
CRISES OF IDENTITY OF THE NIGERIAN BORN MULATTO: A POST COLONIAL-INTERTEXTUAL READING OF THREE NIGERIAN NOVELS

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Abstract

With its emergence in the eighteenth century age of empirical realism, the novel has consistently maintained its reputation as a vehicle for the realistic portrayal of everyday life experiences of ordinary men and women in lived human communities. This verisimilitude of real life experiences to issues portrayed in the novel is also encapsulated in the scholarship of the Nigerian Novel. The Nigerian novel has recently begun to focus its attention on the challenges of Nigerian born biracial children. This paper examines the manifestations of crises of identity in the lives of three biracial female children, popularly known as mulatto, half caste, Yellow or African profit, as portrayed in three Nigerian novels namely Chukwuemeka Ike's *Our Children Are Coming*, Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*, and Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Through the portrayal of everyday life experiences of this growing population of race with half Nigerian parents, who are domiciled in Nigeria, these three novelists have not only raised our consciousness on their membership of our shared identity in the Nigerian nation, but also, given an accurate insight to their birth circumstances, frustrations and bleak future. Using the post-colonial theoretical framework, as well as the qualitative research methodology, this paper brings to the fore, issues of cultural contacts, conjugal liaisons between Nigerians and Europeans, as well as the fate of the products of these inter-racial intimate relationships.

KEYWORDS: The Novel, Post-colonial, Mulatto, Biracial, Crises of Identity, Single Parenting, Pregnancy, Ike, Agary, Atta

Introduction

The trans-Atlantic slave trade which was quickly followed by the colonization of the less developed peoples around the world by Europe account for the early interaction and liaison of Europeans with people of other races, including Africans of various tribes and nations. Also, the attainment of socio political independence by people of these colonies did not end the already established relationships between the former colonizers and people of their former colonies as they soon found reasons to continue this age-long mutual relationship across continents and races. On the side of people of the former colonies, the reasons for sustaining this relationship after decolonization include the search for greener pastures, and the quest for knowledge in the white man's land. On the

side of the former colonizers, their reasons for continuing the traffic into the spheres of their former colonies after liberating them include the exploration of natural resources including oil and gas, search for raw materials for their industrial machines, as well as search for market for their manufactured goods. Implicit in this endless interface and flow of peoples across continents is the conjugal relationships which have continued to increase the population of children of mixed races, particularly those of white and black parentage. Among these are children with Nigerians as one of their parents. It is the circumstances surrounding the birth, upbringing and predicaments of these children as dramatized in three Nigerian novels that this paper sets out to examine. These predicaments include crises of identity occasioned by single parenting, poor parental

guidance and upbringing, neglect, rape, solitude, sexual exploitation and unwanted pregnancy. But before delving substantively into the major terrain of this study we shall examine the meaning and implication of major terms in our paper title. This will enable us understand their operation within the ambience of this paper. The questions then are: “What is the nature and function of the novel ” “What is post-colonial theory ”; “Who is a mulatto ”; “What is crisis of identity ”

The Nature and Function of the Novel

The novel which is the latest genre of literature, is generally defined as an extended fictional narrative written in prose. The major concern of the novel is the depiction of everyday life of ordinary men and woman in verifiable human societies. This preoccupation is usually achieved through the engagement of such novelistic elements as voice, character and setting. Prominent historians of the genre, particularly Arnold Kettle (1976), E. M Forster (1949) and Ian Watt (1957) insist on certain features of the novel. For instance, they are in tandem with the fact that realism is the major distinguishing feature which the novel has over previous narratives such as the old fashioned, escapist and unreal romances, exotic subject matter, and fantasies. In other words, they prescribe that issues portrayed in the novel must be as close as possible to reality. For instance, Watt declares that the novel “portrays all varieties of human experience...the novel's realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it” (11). Going further, Watt insists that the act of novel writing should be “the production of what purports to be an authentic account of the actual experiences of individuals” in lived human societies (30). Thus, the contemporary novel, particularly the Nigerian novel portrays real and typical contemporary people and situations with truth and accuracy, and not avoiding unpleasant or sordid aspects of the lives of characters. Novels which replicate in details the real world through fictional

