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## (Re) Examination of Psychological Identities in Selected Kenyan Youth Fiction

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper examines the fragmented psychological identities among the youth in Kenyan youth fiction. It intends to find out whether psychological developmental stages play an important role in identity formation of an adolescent as portrayed in the selected texts. Identity means the way human being answers to the query that how are they. This question may be asked overtly or covertly. This question also may be asked at personal or at a collective level. Even this question is very applicable to be asked to oneself also. Obviously, it can be asked to others. Different schools of thoughts are present in the identity literature. It generally emphasized either personal or social contents. It also highlights psychological or social processes. This paper highlights that identities are inexorably both psychological and social. This paper also focuses on the process how they are formed, maintained, and changed over time. However, in this paper, I also intend to examine the extensive and interconnected nature of social identity and psychological identity content, and then consider the confluence of psychosexual developmental stages, relational and individual process by which psychological identities are formed, maintained, and change overtime. In order to discuss these issues effectively, the study deems it fit to begin by conceptualizing the notion of psychological identity in order to lay foundation for the debate.*

**Keywords:** Psychological identities, psychosexual, phallic stage, psyche, Oedipus, Electra

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Conceptualizing Psychological Identity

What then is Psychological identity? This question can be answered etymologically by looking at both the positive and the negative sides of the term identity. Peter Weinreich (2013), states that one can regard the categorizing of identity as positive or as destructive. According to Weinreich psychological identity is that which relates to self-image (one's mental model of self), self-esteem, and individuality.

Weinreich's definition is appropriate for this study as it highlights the key words of self-image, self-esteem and individuality as a composite of the human psyche and contributes to the understanding of human social being.

This in essence begs the question 'Who are you?'

We often face this question as a human being or a member of a social group. These questions have many associated psychological and social processes. It references about a complete well-being. The main two types of well-beings are psychological and physical well-being. Our choices, goals, experiences, relationship with others are highly associated with these.

The way people are answering to this question reflects the psychological and social process involved in reaching, maintaining (Vignoles, Schwartz & Luyckx, 2017). The answer also reveals 'unitary' or 'multiple', 'real' or 'constructed', 'stable' or 'fluid', 'personal' or 'social', and in many other ways that often seem to contradict each other (Vignoles et al, 2011). It indicates attempt at integration (Wetherell, 2010). There are two main aspects: 1. How identities be experienced as unitary, stable and real? 2. How what would it mean to conceptualize identities as simultaneously psychological and social?

This paper deals with the last question. It aims to discuss the construction of 'new identification' among the youth in Kenyan youth fiction.

### 2. (Re) Construction of 'New Identification' among Youth

This section attributes much of the study to adolescence and their (re)construction of 'new identification' as reflected in youth literature. The debate regarding childhood and adolescent identification is often formulated in relation to Erik Erikson's notion of ego-identity (Erikson, 1968). Richard Steven's states that, '...This is the time of physical and social changes where developing a sense of *identity* becomes the focal issue' (Richard, 1983).

As per the opinion of Erikson (1968), Ego growth is being completed at the end of adolescence in the three steps: introjection, childhood identifications and identity formation.

The essence of this debate is envisaged by analysis of youth literature fiction. One such fiction is Kamencu's *To Grasp at a Star*.

Kamecu's adolescent characters in *To Grasp at a Star* are in their fifth stage of development according to Erikson's theory, which suggests that they are supposed to be in the process of identity formation or have completed it. 'Muddled Transition' which is the second story in *To Grasp at a Star* reveals a lot about the psychosocial growth of Malaika and her close friend Muthoni in terms of identity formation. A reader may erroneously see Muthoni and Malaika in binary opposition; they may look at Muthoni as being innocent, holy and genuine with her behavior whereas condemn Malaika for being a criminal and a drug addict.

A reader equipped with the knowledge of Erikson's theory checked that Muthoni is not a saint to be admired by many and Malaika is not uniquely, ridiculous if not evil. The story 'Muddled Transition' has very little in terms of plot: Muthoni, a village girl, joins Nairobi City Girls high school from a village school in Meru. The story opens when Malaika is smoking a cigarette and she is encouraging Muthoni to do the same yet Muthoni has never smoked before. 'Come on, just one puff. Your nerves won't be so much on edge then,' Malaika cajoled. Muthoni accepted the proffered cigarette, dragging deeply on it as she inhaled the bitter smoke (pg.53). This bit gives the reader some information about the relationship between the two girls. A relationship of manipulation of which we see Muthoni being directed to do things she had never done before. She now smokes cigarette to please Malaika, an indication that she is in a state of identity confusion. We are informed by the author that, '[t]he moves to the big city was for Muthoni a milestone in her life' (pg. 54). Furthermore, we are told, '[t]he cultures shock had taken her by surprise; things were so different between the two places: Nairobi and back in their Njiru village... In truth, most girls in her class were city-bred children and they considered her an outsider. 'Mshamba' (pg.55). The term 'Mshamba' is derogative to a girl who comes from the village. For a youth who is of Muthoni's age it would mean uncivilized and therefore being ostracized by her schoolmates. This is detrimental to her identity. This is interesting and not long before does the reader have the chance to learn that Muthoni is striking friendship with Malaika in order to adopt the urban identity.

This new identity that Muthoni acquires is comprised of both social and individual values. Such acquisition of identity is explained better by Erikson when he contends:

The adolescence process...is a conclusively complete only when the individual has subordinated his childhood identifications to a new kind of identification, achieved in absorbing sociability and in competitive apprenticeship with and among his age mates. These new identifications are no longer characterized by the playfulness of childhood and the experimental Zest of youth: With dire urgency they force the young individual choices and decisions which will, with increasing immediacy, lead to commitments 'for life' (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson emphasizes the seriousness of the crisis in this stage. For instance, Muthoni's interaction with Malaika and her colleagues in school is at a larger scale now, which brings about the idea that she has to assimilate their way of life in the school by developing an identity that is approved by her schoolmates. She has to undergo various process in order to reconstruct her identity from the known village girl to a city girl. This means that she has to abandon her previous identification and acquire a new one. Thus, we are told:

Most girls of the class were city-bred children and they considered her an outsider. 'Mshamba' they'd call her behind her back- Kiswahili slang term for country bumpkin. Matters were made worse by the fact that she spoke English with a slight *Kimruu* accent, which the rest of the girls made fun of. She sometimes muddled up her L's and r's and when asked to read out a text in class, she would mix them all up, sending her classmates into peals of laughter. 'The liver lan light across the load,' she'd read out instead of 'The river ran right across the road.' This muddle only happened when she was nervous though (pg.55).

The title 'Muddled Transition' is good enough to explain Muthoni's confusion in her new environment as stated in the passage above. Muthoni is depicted as a youth in search of 'new' identity in a hostile environment. She is an outsider who is looking for acceptance in an already closed in-group. This in essence means that formation of psychological identity is greatly influenced by social identity formation. We therefore look at Muthoni is an epitome of such youths who fall victims of psychological identity formation in order to find acceptance in a new social group and in the process, she is ostracized:

Still, she couldn't understand why they were so unkind. What was the big deal about accent? They always understood her clearly enough. It was ironic that while in her village school she had been thought of as one of the best in English; here, things were very different, as she seemed poor in it in comparison with the rest who'd grown up speaking it. The most popular clique of girls wasn't willing to let her in their circle. They modelled themselves on their favourite television and movie stars, even acquiring American accents. Therefore, as an unsophisticated, un-styled girl from the countryside, she just didn't fit in (pg.55).

