its underlying causes.

The role of media representations in shaping public opinion and influencing social issues and economic policies, especially during the Nigerian Civil War, is a critical area of study. Understanding how narratives are constructed and disseminated can either fuel conflict or promote peace and reconciliation. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes* are seminal texts set against the backdrop of the Nigerian civil war. The media played a significant role in shaping public perception of the conflict, with various media outlets presenting biased and conflicting accounts of the war. This thesis explores the representation of the media in these texts, examining how the authors use narrative strategies to reflect the media's effectiveness and bias in addressing socio-cultural and political issues during the war. By investigating the media's role in these novels, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on media influence in conflict settings, offering insights into how historical narratives are shaped by those who control the flow of information.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The media plays pivotal roles in shaping societal trends and perceptions in the contemporary world. Information wields immense power to shape how individuals think, behave, and form their views on critical societal issues. Modern media, as the most advanced communication system humanity has ever encountered, drives these processes by rapidly disseminating narratives and messages. Unlike in the past, when information traveled slowly and reached limited audiences, recent technological

advancements have accelerated the spread of media content, making it a powerful force in shaping public discourse.

While existing scholarship extensively examines the media's role in transmitting messages from sources to consumers, there is limited focus on how it constructs narratives, particularly about political and socio-economic trends. This gap is especially apparent in discussions surrounding the Nigerian Civil War. Despite substantial research on the war's socio-political implications, there is a notable absence of critical analysis on how media representations influenced public understanding of the conflict and its aftermath. This oversight may stem from tribal sentiments and a national psychological urgency to erase the war's memory from collective consciousness.

This study addresses this gap by examining the depiction of the media in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*, exploring how these narratives illuminate the media's effectiveness and biases in times of conflict. Central to this inquiry is the duality of the media as both a tool for enlightenment and a vehicle for propaganda. While the media has the capacity to educate and inform, it is also vulnerable to manipulation by those in power who exploit it to advance their own agendas. This dynamic was evident during the Nigerian Civil War, where both Biafran and Nigerian factions sought to control the narrative through various forms of the media. By analyzing these novels, the study seeks to uncover how media representations shape public perception and influence broader social and economic policies, particularly in conflict contexts.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to analyze how media representations in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche and *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi influence and reflect social and economic issues during the times of conflict and national crisis in the novel.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. identify media representation mode of the media v v5555 in the selected texts.
- ii. examine narrative strategies used by the authors to depict media's effectiveness and bias in the selected texts.
- iii. investigate media's influences on public perception of social issues and economic policies within the contexts of Nigerian civil war as portrayed in the novels.
- iv. examine the Role of Media in Shaping Social and Economic Issues in the selected text:

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- i. What are the representations of media's role in the selected texts?
- ii. What narrative strategies do the authors employ to depict media's effectiveness and bias in the selected texts?
- iii. How does the media influence public perception of cultural issues and economic policies within the contexts of the Nigerian civil war as portrayed in the novels?
- iv. what are the role of the media in Shaping Social and Economic Issues in the selected text:

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the field of literary studies and existing body of scholarship on African literature, particularly in the context of the Nigerian Civil War. By offering a critical analysis on the representation of media's roles in shaping public perception and influence policy in conflict as depicted in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*. This thesis offers the theoretical understanding of how societal issues are portrayed and interpreted in literary works, and also becomes the study of how the media industry influences the portrayal of sensitive issues in literature adds a valuable dimension to cultural studies and critical media literacy.

This research also adds to the academic discourse surrounding contemporary literature, genre studies, and the influence of the publishing industry on literary representations. Engaging with such debates is a fundamental aspect of Literature studies. The understanding of the role of media in contemporary society, particularly in relation to its ability to influence socio-cultural and political issues. The findings of this research could be relevant not only to literary scholars but also to media studies, history, and political science, offering a multidisciplinary perspective on the intersection of media, literature, and conflict. As a result of this, the study encourages readers to critically engage with media representations and consider the broader implications of media bias and propaganda across fields.

1.6. Scope of the Study

To establish a strong foundation for this analysis, it is important to consider the overall body of works of both authors. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is renowned for her exploration of post-colonial Nigerian society, gender, and power relations. Her novels, including *Purple Hibiscus* and *Americanah*, critically examine sociopolitical issues through the lens of personal narratives. *Half of a Yellow Sun*, her historical

novel set during the Nigerian Civil War, is particularly significant for this study as it engages with themes of media representation, propaganda, and the control of information. Through the character of Richard Churchill, a journalist, and the use of radio broadcasts and newspapers, Adichie highlights how media narratives influence public consciousness and governmental decisions during war.

Similarly, Festus Iyayi, a prominent Nigerian writer and activist, is known for his focus on class struggle, corruption, and economic policies in Nigeria. His works, including *Violence* and *The Contract*, are deeply rooted in Marxist ideology, critiquing capitalist exploitation and systemic inequalities. *Heroes*, which also centers on the Nigerian Civil War, presents the media as a mechanism for controlling public perception, manipulating facts, and sustaining economic policies that favor the ruling elite. Through the protagonist, Osime Iyere, a journalist, the novel exposes how media institutions are often co-opted by political interests, shaping the economic conditions and justifications for war.

The selection of *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes* for this study is deliberate and strategic. These two texts provide complementary yet distinct perspectives on the Nigerian Civil War, offering a balanced analysis of media influence on social and economic structures. While Adichie's novel presents a character-driven approach to media representation—exploring both the emotional and ideological impact—Iyayi's novel offers a direct critique of systemic exploitation, linking media control to economic manipulation. Together, these works allow for a comparative examination of how media is employed as a tool for both resistance and oppression, reflecting broader post-colonial and Marxist theoretical perspectives.

This study will critically analyze key themes, including the use of media for war propaganda, the role of journalists as mediators of truth, the economic consequences of controlled information, and the post-war impact of media narratives on national memory. By applying post-colonial theory and agenda-setting theory, the research will explore how the media not only reflects but actively shapes social and economic realities. Through close textual analysis, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection between media, power, and economic policies in Nigerian literature.

1.7 Limitation to the Study

Despite the importance of this study, a few limitations were encountered during the research process: Firstly, one of the novels used for the study, *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi, was not easily available both in libraries and online sources. This made repeated reading and analysis a bit challenging. Also, there are not many scholarly articles, journals, or books that discuss *Heroes*, especially in relation to media, which made it hard to back up some points with existing literature. Lastly, the study was carried out with limited resources especially financial resources which affected the depth of analysis and the ability to include more perspectives to the analysis.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Media's role: In this study, it is the functions play by various form of communication including newspapers, radio, television, and other means of mass communication, as portrayed in the selected novels.

Bias: In the context of this study, bias is examined in relation to how the media portrays the Nigerian Civil War and its associated socio-cultural and political issues.

Narrative strategies: This refers to the techniques used by both Adiche and Iyayi to convey meaning and themes in their works.

Public perception: This is the way in which the public understands and interprets information presented by the media as portrayed in the text.

Socio Issues: In this study, social issues encompass the social and cultural challenges, such as ethnic tensions, identity politics, and cultural preservation that are depicted in the selected texts as being influenced by media representations during the Nigerian Civil War.

Economic Policies: In this study, economic policies refer to the strategies and decisions related to economic management and development that are portrayed in the novels as being influenced by media coverage and public perception during the Nigerian Civil War.

Nigerian Civil War: The term “Nigerian Civil War” as used in this research refers to the conflict that took place between 1967 and 1970 in Nigeria, also known as the Biafran War, which is the central historical event around which the selected texts frame their discourses. It is the textual depiction of this event as narrated in the selected texts.

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Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents a conceptual review of the appropriate variables and issues pertinent to the subject matter of this study. It also presents the theoretical

framework guiding the study, to achieve the overall objectives of the study, the review of empirical studies, the conceptual model and the summary of gaps.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 The Concept of Media and Media Representation

2.1.2 The Nigerian Media

2.1.3 A Historical Overview of the Nigerian Civil War

2.1.4 Nigerian Media and Socio-political Issues

2.1.5 Literature as a Social Commentator across the World and in Nigeria.

2.1.6 Authorial Backgrounds

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

2.2.2 Postcolonial Theory

2.3 Review of Empirical Studies

2.3.1 Empirical Review of Selected Studies on Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

2.3.2 Empirical Review of Selected Studies on Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*

2.4 Conceptual Framework

2.5 Summary of Gap in Literature Reviewed

Endnotes

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 The Concept of Media and Media Representation

The term "media" has been defined in various ways by scholars over recent years. According to one definition, media refers to the different channels through which information is distributed to the public, including digital platforms, print, broadcast, and social media networks¹. Another definition expands on this, noting that media encompasses all forms of communication channels that deliver content to a wide audience, from traditional outlets like newspapers and television to newer digital formats such as social media and online platforms². Media has also been described as the collective means by which information, entertainment, education, and promotional messages are disseminated to the public, often through channels like television, radio, print, and the internet³. Additionally, media can refer to the various platforms and tools used to store and deliver information or data, ranging from traditional forms like newspapers and radio to digital media and social networks⁴.

Further expanding on this concept, media has been defined as the channels of communication that serve to disseminate information to a large audience, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and digital platforms⁵. Media also includes all forms of communication used to reach and influence a broad audience, encompassing both traditional mass media and emerging digital platforms⁶. Similarly, media is described as the aggregate of various means of communication, such as television, radio, print, and digital platforms, that facilitate the dissemination of information to the public⁷. Another perspective defines media as the tools, platforms, and technologies that facilitate the communication of information to a wide audience, including print media, broadcast media, and digital media⁸.

Moreover, media is defined as the various methods and platforms through which information is communicated to the public, ranging from traditional print and broadcast channels to digital and social media⁹. It has also been suggested that media refers to the collective communication outlets or tools that are used to store and deliver information or data, including television, radio, print, and online platforms¹⁰. Media is further described as encompassing all communication platforms that disseminate information to the public, including traditional forms such as newspapers and television as well as digital and social media¹¹. Lastly, media is defined as the collective term for the various platforms and technologies used to communicate with large audiences, from print and broadcast media to the digital and social media channels of today¹².

Though the various definitions of “media” highlighted above provide valuable perspectives, they also exhibit certain limitations. For instance, Smith's definition emphasizes the channels of dissemination but does not explicitly address the content or the audience involved¹. Similarly, communication channels is broad but lacks detail regarding the role of media in shaping public perception and influencing societal norms¹². the collective means by which messages are delivered but overlooks the interactive nature of modern media, especially in digital environments where users are both consumers and creators of content.

Both traditional and digital platforms does not account for the convergence of these platforms in a multimedia landscape where boundaries between different types of media are increasingly blurred¹³. While comprehensive in listing various media types, does not delve into the power dynamics inherent in media systems, such as who

controls these channels and the implications of that control. The inclusion of both traditional and emerging platforms is valuable, yet it fails to address the globalised nature of media, where information is often disseminated across borders, impacting diverse cultures and society's differently¹⁴.

The description of media as a means of communication is apt but lacks a focus on the content's purpose whether it is to inform, entertain, persuade, or educate. The tools and technologies of media but does not explicitly consider the ethical implications of media production and distribution, such as issues of privacy, misinformation, and bias. This definition acknowledges the variety of platforms but does not sufficiently address the role of media in shaping cultural identity and collective memory¹⁵.

The role of media in storing and delivering information but does not fully consider the participatory nature of modern media, where audiences are no longer passive recipients but active participants in content creation and dissemination. The traditional and digital aspects of media does not explore how media literacy is crucial in enabling individuals to critically engage with media content¹⁶. Finally, on the comprehensive nature of media platforms and technologies does not consider the rapid technological advancements and their implications for future media landscapes. Taking these gaps into account, a comprehensive definition of "media" can be formulated as follows: Media refers to the multifaceted channels and platforms through which information, entertainment, and promotional content are disseminated to diverse audiences. It encompasses traditional outlets such as newspapers, television, and radio, as well as digital platforms like social media and online networks¹⁷. Media functions not only as a transmitter of content but also as a powerful agent in shaping

public opinion, cultural norms, and societal values. In the digital age, media is characterised by its interactivity, where audiences are both consumers and creators of content, leading to a convergence of media types and a blurring of the lines between different communication channels. The globalised nature of media means that content can cross borders, influencing diverse cultures and societies, while the ethical implications of media production and distributions such as privacy, misinformation, and bias are increasingly critical. As technological advancements continue to transform the media landscape, media literacy becomes essential for individuals to navigate and critically engage with the vast array of content available¹⁸.

Media representation has been defined by multiple scholars as the way in which media portrays various elements of reality, including people, events, and cultural practices, and how these portrayals influence public perception. One definition suggests that media representation is the process by which meaning is constructed and communicated through symbols and images, shaping how audiences understand and interpret reality. This perspective highlights the semiotic nature of media, where signs and symbols are used to convey meanings, often aligning with dominant cultural ideologies¹⁹.

Another definition frames media representation as the depiction of reality within media texts, shaped by the ideologies of those who produce the content. This view emphasises the power dynamics inherent in media production, where certain perspectives are privileged while others are marginalised. It suggests that media representations are not neutral but are influenced by the values, beliefs, and interests of media producers²⁰.

Media representation is equally considered to be the reflection, distortion, or exaggeration of societal norms and values through media content. This perspective argues that media does not merely mirror society but plays an active role in constructing social reality, often reinforcing stereotypes and cultural myths. However, it also acknowledges that audiences are not passive recipients of these messages and may resist or reinterpret the representations they encounter²¹.

Further, media representation is understood as the way in which media portrays different social groups, often reinforcing or challenging societal power structures. This definition draws attention to the role of media in perpetuating or contesting social inequalities, particularly in relation to race, gender, class, and sexuality. It also highlights the impact of these representations on the identities and experiences of marginalised groups²².

Additionally, media representation can be seen as the process by which media constructs versions of reality that influence how people perceive themselves and others. This definition focuses on the psychological impact of media representations, suggesting that they shape individuals' self-concepts and their perceptions of the world around them. It also emphasizes the role of media in normalising certain behaviors and beliefs, making them appear natural or inevitable²³.

Another scholarly perspective defines media representation as the way media narratives shape public discourse and contribute to the formation of collective memory. This view showcases the power of media in framing historical events and

cultural phenomena, influencing how they are remembered and understood by society. It also suggests that media representations play a crucial role in shaping national identity and public consciousness²⁴.

Drawing on these definitions, a comprehensive understanding of media representation can be articulated as follows: Media representation is the complex process through which media constructs and disseminates portrayals of people, events, and cultural practices, often reflecting and reinforcing societal ideologies and power structures. It involves the use of symbols, images, and narratives to convey meaning, shaping how audiences perceive and interpret reality²⁵. Media representations are not neutral; they are influenced by the values and interests of those who produce the content, often privileging certain perspectives while marginalising others. These representations play a crucial role in constructing social reality, influencing public discourse, collective memory, and individual identity. In the digital age, media representation also encompasses user-generated content, where audiences participate in the creation and dissemination of alternative narratives, challenging traditional media portrayals and contributing to a more diverse media landscape²⁶.

2.1.2 The Nigerian Media

The state of the Nigerian media since the return to democratic governance in 1999 has been widely debated. Various perspectives have been expressed by both foreign and local media analysts, as well as individuals within and outside the Nigerian media. The Nigerian media has remained one of the most vilified and acclaimed institutions in the country in recent time. While it has been commended by some, others have seriously condemned it for irresponsible, reckless, and sensational journalism²⁷.

Despite differing views, there is general agreement that the Nigerian media played a significant role in both the country's political independence in 1960 and the restoration of democratic governance in 1999. These perspectives can be divided into two main schools of thought, irrespective of the evaluative criteria used.

One perspective argues that the Nigerian media has become ineffective, plagued by corruption, self-interest, unethical behavior, and a loss of integrity. This view, noting that since gaining political independence in 1960, the media, once a powerful force for unity, has been weakened by political and ethnic divisions, leading to a shift from promoting national cohesion to fostering disunity and inter-ethnic conflict²⁸. The argument that the Nigerian media has become deeply flawed, characterised by corruption, self-interest, unethical practices, and a loss of integrity. It acknowledges, however, that the media has a long-standing history of activism, particularly during the military era, when publications like Tell, The News, Newswatch, African Concord, and Tempo Magazine played significant roles in opposing oppressive regimes²⁹.

Despite this commendable past, it is believed that the media's integrity began to deteriorate with the advent of democratic governance. The transition to a civilian government, the media shifted from being a pro-democracy force to a pro-money institution. Media executives now prioritise securing appointments, contracts, and advertisements from those they should be holding accountable, transforming the media into public relations consultants for politicians³⁰. Journalism in Nigeria has moved from its role as a societal watchdog to a collaborator in protecting corrupt officials. The pervasive culture of bribery among journalists, where even those with modest salaries are tempted to accept large sums to cover up corruption stories, and

insists that corruption has become so entrenched that nearly every journalist in Nigeria, from top editors to entry-level reporters, has a price³¹.

In contrast, another perspective contends that the Nigerian media continues to be vibrant, relatively independent, responsive, and resilient. This view highlights the media's critical role in both the struggle for independence and the return to democratic governance, arguing that, unlike other African nations that fought for independence through armed conflict, Nigeria's battle was fought and won through the power of the press. There is a contrasting view, arguing that these assessments do not accurately reflect the Nigerian media landscape³². Media and journalism in Nigeria are thriving, as evidenced by the numerous titles available at newsstands and the growing number of FM and TV stations. The resilience of media houses operating in a challenging economic environment, emphasizing that their ability to maintain reader, viewer, and listener interest is a testament to their success.

The recognition of Nigerian journalists on the global stage, such as Dele Olojede's Pulitzer Prize, as proof of the media's vibrancy, the natural career progression for Nigerian journalists often leads to positions in corporate affairs or government, and he sees no issue with journalists accepting roles that may improve their living standards. The trading favors is a common practice in many professions but notes that some journalists choose to resign rather than compromise their integrity, media practices in the UK and the US, where newspapers often align with political parties, suggesting that similar dynamics exist globally³³.

Nigeria, a federal presidential republic and one of West Africa's largest economies, is a nation rich in diversity, with over 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages and cultures. The three dominant ethnic groups are the Hausa Fulani in the Northern Region, the Yoruba in the Southern Region, and the Igbo in the Eastern Region, while English serves as the official language. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced six military coups and two civilian administrations before a transitional military government facilitated the return to civilian rule in 1999.

Nigerian media has been crucial in shaping public opinion and facilitating political discourse. Over the years, various media outlets, including newspapers, television, and radio stations, have emerged, though the media landscape is not without its challenges, such as censorship, self-censorship, and government regulations that restrict free speech. The Nigerian media has been a significant force in the nation's history, using advocacy to shape political discourse and solidify its role as the Fourth Estate.

The evolution of the print media in Nigeria can be divided into four phases: the colonial period, during which the press emerged; the nationalist movement, which led to independence from British colonial rule in 1960; the post-independence era, where the press played a key role during military coups and civilian regimes; and finally, the current democratic period marked by the rise of social media. Military coups, which are illegal and unconstitutional means of seizing power, have punctuated Nigeria's history, but since the return to democracy in 1999, the country has seen peaceful transitions of power through democratic elections.

The origins of the Nigerian media, particularly the print and electronic sectors, can be traced back to the British colonial period, influenced by the British and some foreign-educated Africans. However, despite this British influence, the exact beginnings of Nigerian journalism are somewhat ambiguous. It is however difficult in determining whether journalism was introduced by Europeans or if Nigerians had some form of journalism before the arrival of Europeans, noting evidence of irregular newspaper publishing efforts before 1859. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that the first printing press in Nigeria was established by the Presbyterian Mission in Calabar in 1846, while also acknowledging that Reverend Henry Townsend, also of the Presbyterian Mission, founded *Iwe Irohin* in 1859, recognized as Nigeria's first newspaper and Africa's oldest vernacular newspaper, published in Abeokuta³⁴.

