ON LEGITIMIZING HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES:

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF GENDERED ABAGUSII PROVERBS

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree award in any other University.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my son Andrian and my lovely daughter Arianna.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This project would not have been possible without the Assistance of my supervisors Dr. J. K. S. Makokha of the Department of Literature of Kenyatta University who worked tirelessly in ensuring that I came up with this topic of research. His knowledge on gender and masculinity broadened my ideas in this research. My gratitude goes to my second supervisor Dr. Speranza Ndege of the Department of Literature who assisted my research in having an indebt discovery of the origin of Kenyan communities, the way proverbs are collected from the field and how they are analyzed thematically.

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ABSTRACT

This research work entailed a literary study of proverbs as a gendered genre in Abagusii society. The study aimed to investigate how Abagusii community, one of the several ethnic communities in Kenya, uses some of their popular proverbs in legitimizing hegemonic masculinities as a key feature of their patriarchal society. It was noted that such legitimization and assertion of male authority by way of gendered social interaction is normally negotiated within discursive and dialogical context and situations. Consequently data for the study was emanated from field work in selected areas of Gusii land which included Bomachoge Borabu, Bobassi, Kitutu Chache, Sensi and Manga hills further in this document. After a chapter on fieldwork stages undertaken, *inter alia*, collection, transcription and translation, two chapters were crucial in presentation of the data. Through a descriptive chapter, the study analyzed pervasive features of style employed in the proverbs to express the gendered belief that women are innately inferior to their male counterparts. The study of the proverbs realized that the traditional gender roles dictate that a man is not supposed to show fear or fail in anything that he tries. Another chapter offered interpretation whereby the selected data was analyzed to demonstrate the manner and means by which Abagusii proverbs support and propagate the ubiquitous attitude of economically discriminating against women in their value of the community. To aid in formulating objective interpretation, and ultimately, critical evaluation, the study adopted cornelian theory of hegemonic masculinity besides the feminist critique strand of feminist literary theory which is concerned especially with the portrayal of women in literary works. These two complementary theoretical underpinnings provided the conceptual and interpretive framework for the study. The final chapter of the study entailed conclusion of the study and the summary of findings in the community’s world view regarding the location of masculinities in the identity politics of the Abagusii.

Key Words: Abagusii, proverbs, gender expectations, masculinities and literary criticism.
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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Masculinity: The word suggests having the qualities and appearance considered to be typical of men.

Patriarchy: Our study employs the term patriarchy to refer to a society in which formal power over public decisions and policy making is held by adult men. Such a society is ruled by certain class of men wielding a dominant power that reflects the values underlying the traditional male ideal.

Sexism: This study will employ the term sexism to mean a way of seeing the world in which actual or alleged differences between males and females are perceived as profoundly relevant to important, political, economic, and social arrangements.

Proverbs: Metaphorical statements that summarize cultural context, event, happening or experience and are accepted as truth.

Subordination of women: Women are placed in positions that are consistently inferior to position of men.

Hegemonic: Dominant class of men whose qualities, status and appearance subjugates that of the female in the society and males considered to be outside or at the margins of this class. It is derived from theoretical work of R.W Connell.

Endocentricism: This is the elevation of the masculine conceptually and physically to the level of Universal and the ideal. It is the valuing of male principle above the female.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study Community

The Abagusii communities are a small Bantu ethnic community who occupy South-west portion of the cool fertile western section of the Kenya Highlands. Between them and Lake Victoria is the Nilotic community of Luo. They are bordered to the East and South East by the Kipsigis and the Maasai. To the south, though separated by a corridor of Luo are the closely related “Tende” who called themselves Abakuria. The Abagusii have their oral tradition pointing to “Misiri” as their home of origin. They believed that the founder of their society was “Mogusii” the person after whom their tribe was named. His father was called Osogo son of Moluguhia, son of Kigoma, son of Ribiaka, son of Kintu who led the migrations from the Mount Elgon, where they appear to have stayed for about three to four generations before they finally dispersed due to overcrowding, epidemics and drought. This was not a mass migration but individual family of tiny groups in search for food and grazing. This marked the beginning of their present clan system.

The name of each of their divisions of Abagusi community is derived from the name of their founder (Ochieng 11). They include; the Bassi, Girango, Sweta, Kitutu, Nyaribari, Muksero and Wanjare. They are divided into clans bigger than a family comprising of a number of households whereby the male heads claim descent from a common ancestor. The members of a clan consider themselves as relatives whether or not they can trace their relationship. This makes Abagusii clans as exogamous by which is meant marriage from within the clan is forbidden and regarded as incest. It is believed that around AD 1500 they migrated Eastwards down Nzoia river valley, eventually setting in Yimbo and near Ramogi in the Nyanza region. At around AD 1550 Luo migration waves pushed them from Alego to Kisumu where they settled around AD 1600.
Their further migration eastwards brought them into conflicts with the Kipsigis who expanding southwards from the area of Kapkeben. Each of the Gusii clan group was headed by recognized elders. The Girango leader during the migration from Kano to Belgut was Tabichi, the Bassi led by Ogichoncho, the Wanjare by Oisukia, Sweta led by Manyanta. The entire migrating tribe is said to have been advised by a council composed of heads of various clans. The elders offered sacrifices before the tribe set off on any journey. They also decided on the direction of migration having consulted with scouts and seers.

During the second half of the 18th Century, they had migrated to the fertile Kisii highlands, where they remain up to now. The Abagusii people believed in the existence of a powerful being (God) who was known as Engoro whom was believed to be the creator of all things. This God controlled the destiny of humankind. They attributed Engoro to goodness, pureness, love, generosity and impartiality. This is because among the Abagusii the word Engoro means heart, therefore a good man had a good heart. And anyone who went against this was seen as rebellion therefore punished by God through his ancestral spirits. They believed in ancestral spirits who acted as mediators between mankind and God. They believed in diviners and seers called Abaragori who were seen as special people. They performed special and mostly religious functions in the community. They believed that moon was associated with femininity and fertility. The brightness of the sun portrayed God at his “fullest awareness”. Their economic activity involved hunting, gathering, livestock keeping, cultivation, iron working, trade and cattle raiding.

They had a collection of many political units based on exogamous, matrilineal clans or clan grouping which often consisted of a large clan with a number of smaller clans who normally occupied a distinct territory over a ridge. The clan was the most effective political unit. They had hereditary clan chiefs (Abagambi) who solved land disputes and maintained law and order. They presided over religious ceremonies and disciplined offenders and law
breakers. The chiefs assumed their position automatically by being the most senior survivor of the leading clan families.

Ochieng observes that the Abagusii community like most Bantu nations is a patriarchal community that has practices of patriarchal nature, via oral traditional and folklore (198). Proverbs are an example of how oral knowledge perpetuates this social situation. The man is the head of the family and owner of property. His commands had to be obeyed for it was a taboo for sons and daughters to disobey their father. The husbands could beat their wives and humiliate them publicly without any consent. He owns the land and property it yields. Succession and inheritance is along the male lineage. The social institution which maintains law and order are presided over and dominated by men. Women have very low social status among the Abagusii community. Daughters are brought up to be docile to their husbands when they marry. A woman is expected to be totally and unconditionally loyal to her husband and respectful to men. She cannot argue with men at whatever circumstance. A married woman’s duty is to procreate; she has to give birth to children particularly boys to continue a man’s lineage. One who cannot give birth is viewed with contempt and her husband is allowed to marry another wife to play this role. This motivated our research into having an in depth analysis of the Abagusii proverbs and the way they legitimize hegemonic masculinities.

1.01: Background to the study

Proverbs play a very important role in African literature and societies. They are meant to educate, warn, inform and entertain. This is seen since hardly any conversation by the elders’ takes place without the accompaniment of the proverbs. The elders use the proverbs to sprinkle their conversation with wisdom, conduct and often settle down serious political, judicial and religious discussions. Proverbs were transmitted orally from one generation to another. They therefore form an important part of the lives and thinking of the people
(Ndungo 19). Proverbs are also used in encouraging people in times of difficulties so that they could give heart to an individual or members of the Abagusii community.

The use of proverbs has become the tool through which men control positions of social and economic influence by limiting women's participation to domestic spheres (Boahene 126). He argues that the non-recognition of women's labor reinforces the perception that they are nonproductive "dependents" and subjects them to circumstances that exacerbate their material poverty and weaken their bargaining positions, both within the household and in society at large. While critically analyzing the, Akan (Ghana) society proverbs were found out to function on male dominance over women. He concluded that the position is amplified and legitimized by the belief systems of the society. Most of the belief systems in the Akan ethnic group in Ghana are woven around proverbs. For example, there is a proverb that says, "Woe betides you if you have no male figure in your family." The meaning is that the family is only "whole" when there is a male figure.

There is high value that is placed on fertility (Mbiti 69). This means that girls, even in their teens, are under tremendous pressure to marry and bear children. Thus, young women often hold the culturally centered belief that their worth is tied to their fertility. The woman who is not married has a limited role in society in the African traditional world view as it is expected that all women get married. This thought is bound up with the value of bearing children. The childless woman goes through deep sorrows in African society. Mbiti gives an example of an African proverb, "The woman who has children does not desert home". Meaning that bearing children gives the woman the security and joy of a society. She relates this to another proverb, "the woman whose sons have died is richer than a barren woman". The above is intended to say that people will excuse a woman for losing her children through death, but the one who does not bear is hardly "excused."
The oppression of women is fostered in Africa, through cultural vehicles such as proverbs which may differ from society to society but agrees that what is common to proverbs everywhere is that they touch on a wide array of human concerns and activities (Balogun 39). His main concerns are on the relationship between proverbs and the oppression of women, and how proverbs, as a discourse in which females are portrayed based on stereotypical gender roles and perceptions, continue to frustrate the current efforts towards gender-sensitization and the attendant empowerment of women in the continent. He notes that proverbs serve as a major avenue for the continued perpetration of gender discrimination among the Africans. He asserts that the proverbial oppression of women in Yoruba African culture, has some effects on the identity, dignity, rights, freedom and empowerment of women in their use of the proverbs. The perception of women's personality, their strengths and weaknesses, their dignity by the society and by themselves is among other things as a result of the way they are portrayed in the proverbs bringing about discrimination against women in Yoruba African culture. He concludes that the proverbial oppression fosters women's dependence, and frustrates the efforts of empowering women, despite their awareness of women's efforts to liberate themselves. He observes that many Yoruba men use proverbs and other aspects of tradition to justify their chauvinism.

