

**SYMBOLISM IN THE ABAGUSII BUSAA PARTY ORAL POETRY AND ITS
IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

The study examines dominant symbols in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and their impact on the society. The Symbols features greatly in many songs and oral poetry and its contribution to the society has not been given full attention. The study aims at identifying some of the dominant symbols used in both traditional and current busaa parties. It gives analysis of the dominant symbols in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and also highlights the didactic value of these symbols. This study seeks to investigate the hypothesis that there are certain dominant symbols in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry. The study further investigates the hypostasis that analysis of the symbols releases the full meaning of the Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and why the songs are sung. My basic assumptions in this research is that the use of symbols in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry has a didactic role and can be said to influence the changes taking place in the society investigated. The research has been guided by three theories: sociological theory, stylistic theory and performance theory. The sociological theory has been used to place the busaa party oral poetry in its social context, for these songs spring from a given society which they in turn influence. The study also uses the stylistic literary theory to enable it engage the language of the busaa party oral poetry, especially symbolism. Finally the performance theory is used as a tool to enable the study discusses the busaa party oral poetry as it is performed in the field. The study through performance enables the researcher to participate fully in ceremonies as people enjoy. Parties act as crowd movers among the Abagusii people. The songs, chants and other popular sayings are used because they emphasize the message in focus. The respondents of different categories were engaged: research assistants, key informants and students selected from school choirs in Kenya music festivals. Library research has also informed this study. This research project comprises of four chapters. Chapter one deals with the theoretical issues. Chapter Two focuses on the background of the Abagusii community. Chapter Three focuses on the analysis of key symbols in Gusii beer party oral poetry. This analysis shows how they preserve and disseminate cultural values in the society. Chapter Four comprises the conclusion, findings and recommendations of the research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This chapter constitutes the background to the thesis, the statement of the problem, the objectives, hypothesis, justification, scope and limitation of the study, Literature review, the theoretical framework and the methodology that were significant in the research.

The busaa is called so when water has been boiled and poured into a pot which is made half empty at the beginning. The boiled water is poured into the pot by the woman of the house while kneeling to show respect to the people. Those present were old women and men. Busaa was taken during different occasions and was usually taken with great significance. It was taken during communal work/activities and people usually celebrated. According to mzee Gesora, Busaa brought people together in celebration. This is usually during ceremonies such as; circumcision, baby showering, planting and harvest, reconciliation, marriage negotiation and dowry payment, child naming, funeral, victory in war and sacred ceremonies.

During this occasion songs were sang to mark the mentioned occasions. Merry making parties were conducted even when a person had died, buried and after burial during ritual-cleansing people drank busaa. The songs sang during these activities were called busaa party songs.

Busaa would be taken to bind the community members together. Wherever there were differences among people, they were solved by sharing of among the warring parties busaa like Kong'o among the Luo people. Here it would also mean to reconcile two warring parties before consuming any food in a gathering, during sacrifices for instance, Busaa was poured to the soil to appease the ancestors. This meant that the offerings and sacrifices were shared with the ancestors. The Abagusii strongly believed in sharing with the living dead whatever they had to eat even Ugali which is a staple food in Abagusii community.

Busaa in other parties would be sprinkled to children moving from childhood to manhood as a sign of dressing. This was done during circumcision especially when circumcised boys were getting out of a small house for unmarried boys called, "Seiga" a place where they were secluded after circumcision and taught manhood and life tactics. Different songs were sung to either please or prepare the initiates for future life. Some of the songs include;

"Obeire Momura, Obeire Momura, ee
arwane sigisi, arwane bomanyi, ee)

This can be translated to mean that the initiates are now men and they should work together to fight the neighbouring communities that were harsh and enemies to Omogusii. At the same time the initiates are advised to get marriage partners from the neighbouring clans or communities and not from the village.

Among the Abagusii, the singing or recital of oral poetry unites people to objectively aim at aligning themselves to defend themselves against a common enemy as well as uniting them in celebration for success in war. The songs extol perfection in performance to induce and perpetuate a healthy relationship among them. It is the prowess for fighting or simply how skilfully one does something that makes people respect him or her. In addition, the heavy harvest and the property owned contributed greatly to the kind of status and regard people were accorded in the society. However, changes have taken place and education has taken a key role in the evaluation of people's success. These changes have inspired musicians who have the new value systems to use symbols that reflect the new value systems in the oral poems of the Abagusii.

The study investigates how rich the Abagusii busaa party oral poetry is in use of symbolism for purposes of preserving their cultural values, their customs and traditions. In the use of proverbs and riddles among the Abagusii community, symbolism is used to bring out the historical and philosophical issues in the community. The imagery takes an outsider some effort to understand; the historical and complex philosophical thinking of the people embedded in the images. There is need to interpret these songs to understand both the surface and underlying meaning encapsulated in the symbols.

Symbolism according to Edward A. Bloom, Charles H. Philbrick and Elmer M. Blistein in **The Order Of Poetry: An Introduction** indicates that in its origin, the word 'symbol' represents an act of comparison. Made up initially of two Greek words, symbol means

literally to throw together, to bring into conjunction” (33-4).I would however agree that we have songs and poems; the latter is chanted, recited or reclaimed while the former is recited. All in all we can sing some poems and chant some songs. For that purpose, the study was carried on the songs with or without a chorus as well as poems and vice versa.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been done on the Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and narratives but not on the use of symbolism in those particular genres Evans Omosa Nyamwaka’s unpublished PhD thesis, creative Arts Cultural Dynamic: *the Case Study of Songs and Dance among the Abagusii of Kenya, 1904 to 2002*, the dynamic nature of Abagusii music and dance is brought out but not on style and particularly on use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry. Songs and oral poetry, and for this reason a concerted study of symbolism becomes a necessity in the effort to understand the contribution of the oral party to the society On the other hand, Atuti’s approach, although incorporating style is firmly based on traditional sociological approach. And not use of symbolism. Other studies have been done by anthropologists on the Abagusii cultures. Since literature is the key to the aesthetic and social value of the poetry, this study in literature would achieved more than a study in anthropology did. Among the Abagusii, symbolism is used as feature shared in many busaa celebration; leisure ceremonies, weddings circumcision, naming ceremonies victory in *battles*. Symbols are dominant .This dominance of symbols call for research to establish their social aesthetic functions. The statement problem is mainly that the researcher has the concentrated on beauty of busaa

party oral poetry and the entertainment value in it represents big issues that are prevalent in society hence study of use symbolism in Abagusii busaa parties oral poetry. The research is mainly on Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and its implications in the community. In busaa parties people get entertained as they drink, sing and dance. They get relieved from their frustrations and tiredness while discussing societal issues. The symbols in use during this period carry it all.

In the process some people are rebuked while others are praised. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa parties' oral poetry and its impact on people in society. This study carries out an examination on the literary, social and psychological dimensions of the Abagusii oral poetry as a source of entertainment moral moulding and teaching to the people in society. The meaning implied by some poems gets clear to the people through identification and analysis of use of symbolism in busaa party among Abagusii oral poetry. The purpose of this study is to show how symbolism contributes to society's world view on issues of cultural, economic, political and social political values. The research also highlights and preserves the community's culture as hypothesized in the Abagusii oral poetry in this research.

1.3 Objectives

The study is guided by the following objectives;

- i) To identify the dominant symbols in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry.

- ii) To analyse the role of symbolism used in the busaa party oral poetry in the preservation of Abagusii cultural values.
- iii) To discuss the didactic role of use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry in the Abagusii community.

1.4 Hypotheses

The study intends to investigate the following hypotheses,

- i) Busaa party oral poetry is replete with certain dominant symbols.
- ii) Dominant symbols in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii preserves and disseminates cultural values in the Abagusii community.
- iii) Use of symbolism is important in the didactic role of busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Making of baskets, preparation of busaa, composing of songs are among the artistic work that demonstrates the people's way of life, beliefs, rituals and traditions as well their philosophical thinking are fully reflected in the songs sung during busaa parties. The artistic expressions that demonstrate the people's way of life expresses their philosophical way of thinking. The busaa party oral poetry captures much of the work done by the Abagusii in their daily life. However, little attention has been given to the genre on busaa party's oral poetry especially on the use of symbolism in the Abagusii busaa party oral poetry. This study seeks to look at the use of symbolism in Abagusii

busaa parties' oral poetry and its contribution to the understanding of the society's way of life. The oral poetry is social in its nature.

The social oral poetry tends to address a variety of issues that includes reconciliation, diseases such as HIV and AIDS and changes in social political organization among others in the society. As stated above the studies already conducted include that of Nyansera (1994). Much of the studies have looked at the medical aspect of female circumcision but not symbolism in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry. Others have dwelt on narratives like Monyenye (2008) who has written a thesis titled **“The Indigenous Education of the Abagusii's concerned with the social role of Abagusii oral Narratives.** My study is out to bridge the gap that has been created by previous studies.

This study would therefore contribute additional knowledge and possibly opens up avenues for other scholarly attempts in field of research on Abagusii oral poetry. It could also be readily available for students studying oral literature in secondary schools and the study of anthropology in schools and colleges. The study would also serve as preservation of African heritage especially that of Abagusii.

In this research I have also analysed key symbols in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and its contribution in the Abagusii community. Style in literary works has been studied by Okemwa in his M.A Thesis **The style of the short story in Kenya** but he has not tackled use of symbols in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii people of western

Kenya. In his study Okemwa has only researched on how the short story is written but not on use of symbolism. This is what prompted me to undertake a research on the use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii people.

1.6 Scope of Study

The study focuses on the use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii people and how it socializes people. It discusses the use of symbolism and repetition to find out how characters with exemplary contributions are praised and how those who laze around are condemned. Sources of research of use of symbolism of busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii in Nyamira and Kisii counties. They performed typical Abagusii busaa party oral poetry including among other songs: omokungu oisiko moino, (woman of the other house), Ingererie orotambe (Give me a wick).

1.7 Literature Review

I researched on the use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa party's oral poetry and its impacts in the community. Before going to the field, I did a literature review on other works. Most songs and oral poems which actually have been studied uphold men and women in the family. This revolves around what people do in their daily life.

In her studies **Silberchmidt** (1991) observes that "the pre-colonial African societies were based on a deep sector patriarchal family structure where male superiority could not be questioned". According to Hakerison, "a man gained authority over his wife through the

payment of bride wealth” (Hakarison, 1988). Levine (1964) also points out that “a father figure (symbolic) has a right and authority over his children, he has absolute formal decision holding powers, has rights to cultivate land, hence rights over its produce and wealth”. In this way we start sensing the symbolic meaning of a family, the kind of songs that can be sung therefore would be those that focus on men as superior over women and children as inferior to men and women as well as animals and plants. However, it is important to note that children would grow to become either man if they are boys or women if they are girls. One reason why readers attend to literature differently is that its utterances have a special relation to the world – a relation we call ‘fictional’.

Abagusii busaa party oral poetry has a sub gender of oral poetry performed in many parties and rites of passage conducted in the Abagusii community. The Abagusii has a rich oral poetry heritage performed during busaa parties, work, wedding, and circumcision it is important to note that at this juncture that when we say talk on it will as well mean songs, the two terms are used interchangeably. My research strictly is based on use of symbolism in on busaa party oral poetry and its impact in society. Some critical work exist on Abagusii oral literature especially on narratives and oral poetry among the Abagusii, a few on oral poetry, but none of these is based on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii. This is what has prompted me to research on use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and its impact in society. This title of my research enlists quite different content from what others who have researched and discussed in the oral poetry.

Ime, Ikiddeh in his **Historical Essays on African literature languages and culture** articulates the view that “literature is a social product that has its roots on a defined culture” (p. 59). This would imply that oral literature of any people is tied to the political, social political and cultural aspirations and goals of the people hence enhance national unity. This concern relates to my concern in my research. My concern is, however, based on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii community and how its impacts among those who recite sing and chant through participation as performers or listeners. Ime ikiddeh has not dealt with use of symbolism. His work is on general discussion on general African language.

In Luke Eyoh’s **Indigenous Oral Poetry in Nigeria as a Tool for National Unity** J.Cornon.212 88-91 (2012), reminiscent of William Wordsworth’s **Preface to the Lyrical Ballad**, extensively elucidates the importance of oral literature in his country Nigeria in National relationship. This is captured in some line in his book. “Oral literature has enormous didactic dimensions which can be channelled to the benefit of our society” (p. 236). In the same note, my concern being an objective of discussion is to capture and examine the didactic role of use of symbolism in the Abagusii busaa party oral poetry. In this research, i have filled the gap on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among theAbagusii.

The use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii is significant here and this is a gap in my studywhich I have specifically found important to fill by research

on the use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa parties' oral poetry. This study addresses serious warning given through busaa parties by use of symbolism captured in songs and wise sayings. For example *giakoboko kia monware* which can be translated to mean that (what is at hand is far from the mouth). This song is sung during busaa taking among the Abagusii. It is on the same note that Sakawa, the Abagusii prophet, prophesied the growth of Kisii town the present headquarter of Kisii County as well Gusii land as a whole. He, however, was not taken seriously.

Some researchers have dwelt on female circumcision not touching an aspect of use of symbolism even in the songs. Such studies have been conducted by Nyansera (1994) in her study among the Abagusii of Western Kenya she found that almost 69% of the parents are active participants in their daughters' circumcision. She however does not discuss songs and oral poetry performed during the ritual in terms of style used in the songs. My research on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry is there out to bridge the gap created in Nyasera's work. On the other hand, Nyakundi Stella Nyaboke's thesis indicates some experience from Kisii District that men encourage female circumcision as a pre-condition for girls to get married. The practice has however been declared a health hazard and a violation of both human sexual expression and woman rights. Women seem to lack status and authority to stop the practice. She deals with the attitude and other social cultural factors in the practice. Stella has not dealt with its symbolic nature. This has not been adequately researched in available literature concerning oral poetry. It therefore called for a serious study on symbols which have not been addressed in

Stella's study. This is what prompted me to conduct a research on the use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii people.