Reverend Townsend is often regarded as the father of Nigerian journalism. The *Iwe Irohin* newspaper, initially published in Yoruba, started an English edition six years later. It was sold for about one penny per copy, with an annual subscription costing two shillings. Although the newspaper is often perceived as a religious publication, it exerted significant influence as a political tool. However, in October 1867, a popular uprising in Abeokuta led to the expulsion of Europeans and the destruction of the Abeokuta press, ending the publication of *Iwe Irohin*. Despite this, Townsend and the year 1859 remain key milestones in the history of Nigerian journalism³⁵.

The second major owners of the media were foreigners, mainly Sierra Leoneans and Liberians who had been exposed to Western education before Nigerians. The first foreign-dominated newspaper was the "Anglo-African," founded by Robert Campbell,

a Jamaican educationist, in 1868. Although the “Anglo-African” collapsed after two years, by 1880, many in Lagos felt the need for a new newspaper to fill the void left by the demise of *Iwe Irohin* and “Anglo-African”³⁶. Educated Africans expressed frustration over the absence of a media voice to address the issues of the time. In response, a wealthy businessman, Richard Beale Blaize, launched the first truly Nigerian newspaper, the *Lagos Times and Gold Coast Colony Advertiser*, in November 1880. However, the paper struggled financially and ceased publication by 1883. In 1890, after being dismissed from the *Lagos Times* due to personal issues, Liberian businessman John Payne Jackson persuaded Blaize to revive the newspaper under a new title, *The Lagos Weekly Times*. Financial disputes eventually led Jackson to start his own newspaper, *The Lagos Weekly Record*, in 1891³⁶.

John Payne Jackson went on to have an extraordinary career with *The Lagos Weekly Record*, becoming one of the most influential journalists in West Africa. He established a tradition of fearless journalism and instilled a sense of purpose and enterprise in the Nigerian newspaper industry. Under the leadership of his son, Thomas Horatio Jackson, *The Lagos Weekly Record* continued its tradition of scholarly and combative journalism, catering mainly to the growing elite in Lagos and the Gold Coast Colony. The newspaper's content was largely political, reflecting the movement towards African nationalism. Although circulation numbers were modest during this period, *The Record* achieved the highest circulation among newspapers at the time. The collapse of *The Lagos Weekly Record* in 1930 and the death of Thomas Horatio Jackson in 1936 marked the end of an era in Nigerian press history³⁷.

John Payne Jackson's *Lagos Weekly Record* was known for being a powerful source of ideas, influencing both opponents and the government. However, Blackall's *Observer* to be the most successful 19th-century newspaper in terms of both finances and readership. The first era of Nigerian newspapers was a time of service, sacrifice, and experimentation, marking a transition from a society of *European Africans* or *black Englishmen* to one of educated Nigerians, independent of British oversight³⁹.

The initial era of Nigerian newspapers ended with the rise of a new generation of publishers who sought to promote democratic participation. This new era was epitomized by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and his *West African Pilot*, launched in November 1937. The *Pilot* declared its mission as the protector of liberty and civilization, setting the tone for a revival and revolution in Nigerian journalism. Azikiwe's paper quickly became the main platform for the growing nationalist consciousness, ending the circulation dominance of *The Daily Times*, which then had about 6,000 copies in circulation⁴⁰.

Azikiwe's influence on the Nigerian press was profound, as he broadened the social base of journalism, moving it away from its traditional elitist roots. The period from 1880 to 1937 marked the emergence of a more radical press in Nigeria, independent of church affiliations. Five key milestones have been identified in the history of Nigerian journalism, including early newspapers like *Iwe Irohin* (1859), *Lagos Times* (1880), and *The Lagos Weekly Record* (1891), as well as pre-independence papers such as the *West African Pilot* (1937) and more recent publications like *The Guardian and Newswatch* (1983/85). Between 1859 and 1937, several newspapers emerged as leaders in both cultural and political nationalism. By 1937, no fewer than 51

newspapers had been established in Nigeria, marking the emergence of the first indigenous industrial enterprise⁴¹.

One notable newspaper during this period was the Daily Times (later Daily Times of Nigeria), founded in 1926 as a commercial paper by a Nigerian and four Britons. While it was not heavily involved in the nationalist struggle, it served as a training ground for some of the best journalists in Nigeria. The Daily Times had a circulation of 3,000 in 1930, which increased to 5,900 by 1937. However, the first daily newspaper in Nigeria was technically the Lagos Daily News, launched on November 9, 1925, by bookseller Babamuboni⁴². The paper was later taken over by Herbert Macaulay, who developed it into a strongly anti-government publication and a political tool for his party, the National Democratic Party. Despite its influence, the Lagos Daily News eventually ceased publication. In 1939, the colonial authorities established the first newspaper north of the Niger, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, a Hausa-language publication. In 1945, the Gaskiya Corporation was formed, adding an English-language fortnightly, *The Nigerian Citizen*, in 1948²⁴. In 1949, Obafemi Awolowo founded the Nigerian Tribune as a platform for his political party, the Action Group (AG). During this period, many newspapers were launched in preparation for Nigeria's independence from Britain⁴³.

The early post-independence years were challenging for the Nigerian press. Political partisanship and regional tensions exacerbated divisions, with the press becoming an instrument for political rivalry. With independence came the exposure of previously hidden cleavages, leading to intense bitterness and competition among different

groups. The press played a significant role in this period, often contributing to the political instability that characterized Nigeria's first Republic⁴⁴.

However, the advent of military rule in the mid-1960s brought about a period of self-reflection within the press. The press began to recover its moral authority, playing an active role in societal reform during the 1970s. This renewed sense of purpose paved the way for the establishment of influential publications like *The Guardian* and *Newswatch*.

The Guardian is regarded as a leading force in Nigerian journalism, distinguished by its high standards, incisive analysis, and polished language, making it one of the most impactful newspapers ever produced in Nigeria. *Newswatch* was notable for pioneering investigative journalism and fostering debate with a style reminiscent of American quality magazines. Tragically, its founding Editor-in-Chief, Mr. Dele Giwa, was killed in 1986 by a letter bomb, marking the first instance of such an attack in the country⁴⁵.

A significant point of observation is that the history and development of the Nigerian press have predominantly centered around the Southern Protectorate, particularly Lagos and nearby regions such as Abeokuta, where the press initially flourished. This regional disparity is partly due to the historical gap in Western education between the north and south of Nigeria. This educational gap persisted because most schools in Nigeria were established by Christian missions, which also pioneered newspaper publications. By 1912, the northern region had only 34 primary schools compared to the southern region's 150 primary schools and 10 secondary schools, with the first

secondary school in the north appearing in 1922. Although the number of schools in the north increased significantly by 1957, the disparity remained stark. By then, the north had 2,080 primary schools and 18 secondary schools, whereas the south had 13,473 primary schools and 176 secondary schools⁴⁶.

The north's first newspaper, *Gaskiya Ta Fi Kwabo*, was established in 1939, by which time there were already more than 16 newspapers in the south. This educational and media gap contributed to a lower number of university graduates in the north compared to the south by 1950. The press in Nigeria has navigated various struggles, from anti-establishment journalism during the independence struggle to combating military dictatorship and navigating the challenges of a politically competitive environment in recent times⁴⁷.

The Nigerian media landscape today is significantly shaped by government control and regulation, particularly through the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Radio remains a crucial mass medium due to its affordability and accessibility, not requiring literacy for consumption. The federal government operates stations under the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, individual states manage their own stations, and there are also privately owned stations. The Voice of Nigeria broadcasts in multiple languages, including Arabic, English, French, and several indigenous languages. While some broadcasts target domestic audiences, others, primarily on shortwave, are transmitted globally⁴⁸.

Television follows a similar structure, with federal government ownership of two stations affiliated with the National Television Authority, state-run stations, and

private operators using satellite technology. Besides local media, Nigerians also access news through international sources such as Voice of America, the BBC, and Deutsche Welle. However, privately owned television stations have proliferated across the country. In contrast to the broadcast media, the print media in Nigeria is largely dominated by private publications, which allows for more critical commentary on the government⁴⁹.

The media sector in Nigeria is noted for its vibrancy. State-run radio and TV services reach almost all parts of the country and operate at federal, regional, and state levels. All 36 state governments run radio stations, and many also operate TV stations. Independent producers and community radio/TV services, often managed by universities, contribute to the diversity of media offerings. Radio remains a key information source, with a substantial uptake of pay TV.

In recent years, social media has become a powerful tool for citizens to express their views on issues ranging from politics to social justice and human rights. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have played a key role in mobilizing citizens, especially the youth, to hold leaders accountable and engage in the democratic process. The #EndSARS protests, which began in October 2020 to demand an end to police brutality and call for police reform, exemplify the impact of social media in driving civic engagement in Nigeria.

By 1967, the West had grown increasingly disillusioned with Africa. Rather than establishing parliamentary democracies, the continent saw the rise of single-party systems and military regimes. Instead of adopting Western identities as black

Englishmen or Frenchmen, Africans began to assert their distinctiveness, emphasizing concepts like the “African personality” or negritude. Instead of peace, conflicts had erupted in Algeria, the Congo, and now Nigeria. The West had grown tired of what it perceived as Africa's erratic behavior, and Nigeria became the final point of frustration. Nigeria, once heralded as the most promising nation and a testament to the success of Western colonialism, was now viewed as yet another victim of the so-called African penchant for political instability. Conservatives took satisfaction in this, believing it confirmed their long-held views that Africans were unfit for self-governance and that stability could only be maintained under benevolent white rule⁵⁰. On the other hand, liberals were disheartened, seeing their hopes of transforming white attitudes towards Africa finally dashed.

Before the Nigerian civil war garnered international attention, a more dramatic event dominated global headlines, the Six-Day War in the Middle East. The rapid and decisive nature of the Arab defeat and Israeli victory overshadowed the Nigerian conflict, sparing it from the intense scrutiny that might have otherwise led to international intervention²⁹. In a swift move in August 1967, the newly declared state of Biafra took control of Nigeria's onshore oil fields for six weeks, ensuring that Nigeria would eventually return to the global spotlight. Nigeria was a significant producer of low-sulfur oil, close to European and American markets, and the effective federal blockade cutting off this vital energy source, combined with the closure of the Suez Canal and the gradual strangulation of Europe's petroleum supply, was bound to bring Nigeria back into focus⁵¹.

At the outset of the war, and throughout its duration, the New York Times' research department lacked up-to-date resources on Nigeria. Initially, their correspondents were Alfred Friendly in Lagos and Lloyd Garrison in the East. A comparison of their reports is revealing. On July 13th, Friendly relayed claims from both Lagos and Biafran radio, while Garrison, writing from Nsukka, directly contradicted the federal claim of encircling the town. Friendly reported Nsukka's capture on July 16th, but Garrison refuted this on July 17th, stating that the town had been recaptured by the Igbo on July 18th. By July 21st, Garrison filed the first reports of atrocities from Enugu, recounting eyewitness accounts of civilian massacres in Nsukka⁵². Police reports estimated around 5,000 deaths in the North. During the Aburi negotiations, a notable exchange occurred between Commodore Wey and Ojukwu, highlighting the scale of the killings. While the international press settled on a figure of 30,000 casualties, Garrison's estimate went as high as 200,000, a figure that found its way into academic discussions by the summer of 1968. As the war progressed, and Garrison's reports increasingly contradicted the unfolding events, he was withdrawn from Biafra, having already been expelled from Nigeria by the federal government. He continued to write virulent, factually incorrect articles for various U.S. publications, capitalizing on Biafra's underdog status for personal gain. Renata Adler, in an article for the New Yorker, was similarly guilty of distortion, falsely claiming that Biafra had more doctors, lawyers, and engineers than any other black African country²⁹. The British press, including The Economist, began writing off Nigeria as early as June 1967, with headlines suggesting the dissolution of the federation and questioning the viability of Nigerian unity. In their rush to publish, few journalists bothered to cross-check their facts with Nigerian sources. The international media's

portrayal of the Igbos as a race apart, akin to the Jews, contributed to a dangerous polarization along religious and economic lines.

The press coverage was often sensational and racist, with reports depicting Africa and Africans in dehumanizing terms. For instance, the Sunday Times published blatantly racist descriptions of the conflict, while Newsweek provided graphic, morbid accounts of the conditions in southeastern Nigeria. This type of “yellow journalism” was particularly reserved for African events. Frederick Forsythe, a Biafran sympathizer, published a book, *The Biafra Story*, and several articles filled with inaccuracies and derogatory remarks about Africans. Despite these flaws, his work was widely cited in the foreign press, and he became an “instant expert” on African issues.

2.1.3 A Historical Overview of the Nigerian Civil War

In the broader context of African states’ post-decolonization history, separatism, military coups, and border disputes largely resulting from colonial-era demarcations were prevalent. The Nigerian Civil War was consistent with these trends. The potential wealth from natural resources often failed to reach the wider population in African states and instead sparked political conflict, similar to what was witnessed in the Congo, and later in Sierra Leone and Sudan. External involvement in African affairs, particularly during the Cold War, often aggravated these issues as superpower rivalries played out on the continent. Generalizations should be avoided, but it is crucial to situate Nigeria's conflict with Biafra within this wider African historical context to see the common patterns that transcend individual national circumstances. The Nigerian conflict was not unique in its occurrence, but the unprecedented global

attention it received made it a significant international spectacle of human suffering. At the time of its independence, Nigeria was hailed as a decolonization success story; its peaceful transition to self-rule contrasted sharply with the violence that accompanied India's partition. Moreover, Nigeria, as the most populous African state, boasted substantial oil reserves discovered in 1956, which promised economic prosperity⁵².

There remains significant controversy and lack of documentation regarding the Nigeria-Biafra War and the period immediately preceding it. One of the most contentious and internationally recognized aspects of the war, the famine, still lacks precise mortality figures, with estimates often based on aid organizations' approximations. For instance, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimated in June 1969 that approximately 1.5 million Biafrans had died³³. Max Siollun, in his study of Nigeria's military coups between 1966 and 1976, notes the difficulties in documenting this period, noting that history in Nigeria is often either not recorded or remains a compilation of myths due to the sensitivity of the issues involved. Oral testimonies from key figures play a critical role in historical accounts, particularly in the context of the civil war, as ongoing socio-political challenges continue to color interpretations of the conflict. It is perhaps not so much the victors who write history in Nigeria, but those who were deeply involved in the war, including journalists, missionaries, aid workers, and other advocates from both sides⁵³.

The earliest scholarly works on the war outside Nigeria were based largely on journalistic accounts published during or immediately after the conflict, such as the writings of Frederick Forsyth, Suzanne Cronje, and John de St. Jorré. Forsyth and

Cronje, known for their strong pro-Biafran stance, provided perspectives that leaned heavily toward the Biafran narrative, although Cronje's work is generally seen as more balanced. Similarly, some Nigerian and Eastern Nigerian historians have presented accounts that reflect the biases of their respective sides. Notably, Chinua Achebe's memoir, *There Was a Country*, and the subsequent debate it sparked, highlight the continuing contestation over the memory and interpretation of the war. Nigerian literature, including Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half a Yellow Sun*, has extensively engaged with the war. Recent scholarly work by Toyin Falola and Ogechukwu Ezekwem further explores the war's history through literary lenses⁵⁴.

In the aftermath of the war, scholars began to analyze various aspects of the conflict, and some of these early analyses remain influential. For example, John Stremlau's comprehensive study on the international politics of the war and Morris Davis' work on the role of public relations agencies continue to shape contemporary understandings of the conflict. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in the war's international dimensions, particularly its significance for the history of humanitarianism, human rights, and the visual representation of suffering. The following sections are therefore intended to provide historical context for the subsequent chapters rather than an exhaustive analysis of the war's causes⁵⁵.

The Nigerian colony was established in 1914 through the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates under the leadership of Frederick Lugard. Despite this formal integration, the colonial administration in the North and South was vastly different. In the South, missionaries were permitted to build churches and schools, introducing Christianity and Western education, while the North was governed indirectly, with existing hierarchies and social structures largely preserved,

and religious and educational matters controlled by the Muslim elite. Missionary activity was not permitted in the North until 1927, when the new Governor, Graeme Thomson, allowed mission stations to be established at locations designated by local administrators⁵⁶. This administrative separation laid the groundwork for future conflict. The Nigerian federation initially consisted of three administrative regions: a predominantly Muslim North, a religiously diverse South-West that succeeded the pre-colonial Yoruba kingdoms, and the Igbo-dominated South-East. However, Nigeria's diversity goes beyond this simple tripartite division⁵⁷. Despite reflecting pre-existing differences, this bureaucratic division also reinforced and solidified them.

The decolonization process in Nigeria unfolded through a series of successive constitutions, each granting more administrative control to Nigerians in an attempt to preempt nationalist demands for independence. By 1950, the British acknowledged that Nigerian self-rule was inevitable and sought to guide the process in a way that would protect British interests. A nationalist, pan-Nigerian movement led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, and represented by his National Congress of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), spearheaded the push for independence. The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 laid the groundwork for Nigeria's first-ever elections in 1952. In response, Northern and Western elites formed parties to represent local interests, with these parties evolving out of cultural organizations⁵⁸. Northern elites expressed concerns that the 'Nigerianization' of the civil service and decolonization in general would lead to domination by the more economically advanced South. To address these fears and prevent Northern secession, the British designed constitutional arrangements that protected Northern interests and avoided imposing reforms on the North's local governance structures. As independence approached, particularly after the Lyttleton

Constitution of 1954 established a federal, tripartite structure, party politics in Nigeria became increasingly regionalized, with support mobilized along ethnic lines. Upon Nigeria's independence in October 1960, the Northern-based NPC, led by Prime Minister Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was the ruling party, in coalition with the NCNC, with Azikiwe becoming Nigeria's first indigenous Governor-General a largely ceremonial role⁵⁹.

The government encountered significant challenges early on. The contested 1963 census results, the general strike of 1964, and the unrest and corruption during the federal elections that same year disillusioned foreign observers who had initially been optimistic. In January 1966, a military coup was initiated by young officers, who claimed their goal was to end the corruption of the first post-independence government a sentiment reportedly welcomed by Nigerians but ultimately fell short⁶⁰. Leadership was assumed not by the coup leaders but by General Aguiyi Ironsi. Under Ironsi, North-South tensions escalated due to three key reasons: the coup plotters who executed elected political leaders were not prosecuted; the fact that both the coup plotters and Ironsi were Igbos rekindled old fears of Southern domination in the North; and Ironsi's decision to centralize the federation heightened these concerns. A counter-coup by Northern officers in July 1966 brought Christian Northerner Yakubu Gowon to power, who, after initially considering secession for the Northern region, reinstated Nigeria's federal structure. However, the coup failed in the East, where the local military governor from the previous coup, Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, maintained control⁶¹.

In June and September 1966, two waves of massacres targeting Easterners took place in the North. Biafra advocates spread rumors that Northern politicians and police instigated these massacres, which they and Biafran politicians referred to as pogroms. The exact death toll is unknown, with estimates varying widely⁶². While the precise number is less critical here, the political use of casualty figures as part of wartime propaganda is significant; these massacres provided a plausible historical precedent for Biafra's genocide narrative. As a result of this violence, approximately two million Easterners residing in other parts of the federation fled to the East. A standoff ensued between Lagos and the Eastern region. In an effort to resolve the escalating conflict diplomatically, Gowon and Ojukwu met in Aburi, Ghana, in early January to negotiate the federation's future⁶³. Stremlau contends that the extent of autonomy gained by the Eastern region in the Aburi agreements was not fully comprehended by Gowon and his delegation at the time, leading to Lagos' failure to implement the agreement. To coerce the East into submission, Gowon's government imposed economic measures, culminating in an economic blockade of the Eastern region⁶⁴. On May 30, 1967, the day after Gowon decreed the restructuring of Nigeria into twelve states, Ojukwu formally declared secession. The twelve-state decree, a concession to Nigeria's minorities who had long sought better representation in the central government, effectively isolated the Igbo heartland from the oil-rich Niger Delta and the trading and oil-refining center around Port Harcourt, placing the Igbos at an economic disadvantage within the federation. Ojukwu later argued that he would have renounced secession if Nigeria had reverted to the old four-state structure⁶⁵.