Muthoni only finds solace in Malaika Salim who accepts her as a friend but contrary to this introduces her to drug abuse. Cigarette smoking further expounds her problems hence making her have multiple identities. First as a student, then as a villager in an urban school and as a budding drug addict. Her academic performance also drops thereby listing her as a dull student. This is what brings us to a potential conflict of her different identities and we are tempted to find out whether 'possessing' multiple identities can be considered a stable or desirable state or whether possessing these multiple identities is just problematic. To answer this question, we need to understand Eriksonian theory on childhood.

As I mentioned earlier, Erikson (1968) mentioned a developmental trend. In Erikson's theory, the term 'childhood identifications' refers to emotionally charged self-representations. Overtime, such interactions result in the child identifying himself or herself with valued attributes or roles of the adult. Thus, a child might identify with her father's generosity, an older sister's community leadership, a teacher's erudition, or a comic book hero's courage. A child might also be recognized and labeled by his mother as artistically talented and by his peer as sophisticated (Schachter, 2013).

Muthoni's interaction with her English teacher Mrs. Nzavi indicates that her teacher recognizes her as a talented creative writer. This is revealed through a dialogue after Mrs. Nzavi concludes the lesson.

'So far have you come on, writing those stories we talked about?' Mrs. Nzavi asked Muthoni. Muthoni squirmed uncomfortably. In truth she had not written a single piece after their conversation. The thought had slipped from her mind, as she had always been busy hanging out with Malaika (pg.77).

Once again, we realize that Muthoni does not want to associate herself with the values attributed to her by her English teacher, that is, as a creative writer. We learn that as much as Mrs. Nzavi is trying to help her tap her talent, she is ignorant and adamant to follow her initial passion for writing. Nzavi also discovers that Muthoni has become sloppy in her school work. This sloppiness is enhanced by her association with Malaika Salim. A girl who is described as, 'Rather carefree, happy-go-lucky and free spirited' (pg.71). A reader of this text notices that Muthoni apes Malaika in order to safeguard her ego.

This again adds to her multiple self-representation or rather aspirations of the self. We can view this as building blocks of her future identity- rather than as her identity itself. Here we can argue that Muthoni's identifications are functionally limited due to their possible immature rigidity, their unrealistic nature and their unorganized relationship with other identifications such as her schoolmates and her close friend, Malaika. This lack of organization may cause confusion or incoherent action. That is why Erikson posits that a developmental process normally ensures with a goal of transforming these (multiple) identifications into a (singular) identity.

The process of transforming multiple childhood identifications into a 'whole' identity involves the reexamination of some are affirmed, and others rejected. Those identifications that following such exploration continue to be recognized as significant need to be reworked into what Erikson calls a 'configuration' of identifications resulting in the individual constructing a 'unique and reasonably coherent whole' (Schachter, 2013).

Muthoni's trait as a writer is accepted by her teacher but her mother disapproves of her behavior of coming home late after school. On the other hand, it is her doctor who discovers her complications due to drug abuse. Her escapades with Malaika and her experimentation with drugs only lands her into trouble and then she is admitted in the hospital. The lady doctor says,

'You have been in a thirteen-day coma, a complication resulting from pneumonia and a reaction between some hard drugs and alcohol which you took' (pg. 89) ... 'Apparently you and your friends had been out partying. You had too much to drink. In fact, you mixed all kinds of drinks, smoked Marijuana and swallowed three amphetamines. That combination reacted in your body and you collapsed and fell into a pool where you swallowed a lot of water (pg.90).

Muthoni begins the process of self- reawakening after the ordeal described above. Falling into the pool and being in a coma for thirteen days sends shockwaves in her mind making her realize that her life is at stake. She therefore has to work hard to redeem her image with the support of her parents, teachers and her doctor. We can still argue that Muthoni needs psychosocial support in order to attain psychosocial maturity.

Psycho-social maturity is being considered as the formation of a reasonably 'whole' identity.

To illustrate how the process relates to identity formation, I refer to character traits of Edgar Kazungu in *Death Trap*.

Bill Rutto's *Death Trap* gives an account two high school students -Edgar and Andrew who are classmates at Rangeland High school. The book reveals the weird behavior of the two boys. We learn that

They came from different backgrounds but they were soon united in comradeship when they became part of a thin band of student rebels, all boys. They bullied others, though in the most subtle manner. (pg.3).

They engage in mischief in which they have recruited other boys. Edgar is depicted as one who 'had become the group's undisputed boss' while Andrew as one who 'had become Edgar's errand boy'. The fact that Andrew is an 'errand boy' is reflective of a young boy without proper standings in the school and one who can only survive with the help of Edgar. 'Edgar's money had attracted Andrew like a magnet' (pg.3). Just like the case of Muthoni and Malaika, Andrew's case is of Manipulation. He is manipulated by Edgar who sends him to run unlawful errands from time to time. Edgar on the other hand is governed by his ego. His hesitance to join members of other groups in the school is simply borne out of arrogance. We are told, 'He hated to be challenged; he never entertained arguments or competitions (pg.3). His jealous and hatred of other boys is a conscious choice which has further implication that he is egocentric and that he has such a strong belief that he belongs to his own social class. 'He was a bright student, and the captain of the school rugby team ... studying bored him'. We as the readers of *Death Trap* are able to see that he has multiple identification which makes him a fanatic. Altogether this means that all his identity is invaded by the norms of so-called 'boss' or 'Captain'.

Boeree states, should not be understood as blind obedience to and total acceptance in spite of the imperfections in her society (Boeree, 2006). It must be added that by society one should necessarily mean the society the adolescent belongs to. Another sign of his fanaticism is implied in the second chapter of the novel where is described as who:

... Managed to command respect among his peers. This was because a part from being clever and physically strong, he had the money to spend freely. His father gave him money weekly... (Pg3-4).

The other sign of fanaticism is in the passion of engagement crime without being noticed.

The school authorities had not been able to connect the mysterious happenings, which sometimes rocked the school, to any of the students or Edgar's group because the gang had what they called a code of silence (pg.14).

The involvement in crime and having control over the group are mere instruments of his struggle to look like a 'Boss', or 'Captain'.

Like most fanatics, Edgar is in need of approval of the group since his existence is only justified in the group. That is why '... he shared his money with his friends. Money did much good to his standing'. (pg.4).

One other symptom of fanaticism Edgar displays is the refusal to accept the validity of any other point of view other than his or that of his group.

Edgar hated to be challenged; he never entertained argument or competition. He was also a jealousy boy, and would even get violent if that served the purpose (pg.3).

His manner of argument, devoid of his personal values, too, demonstrates how fanatic he is. Edgar relies completely on group norms and the judgment of the authorities of the group. When Hannah Mulandi writes a play entitled ABC, Edgar feels undervalued because the play seeks to portray a society where corruption, poverty, drugs and violence are prevalent. The play is to be performed before the students as the main audience. Being her classmate, Edgar believes that he can write a better play than Hannah Mulandi. He says, 'I can't stand that girl... That play's nothing; if I mean business, I could write a better one! (pg.8). Edgar's pride and egoism can be looked at as a youth with a maladaptive tendency of fanaticism.

Looking at Edgar's behavior from an Eriksonian perspective, it can be noticed that author is describing Edgar's multiple identifications with a variety of social roles that seem desirable to young adults.