That there is a gap on use of symbolism in Abagusii beer party oral poetry is noted from researchers such as Gwako in his MA Thesis **Continuity and Change in the Practice of Clitoridectomy in Kenya** (1992), His work features mainly on circumcision in general and therefore not researched on symbolism in Abagusii oral poetry. Nyamwaya (1986) has also dealt with circumcision where singing is involved but has not tackled style on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii people hence creating a gap for study.

Okemwa in his MA Thesis, **The style of the short story in Kenya**, has analysed style in general. I have taken this as a concrete invitation to focus on similar issues but in busaa oral poetry through analysis of symbols used in various performances. My study is on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagussii people. In this I have bridged the gap left in Okemwa's study.

Okoh, on the other hand, asserts that "oral literature in Nigeria deals with certain serious issues about life, man, his relationships with his environment and with other human beings, all of which are ...pertinent in the society today. He concludes that oral poetry "has an enormous role to play in national development" (236). There is not any similar study on Abagusii busaa party oral poetry. There is, therefore a gap which the present

study fills through the analysis. The songs and oral poetry composed in busaa parties reflecting men and women in their environment. The songs sung during and after circumcision have hidden meaning; these songs are sung as people drunk busaa. The study analyses the symbols in this songs and oral poetry.

Another scholarly attempt at a detailed analysis of the complex nature of oral literature is by Njongu Waita in his Master of Arts thesis titled: **The significance of Literally Devises in Indian Oral Narratives**, Waita is clear on the fact that “styles correlates with audience as well as social change that has taken place in the last century.” Waita links the narrator and style: thus “it’s the degree to which the narrator masters various devises which dictate production of a good narrative” (147). Although Waita adequately deals with the significance of literally devises, he does not delve into the justification of the techniques used. Waita has not dealt with oral poetry. He, however, points out the relevance of such study:

There is need to investigate how far social change has affected technique in oral literature. This way we may be able to learn whether the literary devices change and develop with society. We will then be able to know a place and future of oral narratives (147).

Indeed, Waita’s suggestion found space in the mainstay of this research on use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa party poetry study. This is because the symbols used in the poetry under study are products of the society and do influence change. Waita has however

not done study on use of symbolism in oral poetry. My research was therefore based on use of busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii.

Peter Wasamba in **Nyatiti and Enanga Poetry; in East Africa: Perspectives and insights**, where he analyses the works of two praise poets, Charles Omondi Tawo and Habibu Suleiman. He observes: “Looked at critically their poems have rich sub-texts, which on interrogation, ridicules the excesses of the individuals in a subtle way” (4). Wasamba emphasizes the importance of the artist thus:

The genre of praise poetry is alive and dynamic and it requires a detailed study and focuses on the bard as the centre of investigation....

Praise poets have inner lives and oral texts which are rich in diversity and which are indicative of the changing aesthetic values of our east African Communities. (17).

Wasamba deals with praise oral poetry among the Luo people. He has not reached on use of symbolism. I have therefore done this to bridge the gap created. His research does not touch issues concerning drinking hence I have dwelled on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among or in the Abagusii community. My research is based on busaa party oral poetry as brought out among the Abagusii community.

Okoth Okombo has enabled this study to analyse use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa parties' oral poetry. While talking of the relevance and usefulness of

“Ethnomethodological approach” In the study of oral literature, Okoth Okombo, in **The Place Of Ethnomethodology in the Study of Oral Literature**, spells out what should be the role of students in oral literature.

....Discern, systematizes, and explicitly formulates the artistic perceptions of the community whose oral literature he/she is studying.... Endeavour to develop an authentic set of theoretical principles to be employed in the evaluation of the relevant body in literature (21).

On reading the work of Okoth Okombo he has not tackled the above scholars none has tackled the use of symbolism. My study is thus out to bridge the gap left. It is on this basis that the study was on the use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry in Abagusii community many symbols has are in use that connect preparation and drinking of local brew called busaa parties that are either meant to praise or condemn great achieves and laziness or evils respectively in the society.

In Evans Omosa Nyamwaka’s PhD thesis, **Creative Arts and Cultural Dynamism: the Case Study of the Song and Dance among the Abagusii of Kenya, 1904- 2002**, the dynamic nature of Abagusii oral music and dance is brought out. In the study the very traits depicted by Abagusii music at different times since 1904 to 2002 are illustrated in detail. Nyamwaka depicts that values hitherto alien to the mainstream Abagusii values have been eventually rejected or acceptance. However, he is silent on the use of dominant symbols to suggest values alien and mainstream he has thus dealt with songs and

dances in general as captured in the community, it is on that strength that my research is based on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii people, Nyamwaka has not identified dominant symbols nor has dealt with role of symbolism in the community it is this gap therefore that my research is addressed.

Solomon Monyenye, in **The Indigenous Education of the Abagusii**, MA Thesis (1977) acknowledges the important role that oral literature played, and still does, in educating an individual within the Abagusii community to become a responsible member of the society, from childhood, through adolescence to adulthood. He says: “Oral literature is the powerful source of past records and serves as a means by which people pass on their values and knowledge to generations” (p. 17) the notion that oral literature has an instructional value and has its foundation on the moral fabric of the society suggest that it has an impact; it lays the basis for arguing that oral literature among the Abagusii has always been purposeful and hence deliberate. The present study demonstrates how this happens through symbolism. I picked on style of oral literature on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii, it is an area which is forgotten. But has a lot of significance among members of the community. Other scholars are tackled oral poetry but not on use of busaa party oral poetry of the Abagusii.

Kabira et al (1978) in Gikuyu **Oral Literature** states that it is important to study oral poetry if we are to appreciate the people’s feelings, hopes, fears, aspirations, philosophy and aesthetics (81). Most of the oral poems in the text are based on protest against the

whites and praise of the African leaders who spear headed the struggle for independence. The white symbolizes people who were African enemies. Kabira has used symbols in his Kikuyu oral poems, my study is on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii.

Finally, it would be absolutely presumptuous if we branded this effort conclusive. Without doubt the debate on the real nature of techniques employed by oral artists and the extent to which they may be characteristic will be on-going. The same goes for the extent to which the performer's own ideological orientation as well as life experiences may be reflected in the Gusii oral poetry's treatment of motifs as well as language. It is here that the aspect of use of symbolism in Abagusii beer party oral poetry comes into play. My focus was on the use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry and how it impacts on the Abagusii community's day to day lives.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by three theories. These are sociological literary theory, stylistic theory and performance theory. Stylistics theory is the study and interpretation of texts from a linguistic perspective. Stylistic criticism, according to Austin (1979), seeks to specify the nature of that contribution. The model, Austin cautions, does not restrict its practitioners to a particular formal linguistic theory in terms of the linguistic analysis; the critic may adopt whatever formal framework best suits his/her purpose (p.33).When a

text is framed as literature, we are disposed to attend to sound patterning or other sorts of linguistic organization we generally ignore.

As a discipline it links literary criticism and linguistics, but has no autonomous domain of its own. Stylistics also attempts to establish principles capable of explaining the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language, such as socialization, the production and reception of meaning, critical discourse analysis and literary criticism. I have chosen stylistic theory because my study is based on use of symbolism where symbolism is a style. Therefore stylistic theory enabled me understand how style was used in oral literature. In terms of aesthetic qualities and social relevance of works of art, both of which must be apprehended in the contexts of language, culture and extra-linguistic factors. Austin (1979) defines stylistic criticism as “the study of the relation that holds in a literary artefact between its linguistic form and, in the broadest possible sense, its complete aesthetic form” (quoted in Eyoh 2005: 33).

In this project the study finds out how symbolism enable people not to directly criticize a person but do it by use of ordinary objects on experience to infer behaviour, character or tendency. Society is full of symbols emanating from their everyday activities. Symbolism associated with farming, cattle rearing, laziness handwork medicine and many other activities have been captured. The approach is also important to show that the interaction of people at busaa parties, the singing recitations reclamations are not just part

of sociology but literacy work from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. The activities are symbolically interpreted.

This study found sociological literacy theory useful as performers and artists who are engaged in production of songs and oral poems are products of the society. Societies are communities of analysts who are reflective of past judgment of their own actions and the action of others. The work of an individual member is on the whole directed by their own consciousness of judgmental expectations of their community.

People composed oral poetry everywhere as they grazed cattle, as they harvested, and even as they into war. The oral poetry has to do with happenings in society. What is recited, chanted or sung has got to do with people's aspiration, thinking, attitude toward certain issues in the society. Virtues and vices are the customs of the people. Literature is carrier of people's culture and the creative work draws in raw materials from society. Communities are reflected in songs. Sociological literacy theory also assists to reflect practical happening in society. People participate actively in the community; get socialized as they get involved on undertakings in society. They meet in busaa parties during initiation ceremonies, this and many other societal aspects are the ones reflected in the composition of my study on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii. During the busaa parties, the participants talk and share with others what is in society. They show what happens in the events that take place in the community. As they drink they sing, advise, warn and castigate those that live within the society.

Performance Theory

The study has also used the performance theory. Performance theory remains extremely useful and valid for contemporary folklorists, especially those working with field-collected narratives and by extension oral poetry. This is because performance theory “allows for recuperation of previously collected material which may have been represented as artless or awkward hymns “ascaptured in“**In vain I tried to tell you**” (1981).

Performance theory also recognizes that not all performances are equal. It situates stories and poetry to a particular event and credits a narrator, a poet or poetess who assumes responsibility for the performance. Bauman calls for us to:

Recognize that the symbolic forms we call folklore have their primary existence in the action of people and their roots in social and cultural life. The texts we are accustomed to viewing as the raw materials of oral literature are merely the thin and partial record of deeply situated human behaviour. My concern has been to go beyond a conception of oral literature as disembodied super organic stuff and to view it contextually and ethnographically, in order to discover the individual, social, and cultural factors that give it shape and meaning in the conduct of social life. (1986).

Poetry is not to be conceived any longer as disembodied "text" but rather a rich convergence of performer, situation, setting, audience, and society. Richard Bauman notes the typical view of oral literature until recently and the changes in orientation urged by performance theory: "oral literature has been conceived of as stuff – collectively shaped, traditional stuff that could wander around the map, fill up collections and archives, reflect culture, and so on" (1986), giving it the bounded appearance that, as with culture, is problematic. My study on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii community reflects culture of the group. The Abagusii ways of life has guided the research.

Without context, it is argued; texts are disembodied from the reality of their performance event, and are thus incomplete and less meaningful. Relationship is woven together from the situation of a given performance, the audience, details of an individual performer, and knowledge and understanding of the social group and culture of the performer and the audience. It is against this background that my study on use of symbolism in busaa party oral poetry among the Abagusii was undertaken. Through the performance use of symbolism is identified, discussed and its didactic role is spelt out as it preserves people culture in the symbols that stick in them.

The Abagusii metaphor which is very unique explores characters with exemplary features /actions portrayed. Some animals characters such as leopards, hyena are used to depict certain feats in society such as bravery and greed respectively. This is evident in songs

involving hyenas whereby they are depicted as being envious and grabbers. I am concerned with the quality of social life, and texts in performance enhance this.

1.9 Methodology

I interrogated the performers to know when the songs were sung, who the performers were and what the message was, this was meant to guide me research on use of symbolism. Some of the questions used to gather the information were;

- i) Why do we sing so much about a grinding stone among the Abagusii community?
- ii) Why do most songs feature women, men and children?
- iii) How, why and When are the songs sung?
- iv) Why do most songs use specific items i.e. sweet bananas, animals, and a piece of wood?

In this field work, I watched live performances of Abagusii busaa party oral poetry, paying attention on use of symbolism in the songs. I attended performance of the songs to critique their enactment focused on groups, interviews with members of the audience with an aim of determining how they appreciate and make meaning of the songs. Questions were mainly answered by research assistants and some artists majorly in charge of performers.

1.10 Purposeful Sampling

I had groups of dancers which were composed of twelve twentyseven dancers. the group had their leaders who later assisted the research they worked as research assistants and being artist as well as an informer. I attended busaa parties of different categories at different seasons. One of the parties was a pre-wedding ceremony where a young woman and young man were getting married. There were a lot of celebrations as the people who were present sang, drank busaa and enjoyed every privilege within their reach. The participants were of different ages. Different types of food were taken, but my interest was on those that took busaa. They were seated lonely under a tree as busaa is not a common drink among the Abugusii people these days.

Also there are post burial parties mainly held after some body has been buried. The families meet after a week or so in order to continue comforting the bereaved family. Thereis however, merry making as a cow is slaughtered, and busaa is taken by old people as they keep on citing the positive character traits of the deceased. In such ceremonies, horns are blown by experts and “obokano” (an eight strings instrument) is played by those specialized in i.e. also attended several occasions where vocalists of different songs were performed. I watched several instruments played: flute, horns and harp.

In all those happenings, the body movement and use of gestures used by the artists enabled me comprehend the purpose of different songs sung as well as the feeling of those singing impacted on the intended purpose was also brought out. I interviewed

the groups and recorded in VCDs, CD and Audio tapes then selected my sample of twelve songs using purposive sampling based on their relevance.