The war began less than a week later, on June 6, 1967, and was initially announced by Gowon as a 48-hour 'police action,' although it ultimately lasted about two and a half

years, ending in January 1970. Shortly after the campaign began, the Biafrans made advances, nearly reaching Lagos, a development that complicated foreign observers' predictions. However, the Biafrans were eventually pushed back, and by early summer 1968, Nigerian forces had surrounded Biafra, enabling them to militarily enforce the blockade. For Biafra, the months of military failure preceding the media attention to its suffering population and the influx of substantial relief in July and August 1968 were the darkest⁶⁶. Change occurred when, amidst the ongoing media attention, aid began arriving, including clandestine military assistance from foreign states and support from relief efforts. The war then slowed to a stalemate.

The famine became the basis for the conflict's successful internationalisation. The territory claimed by Biafra was densely populated and historically reliant on the import of protein-rich foods. The situation was worsened when, following the two waves of massacres of Easterners in the North in 1966 and heightened ethnic tensions, Easterners returned to the Southeast. As the Nigerian army captured Biafran territories, more people fled into what remained of Biafra. The blockade, intended as a siege tactic, failed to bring about Biafran surrender. Instead, it attracted aid organizations and media attention, fueling Biafran hopes for external intervention. The extent of the famine remains unknown, but estimates of total deaths during the war, including the famine, range from 1 to 3 million⁶⁷. A memorandum prepared for U.S. President Nixon in January 1969 estimated that between 1.5 to 3.5 million Biafrans were at risk of starvation within the next 4-6 months. The relief effort was unprecedented, with Biafra's suffering regarded as the gravest crisis since World War II.

Unwilling to compromise, both regimes eventually regarded peace-talk diplomacy as central to the internationalisation process. While Biafra's starving masses captured global public attention, the conflicting parties sought to use the conference table to convince foreign governments that the opposition was responsible for the continuing violence. Gowon admitted that his government was ready to talk as long as the war continued, seeing it as the only way to counter the threat of foreign intervention. Similarly, Onyegbula, the head of Biafra's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, argued that if Ojukwu appeared too eager to negotiate, it might suggest that Biafra was willing to surrender secession. On the other hand, once public opinion abroad became sympathetic to Biafra due to the famine, the secessionists could not appear too uncooperative⁶⁸.

Against this backdrop, all peace initiatives failed. At a summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in September 1967 in Kinshasa, Gowon refused to discuss the issue, considering it a strictly internal matter. However, the war was informally discussed, and the communiqué issued after the summit reaffirmed the OAU's respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its member states⁵³. The first peace conference, arranged by Commonwealth Secretary Arnold Smith under the OAU's auspices in Kampala, Uganda, in May 1968, was met with suspicion by African states, who saw it as undermining the OAU's authority. Neither Nigeria nor Biafra were ready to compromise: Nigeria demanded that Biafra renounce secession before peace talks could begin, and Biafra was unwilling to negotiate on the basis of a united Nigeria. Louis Mbanefo, head of the Biafran delegation, published an article in *The Spectator* titled 'Nigeria's phoney talks,' arguing that Nigeria was not genuinely interested in a negotiated peace. The subsequent negotiations in Addis Ababa were

difficult and protracted, and the breakdown of talks further diminished the prospects for a negotiated peace or an agreement on a mutually acceptable relief route.²⁴ When Anthony Enahoro left after the talks had ended, he remarked that he had not 'come to liquidate Nigeria. With political negotiations between the two sides seemingly hopeless, relief agencies, including the ICRC, became bolder in their attempts to deliver aid. A final unsuccessful attempt to bring both sides together occurred in April 1969, when the OAU arranged another peace talk in Monrovia, Liberia⁶⁹.

Eventually, the war ended with Biafra's collapse and Nigeria's military victory. Ojukwu fled Biafra on January 11, 1970, and two days later, Biafra's army commanders formally surrendered to Nigeria⁷⁰. However, Nigeria's victory was overshadowed by the challenges of post-war reconstruction, reintegration of the secessionist state, and concerns over continued foreign intervention in its affairs. Despite these challenges, oil companies continued to extract and refine Nigeria's oil. In fact, during the last two years of the war, Nigerian oil production steadily increased, leading to an oil boom in the early 1970s, and Nigeria joined OPEC in 1971. Following the war, the press reported ongoing food shortages and relief problems but struck an optimistic tone regarding the spirit of reconciliation. Nigeria experienced more military coups in the following decade, eventually returning to civilian rule in 1999. Today, Nigeria faces two major issues: the emergence of the radical Islamic group Boko Haram in the North and militant opposition in the Niger Delta, both of which, at least in part, stem from the same problem of lacking local political representation that contributed to the crises leading to the civil war⁷¹.

2.1.4 Nigerian Media and Socio-Political Issues

Nigerian media play a crucial role in addressing social issues, but face challenges in balancing professional responsibilities with economic interests. During the 2014 Ebola outbreak, newspapers prioritized treatment and containment frames, demonstrating social responsibility. However, traditional media's coverage of migration issues has been inadequate, often influenced by political and financial considerations. Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for community engagement in human rights advocacy, with factors such as gender, education, and perception significantly associated with its use. Despite its potential for creating opportunities, the media in Nigeria has been criticised for promoting more harm than good, necessitating platform developers to address features that encourage negativity⁷².

The media in Nigeria has undergone significant transformation, beginning from the colonial period where it faced severe repression and resistance from colonial administrators. Though colonialism impeded the development of the colonised populations, intentionally hindering economic and socio-cultural progress to facilitate exploitation, the socio-cultural progress, which includes the media's role in advancing the people's development, was deliberately stifled. The colonial regime also maintained outdated social structures and fueled divisions among various groups and nationalities. In colonial Nigeria, the local media were among those that encountered strong resistance from the colonial authorities, leading to ongoing conflicts. During this time, the media emerged as a leading force in the fight for political independence, with journalism and politics becoming closely intertwined. Many indigenous politicians also took on roles as journalists, fostering a collaborative effort in the

independence movement⁷³. As noted earlier, such as the *West African Pilot* and *Iwe Irohin* played a crucial role in educating Nigerians about the negative impacts of colonial rule and garnering support for the nationalist cause. The media actively contributed to national development under colonial rule by enlightening the masses and opposing the exploitative colonial masters, which ultimately led to Nigeria's independence on October 1, 1960.

From independence in 1960 through various periods of civil rule and military dictatorship, the Nigerian media experienced both challenging and memorable times. The media have been instrumental in Nigeria's national development by educating the public about misrule and opposing totalitarianism. Throughout their years of dominance, military rulers waged an unofficial war on the media, employing draconian decrees and harsh measures to suppress it. The media were seen as a significant threat because they exposed the military juntas' exploitative tactics, leading to the deaths of many journalists, such as Dele Giwa, and pro-democracy activists, like Pa Rewane and Kudirat Abiola, who collaborated with the media⁷⁴. As a result, the media were severely oppressed, often becoming targets of violence by political office holders under the military regimes. Nigeria, as a nation-state with a political leadership resistant to change, has continued this violent political behavior into the democratic era that began in 1999, despite international pressures and media efforts to hold the government accountable. Since 1999, the media consistently exposed corruption and attempts by political leaders to extend their stay in office, leading to renewed efforts to suppress the media. However, the media remained resolute, and their persistence has forced political leaders, such as those under the Obasanjo administration, to yield to public pressure⁷⁵. The arrival of the Yar'Adua and

Goodluck Jonathan administrations signaled that the media were still vigilant. Through their unwavering commitment, the media rekindled hope among the Nigerian people for a better future and sustainable democracy based on good governance.

National development is a historical and dialectical process involving the aspirations of various institutions and people within the country, each with distinct interests and goals. These goals often encounter opposing forces that rise above the national interest, leading to crises and conflicts that threaten Nigeria's unity. To build a strong national consciousness, Nigerians must strive to become a cohesive community, developing a national identity and fostering coordination among ethnic and sectional groups. This process of consciousness-building and exposing societal ills highlights the media's essential role in promoting integrity without favoring any group. The media have evolved from mere professional organizations to entities that contribute to political, economic, and socio-cultural development, continuously breaking new ground in the context of globalization⁷⁵. Today, the media in Nigeria are mature and continue to monitor society by exposing issues such as sectional interests that hinder justice for corrupt leaders. The media have taken their place as the watchdog of society, covering the nascent democracy, advocating for accountability, and addressing social vices while also highlighting the needs of marginalized groups like the Niger Delta minorities and addressing human rights abuses from past military regimes. Despite the rough journey, the media have played a leading role in bringing attention to critical national issues. With caution and sustained effort, the media can successfully fulfill their role in Nigeria's quest for national development. The media's effectiveness lies in promoting development, defined as the process of improving

living standards and transforming society's economic and infrastructural foundations. Development involves people and society moving toward excellence, good governance, and social order⁷⁶. It is an interaction between people and their environment, transforming both for the creation of an egalitarian society. The media's goals align with these ideals, emphasizing the importance of education, information dissemination, and ensuring society does not decay. The media must continue to uphold these responsibilities to support the people's quest for development through the profound transformation of society, involving changes in property relationships and access to public goods for various social classes.

The mass media, whether publicly or privately owned, plays a vital role in shaping economic discourse. It either supports or opposes those in power, highlights or ignores industry issues, and provides a platform for public voices⁷⁷. For the media's survival, it must balance the interests of the state, which regulates it, businesses that advertise, and consumers who depend on its content⁶⁵. When the media is independent, provides high-quality information, and reaches a wide audience, it promotes better economic performance by reducing information asymmetry between the government and the governed, as well as between private agents⁶⁴. A well-functioning media can hold both businesses and the government accountable, encouraging socially responsible behavior and allowing consumers to make informed decisions⁷⁸.

Globally, the media significantly influences economic, political, and social outcomes. In democratic societies, where information flows more freely, the media develops more rapidly. However, the media also plays a role in strengthening democracies over time⁶⁶. To foster free and independent media, policymakers must take specific steps to

ensure that media outlets can operate without undue restrictions. Even in non-democratic nations, the fight for a free press offers hope for progress⁶⁶. At a certain point, media freedom reaches a threshold where attempts to suppress it are no longer feasible⁶⁷.

In addition, Nigeria's national security involves safeguarding its resources, territory, sovereignty, and lawful institutions. The goal is to ensure just and equitable living conditions within the country⁶⁴. The mass media plays a significant role in this domain. However, since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria's national security has faced numerous threats. Upon independence, the media shifted its focus, promoting tribal and sectional loyalties over national unity and identity. Consequently, media content became narrow, catering to specific ethnic interests⁶⁴. This parochialism contributed to heightened tensions and suspicion, which nearly caused the disintegration of the nation.

Security is a matter of public interest, and media professionals must prioritize the well-being of the people. The primary focus of any media outlet should be to address issues that benefit the general public, ensuring fairness, justice, national unity, and international cooperation⁶⁵. The press is expected to perform roles such as monitoring societal changes, responding to the environment, and transmitting cultural values.

As a watchdog, the media brings attention to pressing national issues, emphasizing its critical role in national security. While the power of the media to shape public perception is evident, controversies arise over how those in control of the media wield this power whether in the public's interest or for personal gain. Journalists are

entrusted with the responsibility of objectively informing and educating the populace⁶⁶. However, over time, the Nigerian press has often been reduced to tools in the hands of the political elite, who use it to legitimize their authority⁶⁷. Various challenges facing journalists such as poor remuneration, job insecurity, and limited resources make them susceptible to external influences.⁷

It is in the best interest of media practitioners to contribute to national security. Despite the commendable efforts of the Nigerian press overall, the activities of some journalists, particularly in social media, have occasionally undermined national security through irresponsible reporting⁶⁶. Journalists must understand the complexities of conflicts to provide accurate and balanced coverage. The media's role is crucial in either escalating conflicts or easing tensions.

Similarly, education, as a fundamental societal institution, shapes individuals and equips them with the necessary skills to navigate various situations⁶⁸. It has played a critical role in the technological advancements that have transformed the world. The media has been instrumental in raising awareness among underprivileged and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups about the importance of education⁶⁸. In today's fast-paced world, where change is constant, the media plays a vital role in advancing education⁶⁹. Its ability to reach the eyes, ears, and minds of audiences makes its impact unmatched. Education is no longer confined to the classroom, as media innovations have enabled learning to occur across vast distances, often in real-time⁶⁸.

The use of mass media in Nigerian education has significantly expanded the public's knowledge, especially through tools like television, radio, and other electronic devices designed to disseminate objective information. social media has also emerged as a significant educational tool, serving as a primary source of information for many students⁶⁵. Organizations utilize social media to maintain communication with stakeholders, and its influence is evident in its capacity to correct social ills. The media has played several key roles in educational development, including extending its reach, influencing the masses, and preserving valuable information. Through these efforts, mass media has helped bridge the gap in achieving universal educational coverage⁷⁰.

2.1.5 Literature as a Social Commentator across the World and in Nigeria.

Henry Ward Beecher described books as the windows through which the soul looks out⁷². But why is ink on paper so tremendously impactful on society? Why do thin pages bound together hold so much power? Why is literature so necessary for change? Literature holds a profound significance in the realm of change, serving as both a reflection and a catalyst for transformation. Literature is essentially a mirror, reflecting the norms, values, and complexities of societies at different points in history⁷¹. Through its pages, literature captures the essence of human experiences, both good and bad. It holds the capability of empowering voices dissenting against injustices and articulating the dreams of a better world. But it does not stop at just mere reflection on our society; literature also possesses the power to ignite change. It challenges the status quo; the predetermined norms that are not always right, fair, or unbiased. It inspires movements and fosters empathy by inviting readers to step into the shoes of characters from diverse circumstances and backgrounds⁷³. Whether by

shedding light on social issues, advocating for equality and justice, or simply by providing a sanctuary for contemplation and introspection, literature is an essential force that drives the evolution of societies and individuals, making it an indispensable tool in the pursuit of positive change⁷⁴.

That being said, there are a multitude of things literature has the ability to change. For instance, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair laid bare deplorable conditions that stand as a testament to the remarkable capacity of literature to spur political change⁷⁵. Similarly, *The Doll's House*, a play by Henrik Ibsen, played a pivotal role in advocating for social change by presenting and criticizing gender roles and women's rights⁷⁶. In addition, *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath was a poignant exploration of personal change regarding mental health and unique identities⁷⁷. All in all, throughout history, literature has proven itself to be an unparalleled catalyst for change, sparking revolutions of thought, dismantling societal norms, and igniting the flames of progress that still burn brightly today.

There are several novels that demonstrate the relevance of literature as a unique tool in impacting the world through its influence on politics and the changes resulting from those impacts. *The Jungle* is such a novel written by Upton Sinclair that aimed to expose the conditions the working class was subjected to in the United States, specifically in Chicago's meatpacking industry⁷⁹. The novel follows Lithuanian immigrant Jurgis Rudkus, who came to the United States in the hope of living the American dream, only to find himself in dire circumstances. *The Jungle* had a major impact on society, causing widespread social, legal, and political change⁸⁰.

Sinclair's deeper aim when he wrote *The Jungle* stemmed from his Socialist beliefs. Professor Robert Cherny writes that Upton Sinclair hoped readers would recognize that the horrors portrayed in the novel reflected corporate greed and the exploitative practices of capitalism, ultimately prompting a societal shift toward socialism⁸¹. Although the novel quickly became a success selling twenty-five thousand copies in six weeks no extreme socialist action took place as Sinclair had hoped.

However, Sinclair achieved one of his goals with *The Jungle* within a year: worker conditions drastically improved as a result of the passing of The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, which mandated that meatpacking plants process products in a sanitary manner. Additionally, the Meat Inspection Act of 1906 required the U.S. Department of Agriculture to inspect all livestock before slaughter⁸². *The Jungle* played a significant role in the passage of both acts. Kirsten Rouse writes that when President Theodore Roosevelt received an advance copy of *The Jungle*, he immediately sent labor commissioner Charles P. Neill and social worker James Bronson Reynolds to investigate Chicago's meatpacking industry due to the alarming conditions described in the novel⁸³. Upon completing their investigation, Neill and Reynolds found the conditions were largely consistent with those depicted in the novel. Roosevelt used the threat of disclosing the investigation's contents to hasten the passage of both acts, which became law on the same day⁸⁴. This instant political impact and the subsequent societal changes brought about by *The Jungle* underscore literature's unique ability to affect politics and society as a whole.

An argument could be made that *The Jungle* does not prove literature impacts politics, as an argument can be made for the ulterior motives of Sinclair in *The Jungle*. Critics

such as Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin have called the novel something akin to propaganda. Courbin, in an assessment of *The Jungle* which is included in renowned critic Donald Pizer's collection of essays, *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism*, states that "Sinclair tends to assault the reader with the message he wants to carry, subordinating plot, character development, and verisimilitude to propaganda"⁸³.

The concerns of propaganda in the novel, writing of how this concern of propaganda is minimal and not the entirety of the novel^{84,85}. "Sinclair in these final chapters has [...] shifted the focus of the novel from Jurgis to the Socialist movement itself. Up to the accidental stumbling into the Socialist lecture, Jurgis' story is almost entirely his own"⁸⁶. Furthermore, Bloodworth, Courbin, and other critics of *The Jungle* and its literary value could not deny the impact that it had on America. *The Jungle* is a powerful piece of literature which has always been easily accessible by the community, which undoubtedly changed America.

The Jungle and the impacts it has had on America show how literature is a powerful tool in changing the world through politics. Without the novel, the working conditions of America would undoubtedly be worse off. Although the motives of Upton Sinclair may be questioned, it is undeniable that his work had a major and beneficial impact on the meatpacking industry, proving the ability of literature to tangibly impact politics and thus our world as a whole.

Literature can directly tackle social issues or status quo, both in the time when published, or in the future where it may still hold relevance. Literature can be used to

make a direct observation of an expectation or criticism, or can simply point to issues that need to be tackled and thereby cause the audience to feel empathy for those involved. Discussing, criticizing or simply mentioning social norms directly brings such topics to the public who may not even be aware it is an issue. Then, the said public can discuss how these tackled topics have affected them, and possibly how to change such norms to be more inclusive for the betterment of society. Many pieces have had such effects by explaining and exploring social norms.

One such work is *A Doll's House*, a play written in 1879, a time when women and men had very set roles and social circles to follow. The play, written by Henrik Ibsen who is considered “one of the world’s greatest dramatists” and someone who calls himself a humanist, was a direct criticism created to tackle these social circles⁸⁸. The play made an immediate impact and became a scandal at the time when first performed. This is due to the fact that it directly tackled the expected roles men and women held, giving women a character to look up to, to fight for their freedom and individuality. It has also been praised by critics and academics as a work of dramatic art, however, there are opposing stances as to the play’s message⁸⁹.

The play itself spoke about the story of Nora, a wife with two children and a “perfect” life. However, the issues she faced, such as the need to fake a signature of a man because she needed to get a loan to save her own husband’s life, was criticised for legal reasons within the story as this was a breach of law. But the bigger issue was because of her status as a woman and wife that she should not have to work or borrow money for her husband. These were the same issues women faced within society. Her husband was ashamed to have been saved by a woman, when it should have been the

other way around. Women were expected to not be independent at the time unless absolutely necessary, such as for a widow, and anything else was different and odd. The play ends with Nora leaving her husband and children behind. There are two major interpretations of the play: one was to break the direct norms the majority had followed at the time of the woman needing to be a mother as “it is worthwhile to leave her family to achieve her independence and individuality”⁹⁰.

The other is leaving for the best interest of the children where she will return once both her and Torvald have grown rather than leaving forever. The play’s presentation set off events that continued in discussion to the present day. Ibsen himself had found issue with the way women were treated, saying “a woman cannot be herself in modern society. It’s an exclusively male society”⁹¹. Gail Finney stated that “in closing the door on her husband and children, Nora opened the way to the turn-of-the-century women’s movement”, and the play itself attracted majorly female audiences in likely hopes of being able to gain the confidence to stand up to these norms too to get their deserved individuality⁹².

A Doll’s House is not the only piece of literature that tackles the issues of such roles but is one that is well known, as schools and other places of education use it for discussion and exploration. The very same critiques of expectations can be portrayed and explored in other pieces of literature, such as Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, and continue bringing up ways to deal with the harmful norms of the time.