Towards the end of the text, Edgar Kazungu decides to turn over a new leaf even though throughout the text, he has been among the twenty-five students of Rangeland High School who are also members of a clandestine gang which operate in the school (pg.172). After the accident in Baringo, and after the amputation of his leg, Edgar decides to forego mischief and work hard in school.

When the father drives him back to school, he is given an opportunity to address the students. He addresses the students through a maxim and from a commonsensical 'adult' understanding that manages to shape the son's multiple identities into one.

'A Chinese saying, I'm told, might be useful to you. It has some wonderful words and a philosophy behind it: 'the roots of education are bitter, but its fruits are sweet.' I don't need to add anything to that because if you choose to take a short cut and pursue sweet things while in school, you will end up the loser' (pg.187).

The advice above may help the youth relinquish their bad identification and form a more unified and stable identity. James Marcia states that successful identity formation requires that 'One must relinquish the fantasized possibilities of multiple glamorous life-style' (Marcia, 1980, p.160).

### 3. Representation of Psychic Pain and Quest for Paternal Identity

Quest for identity refers to the existential struggle of man in order to attain meaning and value in his life. It is an inward journey, which is also a journey for existence, a search for roots and a struggle for self-expression. A careful survey of Kabui's novel, *was Nyakeeru My Father?* reveals such quest for identity as an innate in the protagonist. Kabui not only portrays the alien experience of the protagonist, James Kirika, but also delineates various means and methods that the character adopts in his quest for paternal identity. Even if Kirika undergoes traumatic psychic experience due to the fact that his surrogate father denounces him because of his poor performance at school, he refuses to give up his quest for self-identity. We notice that this search for truth or quest for identity gives him a different dimension, depth and renders him problematic both to the nuclear and extended family.

Moreover, Elizabeth Kabui and Florence Mbaya portray their protagonists as young people who are at critical stages of identity formation. The two authors along with many others have highlighted the young people as being problematic as one can promptly remember the traditional Bildungsroman of the nineteenth century represented mainly by *Great Expectations* and *David Copperfield* of Charles Dickens.

As per Christine Griffin (1997), G. Stanley Hall is the pioneer in this field. He had highlighted many concepts of adolescence up to the 1980s. The 'Storm and Stress' model had provided a firm's biological foundation. Adolescence is seen as a potentially distressing time for all young people, owing to the inevitable hormonal upheavals associated with puberty that are assumed to set the young people apart from the world of 'mature' adulthood' (18-19).

Griffin further asserts that the representation of youth has changed from 'Youth as trouble' to 'Youth in trouble'. This has been noticed since 1980s. New thoughts, new understandings have been formed for youth. Race, ethnicity, gender, class and ability have become the basis on which these have been formed. Adolescence is still being considered as one of the problematic periods from a different perspective.

For instance, in the year of 1980s severe conflict arose due to mismatch between biological and social definitions of youth. The crisis had surpassed all the problems of unemployment, lack of education or poverty. Like the age of 18. This age biologically considered as an adult age. But still in many countries child at this age depended on his/her family (Griffin, 1997). This contradiction, among many other conflicts of adolescence, creates an identity problem for many young people, hence leading to creation of multiple identities which we can term as fragmented. Therefore, in the quest for a unified identity the youth undergoes some psychic pain.

Psychic pain is defined in APA dictionary of psychology as the intolerable pain caused by intense psychological suffering (rather than physical dysfunction). The key words in this definition are 'psychological suffering' and then we ask ourselves what causes these psychological sufferings among the youths? Then we come back to the realization that the main focus in this chapter is on the inner working of the character's mind and how they lead to the formation of fragmented psychological identities.

Elizabeth Kabui's novel therefore is singled out as a text that presents incidents of life experiences of young adolescents dealing with issues of sexuality, violence and social struggle and identity crises. Thus, the central thrust of this study is on the psychological impact of these aspects on the individual's psyche. With these in mind, this study is important as it provides a textual analysis of Kabui's central character and how he deals/ or unable to cope with contemporary social concerns often resulting to psychological turmoil and fragmented psychological identities.

The study therefore gives prominence to the development of the plot and Kirika's psychological turmoil as he travels to Sheeba. The journey to grandmother's rural home symbolizes a search of identity for Kirika and socio-cultural rooting for his siblings Victor and Penny. Through the plot of this text, we see the psychological turmoil experienced by the protagonist. Throughout the journey, Kirika is depicted as immersed in his own world of anguish and violent psychic pain that erects a psychological iron curtain between himself and his family. Forlorn and desolate, he cages himself in a cocoon of loneliness and silence for he did not, '... even want to talk. I just wanted to sit there and think over the predicament I had suddenly found myself in. But much as I tried to think, I thought of nothing else other than the fact that the man I had called father for fifteen years was not my father?' (7). Kirika's thought motif is a depiction of the psychic pain he is undergoing; for he is at the centre of the quest for his paternal identity and therefore he has the task of finding out and regain his biological identity and a sense of belonging which are at the core of his pride and self-value as a human being. Kirika is just an epitome of many a youth in Kenya who experience the problems of psychological forms of fragmented identities. These problems arise as a result of numerous factors which includes: single parenting, unwanted pregnancies at school, abandonment of children by their parents and disintegration of families all of which leave children tormented and plough through the world without a proper sense of identity.

To unravel the mystery of identity, Kirika is left with no option but to confront his mother head-on, an option he thinks well given to his precarious situation. His direct question on identity coerces the worst concern from his mother who thinks that the protagonist could be suffering from a kind of neurotic stress. Her concern is highlighted by her question when she wonders, how bad is your headache...is, she probably thought I was running a fever and getting delirious' (12). To her mother, this is the most unusual question whose acidic edges tears at her like a bombshell. This aspect that characterizes the major conflict is however solved by the mother's candid answer that rests Kirika's ghosts of maternal heritage. At least he is not an adopted child. However, the puzzle of his paternal heritage hovers over his head like the sword of Damocles and cries for resolution. This is the answer he sets out to unearth. The clue given by the mother takes the protagonist to Sheeba hospital formerly known as Ngirigasha hospital on a wild goose chase after his identity. Here Kirika takes us through a journey punctuated with nerve-wracking suspense, hope and disillusionment. The rough terrain within the corridors of the hospital is epitomized by the circuitous directions he gets from, 'The watchman...of: 'turn left then right again and then you will see an iron door' (41). These unclear directions get the protagonist all confused. He searches without success after which he concedes that by then, 'I was far back up the corridor and, on my way, out of the hospital' (42). His failure for the second time to unravel the puzzle of his identity creates a new twist in the suspense that informs the continuity of the plot. As the plot unfolds, Kirika encounters a substantial clue on his identity from his grandmother through her delirious apostrophe for in the presence of Kirika, the grandmother thinks that she is conversing with her late husband. In this 'conversation', she tells her 'husband' about Wario (Kirika's mother) and her situation that the protagonist thinks relates to her mother's past. For Wario had promised to:

'Come but has not come yet... That daughter of ours. God has been kind to her... Her boy has grown big... he is almost a man now. I gave him the cow... That Nyakeeru who refused to take responsibility, he would be ashamed of himself if he saw the boy. But he will see him one day for he is still here, in charge of the tea. Did he think we would not survive? Did he think that we would crawl on our own knees?' (50).