narrative are known as realistic novels. In other words, realistic novels portray people across races and classes in situations that arise in ordinary life. The major reason for the engagement of these techniques in the conveyance of issues of everyday life experiences is to inform, educate and engender positive change in the society. Thus, due to their choice of subject matter, setting as well as delineation of typical mulatto characters who are easily identifiable in contemporary Nigerian society, we can locate our three primary texts, by Nigerian creative writers, namely *Our Children are Coming*, by Chukwuemeka Ike (1990), Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*, (2005) and *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary (2006) within the terrain of the realist novel.

What is Post-colonial Theory?

Post-colonial theory deals with issues of cultural contacts between the West and the less developed peoples around the world, and its resultant unequal relationships manifested in such unequal juxtapositions as the colonized versus the colonizer, the superior versus the inferior, the white versus the black or colored, the rich versus the poor, the haves versus the have not, the privileged versus the unprivileged and so on. It is on this premise that Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989) argue that the space and scope of the term post colonialism covers:

All the cultures affected by the **imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day**. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression (2). (Emphasis added)

Emphasis mine.

Thus, the major concern of Post colonialism or Postcolonial Studies is the intellectual examination of the economic, social, political and emotional effects on cultures and societies affected by this historical interaction or imperial process. It is important to note that over the years, many scholars have embarked on studies depicting the reality of this

relationship between the colonizers and people of the less developed world. Majority of these scholars pay particular attention to the relationships between the colonizers and colonized during and after decolonization. Notable scholars in these studies include Franz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Of particular interest in this study are their ground breaking works entitled *Black Skin, White Masks, Location of Culture, Orientalism* and “Can the Subaltern Speak”, respectively.

Alternatively, *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, defines postcolonial studies as: “an academic discipline featuring methods of intellectual discourse that analyze, explain and respond to the cultural legacies of colonialism and of imperialism to the human consequences of controlling a country and establishing settlers for the economic exploitation of the native people and their land”. Thus, post-colonial theory focuses its critical lenses on the legacies of the cultural contact between the West and the less developed peoples of the world. Of course, such legacies include the increasing population of biracial offspring of the whites and Africans, particularly Nigerians, as portrayed in our three texts of analysis.

Who is a Mulatto?

Though with multiple origin, the English term 'Mulatto' /noun / is derived from Spanish *mulo/mule*, which in turn originates from the Latin word *mulus*, literally meaning a person of mixed white and black ancestry. On another hand, some dictionaries and scholarly works trace the term to both Portuguese and Arabic origins. *Mule* in Portuguese means the hybrid offspring of a horse and a donkey. In Arabic, the term *muwallad* means being of foreign blood and local culture. Again, *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines the term in two senses: firstly as “the first generation offspring of a black person and a white person”, and secondly as “the offspring of a negress by a white man, or of a white woman by a negro – usually of a brownish

yellow complexion”. In South Africa, they are referred to as “colored”. And here, there are different species of colored people, including Cape Malay, and Cape Coloured. From the foregoing therefore, it is obvious that a Mulatto is a biracial offspring of white and black races, with the Mulatto constituting a third race who is neither white nor black. Thus, within the ambiance of this study, the term mulatto implies persons or characters in our three novels with one white parent and one Nigerian parent. In recent times the mulatto population has taken a steady rise in Nigeria. This population of persons in Nigeria has begun to attract the attention of Nigerian novelists. Thus, our major concern here is with the delineation of characters who are off springs of white and Nigerian parents in three Nigerian novels namely Chukwuemeka Ike's *Our Children are Coming*, Sefi Atta's *Everything Good will Come*, and Kane Agary's *Yellow- Yellow*.

What is Crisis of Identity?