Even today, the play is discussed by scholars and schools to further interpret and explore the story, in order to unpack the old messages and current issues. Nora is a

character that brings hope to fight for freedom and a person's own individual status. The play contains topics that can be discussed by modern audiences, such as the topic of modern-day feminism, modern-day expectations, what issues are still seen and what people are expected to follow. Concepts and topics that can be explored through adaptations which are made to further connect with the current audience and issues rather than focusing on past audiences from a time that has gone by already. Short films, long films, remade plays with modern visuals; it is done constantly to once again bring literature to the front to tackle issues. An example is *Nora*, a short film from The Guardian that is a direct response to the original play to explore how even in the present, women have not managed to reach the same status as men and still are expected to follow certain expectations because following a "man's job" is considered to be abandoning her children⁹³.

Even though since the play has been written, society as a whole has changed and women have more independence, there are still places that hold onto old traditions and issues that remain even after so long. One lasting issue being how some banks still tie a woman's name to a husband or father automatically unless asked not to⁹⁴. This can be considered a counterclaim to say literature does not impact social expectations and norms as even so far into the future since its original publishing, the world still has similar issues to the past. However, despite that fact the play is still being performed or shown in many forms, and after so much time has passed, shows that the play has the power to inspire women to continue tackling the issues that are still around and create important discussions in society that otherwise might not have happened.

Literature, in its many forms, can also challenge personal opinions and views, along with improving empathy of the audience. Within literature, a person is shown multiple viewpoints that they would otherwise not see in their daily lives. Especially when one is directly placed in another's shoes, it is hard not to learn and experience something of someone else's life. Some concepts that can be explored through literature are what expectations a person puts on themselves, and whether or not others will control that.

One such piece of literature is the novel *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath. It tackles many feminist and exploitation issues at a time closer to modern day, specifically to also secure women against male domination⁹². However, it is more so from a direct personal link rather than a third person view such as a play like *A Doll's House*. *The Bell Jar* is still widely discussed today in schools due to the lasting relevance of the novel's messages on feminism and mental health. As opposed to the play where everything is seen from an almost outside perspective, in *The Bell Jar*, the audience directly sees what the main character does and feels. Her exact thoughts and how she perceives the world that expects her to drop her own life for a man and children.

Within the book, Esther faces issues of self-identity and what is expected of her. While she herself wanted a specific goal for herself – to become a writer – the doubt cast by society directly impacted how Esther thought of herself. External expectations impacted Esther, such as getting married early and acting for others as a mother rather than acting for herself, as well as keeping a lower status than a man. There are moments within the book where she feels like an outsider, and is not ready to tackle some of the problems she's facing, as others are constantly bringing up the issues. The way that society has constantly forced one narrative onto Esther, both explicitly and

sometimes accidentally without realizing how harmful it was, that left her in the end at a doctor to deal with her depression. Even at the doctor, she did not want to face her depression fully until the end of the novel. The novel itself brings attention to female exploitation, all under a banner of the institution of marriage, under which women are constantly criticized for their individuality, whether they truly want their individuality and what they should be wanting instead⁹³.

When the audience is directly shown how the protagonist feels, their issues and thoughts of the events she had to live through and with the added information of the author's life it can bring said audience to a place where they would need to face the information given. *The Bell Jar* directly shows how societal norms can have extremely negative effects on an individual. This can lead to the audience thinking about their own lives and situations, and hopefully feeling empathy for the fictional character, the author, and others who may have similar experiences. Some people never have to experience the horrible situations some may be used to, and having the opportunity to see those situations can bring the possibility of realizing how lucky some individuals are. These discussions let another know what others lived through without actually feeling the issues directly, but place it within a new light for others to hopefully understand.

However, within the same vein, as *The Bell Jar* can be seen to be speaking of issues seen today, the fact that those issues still prevail is a counterclaim to say that literature does not challenge and change personal views and opinions, at least not so quickly or so effectively. Exploitation of women still occurs on the daily, where virginity and the willingness to forget and ignore their individuality and issues is still expected, and

forced in some places and situations to act as a “model wife.” Nevertheless, showing these experiences to foster empathy and bringing these issues to light can create powerful change because society as a whole will then be more knowledgeable of how to truly help others to improve the lives of others.

The strength of communal themes lies in their ability to build empathy. Janina Levin describes empathy as a concept that intersects psychology, moral philosophy, and aesthetics⁹⁵. This emotional magnetism plays a crucial role in literature, as the empathy-altruism hypothesis suggests that individuals with high levels of empathy are more likely to engage in altruistic actions⁹⁶. Levin further argues that literature cultivates empathy, which can lead to more empathetic world citizens⁹⁷. By engaging with communal themes, readers can develop empathy for characters facing cultural and social challenges, leading to a better understanding of their experiences and differences.

In *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, readers empathize with the characters’ cultural struggles and challenges related to their bicultural identity and assimilation. This empathy-driven change can lead readers to view individuals from different backgrounds with greater understanding and compassion. For instance, a reader who is not multicultural might gain insights into the experiences of multicultural individuals and recognize the implications of these differences.

Empathy’s potential for driving change extends beyond literature. The Harvard Business Review highlights empathy as a key factor in organizational change, emphasizing its ability to unite people and foster collective action⁹⁸. Literature, as a hub of empathy, harnesses this power to foster a shared humanity and inspire

collective change. However, some argue that literature's reach might be limited if readers do not identify with the communities portrayed. W.H. Auden, in his essay "Writing," suggested that literature's influence is more subtle and personal, shaping individual understanding rather than drastically altering societal trajectories⁹⁹.

While Auden's perspective on literature's impact is valid, literature's capacity to represent diverse perspectives and experiences broadens empathy and understanding among communities. Although not everyone will empathize, literature still facilitates significant change by reducing exclusivity and promoting inclusivity. The presence of diverse narratives and characters in literature can challenge exclusive thinking and encourage a more inclusive society.

In a world where societal change can seem challenging, literature emerges as a powerful tool for transformation through communal themes that evoke empathy. As Auden noted, literature's impact may be subtle and personal, but its broader ripple effects demonstrate its ability to transcend cultural barriers and foster collective change. Literature acts as a bridge connecting hearts and minds, ultimately igniting collective change and contributing to a more empathetic and inclusive world¹⁰⁰.

Nigerian literature occupies a unique space in the global literary landscape, functioning not only as a medium of artistic expression but also as a profound vehicle for social commentary. This role has been pivotal from the early days of Nigerian literary endeavors to the contemporary period.

The first generation of Nigerian writers, active primarily in the mid-20th century, laid the foundation for literature as a tool of social critique. This generation includes seminal figures such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Cyprian Ekwensi. Their works address themes ranging from colonialism and cultural disruption to gender roles and societal expectations. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is widely recognized for its critique of colonialism and its impact on traditional Igbo society. Achebe's novel provides an incisive look at the effects of British colonial rule on indigenous cultures, particularly through the lens of the disintegration of the Igbo community. Achebe's narrative focuses on Okonkwo, a respected warrior whose life and community are upended by the arrival of European missionaries and colonial administrators.

Achebe's work reflects the complexities of cultural confrontation and adaptation. By illustrating the disruption of traditional values and the imposition of foreign ideologies, *Things Fall Apart* serves as a commentary on the broader consequences of colonialism for African societies. Achebe's portrayal of the clash between traditional and colonial values underscores the profound impact of external forces on local cultures, revealing the inherent tensions and struggles that arise from such encounters.

Wole Soyinka is another towering figure in Nigerian literature, who has used his plays and essays to critique political corruption, authoritarianism, and social injustices. His play *A Dance of the Forests*, commissioned for Nigeria's independence celebrations, offers a critical perspective on both pre-colonial and colonial societies. The play serves as a reflection on moral and ethical issues, advocating for integrity and social reform. Soyinka's works often address the challenges of governance and the abuse of

power. For example, his play *The Man Died* engages with the political repression experienced during the Nigerian Civil War. Through powerful symbolism and dramatic narrative, Soyinka critiques the violence and oppression perpetrated by authoritarian regimes. His emphasis on moral responsibility and resistance highlights the role of literature in challenging unjust political systems and advocating for societal change.

Cyprian Ekwensi's novels, such as *Jagua Nana*, provide a critical commentary on the evolving urban landscape of Nigeria and the changing roles of women. Ekwensi's narrative explores the life of Jagua Nana, a woman navigating the complexities of modern urban life while confronting traditional gender expectations. *Jagua Nana* addresses themes of female agency, sexual autonomy, and the tensions between modernity and tradition. Ekwensi's portrayal of Jagua Nana's struggles with societal norms reflects broader issues of gender inequality and the challenges faced by women in a rapidly changing society. By focusing on the experiences of women in urban settings, Ekwensi's work offers a critique of the socio-economic transformations occurring in post-colonial Nigeria.

The second generation of Nigerian writers continued to build upon the critical foundations established by their predecessors, addressing the socio-political challenges of the post-independence era. This generation includes notable figures such as Buchi Emecheta, Gabriel Okara, and Elechi Amadi, whose works engage with issues of gender, identity, and socio-economic disparity. Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* offers a critical examination of the role of women in Nigerian society, particularly focusing on the expectations surrounding motherhood and female identity.

Emecheta's narrative centers on Nnu Ego, a woman who endures numerous hardships in her quest to fulfill traditional roles as a mother and wife. Emecheta's work critiques the societal pressures and constraints imposed on women, revealing the often-harsh realities faced by female protagonists. Through Nnu Ego's experiences, Emecheta highlights issues of gender inequality, economic dependency, and the marginalization of women. The novel serves as a powerful commentary on the systemic challenges faced by women and the need for societal reform to address these issues.

Gabriel Okara's *The Voice* addresses the themes of cultural identity and the impact of modernization on traditional African values. Okara's work reflects on the dislocation experienced by individuals caught between traditional customs and the pressures of modernity. *The Voice* explores the tensions between the old and the new, highlighting the struggles of individuals attempting to reconcile their cultural heritage with the demands of contemporary life. Okara's use of poetry and prose to address issues of identity, generational conflict, and cultural alienation provides a critical perspective on the socio-cultural transformations occurring in Nigeria.

Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* is yet another relevant work that engages with themes of superstition, fate, and the supernatural, reflecting the socio-cultural anxieties of Nigerian society. Amadi's narrative delves into the world of traditional beliefs and their impact on individual lives, providing a critique of the intersections between cultural practices and modernity. *The Concubine* portrays the struggles of its protagonist, who is caught between the forces of tradition and modernity. Amadi's exploration of supernatural elements and cultural practices offers a commentary on the persistence of traditional beliefs in a rapidly changing society. The novel reflects

on the challenges faced by individuals navigating the complexities of modern life while adhering to longstanding cultural norms.

The contemporary generation of Nigerian writers continues to engage with social commentary, reflecting on the impact of globalization, democracy, and socio-political challenges. This generation includes prominent authors such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Teju Cole, and Sefi Atta, among others, whose works offer critical perspectives on current societal issues.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* provides a comprehensive examination of the Nigerian Civil War and its impact on Nigerian society. Adichie's novel offers a nuanced portrayal of the war's devastation, exploring themes of ethnicity, political corruption, and the human cost of conflict. Adichie's narrative highlights the complex interplay between personal and political experiences, reflecting on the deep-seated divisions and struggles faced by Nigerians during the war. The novel serves as a critical commentary on the historical and ongoing issues affecting Nigeria, offering insights into the socio-political dynamics of the post-colonial era.

Teju Cole's *Open City* explores themes of diaspora, identity, and the impact of globalization through the lens of a Nigerian-American protagonist navigating New York City. Cole's novel engages with the complexities of cultural displacement and the interplay between personal and political spaces. *Open City* reflects on the experiences of individuals straddling multiple cultural contexts, highlighting the challenges of identity formation and assimilation. Cole's narrative offers a critical

perspective on the globalized context of contemporary Nigerian experiences, examining how globalization influences personal and collective identities⁸.

Sefi Atta's *Swallow* addresses issues of economic hardship, corruption, and the plight of women in contemporary Nigerian society. Atta's narrative focuses on the experiences of ordinary Nigerians struggling to navigate a challenging socio-economic landscape. Through the experiences of her characters, Atta provides a critique of the effects of corruption and inequality on individuals and communities. *Swallow* highlights the intersections between economic hardship and gender dynamics, offering a critical commentary on the systemic issues affecting contemporary Nigerian society.

The role of literature as a social commentator in Nigerian society has evolved significantly from the early works of the first-generation writers to the contemporary voices of today. Nigerian literature has consistently engaged with social issues, offering critical reflections on the country's socio-political landscape. From Achebe's critique of colonialism and Soyinka's exploration of political corruption to Adichie's examination of war and Atta's commentary on economic hardship, Nigerian writers have used their craft to address and challenge societal norms and injustices. Through their exploration of cultural, political, and social issues, Nigerian literary artists have contributed to a deeper understanding of their society, fostering dialogue and advocating for change. The enduring power of Nigerian literature as a tool for social commentary highlights its significance in reflecting and shaping the socio-political discourse of the nation.

2.1.6 Authorial Background (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, whose name translates loosely as “my spirit is unbreakable” as the writer herself would put it, was born on 15 September 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria into a “typical middle-class African family” with a university professor of statistics and deputy vice-chancellor for a father and a university registrar for a mother. She spent her childhood in the university town of Nsukka, in a house previously inhabited by Chinua Achebe, whose work she began to read from an early age.

Adichie started her university training to become a doctor in 1995 in Nigeria. She was thinking of herself as a writer from the age of six and even published a book of poetry at 16, which she defines now as “really bad, awful poetry,” but she decided to begin studying medicine because “in Nigeria, as in most developing countries”, she explained, “if you're smart in school you're supposed to be a doctor or a lawyer or an engineer. It was just assumed I would be a doctor. We value engineers or doctors or lawyers”.¹ But she left the following year to enroll at Drexel University, Philadelphia and transferred two years later to Eastern Connecticut State University, where her sister was living, to study Communications and political science where she graduated in 2001. After graduation, the writer received a scholarship to pursue her master's degree in creative writing at Johns Hopkins University. In 2005 she was a Hodder Fellow at Princeton University, and in 2006 Adichie enrolled again in African studies at Yale University, experience that she found disappointing. She has since taught creative writing in the US and in Nigeria. ² Her first novel, which Adichie dismisses as “horrible” and “very bad” and that was never published, was the Nigerian version of the immigrant story to the US and, in the process, she realized that what she really wanted to write about were true stories about Nigeria.

Her first published novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, on which Adichie began to work while she was still a college senior, was shortlisted for the Orange Prize in 2004, the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize and long-listed for the Man Booker Prize and won the 2005 Commonwealth Writers Award for best first book and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for the debut fiction.³ The book was also chosen as Book of the Year by the San Francisco Chronicle.⁴ After the publication of *Purple Hibiscus*, one critic called the author “Chinua Achebe's twenty-first-century daughter” and the shortlisting ranked Adichie, then, along with authors Margaret Atwood, Shirley Hazzard, Andrea Levy and Rose Tremain. *Purple Hibiscus* explores the tension between Igbo and Western culture and draws on certain aspects of her background: her home town and her Catholicism. A coming-of-age story narrated by a 15-year-old girl, it is a portrayal of an abusive childhood in a fanatically religious household, ruled by a charismatic and strict Catholic father who beats his wife and children in private for minor transgressions.⁵ In the background looms an atmosphere of oppression and uncertainty, characteristic of the Abacha dictatorship of the 1990s.

In her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, a drama about the Biafran war in the 1960s, Adichie draws from a page of modern African history and writes about the traumatizing effects of the civil war on the life of several individuals.⁷ Having their privileged lives swept up by the war, Olanna, her lover Odenigbo and Ugwu, are obliged to flee to the villages of Eastern Nigeria, where they must endure the chilling violence of war and have their values and morality challenged under dire circumstances. The novel has attracted beautiful words not only from Achebe who said “she came almost fully made” and called her “a new writer endowed with the gift

of old storytellers”, but also from Joyce Carol Oates, who called it as "a worthy successor" to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and VS Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*. The book won the Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction 2007 and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.⁸ *Half of a Yellow Sun* was also made into a film by first time film director Biyi Bandele, who also adapted the book to screenplay. It's a British-Nigerian co-production between the British Film Institute and a Nigerian private equity firm who worked together in order to bring the novel to the screen and assembled a pretty impressive cast in doing so: Thandie Newton as Olanna, Chiwetel Ejiofor as Odenigbo, Anika Noni Rose as Kainene, Joseph Mawle as Richard and John Boyega as Ugwu are all involved. The film was shot on locations in the U.K. and Nigeria and made its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival in September 2013.

Adichie continued to write during this period, and several of her short stories were published in literary journals and won competition prizes. That same year, 2007, her short story "*Half of a Yellow Sun*" won the PEN/David Wong short story award. Her collection of short stories, *The Thing Around Your Neck*, many of them honest and witty portraits of her home country or of Nigerian women and their uneasy life as immigrants in the United States, was also recognized for its excellence: it was shortlisted for the 2009 John Llewellyn-Rhys Memorial Prize and the 2010 Commonwealth Writers Prize for the best book from the African region. The settings are often more mundane than what we were used to within her novels, but the personal and the political issues are just as present.

The author was also a finalist for the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2002 for the 2001 Story, “*You in America*” from *Zoetrope: All-Story Extra* and was the O. Henry Prize-winner in 2003 for the short story “*The American Embassy*,” which had appeared in *Prism International*. Although best known for writing prose, she has also written and published poetry and a growing number of essays and lectures.¹³ Adichie has also written an early play, *For Love of Biafra* where she registers the broken hopes of a Nigerian family during the Nigerian civil war. Her latest book, *Americanah*, is a novel dealing with love and race issues and is centred on the story of two young people who left Nigeria and its military dictatorship to go abroad for studies and the difficulties they encountered along the way. ‘*Americanah*’ is the Nigerian word used for those who leave in search for a better life in America, as the writer explains in one of her interviews.

Authorial Background (Festus Iyayi)

Festus Iyayi remains one of Nigeria’s most influential writers and social critics, renowned for his unwavering commitment to addressing societal ills through literature. Born on September 29, 1947, in Ugbegun, a small village in the Esan region of Edo State, Nigeria, Iyayi’s early experiences shaped his literary focus on themes of inequality, exploitation, and social justice¹⁵. He grew up witnessing firsthand the struggles of the rural poor, an experience that profoundly influenced his writing and academic pursuits.

Iyayi pursued his education with diligence and passion. After completing his primary and secondary education in Edo State, he attended the University of Ibadan, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. His quest for knowledge took him abroad to the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom, where he earned his

master's and doctoral degrees in Industrial Management. Despite his formal training in business and management, Iyayi's passion for literature and social activism guided his professional and creative life¹⁶.

Upon his return to Nigeria, Iyayi joined the academic staff of the University of Benin, where he lectured in the Department of Business Administration. However, his involvement in union activities and his advocacy for workers' rights set him on a collision course with the authorities. As the President of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in 1986, Iyayi's leadership was marked by his relentless fight for academic freedom, better working conditions, and improved funding for higher education in Nigeria. His activism led to his suspension from the University of Benin, a punishment that highlighted the oppressive tendencies of the Nigerian government towards dissenting voices¹⁷.

Iyayi's literary works are deeply intertwined with his Marxist ideology and his commitment to social justice. His novels serve as a critique of the Nigerian socio-political landscape, exposing the corruption, exploitation, and class struggle that plague the nation. Through his creative lens, Iyayi dissects the dynamics of power and the consequences of capitalism on the poor and marginalized.

Iyayi's novels, particularly *Violence* and *Heroes*, are seminal works that reflect his dedication to social realism. He deploys his artistic and creative idiosyncrasies to unravel social tensions such as poverty, exploitation and conflicts in his native Nigeria. In addition, he identifies deteriorating aspects of Nigerian society and prescribes a panacea for class reordering. However, while interpreting his two novels,

some scholars overlook the upper-class echelon, exonerating them from the misery of poverty and exploitation which they inflict on the poor masses. Through the social realistic medium anchored on the Marxist theoretical framework, Iyayi's works extend the frontiers of interpretation by demonstrating that poverty and exploitation are caused, sustained, and maintained by the wealthy, privileged, government, and capitalist class who exploit the poor masses¹⁸.