This earth-shattering clue obviously re-invigorates Kirika's search for his paternal roots. In this scenario, grandmother's apostrophe acts as an inadvertent symbol of revelation. It is through it that the shadowy character of Nyakeeru is revealed. It also introduces us to a new complication in the plot embodied by the character of Nyakeeru. Nyakeeru, whose nickname symbolizes very brown or white complexioned man, is the new puzzle that Kirika must solve to unearth his identity.

After sleepless nights of harrowing psychological torment, Kirika finally meets the said Nyakeeru (Mr. Wendo) in a fit of agonizing cross-purpose. Kirika's urgency to meet Nyakeeru contrasts sharply with the other's brutal avoidance. Kirika is just a boy who Nyakeeru takes for a miserable wretch searching for a job at the tea factory where he is the manager. He cannot fathom the audacity of the boy, for he thinks that Kirika is defiling his authority and class that derives from his hallowed position as a tea-factory's manager. Through vivid description, Nyakeeru's brutality descends on our consciousness like a thunderbolt. The protagonist graphically describes his meeting with Nyakeeru by demonstrating how he anxiously

Waited with baited breath as I watched the now familiar car approach. I ran to the middle of the road and frantically waved it to stop ... The driver's door opened and someone stepped out. It was Nyakeeru! It was Nyakeeru! It had to be him because he was of extremely light complexioned .... what is the matter boy you want to die? Get off the road ... Hakunakazi? ... He got back to the car swerved past me and drove off, a cloud of dust following him (69).

The above graphic description, punctuated with dialogue between the protagonist and Nyakeeru, reveals the latter as brutally cold towards the youth he considers desperate and beggarly. The brutal encounter completely obliterates the protagonist's hope of unmasking his eagerly sought paternal heritage. Furthermore, the encounter symbolizes the prejudice and malice that some contemporary leaders bear against the youth in Kenya. This is in the sense that some leaders who occupy various social, political and economic institutions in Kenya, have a tendency to hog all the trappings of power and influence. On the other hand, the youth are left wallowing in a state of powerlessness and abject poverty. The jobless youth is treated as an underdog and no one is ready to listen to them or offer job opportunities. This is one of the contemporary issues that Kabui strives to address in *Was Nyakeeru my Father?*

Although Kirika is completely deflated by Nyakeeru's inhumaneness, his tenacity is revealed by his relentlessness in search for identity. Kirika is not the kind of person that gives up so easily; he traces Nyakeeru's house by cunningly befriending the latter's daughter, Stacy Wendo. In this endeavor, his plans however backfires as his quest to know who actually his father is turns to vengeful loathing which he unreasonably projects on Stacy Wendo, Nyakeeru's daughter. His

new quest is revealed through his thought motif. As they were coming from the church, Kirika describes how he, 'walked besides her wondering what next to say ... I had no plan. All I knew was that I would make her pay for her father's deed' (80). Kirika's new purpose of intended revenge against Stacy Wendo is an indication of shifting goal posts. The obsessive pain he suffers as a result of his perceived bastard situation and the acrid viciousness Nyakeeru directs at him when they meet face to face blurs his rational judgment where he perceives Stacy as a mirror image of Nyakeeru. To him, Stacy's persona represents Nyakeeru's projection of himself and therefore his intended revenge on Stacy would be tantamount to punishing Nyakeeru, the object's father.

In a deeper sense, Kirika's quest for revenge is a reflection of the anger that afflicts many youths as a result of being neglected by the society. Consequently, they rebel against the society as a way of punishing it. This may result into delinquency. Through this novella, Kabui is therefore trying to highlight the effects of irresponsibility in the society which she views as a ticking time bomb waiting to explode if not ameliorated in time.

Kirika's dwelling so much on the causes of his psychic pain only exacerbates other than ameliorates his problem. This is true when the hidden purpose of examining the possible cause of his trouble is to assign blame and attempting revenge.

To justify blame, the young adults tend to magnify pain. Attributing blame then stimulates anger to punish the perceived offender. Biologically, the association of pain/ vulnerability with anger is almost irresistible; anger has survival-based analgesic and amphetamine effects – it temporarily numbs pain and provides a surge of energy and confidence to ward-off threat. But each repetition of this process reinforces perceived damage and vulnerability by making defense seem more necessary (Stosny, 2013).

Kirika does not succeed in his mission for his holiday is cut short by his mother's insistence that the protagonist and his siblings go back to the city. Kirika tells us that his, 'Mother called on Friday evening and told us we would be traveling back home the following day' (87). Consequently, he does not get the opportunity to carry his vengeance. Later on, we see Kirika abandoning his new found mission. On his journey home, he is seen saying in retrospect:

I had, realized that after my initial disappointment at not getting an opportunity to be alone with her, I no longer really thought of Mr. Wendo or of my bitterness and hatred towards him. Furthermore, I no longer connected Stacy to Mr. Wendo, and the urge for vengeance had greatly subsided. ... I kept wondering as we traveled back home. Would I still carry out my plan? (87).

The above introspection is a reflection of Kirika's change of mind. His dilemma on whether he would carry on with his malevolent mission is palpable. He is torn between his quest for revenge and the apparent change of heart which is evident in his utterance. His blame-anger congeals into chronic resentment which now comes out automatically as a defensive system geared to protect his ego that has been made fragile by the perceived need of protection. Here again, it is worth noting that to the resentful, painful emotions are not motivations to heal and improve but punishments inflicted by an unfair world. They try to control what other people think by devaluing or coercing them, thereby reinforcing the vulnerability they seek to avoid.

The protagonist is attacked by a mob outside Mr. Wendo's compound where he has gone to search for Stacy to tell her about his paternal heritage. When he sees his brother however, he 'started running towards him' (134). While he was running, people must have thought him the criminal that must have bombed Mr. Wendo's home. Consequently, they are seen raining kicks on him. This is graphically captured thus, 'Someone else kicked me hard on the stomach and soon I could not tell where the kicks were coming from. Something dark covered my eyes, and for the pain I felt, I was certain it was blood. Soon everything was black' (135). The above episode is as climactic in nature as it is cataclysmic for the way it abruptly disrupts the plot as well as the lives of characters such as Kirika and Wendo. The incidence forces Kirika to abandon his revenge mission for he is hospitalized in a state of unconsciousness whereas Wendo is forced to resign from his job as a tea factory's manager and to move to a new corner of the country to avert future disaster. The episode causes Zach to undergo moral redemption for he is seen reporting to the police how one of his friends had perpetrated the heinous crime. Consequently, Zach turns away from the bhang smoking gang and is seen gearing for a positive change in life. At last he has attained personal identity and autonomy in life.

Kirika's discovery of his paternal identity marks the denouement in the plot development. This is after discovering that his father had been taking care of a young man by name Ngece for fifteen years. As a result, he is seen confessing: For the first time it occurred to me that I could have been mistaken. Could my parents have been talking about Ngece? ... Now at the end of that journey I had found my answer; I knew who my father was' (138).

It is at the end of this book that he realizes his folly orchestrated by rash conclusions. He has now discovered for the first time that he could have been mistaken. This is the discovery that finally slays the dragon of his identity crisis.

In comparison to Kirika's characters, the study also illuminates the fragmented psychological identities of teenage girls in youth fiction in respect to Abigail's characters in *Sunrise at Midnight* and Catherine Njeri in *Confessions of an Aids Victim*.