Though variously defined, the term (noun) “identity” in this context, means two things, firstly a sense of personality, and secondly, a sense of belonging to a group. In everyday life, these two senses of belonging are contextual. They are both individualistic and collective. In other words, they cut across a variety of issues such as personhood, race, gender, class, religion, age, nationality, and ethnicity to mention but a few. On the other hand, an individual, or a group of people are said to be in a state of crisis when there is a conflict between the individual and the outer world, or between one socio-economic group and the other. In other words, a state of crisis denote “a condition of instability, in social, economic, political, or international affairs. It also implies an emotional or circumstantial upheaval/disturbance in a person's life. Thus, the phrase “crises of identity” in the context of this paper implies, the mulatto's challenges occasioned by conflicting personality of being both black and white. From their predicaments in these three novels, it is obvious that this group of persons/youth are unsure of whom they are, whom to trust and their place in the society as some of the

characters in our texts suffer such unpleasant experiences as deprivation of maternal/paternal love and guidance, abduction, rape, deceit, neglect and sexual exploitation, unwanted pregnancy, barrenness, homelessness, and much more, as we shall soon discover in the analysis of our three primary texts.

Analysis of Texts

In his enumeration of the possible causes of crisis of identity, Jaques Le Rider (38), identifies such issues as neglect, alienation, subjectivity and individualism as major reasons for both individual and collective/group crisis of identity. In the same vein, the predicaments of the biracial characters we encounter in our three novels of analysis stem from the dual fronts of parental and societal, neglect, alienation, and individualism. An in-depth study of these three novels reveals that both the parents and adult society of these differently located mulattos seek only their own wellbeing without minding the moral and psychological effects of their actions on these children of circumstance.

Chukwuemeka Vincent Ike's *Our Children are Coming* is a Nigerian novel published in the last decade of the twentieth century (1990). Here, the youth, including their biracial counterparts are neglected and alienated from their parents and their nation's scheme of things. When the youth set up a commission of enquiry to counter that constituted by the government of the day, the very first witness before the students' commission is a biracial young woman. In this narrative, she is born of an American mother and a Nigerian father. Chukwuemeka Ike, speaking through a third person omniscient narrator describes this frustrated character thus: "she is a mulatto or an African Proletarian in undergraduate parlance" (195). Her story before the commission deserves our pity. She is a product of an unholy concubinage which takes place in America some decades back. It is revealed that her Nigerian father had no intention of getting married to her

white American mother. For no fault of hers, she suffers because of her father's ingratitude and moral misconduct. She tells the commission called "National Commission on Parents Over Twenty One Years" that when she was barely one year old, her father abducted her from her American mother and took her to London, leaving her American mother who supported him financially in his time of need in an untold heartache. She tells the commission:

My illustrious father had had financial problems during undergraduate days in the U.S. My mother, who was also an undergraduate in the same university gave up her own studies to take a job and finance his education... one day, unknown to mummy, daddy ran away to England, taking me along (203).

In England, she is brought up with the lie that her American mother is dead. This unpleasant childhood, bereft of maternal care, makes her plan an early marriage in order to make up for her childhood deprivation of an ideal home. But unfortunately, due to lack of proper parental guidance, she falls in love with a fellow undergraduate who incidentally is the son of her father's colleague and enemy. The feud between the two fathers stem from the senseless rivalry over an erstwhile girlfriend. Consequently, these fathers use their children as scapegoats for settling old, dishonorable scores which they will not admit publicly. Thus, their neglect, as well as search for emotional support drive the two young people into each other's arms which results to pregnancy before graduation or means of livelihood.

In the context of Chukwuemeka Ike's narrative, the mulatto's identity crisis lies in her estrangement to her Nigerian father, and absence of her preferred American mother. Apart from the burden of pregnancy as a student, without care, and income, she is disowned by her father, thus making her homeless, and leading to a serious psychological crisis. She regrettably declares before the students' commission: "I was deprived of the opportunity of growing up

under the loving care of a mother ...” (207). In his judgment of this matter, Chukwuemeka Ike exonerates this character whom he simply identifies as a “mulatto” from any wrong doing. In a passionate sympathy for her, he blames her father and his likes for their selfishness and unpardonable neglect of their children, irrespective of race or skin color. Speaking through the voice of the sole commissioner of the students, he declares:

Before parents rush to met out punishment to their children for any offence, they should count their teeth with their tongues, as it were. They might discover that they have committed more heinous crime than their children but have been lucky not to have been found out (210).