In *Violence*, Iyayi portrays the excruciating poverty experienced by the working class as a direct consequence of government's failure and corruption among the upper class. The novel tells the story of Idemudia and his wife, Adisa, who struggle to survive amidst the exploitation and injustices perpetrated by the wealthy elite. Through the lives of these characters, Iyayi highlights the dehumanizing effects of poverty and the systemic corruption that perpetuates it. The novel's unflinching depiction of urban poverty serves as a powerful indictment of Nigeria's socio-economic structures. Similarly, *Heroes* focuses on the Nigerian Civil War and the exploitation and carnage wrought by the ruling military class. The novel follows Osime Iyere, a journalist who witnesses the horrors of the war and the manipulation of poor, ignorant soldiers by the elite for their own selfish ambitions. The exploitation and carnage in *Heroes* are avoidable, soul-wrenching disasters caused by the ruling military class who use poor, ignorant soldiers to advance their inordinate ambitions. Iyayi's portrayal of the war underscores the devastating impact of the conflict on ordinary Nigerians and the complicity of the powerful in sustaining the violence.

For Iyayi, literature is not merely a form of entertainment but a tool for social change. His commitment to using literature as a medium for exposing societal ills and

advocating for justice aligns with the Marxist belief in the transformative power of art. By highlighting the systemic nature of poverty and exploitation, Iyayi challenges readers to question the status quo and seek meaningful change.

Iyayi's novels have been widely studied and praised for their unflinching portrayal of Nigerian society^{17, 18}. However, his works have also faced criticism. Some scholars argue that his portrayal of the upper class is overly simplistic or one-dimensional¹⁸. Nevertheless, his depiction of the wealthy and powerful as the architects of poverty and exploitation remains a powerful critique of Nigeria's socio-political realities.

Despite these criticisms, Iyayi's works have had a lasting impact on Nigerian literature and social activism. His fearless critique of corruption and inequality has inspired subsequent generations of writers and activists. His novels continue to be relevant in contemporary Nigeria, where issues of poverty, exploitation, and corruption persist.

Festus Iyayi's life and career were tragically cut short on November 12, 2013, in a car accident caused by the reckless convoy of Kogi State Governor, Idris Wada. At the time of his death, Iyayi was on his way to a meeting of ASUU in Kano to negotiate an end to a prolonged strike by university lecturers¹⁶. His untimely death was widely mourned, and it highlighted the very issues of government negligence and impunity that he had spent his life fighting against.

Iyayi's legacy endures through his literary works and his contributions to the struggle for social justice in Nigeria. His novels remain essential reading for anyone seeking to

understand the socio-economic challenges facing Nigeria and the role of literature in addressing these issues. His commitment to social realism and his belief in the power of literature to effect change continue to inspire both readers and writers. In conclusion, Festus Iyayi's life and works exemplify the role of the writer as a social critic and agent of change.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda Setting Theory, first introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, emerged from their study of the 1968 U.S. presidential election, commonly known as the *Chapel Hill Study*. Their theory, termed the Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media, proposes that media does not dictate what the public should think but influences what the public thinks about¹⁰¹.

Media organizations shape political reality by selecting and emphasizing particular stories¹⁰². As a result, the public not only gains knowledge about the issues but also perceives their relative importance based on how frequently and prominently they appear¹⁰². This concept underlines the media's role in shaping the agenda of public discourse, especially during election periods¹⁰². The theory has since been expanded by McCombs and Shaw to encompass a second level, referred to as Second Level Agenda Setting¹⁰².

Agenda Setting Theory traces its roots to Walter Lippmann's 1922 work *Public Opinion*, which addresses the link between real-world events and public perceptions¹⁰³. In 1963, Bernard Cohen further developed this idea, emphasizing the

media's power to tell people what to think about, even if not what to think¹⁰⁴. These early insights laid the groundwork for McCombs and Shaw's formalization of the theory during their 1968 election study, which revealed a significant correlation between the issues the media focused on and those considered important by undecided voters¹⁰⁵. Despite similar findings by G. Ray Funkhouser at the time, only McCombs and Shaw formalized the theory and pursued further research¹⁰². At its core, Agenda Setting Theory revolves around two key assumptions: (1) media does not merely reflect reality but filters and shapes it, and (2) media concentration on specific issues makes those issues more salient to the public¹⁰⁴. A critical aspect of agenda-setting is the concept of accessibility, which suggests that issues more frequently covered by the media are more easily recalled by audiences¹⁰⁶. When asked about the most pressing national issues, people tend to reference topics that have received the most media attention¹⁰⁴.

Agenda Setting Theory posits that repeated media coverage influences public opinion, particularly when other networks do not cover the same issue as extensively¹⁰¹.

There are three primary types of agenda setting: public, media, and policy agenda setting¹⁰⁷. Public agenda setting concentrates on the issues that resonate with the audience, while media agenda setting investigates how the media influences this audience¹⁰⁸. Policy agenda setting, which received less attention from Rogers and Dearing, delves into how both media and public agendas can impact decisions made by elite policy makers¹⁰⁷. Other scholars have since explored this latter area, investigating what factors influence policymakers' priorities¹⁰⁹. Of the three types, media agenda setting has faced the most critique. David Gauntlett, in his work

*Approaches to Audiences*¹⁰⁵, argues that media effects research has certain limitations. He contends that addressing social problems like violence by blaming the media is backward, as it ignores the responsibility of those committing violent acts¹⁰⁵. Gauntlett further claims that media agenda setting arises from a conservative ideology that often targets “liberal media” for criticism¹⁰⁵.

In studying the relationship between media and public agenda, the audience's predisposition to specific beliefs plays a significant role. The Audience Effects Model proposes that media exposure interacts with pre-existing audience sensitivities, thus shaping their concerns¹¹⁰. Highly sensitive audiences are more likely to be influenced by media coverage of a particular issue, while others may remain unaffected¹⁰⁹. The impact of media agenda setting is also influenced by whether the issue is obtrusive or unobtrusive. Obtrusive issues, like high food prices, directly affect most people, whereas unobtrusive issues, such as distant political scandals, do not¹⁰⁴. The degree to which an issue affects an audience depends on personal experience, as those affected by unemployment are more likely to be influenced by news about joblessness than those with stable employment¹¹⁰.

One major criticism of Agenda Setting Theory is its complexity in measurement. Media surveys are typically divided into broad categories, and the results often appear too generalized to be meaningful¹⁰⁴. The theory's reliance on numerous variables complicates data collection and analysis¹¹⁰. For example, studying the media's influence on societal violence requires not only distinguishing between fictional and factual violence but also tracking individual exposure to violent content¹⁰³. Additionally, factors such as the perpetrator's background family life, history of abuse,

and other influences must be considered. These complexities make it difficult to arrive at conclusive evidence to support the theory¹⁰⁹.

The evolution of media technologies challenges the longevity of Agenda Setting Theory. When the theory was conceived, media was predominantly a one-way communication model, where content was broadcast to passive audiences through television, radio, and print¹⁰⁵. Today, media functions as a two-way communication model, with platforms like the internet and social media enabling audiences to actively engage with content and media sources¹⁰⁴. This shift raises questions about the future relevance of the theory. With increased control over media consumption and the ability to shape public discourse, the public's influence on media and policy agendas has grown¹⁰⁴. Consequently, the theory may not hold as much influence in the future as originally anticipated¹¹⁰.

The agenda-setting theory, which posits that the media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions by determining which issues are highlighted or neglected, is highly relevant to the study of media representation in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*. Both novels offer a vivid depiction of historical events that were significantly shaped by media influence Nigeria's Biafran war in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and the Nigerian Civil War in *Heroes*. In these contexts, the media functions not only as a means of information dissemination but also as a tool that shapes public perception and governmental policies related to these social and economic upheavals.

The agenda-setting theory's assertion that the media does not tell people what to think but what to think about aligns well with how both Adichie and Iyayi portray the role of media during conflict. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, media portrayals of the Biafran conflict highlight issues of national unity and ethnic tension while neglecting other significant matters like the humanitarian crisis. This selective coverage aligns with the agenda-setting function, demonstrating that the media's prioritization of certain issues directly influenced public discourse and government policies during the war. Similarly, in Iyayi's *Heroes*, the manipulation of media reports on the civil war demonstrates the media's ability to control narratives that influence national economic and social policies, especially regarding military strategy and the political economy of war.

Moreover, the theory's emphasis on how media salience affects the importance the public attaches to issues is evident in the representation of the Nigerian Civil War in both texts. In *Heroes*, for instance, the military junta's strategic use of media to obscure the true cost of the war reflects the agenda-setting model. The media's selective focus on military victories and downplaying of the economic deterioration reveals the intentional shaping of public perceptions to maintain the government's political dominance. This aligns with the theory's notion that media agenda-setting is not merely about covering issues but also about managing public sentiment and influencing governmental decisions.

In both novels, the media's portrayal of social issues like ethnic conflict, hunger, and political corruption underpins the agenda-setting function by directing attention to certain aspects of the wars while sidelining others. The emphasis on these issues

through the lens of the media reinforces how public attention can be manipulated, thereby shaping economic policies and social responses. This dynamic demonstrates how the media's framing of conflict in both novels aligns with key principles of the agenda-setting theory, offering a lens through which the role of media in shaping public perception and policy is critically examined.

2.2.2 Postcolonial Theory

The emergence of post-colonial theory, commonly referred to as post-colonialism, can be linked to Edward Said's influential work *Orientalism*, first published in 1978. This landmark study transformed literary criticism by revealing that no intellectual or cultural activity is free from power structures, highlighting the connection between literary representation and colonial power¹¹¹. Said's *Orientalism* illustrates that all areas of knowledge, including the sciences and the humanities, were integral to the European political dominance achieved through colonialism and conquest¹¹². While post-colonialism has had broad implications, its focus on literary texts has both shaped and somewhat limited the discipline's scope¹¹¹.

In the decades following *Orientalism*, post-colonialism evolved into a comprehensive academic field. Its exploration of the intersection between power and knowledge extended into numerous subjects, including the history of colonial domination, anti-colonial resistance, nation-building in post-colonial contexts, and the politics of cultural control¹¹¹. Post-colonialism's geographical reach spans the globe, scrutinizing the cultural impacts of political and economic domination. Initially, it focused on post-colonial eras, particularly from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, aligning

with critiques of European Enlightenment. More recently, scholars have turned to earlier periods, especially the Renaissance, to explore how travel and the 'discovery' of new lands contributed to identity formation¹¹³.

Given its vast range, post-colonialism faces significant challenges, making it a contested field. Both inside and outside academic circles, there is frequent debate about how to define post-colonialism, distinguish it from related fields, and assess its relevance in formerly colonized nations for understanding societal structures and struggles. Post-colonial theory, which examines the power/knowledge dynamic, must address real-world concerns and aim to alleviate some of the inequalities it uncovers. This aspect of post-colonialism makes it comparable to feminism, which continuously seeks to bridge the gap between feminist literary theory and activism¹¹⁴.

Said's *Orientalism* primarily examined how colonialism produced exoticized portrayals of non-Western cultures, particularly the Middle East¹¹². However, one limitation of his work is that it portrays the colonized as silent and passive, with the colonizers depicted as omnipotent¹¹¹. In response, later theorists like Homi Bhabha focused on colonisation as a process of subject formation. Drawing on Lacan's concept of the mirror image, Bhabha explored the dynamic, dialectical relationship between the coloniser and colonised. His work deconstructs traditional binaries, such as master/slave and coloniser/colonised, and introduces the notion of a 'hybrid' identity emerging from these interactions¹¹⁵.

Bhabha's theory suggests that European identity after the Enlightenment is not challenged but reflected by the colonised, resulting in a divided and complex self-

image. The notion of power becomes ambiguous, as both colonizer and colonized are bound in a relationship characterized by oscillating emotions of fear and desire, creating a space for subversion and transformation¹¹⁵. In his essay *Signs Taken for Wonders*, Bhabha examines how the western book, as a symbol of cultural authority, is received and transformed in colonial settings, thereby blurring the distinctions between the coloniser and the colonised. This process of hybridisation leads to an ambivalence that destabilizes clear-cut power dynamics¹¹⁵.

Bhabha's ideas about hybridity challenge the stereotype of passive colonial subjects. Another influential approach to post-colonial subject formation is that of Subaltern Studies, led by Indian historians like Ranajit Guha. In *Writings in South Asian History and Society*, Guha critiques the elite focus of traditional Indian historiography and emphasizes the role of subaltern groups—those outside the elite—in shaping Indian nationalism, a perspective often ignored in mainstream historical accounts¹¹⁶.

The binary relationship between coloniser and colonised is redefined into a complex structure, with various subject positions forming the once-colonised societies¹¹¹. Guha introduces the subaltern studies project with a goal to analyze post-colonial nations and societies, highlighting the ruptures and fissures within them. The ambivalence between the elite and subaltern persists, as both are engaged in a binary relationship, though Guha acknowledges the existence of autonomous spaces occupied by the subaltern¹¹⁶. Nevertheless, points of contact inevitably emerge between the two entities, with overlaps and interactions forming their histories. Guha emphasizes the study of previously unexplored and unresearched areas of national history, wherein the elite and subaltern define each other in relation to colonial powers. He further

divides the elite into 'national' and 'local' groups, noting that local elites may be subalterns in a different context, thus illustrating the fluidity of subject positions. The inherent ambivalence in such definitions cannot be ignored even in this framework¹¹⁶.

Although subaltern studies were not initially designed as post-colonial interventions, they offer valuable insights into colonial subject-positioning. The project provides a rereading and rewriting of Indian national history, focusing on the fragmented colonial landscape and the power hierarchies among the colonised populations. Spivak, engaging critically with subaltern studies, raises the essential question: "Can the Subaltern Speak?"¹¹⁷ Spivak's work highlights the notion that subaltern consciousness is shaped and often distorted by elite interpretations¹¹⁷. It is always out of alignment with its signifiers and is ultimately effaced even when disclosed. Her translations of Mahasweta Devi's stories reflect the complexity of subaltern voices, particularly in tribal insurgencies against mainstream Indian administration, emphasizing the nuances of linguistic diversity in post-colonial societies¹¹⁷.

Spivak's exploration of the possibility of recovering subaltern voices delves into the problem of representation under cultural and political dominance. Her analysis connects this with the ongoing discussions on the Hindu custom of sati, where she finds it impossible to recover the voice of the woman being burned. Between the intersection of patriarchy and imperialism, the subaltern woman vanishes into a violent oscillation between tradition and modernity, where recovering her voice becomes a challenging endeavor. Spivak contends that while the project of recovering subaltern voices is destined for failure, a strategic essentialism could be employed, with intellectuals speaking on behalf of those whose voices remain irrecoverable¹¹⁷.

This discussion extends into Spivak's essay *Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism*, which critiques the representation of subaltern women. Spivak argues that white creole Antoinette from *Wide Sargasso Sea* cannot represent the colonized women, highlighting that the true colonial 'other' is embodied by the black servant, Christophine, who remains marginal and erased under colonial and patriarchal pressures¹¹⁸. This exemplifies the broader debates within post-colonial theory about the nature of colonial subjectivity and the representation of the colonized.

The post-colonial theories of Bhabha and Spivak, though differing in their approaches, have greatly influenced the understanding of post-colonial subject formation. Bhabha's works, particularly his preface to Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, delve into the formation of hybrid colonial identities, building on Fanon's analysis of national culture. Fanon refocused attention from the broader pan-Africanist concept of negritude to the specificities of national struggles against colonialism, critiquing negritude for promoting a homogenous African identity, whereas he emphasized the diversity of national cultures¹¹¹.

Senghor's concept of negritude, which sought to unify black cultural values, stands in opposition to the fragmented perspective of subaltern studies. Negritude promoted cultural pride by celebrating African traditions, language, and arts in opposition to European colonial influences. However, Fanon and others have critiqued it for oversimplifying the complexities within African nations and the varied experiences of colonised peoples¹¹⁹. Post-colonial theory thus occupies a complex and contentious intellectual space, addressing the dynamics between coloniser and colonised,

exploring colonised cultures through a wide range of analytical tools, and often placing the theorist's political and ideological positions under scrutiny¹¹⁹.

Post-colonial theory, as a wide-ranging and sometimes amorphous field, makes it challenging to define the scope of post-colonial studies. As an academic discipline, post-colonialism predominantly focuses on literature, originating in literary studies and evolving to question and widen the boundaries of literature. Edward Said's *Orientalism* pioneered the literary approach by analyzing European colonialism's representation in texts like those by Renan and Flaubert. His later work, *Culture and Imperialism*, further explores European canonical texts like *Mansfield Park* and *The Outsider* while juxtaposing them with works by scholars like Ranajit Guha and C. L. R. James¹¹¹.

Aijaz Ahmad, in his book *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, explores the complexities of terminology within post-colonial studies¹²⁰. Ahmad argues that the term 'third world literature' is more appropriate for post-colonial literary works because it aligns with the political divisions established by the three-worlds theory¹²⁰. He criticizes the post-colonial project, particularly the way it elevates non-Western writings to canonical status through Western academic and publishing platforms. This process, he contends, reinforces the cultural dominance of the Western world, thus calling into question the transformative potential of post-colonialism itself. Ahmad's skepticism extends to the collaborations between post-colonial studies and Western institutions, suggesting that these alliances might undermine the very principles of resistance that post-colonialism seeks to uphold¹²⁰.

In addition to literary texts, post-colonialism broadens its scope to include cultural studies. For instance, movements like Negritude sought to examine every aspect of African culture, encompassing language, rhythms, and life¹¹. Similarly, post-colonial studies now include popular culture, responding to the global revolution in audio-visual media. However, Ahmad warns that cultural studies often celebrate the plethora of media images and productions without critically examining the underlying processes that bring these images into circulation¹²⁰. Thus, the enduring strength of post-colonial theory lies in its ability to connect literature, culture, economics, and politics, fulfilling its initial political and interventionist promise.

Post-colonial theory offers a critical lens through which the complex interplay between media, social issues, and economic policies can be examined in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*. Both novels are deeply rooted in the socio-political and economic aftermath of colonialism, a key focus of post-colonial theory, which interrogates how colonial legacies continue to shape modern societies, especially through cultural and media representations.

At its core, post-colonial theory critically examines how media as an institution has historically played a role in both perpetuating and challenging colonial ideologies. In this light, media in post-colonial societies becomes a double-edged tool: on one hand, it has the potential to reinforce hegemonic structures of power left behind by colonialism; on the other, it serves as a means of resistance, enabling the articulation of indigenous perspectives, political dissent, and social issues. This dual function of media is especially pertinent in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*, where media

representations actively shape public perceptions of war, politics, and socio-economic realities.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie foregrounds the media's role during the Nigerian Civil War, showing how both foreign and local outlets manipulate narratives for various ends, whether to serve political agendas or to humanize the plight of the Biafrans. The novel illustrates how global media influences international perspectives on the conflict, drawing attention to the economic consequences of the war, such as the disruption of trade and humanitarian aid. Through the lens of post-colonial theory, the media in Adichie's work reflects the continuing influence of Western powers, whose reportage often aligns with the colonial strategy of selective representation, foregrounding certain narratives while silencing others. This selective dissemination of information underscores the ongoing power dynamics in post-colonial societies, where media, despite its reach, remains a site of contestation over who controls the narrative and to what ends.

Festus Iyayi's *Heroes* similarly portrays the role of media in shaping political and economic policies, especially in relation to Nigeria's post-colonial military regimes. Iyayi's depiction of the Nigerian media's complicity in the nation's governance highlights the corrupting influence of media institutions, which often align with the political elite to suppress dissenting voices and shape public opinion in ways that uphold existing power structures. Here, post-colonial theory becomes essential for understanding the economic and social implications of such media representations. The economic policies of the military government, which are heavily critiqued in the novel, are legitimized and normalized through media outlets, reinforcing the post-

colonial critique of how media often serves as an instrument of neo-colonialism, perpetuating socio-economic inequality and political dominance.