#### 4. Fragmented Psychological identity of teenage girls in young Adult Fiction

In a typical society, the girl child is always seen as a weakling as well as vulnerable. She is prone to exposure and to chances of being attacked or harmed either physically or emotionally. The girls are viewed as defenseless, helpless and invisible. In the novel *Sunrise at Midnight*, there is no exceptionality as Florence Mbaya uses given girl characters at different angles to highlight their different psychological problems they experience during puberty and adolescent stage. Mbaya, through her protagonist Abigail, portrays the vulnerability of an adolescent girl to sexual mistreatment and

harassment the girls experience during this crucial stage of growing up. They are preyed on by men who take advantage of them, make them pregnant and leave them helplessly. This leads to traumatic experience and a state of identity crisis.

The unexpected pregnancy takes toll in her emotional and physical being, suffering unacceptance, as well as rejection from friends and her close family members. Thomas, her elder brother, the first born in the family and three years older than Abigail, is among the first people to reject her. We are informed that:

As Abigail had feared, he had been brutally stern when he heard about her pregnancy. 'Take responsibility for your own actions! 'And, don't ever tell people who may not know us that you and I are related!' (p.20)

Thomas shows disappointment with her little sister. He treats her with scorn and trepidation. This open rejection serves to humiliate her and prove to her that she has become a disgrace to the family. Out of this Abigail suffers psychological torture. Her image has been tainted and she is yet to acquire a new identity – identity of a young mother and of a school dropout. To redeem her identity as a school girl she asks her mother a blood curdling question that: 'Why can't I just have an abortion? That way, I can go on with school, and not have to miss out.' (p.20). Erika, Abigail's mother, is disgusted and warns her against procuring abortion. Abigail therefore becomes an epitome of many teenage girls who become victims of early pregnancies and drop out of school. Such teenagers are judged harshly and ostracized from the main stream society. They are viewed as social misfit and counted amongst the immoral in the society yet the bigger responsibility lies with the parents who abdicate their duties to teachers or peer groups.

Abigail is equally rejected by her friends:

Abigail had quickly run short of friends once Benji had arrived on the scene. When it had become widely known that she was pregnant, some had simply taken off while a few still visited her, and brought what they thought were solutions to her predicament. Sabina, for instance, had offered to 'help with the small problem.' Abigail would forever remember her for the way she had put it. 'I can fix that little problem for you...' she had affirmed (p.21).

At this point Abigail's naivety is once again revealed. Her thoughts are easily swayed by a false friend who advises her to go for abortion. She is psychologically tormented and her restlessness is portrayed in the manner in which she blindly follows Sabina to go and try abortion. Their arrival at Soni Town Clinic shocks her by seeing a range of illness that is treated by the clinic: malaria, heart ailments, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, impotence, and many others (p.23). What shocks the reader most is the description of the clinic and the activities carried there in:

A big dark fly flew noisily from an inner room and perched on the dusty table. Two more followed, humming gaily as they moved from object within the room. After a while, a hefty masculine woman carrying a plastic bucket with the lid partially open walked through the door. Abigail could see that the bucket which was accompanied by a swarm of flies contained bloodied items. Some blood drops dripped onto the floor as she walked out and disappeared through the rear exit. Muffled moans now issued from the inner room, followed shortly by painful shrieks and what were obviously muffled orders to silence. There descended in the outer room an eerie, uneasy silence (p.24).

The description above is more of a revelation to the public that many teenage girls procure abortion in order to proceed with their education without the hindrance of bringing up the child. The abortion is done in dingy, unhealthy and unhygienic environment that may lead to contracting further infection hence the death of the victim. The bloodied bucket accompanied by a swarm of flies attests to the fact that the 'clinic' is filthy and malodorous. Through speculation, one might conclude that Sabina is one of the girls who might have procured an abortion in this place. She is well versed with this environment and does not see anything unique. At first Abigail finds Sabina's offer exciting and captivating because once she gets rid of the 'thing', her vomiting will stop and life is bound to return to normal. She will also have a chance to go back to school. But this is not the case. After witnessing a bucket with bloodied items with a swarm of flies and hearing cries and moaning of other girls within the clinic she becomes psychologically tortured. She feels a painful upsurge from deep in her stomach and disappears from the clinic (p.23). Her conscious does not allow her to abort and her confusion is more of a reflection of 'youth in trouble'. It is more of an experimentation with life. In this case Florence Mbayi intends to inform her readers of the side effects of abortion. The moral lesson that one can deduce from this explanation is that committing an abortion is a sin as her mother had warned her earlier and it is equal to murder. Her deviant behavior portrays the rebellious nature of the youth as they seek to free themselves from the yoke of fruits of mischief.

Mbayi satirizes the idea of abortion for teenage girls and addresses the tension between those who encourage them to take part in this vice and the practical personal issues that is often less clear in the public sphere, in ways that are nuanced and insightful. Strikingly situated as a means to outline not only the current issues surrounding abortion debate, *Sunrise at Midnight* also highlights the lived experiences of women within a patriarchal society, and in so doing also clarifies the practical implications of abortion. The depiction of abortion in the story, is reflective of current social views espousing multiple perspective that allow young adult to find a place in the text.

Mbayi in this case ridicules human weakness with intention of challenging the society to abandon the loathsome practice of abortion and to embrace positive virtues. This observation implies that when a human weakness or folly is satirized, the victims find themselves in dual positions. First, they laugh at the humorous portrayal of the weakness, but on the other hand, they are challenged by the interest criticism. However, when these weaknesses are trounced by good, they see a premonition of what happens to a person with such weakness. This can cause a shift in perspective and ultimately change in behavior.

By emphasis we can argue that *Sunrise at Midnight* presents a kind of study focusing on abortion that is psychologically problematic for female youths, and how these issues can be solved or alleviated through counselling. In this text Mbayi also seems to argue that a counsellor is needed to guide the youth and he/she must be open to evaluating the contributing factors of early pregnancies and abortion for that matter. Many girls may experience psychological distress before and after abortion. The experience of abortion is individual, tormenting and must be treated as causing trauma to the youth.

Motherly care is equally of importance to the teenage girls who fall pregnant. Erika, Abigail's mother, portrays the extent to which motherhood is a necessary, God-granted part of a woman's life. Being a staunch Christian, Erika discourages Abigail from procuring abortion. What is worthy to note is that the thread of the cultural mainstream in Kenya is woven with Christian values. Although anti-abortionist sentiment takes many forms, both pacifistic and violent, and religious traditions are not entirely consistent, on the abortion issue many Christian traditions agree (Tone, 1997): abortion is morally wrong. Mother Teresa's words at the 1994 National Prayer Breakfast (1994) have been reproduced in the main-stream media for a worldwide audience: "The greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child... and if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?"

Mbaya seems to insinuate that when we focus on the right to life or the right to choose, or we discuss abstinence vs. sex education in schools, it becomes clear that possibly the most frightening element of the abortion question is the lack of real, clear and accessible information about sex, sexuality, and birth control. Unfortunately, the only option given to young adult is abstinence.