A proverb is a “brief statement full of hidden meaning, accepted and used by a community as an expression of truth and wisdom”. (Miruka 47). In functional classification of the proverbs, he considers oral literature as a product of culture. It is through people's oral literature that people peep into their philosophy, beliefs, attitudes and morals. The proverbs function to propagate these aspects of the community classifying them into directives which comment on situations, describe, sum up or are intended to convey some idea to the targeted people. They also point out the nature of the events and hence express the perceptions of the speaker about the event. The proverbs are flavored with authority and axiom as they are
stated as objective truths seeking to guide human conduct. The proverbs impressed by statements of what are universal truths, principles that guide the actions and thoughts of a rational society.

The success of a proverb depends on careful use of Imagery and symbolic language. The depth of the underlying meaning in the interpretation as compared to the surface meaning makes it stand out as an understatement (Chesaina, *Oral Literature of the Kalenjin* 17). She agrees with (Miruka 48) that Proverbs are regarded as the nutshell in which a people's philosophy, worldview, wisdom, values and attitudes are encapsulated. She shares with many other researchers that they convey the community's attitude towards men and women and the social expectations of both. She observes that proverbs can be used as parameter of examining gender relations whereby men are regarded as strong in contrast to women who are regarded as weak, and as the cause of men's downfall. The vast majority of proverbs give a negative portrayal of male and female characters there are proverbs which are used to justify traditions which favor men at the expense of women and others which show complete disregard of women's feelings as human beings in the face of these traditions.

Proverbs give an insight into behavioural patterns of a people. They give commentaries on happenings that reveal the system of values under the culture functions. They are a core of people's culture since they phrase their philosophy as well as poetry (Kipury 148). Her study is based on the images contained in the proverbs which give a great deal about the values and attitudes of a people. The metaphors are drawn from daily life and are often created taking already existing types of models. She therefore agrees that Proverbs employ the use of stylistic features which can only be appreciated in the original language and not in the translation.
A proper understanding of African proverbs is necessary for an appreciation of not only African Oral Literature but also of African beliefs, attitudes and point of view (Nandwa and Bukenya 100). They assert that a proverb is not born instantly as a proverb but starts as just a neat general saying, which if it has the power to fire the imagination of the people which gets gradually accepted until it becomes common currency in a community. Thus making of a proverb may be regarded as a communal activity.

Chesaina further states that proverbs use symbols and other imagery since their intention is not to hurt the listener but help to communicate the message indirectly and clearly without causing unnecessary offence to the person to whom the message is aimed (13). She further recognizes the roles of proverbs in didactic function of most values which are enshrined in proverbs which are as relevant to our contemporary culture as they were to our ancestors' cultures. She says that Proverbs are therefore used to illustrate a point and make statements in the cultural set up of the community.

Proverbs frequently occur in general conversation and in oratory to embellish, conceal or hint. They are closely interwoven with other aspects of linguistic and literally behavior. The allusions of proverbs in various collections are often not obvious; this is frequently due to our ignorance of the culture particularly with proverbs which allude to some well known story (Finnegan 391). She says that knowledge of the situation in which proverbs are cited may also be an essential part of understanding their implications. She concurs with other researchers that Proverbs often represent people's philosophy because it is in proverbs, the whole range of human experience can be commented on and analyzed, generalizations and principles expressed in a graphic and concise form because they illustrate every belief and prescribed piece of behavior in a direct and literal way which become accepted by the community as a whole.
The Embu and Mbeere communities are recognized as patriarchal whereby the man is the head of the family and owner of property (Chesaina, *Oral Literature of the Embu and Mbeere* 9). She claims that if a woman has certain qualities which should make her feel self-confident, she must not show any sign to indicate that she is aware of her strength of character but expected to let others praise her if they find it necessary. She recognizes the traits which characterize a woman as humility, patience, tolerance and obedience to men.

She observes that at marriage, a woman implicitly becomes the property of her husband and once dowry is paid she can't return to her parents even if she is mistreated by the husband. The women's role is to plant, weed, and harvest and store the produce and that they are traditionally not supposed to take livestock to the pasture but it is their duty to ascertain that the herd boys have fed and watered the animals. Their main role is to collect the money accrued from the cooperative centre.

The Abagusii use images in their proverb as a style to create pictures and allusions. The accuracy in which they use their proverbs comments on a real life situation. This therefore implies that being a "real" man in the Abagusii patriarchal culture requires that one had feminine qualities in contempt. This study critically examined how the Abagusii community uses the proverbs to legitimize hegemonic masculinities in the society hence discriminating against women, the features of style employed and community's world view regarding the masculinities.

1.1 **Statement of the Problem**

Proverbs are one of the oral literature short forms that are widely used among the Abagusii society and in many traditional African communities. They facilitate the transmission of knowledge, advice, lampoon, and console, encourage, caution, warn, admonish and embellish linguistic communication from generation to generation. Indeed, proverbs are considered as custodian of a people's wisdom and philosophy of life. They act as
important vehicles through which the attitudes and beliefs of people are expressed. There was need, to study how proverbs created and perpetuated gendered culture among the Abagusii community. This was vital because oral literature is part of the body of knowledge out of which African societies educate and socialize their members. The study investigated how proverbs among the Abagusii legitimize hegemonic masculinities and whether they promote the belief that women are innately inferior to men. Such a study is in line with direction and trends in the humanities and social science that focus on gender studies and the place of literature in knowledge based societies of the 21st century and the framing of the proverbs in legitimizing masculinities.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Analyze ways in which Abagusii proverbs discriminate against women by locating this folkloric genre in social life

2. Discuss the major features of style that proverbs employ to legitimize hegemonic masculinities and subordinating women.

3. Identify the economic factors which contribute to the cultural manner in which the proverbs perpetuate patriarchal tendencies in Abagusii cultural heritage.

4. 1.3 Research Question

This study aimed at responding to the following research questions:

1. How do the Abagusii frame the proverbs in discriminating against women?

2. Which features of style do the Abagusii proverbs employ to legitimize hegemonic masculinities and discriminate against women?
3. How do the proverbs portray women and reflect the economic ideologies in the Abagusii cultural heritage?

1.4 Research Premises

The study was guided by the following assumptions:

1. Not all the Abagusii proverbs discriminate women.

2. Certain features of style are employed in the proverbs to legitimize hegemonic masculinities and subordination of women.

3. Cultural beliefs are used to economically discriminate women in Abagusii proverbs.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Proverbs among the Abagusii have been respected and admired by many people in the society. Their value to the society cannot be therefore underestimated. Many scholars have been keen in tackling the classification of proverbs in different communities, their performance, style and social functions but their role in legitimizing hegemonic masculinities has not been investigated. This study contributes to filling of this gap. Women are depicted negatively as children who need to be guided and protected (Chesaina, *Oral literature of the Kalenjin* 19). Proverbs cannot be studied and analyzed meaningfully outside the cultural forces of the society that created them because they serve as carriers of people's culture and history (Ndungo 21). She asserts that according to feminist literary theory, the images that come from the proverbs are a reflection of the societal attitudes towards women and their role in the society has largely been ignored although they have been there since creation. She argues that literature is a vehicle of a cultural philosophy (19).
A man uses aspects of African culture to perpetuate the privileged status and dominant position (Maimela 2). She observes that culture is used as a tool of oppression and domination over women. This study will contribute to the ongoing effort by feminist scholars to understand the role of women in patriarchal societies. This is in line with the currently global emphasis on studies focusing on gender with special reference to women. It is on this basis that our study was motivated by the desire to explore some of the Abagusii proverbs and critically examine the ways they legitimize hegemonic masculinities.

1.6. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

1.6.1. Limitations of the study

The scope of this study was limited to Abagusii indigenous speakers. It consisted of Bobassi, Bomachoge Borabu, Kitutu Chache, Nyaribari Chache and Kitutu masaba. This is because the researcher was conversant with the areas and it was also near. The respondents' found it easy in giving the actual data. This study focused specifically on proverbs that promoted hegemonic masculinities. This research was based on conversation with some of the elderly men who were acquainted with the skills of conveying the proverbs in their conversations.

1.6.2. Delimitation of the Study

This study was confined to nine randomly sampled locations. It was confined to elderly men who were acquitted under study based on their conversation because there are knowledgeable with the skills of conveying the proverbs in their speech. The researcher was confined not by what the proverbs say or what it means but the kind of wisdom attached to it as it is uttered in legitimizing hegemonic masculinity and their depiction of women. Making notes in the presence of other members of the audience especially video recorder was very difficult because it certainly disrupted the informant who concentrated on the machine.
tools used added to self conscious of the informant. A great deal of Information was also lost when translating the information because some the Abagusii words were very difficult to translate therefore difficult to communicate the intended meaning. The study offered a free translation keen on not to distort the meaning.

1.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employed Connell’s theory of Hegemonic masculinities and Ruth Sheila’s feminist critique theoretical strand of feminist theory. Connell, an authority in masculinities recognizes hegemonic masculinities as a norm that men are expected to aspire and women are discouraged from associating with. Her argument on gender practice that embodies the currently acceptable answers to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy which guarantees the dominant position of men subordination of women in which a society expect what a real man should act and should look like. She looks at masculinity in terms of relationships between men and women through the field of power; she calls it the patriarchal dividend whereby being a man was a source of power and authority. The manifestation of men’s power in a society is evident in various societal practices such as ritual ceremonies where men exalted their power to women. Some of the ritual practices have specific restrictions which gave men an upper hand over women hence showing domination.