Postcolonial theory's interrogation of cultural dominance and representation is particularly relevant here, as it challenges the ways in which media representations can either marginalize or give voice to the oppressed. The theory allows for a critical examination of how media in post-colonial societies is frequently manipulated by those in power, controlling the portrayal of economic and social issues to benefit certain groups while silencing others. This manipulation of media aligns with post-colonial concerns about the continuation of colonial practices through new forms of control and influence, often perpetuated by the media's ability to shape public discourse.

In both texts, the media serves as a battleground for competing narratives about the nation's identity, its socio-political challenges, and its economic policies. Post-colonial theory is crucial for unpacking these dynamics, as it allows for a nuanced understanding of the media's role in perpetuating colonial legacies, even as it offers potential for resistance. By applying post-colonial theory, the analysis of media representation in these works can extend beyond the surface level to reveal the deeper structures of power and domination that continue to shape post-colonial societies, particularly in terms of their social issues and economic policies.

In both *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*, the media emerges as a critical tool for narrating and reflecting class struggles and the impact of economic policies. The texts highlight how systemic inequalities are perpetuated through both economic structures

and media narratives, which either expose or obscure these issues depending on who controls the narrative. The representation of media in these novels emphasizes the intersection between economic exploitation, political oppression, and social conflict.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie intricately weaves the economic marginalization of the Igbo people into the broader narrative of the Nigerian Civil War. The control of resources, particularly oil in the southeastern region, is central to the conflict. Through media coverage, Adichie portrays how economic policies enforced by the federal government exacerbate these inequalities, leading to the secessionist movement and subsequent war. The international media, however, often skews these narratives, framing the conflict as purely ethnic or political, while ignoring the economic roots of the war. Richard's journalism becomes a counterpoint to this bias, attempting to expose the true causes of the conflict and the human cost of war. His work underscores how media can either reinforce systemic exploitation by distorting facts or challenge it by amplifying the voices of the oppressed.

Similarly, in *Heroes*, Festus Iyayi explores the impact of economic policies on the working-class during Nigeria's military regimes. The novel depicts a society where the ruling class, supported by corrupt and complicit media, imposes policies that widen the gap between the elite and the masses. Workers are portrayed as victims of an exploitative system, facing harsh economic realities due to policies designed to favor the wealthy and powerful. The media in *Heroes* often serves the interests of the elite, framing labor struggles as disruptive or unnecessary while ignoring the structural injustices that necessitate them. However, through alternative narratives provided by labor activists and independent journalists, Iyayi shows how media can

also be a platform for resistance, shedding light on the struggles of the working class and exposing the failures of the ruling class.

Both novels highlight the critical role of media in shaping public perception of economic policies and class struggles. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, media narratives often obscure the systemic exploitation underlying the war, aligning with colonial and post-colonial ideologies that prioritize resource control over the welfare of the people. Conversely, in *Heroes*, the media reflects the corruption and inefficiencies of the military regime, often siding with the elite to suppress dissent. Yet, in both texts, there are instances where the media becomes a tool for advocacy and resistance, challenging dominant ideologies and advocating for economic justice.

The portrayal of media in these novels underscores its dual nature. On one hand, it can serve as an instrument of the ruling class, perpetuating inequality by shaping narratives to maintain the status quo. On the other hand, it can be a voice for the oppressed, exposing injustices and advocating for change. By examining how media represents class struggles and economic policies in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*, it becomes evident that media is not a neutral entity but a battleground for competing ideologies and interests. This dynamic portrayal provides a nuanced understanding of the media's role in reflecting and shaping the economic realities of society.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Empirical Review of Selected Studies on Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The research on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* addresses diverse themes such as postcoloniality, feminism, masculinity, and the historical significance of the Nigerian Civil War. The empirical studies reviewed focus on various aspects of Adichie's novel, offering insights into how the text engages with critical social, political, and cultural discourses.

Half of a Yellow Sun is framed within postcoloniality and Pan-Africanism, exploring how colonial legacies, particularly disintegration, have persisted into the postcolonial era. Sinha highlights the importance of identity assertion in postcolonial Africa, suggesting that movements like Pan-Africanism arose to combat the insecurities and psychological burdens left by colonialism. Adichie's portrayal of cultural syncretism, linguistic barriers, and nativism emphasizes the continuing influence of colonialism even after political independence¹²¹.

The research delves into the parodied feminism within Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*. Their work examines how Adichie portrays female characters negotiating charges against men, suggesting that Adichie's feminist discourse transcends simple victimization. The authors argue that Adichie moves beyond the traditional themes of subjugation of women, creating more nuanced female characters who embody both resistance and satire in addressing gender issues¹²².

The analysis investigates wartime violence in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, focusing on ethnic violence, hate crime, and wartime atrocities like rape and forced conscription. Their study highlights the destructive power of hate crimes in the context of secessionist movements like Biafra. The depiction of war crimes serves as a testament

to the brutality of the civil war, and Adichie's portrayal of these events contributes to the historical documentation of Biafran experiences¹²³.

The work applies a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) lens to the interpersonal meaning in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This research reveals how characters, particularly Master, use declarative statements to influence the audience through Ugwu, emphasizing the importance of education for African resilience. This linguistic analysis highlights Adichie's skill in using language to portray characters' attitudes and social hierarchies, demonstrating the centrality of education in the fight against exploitation¹²⁴.

Another study utilizes a New Historicist approach, situating *Half of a Yellow Sun* within the broader context of Biafran literature. Makosso argues that Adichie, as a literary historian, revives memories of the Nigerian Civil War through her narrative, making a political commitment to denouncing the war's devastating impact on individuals and Nigerian society at large. Adichie's work is seen as a chronicle that continues to shape contemporary discourse on national identity and post-war reconstruction¹²⁵.

Also, another research offers a gendered perspective on motherhood and home-making in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, challenging traditional notions of both. Jilek argues that Adichie redefines motherhood as a performative and relational practice, rather than a biologically determined role. Through her female characters, Adichie presents alternative conceptualizations of motherhood, destabilizing binary views and

reflecting the complex lived experiences of Nigerian women in a postcolonial context¹²⁶.

It was critically examine how masculinity is framed and resisted in Adichie's novel. Their study highlights how Adichie challenges patriarchal hegemony by creating strong female characters who defy traditional gender roles. The authors use critical discourse analysis and feminist theory to argue that the novel questions the societal construction of gender and critiques the notion of male superiority¹²⁷.

Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun and the Valorization of Womanhood applies feminist theory to examine the redefinition of femininity vis-à-vis education. Feghabo argues that Adichie uses education as an underlying force that empowers her female characters, specifically highlighting the contrast between rural, illiterate women and educated women in the text. Through the lens of feminism, Feghabo notes that education serves as a tool for Adichie to challenge and subvert gender bias in society. The study illuminates the ways in which education enables the female characters to navigate a patriarchal landscape, thus revalorizing the marginalized feminine 'other' in a post-colonial African context¹²⁸.

The novel was approached from a political allegorical standpoint in the article *She is Waiting: Political Allegory and the Specter of Secession in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun*. Contrary to critics who emphasize the personal over the political, Coffey suggests that the relationship between the protagonists Olanna and Kainene mirrors the historical tension between Northern and Eastern Nigeria during the Nigerian Civil War. According to Coffey, Kainene's disappearance at the end of the novel can be interpreted as an allegory for the disappearance of Biafra¹²⁹.

The study opens a discussion on secession, challenging narratives that view Biafra's collapse as inevitable and drawing parallels between personal relationships and national political struggles.

Another further study offers a new historicist perspective in her article *A New Historicist Approach to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun*, focusing on how history and power relations shape the narrative. Adichie, according to Kara, explores the colonizer-colonized paradigm by reinterpreting Nigeria's post-colonial history, particularly through the multiple narrators in the novel¹³⁰. The study emphasizes how Adichie presents a variety of experiences during the Biafran War, complicating the conventional view of historical narratives and offering a multi-faceted perspective of the colonizer-colonized dynamic¹³⁰.

Another stylistic analysis of the novel, underscores the functional role of linguistic features in constructing the narrative. Ajadi's study identifies the use of graphological elements, deviant word forms, and character-specific language styles to signify plot movement, socio-economic status, and educational background¹³¹. He argues that Adichie's employment of these stylistic tools contributes to the thematic depth of the novel, particularly in conveying the characters' struggles and experiences during the war. By focusing on how language reflects character identity and setting, the study highlights the stylistic richness of *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Postcolonial theory examine themes of identity, diaspora, and the Biafran Civil War in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Hers analysis centers on how the characters Olanna, Richard, and Ugwu evolve throughout the war, with a particular focus on how their identities

are shaped by the conflict. The characters' experiences during the war lead them to become more deeply rooted in their Igbo culture, reinforcing the novel's postcolonial exploration of identity formation amidst the horrors of war¹³².

Finally, the dilemma and resistance of the "other" in *Half of a Yellow Sun* was explored from a postcolonial perspective. The study contends that Adichie highlights the racial and ethnic dilemmas faced by the Igbo people during the war, using her narrative to resist colonial discourse and construct an alternative space for survival¹³³. Xie's analysis aligns with broader postcolonial themes of racial and cultural confidence, positioning Adichie's work as a testament to the resilience of the marginalised.

2.3.3 Empirical Review of Selected Studies on Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*

In the article by Haruna, *The Writer as the Conscience of His Society: A Study of Festus Iyayi's Heroes*, the author highlights how creative writers such as Festus Iyayi serve as the moral conscience of society by using literature to expose societal issues like corruption and oppression. Haruna identifies the unique approach Iyayi takes in his novel *Heroes*, particularly in its depiction of the Nigerian Civil War. Haruna concludes that Iyayi, through his literary artistry, emerges as a patriotic voice calling for social reform through his critical engagement with the prevailing social order.

This study establishes Iyayi's novel as a platform for societal critique, reflecting the broader role of literature in driving social change through creative expression¹³⁴.

Similarly, Armstrong's study *Speaking Through the Wound: Irruption and Memory in the Writing of Ben Okri and Festus Iyayi* delves into the representation of war and social upheaval in Nigerian fiction. Armstrong compares the narrative techniques of Okri and Iyayi, pointing out how *Heroes* adopts a realist narrative structure to document the Nigerian Civil War. Iyayi's style is characterized by a focus on the ethical representation of atrocity and the trauma of violence, contrasting with Okri's more metaphorical and chaotic approach. Armstrong's analysis demonstrates how Iyayi's work reflects the harsh realities of war, serving as a witness to historical events while also promoting healing and reconciliation through the literary documentation of trauma¹³⁵.

In the study conducted by Alli and Ademola, *A Linguistic (Stylistic) Reading of Ideological Discourse in Festus Iyayi's Violence, The Contract, and Heroes*, the authors explore the intersection between literature and ideology through a stylistic analysis of Iyayi's novels. The study shows the significance of language as a tool for societal transformation, as seen in Iyayi's use of narrative technique, lexical choices, and dialogue. The Marxist framework used in the analysis reflects the contention that Iyayi's works are more than mere reflections of social institutions—they are active critiques of capitalist exploitation and class antagonism. This linguistic approach highlights how Iyayi's novels, particularly *Heroes*, use language to foreground class struggles and social injustices, further solidifying the role of literature in advancing ideological discourse¹³⁶.

In another paper titled *From Ignorance to Experience: Protagonists of Dynamism in Festus Iyayi's Violence and Heroes*, discusses the dynamic nature of Iyayi's protagonists, who undergo significant transformations as they gain new experiences. The character of Osime Iyere in *Heroes* evolves from an idealistic view of humanity to a more realistic perspective, recognizing the brutality of war and the complicity of both sides in the conflict. Ogbuide's analysis portrays Iyayi's protagonists as representatives of the oppressed masses who become conscious of their societal conditions, and through this awareness, they develop the strength to combat societal injustices. This thematic focus on the growth of characters emphasizes Iyayi's advocacy for social education and collective action as tools for societal change¹³⁷.

Festus Iyayi's Fiction and the Revolutionary Imperative: A Study of Violence and Heroes, examines how Iyayi's novels transcend mere documentation of social issues and actively promote revolutionary change¹³⁸. Ndifon argues that Iyayi's protagonists not only become aware of social injustices but also recognize the need for a complete overhaul of the capitalist system to establish justice in society. This perspective underscores the revolutionary ethos embedded in Iyayi's fiction, positioning his works as calls to action for the oppressed classes to challenge their oppressors and seek societal transformation through collective revolution¹³⁸.

Between Aestheticism and Marxist Literature: A Study of Foregrounding in Festus Iyayi's Violence, Heroes, and The Contract, analyzes how Iyayi uses foregrounding as a literary device to emphasize themes of class struggle, violence, and social injustice. Yakubu highlights how Iyayi's novels reveal Marxist ideologies through the

depiction of the plight of the less privileged and their struggle against societal exploitation¹³⁹. The study concludes that the primary function of foregrounding in Iyayi's works is to critique the social order rather than to serve aesthetic purposes. This reinforces the view that Iyayi's literature is deeply rooted in Marxist thought and advocates for social revolution through its critique of the existing class structure¹³⁹.

In the study of *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi, several researchers have critically explored its thematic and ideological underpinnings, particularly focusing on the socio-political context of the Nigerian civil war. Nwagbara's analysis of *Heroes* reveals the protagonist Osime as a revolutionary figure driven by Marxist dialectics. According to Nwagbara, the novel portrays the Nigerian-Biafra civil war as a class struggle between the bourgeois elites and the proletariat, with the elites on both sides representing an oppressive force while the poor are depicted as the victims of this exploitation¹⁴⁰. The research concludes that *Heroes* encapsulates the theme of class antagonism and oppression, positioning Osime as a symbol of resistance against the systemic injustices rooted in post-colonial Nigeria¹⁴⁰.

Additionally, the study of the use of language in *Heroes* reveals how Iyayi employs oppressive language as a tool to reflect societal hierarchies and injustices. The research draws a parallel between Iyayi's depiction of the Nigerian military and George Orwell's portrayal of power dynamics in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, showing that the oppressor's control over language perpetuates social dominance and dehumanization¹⁴¹. In *Heroes*, language is depicted as a vehicle for the suppression of the lower classes, contributing to the theme of socio-political decay¹⁴¹.

Finally, another further comparative analysis of *Heroes* and Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty* sheds light on the depiction of the Nigerian soldier within a historical context. The study highlights how both novels use military figures to explore broader social realities, emphasising the soldier's role in maintaining the status quo of exploitation and injustice. This new historical perspective enriches the understanding of how Nigerian literature reflects military and socio-political dynamics¹⁴².

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework developed in this study explicitly illustrates the relationships between the independent variables (media representation, social issues, and economic policies) and the dependent variable (the portrayal of media's influence in shaping societal discourse in the selected novels). These relationships are more intricate than they appear on the surface, as media representation plays a multifaceted role in influencing public opinion and policy, which are depicted through literary narratives. The framework is illustrated in Figure 2.1, highlighting how media shapes the socio-political and economic environment as portrayed in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
Media Representation	Portrayal of Media's Influence in Social Discourse
- Media portrayal during wartime	- Impact on public perception of conflict
- Framing of social and economic	- Influence on societal attitudes towards

issues	policy
- Media as a propaganda tool	- Shaping narratives around class struggles and governance
Social Issues	
- Ethnic and class conflict	- Media's role in framing conflicts in society
- Civil war and political instability	- Public awareness and the role of media in highlighting social challenges
Economic Policies	
- Economic impact of war	- Media's critique or support of government policies
- Class disparity and worker rights	- Representation of economic struggles in media

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework/Model of Media Representation, Social Issues, and Economic Issues in Shaping Public Discourse in Literature

Figure 1 represents the relationships between the independent variables—media representation, social issues, and economic policies—and the dependent variable, which is the portrayal of media's influence in shaping societal discourse in the novels *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*. In this framework, media representation acts as the primary lens through which both social and economic realities are depicted in the novels.

In the novels, media acts as both an informer and influencer. The framing of events whether it's ethnic conflict, civil war, or economic distress—is shaped by how the media chooses to portray them. For instance, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the media's

portrayal of the Biafran war shapes both the national and international perspectives of the conflict. This, in turn, affects how characters within the novel understand and react to the socio-economic conditions around them. In *Heroes*, media serves as a mouthpiece for power structures, reflecting both the suppression and promotion of economic policies that affect the marginalized classes.

In addition, media's role in shaping social issues like ethnic tensions, class struggles, and political instability is highlighted through its influence on public discourse. The novels showcase how the media can either amplify or suppress narratives about social injustices. The portrayal of ethnic conflicts and the struggles of the working class are often linked with how the media frames these issues. For instance, media outlets may sensationalize ethnic conflict, leading to a skewed understanding of its root causes, as seen in *Heroes*.

Finally, economic policies are represented as being intricately tied to social issues, with media playing a central role in critiquing or supporting government actions. In both novels, the media's portrayal of economic policies especially during times of war or political instability determines how these policies are understood and acted upon by the public. For instance, media representation in *Heroes* often critiques the government's economic policies, highlighting class disparity and the struggles of workers.

Media, acting as an intermediary, shapes how social issues and economic policies are perceived and understood, ultimately influencing public perception and discourse. Through this framework, the study aims to demonstrate that media representation in

literature is a powerful tool that both reflects and shapes societal realities, as depicted in the works of Adichie and Iyayi. This conceptual framework provides a foundation for understanding how the portrayal of media in literature not only reflects existing social and economic conditions but also plays an active role in shaping discourse around these issues.

2.5 Summary of Gaps in Literature

From the empirical reviews of studies on Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*, several key gaps emerge in relation to the medias representation in shaping social and economic issues. While the studies explore diverse themes like postcoloniality, feminism, wartime violence, and societal critique, there is limited emphasis on the specific function of media in both novels, particularly how media narratives shape or reflect socio-cultural and economic realities during and after the Nigerian Civil War.

First, most research on *Half of a Yellow Sun* centers around themes such as postcolonial identity, gender dynamics, and historical documentation of the Nigerian Civil War. Sinha's focus on postcoloniality, Okeugo and Onyinye's exploration of feminism, and Kirti and Kulshreshtha's analysis of wartime violence, though insightful, overlook how media portrayal contributes to the public perception of these issues within the civil war context. Similarly, another study approaches the novel from a New Historicist perspective but does not delve into how media, as an institution, influenced or was influenced by the socio-political conditions described in the novel. Therefore, there is a gap in understanding media's effectiveness and

potential bias in shaping public consciousness and its implications for socio-cultural issues during the civil war, which aligns with the first research objective of this study.

Furthermore, studies on *Heroes* largely concentrate on Iyayi's realist portrayal of war, class struggle, and the role of literature as a tool for social critique, as seen in Haruna's and Armstrong's works. These studies emphasize the role of literature in promoting social justice, but they lack an analysis of how media both as depicted in the text and in real life frames political and economic policies in wartime Nigeria. Alli and Ademola's linguistic study on ideological discourse in Iyayi's works does not engage deeply with how media narratives influence or are influenced by political and economic structures, leaving a gap in the broader understanding of the media's role as a mediator between public perception and policy-making. This connects to the second research objective, which seeks to examine how narrative strategies depict media effectiveness and bias.

Moreover, while existing studies examine the societal impacts of both novels, they do not sufficiently address how media shapes public perception of cultural issues and economic policies during the Nigerian Civil War. For example, some studies focus on revolutionary imperatives and the transformation of characters, but they neglect the investigation of media as a tool for shaping narratives around social issues. This gap is critical because media plays a powerful role in influencing public opinion and policy formulation, which is directly tied to the third research objective of this study: investigating the media's influence on public perceptions of social and cultural issues in the context of civil war.

In conclusion, while substantial research exists on both novels, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the media's role in shaping social issues and economic policies. This study seeks to fill that gap by focusing specifically on how Adichie and Iyayi represent media's effectiveness, bias, and influence within the civil war contexts, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of the media's role during periods of national crisis. The exploration of media narratives and their social impact within these novels contributes to a broader discourse on the intersection of literature, media, and policy-making in postcolonial Africa.