From this mulatto's submission before this commission, it is obvious that her sympathy lies with the mother she never knew. She tells the commission:

I can't see myself ever being in a position to do what my father has done: allow a woman to sacrifice everything for me and then be so mean, shabby, inhumane, and irresponsible to her; bring up my own child on a foundation of lies and deceit; lead a wild sexual life without giving a thought to the implication of my profligacy... (207).

Implicit in this outright condemnation of her father is the fact that she would rather be an American, living with her mum, than a half Nigerian under the care of her uncharitable and morally bankrupt father.

A close reading of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* (2006) reveals that behind the glitz and glamour of being half white, lies the pain of abandonment, lack, deprivation, exploitation and solitude in the lives of majority of Nigerian born mulattos. Here, the author delves into an in-depth analysis of the origin, as well as numerous varieties and shades of biracial people found in the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria. She tells us through the protagonist narrator

Zilayefa: “Our crop of yellows was full of variety, colored by the Filipinos, the Chinese, the British, and the Americans who worked in the oil sector” (74). She aptly decries the fact that they are dejected and rejected by their white fathers, to whom they are nonexistent. She says that this has continually earned them the derogatory reference name *born troways*. (74). She equally emphasizes the fact that irrespective of their common predicament of biracial parentage, each one of them has a different pathetic story (74). Thus, Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* features three female biracial characters namely Zilayefa, Sisi and Emem.

The novel is set in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria with its ecological devastation, and human degradation resulting from oil exploration and human exploitation by multinational oil companies, their expatriate staff and other transient Europeans with whom there is no future with a Nigerian lover. This is because majority of them have families way back home in their various nations abroad, and they leave when they have to without looking back. In this novel, Kane Agary paints a vivid and insightful picture of the devastating effects of the unholy sexual relationships between these transient Europeans and young girls from this Nigerian oil rich region. The story centers on the life of a mulatto whose future is threatened as a result of a devastating oil spillage which destroys her single mother's farmland, which incidentally is their only means of livelihood. Unfortunately, the multinational company responsible for the degradation refuses to pay compensation to the community, including her single mother. This loss is even more devastating due to the absence of a male figure in their lives who should at least cushion the negative effects of this devastating loss. The name of Kaine Agary's protagonist mulatto is Zilayefa. She is the first person omniscient narrator of the story.

Zilayefa is fondly called “Yellow-Yellow” by the folks in her hometown due to her skin color as an offspring of a black woman and a white man. It is from this nickname that the

novel derives its title *Yellow Yellow*. "Yellow- Yellow" is born in a world where young girls seek to escape their poverty by looking to white men to rescue them. It is this unbridled quest for material wellbeing through prostitution with transient white men that results in the increasing population of biracial children in this region. In order to further emphasize the immorality surrounding the conception and birth circumstances of these group of people in this society, people often identify them with such derogatory names as "African-profits", "Born-troways", "ashawo-pickins", "father-unknowns" (171). Right from the beginning of the narrative, Yellow emphasizes the fact that she is the product of a run-away Greek father named Plato Papadopoulos, and a Nigerian (Ijaw) mother named Ebieré. Yellow narrates vividly the low virtue lifestyle of majority of young women from the Niger Delta region in their quest for the Whiteman's attention and love. In this regard, she tells us that: "Hundreds of girls leave their villages to go to places like Warri and Bonny to get their chance with a whitey" (168). It is within one of such casual intimate relationships with a "whitey" that Yellow is conceived. Concerning the embarrassing circumstance surrounding her conception and birth, she tells us:

My father was a sailor whose ship had docked briefly in Nigeria about one year before I was born. After months at sea, he was just happy to see a woman and would have told her anything to have her company. The woman he chose was my mother... who had just moved to Port Harcourt from her small village with visions of instant prosperity. She met my father at a disco and fell for him ... I don't think my father ever told her that he would marry her, she just assumed that he would. Instead, he left Port Harcourt without saying good-bye. ... There was no message; he was gone, leaving behind his planted seed in my mother's *belle* (7).