Abigail's mind swings like a pendulum between the idea of abortion and carrying the pregnancy. She finally resolves to retain her pregnancy. In this case Mbaya depicts her as an epitome of many teenage girls who endure carrying the pregnancy for nine months and deal with all the complications associated with it. She is traumatized and stops going both at school and in the church. Her psychological problems lead her to regrets as she remembers her guidance and counselling teacher advising them against boys. She had always said, 'Don't let boys touch you. That is always the beginning of trouble, but if you should find yourself that situation run!' (p.15)

Ultimately, the disorder of Abigail's surroundings seems to mirror her own internal turmoil. She joins a group of bad girls after she gives birth to Benji. These girls mislead her to a 'hotel' in Soni town. Indeed the 'wildness' of Soni town and Eden 'hotel' is a source of frustrations to her and many other youths. It can be remembered biblically that it is in Eden that Adam and Eve committed the original sin. Abigail's unstable mind and frustration is a symbolic of what sin can cause to one's life. This serves to comment on the confusion and deep psychological collapse endemic to a people that have no stable, recognized place in society like Rita and Jacky. Soni town is a ruin: a ruin both psychologically and physically to the teenage girls. It is a town with brothels and fake clinics for conducting abortion: a town where drug abuse and alcohol is taken by both adults and under age youth. It is an embodiment of urban centers that create mental distress and general hysteria to the youth. The environment in Eden 'hotel' is symptomatic of the social ills committed to our young adults. It is a reflective of a complete breakdown of morals in the postmodern society.

By apologizing to her mother, Abigail seems to articulate the profound sense of psychological depression, personal worthlessness and social despair that has plagued her in the recent past. This self-emptying helps her acquire a stable identity in future and even grapple with the contradictory nature of her current identity and her subsequent inability to conform to her mother's demand. The fragmented nature of this character's behavior enables Mbaya to comment on the mental instability resulting from the experience of post modernity, and its oppressive forces. Being an adolescence, Abigail requires a role model who should help her reconcile her clashing selves. And also help her embrace contradiction by acknowledging that being a teenage is nothing more than experiencing the 'precarious balance between union and division, order and disorder' (Onstendorf, 1998).

Through Florence Mbaya's we are able to see how an adolescent young adult is stigmatized especially once she drops out of school due to early pregnancy. Mbaya informs her readers that when a teenage girl falls pregnant her dreams for education should not be shattered. She should press on no matter the circumstances she undergoes. Abigail is subjected to mental torture when she makes a second attempt in her secondary education; joining All Saints School leads to scorn, despise and stigmatization. She suffers rejection and her self-esteem lowered by the treatment she receives at the school. She loses her identity as a student and acquires a new identity of a 'mother in school'. Discrimination and prejudice only lead to psychological fragmentation of her identity that leads to more confusion and wanting to drop out of school again. We are told her colleagues molest her by calling her names:

'Oh, and do you know what we call a girl like you?' The others broke into taunting sniggers. 'Mama-Baby!' they shouted at Abigail as she walked away. 'Your breasts must be full; you actually smell of milk. Yuk!' one girl spat in exaggerated disgust (p.40).

Teenage girls who rejoin school after giving birth are met with a lot of rejection and dejection. Their ego is tainted and this impacts negatively on their identity formation. They feel out of place hence distance themselves from the crowd and finally drop out of school again. Abigail is met with such hostility and name calling. She is branded as 'Mama-Baby', 'big breast' and smelling of milk. Such humiliation and misdemeanor out rightly affect Abigail psychologically and her concentration in class is doomed. She finally tells her mother that, 'I will not go back to school, and that is final.'

Such irrational decision leads to further psychological torture. She becomes a disappointment and a disgrace to the family. Thomas, her elder brother, threatens to throw her out of the family but she stays put. Her mother on the other hand is devastated and insists that Abigail must go back to school. We as readers sympathize with Abigail because her only brother and mother are not ready to listen to her predicament and instead put more pressure on her that leads to her rebelliousness. Mbaya aims to highlight the importance of education to a girl child despite the difficult circumstances they go through. Lack of education leads to misery as we are told Erika, Abigail's mother, dropped out of primary school due to early pregnancy. Erika is in distress because:

She had lost her first-born son in infancy, had had two miscarriages after Abigail, and she had lost a one-day-old little girl under circumstances that she could not understand. After this, Reuben, her husband of twenty years, had left home without a word. Now, how was she going to explain to relatives and friends where she was when her sixteen-year old was having under-age sex? (p.18)



Erika regrets for having dropped out of school at a tender age and she wouldn't wish her daughter to suffer the same. Despite the rebelliousness nature of the youth, we see Erika as a mother who is determined to build the future of her daughter by providing the basic education that many girls may be denied. She juxtaposes her life back then with the present experiences of her daughter and feels that 'Education is the key to life'. For her:

She had no idea what it felt like to re-join a school after getting a baby. She herself had married Reuben when she had got pregnant in school, but in her time such a misdemeanor had called for outright expulsion. She had been forced to abandon her education and get married, which she had regretted her whole life. She did not want Abigail to end up as she had, and going back to school was the only choice. 'I know it is tough, Abby dear...' she ventured when her daughter kept quiet (p.41).

*Sunrise at Midnight* glorifies 'getting a good education for the girl child' as the answer to society's problems without discussing the reasons for social inequalities. While young adult female protagonists may no longer be depicted as 'damsels in distress' (White, 1986) a great many, are still portrayed as 'Selfless beings who conform to expected gender-appropriate roles, even at the expense of their own desires,' (Rubinstein-avila, 2007). In *Sunrise at Midnight* Constance is portrayed as educated attractive, responsible, ethical, powerful and assertive young lady while Rita and Jacky are portrayed as promiscuous, idle and semi-illiterate. Abigail on the other hand is depicted as sexually passive and powerless. *Sunrise at Midnight* therefore reveals Abigail's moral urgency to share the lessons she has learned. Her experiences become the story of the novel and not the underlying problems of social class and economic injustice that the novel obliquely depicts. Having undergone through fragmented psychological turmoil she finally redeems her image and embarks on her academic journey. We then shift our focus to look at another form of psychological identity dubbed Oedipus and Electra complex.

### 5. Oedipus and Electra complex and the Confusion of Sexual Identity

As per the theory of the Freudian psychoanalytic theory, psychological development of personality is getting affected by earlier traumatic experiences. Different stages of Freud's psychosexual stages of development must also take cognizance. Each stage is related to the other stages (Corey, 2013, p.69). Hence to identify one's identity one should examine aspects that have influenced the individual from birth up until adulthood as these should give insight as the cause of the behavior.

The psychological theme resented in the oral stage is dependency. Child is dependent on its father and mother for his/her hunger. The second stage is the anal stage. It occurs until three years of age. Norms in society can be learned in this phase. Louw highlighted that children originate sexual pleasure from excretory functions. They are able to know that the way they behave is the reactions they get from people (Louw, 1988).

The third psychosexual stage and development is the phallic phase. 'If this stage is successfully negotiated then the child identifies with their gender role and acquires the superego' (Abbott, 2001).

'Group psychology and the analysis of the Ego' play important role in the Oedipus complex (Freud, 1998). Like the Oedipus Complex, the Electra complex also causes inner conflict in the child's life during this stage of development. Early experiences play a key role in the development of personality. It helps to form the behavior of person in future life. Freud (1953) posits that fixation at the phallic stage develops a phallic character. For instance, in *Sunrise at Midnight* Abigail develops unconscious sexual attraction towards her father but represses her feelings. She idealizes her dad as the object of her desire and reveres him as a figure of strength and power in her life. She believes that it is only her father who understands her problems unlike her mother who doesn't spend time with her. It is her father who helps her with her homework and encourages her to work hard in school. Abigail directs all her affection towards her father but later she fails to garner his attention.