Connell also looks at masculinity in terms of the relationship between men. The scholar argues that while men oppress women, some men also dominated and sub dominated other men. She classified masculinity into two different types which include the hegemonic and subordination category of masculinity. This category belongs to people who are marginalized in terms of race, class and ethnicity. She noted that the people exhibiting hegemonic masculinity dominated other masculinity and created cultural prescription of what is meant to be a real man. However Connell argues that the minority understands what being a man means differently from members of the ruling staff. Thus masculinities are fluid and
should not be considered as belonging in a fixed way to any group of people, she therefore reaffirms that patriarchal power is not monolithic but made of many different social groups, ideologies and hierarchies.

Our study employed this approach as we investigated how women are discriminated in the Abagusii proverbs. The study argued that men extended their dominance in all forms of the community practices. Proverbs being part of the community folklore was not spared either. This study looked at the way proverbs were used to legitimize hegemonic masculinity in the Abagusii society.

The biological differences such as physical size, shapes, body chemistry make men superior to women. They therefore distinguish between the word sex and gender. Sex is the biological constitution of male and female while gender is the cultural programming as either feminine or masculine (Sheila 4). These gender categories are constructed in the society by arguing that the inferior position that is occupied by women in the Abagusii patriarchal society through their proverbs has been culturally produced and not biologically produced. The Abagusii community use proverbs to exert force that undermines women's self confidence and assertiveness. Some of their proverbs dictate that men are supposed to be strong physically, powerful and emotionally stoic. They are not supposed to cry because crying is considered a sign of weakness that one has been overpowered by emotions. This was also of great assistance pertaining to the Abagusii community's world view regarding masculinities.

They examine the patriarchal traditions and institutions that control the material and economic conditions by which society oppresses women, patriarchal beliefs about the difference between men and women and the laws and customs that govern marriage and motherhood. They assert that women's domestic work in their own homes is unpaid not
because their work is not important or involves less time or than the paid work performed by men outside the home, but because patriarchy defines women in their domestic roles as non-workers.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.8.1 On Hegemonic Masculinity

The aim of this section was to have an understanding on what other scholars have said about oral literature as a tool used in legitimizing hegemonic masculinities and promoting male and subordinating women in the society.

The father is the head of the family and the supreme subject in all the affairs that take place at home. In case he dies, the eldest son of the senior wife takes over (Kenyatta 9). It is therefore traditionally very important to have a male child in your home to continue the lineage of the family for if the man died without a boy the family would come to an end. The male children were also valued because while the girls married and went to stay away, men remained and protected the community against external attack.

Men serve as household heads and are responsible for Agriculture, collective activities while women are responsible for cooking, house cleaning, and child care. They are expected to be modest and stay within the household unless accompanied by male relatives. The traditional system emphasized male rule and a particular image of masculinity in which calmness and male solidarity were essential (Frank 76). He argues that the Muslim Hausa social organization is highly stratified. It is based on occupation, wealth and gender within the family. One's status is determined by the status of one's family and within the family; males at least are dominant theoretically.

Ndungo observes that traditionally women were expected to be good and responsible wives to their husbands by taking good care of him and obeying him at all times. She asserts that various attitudes towards women seem to have stemmed from the numerous roles
assigned to them. They have therefore socially accepted the attitudes towards them and accepted that they were innately inferior to men and that they should occupy inferior position in the society (106). The proverbs are therefore used to justify the above assumptions towards subordination of women in the Abagusii society.

1.8.2 Other masculinities

Connell recognizes other types of masculinities which included: Subordinate masculinity as the cultural authority of heterosexual men and subordination of homosexual men. Homosexuality is viewed as the polar opposite of what masculinity entitles a man to be; therefore it is associated with femininity and is politically, economically, and culturally attacked. Heterosexual men may view gay men in the same light that they view women, meaning that there is an innate need for dominance. This leads to the subordination of gay men because they are seen as having a failed hegemonic masculinity. Connell also examines complicit masculinity as the categorization of men who connect with hegemony but do not fully represent hegemonic masculinity. Men that fall into this category do not receive the same benefits and privileges as those who are seen as purely hegemonic. A great many men who draw the patriarchal dividend also respect their wives and mothers, are never violent towards women, do their accustomed share of the housework, bring home the family wage, and can easily convince themselves that feminists must be bra-burning extremists (Connell 76).

Connell also brought forward marginalized masculinity as the authorization of the hegemonic masculinity. Men who fall into this category benefit less from the hegemonic ideal because of traits other than their gender behavior. Race relations may also become integral part of the dynamic between masculinities. In a white-supremacist context, black masculinities play symbolic roles for white gender construction (Connell 80).
In other words, the hegemonic masculinity among whites maintains the oppression against the masculinity among blacks. Though these concepts have been discussed in context of men, masculinity affects everyone. Both men and women can benefit from or be oppressed by the expectations of masculinity that are meant to be lived up to in society according to (Makokha 140).

Our study employed hegemonic masculinity as it leads to marginalization, complicit and subordination. Connell asserts that masculinities are socially and historically constructed. The dominant group that practice hegemonic masculinity ensures that subordinate masculinities acknowledge and accepts their power. This can be through control of structures such as economy of a country by one particular race at the expense of the other; hence hegemonic masculinity is the socially dominant form of masculinities in a particular culture within a given historic period. He conceived hegemonic masculinities as an integral part of his larger social theory of gender which emphasized the socially constructed nature of masculinity and femininity. The constructivist approach maintains that the categories through which we perceive, evaluate and think are socially constructed independently of the subjects. Construction of reality is based on guidelines set up by culture of the society.

The success of a big man which was peppered with rich cloths, gold ornaments, and a large number of wives, children and dependents was measured by material wealth and appearance Subordinate to their male relatives, most women gained status only as their brother and sons ascended the family hierarchy (Holland 122).

Goba concepts of masculinity and femininity juxtapose a hard, erect, strong and potent male body to a soft round and yielding female body. A boy needs discipline because once he became a man is likened to a grown tree and cannot be bent or formed to someone else's will. Females though are by their nature, soft, easy going and not fussy like men (Dover 175).
Wealthy businessmen who are highly admired and respected in the Abagusii community are recognized. This is whereby a man needs at least three wives to bear children, are to work and for pleasure (Silberschmidt 176).

Among the Abagusii community, men seem to be key element in terms of male self identification with control over women being an important social index with their masculine identification. Men seem to have chosen the lifestyle a behaviour that seems to have control over women as well as a legitimate way of expressing masculinity. Masculinities are being socially and historically constructed and domination is only inscribed in men's nature.

The images of women which is illustrated clearly in African Oral Literature as regarded as two sides of a coin, which are intended to legitimize male domination because the contrasting images reflect a male ambivalence towards female (Mbughuni 22).

Sheila argues that the masculine ideal of man as courageous, intelligent, healthy, strong and responsible are images drawn out of our ideal male from the classical qualities of intelligence, honesty, courage and that the dimensions are required to transform the ideal man from the merely human to the masculine (60). She also asserts that the ideal patriarchal male must be not only be brave but also never timid, independent but never needful, strong but never weak and committed to victory in battle, which is his first priority. He is a man of constraint and restraint, for violent emotions of any kind might deter him from his rationally designed course or strategy. This leads to control over himself and his needs or feelings as perceived to be the key control over events which are crucial to his sense of self.

Endocentricism therefore serves as the heart worship of mars and the embracing of phallic morality to the exclusion of its compliment yet no 'real man' may tolerate the tender qualities but deny himself any tendency towards them or any personal experience of them. Thus woman serves this important function in patriarchy as the negative image of man, did
his compliment as acceptable to all traits cannot accept himself yet cannot as a 'human' being live without the image, woman, contains that element of humanity ripped from man- an element she keeps for him, still in the world, available when and where needed, but sufficiently distant to avoid interfering with business (Sheila 65). Yet even as negation, woman's place is not safe. As a man must flee from the Venus principle within himself, as he must hold that configuration in contempt, so he must hold woman in contempt as well.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied the following methodology.

1.9.1 Library research

The study entailed library research on available literature about proverbs. Attention was paid on the realization of hegemonic masculinity in African proverbs from the internet and what other African scholars had done. The literature materials from the library were used to highlight the stylistic features employed in legitimizing hegemonic masculinity in the proverbs. Close reading was done around the theory of hegemonic masculinity.

1.9.2 Research instruments

(i) **Video recording:** - Proverbs were recorded from the informants by the researcher in the field.

(ii) **Questionnaire:** - The researcher prepared questions which were asked to the informants to seek information concerning the proverbs, its meaning, occasion when it was used and the context in which it was used.

(iii) **Group discussions:** The researcher complemented qualitative research by including interviews and group discussions on the proverbs collected.
1.9.3 Data analysis

1. Transcription of recorded material from video into rough notes

2. Literal translation followed by free translation into English language dividing them into categories according to their legitimacy power.

3. Classification of data collected into clusters according to their meaning and content.

4. Analyzing the pervasive features of style used in these proverbs.

1.9.4 Sample Selection

The selection of proverbs for this study was done purposively. A total number of 150 proverbs were collected during the field work from various locations within Kisii and Nyamira County. The proverbs were all analyzed but only 48 were found relevant to this study as they fitted into 6 distinct categories that legitimized hegemonic masculinity. These proverbs formed the corpus of our study.