The study has incorporated some research method such as:

Interviewing where we interviewed the artists on the use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa parties oral poetry to define people oral in the societies. When artists performed I recorded findings. The interview was done in the open air. In recording I took notes related to the performance, did free translation and interpreted the performance which necessitated attendance of some performances and then had some poems recorded.

Participation was yet another instrument where I was actively involved in the recitation and chanting of some poems. Together with a group performing we captured and made use of the narrators. Performers gave personal testimonials of when and how the oral poems were performed. Observation of live performances was crucial in identifying individual behaviour to enable one recognize symbols.

Secondly, I transcribed and translated the songs into English while striving for accuracy in order to retain originality. To achieve my objectivity I employed the service of two transcription and translation assistants. I was aware of lexical phonological syntactic and pragmatic technicalities present in English/Kiswahili translation. I however, had to paraphrase some translation.

A note on Translation and transcription

Transcription preceded translation. Alert that word by word translation would not necessary culminate in the desired faithful record, we resulted to free translation. Above all, our translation was aimed at relaying both meaning and impact intended by the performer.

My research was based on a review of related studies and their revelation show that busaa party oral poetry has been given insufficient literary attention and has been generally neglected in terms of analysis and interpretation. The data for this study was therefore collected through observation, participation and interview. Songs collected from performers in selected areas were recorded on tape and later transcribed and translated. For systematic analysis, the Songs were categorized in some broad categories on the basis of their content. A study of the performance of the songs was undertaken. In the fieldwork, we realised the meaning of the songs are actualized through performance.

1.11 Data Collection

I tabulated the songs and then picked relevant ones in terms of traditional and contemporary symbols to show how use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa parties' oral poetry preserves our traditions and customs as well as influencing change. From our interview with mzee Gesora Nyareso the study was informed that some style get incorporated in symbolism. Such features are repetition, use of imagery, sarcasm, and irony is components of use of symbolism.

To grasp background knowledge, getting available literature and generation of hypothesis requires sources materials from the library. The work already covered was available in libraries.

1.12 Data Collection Problems

During data collection I encountered many problems such people refusing to sing unless they were given money some were suspicious of me and more so skipped the performers. They were always engaged with other issues while people expected to be highly paid in order to sing thinking I was sponsored by an organization hence had a lot of money. Some people would refuse to have their voices recorded. The weather would at times be unfriendly; it would be either rainy or very sunny.

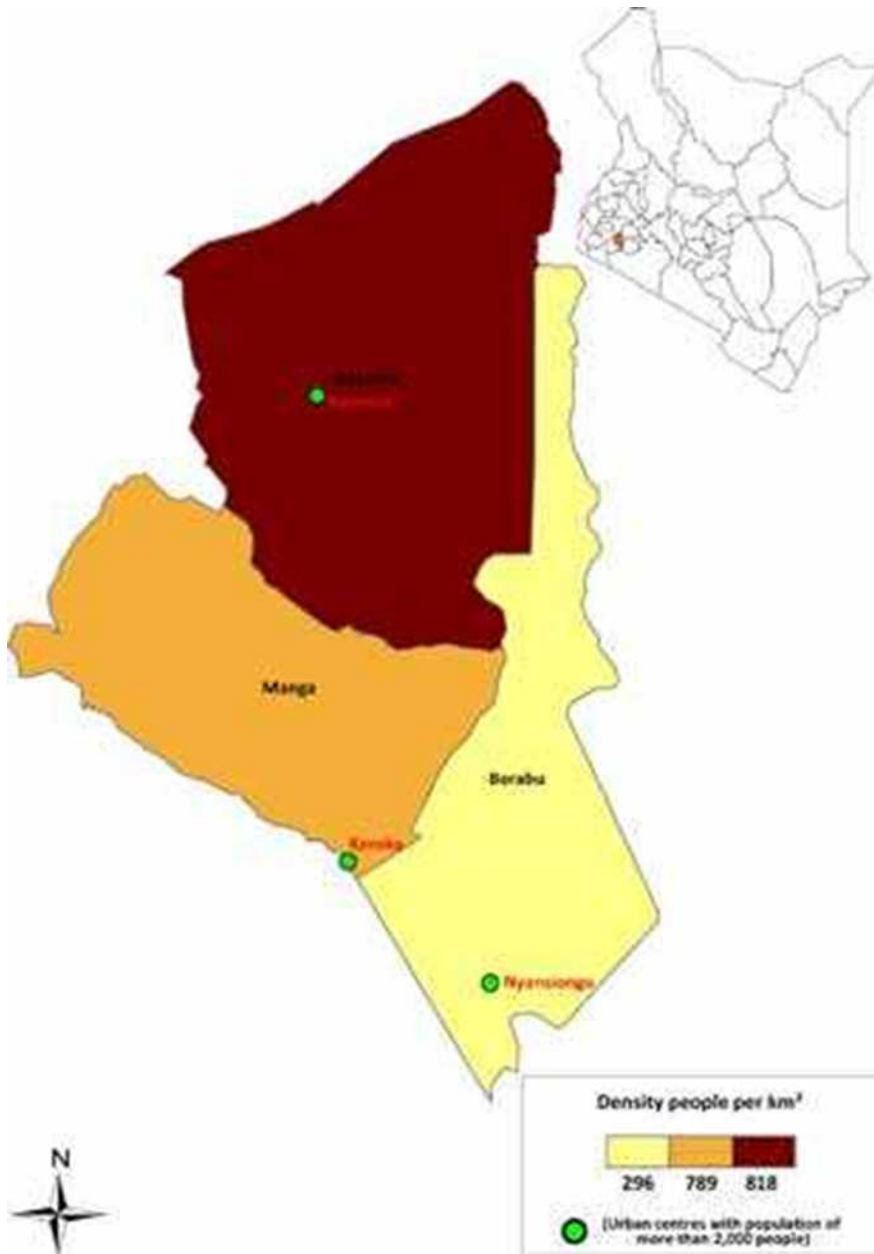


Figure 1: Map of Kenya and map of Nyamira County

Administration

Population

The County is inhabited by the Abagusii although other ethnic groups also stay there. The Abagusii are Abantu speaking people. It is one of the most densely populated community

in the country. The rapid population growth has caused increased land fragmentation and people who are slanders. This has led to the cultivation of steep slopes. As a result soil erosion has affected land in the area which is densely populated .Due to the 2007/2008 post-election violence many traders especially of Bantu origin have settled there.

Economy

The people here practice both crop farming and livestock husbandry; the main cash crops grown are coffee, pyrethrum, tea, sugar-cane, banana and passion fruits. Food crops and other horticultural crops are grown which include maize, sorghum, finger millet, beans, onions, carrots, cabbages and pineapples. Salary and wages for the employed contribute significantly to the household incomes.

The area of focus is administered in line with the Kenyan administrative structure which begins with the president to the clan elder. With the promulgation of the new constitution in august 2010 Kenya has moved to counties abolishing provincial administration. We have fourty seven (47) counties in our Republic of Kenya. The Abagusii community occupies two of the fourty seven (47) counties that is Nyamira and Kisii Counties. We have Counties under Governors and are represented in parliament by Senators. We have county Assemblies represented by county representatives.

1.13 Definition of Terms

Some terms were new and I gave them contextual meaning and their definitions.

Symbolism-Is use of symbols to represent ideas, especially in art and literature.

Spoken and sung cultural history: a community's cultural and historical background preserved and passed on from one generation to the next in spoken stories and song, as distinct from being written down.

Busaa is a local brew made out of a mixture of fermented wimbi and maize unga which is fermented in a tin and fried in an open oven. It is then mixed with water and fermented wimbi Called “Ememera”.

A harp- “Obokano” is a large musical instrument with strings stretched on a vertical frame, played with the fingers. Horn is a simple musical instrument that consists of a curved metal tube that you blow into. Basket is a container for holding or carrying things. Pot is a deep round containers used for cooking things in. Tool is a thing that helps you to do your job or achieve something.

Ornaments are objects that are used as decoration in rooms or as body make up.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND OF ABAGUSII COMMUNITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the background information concerning the origin of Abagusii as a people. The historical background of the Abagusii people is traced to their migration to the present land. This research also interrogates the difficulties they encountered as they tried to get a better place to settle and do farming – an occupation which features prominently in the research. The information about the migration of Abagusii to their present land was narrated to me by Mzee Gesora Nyareso of Bonyamatuta Location in Nyamira County. Mzee Nyareso is 90 years old. William Ochieng has also extensively discussed Gusii migration in his work on “Origin of Abagusii”. Most of the symbols, if not all, are centred on farming, relationship with their neighbours and how to work hard in order to survive. The symbols are manifested in songs sung during busaa taking parties.

Busaa is a local brew made out of a mixture of fermented wimbi and maize unga which is fermented in a tin and fried in an open oven. It is then mixed with water and fermented wimbi called “Ememera”. It usually takes two to three days to be ready for use. The local brew is taken among old people in Gusii land. Usually the busaa is taken by use of either local straw (Chinkore) or (Ekemunu). They actually shared the straws in a merry go round way

In this chapter, the focus is on the origin of Abagusii. Information has it that they originated from one father. According to what Mzee Gesora narrated, there are several sub-clans in the Abagusii community. Presently, the community occupies two counties: Kisii and Nyamira, the former is larger than the latter. Their main cash crop is tea.



Mzee Gesora Nyareso,
age 90 in a hat and

Mr. J. Omboga Clement

Figure 2: The Narrative of the Origin of Abagusii

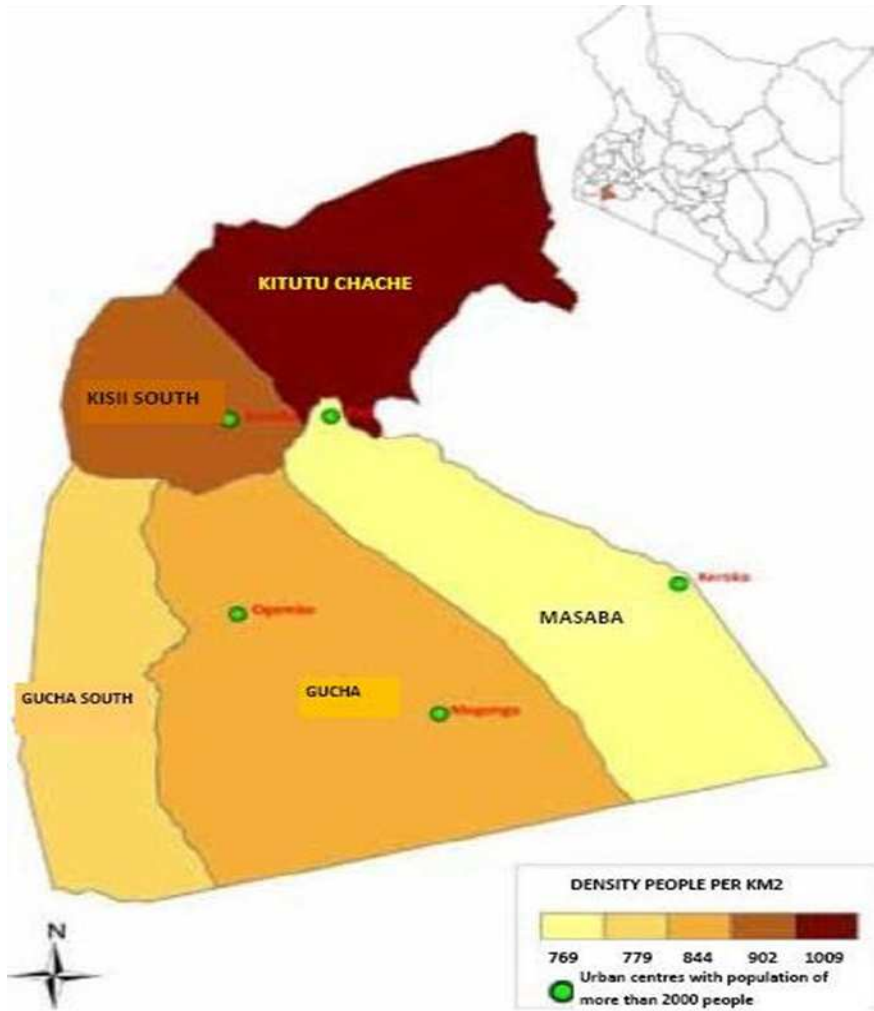


Figure 4: Kisii County Map

2.2 Origin of the Abagusii

The Abagusii, like the Abaluyia (Luhya) communities come from Congo and Cameroon regions. According to Mzee Gesora Nyareso,(90 years) narrated that the Bantu speakers migrated from the Congo they split up into different groups with the Kisii ending up in the region around Lake Victoria. The other Bantu speakers, Kikuyu, Kamba and other

groups in Kenya continued the hunt for richer soil for farming and moved on eastwards across the Rift Valley to their current locations.

Constant sieges resulted in the development of a war-like culture, unlike most Bantu communities, to defend themselves against cattle-raiding neighbouring communities. To this day, they have a reputation of being tough, emotionally hostile, but resilient, and very industrious at the same time. They were surrounded on all sides by initially, and later sporadically hostile communities comprising mainly Nilotics such as the Maasai, Nandi, Kipsigis, and the Luos.

There's strong evidence, however, that periods of peace with neighbouring communities must have led to intermarriages. This is evident in the greatly varied complexion and physique among Abagusii from different sub-regions of Abagusii for instance, some clans of the Suba (Abasuba in Ekegusii) who, however, have been said to have been completely absorbed by the Luo. The Kuria (Abakuria) have a great deal in common with the Abagusii in language and cultures as well. The history of intermarriage has led to prohibition of marriage alliances for specific clans of the Abagusii especially with some surrounding Kalenjin called *kamama* (an appellation connoting extensive marriage alliance Mzee Nyareso said that many Kipsigis can easily point to someone in their lineage (especially a matriarch) from Abagusii people. It should be noted that the Abagusii would gather on their way to either sing to celebrate their victory or mourn their defeat. They took busaa as they sang in small parties.