With this sudden disappearance of her Greek father even before her birth, Zilayefa

is raised by a single Nigerian mother who has no picture/photograph of her father. She also tells us that her mother's parents had died when she was young, and that she has no brother or sister. So, basically, her mother is her only family. Despite the protective grip of the single Ebieré over her only child Zilayefa, and her determination to give her the best she could afford in a village setting, the loss of means of livelihood to oil spill, as well as the vacuum created by the absence of a father figure in Zilayefa's life exposes her to many regrettable experiences, including heartbreak, sexual exploitation and unwanted pregnancy by men who are underserving of her innocence. Firstly, while still in the village, she is heart broken by the unannounced disappearance of her new found Spanish friend Sergio, and secondly, in Port Harcourt city by an Admiral who is old enough for her father. Her sexual escapades result to unwanted pregnancy, thereby exposing her to almost the same mistake as her mother.

Thus, Zilayefa's identity crises stem from solitude caused by the nonexistence of any family relations and what she aptly describes as "my colorless existence", as neither white nor black (p. 21). It is this mindset of loneliness in the midst of people, and equivocal personality that incite her desperate desire to trace her father. Though this desire is often frustrated by her mother's tactful avoidance of any detailed discussion concerning him. But her mother's attitude, according to her, "does not erase my desire to know more about my other half" (108). Hence she constantly ponders on such questions about her father as "Where was he Did he ever come back to Nigeria Did he ever think of my mother Would I know him if I saw him " (19). It is this desire to trace her father - Plato Papadopoulos that endears Yellow-Yellow to any male figure whom she feels could fill the paternal vacuum in her life. Sergio the Spanish antique-furniture dealer is one of such characters. Though he soon proves that he could neither fill the vacuum in her life, nor lead her to the whereabouts of her runaway father by his sudden disappearance from the village soon after getting endeared to

Yellow. Even after their chance meeting in the city of Port Harcourt, despite his sexual escapades with her, continues to prove that he has neither any clue to her father's whereabouts, nor any ticket for a brighter future for the poor Zilayefa. This is evident in his constant reminiscences of his so called cherished family of a wife and twenty year old twins in faraway Spain, whenever he is with Zilayefa.

Again, when Yellow escapes from the village to the city of Port Harcourt to start a new life, not even the privilege of enjoying the opulence in Sisi's home could relieve her of the desperate need for a protective male figure in her life. It is this desperation that drives her into the arms of a retired aristocrat named Admiral Kenneth Alaowei Amalayefa, a man who is old enough for her father. Admiral is a divorcee with a penchant for sleeping with very young women. On her first night with him, Yellow is convinced that she has finally met the man to take the place of a father she never had in her life. Concerning Admiral's regal carriage which further endears her to him, Zilayefa tells us:

Whenever I saw him, he was dressed in traditional attire and had a little bounce when he walked. In my eyes, he looked so dignified. If I had the luxury of creating a dream father, he would definitely have come out looking like Admiral (120).

She further relishes this experience thus:

I felt a deep longing for him, not because of the comfort Emem hinted at, which was money, but because I was hoping that the relationship will give me a taste of a close paternal affection that I never had (138).

Unfortunately, Zilayefa's sheepish admiration and acceptance of this father figure soon makes her vulnerable for sexual exploitation. At first, Admiral pretends to care so much about her education and wellbeing. He lavishes her with the sort of money she has never handled before.

Having gained the confidence and friendship of Yellow, Admiral soon turns back to prey on her virginity and innocence. He impregnates her in the process and encourages her to get an abortion. When Yellow tells him about her pregnancy, he wastes no time in ordering her to "go to Island Clinic and ask for Dr. George. Tell him you need a pregnancy test, and if you are pregnant, he will help you get rid of it" (162).