1.9.5 Research Design

This study relied on descriptive content analysis as the data collected was sorted out into clusters using descriptive statistics to determine the characteristics of the data at hand. Interviews were one hour on average with 10 informants selected to reflect the demographic diversity of the Abagusii community. This was a pre-cursor to more quantitatively research design to distinguish proverbs legitimizing hegemonic masculinities and those that never did so. The findings were detailed in chapters.
CHAPTER TWO

GENDERED PROVERBS IN CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on proverbs collected through fieldwork with an in-depth analysis on the proverbs that legitimized hegemonic masculinities and subordinating women in the society. They were transmitted orally from one generation to another and the elderly men who were acquitted with the skills of conveying the proverb in their conversation. It offers a critical examination of Abagusii proverbs and their role in legitimizing hegemonic masculinities. It also discusses the thematic meaning of the proverb and their social and psychological implication on women.

2.1 Proverbs that use women as objects to gain wealth and prosperity

The proverbs are used by men to control positions of social and economic influence in Abagusii society. They limit women to domestic chores. The Abagusii families enhance their wealth by giving away their female children. The proverbs depict how the society objectifies women by placing different demands on their bodies and reproduction. They also reveal the patriarchal view that women should find fulfillment once they have given birth to children to continue their family lineage.

*Chiombe nachio masangio, chiasangia mwaasi noonde mware motamanyaini*

(Cows are a tool of facilitating and uniting unknown person from far who is a stranger)

Cows were facilitators for people to meet. They could unite a strange man and woman who would have never met. Marriage as an institution was recognized through payment at pride price. It is because of this that a woman was seen as a bought commodity to
be owned by a man. This was discriminative and yet society upheld and embraced the concept.

*Mwanyabaiseke Bange Inchara etakobaria, kerandi getakwoma Botaka na Botakoera*

(A home with many daughters never starved. It is like milk guard which never went dry and poverty never ended).

A traditional home with many daughters was considered rich and as a result the girls were to be paid for bride price to parents when married and they also provided cheap labour to the family in the garden and house hold chores were easily done. But the lack of boys provided suffering to the family due to the fact that men symbolize protections. In the event of trouble a man could protect even though that home had many girls, it would not be respected. A parent with many sons was more respected than one who had many daughters.

*Omokungu Agokunga, Omosacha Osacha*

(A woman takes care of what a husband brings, while a husband’s role is to hunt)

The role of a traditional woman was to take care of what the man had harvested and made a kill in order to bring home. Careful wives were respected and made families strong. This proverb cautioned women to play a noble role in making families stable homes. Much as the man goes hunting the woman must also protect the harvest. These also discriminated women from seeking anything outside what they had harvested as their work was only to give birth and care for the children. She was assigned and restricted to the home. This was also discriminatory as women would also try to make a stable home in which men would destabilize.
Mochi otabwati baiseke baroke bana

(The family which does not have girls to name children)

The proverb above meant that the household or family which was not blessed with any girl child was unlikely to blossom in future. This is because they were seen as a source of wealth. A girl child was seen as a source of wealth for people to marry and for the continuity of lineage. Girls could be given to another family as an exchange to cattle which made the family successful. If a man had many cattle, then he was declared the wealthiest man in the whole village. Although the above proverb depicts women positively it is subjective in a manner that the Abagusii community perceived women as source of wealth to the family not as part of family members hence women were seen as properties that were possessed by the family.

Okoibora Okuya, gokagera Omokungu Omonyaka Akarokwa Nting'ana

(Giving birth is very good, for it made a despised woman to be respected).

Traditional Abagusii society despised a barren woman but after she gave birth the sons and daughters grew in strength and stature. They sons went for hunting and brought something they also ploughed their farm. Neighbors came to drink water and eat. This made the poor mother earn respect. This proverb therefore cautions members of society not to despise because everyone had fate. This proverb is also pro-women but it despised women who never gave birth but once she did so, she became a queen.

Roiboro Nkiegeso gekoroma

(Giving birth is like a hiccup that causes pain)

The process of giving birth may be painful causing discomfort but the experience is relief. The proverb encouraged women to be confident when pregnant though painful; this is
because it was a temporal situation. But after experiencing such a hiccup, they were respected depending on the kind of child that they gave birth to. This meant that even though women experienced such a pain in giving birth, she was only appreciated once she gave birth to a bouncing baby boy to continue the family lineage.

**Omoiseke Omonyakieni Agoeta Isiko ya chinyomba chia chintakana**

(A beautiful girl passes through the homes of orphans)

This is because orphans cannot raise dowry for marriage. This proverb provides limits to traditional girl’s sphere of operation. A girl was seen as an object of marriage. A girl could easily acquire a suitor if she passed across a wealth man’s home. Marriage proposals came from the bridegroom’s home, the girl married the man not because she loved him but because of wealth.

**Sira Ngiri Moiseke**

(Unsettled debt cannot marry a woman,)

A man who wanted to get a wife paid dowry in form of cows. If a family was known not to honor the agreement of the bride price, then they were refused the bride until the debt was first settled. The proverb warned the parents of the bride to be firm in ensuring the completion of dowry before surrendering their daughter. This was punitive to a girl who wanted to be married and join the husband and a poor man who wanted to marry. The level of negotiation skills were important here so that if the people from the bridegroom side wanted to be given the bride on a promise to settle debt later. It was never immediate.

**Omokungu Omuya Omonyene engombe namoroche**

(A good woman is seen by the herder)
The proverb tries to show that to get a wife, one needed to have cows so that he could pay the bride price. With cows you could marry a good girl. This shows that girls were seen as a source of wealth in the society.

Omosacha Omuya noyokoringa nkundi gochia bwoye omogoko osara mbara abanto baye bamoroka ise banto

[A good husband is the one who carries something in his fist for he becomes famous to his home and his family calls him father to the people]

The role of a putting food and sustaining a family was only appreciated when it was done by the husband but not the wife.

Ore na Moiseke Omwabo tomoira kiara chiombe nkomanwa chikare Nyakoe inani.

[Whoever who has a sister should not be pointed finger for dowry is being paid at nyakoe [a place].]

Women were seen as source of income. A parent who gave birth to as many girls took pride as the family was going to be wealthy.

Ngombe ndongi chiarongia Nyarinda ochia komesera ronde.

[Cows can take Nyarinda [a girl] to shine in any part of the country]

This means that the girl child was only seen as a passerby who would be married to any part of the Country as far as the parents were given dowry. Women were only praised for giving birth and bringing up the children only to be taken for granted.

Kaya Nkaya kange Mwango Omatara ko mbuya atatoete mwango
[Good is good like; Mwango [person] but she never gave birth to another Mwango [daughter]

Mwango was very good but she didn’t have any child. A woman’s goodness was only seen and appreciated when she gave birth to children and more especially the male child.

2.2 Proverbs that depict women as sinful people.

These proverbs portray women as possessing evil and horrible nature needing to be controlled by man. Women were considered as very dangerous and unreasonable beings.

*Engareka yagerete bokayia*

(Competition caused proper cooking)

Jealousy among women led the discovery of good cooking. The cooks referred here are co-wives. The story is told of a woman who cooked food with intent to injure her co-wife wanting to kill her by the hot food. Ironically the woman fattened after eating the food. It became a blessing in disguise. This act led to the discovery that effective cooking skills co-wives were known to be very jealous to each other each fighting to control the husband.

*konyuoma Abakungu Abange Nekebera Kwerentereire*

(Marrying many wives brings a lymph node to you)

A man with wealth was traditionally allowed to marry more than one wife. And the more the men married the more problems he added into the family. Women were therefore seen as trouble creators and people to be administered. People married many wives to assist in home task, chores and delegation. But the woman as their nature was could be a cause of trouble; others could be lazy, uncooperative and indecisive agents. Men could therefore be
cautioned that although it was prestige to be a polygamist one had to be prepared to face challenges that came with it.

_Omoibori Omino Kerecha kere enyasi Mosukondakwe Irongo reta obori_

(A Co- wife is like a devil on the wall; if I die she goes to the ceiling and brings millet)

A co-wife is a pretender of the worst order. Though polygamy was accepted and practiced in the Abagusii traditional society in most cases it was never without resentment. Women who shared a husband were known to be jealously over one another. They could laugh together but harbored ill feelings of one another. The woman could cook for the husband to ensure he was strong enough as he went to “hunt” but when he brought a kill all even that woman who did not make any contributions to the husband’s well-being wants a share. This was considered as exploitation and combined with other factors caused conflict. It was said that they were fighting over the same grinding stone. This proverb cautions the Abagusii women to collective responsibility

_Omokungu Omongiti Akoruga igasi mbeba chiaria Magachi. Omokungu Omuya koruga isiko bagesi babega_

(A selfish woman cooks at night and the rats eat. While a good woman cooks day time for bachelors to eat)

Traditionally selfish women were known to cook late at night when everybody else has surrendered to sleep. The visitors of the food were rats that destroy and can’t help. Women who cooked earlier made the unmarried men to get the meal. They could help in the event of a problem. For a woman to cook at this time of the night even the husband is party and yet the proverb does not blame the man. Blame is heaped on the woman. This being
bias against women. The proverb cautions women to have clean hearts and provide food for the family.

*Omoiseke Omohe Momura Bware Aganyete*

*Omomura Omohe Moiseke bware aganyete*

(A wicked girl waits for a man from far and a wicked man waits for a girl from far)

A girl with bad character would not be betrothed because of her bad qualities were known the probable suitor is a man from far who does not know her behavior. The same applies to a wicked man. The proverb cautions girls to be of good behavior to be able to acquire suitors. A family whose background was known to be wicked such as a family of witches affected the future of the girl born in those homes. This appears to have been a discriminatory process against girls even straightforward girls became causalities of the process.

*Omokungu Oisiko Moino kae Bosibori enso yaye Nero Yoka Abwate Agosera*

(The woman of the other house let Bosibori (Name of a woman) has her grinding stone since it is the only one that she possesses)

The women of other house were the co-wife. The grinding stone was the husband. The proverb encouraged women to appreciate the fact that they were married by one man and should learn to cope with the challenges brought about by a polygamous marriage.