The research as early indicated captures the counties of Kisii and Nyamira which borders the Luos and the Maasai to the South and the Kalenjin to the East respectively. The Abagusii are divided into several clans which live in their present ancestral land. Chief Onyancha Ayora a senior assistant chief in Bogichora Location in Nyamira County indicated also that Abagusii had moved from Congo-Zaire and settled at Kisumu where Nyakomogenda, mother to Abagusii, died a lonely old woman. She had been left behind by her sons who had moved on, leaving her behind together with the goats in the small huts they abandoned upon leaving the present day Kisumu.

The huts were called *Ebisumu* which means small huts. This explains how the town of Kisumu, came to be named. It is assumed that Nyakomogenda died out of old age. Her sons had moved to Kabianga, the outskirts of the present-day Kericho with their cows to graze. Currently we have the Omo-Nyaribari, Omogirango, Omogetutu, Omomachoge, Omobasi and Omonchari as the clans of Abagusii.

Mzee Gesora Nyareso went on to say that common names of Abagusii include among others: Areri, Arasa, Bogonko, Bosire, Isabokey, Mairura, Makori, Mogaka, Mogeni, Momanyi, Moseti, Motieri, Nyambane, Nyambati, Nyanumba, Nyabuti, Ocharo, Onchiri, Ongeru, Onkoba, Onsomu, Onyoni, Osebe, Otworu, Nyakoni, Bagwasi, Omanwa, Ongori, among others. There are common family names similar to the English surnames like Smith and Johnson. Female names such as Biyaki, Bitutu, Moraa, Nyanchama, Monchari, Nyabokey, Nyatichi, Kemunto, Kerubo, Kwamboka, Kerebi, Gesare, Buyaki, Bwari,

Bosibori, Bochaberi, Kemuma, among others. The names are either given according to seasons or named after the deceased. Names could also be after occasion, events or people for instance, “Bitutu” represent a bush, and significantly the person was named either after the bush or near the bush.

2.3 Culture

Funerals and burial arrangements are part of the people’s culture. The ceremony takes place in the dead person's homestead and a large gathering is a sign of prestige. Traditional practices of wailing, shaving of hair, and animal sacrifices. Before burial, the corpse is dissected in order to determine whether death was caused by witchcraft. Some specialists dissected the body the way doctors operate bodies nowadays. The Abagusii tend to fear the spirit of a dead person. They believe the dead person may be angry for having died and may punish survivors. Therefore, sacrifices must be made to the spirit of the dead person to appease it. During such ceremonies, busaa was taken mainly by old men as they sing songs.

Marriage among the Abagusii people was a communal affair. Each person was supposed to get married, so parents ensured their daughters or sons got married in a customary way. In a case where a father could not afford dowry for his son, members of the community donated cows, goats and chinkore (ingredients for busaa) for brewing of busaa for the ceremony, which would be held after the settlement of dowry. If a person reached the right age for marriage but died before marriage, a dry piece of wood would be thrown

into his grave to indicate the deceased did not leave any trace of continuity of life. In the case of a mature young woman, her breasts and nips would be pierced with a sharp thorn implying barrenness. These practices indicated the importance attached to marriage and child bearing for continuity of life among the Abagusii people. If such a person passed on, an elaborate burial ceremony is not conducted. His/her burial was done like that of a child.

It is also important to note that there was a spy to do thorough inquiry about the background of the bride to ascertain her background. She was supposed to be hard working of lineage free of witchcraft or any other social ills. The Abagusii had particular seasons for specific occasions or festivity. They had birth season initiation season. Marriage season communal activities and worship seasons.

On birth seasons, when a child is born he or she is named in ceremony attended although men were also invited. They brought awards and gifts to the parents of the child. They however ate a lot as they sang the songs more especially the one associated with blessings that accompany a child birth.

Kiomogoko nomwana ogatoire

A miser`s food is given by a child.

Kiomogoko nomwana ogatoire

A miser`s food is given by a child.

Abagusii speak *Ekegusii* language as it is properly called. The Meru in Eastern province are closely related to the Kisii people or Abagusii in language and culture. They are markedly similar to the Bakiga of south western Uganda in culture, industry and choice of terrain. The LuTooro language of Western Uganda shares a great many words with Ekegusii.

2.4 Ways of Worship

According to Mzee Gesora and what I also complimented from my reading, before Christianity was introduced to the Abagusii people, they believed in one supreme god who created the world but did not interfere directly in human affairs. Instead, interference was caused by ancestor's spirits, and impersonal forces. The Abagusii believed that displeased ancestor's spirits were responsible for disease, death of people and livestock, and the destruction of crops. Today, the Abagusii claim to be followers of some form of Christianity. A Roman Catholic mission was first established in 1911 and a Seventh Day Adventist mission in 1913. There are four major denominations in Abagusii land: Roman Catholic, Seventh - day Adventist, Swedish Lutheran, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of God.

Mzee Gesora Nyareso narrated in awe of the changes that have taken place in the community. He said, although churches are very active, some non-Christian beliefs continue to influence the lives of most Abagusii. If afflicted by misfortune, many Abagusii visit diviners (*abaragori*) who may point to displeased spirits of the dead and

prescribe 'a cure'. In addition to abaragori, who are usually women, various healers also exist. *Abanyamoriogi* (herbalists) use a variety of plant mixtures for medicines. Indigenous surgeons (*ababari*) set fractures and treat backaches and headaches through trepanation (needles). Professional sorcerers (*abanyamosira*) protect against witchcraft and retaliate against witches. (*Omoriori*), the witch smeller, finds witchcraft articles hidden in a house. Witches (*omorogi*) can be men or women, but are usually women. They are believed to dig up recently buried corpses to eat the inner organs and use body parts for magic. Among the Gusii, witchcraft is believed to be a learned art handed down from parent to child.

Mzee Gesora narrates that Abagusii had their way of life. They had their customs and traditions. The Abagusii play a large bass instrument called *obokano*, *eight*. Circumcision of boys at around age of 10 as a rite of passage without anaesthesia is common among the Abagusii. This ritual takes place annually in the months of November and December followed by a period of seclusion during which the boys are led in different activities by older boys, and is a great time of celebration indeed for families and communities at large. I have already noted this under initiation above. Family, friends and neighbours are invited days in advance by candidates to join the family. Mzee Gesora discusses this under rites of passage. Some of the notable musicians among the Kisii people include Arisi O'sababu, Monyoncho, Sungusia, Riakimai '91 Jazz, Embarambamba, among others. Gusii community traditional marriage was arranged by the parents who found an appropriate bride. Customary, civil and Christian marriage was allowed.

Both boys and girls were initiated when they were of the required age as customs and traditions dictated. There were special persons trained for the operation. The initiates got pre-initiation training on importance of respect the old people. They underwent special coding whereby they were each attached to omo-segi – the one who nurses the initiates. For a boy to be initiated he had to collect enough fire wood, for keeping on throughout the seclusion period. Continuous presence of fire here is associated with continuity of life through procreation. Hence, if the fire went out during seclusion period one couldn't sire children in case of a boy or give birth to children in the case of girls unless special sacrifices are offered to appease the living dead. In addition, the Abagusii practice female genital mutilation, which is practiced regularly even though it is prohibited by law. Sometimes called female circumcision, this surgery robs girls of the possibility for sexual satisfaction. The practice is intended to keep girls and women "in line," and it has attracted the attention of human rights advocates around the world.

This rite of passage makes one be a full member of the society, an adult as the song below highlights:

Aye ohie Aye ohie Aye ohie goko okorire buya Aye ohie ariri

Aye ohie Aye ohie goko okorire buya Aye ohie ariri

Oreng'e mokabaisia obeire mokabamura

Aye ohie Aye ohie goko okorire buya Aye ohie ariri

He belonged to the lad;

He now belongs to the initiated group.

He belonged to the lad;

He now belongs to the initiated group.

This means becoming mature.

This means the rite of passage was successfully conducted hence followed with in ululation after the entire group members had been initiated.

The women carried cooking sticks signifying she would now take up house wife slashing all sides to show adult men's responsibility. To walk and marry everywhere responsibility. In the case of the boys, women carried pangas which signified the kind of work the grown up boys would be doing after initiation. These included slashing, farming, and the panga could as well mean that the boy could produce more food and get more children.

Arwane sigisi Arwane sigisi

Arwane sigisi Arwane sigisi

Arwane sigisi/Arwane sigisi noyoo.

Can fight anywhere including among the Kalenjin.

After seclusion, the boys and girls were blessed to have children and animals. This was done by an old man, would be father, grandfather or uncle sprawling in a soft busaa or milk to them saying "Chiombe nabana, Cows and children. It was done in the open as they drank busaa. It's also important to note that while seclusion a kind of virtual meant

to encourage the initiate and the songs were sang by old men. The busaa was prepared for that particular occasion.

2.5 Relationships

According to Mzee Gesora relationships among the Abagusii is highly cherished. Daily interactions follow strict rules of politeness. There are rules to ensure that sexual shame (*oboyaka*) is avoided and there are rules governing respect (*ogosika*). These rules are many and complicated. They regulate proper behaviour between women and men, among generations, and between different kinds of relatives. For example, although anyone within the same generation may joke with each other and talk about sexual matters, this is prohibited between different generations. A father may not set foot in his son's house; a son-in-law has to avoid his mother-in-law; a daughter-in-law must not come too close to her father-in-law (she cannot even cook a meal for him). In everyday interaction, the expected behaviour is one of respect of the old people towards the young once and vice versa. The Abagusii are very careful about personal appearance and avoid showing themselves even partially naked. Similarly, bodily functions must not be mentioned or implied between different generations or between women and men. It is important to avoid being seen on the way to the “bush/toilet”. This kind of teaching according to Mzee Nyareso was done by grandparents who offered guidance to the grandchildren through songs. This is captured in a song

“omukungu osiko moino”

“omukungu osiko moino”

A woman of the other house

A woman of the other house

Abagusii person distinguishes her or his own father and mother by specific terms: *tata* (my father) and *baba* (own mother). Likewise, parents distinguish their children as *Omomura one* (own son) and *mosubati one* (own daughter). However, all women and men of the same generation are considered "brothers" and "sisters." All women and men in one's parents' generation are called *tatamoke* (uncle) and *makomoke* (aunt). All members of the next generation are *omwana one* (my child), grandchildren's generation are *omochokoro* (my grandchild), and grandparents' generation are *sokoro* (grandfather) and *magokoro* (grandmother).

Hospitality and respect toward strangers is common. At the same time, the Abagusii are very reserved, polite, and in many ways suspicious about others' intentions. Although interpersonal conflicts are common, people are not supposed to show outward signs of anger. The strong emphasis on peaceful conduct and emotional control can result in explosions of violent behaviour under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol here is a general term for busaa while 'busaa' is a specific kind of beer.

Before British colonization, the Abagusii lived in two separate groups: the homestead (*omochie*) where a married man, his wives, and their unmarried daughters and

uncircumcised sons lived, and the cattle camps (*ebisarate*) in the grazing areas—where most of the cattle were watched by resident male warriors.

Maize is the staple, which is ground into flour. Maize flour is mixed into boiling water to form thick dough like paste (*obokima*) that is eaten at all meals. A meal usually includes fried cabbage, tomatoes, and some potatoes. Depending on how well-off the family is, chicken or goat may be served. The *obokima* is formed into a spoon with one's fingers, and then used to scoop up the meat. Other popular foods are sour milk, goat intestines, and millet porridge. Finger millet was the traditional staple before the introduction of corn. On recreation, traditional dancing and music were once popular, but today few outlets exist in the countryside for such entertainment. Among men, a main form of recreation consists of drinking beer.

Alcoholism and violence toward women are the most severe social problems. Traditionally, only older people were allowed to drink large amounts of locally brewed busaa (*amarua*). Today, social control over drinking has broken down, and traditional busaa and home-distilled spirits are served in huts all over the district. Probably close to 50 percent of young and middle-aged Abagusii are regular drinkers, with a larger proportion of men than women. This heavy drinking leads to violence, neglect of children, and poverty. The Abagusii also have high murder rates compared to the rest of Kenya. Although violence toward women (such as rape and beatings) has been part of Gusii culture since earlier in this century, alcohol is probably a factor in its increase.

The exploitation of women in Abagusii society is a serious human rights problem. According to customary law, which is usually followed in the countryside, women cannot inherit or own land, cattle, or other resources. This makes them completely dependent on men for survival and attainment of any future security. Until a woman has adult sons, she is under the authority of her husband and has to ask permission from him to leave the homestead.

Growth of Kisii Town

Mzee Gesora, said the Abagusii, people like many East African people foresaw the Coming of the Europeans. Abagusii had their ways of foretelling the future. They had a Prophet called Sakawa. He was born in the 1840s and died around 1902, and was reported to have predicted the arrival of the British in 1907 and the building of the District capital, Kisii Town.

He prophesized the present growth of Kisii town referring as “Amandegere name” ‘Mushrooms would grow in Gusiiland’. This prophecy is contained in songs which were sung during busaa parties. Such songs include “omobani Sakawa.” This is the symbolic of growth of the present Kisii Town.

In 1907–08, a prophetess called Moraa tried to start a rebellion against the British. She sang a song to encourage men to soldier on during difficult times. In 1908 she gave her step-son, Otenyo, a traditional charm that she believed could protect him from bullets,

and she sent him to kill a British Officer G.A.S. Northcot. Although Otenyo wounded Northcot with his spear, he survived and later became the governor of Hong Kong.