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Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a Content Analysis design research design to critically examine the representation of media in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*. A Content Analysis is appropriate as it emphasizes the interpretive analysis of textual data, enabling an in-depth exploration of themes, narrative techniques, and the socio-political contexts embedded within the novels. By focusing on the subjective experiences and symbolic meanings constructed in these texts, the design facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how media is portrayed as a tool for shaping public perception and influencing socio-cultural and economic policies during the Nigerian Civil War. This design also allows for a nuanced

engagement with the interplay between literature and historical realities, making it well-suited for addressing the objectives of this research.

3.2. Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of the literary works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Festus Iyayi. Chimamanda Adiche has produced at least 11 major published works spanning novels, essays, short stories, children's books, and memoirs. Adichie's body of work, including novels like "*Purple Hibiscus*" and "*Americanah*", as well as essays like "*We Should All Be Feminists*" and "*Dear Ijeawele, or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*", showcases her preoccupation with themes of identity, feminism, trauma, and resilience. "*Half of a Yellow Sun*", in particular, explores the Biafran War's impact on identity and resilience.

Similarly, Festus Iyayi authored four major works, such as "*Violence*" and "*The Contract*", critique social inequality, corruption, and exploitation in Nigerian society. "*Heroes*" re-examines the notion of heroism and identity, offering an understanding of the human experience.

By examining the works of both authors, particularly "*Half of a Yellow Sun*" and "*Heroes*". These novels were selected due to their rich portrayal of the Nigerian Civil War and their critical engagement with the role of media in shaping public opinion and socio-political discourse during the conflict. The focus is specifically on the characters, events, and media representations within these texts, as they offer insights into how the media influenced the public's perception of the war and its broader implications on culture, identity, and policy.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study adopted purposive sampling technique through purposive selection of two literary texts, *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi. These novels are chosen specifically for their relevance to the research objectives, as both offer critical insights into the portrayal of media during the Nigerian Civil War. The selection is purposive because these texts provide rich narrative content that explores media representations and their impact on public perception, making them ideal for the qualitative analysis in this study. Additionally, secondary data, consisting of scholarly articles, books, and other academic resources, are purposefully chosen to complement the primary texts and provide theoretical and contextual support. The sampling technique, therefore, is purposive, aimed at selecting only the materials that are most relevant to the study's focus on media representation and its socio-political implications during the war.

3.4 Description of the Research Instrument(s)

The research instrument for this study is textual analysis, which involves a detailed and systematic examination of the two selected novels: *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi. Content analysis allows for the identification of themes, narrative techniques, and the portrayal of media within the context of the Nigerian Civil War. This instrument enables the researcher to closely examine how media influences characters, shapes public opinion, and reflects the socio-political dynamics of the time. Key passages from both novels are analyzed to uncover representations of media, such as news broadcasts, propaganda, and journalism, as well as their effects on public perception. In addition to textual analysis, secondary data in the form of scholarly articles, books, and critical essays on media, postcolonial theory, and African literature are employed to support and contextualize the analysis. These secondary sources provide theoretical frameworks and historical

background that enhance the understanding of the primary texts. This combination of primary and secondary research instruments ensures a comprehensive approach to exploring the role of media in the selected novels and its broader socio-political implications.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

The method of data collection for this study involves a combination of primary and secondary data sources. The primary data is collected through a close reading and textual analysis of *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi. These novels are selected due to their depiction of the Nigerian Civil War and their exploration of media representations during the conflict. Relevant passages, scenes, and dialogues that highlight the role of media in shaping public perception and influencing social and political issues are identified and carefully analyzed. Secondary data is gathered from academic sources such as books, scholarly journal articles, and research papers that provide critical perspectives on media studies, African literature, the Nigerian Civil War, and media representation in literary texts. These secondary sources help contextualize the findings from the primary texts and offer a theoretical framework for understanding the media's role as depicted in the novels. The combination of textual analysis and secondary research ensures a robust and comprehensive approach to answering the study's research questions, providing a well-rounded analysis of media's representation and impact in the selected works.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis for this study is thematic analysis, which involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting key themes and patterns within the selected novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi. Thematic analysis allows for an in-depth exploration of the ways in which

media is represented and its role in shaping public perception and socio-political issues during the Nigerian Civil War. This process includes coding relevant passages, categorizing them into specific themes related to media portrayal, and examining how these representations influence the characters and events within the novels. The analysis is further guided by theoretical frameworks such as Agenda-Setting Theory and Postcolonial Theory, which provide lenses through which the narratives are interpreted. These frameworks help illuminate the biases, power structures, and ideological implications embedded in the media portrayals within the texts. The data analysis is conducted iteratively, allowing for the continuous refinement of themes and the development of a comprehensive understanding of media's impact as represented in the novels. This method ensures a thorough and focused interpretation of the texts, highlighting the socio-political relevance of media during the time of the Nigerian Civil War as depicted in the literature.

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

This chapter addresses the four research questions that guide this study by analyzing the representation and influence of media in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi. It explores the areas of media's operation and involvement in the texts, highlighting how media functions within political, cultural, and economic spheres during the Nigerian Civil War. It also examines the narrative strategies employed by both authors to depict the effectiveness and bias of media, including techniques such as irony, symbolism, character perspectives, and embedded reportage. Furthermore, the chapter investigates how media influences public perception of cultural issues and governmental policies, emphasizing its role in shaping identity, reinforcing ideological positions, and controlling wartime narratives. Through a comparative analysis, the chapter reveals how literature critiques media manipulation and underscores its power in both sustaining and challenging dominant structures during times of national crisis.

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the representations of media's role in the selected texts?

The operation and involvement of the media in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes* are essential to understanding how both authors critique the role of the media during the Nigerian Civil War. Media in these novels does not merely serve as a conduit for information; it actively shapes the public's perception of reality, distorting and influencing political, social, and economic understandings. The operation of the media is presented not as a monolithic entity but as a fragmented, manipulated instrument with the power to affect lives, opinions, and historical narratives. By analyzing the varied ways in which media operates in these two novels, we can uncover how both Adichie and Iyayi depict the media's influence on society during a period of national crisis.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie's portrayal of the media is inseparable from the dynamics of the Nigerian Civil War, where media becomes a central tool in fueling ideological and political divisions. Media plays a crucial role in disseminating government-controlled narratives, often framing the war as a just campaign against secessionist rebellion. It later becomes a mechanism for portraying the Biafran forces as enemies that must be crushed. Through characters like Olanna, Richard, and Ugwu, Adichie shows how the media not only reflects the war but also actively shapes its trajectory and perception. Radio broadcasts and newspapers are primary vehicles for propaganda. As Adichie writes, "The voice on the radio said the vandals had been repelled again and that Biafran troops were advancing steadily" (p. 301).

This statement exemplifies how radio messages were structured to emphasize hope and victory, even in the face of devastating realities. Olanna's proximity to the Biafran media landscape offers a lens through which readers can observe how media is mobilized to shape public sentiment and maintain wartime morale. Working in a Biafran ministry, she becomes part of the communicative machinery that crafts the image of the war for the public. Adichie illustrates this when Olanna hears a broadcast describing a battlefield: "There was no mention of the dead children or the bombed village. Just that Biafran soldiers had shown great courage" (p. 302).

This omission reveals how the media filters reality, suppressing information about civilian casualties and human suffering to maintain the illusion of control and resilience. Olanna's eventual awareness of this manipulation highlights the emotional cost of propaganda, as characters begin to question the truth behind the state's narrative. In particular, Adichie uses the contrast between the optimistic messages broadcasted and the harrowing conditions on the ground to critique the gap between media representation and lived experience. Olanna reflects on this when she says, "Sometimes I wonder if we believe our own propaganda" (p. 303).

The internal conflict this statement expresses mirrors the broader disillusionment felt by Biafrans who begin to realize that their suffering is being edited out of public discourse. The strategic deployment of media content thus becomes not just a wartime necessity but a form of moral compromise. Meanwhile, the print media particularly newspapers like *The Nigerian Observer* play a pivotal role in shaping Nigerian and international perceptions of the war. These government-aligned papers echo the

federal agenda and frame the war in terms of preserving national unity. Adichie's narrative contrasts this sharply with the Biafran media. The federal press, as shown through references in Richard's perspective, portrays Biafra as a reckless insurgency threatening the sovereign integrity of Nigeria. "This is reflected when Richard reads an article that refers to the Biafran army as "a ragtag group of rebels being put in their place by a superior national force" (p. 325).

Such language serves to delegitimize the Biafran cause and galvanize patriotic support within the Nigerian populace. Richard's character, an English writer and outsider-turned-insider, offers a valuable lens for interrogating media bias. Initially intrigued by the Biafran cause, he becomes increasingly disillusioned with the inconsistencies and political filtering of both Nigerian and international media. He notes, "The foreign press called it a tribal war, as if there were no history, no context. As if it were not about oil and power" (p. 374).

This quote underscores the reductive framing of the war by Western outlets, who often strip it of its political complexity and reduce it to ethnic conflict. Richard's frustration emphasizes how deeply media narratives are influenced by geopolitical interests and how even supposedly neutral Western journalism can perpetuate skewed interpretations. Throughout the novel, Adichie foregrounds the media's power to construct national narratives, obfuscate humanitarian crises, and dictate public memory. The cumulative effect is a layered critique of media as an instrument of state power and ideological warfare. Through characters' reflections, the novel illustrates how information is weaponized, with the media manufacturing consent or resistance depending on its allegiance. As the war progresses, the truth becomes harder to

separate from fiction, a reality that Adichie captures with painful clarity: “The war isn’t about truth anymore, it’s about who controls the story” (p. 389).

Media Manipulation and Ideological Control in *Heroes*

In *Heroes*, Festus Iyayi presents a scathing critique of media manipulation during the Nigerian Civil War, focusing on how information is selectively disseminated to serve the interests of the ruling elite. Unlike in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, where the media's role is depicted through both Biafran and Nigerian lenses, Iyayi centers his narrative on the experiences of Osime Iyere, a journalist who becomes increasingly disillusioned with the government's control over the press. From the outset, Iyayi highlights the deliberate distortion of facts by the media. Osime observes: “If the Biafrans lost a city and it was clear that was the truth, the newspaper had to report the opposite” (p. 2).

This manipulation serves to maintain a façade of success and control, masking the grim realities of the war from the public. The media's role extends beyond mere misinformation; it becomes a tool for ideological indoctrination, shaping public perception to align with the government's narrative. Osime's growing frustration with media censorship reflects the oppressive nature of information control. He notes: “The entire war is an investment in blood and destruction by those at the helm of affairs with the expectation of a profit” (p. 64).

This statement underscores the idea that the war is not fought for national unity or ideological reasons but for the personal gain of those in power. The media, by concealing the exploitation and suffering of soldiers and civilians, becomes complicit in this profiteering. Iyayi further critiques the media's failure to report on the

corruption and economic interests fueling the war. Osime remarks: "Corruption is everywhere, sell your arms to your enemy and collect the money and put it in your pocket... this war is part of the whole business enterprise and that means it must yield fruits" (p. 148).

This exposes the extent to which economic motives, rather than patriotic ideals, drive the continuation of the conflict. The media's silence on such issues perpetuates a false narrative of noble warfare. The portrayal of soldiers in the media also comes under scrutiny. While the press glorifies the military, presenting soldiers as heroes, the reality is starkly different. Osime reflects: "The generals take the credit, get the praise, always they are heroes" (p. 86). This highlights the disparity between the media's depiction and the actual experiences of rank-and-file soldiers, who bear the brunt of the war's horrors without recognition or reward.

Both Adichie and Iyayi also highlight how the media's operations extend beyond mere information dissemination to actively influence the political and social fabric of society. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, media representation affects the way the people of Biafra see themselves in relation to the Nigerian state. The portrayal of Biafran resistance as an act of liberation and defiance resonates deeply with the people, strengthening their resolve and providing a unifying force in the face of war. The media constructs a narrative that turns military defeat into a moral victory, and in doing so, shapes public understanding of the war's goals. Yet, as the war drags on and the realities of famine, disease, and death become impossible to ignore, the media's ability to maintain this illusion weakens, leading to widespread disillusionment among the people.

Similarly, in *Heroes*, the media's portrayal of soldiers' sacrifices becomes a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it serves to reinforce nationalistic fervor and public support for the war. On the other, it also highlights the dehumanization of the soldiers as mere instruments of the state's political agenda. The media constructs an image of the soldier as a hero, but this image is increasingly at odds with the soldiers' experiences, leading to a sense of betrayal and frustration. The media's selective coverage of the war, focusing on heroic narratives while ignoring the brutal reality faced by the soldiers, contributes to a widening gap between the public and the frontline.

The areas of media's operation and involvement in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes* are complex and multifaceted. In both texts, media is not only a source of information but also an instrument of ideological control and social manipulation. Whether through the portrayal of Biafran resistance in Adichie's novel or the censorship and omission of wartime suffering in Iyayi's, the media plays a significant role in shaping the public's perception of social and political realities. The two novels illustrate how media operates in times of national crisis—not as a neutral observer, but as an active participant in constructing reality. By controlling the narrative, the media in both *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes* seeks to define what is remembered, what is forgotten, and how the public understands the causes and consequences of war.

Research Question 2: What narrative strategies do the authors employ to depict media's effectiveness and bias in the selected texts?

The depiction of media in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes* is intricately tied to the authors' narrative strategies. Both writers draw on diverse literary devices to expose, critique, and contextualize the media's role within a turbulent socio-political environment. Through structure, point of view, characterization, irony, symbolism, and embedded media forms, the authors construct nuanced portrayals of the media's duality, its power to inform and misinform, unify and divide, liberate and oppress.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie adopts a multiple-perspective narrative structure, alternating between the experiences of Olanna, Ugwu, and Richard. This shifting point of view allows the reader to witness the Biafran War and its associated media propaganda from varying social and ideological standpoints. The advantage of this technique lies in its ability to reveal not just what the media says, but how it is received, interpreted, and internalized by individuals across class and cultural divides. For instance, Olanna's engagement with the Biafran radio station presents media as an instrument of hope and national identity. At one point,

The voice on the radio said, 'Biafran troops have captured Nsukka and are marching towards Enugu!' Olanna's heart lifted, even though she knew the words were spoken with the same empty optimism as always (p. 286).

This moment shows how the media can simultaneously inspire and deceive. Meanwhile, Richard's more reflective view exposes its propagandistic overreach: "He had written articles full of pathos and defiance, but he was no longer sure what he believed. The truth was muddled, distorted by radio voices that wanted only to stir" (p. 312). Ugwu, the houseboy-turned-soldier, experiences media as both alien and

authoritative an external voice that shapes his understanding of war but rarely represents his personal truth. Thus, through these interwoven viewpoints, Adichie effectively critiques the media's authority and illuminates its partialities.

A particularly salient narrative strategy in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is the incorporation of fictional media artifacts—radio broadcasts, newspaper headlines, and official press releases—within the text itself. These inserted materials provide an intertextual dimension that blurs the line between fiction and reportage. For example, when the novel inserts actual transcripts of Biafran radio bulletins or alludes to editorial pieces, it mimics the format of wartime journalism, immersing the reader in the lived reality of media consumption during conflict. “Ugwu listened to the radio in the barracks. The words came in clipped tones, full of triumph. But outside, there was only hunger and the sound of retreating feet” (p. 364). This metafictional device allows Adichie to interrogate the mechanisms of media construction: who controls the message, what gets omitted, and how repetition of patriotic rhetoric substitutes for nuanced truth.

Moreover, Adichie employs irony and juxtaposition as narrative strategies to reveal media bias and ineffectiveness. One prominent instance is when the characters listen to optimistic radio announcements about Biafran advances, only to simultaneously confront starvation and military defeat in their daily lives. “The radio said victory was near. Ugwu watched as the wounded arrived, eyes wide with pain, their bodies broken. He no longer believed in victories” (p. 407).

This ironic contrast between reported reality and lived experience underscores the manipulative function of wartime propaganda. The media does not reflect events as they are, but as they ought to be perceived, sustaining morale at the expense of

authenticity. In this way, irony becomes a powerful literary tool that questions the reliability of media narratives and invites readers to adopt a critical stance.

In Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*, the portrayal of media bias and manipulation is intricately woven through the narrative strategies centered on the protagonist, Osime Iyere, a journalist. Iyayi employs a first-person narrative, allowing readers intimate access to Osime's evolving consciousness and critical reflections on the war and the media's role within it. One of the most striking examples of media distortion is highlighted early in the novel: "If the Biafrans lost a city and it was clear that was the truth, the newspaper had to report the opposite" (pg. 20).

This statement underscores the deliberate misinformation propagated by the media, serving the interests of those in power rather than conveying the realities of the war. Iyayi further critiques the media's complicity through Osime's observations of the war's profiteering aspects: "This is not a war. This is an investment in blood and destruction by those at the helm of affairs with expectation of profit" (pg. 26).

This perspective reveals the media's role in masking the true motivations behind the conflict, presenting it as a noble cause while concealing the underlying greed and corruption. The narrative also exposes the dangers faced by journalists who challenge official narratives. Osime recounts an incident where he is assaulted by soldiers for attempting to report the truth: "Do you want me to tell you what we have done to journalists in this war? [...] Journalists like you we have first of all shaved and whipped before shooting. Now go away." pg. 60

This chilling encounter illustrates the oppressive environment in which the media operates, where censorship is enforced through intimidation and violence.

In both novels, interpersonal interactions also serve as a subtle narrative strategy to depict the media's effectiveness and bias. Conversations between characters about news broadcasts, war reports, or editorials reveal how deeply the media penetrates personal belief systems. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, characters argue over the accuracy of war reports, reflecting the confusion and suspicion that arise from over-politicized journalism. In *Heroes*, Osime's debates with colleagues and military personnel reveal the pressures to conform, the risks of dissent, and the moral ambiguity faced by those within the media system. These dialogic moments emphasize the contested nature of truth in wartime media and show how media narratives become internalized or resisted by individuals.

In terms of temporal structure, both Adichie and Iyayi use non-linear timelines that allow for retrospective contemplation and foreshadowing. By recounting past events or projecting future consequences, the authors demonstrate how the media narratives evolve, how memory is shaped by the media, and how initial biases are later revealed. This temporal manipulation reinforces the idea that media is not a static institution but one that transforms and is transformed by political circumstances.

Finally, both authors employ emotional realism as a narrative strategy. Rather than focusing solely on factual representation, they delve into how media affects the emotional states of characters—how fear, hope, anger, and despair are stirred or quelled by news reports and propaganda. This emotional focus reveals the

psychological impact of biased media, showing that its power lies not just in misinformation but in its capacity to shape human emotion and action.

In conclusion, the narrative strategies employed by Adichie and Iyayi go beyond simple storytelling. They are deliberate artistic choices that deepen our understanding of the media's power and its shortcomings. Through multi-perspective narration, metafictional elements, symbolism, irony, dialogue, and emotional depth, both authors construct a complex picture of the media during the Nigerian Civil War. While Adichie foregrounds media's capacity for both unity and deception, Iyayi unflinchingly critiques its role as a tool of the elite. These strategies illuminate the ideological operations of the media and invite readers to reflect critically on the narratives they consume, particularly in times of political unrest and national crisis.

Research Question Three: How does the media influence public perception of cultural issues and economic policies within the contexts of the Nigerian Civil War as portrayed in the novels?

The third research question focuses on the influence of the media in shaping public perception, especially as it relates to cultural issues and government policies during the Nigerian Civil War as portrayed in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and *Heroes* by Festus Iyayi. This question explores the intersection between the media narratives, national identity, cultural cohesion, and the justification of economic or military policies. Through a thematic analysis of both texts, it becomes evident that the media plays a central role in not only informing but also manipulating public opinion and identity construction in times of national conflict.

Media's Influence on Perception of Economic Policies in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie demonstrates how the media was deployed as a powerful instrument of cultural mobilization and propaganda by the Biafran government. One of the most apparent strategies used by the Biafran state was the crafting of a unified cultural identity, anchored in the historical and emotional memory of marginalization. Through state-sponsored radio and newspapers, cultural symbols like the Biafran flag, national anthem, and the iconic image of the rising sun were emphasized to instill a sense of pride and unity among the Biafran people. Adichie uses characters like Olanna and Richard to illustrate how deeply embedded these cultural narratives became, even when they conflicted with the harrowing realities of war.