*Tosanera mokamomura Otaramorora*

(Do not wish for a daughter-in-law before you see her)

One may want a daughter-in-law to come and assist with home keeping only to find she is a real troublemaker who may cause untold suffering. She may be the opposite of what one wanted. She may be lazy, wicked, weakling and a rumormonger or even a witch
**Omokungu Nyagetiara Moigwere monu okobonga**

(Bad women seen by bad mouth)

This proverb meant that this woman known as Nyagetiara spoke a lot. Majority, the proverb was meant to warn those aspiring to get married. For women, it was meant to advice them to be careful with their mouths specifically of what they said. For women it was to warn them against those who used to talk a lot and who could ruin their relationship. The proverb cajoles women and makes them seem as an object of destruction.

**Yamokungu teri koriegwa keu**

(A woman’s belongings is not eaten)

The proverb is used to cajole some of the women and their selfish behaviors. Women are selfish. They can’t easily give things. They are difficult to give but expect to be given by men. The proverb was said when women were too demanding whereby they used to expect much from men.

**Abakungu nabaya ko! Nemenu yabasareirie**

(Women are good but their mouths have spoilt them)

The proverb was used to advice women and showing their usefulness though they had a major problem which led to their destruction that is rumor mongering around. Women were believed to be betrayers and traitors where they could just reveal the secrets by gossiping around and this led to their destruction whereby some were even discriminated and sent to their matrimonial homes. Some of the contexts within which the proverb can be used were to advice those women aspiring to be married that their prospective rules were good and had to be careful. This encouraged women to keep on doing their good deeds but not to rumor monger.
2.3 proverbs that portray women as weak in risk taking.

These proverbs reinforce the cultural ideal of masculinity such as endurance, self-reliance, competitiveness and willing to take risks to be only for men and not women. The society encourages men to maintain their masculinity by avoiding practices that connotes inferiority and exercise those ideals in heroic deeds.

_Maiso Abakungu_

(Eyes of women)

This means that the evening made women to fear whenever they saw bushes and many people. Their eyes were weak and so every time it became late in the evening women were cautioned to go back to their homes and not to be late outside their compound to avoid danger of any attack. They were also perceived not to defend themselves when there was danger. The women’s place in the society was to stay indoors and when they got out and something happened to them they were supposed to be blamed.

_Inche tingotama buna baba agotama gochia matunwa abana_

(I cannot run away as my mother runs towards the hills like a child)

This was a home where a mother lost many children through deaths. Each time that she had stumble she could run away thinking that somebody had came to report of the death of another child. This proverb portrayed women as weak vessels that feared death. Men were considered to be strong to face any calamity compared to their women counterparts.

_Chinkomoni chiame kiabiraa oyotabwati bamura tagochitwa_

(Sweet wild fruits will grow at Kiabiraa (a place) and whoever who doesn’t have boys will not harvest them.)
This proverb meant that to harvest very sweet wild fruits one had to go to the forest, climb the trees and do the harvesting. Young men did this job better. This proverb clearly demonstrates how a girl child was regarded in Abagusii society. They were treated as weak beings incapable of any harvest. The contemporary society indicates the difference of wild fruits to Education. Traditionally the Abagusii society believed that men were the only figure to be educated. They therefore neglected women education.

_Omokungu Omworo mwoe Boremo bwa Kenyambi Agwaka Inse Kobwata Omotwe._

(A lazy woman is allocated unproductive land to till. When she cultivates she holds her head.)

Laziness was abhorred. A lazy woman could wake up late to go to the field to cultivate only to find that active women had already cultivated all the productive land leaving the unproductive and rocky areas for the late comers which could definitely attract minimal harvest to the lazy. The proverb cautioned lazy women to work hard and be active. A woman had to really work hard in order to sustain her family in terms of production.

_Omokungu Omweanya Motarere etoigo_

(Rigorous woman doesn’t do things properly; she goes to her home without anything).

This proverb meant to educate women to be hard working. Whenever a woman could not do much of the day’s work, she was regarded as useless. They never could take a microsecond to look at what a woman had done earlier. Women were required to work extra miles like machines to make sure that everything went well.
Omokungu oyomo ngeteni kere riko.
(One woman is like small firewood)

If one marries one wife and she dies the situation was very bad. This encouraged polygamy. The proverb above practically shows how one woman is very useless and of no more assistance. The proverb is used symbolically to show how one woman in a family was of low assistance hence encouraged marriage of many wives for a single man.

Esinyo makwanwa bobe, bamura etabwati
(For a boundary to be talked ill of, it does not have boys)

From the originality of the proverb it was categorically used to favour men. This meant that women were not so important concerning important matters. Also it meant that for a successful family clan or a country, there must be a man i.e. a strong man. This shows how women were nothing since everything was echoed unto men.

Monte Mosacha gocha korera igo Obutorigwe
(For a man to cry, he must have had a thorough beating)

This proverb shows how men were highly favored. It shows how it was very difficult for them to cry specifically, this proverb was used to refer how women could cry anyhow like babies and weaklings hence meant to cajole ladies and show them that men could not cry as they thought but only when a serious thing had happened to them. This includes; death of a wife and theft of cattle.

Nguru chia momura nchogu egwatia mbara
[A man’s strength is like an elephant splitting firewood].
This proverb meant that even if a woman worked really hard, her energy would not be appreciated for she was seen as a weak creature. A man was therefore considered to be very strong in whatever that he did.

_Enkoba ekori Omomura tiga egende manga in echi koria omogumo noro nyamato magare_

[Thunder that strikes a boy let it go to Manga down to strike a Mogumo tree with wide leaves].

This really disregarded the lives of women and valued men.

**2.4. Proverbs that portray women as unreliable and unpredictable beings**

These proverbs portray women as thankless, inconsistent, unreliable, unpredictable, treacherous, gossipy and easily deceived therefore, doubting their integrity.

_Koreta Itinge Konya kwaretire Nonde_

(To marry a woman who was already married means that you had also married)

Translated that if a man divorced means that he was before divorced by a woman and any other marriage that the woman is involved in could be of another woman who would be a divorcee. The divorcee might have had unknown difficulties to the husband. The proverb was used to caution husbands to be contented and tame their wives. Women were also cautioned to nurture their marriage as all men are the same and never with to move from one marriage to thinking that it would be better.

_Rittinge Mogoroba Rikonganya_

(A re-married woman migrates at night)
A Woman who had been married elsewhere would finally leave the second marriage at night to return to where she had been married. This woman who was already married is like a borrowed cloth. This can be taken by the owner at any time. The owner in this case is the first husband. This proverb cautions men who marry married women that they should live with them knowing that they will leave without notice. It also cautioned men who had reached the age of maturity they should carry out investigation to ensure that the bride was married before. It also warned women to stick to their original marriage even when the going was difficult.

Mokungu Machana Takoreiri

(For a woman to cry she was not done for anything)

The proverb implied how women were treated unfairly without any mercy. In the polygamous marriage a husband could help the second wife and leave behind the first wife. In inheritance, you could find that the next of kin was the second wife which was very unfair for the first wife. When was done for small things she would complain. And big things made her keep quite. The proverb could be uttered during family disputes where it could sarcastically embarrass the culprit who did not care for the women and also exemplify how women are treated unfairly.

Nyarinda kagwakinire, Tiga Ogotenga goisane

( Nyarinda as you grow up let your dancing stop)

The proverb legitimizes how women were abused. It was mostly told to women who were abused by temperamental husbands that now they were adult women and should therefore stop behaving childish. They should be grownups. They were abused without caring about their adult status.
Omoiseke Gechemba kore mogengi, obera mino tocha kongengeria Sarange,
Sarenge Neritiro rire Nyomba.
(Gechemba the gossiper stay at your home don’t come to gossip my husband for he is
the only strong pole in my house)

This proverb proves how women are believed to be rumor mongers and how they are
discriminated by being told to stay at their homes. This shows that women like gossiping and
were therefore advised to stop gossiping one another.

Konywoma Itinge, Itinge moyo rikorongia

[Don’t marry a divorced woman for she is washing her heart]

A divorced woman can’t stay in her new marriage. This is because her mind was not
satisfied due to the fact that she is thinking about her past marriage. She could make people
happy but at the back of her mind, she is thinking about her former husband.

Ritinge kanya goesibia gwaikire mochi mogare

[Divorced woman start bathing for you have reached a wider homestead]

A divorced woman once married, will do her best to make and deceive her husband
and run away with property.

Omokungu Obande Nyabarati ere bweri

(Another man’s wife is like a freshian at byre)

This proverb advised men not to put a lot of trust to another man’s wife. This is
because they are vulnerable and may go away any time.

2.5. Proverbs that portray women as dependent to men once married.
These proverbs portray the society denying women their psychological, material and social existence without men. Once married a woman is expected to exist in harmony with her husband and should not move from one marriage to another.

*Mokungu tana kwanga Ase rorera nase Getinge*

(A woman never refuses the place of her anklet/bracelet and the place of the marriage in the husband’s home where the umbilical cord was buried).

A woman has two important places in her life. They include her birth place and her matrimonial home. She would live to keep ties with her people though displaying respect for their culture long after marriage likewise a woman who had been married and bride paid could never remarry. Even if she separated with her husband, the dowry was not returned she remained part and parcel of her matrimonial home up to death. This made the traditional African woman subordinate to a man (husband) as she voluntary left her home to become part and parcel to where she was not born. In an event of misunderstanding the woman (Wife) could be sent to her home to bring a goat to appease the husband’s kinsmen as punishment.

*Takona kondamera Omosacha bakungu nere ritiro rire nyomba*

(Do not abuse my husband women for he is my strong pole in my house)

This proverb tries to picture how women were abusive and talkative. It was meant to educate women to be very careful in the society. Somehow it shows how “women” as the only people who were capable of abusing men in the society. This is very unfair to them since in rare cases could you find a woman abusing a man

2.6 proverbs that discriminate women on beauty and not personality
The traditional Abagusii society considered beauty girl as a qualification for marriage. This proverb discriminates women on their physical beauty and not inner character. Brown girls were regarded as a symbol of beauty. They considered physical beauty rather than character. This is a discriminatory process because black girls would be also very good in behavior. What really matters in marriage was the heart. Traditional spouses looked at the height of a girl, color and strength. The proverb cautions men would be spouses not to concentrate on color but on behavior.