From the above history of the Abagusii, I have observed that Abagusii are related to all Bantu people and have in the past been in contact with Nilotes. The Abagusii are farmers who keep cattle and also tend to their crops. They relate well with their neighbours. Their migration to their present land was prompted by their desire to farm and lead a good life. Their use of symbolism is meant to communicate figuratively with each other and thereby create linguistic variety among themselves. Singing was part of their everyday life. They sang during ceremonies and songs were symbolic.

Although no European traveller, trader or missionary had visited Abagusii country in the nineteenth century, the Abagusii, like the other African groups, had learnt about them through their prophet, Sakawa. Sakawa used to meet his followers at the present-day Kisii town and told them where the future police lines, the hospital, the offices and churches would be built. He lit fires in a long line to show where electric poles and lights would follow. He also prophesied that the Abagusii warriors would be disarmed by the white strangers if they showed resistance, 'but these white people', he said, 'Will stay and later leave for their country, leaving us to rule ourselves as we have always done in the past'. All these have come to pass as mzee Gesora narrated. All this was captured in songs sung during busaa taking parties.

It is not known exactly where he went when he died. Some people believe that he ascended into the skies and that he will come back one day. Indeed in 1921 many of the Gusii were expecting his return. Whatever had happened to his body, it is known that two years after Sakawa died, the British arrived in Gusii-land. The Gusii had forgotten that Sakawa had warned them not to oppose the white men, and when the Gusii warriors took their spears to defend their land many were killed by the British who were fought with guns. Together with the Giriama, the Taita, the Kamba, the Kikuyu, the Nandi and the Elgeyo, they were on the receiving end of murderous 'patrols' which many times ruthlessly killed men and women and exterminated their stock. To date songs have been sung to commemorate Sakawa.

CHAPTER THREE

SYMBOLISM IN ABAGUSII BUSAA SONGS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I analyse the use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and its didactic role in the community. I have also discussed various artists/performers in this study. They include group dancers and Artists such as Ikonge market women, Ronald Ontiria who uses Bikundo as his trade name in his artistic work and Amariba women group dancers.

I have researched on the history of the Abagusii which has enabled me get the background information to the study. Our interaction with the groups is brought on board in this chapter. I have given a discussion on the use of symbolism in relation to the events that take place in the Abagusii community. The topics under discussion include symbolism connected to gods and nature, women and children, women and love, handwork and animal, men and women, harp and other symbols.

3.2 Women and Children as Symbols

Symbolism has been described as the practice or art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. An action, person, place, word, or object can all have a symbolic meaning. When an author wants to suggest certain mood or emotion, he/she uses a certain symbol to express.

Abagusii are a god fearing community. We learn from the research done that god gives men women who call them husbands and women to men whom they call wives. In the song: “omokungu oisiko moino kae Bosibori ensio yaye”,

“Omokungu o’ siko moino,	A woman of the other house
kae Bosibori ensio yaye”-	Give Bosibori her grinding stone
Bosibori ensio yaye.	Give Bosibori her grinding stone
Kae Bosibori ensio yaye	
Nero yoka abwate agosera	the only one for grinding
Ee nero yoka abwate agosera	yes, the only for grinding

The performer appeals to women to stick to their husbands. One should not loiter. Each woman or man ought to respect her/his spouse. The significance is captured in the symbol of a grinding stone. The husband is the one referred as a grinding stone. The environment plays a very important role in creating a conducive atmosphere for man who is referred as a grindstone. A grindstone symbolizes a husband for he is the one who sires children, looks for food for the family and ensures security of a home. The wife on the other hand guards what the husband has secured. Women’s particular occupation during busaa drinking involves boiling water required to mix with the drink, cooking for the husband, what to eat before and after drinking. There is food that one has to work hard to get from the soil. The reunion of man and woman give birth to children those, without suffer a great deal in life those that have thank God for the gift. Gratitude is therefore given to God as indicated in the song below.

“Engoro Nderere”,	God take care of my child.
Engoro, Engoro,	God take care of my child
Engoro Onderere	

The song was sung during busaa parties, God is acknowledged as the one who takes care of a child. This indicates that no matter what we do, we cannot succeed in taking care of the child unless God intervenes. This is the beliefs of the Abagusii community, so the song is a prayer. It is performed in the morning and the mother of the children faces east where the sun rises from and addresses the God. A child who would be crying stops to do so at the call of God take care of my child. If the prayer offered every morning for a period of one week and the child keeps on crying then the period can be extended. The performance takes almost half a day starting in the morning until the sun sets.

It is believed the child has some ghosts disturbing him or her. The father of the child only gets reports on the progress of the chants. According to Mzee Gesora Nyareso when interviewed about the relationship that existed between God and man he said that Men are believed to sire children through God’s power leave the pain of taking care of the child to women. This gives an indication that women play a big role in taking care of children once they have been born.

The beliefs in herbs which were common among members of the community from the history of the Abagusii, we confirm they had medicine men and women. These are people

who took care of them wherever there was disease outbreaks, women Herbalists usually took care of children. They give children some herbs which made them recover. Symbolically, therefore we had women doctors for children while men normally treated youths and old people. Herbs symbolize a way of prolonging one's life just as we have medicine in our present, hospitals. The community had such health cares but was in people's homes.

During birth of a young one as already indicated above women enjoy in the celebrations. Women and children symbolize continuity of one's clan. It means when women give birth, we have children enhance continuity of generation. The birth of a child is significant. This way those who are not used to sharing whatever they have cannot escape the communal sharing of whatever they have simplified in the song

'Kiomogoko no' mwana ogatoire'

A miser's food is given through a child.

'Kiomogoko no' mwana ogatoire'

A miser's food is given through a child.

The eating, singing and dancing portray a community's happiness at birth of a child. No matter the sex, for both sexes are important. A family with many daughters means a lot of wealth got from the pride while sons meant proper defence in the family. Parents love their children so much that when they miss them, they long for them. This is exemplified in the song

Abana Bane Nyambeki na Nyarere

My children Nyambeki na Nyarere.

Ntabarochi enda egotera amache.

I don't see you; you make my stomach sing water.

The children are loved cared and are portrayed as God given gift. The song (omong'ina otabwati omwana) shows how a woman without a child suffers.

The song is about how women without children are treated in the community. They are not regarded at all. This gives an indication that the community very much value children and those therefore who did not give birth were not regarded as important beings in the society.

It also meant bareness was condemned in the community. Barren women therefore suffered a lot humiliation in the community. It was believed that such women did not have God's blessings. They therefore lacked protection and a better way of enhancing their family ties and continuity was just within the community's jurisdiction. The Abagusii community respected a woman with children. She was very much adored but one without was downtrodden and very much despised as in the song.

Omonto otabwati omwana A person without a child

Omonto otabwati omwana A person without a child

Omwana! Omwana! Omwana! A child! A child! A child!
A rigie rigena abareke should carry a stone

‘Oyotabwati omwana a rigie rigena abareke’--she without a child should look for a stone to take care of. The stone is hard and cannot be squished anything which symbolizes how a barren woman has nothing to offer in the community.

The song indicates that whoever does not have a child should look for ways of getting alternative child. If possible to get a child by another man in case the husband is impotent or inherits a sister’s child. The community gave room for such alternative means of owning a child to ‘poster’ protection and enhance forged blessing. This is an indication of the Abagusii’s alternative measure to narrow the gap between those who have children and those without children.

In song the ‘omokungu siomia somia’--women who are lazy in the community move from house to house looking for food. They are warned from such vices. This indicates that laziness was discouraged in the Abagusii community; women who loitered from house to house would not know how families suffer in raising their children. Children need food as they grow and any little food is kept for a child. Those women who loiter might be given the little food that belongs to the children. The song (Gose mboke)

‘Gose mboke gose mbamwana.’

Whether it is little or it is for a child.

‘Gose boke gose mbamwana.’

Whether it is little or it is for a child.

The song criticizes people in the community who are not hard working. It also an indication on the things the community is cherished. Moving from one’s house to another aimlessly was not accepted in the society. People offered protection to the child as indicated in the songs.

Furthermore, on the question of women and children poetry, children are referred to as a blessing from God. He is the giver and the taker of all that we have on earth. There is feasting and merry making among the children mainly to grace the occasion. In this way, those who are barren do not wish to be so and no one should ridicule such women. God! Engoro’ has a way of balancing nature by giving some people children while others are not given. Some are given wealth but this cannot be a substitute for children. There are not any other forces or being that can give women children other than God. This gives an indication that Kisii community believe in a supernatural being God—Engoro, from whom all children come.

3.3 Symbolism of Sweet Sweet Banana

During wedding, marriage songs are sung. The performers led by their soloist bid farewell to the beloved couple which is going to join another stage in their life. The symbols which are used in the song the “Sweet Sweet Banana” encourage the

transformation those who get married undergo in their bid to start new life. Such songs are sung as the preparation is going on. “Sweet Sweet Banana itself symbolizes happiness, togetherness, joy and fertility as indicated in the lines below

Sweet sweet banana

Egetenga kieritoke

Sweet sweet banana

Egetenga kieritoke

Oyonde kero oragende

Ondangerie ngokobe

Sweet sweet banana

The bush of banana

Oyonde when you are marrying

Call me for escort

The banana bush symbolizes togetherness required by people when they are bidding farewell one of their own to start a new life a new life in marriage. It requires those already in good company not to forget their friendship during parting. This song was sung by Ronald Ontiria Onchuru whom for purposes of this project is called by his stage name--Bikundo

That people should continue remembering each other even in marriage.

The song romanticizes the bride on the bride groom's beauty, shape, posture and importance. The song is sung during merry marking where those from the side of the bridegroom and bride celebrate the marriage; there is plenty to eat though, Busaa taking is part of ceremony. The people display their feeling and attitude towards happening in the occasion. This one would be easily read from the facial expression and use of paralinguistic features such as gestures, body movement and the dance styles used at that time. The soloist sung as others responded in unison.

The guests of honour being the bride and bride groom are praised as people bid their farewell. Therefore people are proud as they sing the song. On the other hand, the group that has their daughter for marriage (the banana) is not happy for they would be missing her in their family. One of the members and on the other hand is happy because the 'thief' clan has got wealth got from the bride price. Also their relationship has been tightening. This means chances of going to war are minimized.

The 'sweet banana' is a type of banana which had been introduced by the whites. As the word 'sweet' denotes, it is a banana full of flavour. It is used and loved by people; both young and old. The marriage is expected to be a harmonious one. The relationship among the tribes is cemented through marriage.

In view of the above, we can conclusively say the Abaguisii community cherished love, honesty and trust in marriage. Marriage is seen as a way of bringing two communities together. There is the group that is happy for having an additional member in their

community- The sweet banana which is a symbol of a married woman. The group is happy in the sense that the woman would enhance community's continuity through procreation. She will give birth to children who are seen as wealth providers as in the case of daughters and continuity of the family the song below highlights the happy occasion.

Sweet sweet banana egetenga kie ritoke

Sweet sweet banana egetenga kie ritoke

Makori ekero okonywoma

ondangerie egekobo

Makori ekero okonywoma

ondangerie egekobo

egetenga kie ritoke

Sweet sweet banana a bush of bananas

Sweet sweet banana a bush of bananas

Makori when you marry ask me for escort

Makori when you marry ask me for escort

This song symbolized fertility and expansion of a family through marriage by getting Siblings - a banana multiples to get new bananas from one banana plant .The Abagusii, believed that once one gets married he would also get many children , which was the Purpose of marriage for continuity of stream of life .A banana has a lot of fertility this explains why its harvest is fast and more compared with other crops. As

the bride and bridegroom reaches their new homestead, they would be sprawled as milk and busaa on the cheeks. This is a sign a way of blessing the couple to get more children and be wealthy in the community as captured in chant; ‘Osarare buna Emanga na Esameta’ (To multiply like the hills, Sameta and Manga, ability to own children as well as wealth).

3.4 Symbolism of Hard Work

Work is highly valued among the Abagusii community. The hard working people in the community were not only respected but also honoured while the lazy ones were highly disregarded by members of society. Hard work is cherished, and those who do not work hard are not given a share. Laziness is discouraged. Songs were sung on different occasions depending on what was taking place. The songs sung towards evening were meant to welcome home those who had gone to graze cattle in far areas. They normally found old men seated in a semi-circle manner. Their faces brighten as they see young return home safely with their wealth the following song is sung;

Mosaiga Siberi ong’e
Age mate sip and return
Mosaiga Siberi ong’e”
Age mate sip and return,
Toa monto okobabaya
Don’t give a loitering person.
Oraiya oraiya,

Ha ha ha,

Chingero bo Nyagero.

Songs with songs

The song was normally sung in the evening when those who had taken cows out for grazing come back. They have worked and as a result the song praises them. Those that have not worked are should not be considered when the sharing a drink. This indicates that lazy and loitering people are not tolerated in the society.

The repetition in the song “Don’t give a loitering persona drink, Oraeya oraeya” is meant to encourage the men and women on how to work hard in their day- to- day life. It is also part of entertainment. The soloist repeats the words, “Oraiya oraiya” to make the people respond in unison. This symbolizes solidarity in working for a common goal in the society. The young men who happen to get the song get encouraged to work. Among the Abagusii, oral poetry-oral poems which are actually songs need interpretation to “Oraeya oraeya” to understand their meaning.



Figure 5: Ronald Ontiria (Bikundo) and Amariba Dancers

Symbolism used in songs busaa party songs exhibit different virtues and vices. The song indicates that laziness is discouraged. As those who are not hard working are not considered in busaa taking. Sharing busaa and any type of accompaniment during such ceremonies is limited. The song entertains those ones who take busaa which symbolically is way of welcoming those who had gone to graze cattle. Their work is appreciated.