When her father one day leaves and disappears from home, her life takes a nose dive for she remains with no one to turn to in times of need. A matter that deepens her feeling of rejection and low self-esteem. Throughout the phallic stage of psychosexual development, Abigail develops sexual attraction to her father and she expresses penis envy. As she fails to cope with the phallic phase successfully, Abigail remains trapped in the phallic stage, resulting in what Freud terms as a phallic-fixation. This phallic-fixation disrupts her progress towards the next stages of psychosexual development and leads up to Electra Complex.

To resolve her Electra Complex, Abigail suppresses her libidinal desires for her father and seeks a male friend that compensates her father's love and for the penis loss through falling in friendship with Richard. However, as an adolescent, she neither finds love or affection to match her father's. Richard makes her pregnant but bearing a male child does not also resolve her Electra complex since she is still a school girl and the male child cannot replace her father. Richard disowns both Abigail and the child. Thus, the unresolved complex has an impact on Abigail's psychological, narcissistic and emotional maturity. This in turn affects her identity. She is now a young mother devoid of a father and from a boyfriend. We can still argue here that she is unable to overcome her father's love. A situation that is described by Freud as Phallic-fixation. Due to phallic-fixation she advances aggressive behavior towards her mother and develops a confused personality that leads her to mingle with Rita and Jacky who are school dropouts.

By choosing Richard as a boyfriend, Abigail intended to have someone who understands her feelings. However, Richard fails to become the fulfillment of her desire and ambitions, a matter that affects her psyche, causing her a psychological torture and dropping out from school when Richard finally impregnates her.

In the same text we see that Thomas, the brother to Abigail, deeply loves his mother that he obeys what his mother says and does what his mother wishes him to do. He does everything to please his mother. He assists her with her small business by selling in the shop. In Thomas' eyes, his mother is hardworking and after his father leaves home without a word, he has the responsibility to take care of his mother.

We can argue here that the love of the son and mother is blameless, but it gradually develops from Oedipus complex into a kind of mother fixation. We learn that

A couple of months after the loss of the baby, Abigail's father had not returned... Abigail had been in class eight, due to write her KCPE, while Thomas had been in Form Two at All Saints High School. A few days later, Abigail's mother had informed them that their father had sent word that he was at the coast, hunting for a better and bigger job. 'He will invite us there once he finds the job', she had told them (p.30).

Thomas' reaction to this statement portrays anger and hatred towards his father. 'How could he just leave without a word? Doesn't he care about us? I hate him!' Thomas had said, and marched out of the room (p.31). His words may hint to us that he regards his father as a rival and one who doesn't take up his fatherly responsibility. In contrast Abigail detests her mother and loves her father. We learn that

In truth, Abigail needed her father much more than she was letting show. Not only because he was easier to go to for help with her studies, but also because he was simply fun to be with (p.31).

Thomas realizes the gap that has been left by his father and steps in immediately.

'I guess then I have to step into Dad's shoes and do that on his behalf,' Thomas had said. He had indeed become the man of the family, and his mother especially relied on him, even seeking his advice on many issues (p.35).

The family's discussion on whereabouts of their father, who had been away for three years, elicits heated argument. Thomas states that he would ask his father a lot of questions if he suddenly appeared and through Constance, their cousin, we learn once again of Electra and Oedipus complex. Constance states that

It was obvious from the tone of his voice (Thomas) that the questions he had for his father were not the pleasant type. Constance reflected on that for a moment, wondering why it was that the boy-child always invariably sided with the mother in moments of emotional disagreement, while the girl-child was always forgiving towards the father. Was that God's way of maintaining some kind of equilibrium in society, where He provided protection for the mothers through their sons and accommodation for fathers through their daughters? (p.110).

It is obvious that Thomas hates his father and loves his mother while on the other hand Abigail loves her father and dislikes her mother. Here we can talk of both father and mother fixations. Thomas believes that his mother is his sanctuary and sunshine that never declines and therefore he has to look for a job in order to support her.

Both Abigail and Thomas still remain trapped in the phallic stage, resulting in what Freud terms as phallic-fixation. This phallic fixation disrupts their progress towards the next stages of psychosexual development and leads to Electra complex and Oedipus complex respectively. Thus, the unresolved complex has an impact on Abigail's sexual and emotional maturity. In other words, we can say that Phallic-fixation also contributes to create her aggressive behavior and confused sexual identity. This then leads us to analyze Catherine's psyche in terms of Freudian Psychoanalysis in *Confessions of an Aids Victim*.

## 6. Catherine's Psyche in Terms of Freudian Psychoanalysis

In *Confessions of an Aids Victim*, Catherine Njeri as the protagonist suffers rejection from her father at the phallic stage. We learn from the text that Catherine comes from a family of four boys and herself as the only girl. Her father owns a bookshop in Murang'a town and is largely absent from home. Catherine explains that

He (my father) does not stir any memories in my early childhood. When I started being aware of him, he was always the cold unfriendly stranger who sat quietly in an arm chair with one eye on the newspaper and the other on troublemakers. Mother never appeared to be happy whenever he was around and us children went to lengths to keep out of his sight (p.12).

Catherine is tormented by her father's rejection but suppresses her psychological pains. Her father is cold and unapproachable. He is quarrelsome and does not engage in any conversation with her children. Her love towards the father is met with aggression and the father's hostility towards the mother is denigrating. The father is a man full of himself and does not entertain any nonsense in the family. Catherine therefore lives with psychological depression and repression of love for her father. This turns out to hatred towards the father. Thus, we are told, 'I started regarding her in silent loathing' p.12). Though after sometimes her repression makes her to work hard in class.

It is good to understand that repression does not eliminate one's painful experiences and emotions; rather, it gives the painful childhood experiences the force by making them the organizers of their current experiences. Humans therefore behave the way they do to allow themselves to 'play out' without admitting to their conflicting feeling about the painful experiences and emotions that they have repressed. Repression eventually gives painful and unpleasant childhood experiences the force by making them the organizers of the current experiences (Freud, 1963).

Catherine undergoes through a painful and a sad childhood experience. One, because his four brothers did not love him and two because of the constant quarrels between his parents. Catherine says that

I vaguely remember a fight my parents had when I was seven which made us cry and huddle in the corner of the bedroom. I still recall how my mother sobbed all night after father had proudly walked out of the house with the door banged shut behind him (p.12).

If this incidence remains in Catherine's mind even at adult age, then we can say that psychological development at childhood is very important in formation of one's identity in his/her later life.

Freud (1953; 1963a) explicates that psychological development takes place through over-lapping psychosexual stages like -'oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital.' Freud (1953; 1963a).

Each of the stages, paves way for the individual's sexual maturity and his/her normal heterosexual life. Unconscious attraction takes place in the minds of boys towards his mother. This is also known as Oedipus complex. Girls are also getting attracted towards their fathers i.e. Electra Complex.

Catherine does not receive love from her father and in comparison, with Abigail she misses the phallic stage. We learn that Father owned a bookshop in Murang'a town and was largely absent from home. He does not stir any memories in my early childhood. When I started being aware of him, he was always the cold unfriendly stranger who sat quietly in an armchair with one eye on the newspaper and the other on trouble makers (p.12).