Olanna's involvement with the Biafran radio station is instrumental in showing how the media was used to reinforce collective cultural identity. Her work, which involves scripting and delivering pro-Biafran messages, highlights the media's role in mythologizing the Biafran cause. Cultural identity becomes a weapon—one that is mobilized not just to rally support for the war but to redefine the meaning of what it means to be Biafran. In this context, the media is not just informative but performative: it performs identity by reinforcing who the “we” is in opposition to the “other,” the Nigerian state. This is poignantly illustrated when Olanna teaches her students about the Biafran flag:

She taught them about the Biafran flag. They sat on wooden planks and the weak morning sun streamed into the roofless class as she unfurled Odenigbo's cloth flag and told them what the symbols meant. Red was the blood of the siblings massacred

in the North, black was for mourning them, green was for the prosperity Biafra would have, and, finally, the half of a yellow sun stood for the glorious future (pg. 371).

Richard, on the other hand, offers a more detached perspective. As a white British man who becomes emotionally invested in the Biafran struggle, Richard serves as an interesting lens through which Adichie critiques the construction of cultural identity through the media. He is seduced by the romanticism of Biafra but becomes increasingly critical of the simplified binaries perpetuated by the media. His evolving stance reflects how the media narratives, though powerful, often flatten the complexities of cultural and political realities. This is evident when Richard observes the disparity between media portrayals and the actual experiences of Biafrans: “There was a hollowness to all the accounts, an echo of un-reality. So, Richard began to write a long article about the massacres”.

Moreover, the novel illustrates how Biafran media not only sought to forge a shared identity but also vilified the Nigerian state, portraying it as genocidal, immoral, and culturally alien. These depictions were not entirely fabricated, as the war was indeed characterized by brutal violence. However, Adichie emphasizes that the media exaggerated some of these realities to maintain morale and demonize the other side. The result was a media environment where truth became secondary to the urgent demands of survival and nation-building. This manipulation is further highlighted when characters confront the stark contrast between the media reports and their lived experiences:

“The radio’s positive encouragement (‘glowing news,’ it proclaims, ‘Biafran troops were flushing out the last remnants of the enemy’) gives way to the advancing Nigerian army” (pg. 371).

Through these narrative choices, Adichie underscores the media's profound influence on cultural perception during the Biafran War, revealing both its capacity to unify and its potential to distort reality.

Research Question Four: The Role of Media in Shaping Social and Economic Issues in the selected text:

In *Heroes*, Festus Iyayi portrays the media as a crucial mechanism for shaping public perception of cultural values and political policies during the Nigerian Civil War, often operating as an appendage of state propaganda. The novel critically examines how the media narratives are manipulated to mask injustices and reinforce a distorted sense of nationalism. Through the eyes of Dr. Osime, the protagonist, readers are introduced to the cynical realization that what is presented to the public is often a fabricated version of reality. The media in *Heroes* does not just report facts—it curates loyalty, defines enemies, and silences alternative viewpoints. This role becomes apparent when Iyayi writes, “The war, the media said, was a noble fight, a patriotic duty. But they never showed the decapitated children, the hungry villagers, the raped women” (p. 86).

Festus Iyayi sharply criticizes the media for sanitizing the brutal realities of war to maintain public morale and suppress dissent. Iyayi also explores how the media messaging was used to enforce cultural myths and nationalistic ideals that masked socio-political contradictions. Cultural issues, such as ethnic divisions and the marginalization of the poor, are glossed over in favor of an artificial unity propagated

through the state-controlled press. The slogan “To keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done,” frequently echoed in newspapers and radio broadcasts, is dissected in the narrative as a political cliché rather than a genuine call for unity” (p. 134). Dr. Osime’s reflection reveals this manipulation: “The media kept hammering on the need for unity while the leaders looted the treasury and sent the poor to die” (p. 135).

This underscores the dual function of the media: to pacify the masses with emotional appeals to cultural solidarity while concealing the self-serving interests of the elite. In the context of the Nigerian Civil War, the media played a key role in constructing a unified national identity. However, this identity was often artificially created and carefully controlled by the state to serve the political agenda of the ruling class. Festus Iyayi critiques this constructed unity, showing how the media narratives gloss over deep cultural divisions and instead promote a homogenized version of Nigerian identity. Throughout *Heroes*, the media is depicted as a force that rallies public support for the war by promoting nationalism and a sense of unity. However, this portrayal is far removed from the diverse ethnic and cultural realities that characterize Nigerian society.

For instance, Iyayi uses the protagonist, Dr. Osime, to explore the dissonance between state the media's portrayal of national unity and the lived experiences of ordinary citizens. In one notable passage, Osime reflects on the media’s narrative of national solidarity, stating, "The media kept hammering on the need for unity while the leaders looted the treasury and sent the poor to die" (p. 135). Here, the media’s portrayal of national unity is at odds with the reality of economic exploitation and war-induced poverty. While the government and military elite benefit from the war, the media

presents them as heroes defending the nation. The media, in this sense, becomes a tool of cultural manipulation, shaping the national identity to favor the elite and disregarding the struggles of marginalized communities.

Media's role in sanitizing the brutal realities of war and reshaping public perception of its legitimacy is another critical theme in *Heroes*. As the conflict between the Biafran secessionists and the Nigerian government intensifies, the media plays a pivotal role in crafting narratives that minimize the atrocities committed during the war. Iyayi critiques this by showing how the state media amplifies the heroism of soldiers and the righteousness of the war effort, while glossing over the horrific consequences of the conflict, such as widespread famine, civilian casualties, and the disintegration of societal structures.

In one instance, the media praises the Nigerian government's war effort as a moral and just cause, reporting that "the war economy is growing, and the people are making sacrifices for national survival" (p. 142). This portrayal is in stark contrast to the dire realities faced by ordinary citizens, who are suffering from poverty and starvation. Dr. Osime, who is critical of the media's distortion of the war's impact, observes, "The newspapers called them heroes. But who mourned the mechanic shot through the neck? Who remembered the schoolboy buried in a mass grave?" (p. 189). This critical statement reflects Iyayi's condemnation of the media's selective reporting, which obscures the full impact of the war on civilian lives.

The media's role as a propaganda machine is central to the novel's critique of state power. It is not simply a source of information but a tool for controlling narratives,

ensuring that the public remains supportive of the war and the political establishment. Iyayi's novel exposes how the media sanitizes the horrors of war to maintain morale, presenting the conflict as a righteous and necessary struggle, rather than acknowledging its devastating consequences for the civilian population.

The media in Adichie's narrative also serves to justify or obscure certain economic decisions made during the war. As the blockade of Biafra tightened, resulting in widespread famine and the collapse of basic services, the media downplayed or outright ignored these issues in favor of broadcasting messages of resilience. For instance, propaganda efforts included public announcements and print media that assured citizens of imminent international aid and painted starvation as a noble sacrifice for the greater good of Biafran independence. In this way, the media became complicit in rationalizing the government's economic failures. A character in the novel remarks, "They say we are hungry because we are strong, because we refuse to surrender" (p. 320).

Adichie does not explicitly delve into every economic policy, but the implications are clear: the media was instrumental in reframing suffering not as evidence of poor governance or mismanagement, but as a sign of moral superiority and national fortitude. This manipulation of perception allowed the government to avoid accountability and continue pursuing its military objectives despite the civilian toll. Richard observes, "The newspapers are full of victories, but the people are dying" (p. 330),

4.3 Discussion of Findings

Together, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes* show how media plays a dual role in shaping public perception: it fosters a collective identity and rationalizes policy decisions, often at the cost of truth and accountability. While Adichie focuses on the ways media is used to build a cultural narrative of unity, heroism, and resilience, Iyayi offers a more jaded view, emphasizing manipulation, fragmentation, and complicity in systemic oppression.

In both novels, the impact on public perception is profound. Citizens come to see their suffering as inevitable or even virtuous. Dissent is not just silenced—it is delegitimized. The media creates a reality in which war is not a policy choice with winners and losers, but a natural or even divine trial to be endured. By exposing these distortions, both authors reveal the dangerous power of media in wartime societies, especially when it operates without accountability.

The influence of media on public perception of cultural issues and policies, as portrayed in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*, is both far-reaching and deeply political. Through state propaganda, romanticized narratives, suppression of dissent, and selective reporting, media helps to construct a reality that supports war, division, and economic inequality. Adichie and Iyayi, through their distinct narrative strategies and perspectives, uncover the psychological and sociopolitical consequences of these media portrayals. In doing so, they invite readers to question the reliability of official narratives and to consider the ethical responsibilities of the media, especially during times of crisis.

The findings of this research reveal a critical representation of the media in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*. Drawing from the three research questions, this section discusses how the authors project media's operations and biases through literary strategies and thematic constructs. The analysis is informed by Agenda-Setting Theory and Postcolonial Theory, which collectively provide a robust framework for examining the media's ideological roles and implications.

The first research question explored the areas of the media operation and involvement in the two texts. In both novels, media does not merely serve as a background tool for communication; it actively participates in the narrative, shaping perceptions, framing realities, and orchestrating political thought. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the media is primarily represented through radio broadcasts and newspapers, which were critical sources of information during the Biafran War. These media forms disseminate both real-time updates and propaganda, revealing the tension between truth and political expediency. Biafran media, particularly the Voice of Biafra, becomes an ideological apparatus that bolsters nationalism and unity among the secessionists while masking the failures of the Biafran government. Adichie presents the media as a double-edged sword—it instills hope and national pride yet simultaneously distorts reality and suppresses dissent. This aligns with the principles of Agenda-Setting Theory, which posits that media influences public priorities not by dictating what to think, but by emphasizing what to think about. Through selective emphasis, the media in *Half of a Yellow Sun* shapes what the populace perceives as critical, thereby controlling the narrative of the war even when the actual events contradict the reported stories.

In *Heroes*, the media's operations are more overtly critiqued. Here, the Nigerian government utilizes media as a mouthpiece for state propaganda, suppressing dissenting views and promoting a singular, sanitized version of war. Iyayi's portrayal of state-owned newspapers and radio stations underscores the media's complicity in perpetuating militaristic and capitalist ideologies. The media's operation in this novel is multifaceted: it functions as a tool of ideological control, a mechanism for public deception, and a means to obscure economic exploitation. The narrator, Osime, a journalist, provides an insider's view of the media manipulation. Through his eyes, the reader sees how news is censored, journalists are silenced, and truth is sacrificed for political loyalty. The media in *Heroes* operates within a framework of repression, capitalizing on conflict to consolidate power and wealth at the expense of the masses.

The second research question focused on the narrative strategies used to portray media's effectiveness and bias. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie's use of a non-linear, multi-perspective narrative provides layered insights into media reception and bias. Through the diverse experiences of Olanna, Ugwu, and Richard, the novel captures how different segments of society interpret media messages. The interjection of fictional news reports and radio speeches within the narrative structure adds an element of realism, allowing Adichie to critique propaganda by mimicking its form. The disconnect between the optimism projected by the media and the characters' grim realities reveals the media's role in manufacturing consent and silencing suffering. Irony and juxtaposition emerge as key narrative tools. For instance, characters often express hope and belief in Biafran resilience just before confronting the brutal realities of starvation and defeat. This strategic placement highlights the dissonance

between media narratives and lived experience, suggesting that the media is not only biased but dangerously deceptive.

In *Heroes*, Iyayi employs first-person narration to give a direct and unfiltered critique of media complicity. Osime's introspective commentary allows Iyayi to explore the moral dilemmas faced by conscientious journalists under authoritarian regimes. Dialogue is another powerful tool, conversations between Osime and his colleagues expose the pressures to conform and the cost of dissent. Iyayi also uses symbolism to enhance his critique: the newspaper office, once a symbol of free speech, becomes a space of fear and compromise, reflecting the broader erosion of journalistic integrity. Additionally, Iyayi's graphic depictions of war scenes, often contrasting with the sanitized reports in state media, serve as a scathing indictment of media censorship. These narrative strategies reinforce the thematic argument that media is not neutral; it is a political actor shaped by power structures. Here, Postcolonial Theory provides an important interpretive lens, as the manipulation of media narratives reflects the continued struggle for control over knowledge production and historical memory in postcolonial societies. Iyayi portrays the media as part of the neocolonial machinery that perpetuates internal oppression and external dependency.

The third research question investigated how media influences public perception of social issues and economic policies within the context of the Nigerian Civil War. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, media's influence is seen in its ability to frame the war as a just and necessary struggle for independence. The Biafran media constructs a narrative of victimhood and resistance, which galvanizes support but also blinds citizens to internal failings and human rights abuses. The portrayal of food blockades, refugee

crises, and foreign diplomacy is filtered through a nationalist lens that prioritizes ideological loyalty over factual accuracy. Adichie reveals how such framing distorts public understanding of economic policies. For instance, the shortage of resources is attributed solely to Nigerian aggression, while the mismanagement of relief materials by Biafran officials is downplayed. This selective reporting fosters a form of cognitive dissonance where suffering is normalized or justified in the name of national pride. The result is a populace that is emotionally engaged but intellectually misinformed, a condition that benefits the ruling elite and prolongs the conflict.

In *Heroes*, the influence of the media on public perception is even more pronounced. Iyayi explores how state-controlled media creates an illusion of unity and moral clarity, concealing the economic motives behind the war. The Nigerian government uses the media to promote narratives of national survival and enemy demonization, masking the exploitation and profiteering by political elites and foreign interests. Osime's investigative journalism uncovers how economic policies, such as military procurement, resource allocation, and foreign aid, are manipulated for private gain. Yet, these revelations are suppressed or distorted in official media, leaving the public unaware of the true dynamics of power. The result is a manufactured consent that enables continued sacrifice from the masses while shielding the elite from accountability. The media, in Iyayi's depiction, is not just biased, it is an ideological apparatus that legitimizes class inequality and economic injustice.

The combined insights from both novels suggest that media during conflict does not operate in a vacuum; it is embedded in political, economic, and cultural structures that shape its function and output. Agenda-Setting Theory helps explain how the media's

selective emphasis on certain issues creates a hierarchy of importance that aligns with political goals. Postcolonial Theory reveals how the media narratives are contested spaces where national identity, historical memory, and ideological control are negotiated. Together, these frameworks illuminate the complex interplay between media representation and socio-political reality.

Furthermore, the findings underscore the emotional and psychological dimensions of media influence. Both Adichie and Iyayi show that media shapes not just public opinion but also personal beliefs, fears, and hopes. Characters in both novels respond to media messages with faith, skepticism, anger, or despair, demonstrating the intimate relationship between information and identity. The media becomes a mirror through which people understand their world, and when that mirror is distorted, so too is their reality. This emotional manipulation is one of the most potent forms of control, as it bypasses critical reasoning and appeals directly to sentiment and loyalty.

The discussion also reveals that while both authors critique media bias and complicity, their approaches differ. Adichie offers a more nuanced and ambivalent portrayal, acknowledging the media's capacity for both good and harm. Her characters wrestle with conflicting truths and are often sympathetic to the media's role in nation-building. Iyayi, by contrast, presents a more radical critique, portraying the media as inherently corrupt and ideologically compromised. His vision is more confrontational, urging resistance and reform. These differing approaches reflect the authors' broader political orientations and historical perspectives, yet both converge on the conclusion that media is a central actor in the drama of war and governance.

In conclusion, the discussion of findings affirms that media representation in *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes* is neither accidental nor superficial. It is a deliberate narrative choice that reveals the authors' critical engagement with issues of power, truth, and justice. By analyzing the areas of media operation, the narrative strategies used to depict media, and the influence of media on public perception, this study highlights the centrality of media in shaping both social issues and economic policies. The application of Agenda-Setting and Postcolonial has further deepened our understanding of how media functions within the broader dynamics of conflict and control. The media, as portrayed in these novels, is not just a storyteller, it is a battleground for ideology, a tool for domination, and occasionally, a voice for resistance.

End notes:

Heroes by Festus Iyayi

Half of a yellow sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Chapter Five

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to critically analyse the representation of media in shaping social issues and economic policies during the times of conflict and national crisis as depicted in Chimamanda Adiche's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*. Therefore, this chapter presents summary of the major research findings, conclusions of the study, recommendations, contribution to knowledge and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study examines the representation of media's role in shaping social issues and economic policies in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *"Half of a Yellow Sun"* and Festus Iyayi's *"Heroes"*. Using post-colonial theory and agenda-setting theory as a premise, this study investigates how media influences public perception of cultural issues and policies during the Nigerian Civil War.

From the study, post-colonial theory emphasizes the impact of colonialism on the cultural, social, and economic development of colonized societies. Agenda-setting theory, on the other hand, suggests that media has the power to influence public opinion by selecting and framing certain issues over others.

In *"Half of a Yellow Sun"*, Adichie portrays the media as a powerful tool for shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions. The novel highlights the role of media in perpetuating propaganda and misinformation during the Nigerian Civil War. Adichie's representation of media is critical, suggesting that media can be used to manipulate public opinion and justify violence.

While in *"Heroes"*, Iyayi portrays the media as a tool for social commentary and critique. The novel highlights the role of media in exposing the atrocities committed during the Nigerian Civil War. Iyayi's representation of media is more positive, suggesting that media can be used to promote social justice and hold those in power accountable.

Both novels highlight the effectiveness of media in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions. However, they also suggest that media can be biased and used to perpetuate propaganda and misinformation. Adichie's novel, in particular,

critiques the role of media in perpetuating violence and justifying the atrocities committed during the Nigerian Civil War.

Both authors use narrative strategies such as imagery, symbolism, and irony to depict media's effectiveness and bias. Adichie uses imagery to describe the devastating effects of war and the role of media in perpetuating violence. Iyayi uses symbolism to highlight the role of media in promoting social justice and holding those in power accountable.

Also, both novels suggest that media has a significant influence on public perception of cultural issues and policies. Adichie's novel, in particular, highlights the role of media in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions during the Nigerian Civil War. The framing of conflicts, economic crises, and human suffering in both novels underscores the media's capacity to shape public consciousness. Whether through propaganda or counter-narratives, the media's power lies in its ability to prioritize certain issues while sidelining others, influencing both policy decisions and social action.

5.2 Conclusion

Half of a Yellow Sun and *Heroes* serve as profound literary critiques of media's role in shaping social issues and economic policies in post-colonial Nigeria. Adichie and Iyayi underscore the dual nature of media as both a tool of oppression and a platform for resistance. Through the lens of post-colonial and agenda-setting theories, the

novels reveal how media representation influences public consciousness, historical memory, and socio-economic realities.

The study reaffirms the enduring power of literature to challenge dominant ideologies and offer counter-narratives that center marginalized perspectives. As media continues to shape global discourses, these literary works remind us of the importance of critical engagement with information systems to foster justice, equality, and inclusive development.

In conclusion, this study has examined the representation of media's role in shaping social issues and economic policies in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "*Half of a Yellow Sun*" and Festus Iyayi's "*Heroes*". The study has highlighted the effectiveness and bias of media in addressing socio-cultural and political issues during the Nigerian Civil War. The study has also examined the narrative strategies used by the authors to depict media's effectiveness and bias.

Finally, the study has investigated media's influence on public perception of cultural issues and policies.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Media practitioners should be aware of their role in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions.
2. Media practitioners should strive to promote social justice and hold those in power accountable.

3. Media practitioners should be critical of the information they disseminate and avoid perpetuating propaganda and misinformation.

4. Further research should be conducted on the representation of media's role in shaping social issues and economic policies in African literature.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study makes significant contributions to the understanding of media representation within post-colonial African literature. By analyzing *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Heroes*, it provides insights into the intersection between media, social issues, and economic policies. The research underscores the importance of critical media literacy in post-colonial societies, where historical injustices and economic exploitation are often perpetuated through media narratives.

The study also enriches post-colonial discourse by highlighting how African writers use literature as a form of counter-media. Adichie and Iyayi demonstrate that storytelling can serve as a means of resistance, challenging hegemonic narratives and advocating for social justice.

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This is to certify that the thesis by Kingsley Eziuche JIBUO with that matric number LCU/PG/005244 in the Department of Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State is in full compliance with the approved University Format and Style.

Signature

Date

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