The word, “Kobayabaya” Symbolizes those who loiter –lazy people. They are not regarded in the community at all. ‘Moseiga Siberia’ which can be translated as age mate take a sip indicates how taking of drinks food was discriminately shared. Those who never worked were not considered in taking of beer which symbolized love for hard work.

The song “Omosaiga Siberia Ong’e” – refers to age mate of the singer. The one singing gives the others busaa using a small calabash and would demand it back when he requires it. The calabash significantly is shared among those men and sometimes women who have been working.

Mosaiga Siberi ong’e
Age mate sip and return
Mosaiga Siberi ong’e”
Age mate sip and return,
Toa monto okobabaya
Don’t give a loitering person.

The words are translated to mean age set person takes a sip and return it to me.

The symbols of sharing of the calabash or at the present times they used straws.

The images of loitering refer to those who never joined the others in working.

Hardworking men sang the song normally after work. There is always food (made out of Wimbi) and traditional beer called (busaa) prepared out of maize and wimbi. The names of those that are participating in the drinking as indicated in the song below.

Nyamweya Siberia onge.	Nyamweya take a sip and give me,
Ounya sibria onge.	Ounya take a sip and give me
toa monto okobaya baya.	Don’t give a loitering person
Makori Siberia onge.	Makori take a sip and give me
Mong’are sibria onge.	Mong’are take a sip and give me

Toa monto okobayabaya. Don't give a loitering person

Toa monto okobaya baya. Don't give a loitering person.

The calabash (Egesanda) is normally shared selfishly. The song was sung in a small hut where old men sat and sang. The house was traditionally called "Gesarate". The hut was exclusively for men.

The hut symbolizes unity which was shared among the old and young people in society. The old people met and discussed societal issues as they drink and sing songs of praise. Their discussions are full of wisdom for they wisely advise on good things and ways to follow in the community. They also caution against unwanted, undesired and issue that affect people. The old men become drunk and want to disperse. As they do it they all stand, some staggering as they sing a song for dispersal. They are happily drunk as they bid bye to each other. The names of the group members are mentioned one by one by the soloist. The song is called –"Aka entabanana". The members sing the standing to symbolize end of session. The circle formation and the line pattern- indicate they were tired.

Similarly the Abagusii cared so much about those who went to graze and sometimes came home late. They had a mechanism they employed to differentiate the enemy from one of their own. They therefore trained their children as they took busaa the following song;

Maera ominto e Maera	I have come from grazing
maera	
Narure korisia Maera,	from those hills far maera
Ebituwa biria Maera,	hills maera
Biturungaine Maera,	big and small
E buna amaemba Maera,	like finger millets maera
Maemba nkongo Maera,	open for maera
Onyigorere Maera.	I am late maera
Rwa baba orogena rwa baba,	our grandmother's stone
Rwa baba orogena rwa baba,	our grandmother's stone
Ae-e e e rwa baba,	oh our grandmother
orogena rwa baba aee eee,	grandmother's stone
mbuyarogosa tirori koanda,	grinds nicely
mbuyarogosa tirori koanda,	without causing course
ae ee ee	

This song calls for consideration of those who are sent out for mission. Those hills “ebitunwa biria” Symbolizes far places such people should be counted in the community. They are part and parcel of the community. Grazing of cattle far of way from home symbolizes their struggle to keep cattle despite scarcity of land. In this song; those who take care performed their duties of grazing cows and taking care of cows. Abagusii people are farmers of cattle do it in very hostile places. Sometimes they come late and

have to request those at home to open for them a gate. The singing is important because sometimes other people can pretend to be those who went out for grazing mission.

Thieves or enemies can purport to be those who went out grazing. In this way the singing helped check on who comes to one's compound. The one who opens for the grazer must know his/her voice. Singing therefore is a way of communicating secret issues in the community.

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3.5 Men and Women as Symbols

In this type of symbolism, we capture man's relationship with woman as they exist in the universe. Man needs a woman for companionship as regards to staying together. Man offers woman security and at the same time woman serves as security to man. The fact that man and woman stay together proves to mankind the kind of shelter they give each other. The role of men and women is spelt out in the songs captured below.

The song ‘Omokungu o’siko moino’ A wife of the other house, is about a loitering woman.

“Omokungu o’isiko moino,
Kae Bosibori ensio yaye”-
A woman of the other house
Give, Bosibori her grinding stone.

The words Ensio means grinding stone. This symbolizes man as the head of the family. He does everything in the home. He sires children and looks for food for the family – ‘Agosacha’ and guards the family. A man is said to be the one who looks for wealth. ‘Sacha’ signifies wealth collector. The work of the wife is to keep custody of what the husband has secured in his attempt to feed the family.

The one called ‘the woman of the other house’ is the woman who has no specific husband. She is being warned not to snatch Bosibori, an upright woman her husband. The song is meant to encourage women to hold to their legal husbands and at the same time discourage those interference on other’s spouse. Contemporary songs do encourage young men to hold and respect their marriage. This is because we are living in an HIV-AIDS Era. The song discourages immorality as well as mobility of women. This also shows that the society had a way of keeping to the norms and integrity in observing societal rules. The intonations used in the poem clearly indicate how discouraging it was

for, 'a wife of the other house' snatching Bosibori her husband. This was meant to keep cultural values in the society.

During war some brave soldiers are killed. The Omogusii had a way of asking the support of the army, such is captured in song number four which is sung during busaa parties to encourage young men in war. The song requests for support for those in war to defeat the enemy. The song, 'Ing`ererie orotambe', in the line "Ing`ererie orotambe nduserie abanto baito roche"- render me a belt (orotambe) to fetch my people from the water bank, symbolizes help or assistance by young men who have become weak during war. The assistance was normally given by other by young men.

The young men were therefore expected and encouraged to render help whenever required. It can also mean that in case of sign of defeat, they can be helped. The same oral poem would symbolically mean, requirement of assistance for the continuity of a family in case of infertility or impotence. The young men who have left a young wife would require to be assisted in procreation. The images of "orotambe," a kind of cloth that makes a lantern to light is symbolic. Without light there is darkness. Symbolically light that comes from the lamp mean life. The wick (orotambe) means continuity of a family, a community. Distinguishing Darkness from light is very important in our in life today.

The type of dance where the Abagusii shake their shoulders facing downwards to the soil is an indication of how soil is important to them. It is from the soil that our people get what to eat. It is from the soil that we can tell the hardworking people and the lazy ones in the community. Soil is therefore important for those you make use of it but not for those who loiter.

Omokungu siomia siomia

A loitering woman.

N'gai okomanya bwarugerwe!

Where will your food have been cooked!

This means the woman cannot work but moves house to house looking for food. The song was sung to discourage laziness in the society as well as encourage hard working people.

Similarly, in song, “omokungu osiko moino” (a wife of another house) the symbolic meaning captures the Abagusii mechanism of discouraging and preventing immorality and husband snatching as early on indicated in the song. It is a way of keeping people morally upright. The words “It is the only grinding stone she has” symbolizes that a woman should look after her own husband. This admonishes those women who move from one husband to another.

Men among the Abagusii community are polygamous by nature, they, however, do not marry any woman. They are selective choosy for they are not allowed to pick women anyhow. This is what is captured in the song. The traditions and customs of the Abagusii

hold it that a woman should be legally married to the “Ensio- grinding stone”- to the husband. The song therefore emphasizes on a woman to focus on exploitation of the soil rather than keep on moving from house to house looking for food. People are rebuked especially women when they do not make use of their tools like jembes to till the soil and get what to eat.



Figure 6: Ikonge market women dancers

The above are Ikonge market Women dancers who sang the song omokungu oisiko moino kae Bosibori ensio yaye. The song was sung in busaa party ceremony after marriage.

In the song, 'give me orotambe' to remove our people from the water bank; the performers seeking help to assist others in trouble. The song indicates getting help necessary to foster generations in case of impotence or procreation which necessary for continuity of a generation and preservation of our culture. This encourages wife inheritance in situations where one's strength to sire children is threatened. This is to make people aware especially the young generation that a community's history and customs and traditions have to be preserved through generation's continuity as in the song below

Ingererie orotambe	Assist me with wick
Induserie abanto baito roche	Help my people from danger
Induserie abanto roche	Help my people from danger
Orwane nengegu rwaereire	My strength is over
Oraiya oraiya chingero bonyangero.	O yes song with songs

There should not be a generation gap where a community fails to sire children. This would happen when the man is impotent. When the song is sung, those who have no power to sire children get affected. It is however, a way of showing concern for young people in the community who have not married to marry. The marriage would make them have children of their own. Having children could make them responsible. The song symbolizes responsibility among parents. When they have children, they should take care of them. They ought to know their whereabouts all the time.

Further still on discussion of the song, 'Ing'ererie orotanga,' I would say give me a long stick, significantly shows how bad the bird would be that it requires a long stick to chase it away. Touching it or reaching near it is bad omen. This one brings out the superstitions and beliefs of the Abagusii. Here we get that there has been and are situations that require one to sit down and think seriously in order to arrive at a given conclusion. We are being cautioned to be careful in making certain decisions in our life. Some decisions have to be made after careful consideration including making consultation:

ing'ererie orotanga,
Give me a stick,
Nduserie Engocho ere ekenagwa,
I remove a bad omened bird from a tree,
nduserie engochere kenagwa,
I remove a bad omened bird from a tree,
Teira omoino Bogirango,
Not to take a song Bogirango,
oraiya oraiyachingero bonya ngero
oraiya oraiya songs with songs.
"Give me a long stick "
I use to assist my people
Assist my people
oraiya oraiya song with song.

Eng'ochō refers to “a bad omened bird “which causes misfortune to people in society. Furthermore the long stick symbolizes distance one should keep from witches and wizards. In everyday life people’s unity is threatened – especially by gossips. When people gather and discuss issues in the community, they do it in low tone-voices. They fear others who can spy them. Those who spy are regarded as bad omened bird. They should not be accepted in the community meeting. If anything, they should be chased away by use of a weapon- a long stick. One should keep a distance from such people so as not to be contaminated or soiled for they are believed to make one either suffer or die which therefore meant keeping them aloof was therefore necessary.

People therefore do not allow bad omened people from carrying and taking away that which they are not intended to take. The song “Ing’ererie orotanga” which means give me a big stick seeks for wisdom and education to do something positive in the community. The song demonstrates how much one requires from another in order to whisk away people with bad intentions in their community. This is symbolically captured in the lines:

Ingererie orotanga
Give me along walking stick
Nduserie engoncho orobago
I remove a bad omened bird
Nduserie engoncho orobago
I remove a bad omened bird

Teira omoino Bogirango

Not to take our singing Bogirango

The omened bird refers to a bird once it sings something bad is likely to happen. Such birds are not encouraged and should be whisked away. The bad omened bird would be referring to people in the society who cannot be trusted especially when handling big issues in ceremonies like in busaa parties. They are the kind who cannot be tolerated and accepted in such occasions. It is also not very easy to deal with them.

One needs special means including getting wisdom from God to tackle such a situation or rather to arrest it. One is discouraged of discussing pertinent issues in the presence of some people who can easily disseminate the discussion to unintended people. The unintended people are symbolized by the “Bogirango” far away people. Given that the song was sung in Nyaribari proves that Bogirango is far. In the same vein, we see how people’s ability, humility and hard work are preserved and passed on from one generation to another’s in the song;

Omogusii omongaini ombacha,	a clever kisii a clever kisii
Aiya aiya ombacha,	yes, don’t dodge
Nyarinda tombacha	Nyarinda don’t dodge
Aiya aiya ombacha,	yes don’t dodge me
Nyarinda tombacha	Nyarinda
Ageta ekemunto	he passed ekemunto

Aiya aiya tombacha,	yes, don't dodge me
Akanyora Kemunto,	he got kemunto
Ngai aiya aiya	yes, yes
Ombacha Nyarinda tombacha	don't dodge me Nyarinda
Agaeta ekerubo	he passed ekerubo
Aiya aiya tombacha,	yes, don't dodge me
Akanyora Kerubo,	he got kerubo
Ngai aiya aiya	yes, yes
Ombacha Nyarinda tombacha	don't dodge me Nyarinda
don't	
Agaeta ekiambokero	he passed ekiambokero
Aiya aiya tombacha,	yes, don't dodge me
Akanyora Kwamboka,	he got kwamboka
Ngai aiya aiya	yes, yes
Ombacha Nyarinda tombacha	don't dodge me Nyarinda
don't	
Agaeta emeraa	he passed emeraa
Aiya aiya tombacha,	oh! Yes, don't dodge me
Akanyora Moraa,	he met moraa
Ngai aiya aiya	oh! Yes, oh! Yes
Ombacha Nyarinda tombacha	don't dodge me

In the song, the naming is symbolic. The Omogusii naming ceremony was celebrated in busaa parties' songs. Here then the party would recall how the first naming of the Omogusii was done. Children are also named after the dead ones. That is if a person dies and he was of good character, a child born is named after him.

The names symbolize the type and kind of place the people reached in their migration. In the Christian world, Children get Christian names drawn from the Bible. Such names include Mathew, Abel, David and others. The names are symbolic. Abel symbolizes trust, the one who does not cheat God. His offering accepted by God but Cain's offering was not and he ended killing his brother.