Determined not to return to the village with the shame of unwanted pregnancy like her mother, or fall out of the favor of her host family in Port Harcourt, Yellow eventually procures an abortion. She anguishingly tells us during the abortion scene, "My life was out of focus ...

I cried but could not feel sorry for myself because I have made the choices that got me into trouble. I had allowed myself like an empty canoe to drift along with the flow of the river (177-178). The narrative ends on a bleak note for her. Yellow is yet to acquire her dream university education. Rather, she is in a state of pain, regrets and hopelessness occasioned by the shedding of blood of an innocent fetus whose conflicting paternity lies between her two sexual partners namely Sergio and Admiral.

Yellow's colleague and friend, Emem is also a biracial character. She is the product of a Spanish father and a Nigerian mother. Revealing the collective innermost pains and shame of her likes, Zilayefa confesses that many of them never knew their fathers and were born of a crop of yellows...full of variety, coloured by Filipinos, the Chinese, the British and the Americans who worked in the oil sector" (74). She further reveals that their mothers were women of low virtue whose major preoccupation was the scramble for any man with white skin. According to her, their mothers are the set of black women who bleach their skins which betray their innermost feelings, from embarrassment to excitement... they do this for the purpose of sex (36).

In Seffi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* (2005) Sherifatu (Sheri for short) is the

second major character and a childhood friend of the protagonist Enitan. In this narrative she is the oldest child in the polygamous Bakare family. She is a mulatto. This is because she is an off spring of a Nigerian father of Yoruba extraction, and an English mother who is long dead. Due to her inter racial parentage, she is fair skinned and usually teased and taunted by her black peers. She is not the only mulatto with this challenge. The narrator confirms this when she declares that “People her colour got called Yellow Paw-Paw or Yellow Banana (21).

By the time we meet Sheri at the beginning of the narrative, she is portrayed as an indecently dressed eleven year old girl with her top hanging above her navel. She lacks good morals. She tells her friend Enitan that aside of the unfortunate loss of her biological English mother, she had also lost her paternal grandmother with whom she spent her childhood. She tells her “The only grandparent I'd known was my father's mother, who is now dead (19). It is now obvious that Sheri lacks any form of maternal guidance, care and love in her life as her father is rarely available. Her father's two wives who are identified after the names of their first born children – Mama Gani and Mama Kudi, as Muslim wives are usually in doors, attending to their biological children. Thus, Sheri grows up as a rebellious young woman who lacks any form of moral decorum. Enitan tells us that “Sheri knew all the rude sayings: mouth like a duck, dumb as a zero with a dot in it. She was the spoilt one. Sharp mouth and all” (20). Hence, she is considered a corrupting influence on her peers, and no family in their neighborhood wants their children in Sheri's company, including Enitan's family. Thus, when she strikes a rhythm of friendship with Enitan who lives next door, she is treated as an unwanted guest. For instance, Enitan's family gardener Baba is usually seen in a hot chase of Sheri, scaring her away from Enitan's house with machete in the air (19). Concerning her mother's dislike for Sheri and disapproval of their friendship, Enitan also tells us that “My mother will drive her

out if she ever saw her. But Enitan absolves her friend of responsibility for her utter lack of decorum. She tells us: “She was funny and she was rude, but that was probably because she had no home training” (20).

Despite the efforts of Enitan's family to separate them, their friendship builds, as they continue to devise ways of seeing each other. Unfortunately, during one of their outings to attend a party, Sheri is raped by a gang of three men. The rape results in pregnancy which Sheri attempts to abort in a very crude way with a clothes hanger, making herself barren in the process. Thus, her barrenness as well as her witness of the ugly experiences of her father's wives influence her decision to live as a mistress to a Muslim Brigadier. Brigadier Hassan is married to two wives with children. Thus, in exchange for the good life given to her by the brigadier, she plays a caring role to him, tidying, cooking, cleaning, and satisfying his sexual appetite. Unfortunately, irrespective of her dedication to him, Brigadier Hassan brutalizes her with the least provocation. After one of such brutalities in the hands of the brigadier, Enitan gives her a catering business idea which eventually becomes her family's means of livelihood after the demise of her father. Her success in this regard makes Enitan constantly refer to her as a strong woman.