The proverb above shows how unfairly women were treated. They were seen as mere things of no importance. It did not matter how well a black girl dresses because people will not recognize her beauty. They will only know the beauty of a brown girl. This was also discriminatory.

If you wanted to see a sheep’s beauty or goodness you would look at it before giving birth. For when it gives birth the beauty disappears and becomes ugly. Girl’s beauty was seen before giving birth but after this she breast feeds her children and therefore becomes ugly. This was also discriminatory. This is because a sheep once cut the tail loses its beauty just like a woman loses her beauty once she breast feeds her children.
CHAPTER THREE

PERVERSIVE FEATURES OF STYLE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter dealt with the pervasive features of style employed in Abagusii proverbs to discriminate women. It dealt with the role of style in creating and perpetuating gendered culture among the Abagusii. The proverbs are only appreciated in their original language and not in their translation.

Many African cultures have a feeling for language, imagery and expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology which comes out clearly through the use of proverbs. Language being a symbolic act of representing and valuing things cannot be separated. This is because what we say about something forms our attitude towards that thing (Finnegan 390). She observes that what we call something summarizes our attitude towards it. This implies that what a society says through their proverbs about Men and Women is their view about them.

Figures of Speech are expressions which depart from the acceptable literary sense that are employed to give particular emphasis to an idea or a sentiment in order to beautify a literary work such as poetry and proverbs. These devices occupy an important position in proverbs and as they perform functions which make the proverbs what they are, that is pithy, metaphorical and spicy expressions with which sayings are embellished (Akinmade 118). He further states that they are used by proverb coiners to express succinctly a multi-faceted concept in order to make a point in a more powerful and emphatic way because they are used to make speeches very memorable and appealing in order to achieve some stylistic effect.
This chapter uses the above knowledge to analyze the figures of speech in Abagusii proverb as they are employed to give special emphasis to a speech or an idea. This emphasis is usually achieved by the user’s conscious or unconscious departure from the strict literal sense of the word. It is a means of expression in language which gives beauty, graphic and clear meaning to what is said or written.

Writers use figures of speech to explain a point using a familiar concept; expressing succinctly a multi-faceted concept; making a point more powerful and emphatic and make the text more colorful and appealing. These devices, which are also found in abundance in proverbs, are the ingredients which are added to verbal art to make it different, fascinating, and memorable. They are the salt and spice that sweeten and embellish the proverbs making striking and easily remembered by its intelligence and truth to the ear and its sound (Dooga 85).

Proverbs therefore use figurative language to convey their message in a way that makes it aesthetically attractive and socially relevant to the hearers. This rich variety of poetic devices enhances the flavor that makes proverbs a vital spicing ingredient in a conversation. Our emphasis will look at figures of speech which deal with comparison of two things that is similes and metaphor, figures of speech that introduce some sound flavor to the proverbs that is alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, figures used for emphasis, Parallelism mnemonic, brevity, hyperbole and humor in legitimizing hegemonic masculinity.

(Baldick 123) defines a simile as “an explicit comparison between two different things, actions or feelings, using the words “as” or “like”. This figure of speech occurs very frequently occur in Abagusii proverbs. The metaphor is also regarded as the most important and wide spread figure of speech in the proverbs. It is an imaginary comparison of one thing
or idea or action rather than direct statement. Indeed paramiographers believe that all proverbs are metaphorical.

A metaphor is a complete replacement of one thing by another thing. Even though they are different generally, they are said to be exactly the same thing as simile. Of course there is one special area of similarity between the subject that is being compared (tenor) and the object that is being compared with (vehicle) as we have in simile. This is why a metaphor is also regarded as condensed kind of simile (Oni 125).

3.2 Imagery

Abagusii proverbs use images which conjure up in the mind pictures that reinforce the clarity of the subjects. The images used are tangible, abstract, simple and complicated. The images can be classified as symbols, metaphors, similes and personification. Abagusii proverbs scan the spectrum of the physical, socio-cultural and political environment.

Many of the Abagusii proverbs refer to people and places. The names used in the proverbs get associated with the proverbial circumstances that they refer to and hence brings about duality. The names used are realistic. The factuality of the names hints at the probable and historicality of the proverbs where it happened. Some of them are also coined out of imagination to legitimize hegemonic masculinity.

3.2.1 Place images

1. Chinkomonichi chiamu kiabiraa osobowathi bamuru tugochirwa.

[Sweet wild fruits will grow at Kiabiraa (a place) and whoever doesn’t have boys will not harvest them].

This meant that boys were the only people to be educated. The place above is a real place that can be found in the Kisii community.
2. *Enkoba ekori Omomura tiga egende manga inse echi koria omogumo noro nyamato magare*

[Thunder that strikes a boy let it go to Manga down to strike a Mogumo tree with wide leaves].

The name Manga is also a place in Kisii land. This proverb meant that thunder was only supposed to strike a girl and not a boy for if it did so it was bad. This was discriminatory as all human beings are equal before the eyes of God.

### 3.2.2 Plant Images

The Imagery also encompasses more from the general environment to the world of plants.

1. *Chinkomoni chiame kiabiraa oyotbwati bamura tagochitwa*

[Sweet wild fruits will grow at Kiabiraa (a place) whoever doesn’t have boys will not harvest them].

The sweet wild fruits were very good fruits admired by the Abagusii community. This meant that the sweet fruits were only to be harvested by men and not women. This regarded the girl child as weak human beings.

2. *Enkoba ekori Omomura tiga egende manga inse echi koria omogumo noro nyamato magare*

[Thunder that strikes a boy let it go to Manga down to strike a Mogumo tree with wide leaves].

The Mogumo is a tree with wide leaves. This proverb therefore meant the high value placed on men in the society. That it was seen as bad if a man was struck
by thunder but nothing was done if this happen to a girl, they therefore respected men than women.

3.3.3 Animal Images

The animal world is also rich in Imagery

1. Chiombe nachio masangio, chiasangia mwaasi noonde mware motamanyaini
   (Cows are a tool of facilitating and uniting unknown person from far who is a stranger).

   Cows were known to be domesticated by men in the Abagusii society. Once a man married, he would pay dowry in form of cows. Therefore he would marry any wife that he wanted and as many as possible. He therefore domesticated his wives as he did to the cows once married. One would also marry anybody that he never knew earlier on provided that he had cows.

2. Omokungu Omongiti Akoruga igasi mbeba chiaria Magachi. Omokungu Omuya koruga Isiko bagesi babega
   (A selfish woman cooks at night and rats eat, while a good woman cooks day time for bachelors to eat).

   Mbeba are rats that destroy food in the homestead. Women who were known to be selfish of their property would make them and finally they were destroyed by evil people.

3. Omokungu Omuya Omonyene engombe namoroche
   (A good girl is seen by the herder).
A good girl was admired by the herder who was taking care of his cattle. This proverb meant that the owner of the cows was always searching for the best wife to marry in the society so that he would pay the cows.

4. *Ore na Moiseke Omwabo tomoira kiara chiombe nkomanwa chikare Nyakoe inani.*

[Whoever has a sister should not be pointed finger for dowry is being paid at Nyakoe [a place].

This proverb also depicted women as source of income. This is after they were married they would be paid for dowry. A parent who had daughters would not be despised because he would once get rich once the daughters get married. They saw women as commodity to be traded in.

5. *Ngombe ndongi chiarongia Nyarinda ochia komesera ronde.*

[Cows can take Nyarinda [a girl] to shine in any part of the country.]

Once a woman got married the one who had been paid the highest dowry would go to shine elsewhere in any part of the community. It did not matter whether you loved your husband to be or not, you were married to the richest man. It did not matter which part of the society he comes from.

6. *Buya bwa Ngondi Sigiti etaratwata koyatwata irionya yasiria*

(A young sheep’s beauty is the one that has not given birth, but when it does it loses its fur).

A girl’s beauty was only admired before she gave birth. If she gave birth her beauty disappeared. This encouraged polygamy for men to admire younger girls. The symbols used in the animal world are easy to relate to and they help to legitimize hegemonic masculinity in a sharp and vivid way.
3.3.4 Images from domestic scene

They refer to items used at home and the very important. The audience is expected to relate to images used to the message conveyed. This is because the images used are what they normally use in the homestead and are therefore used to them.

*Mwanyabaiseke Bange Inchara tekobaria, kerandi getkwoma Botaka na Botakoera*

(A home with many daughters never starved. It is like milk guard which never went dry and poverty never ended).

Ekerandi is a guard that is used to store milk. When one had many girls the parents knew that they had stored wealth in his homestead.

Similes have also been used to compare between two objects of completely different zones with the cultural Attitude towards the object of comparison giving logical clue to the implication of the proverbs in legitimizing hegemonic masculinity.

1) *Inche tingotama buna baba agotama gochia matunwa abana*

(I cannot run away as my mother runs away towards the hills like a child).

The simile above is used to compare women with fear who normally ran away when they see danger ahead. Women are therefore portrayed as being fearful and not ready to face challenges.

2) *Omoibori Omino Kerecha kere enyasi Mosukondakwe Irongo reta obori*

(A Co- wife is like a devil on the wall, when I die she goes to the ceiling and fetches millet to eat).
A second wife was always compared as a devil on the wall. This is because of the jealous and competition that she brings to the first wife thus she always caused trouble and discomfort in the family that was once united.

3) *Omokungu oyomo ngeteni kere riko.*

(One woman is like small firewood).

A man who married one wife had trouble in case of any calamity befalling in that family. Once she died without children that family would not exist anymore. They therefore encouraged polygamy so that a man would not take risks in his marriage.