Similarly, the Abagusii had a way of getting their first names in history. There was a song composed in remembrance of what happened. It makes the Abagusii recall their migration to the present land. It becomes easier to know Kerubo comes from Kisii when one meets Kerubo and Wanjiku. Wanjiku is obviously a name of a female from Mount Kenya region. In a way, the different naming according to events, place confirms to us the cleverness in the song "Omugusii Omong'aini. Naming was significant among the Abagusii people for they were given according to places they passed during their migration. The naming was done according to the following:

Kerubo – named while they were in a swampy place.

Kwamboka – named as they were closing a bridge.

Makori – a child who was born on the path during migration

Kemunto – a child named wherever people met for a private talk.

Moraa – trees called by that name “Emeraa”.

In some cases children were named in relation to difficulties encountered, serious events. One would be named Nyang’au – after several of his brothers have lost their lives. Such a child remains with some hair whenever his hair is cut short. This one serves as part of remembrance of the Abagusii migration and the difficulties encountered especially those associated with child bearing and sourcing for names.

Their happiness in singing the song was visible in the way they shook their shoulders. The women in such beer party wore jingles, necklaces – the ornaments signified beauty of Omogusii. The ankings the women wore at this time are significant of respect for their traditional wedding. The way women dress among the Abagusii nowadays is an imitation of old dressing only that it has been exaggerated. The wearing of earrings nowadays belittles our young generation who dress imitating whites.

Abagusii remained together in the migration despite hostile environment. They lived together and migrated from one place to another. The naming of children was done when they were together and nobody got opposed to it.



Figure 7: Maina's Group Dancers

The above group photo is captured to depict sharing of busaa in the busaa party. The soloist was Thomas Agnes Maina. In song, “when they reached a bridge they named the child Kwamboka”. The name Kwamboka symbolizes crossing the bridge. It is associated with the difficulties the Abagusii people faced during their migration in search of green pasture.

The name is normally given to a girl child and this momentarily makes the people sing in a relaxed manner as they continued in their day today life. They sung together as they

recalled the naming, creating sodality among the Abagusii. The singing was done as busaa taking went on as people using traditional straws. The drinking is from one pot “Ekee/Ekemunu” and “Chinkore” (calabashes and straws),the common drinking signified unity among members of the community.

3.6 Obokano and Ensiongo

Obokano is a very common, notable and significant instrument. It is played by people with special talent. It is usually common in busaa parties among the Abagusii people.. Harp symbolizes unity of Omogusii for it is used in most songs. People shake their shoulders, jump up and down, and move horizontally and diagonally in response to rhythm created by the harp. The eight strings themselves are significant when played with songs. They are majorly two types; the cockish and hen like which convey message for men and women respectively. The eight strings themselves are significant when played with songs. The Obokano player together with his dancers keeps on entertaining people drinking busaa. Women attend such occasions their major role being pouring boiled water to big pots called ‘Chinsongo’The women normally participate in such ceremonies dance to the rhythm of the songs. They wear clothes from goat skin called *chingobo*. The songs which are normally sung in busaa party also indicate that beer taking after work is acceptable. This is symbolic in the sense that men and women among the Abagusii should like work. It also creates harmony among those who take busaa from the pot- Ensiongo(big pot). The straws (chinkore) which are shared in a circular manner portrays how social the men and women are. The sharing showed how unsuspecting the Abagusii

people were during ceremonies. The pot from where the drink was taken is very significant.

It symbolizes unity among members of the community. Its shape is also symbolic. It shows how woman is figured and the fact that the beer being taken is brewed by woman, illustrates womanhood and the position of women in the community she is regarded. The traditions of Omugusii – Abagusii on how to deal with issues in the society are discussed here. Busaataking enhances cohesion among members of the community and extension in the whole nation. Men and women sang as they continued taking busaa using ‘Chinkore’ – straws’. The use of straws which cannot be shaved today symbolizes trust among members. People were free from many things which included serious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, mistrust of all kinds. This once again as I have said brought unity as highlighted in the song below.

Mosaiga Siberi ong’e
Age mate sip and return
Mosaiga Siberi ong’e”
Age mate sip and return,
Toa monto okobabaya
Don’t give a loitering person

In singing the song, “Mosaiga Siberia ong’e” the community tend to pass the singing culture from the old to the young people. The harp, an eight stringed instrument shows

how the people respected those who had such instruments. A good example in our age is Bikundo. Like the Luo Nyatiti a one-stringed instrument, a harp plays an important role as far as socialization of the Abagusii people is concerned. People discuss, share, talk sing dance and gossip as it is played skilfully. The instruments signifies togetherness required among members community.



Figure 8: Obokano (Harp)

In the song, ‘ Egetii gi Tabaka’(Tabakafield)

Egetii gia tabaka omoiseke ataragetirianda,

Tabaka’s field

Egetii gia tabaka omoiseke atara getirianda,

a girl walks naked

Atare gotara na ngobaye

Agirl so beautiful

Atare gotara na ngobaye

Agirl so beautiful

Oraiya oraiya etago yane mosaiga.

Oh! Oh!

Similarly girls were valued so much. They signified wealthy (Entururu). The old men sung the song to signify a girl's beauty. The girl is said to be in a Field. The Tabaka Field symbolizes a girl who is beautiful and very ripe for marriage. At the same time being in the Field means the girl is not engaged. Young men are therefore urged to go and marry the girl. The song is sung meant to encourage both the young men and women to marry. Field would also mean level ground for those in engagement to exchange their vows. In the song 'Amaemba ababa Amantgoro' (mother's millet) the song symbolizes plenty harvest which was praised among the Abagusii community. The harvest brought community together Amaemba ababa amantogoro. In the song as earlier on said the Abagusii people value land so much. It is from land that food comes. Therefore soil is symbolically a source of food. Being farmers, the community believes there would be no hunger with rich harvest. The rich harvest of Amaemba – finger millet significantly is assurance of survival and continuity of the community.

The performers are happy as they sing the song. As the singer continues to sing, they mention of "Nyangweso Yacha Yaboriani" this means that there was a bird that came to steal the finger millet; such a bird threatens the community. But sincere they are not many; it means people have to quicken their steps to harvest it. In life, we have pros and

cons just as seen yearly in the song, 'kiomogoko no mwana ogatoire' the song is sung in celebration for a new baby. Busaa and all types of food are consumed as exemplified in the lines;

kiomogoko no mwana ogatoire,

kiomogoko no mwana ogatoire,

kiomogoko no mwana ogatoire

This refers to the one who is a miser. This symbolizes happiness brought by Birth of a child even those who are not ready to share with other do share during this occasion. A new born symbolizes new generation and continuity of one's family lineage. A lot of food lavished on the particular day signifies wealth and material of all kinds in the community.

Among Abagusii, people were regarded differently according to their behaviour, what they did and how they interacted with others in the community. There are those who were generous and would give or share with others whatever they had. And there were those who were mean and behaved arrogantly. The latter group would sneer others in the society. Such people would be dealt with strictly during ceremonies. One such ceremony where they cannot escape is during circumcision or birth of a new one. It is also a warning to people who are misers. Those who do not want to spend. Those who attend to such occasion sing as lavishly eat anything that they get since the parents of the new born baby have previously behaved and acted in a mean manner.

In the song new born babies symbolize unity and reconciliation. These people who have not been sharing meet here and share what is said to belong to the child. It is also a way of warning mean people of the consequences of their meanness when a chance is revised. People will eat and spend such a person's food to the last time.

3.7 Sakawa

Sakawa was among the most trusted Kisii prophets. The prophet prophesied the growth of Kisii town and the one with sons will harvest mushroom. Mushrooms here symbolize growth and development of Kisii town.

Those who will benefit from it are those who have sons. This indicates that the present growth of Kisii town is a response of the Abagusii seers' history and poetry keeps the history and periodical happening of Omogusii in stock. The prophet Sakawa symbolizes those who had foreseen growth of Omogusii in terms of population as well as in terms of education. He was out to tell Omugusii to compete with others in education. Amandegere significantly refers to the many building in the town. Mushrooms resemble houses, they are sweet, rare and not ease to get the song therefore is used to show difficult of getting education but if one has got that he/she enjoys. The prophecy has been realized today since those who have educated children have occupied the town, no matter from which clan or tribe. It was one way of prompting competition for education.

God symbolizes life; God symbolizes the continuity of people's life. Praying to God for survival is a symbol of His Omnipotence. The research indicated God is universal who should therefore be praised as Engoro nderere among the Abagusii people.

Young warriors defended the community from outside attacks. They used spears, pangas and rungas, bow and arrows catapult and weapons to fight their enemies. The enemies were normally those that took their cattle or wanted to grab their land. They included the Abamanyi (Maasai) Abasigisi (kalenj) and others. The others here included Luos who were not actually Abagusii enemies. The term 'Abamanyi' has a negative connotation, for it means invaders, ants have earned that name because they usually attack people at night. They are juxtaposed with the invaders. Fighting was normally done at night. Once a certain village/people has been attacked there would be ululation to alert everybody in the homestead and the whole village. The attack can be made immediately if the warriors were prepared or later as it deemed necessary.

Incase it was later then the warriors who normally stayed in isolated places had to prepare for food was prepared and stocked and would be taken to them to the battle field. Women never went to the battle field and men were not allowed to sleep with their wives during such occasions. Once they have won, those that returned alive were cleansed by use of busaa and milk. They are welcome home as heroes. People were (chigwagwa), a kind of creepers plant as a sign of victory. They would sing victory songs like Moseiga siberia onge.

Those who died in the were buried outside the homestead for it was believed it was a bad omen and if one died and the body was not found, a grave is dug and a mock burial conducted whereby a piece of wood was buried, as people chanted sorrowfully in a remembrance of fallen hero.

Victory meant returning stolen cows and here a song is sung:

Echiaranire ee baba, enchieraniere chiombe chiairanire

Echiaranire ee baba, enchieraniere chiombe chiairanire

Another common song is “Chiombe na abana” this is translated to mean “cows and children” Cows symbolized wealth and children; the continuity of the community or one’s generation. This was done after sprinkling the initiates with Busaa and sour milk which is done on the forehead. This exercise is carried by the man of the house “Omosacha bwenka” surrounded by village men. During this time women don’t participate but only bring busaa and stand to watch from a distance.

3.8 A cow

A cow source of milk and milk is attached to many things in the Abagusii traditional setting. Milk is used to bless those becoming adults after initiation, married couples. The chant ‘chiombe na abana,’ (cows and children) accompanied the mouth sprinkling of milk to the married couples just as it is done to the initiate after seclusion.

The song 'chiaranire ee baba'

Chiaranire ee baba chiaranire

Chiombe chiaranire

Cows have come back

Cows have come back

The song symbolizes victory. The young men are praised as they return home with stolen cows. The spears rungs, Catal pelt, bows and arrows are carried high for them to win. The weapons were necessary during war as they enabled a community to defend themselves against enemies. People were happy because of the return of cows. A cow was significant among the Abagusii people for when a young girl get married, cows are given as dowry one becomes rich and more rich, if he had sired more daughters.

Those who have come out victorious from war also get blessed through sprinkling of milk. From a cow the Abagusii got clothes in a form of goat skin (ebisena). Some of the initial clothes the people wore were made from cows skin, It was called (Egesena) a small cloth that covered the buttocks and from part in case of a man/boy and the front abdomen parts and the breast in case of a girl. They signified respect for they covered and protected important parts mainly for re-production. This showed how society value procreation and continuity of generation.

Abagusii, who grew wimbi and wimbi millet used cow skin to spread it to dry-The cow skin was called “Egesero” or the big one “Riyo” a dried cows skin. The wimbi would be made ready and be kept in a big basket smeared with cow-dung from cows for storage. From a cow Abagusii got food such as stated above, milk meat blood and even medicine for some part of a cow was used as medicine. Cows generally were important animals among the Abagusii people. Even when a person died, before burial, the one who would start the digging of the grave is given a small cow.

In conclusion, in all Abagusii life time, cows is valued a reason why they were taken care of seriously and songs composed in their honour asit’samong the Maragoli people of Western Kenya.

I observed that the Abagusii community preserves its values in busaaparties’ oral poetry. Oral Poetry as exemplified by the song “Abange bakure” speaks of death and “Engoro” which is a worship song indicating their value of God. As for the use of song in special situations, I found out that the Abagusii have songs for special occasions be it circumcision, death/funeral, birth, calamity and war. For instance, I would show this by giving the songs “Omomura Bwe Gesaku” (A man of the clan) to show how the youth were urged to be warriors; another example is “Kiomogoko no mwana” (A miser’s food is given through a child) which is performed when a baby is born to show how babies are viewed by the community.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Conclusion

From the study, I conclude that the use of symbolism in Abagusii busaa party's oral poetry enhances understanding among the members of the society. People get entertained after war for winning, during wedding ceremonies, when a baby has been born or any occasion that calls for celebrations. They discuss issues of magnitude on how they affect the society and tend to sort solutions to problems that face members of the society. They cherish good leadership, hard work, and honesty and rebuke laziness. Those people who work hard are praised and highly regarded in the community. The lazy ones are disregarded slandered. Soil is symbolic; it is where the Abagusii benefit from most hence highly valued. The research shows that it is from the soil that we get all kinds of food. Plants grow from soil and animal eat plants that grow from soil.

Research shows clearly how the Abagusii people loved gathering together to be entertained as they took busaa. Through entertainment, a lot of issues of importance in the community set-up are deliberated. There is drinking going on as people chat over all issues ranging from advisory, praise to mockery or lament on certain bad episodes in the community. The issues are not put in black and white. Symbols are used in order not to make more especially the mockery open. It is on this particular occasion where virtues are imparted and vices of all kinds rebuked.