Catherine ends up repressing her affection towards her father and seeks a socially unacceptable sexual relationship by touching and kissing her step brother Maina. In this case Catherine finds alternative source of her phallic obsession not only in Maina, but also in fornication with other boys.

By choosing Maina as a love-object, Catherine intends to reproduce the archetypal father-figure through him. However, their relationship is discovered by their parents and both Maina and Catherine are punished for committing an abomination, a matter that affects Catherine's psyche. This causes her heart break and psychological disorder. We realize that Catherine's issue is more complex. Rather than being affectionate to her, Catherine's father marries another wife while at the same time threatens to withdraw any assistance towards her education.

Catherine moves back and forth between the phallic stage and the genital stage. The genital stage according to Freud occurs from puberty up until adulthood, more specifically old age. This phase relates to the phallic phase as it is at this stage where the conflicts regarding Oedipal complex are resolved. The adolescent realizes that the desire for the parent of the opposite sex is unacceptable and unattainable; hence he/she will focus that sexual energy to another person/suitable mate. Catherine fails to acquire a suitable mate by opting to befriend her step brother thereby pushing her development back to phallic stage. Ellen Pasterino and Susann Doyle-Portillo reiterate this

That during the phallic stage, children develop unconscious attractions to the other-sex parent. Recognizing now that the love for the parent cannot be fulfilled, the adolescent seeks resolution of the genital stage by transferring this love to another sex mate (Pasterino and Doyle-Portillo, 2010).

Dobie (2011) contends that the adults suffer from arrested development, if childhood needs are not fulfilled. The settled human being may become obsessed on a behavior that serves to fulfill what was not satisfied at an early age' (p.58). Because her sexual desires for her father are not satisfied, Catherine has a phallic fixation which renders her a phallic character.

Feeling rejected and abandoned by her father, Catherine has a negative self-image. She is afflicted with self-disgust, self-doubt and experiences feelings of inferiority. This then makes her choose a secondary school that is very far from home (p.23).

Freud (1957) declares that the female who fails to manage the sexual problems of the phallic phase will turn into a phallic character and self-centered person characterized by recklessness, self-possession, narcissism, futility and vanity. For Catherine at this stage her parent is no longer the focus of her life, she focuses her sexual energy on other members of the opposite sex. This is an act of immorality that leads to contraction of HIV/AIDS and an identity of an immoral youth. Her feeling of low self-esteem is at the center of the obscene and aggressive behavior she exhibits throughout her youthful age. She attributes her irresponsible sexual behaviour to lack of parental care and inadequate pieces of advice on matters concerning teenage sexuality. Making the matter worse she even involves herself with sugar daddies at a tender age. She says, 'Through classmates, Annette, I met Moses, an elderly man in his late fifties. To call a spade a spade by its name, he was what Kenyans will call sugar daddy already married with two wives and children my age...' (pg. 82).

Freud asserts that 'feelings of inferiority arise when the ego is unable to meet the super-ego's standards of perfection' (Feist and Feist, 2009, p.30). Catherine feels inferior because her ego is unable to meet the moral and ethical standards of her father who represents the superego.

The author informs us that Catherine and Brian have a child called Jimmy and when Catherine graduates with a bachelor's degree, her parents still do not want her to get married to Brian. While having a meal the father's superego is revealed through this description.

Father looked up from the newspaper. We hardly involved him in our conversations partly because he was always disinterested. He was a kind of male chauvinist who believed nothing good could come out of a woman (p.83)

Father is one person who is difficult to please and Catherine feels dejected and disappointed with her father's reaction when she says that, 'End of the dry run, father picked up his paper again and shuffled through its pages, suddenly looking disinterested again...' (pg.84). This opens a window for Catherine to seek love from other men who end up tormenting her even more.

Based on the Freud psychosexual stages theory (1953), Electra Complex plays a critical role in the developing of the superego. Catherine's Electra complex is unresolved mentioning that superego has not formed yet.

Freud (1953) emphasizes that an Oedipal conflict has an emotional impact on girls more than boys. The woman's loss of the phallic symbol makes her doubt herself. She finally contracts HIV/AIDS from Alex.

This is what throws her off balance and she regret a lot.

I go about my daily routine in disillusionment, often filled with trepidation and fear. I know I do not need a solution to my problem-there is none. What I need is a miracle as I watch my grace period quickly dwindle. I am like a dry leaf hanging loosely on a tree, waiting to drop down as the wind blows in my direction. I regret every single day I have lived a reckless life, regret every affair I ever indulged in. They say prevention is better than cure. With regards to HIV and AIDS, I will add that prevention is infinitely better than an unknown cure (p.95).

Catherine decides to let go her emotional feelings through a letter to Marilyn. Besides, she is unable to find a suitable man to settle down with after her escapades with several of them. She thus suffers from an internal struggle between her repressed attraction to her father and the liberation of her libidinal drives. She has not withdrawn the notion of a father's love to a daughter even though she gets herself involved in many erotic adventures. Catherine's promiscuity is

triggered by Alex's and Brian's inability to replace her father. Further she feels bitter about her parents rejecting Brian because he comes from a different tribe. To get a life partner Catherine has to totally relinquish the possibility of her father's love forever and focus her energy on a serious man who will not use her as a sexual object but an equal partner in marriage. This therefore leads us to conclude that Freud's perspective on psychosexual development can be useful in understanding the ambivalent feelings of the youth that may lead fragmented psychological identities.

## 7. Conclusion

The paper defines psychological identity as one's mental model of himself/herself. It looks at psychological identity as that which relates to one's self-image, self-esteem and individuality. This therefore means that psychological identity develops from psychological and social process. It is further developed by the choices the youth make, the goals they pursue, their emotional experiences, their relationships with others and their psychological well-being.

Erikson (1968) reminds us that adolescence is a critical period of identity formation, in which individuals overcome uncertainty, become more self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and even become more confident in their own unique qualities. In order to move on, adolescents must undergo 'crisis' in which they address key questions about their values and ideals, their future occupation or career, and their sexual identity. Through this process of self-reflection and self-definition, adolescents arrive at an integrated, coherent sense of their identity as something that persists over time. While this is partly a psychological process- and indeed a function of general cognitive development - it also occurs through interaction with peers and care givers. This in essence means that psychological identity is developed by the individual, but it has to be recognized and confirmed by others. Adolescence is also viewed as a period in which young people negotiate their identity in 'clique' and larger 'crowds' of peers, who exert different types of influence. Apart from adolescence stage childhood development has a greater impact on an individual's psychological identity.

According to Freud (1953), the individual is captured by events of his childhood throughout his/her whole life and the unpleasant experiences a person has undergone in early life. It is for this reason that this study notes the significance Freudian psychosexual stages of growth in the analysis of youth fiction. For instance, during the phallic phase of psychosexual development characters such as Catherine and Abigail have erotic desire for their fathers and feel the penis envy. And because they fail to negotiate successfully with this stage, the two girls are stuck in the phallic phase which renders them phallic characters. As a result, they are plagued by Electra complex. Similarly, Kirika and Thomas are attracted to their mothers and they envy their fathers. As a result, they are plagued by Oedipus complex. The phallic-fixation influences the psychosexual development of the four and delay their sexual and emotional maturity.

This study summarizes that Freudian psychoanalytic reading of youth fiction and of the characters mentioned in the texts, can help to understand the fragmented psychological dimensions of the young adult's personality and even make the reader aware of the unconscious psychological motives lying behind perverse and unacceptable behavior.

## 8. References

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