4) *Omokungu Obande Nyabarati ere bweri*

(Another man’s wife is like a freshian at byre).

When a man took another man’s wife he would be sure of that wife taking advantage of him. The wife would always desire to have as much wealth as possible so that when she returns to her original marriage she is rich. This therefore discouraged men in engaging other men’s wives as they were known to be unreliable and unpredictable.

5) *Nguru chia momura nchogu egwatia mbara*

[A man’s strength is like an elephant splitting firewood).

Men were known to be very strong like Elephants and would therefore face any strong task without fear or favor. This made men to be superior to women in terms of the roles that they play in the society.
3.3 Parallelism

Abagusii proverbs exist in two separate ideas which are connected through repetition or allusion parts which are of equal length. They are separated by a convenient punctuation mark making the proverbs poetic and rhythmical in nature. They also create a memorable phrase so that once they are conveyed to women they legitimize hegemonic masculinity.

3.3.1 Proverbs that contain double preposition.

Some of the Abagusii proverbs contain a general statement in the first part of the proverb and an extension or it’s qualification in the second part. Both of the statements are alternative and interrelated. The first part makes a declaration which is qualified in the second part.

1) **Chinkomoni chiame kiabiraa**

(Sweet wild fruits will grow at Kiabiraa (a place) whoever who doesn’t have boys will not harvest).

2) **Chiombe nachio masangio motamanyaini**

(Cows are a tool of uniting they unite a strange person)

3) **Koreta Itinge**

(To marry a divorced woman you had also married)

4) **Mokungu tana kwanga**

(A woman will never forget the place of the anklet)

5) **Omoiseke Omobe**

(A wicked girl waits for a man from far)

6) **Omokungu Omuya**

(A good woman is seen by the herder)
3.3.2 Proverbs that contain contrast preposition.

Some of the proverbs gave the first part stated in affirmative while the second is in the negative. This adds to the effectiveness of these proverbs by giving a categorical tone and making them more persuasive to legitimate hegemonic masculinity.

1) *Omoiseke Omonyakieni*  
(A beautiful girl)  
*Agreta Isiko ya chinyomba chia chintakana*  
(passes through homes of orphans)

2) *Omokungu oyomo*  
(One woman)  
*ngeteni kere riko.*  
is like small firewood)

3) *Abakungu nabaya*  
(Women are good)  
*ko Nemen yabasareirie*  
(but their mouths have spoilt them)

4) *Nyarinda kagwakinire*  
(Nyarinda as you grow up)  
*Tiga Ogotenga goisane*  
(let your dancing stop)

3.4 Mnemonics

Abagusii proverbs contain sound patterns that make them pleasant to hear and memorable as a result of the rhythm and musically. They include alliteration, assonance; rhyme and idiophones. They create euphony that improves the aesthetics and convey the intended message to women in the society.

3.4.1 Alliteration

The proverbs have the recurrence of a consonantal sound in the words that follow each other closely in the statement. The sound usually occurs at the beginning, middle or any part of the words. Alliteration gives some melody or musicality to the ear when we listen to
the proverbs. This is because you hear the sound over and over as we usually have in most songs. It can also attract attention to certain important thoughts in them. With this attention, such words or thoughts tend to receive greater emphasis than all other words or thoughts that go with them. Looking at the above definition of alliteration, two categories of alliteration can be identified. They are consonantal and vowel alliteration. Consonantal Alliteration is the type in which consonants especially at the beginning of the words are reiterated. Classically our research focused on the sound that occurred at the beginning. They make the proverbs memorable to the listener.

1) **Chinkomoni chiame kiabiraa oyotabwati bamura tagochitwa**

   [Sweet wild fruits will grow at Kiabiraa (a place) and shall harvest them and whoever who doesn’t have boys will not harvest.]

2) **Chiombe nachio masangio, chiasangia mwaasi noonde mware motamanyaini**

   (Cows are a tool of facilitating and uniting unknown person from far who is a very stranger)

   The sound **Ch** is repeated in the words above.

3) **Koreta Itinge Konya kwaretire Nonde**

   (To marry a woman who was already married means that you had also married)

   The sound **K** is repeatedly used.

4) **Mwanyabaiseke hange Inchara tekobaria, kerandi getakwoma Botaka na Botakoera.**

   (A home with many daughters never starved. It is like milk guard will never went dry)
The sound **B** is repeatedly used in the above proverb.

5) **Ritinge Mogoroba Rikonganya**

(A divorced woman migrates at night)

The sound **R** is repeatedly used in the above proverb.

6) **Mochi otabwati baiseke baroke bana**

(The family which does not have girls to call children)

The sound **B** is repeatedly used in the above proverb.

7) **Kaya Nkaya kange Mwango Omatara ko mbuya atatoete mwango**

[Good is good like Mwango [person] but she never gave birth to another Mwango [daughter]]

The sound **K** is repeatedly used in the above proverb.

8) **Omosacha Omuya noyokoringa nkundi gochia bwoye omogoko osara nka abanto baye hamoroka isebanto**

[A good husband is the one who carries something in his fist for he becomes famous to his home and his family calls him father to the people]

The sound **B** is repeatedly used in the above proverb.

3.4.2 Assonance

This device is the repetition of vowel sounds. It is described as a partial rhyme in which the stressed vowel sounds may be different. Assonance is very common in Abagusii proverbs. Most of the following proverbs that legitimate hegemonic masculinity have an **O**
sound that is repeatedly used at the beginning of words in the proverbs. The proverbs have the repetition of the vowel sound \( O \) that comes after one another or close together in a statement.

1) **Omoibori Omino Kerecha kere enyasi Mosukondakwe Irongo reta obori**

   (A Co- wife is like a devil on the wall, when I die she goes to the ceiling and fetches millet to eat)

2) **Qmokungu Qmongiti Akoruga isiko mbeba chiaria Magachi. Qmokungu Qmuya koruga Igasi bagesi babega**

   (A selfish woman cooks at night and the rats eat while a good woman cooks day time for bachelors to eat)

3) **Qmokungu Qmuya Qmonyene engombe namoroche**

   (A good girl is seen by the herder)

4) **Qmokungu Qyomo ngeteni kere riko.**

   (One woman is like small firewood)

5) **Qmokungu Qbande Nyabarati ere bweri**

   (Another man’s wife is like a freshian at byre)

6) **Qmoiseke Qmuya Nyakeini Kebariri**

   (A beautiful girl is the brown one)

7) **Qmoiseke Qmomwamu, isangonde ekona gotebwa**
(A black girl is not easily recognized)

8) **Omokungu Agokunga, Omosacha Osacha**

(A woman takes care of what a husband brings while a man’s role is to hunt).

**Omoiseke Omonyakieni Agoeta Isiko ya chinyomba chia chintakana**

(A beautiful girl passes through homes of orphans)

9) **Omokungu Qisiko Moino kae Bosibori ensi yaye Nero Yoka Abwate Agosera**

(The women of the other house let Bosibori (Name of a woman) have her grinding stone since it is the only one that she possesses)

3.4.3 Rhyme

The proverb contains words that more often have a word at the middle of the line that end in the same sound as the last word of the line. This creates phonics symmetry and enhances rhythm.

**Omokungu Agokunga, Omosacha Osacha**

(A woman takes care of what a husband brings a man’s role is to hunt.)

**Tosanera mokamomura Otaramorora**

(Do not wish for a daughter-in-law before you see her)

**Takona kondamera Omosacha bakungu nere ritiro rire nyomba**

(Do not abuse my husband women for he is my strong pole in my house)

**Nguru chia momura nchogu egwatia mbara**

[A man’s strength is like an elephant splitting firewood]

**Inche tingotama buna baba agotama gochia matunwa abana**
(I cannot run away as my mother ran away towards the hills like a child.)

*Mwanyahaiseke Bange Inchara tekobaria, kerandi getakwoma Botaka na Botakoera*

(A home with many daughters never starved it is like milk guard which never went dry, poverty never ended).

### 3.4.4 Ideophones

They have words that convey the meaning through their sound. The sound represents the idea being conveyed in the proverb.

1) *Abakungu nabaya ko! Nemenu yabasareirie*

(Women are good but their mouths have spoilt them)

### 3.4.5 Reduplication

They have the repletion of the same word or sound immediately after it.

1) *Tomywoma Itinge, Itinge moyo rikorongia*

[Do not marry a divorced woman for she is washing her heart to make people happy]-

The word *itinge* has been repeated twice for emphasis.

### 3.5 Economy of words (Brevity)

Most of the Abagusii proverbs are compressed into very few words some consisting of two or three words in the original language. This is achieved through Omission of the subject of the action or the object of the proverb. This facilitates quick communication and emphasizes the immediacy of the legitimacy power conveyed through the proverb.

1) *Roiboro Nkiegesa gekoroma*

(Giving birth is like a hiccups that causes pain)
2) *Sira Ngiri Moiseke*
   (Unsettled debt cannot marry a woman)

3) *Engareka yagerete bokayia*
   (Competition caused proper cooking)

4) *Tosanera mokamomura Otaramorora*
   (Do not wish for a daughter-in-law before you see her.)

5) *Yamokungu teri koriegwa keu*
   (A woman’s belongings is not eaten)

6) *Maiso Abakungu*
   (Eyes of women)

7) *Ritinge Mogoroba Rikonganya*
   (A divorced woman migrates at night)

8) *Mokungu Machana Takoreiri*
   (For a woman to cry she was not done for)

### 3.6 Hyperbole

The proverb issues deliberate exaggeration to convey ideas. They create a shocking effect and make the listener think about the message communicated through the proverb.

1) *Omoibori Omino Kerecha kere enyasi Mosukondakwe Irongo reta obori*
   (A Co-wife is like a devil on the wall, when I die she goes to the ceiling and fetches millet to eat)

   The second wife is a likened to a devil which is an exaggeration.