As the drinking goes on one would identify use of symbols such as harp and its implication on Omogusii. The study was informed on how the harp, 'Obokano 'an eight stringed instrument only gets associated with Omogusii. There is no such instrument all over the world. The other things include pots, baskets, jingles, horn, calabashes and many others. They are all meant to preserve and disseminate Abagusii cultural values. Such issues place the Abagusii in the world map.

The research was on the use of symbolism in busaa parties' oral poetry among the Abagusii. The study has reviewed related literature and shown its uniqueness in conception. It has described and deployed the stylistic literary model in its paralinguistic affective aspect. It has discussed some of the Abagusii busaa party oral poetry and the outcome is that Abagusii stories were told in form of songs which for example eulogizes Abagusii heroes of war. These heroes were praised with songs which were symbolically presented.

From the analysis of the songs it emerged clearly what bad luck befall those who were conceited, lazy, disobedient and disrespectful and those who intelligently followed what they were instructed to do in the society were rewarded in the society. The songs such as: "Mosaiga Siberia Ong'e toa Monto O'kobaya baya" is meant to reward obedient people in the society. Such songs were sung during busaa party ceremonies. In this way the poems studied foster national unity among the Abagusii if properly. Finally, it raises the

issues of authorship, performance and language in relation to oral literature and calls for a reassessment of the issues.

The research indicates that Abagusii oral busaa party poetry has specific functions. However, the functions to a greater extent are general. The oral busaa party poetry is meant to pass information /message to members of the community. This is because symbols are important when it comes to discussing societal issues. The issues are political, economic, social and political. People live in organized systems which can be called government. At least there is a systematic way of respected council that governs the society. There are set rules without which there would be no respect, punishment and rewards.

The head of the family is symbolized by the father whereas economically the community is considered to be stable with lots of harvest. Hard working people are rewarded and respected in the society. Good harvest symbolizes prosperity of members of that particular community. People hold different communities of the ceremonies are symbolic for instance circumcision makes one move from child to adulthood. People eat, drink and enjoy as they dance in merry Making. The pouring of libation shows the significance of the ancestors are regarded for sharing whatever little there would be represented communing with their living dead.

The symbolism enhance people's attitude toward those things they did and changed as they get entertained, get educated as they socialize amongst themselves. The Abagusii history is recorded in the way it's preserved in use of a traditional pot, Basketry, musical instruments such as Harps, horn .The songs are repeated over and over to last the duration of the beer taking. This was specifically so to emphasis certain issues.

The songs, however, place us to a given historical period as well as serves as entertainment. One good thing with such songs is that they are seasonally sung especially during music and drama festivals. They authentically indicate cultural belonging and for national integration that although we have diversity of cultures, we belong together. They enhance cohesion and togetherness. Secondary the tendency of wife inheritance in order to enhance generation among the Abagusii is slowly diminishing. Like in other communities for example the Luos who have elaborated Tero-buru where wife inheritance is paramount. It is also most becoming a thing of the past. The advent of HIV-AIDS and lack of care has created fear and anxiety among people. People are no longer interested in wife inheritance. People have chosen the Christian way of life and therefore whether they get children or not, they are less worried. However in situations and special circumstances where wife inheritance in inevitable the ones tending to practice it undergo HIV-AIDS test which is both voluntarily and free. If the song /oral poetry has to be recited of such kind, then it has what Bikundo has sung that involves putting safety belts if one cannot avoid where the safety belts are a symbol of condoms.

In the song the women are asked to close the gates, symbolically the gates refer to the women sexual organ. Men are asked to tie their dogs *abasacha siba chisese chiaino* (Men be slow in desire for women) tying of their dogs symbolically means men should in such circumstances given that the people's expectations. It has also been realized that many poets used symbolism to deepen the meaning of their poems. Here is an excerpt from William Blake's "Ah Sunflower." In it, Blake refers to life cycle and uses sunflowers to represent humankind and that they desire everlasting life.

In Abagusii community like any other communities as I found out in the project, symbolic objects often symbolize something else: A chain can symbolize the coming together of two things. A ladder can represent the relationship between heaven and earth or ascension. A mirror can denote the sun but when it is broken, it can represent an unhappy union or a separation.

4.2 Recommendations

This research hereby recommends the teaching of symbolism in Abagusii Oral poetry in the primary and secondary schools in the country. The teaching should be given publicity in the local direct and then translated to other languages. The researcher recommends the study of oral literature using Information communication technology given that this days the songs can be sang, recorded both in audio and visual.

They can be easily preserved in such manner also due to lack of time, someone could still go ahead and do the research further with a view to improving the already analyzed material as well as filling in the gaps that might not have been captured in this research. There is need to have more time to further due research on the topic to exhaustively work and understand use of symbolism in Abagusii peer party or poetry. If this is not done the digital children will not comprehend their cultural background. It is important to the curriculum developers to blend traditional and modern issues concerning symbols used in traditional and more contemporary songs. Particular attention should be paid to symbolism in Abagusii peer party or poetry.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: EKEGUSII SONGS

Column A

Engoro, Engoro,

Engoro Onderere

Abange bakure ee ee bare abaya mono

Abange bakure ee ee bare abaya mono tiga tomobake tata Nyasae twaikire rero

Column B

God Take care of this child.

Many have died

Who are very good

Let's pray to our God

We have reached today

God, God the sun

SONGS

S1

Nyamweya Siberia onge ,

Ounya sibria onge.....

Toa monto okobaya baya.

S2

Entabanana.....

S3

“Omokungu o’ siko moino,

A woman of the other house

kae Bosibori ensio yaye”-

Give Bosibori her grinding stone

Bosibori ensio yaye.

Give Bosibori her grinding stone

Kae Bosibori ensio yaye

Nero yoka abwate agosera

the only one for grinding

Ee nero yoka abwate agosera

yes, the only for grinding

S4

Ingererie orotambe

Assist me with wick

Induserie abanto baito roche

Help my people from danger

Induserie abanto roche

Help my people from danger

Orwane nengegu rwaereire

My strength is over

Oraiya oraiya chingero bonyangero.

O yes song with songs

S5 and 6S

Omogusii omongaini ombacha,

a clever kisii a clever kisii

Aiya aiya ombacha,

yes, don’t dodge

Nyarinda tombacha

Nyarinda don’t dodge

Aiya aiya ombacha,

yes don’t dodge me

Nyarinda tombacha

Nyarinda

Agaeta ekemunto

he passed ekemunto

Aiya aiya tombacha,

yes, don't dodge me

Akanyora Kemunto,

he got kemunto

Ngai aiya aiya

yes, yes

Ombacha Nyarinda tombacha

don't dodge me Nyarinda

Agaeta ekerubo

he passed ekerubo

Aiya aiya tombacha,

yes, don't dodge me

Akanyora Kerubo,

he got kerubo

Ngai aiya aiya

yes, yes

Ombacha Nyarinda tombacha

don't dodge me Nyarinda don't

Agaeta ekiambokero

he passed ekiambokero

Aiya aiya tombacha,

yes, don't dodge me

Akanyora Kwamboka,

he got kwamboka

Ngai aiya aiya

yes, yes

Ombacha Nyarinda tombacha

don't dodge me Nyarinda don't

Agaeta emeraa

he passed emeraa

Aiya aiya tombacha,

oh! Yes, don't dodge me

Akanyora Moraa,

he met moraa

Ngai aiya aiya

oh! Yes, oh! Yes

Ombacha Nyarinda tombacha

don't dodge me Nyarindadont

S7

Ingererie orotanga

Give me along walking stick

Nduserie engoncho orobago

I remove a bad omened bird

Nduserie engoncho orobago

I remove a bad omened bird

Teira omoino Bogirango

Not to take our singing Bogirango

S8

Sweet Banana

The lines:

Sweet sweet banana

Ondangerie ngokobe

Egetenga kieritoke

Sweet sweet banana

Sweet sweet banana

The bush of banana

Egetenga kieritoke

Oyonde when you are marrying

Oyonde kero oragende

Call me for escort

S9

abana bane aiye ee ee ee

my children

abana bane Nyambeki na Nyarere

Nyambeki and nyarere

intabaroche aiye eebaba aiye

intabaroche Nyambeki na Nyarere

when I don't see you

the house is dark with you

koriorio yaba omosunte aiya

my movement are motionless

abana bane

aiye eee

oho,oho

baba aiye

abana bane Nyambeki na Nyarere aiye

my children Nyambeki and

Nyarere

oh

S10

Maera ominto e Maera

I have come from grazing maera

Narure korisia Maera,

from those hills far maera

Ebituwa biria Maera,

hills maera

Biturungaine Maera,

big and small

E buna amaemba Maera,

like finger millets maera

Maemba nkongo Maera,

open for maera

Onyigorere Maera.

I am late maera

Rwa baba orogena rwa baba,

our grandmother's stone

Rwa baba orogena rwa baba,

our grandmother's stone

Ae-e e e rwa baba,

orogena rwa baba aee eee,

mbuyarogosa tirori koanda,

mbuyarogosa tirori koanda,

ae ee ee

oh our grandmother

grandmother's stone

grinds nicely

without causing course

S11

Egetii gia tabaka omoiseke atara getirianda,

Egetii gia tabaka omoiseke atara getirianda,

Atare gotara na ngobaye

Atare gotara na ngobaye

Oraiya oraiya etago yane mosaiga.

Tabaka's field

a girl walks naked

A girl so beautiful

Oh! Oh!

S12

Eee wamaya wamaya,

wamaya ee wamaya

ngatebigwa nyuome ngakana

tinkonyuoma tiga tata anywome

Eee good lucky

Eee good lucky

I was told to marry I refused

let my father marry

S13

Birth song

Performer: Ronald Ontiri Onjuru (36 years)

Location: Kiogoro

Kiomogoko no mwana ogotoire A miser's food is given through a child

Kiomogoko no mwana ogotoire A miser's food is given through a child

Gosamba keririato aririri A new-born has come ululate

S14

1. Worship song

Performer: Meshack Onyamo Ragi (67 years)

Location: Ekerenyo

Engoro Engoro Engoro Onderere God God God care for the child

Engoro Engoro Engoro Onderere God God God care for the child

Engoro Engoro Engoro Onderere God God God care for the child

S15

2. Funeral song

Performer: Obino Nyambane (50 years)

Location: Kisii

Abange bakure ee ee Many have died

Bare abaya mono Who are very good

Tiga tomosuba tata Nyasae Let's pray to our God

Twaikire rero We reached today

S16

Omomura bwe gesaku

Performer: Dennis Marube

Age : 24 years

Location: Obwari

District: Nyamira North

County: Nyamira

	Kai!
Kai!	Kai!
Kai!	Man of the clan
Omomura bwe gesaku	Took his spear
Akaimokia ritimo	With the shield
Amo ne Enguba	He ran
Akaminyoka	He ran
Akaminyoka	Till he reached Bochege
Agaika Bochege	Till he reached Bochege
Agaika Bochege	Put his weapons down
Akabeka ebirwanero biaye inse	And listened keenly
Agategereria	Listened very keenly
Ogochi gotegerera buya	He heard loud cry
Akaigwa ebikuro	Uui!
Uui!	Uui!

Uui!	Where are men here?
Bamura bare ande?	Where are men here?
Bamura bare ande?	He carried his weapons
Akaimokia ebirwanero biaye	He ran
Akaminyoka	He ran
Akaminyoka	Till he reached Kinena
Agaika Kineni	He put down his weapon
Akabeka ebirwanero biaye inse	Wiped his sweat
Agetinyia ebigeria	Looking to the other side
Ogochi korigereria gochia ng'umbu	He saw houses burning
Akarora chinyomba chikoyia	He thought
Akabora	Obee, what to do?
Obee, naki ngokora?	Could I go back
Igonkoirana bono	What do I do now?
Igongotiga bono?	
Akainyora amang'ana ya	He remembered the sayings
abagaka bare goteba	of the old men
Ontiria na motiria na Makomberia inda	
Momura aiborwa rimo	Men are born once
Momura akwa rimo	Men die once

Akoinyora ekiaboisanga	He remembered Boisanga
Ebwatire omonu	Tied in the mouth
Agasiba enkoro omogoye	He tied his heart with a rope
Akaimokia ebirwanero biaye	Carried his weapons
Akaminyoka	He ran
Akaminyoka	He ran
Ogochi goika Bochege	On reaching Bochege
Akaumerana na ababisa	He met his enemies
Akegosia gochia nyuma	Felt afraid and moved backwards
Bagakengerana	Timed each other
Bagakengerana	Timed each other
Omobisa akamobeta ritimo ekena ma chogo	The enemy speared him on the knee
Akararera obee!	He cried obee!
Agasuka magega	He moved backward
Akang'usa ritimo korwa kogoro	He pulled the spear out of his leg
Akagenderera korenga	He kept timing
Akarenga	And timing
Ase egeka egekee	In a while
Agatong'a omobisa buna chogo	He speared the enemy
Akarara inse akwete	He lay down dead

APPENDIX II: MATERIAL CULTURE

The materialistic valuables of the Abagusii people are pictures below and their names appear at random

Basket

Omonyoncho

Ekee

Gesarate

Ekemunwa

Pots

Ensiongo

Egetono

Egetega

Enyakaruga

Skin container

Chisaro

Ebuseki

Ekeraro

Guards

Omorao

Enkondo



Tools

Ekebu

Eseka

Endurucho

Orwambo

Esururu

Egesire

Omoro

Ornament

Etago

Egesembe

Esumati

More terms in usage;



APPENDIX III: GUIDING QUESTIONS

- i. Why do we sing so much about a grinding stone among the Abagusii community?
- ii. Why do most songs feature women, men and children?
- iii. How, why and When are the songs sung?
- iv. Why do most songs use specific items i.e sweet bananas, animals, and a piece of wood?