Additionally, as a grown woman, Sheri recalls the fact that her crises of identity dates back to her childhood days when she was always teased and taunted by her black peers both in school and at play. She recounts her desperate actions geared towards acceptance by her peers during one of such unfortunate experiences at the age of eight. “Fed up with a boy at school who laughed at her features, she ran home one afternoon, and cut off her hair, trimmed her lashes to stubs and rubbed brown shoe polish on her face” (159). The taunting boy turned out to be Wassiu Shittu.

In the light of the foregoing, a discerning reader of Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*, may not be wrong to declare that Sheri deserves our pity due to her strings of predicament occasioned by no fault of hers. Indeed, the early loss of both her biological

mother and paternal grandmother, poor moral upbringing, lack of good education like her friend Enitan who is a lawyer, the loss of her fertility due to a crude but painful abortion occasioned by her rape by a gang of three ruthless men, her harassment by Enitan's mother and gardener, her inability to marry and have children like her friend Enitan, her brutality by her sugar Daddy Brigadier Hassan irrespective of her dedication to him, all culminate to her identity crises as a young woman. Sheri herself locates the root of her predicaments in her family set up when she declares:

But look at the way we were raised, two women in one house, one man. Mama Kudi's turn to cook for Daddy, Mama Gani's turn to sleep with Daddy. A young girl shouldn't grow up seeing such things. But that is my family. ... Our lives could have been better" (298).

Conclusion

The predicaments of Nigerian born mulattos have begun to attract the attention of Nigerian novelists. As such, this paper has so far examined the representations of these biracial children with half Nigerian parents, popularly known as "mulattos" in three Nigerian novels, namely Chukwuemeka Ike's *Our Children are Coming*, Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, and Seffi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*. Our in depth study of these three Nigerian novels has revealed the unfortunate common pattern of experience of this specie of Nigerians. In other words, we have discovered that our three novelists have not only traced the circumstances surrounding the conception and birth of these Nigerian children of circumstance, but also raised our consciousness on their membership of our shared community of the nation. They have also raised awareness on the need to give them the much needed sound moral upbringing, protection and sense of belonging. Chukwuemeka Ike's Mulatto also known as "African Profit" suffers abduction, deceit, deprivation of

maternal care, poor moral upbringing neglect and abandonment by her Nigerian father whom she considers uncharitable to her American mother. Kaine Agary's mulatto who is the protagonist narrator, fondly known as Yellow- Yellow is an offspring of a runaway Greek father Plato Papodoupulus and a Nigerian mother of Ijaw extraction Ebiere. Her desperate search for the absent father figure in her life exposes her to vulnerability and numerous regrettable blunders. In this narrative, she suffers solitude, sexual exploitation by men who are old enough for her father, and a very painful abortion. Seffi Atta's second major character Sheri is the product of a long dead English mother and a polygamous Nigerian father of Yoruba extraction. We are not told the cause of her mother's early demise. By the time we meet Sheri at the beginning of the narrative, she is portrayed as a cultureless, abusive, and indecently dressed eleven year old girl. Due to her lack of decorum, she is perceived as a corrupting influence on other children in her neighborhood, particularly by the family of her friend Enitan. In this narrative, Sheri suffers the loss of her paternal grandmother who should have filled the vacuum occasioned by the early demise of her biological mother. She also suffers rape, crude abortion, bareness, and inability to marry. Instead, she becomes a mistress to Brigadier Hassan who brutalizes her at the least provocation, irrespective of her dedication to him.

Thus, through the engagement of the realist elements of the novel genre, including setting, character and voice, these three novelists have not only dramatized the alienation, struggles, and frustrations of these three Nigerian born biracial characters, but also indicted their parents and the Nigerian adult society at large. They have also reminded us of the traditional African communal culture in the task of child upbringing. Like the clay in the hands of the potter, Nigerian born mulattoes deserve to be protected and molded into responsible and respectable adults and leaders of tomorrow.

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