2) *Omoiseke Omuya Nyakeini Kebariri*
   (A beautiful girl is the brown one)
Brown is also exaggerated as also black is beauty.

3) **Omokungu Omongiti Akoruga igasi mbeba chiaria Magachi. Omokungu Omuya koruga isiko bagesi babega**

(A selfish woman cooks at night and the rats steal the food eat. While a good woman cooks day time for bachelors to eat)

Here the character of a selfish woman is exaggerated.

4) **Nguru chia momura nchogu egwatia mbara**

[A man’s strength is like an elephant splitting firewood).

A man’s strength is also exaggerated by comparing it with the strength of an Elephant.

3.7 **Humour**

They contain humour arising from the words images or the context of the usage. Abagusii proverbs being culturally biased are easier to the native speaker of the language to discern the humour than an outsider.

1) **Inche tingotama buna baba agotama gochia matunwa abana**

(I cannot run away as my mother ran away towards the hills like a child)

The way a mother runs up the hill because of fear is humorous. This is because she is a grownup who is not expected to fear anything. By running away like a child, people wonder that should be running away. Is it the child or the mother?

2) **Ritinge kanya goesibia gwaikire mochi mogare**

[Divorced woman start bathing for you have reached wider homestead]
A divorced wife character to practice bathing just because she has been remarried to a wider homestead is also humorous. This image is used to mock the already married woman to a new homestead that even she pretends to be what she is, her character is already known from where she was first married.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF WOMEN IN THE ABAGUSII SOCIETY

In the traditional African society, womanhood was a concept that is most viewed with a lot of seriousness. Young girls who had attained puberty are normally seen women. It is at this point that they begin to be prepared for the higher responsibility ahead of her. The preparation normally involves lessons on social etiquette, wifely duties on how to serve their husband and everything that defines their womanhood. These lessons also included her responsibility to the society and thus she grows up in her surrounding knowing the importance of her sex and the role she is to play in the society. The African woman’s resilience and hard work was thus entrenched in the consciousness of every young girl from this stage of her life. The peak of a woman’s life came in when she married thus becoming a wife, and a mother. The central point is her independent role as a contributor to the socio-economic well-being of her family and well-being. This chapter dealt with manner and means Abagusii proverbs propagates the ubiquitous attitude of economically discriminating against women.

4.1 Role of Abagusii women in Agriculture.

Abagusii society is structured in such a way that though patriarchal, there are gender specific roles for the man and woman engage in. These roles are complementary in a way that there is balance. They work according to the roles assigned to each sex which at the end propagates the interest of the entire family and this is almost common to every African community. Women once married in the traditional Abagusii setting would cultivate their own farm and also participate in the cultivation and tending of the family farm which was usually owned and controlled by their husband, who is the head of the household.
In other words Abagusii society gave women recognized roles in the economic well-being of the community. Women were the major food producers and thus had access to land.

*Omokungu Omworo Oegwe Boremo bwa Kenyambi Agwaka Inse Kobwata Omotwe.*

(A lazy woman was allocated unproductive land to till. When she cultivates she hold her head.)

The society gave them authority to decide on how the land would be used and cultivated. Therefore, the economic role was that of productive, labor and processing of food.

*Mwanyabaiseke Bange Inchara tekobaria, kerandi getakwoma Botaka na Botakoera*

(A home with many daughters starved. It is like milk guard which never went dry poverty never ended]

These roles ensured that the women established and maintained their rights in the domestic and other spheres. The role of the woman in this society is acting as a “child bearer and worker”. This is an aspect of African womanhood that defines the woman as an important member of the society. They see children as unqualified wealth because of the perpetuity of the clan and therefore this puts the woman in a special position of respect. The more children a man had made the work load less and the fortune of the family increases. This is really the reason why men in the traditional society married many wives as depicted in the proverb.
Omokungu oyomo ngeteni kere riko.

(One woman is like small firewood)

Polygamy was highly encouraged to be as evidence to a man’s wealth and giving birth to many children would provide cheap labor to the family. Also, in the Abagusii community an African woman is regarded as one who is responsible for the improvement of their economic life. Most of them engage in trade. Others make craft like pottery, mat knitting and weaving basket. To ensure that these roles are spelt out to the letter, the Abagusii society has gender specific roles that make the African society organized in a way that everybody plays their active roles just like they have economically.

Though patriarchal, the society respects these roles and there are no encroachments. Therefore, women in this society are highly valued and esteemed by their husbands for what they can extract through their wives in terms of agricultural benefits and not what they are. This is acceptable and therefore legitimizes hegemonic masculinity.

It is also important to note the fact that the women farm, trade and engage in activities that give the family income does not mean that the man does not care for her as a person. They do not depend on their women for survival. Rather the society is structured in such a way that the man and his wife team together to build their home. They do not lose sense of value because of their role in the society. This is because the husband does clothe her; give her some food items and money on market days to buy condiments.

Women were seen as indispensable not because of their child bearing ability or extra income that comes through but because the society recognized them as valuable and the women themselves know their worth. Once they give birth they remain respected but if they do not they were condoned. Therefore, where reproductive labor has been devalued and
motherhood has become the basis of women’s systemic disadvantage especially in the labor market.

4.2 Women as Contributors to Continued Wealth in the Family

The Abagusii society considers a home without a girl as a spring without a source. This spring is likely to dry up any time drought comes in, a woman was therefore considered as a source of wealth.

Okoibora Okuya, gokagera Omokungu Omonyaka Akarokwa Nting’ana
(Giving birth is very good for it made a despised woman to be respected).

In the case where wealth was already created, the woman acts a source of preserved wealth especially at the point of dowry payment. The father would be paid dowry when she got married. Abagusii society considers cattle as a source of wealth and a sign of economic well-being. The more daughters one has, the more he is expected to get many heads of cattle thus getting respect in the society.

Chiombe nachio masangio, chiasangia mwaasi noonde mware motamanyaini
(Cows are a tool of facilitating and uniting unknown person from far who is a stranger)

Girls were seen as a form of investment for their parents and were therefore equated to cows.

Mochi otabwati baiseke baroke bana
(The family which does not have girls to name children)

This explains why they ensure that their daughters are well brought up. The girls are mostly taught the secrets of motherhood in addition to the role they should play as wives in their marital homes. The purpose of this thorough upbringing was to enable the parents of the
girl to bargain higher prices of dowry especially when the suitor proves that their daughter is of good character and can make a good wife.

Ore na Moiseke Omwabo tomoira kiara chiombe nkomanwa chikare Nyakoe inani.

[Whoever who has a sister should not be pointed finger for dowry is being paid at Nyakoe]

A good wife was determined by her character which included behavior, physical appearance and being industrious. Once a woman was married her family was assured of economic benefits from the family she marries into.

The strength of a woman in her marital home and her ability to multi-task is one factor that was observed during the youthful life of the woman so that the negotiations for bride price go higher when the time for her marriage comes. They highly valued virginity as bad girls who were reckless to their lives would only be married to an old man as a second wife or by man far away who didn’t know her behavior. This is because no man would marry her from near because he knew her well.

Omoiseke Omobe Momura Bware Aganyete

Omomura Omobe Moiseke bware aganyete

(A wicked girl waits for a man from far and a wicked man waits a girl from far)

Most families also preferred that their daughters get married in rich homes so as to be able to more wealth. The aspect of neighborliness and brotherhood as major practice in Abagusii society would prevail between the two families so that they could both benefit from the union. This confirms the African saying that an African home without a girl is like a spring without a source.
Beautiful girls were a target for every man looking for a wife. This is because the more beautiful she was the more dowry that would be paid to her parents. But men in this case didn’t have to be handsome but rich. This clearly means that the pre-colonial African society was one that depended on bride wealth. The issue gave women an amount of economic independence and clout. This is because in some African societies, the African woman retained control over their bride wealth which economically empowered her to certain extent. This fairly explains and brings out the economic role of women in these societies.

4.3 Women as Economic Powerhouses to be traded in the Society

Women in Abagusii society were seen as economic powerhouses of their societies to be traded in. Rich men would marry the most beautiful women who were able to pay higher bride price. This left the poor men in the society to marry later because they were forced by economic circumstances.

The major role that parents played in this trade was setting the rules of trade amongst themselves in terms of organizing and managing the dowry to be paid. A beautiful woman had chances of trading a rich man than an ugly one.

*Omoiseke Omuya Nyakeini Kebariri*

(A beautiful girl is the brown one)

Also, in the Abagusii community an African woman is regarded as one who is responsible for the improvement of their economic life they engaged in. They therefore had to be hard working to get a wealth husband. A woman was seen as a commodity to be traded in whose price was negotiable depending on a ‘current state’ she was going to married.
Omoiseke Omonyakieni Agoeta Isiko ya chinyomba chia chintakana

(A beautiful girl passes through homes of orphans)

Though patriarchal, the society respected marriage whereby parents of a girl in this society were highly valued and esteemed because of their daughters for what they would extract through them being paid for dowry. The trade between women and material possession was seen as equal. One who had many daughters fore saw many cows while one with many cattle saw a number of wives he would marry. The exchange of bride price was regarded as total exchange in an economic situation. This gave the husband full rights over his wives and children.

Omokungu Agokunga, Omosacha Osacha

(A woman takes care of what a husband brings while a man’s role is to hunt.)

Their contributions were majorly in areas of labor, wealth and source of pride. Family labor was majorly organized for economic activities.

Omosacha Omuya noyokoringa nkundi gochia bwoye omogoko osara nka abanto baye bamoroka isebanto

[A good husband is the one who carries something in his fist for he becomes famous to his home and his family calls him father to the people] These would include a man, his wives and children ceramics’. Abagusii women were more into household chores. Clothes weaving, basket making, beads making, as their male counterparts tended to be more involved in the production units such as farming, hunting, carving etc.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

This research purposed to critically examine how proverbs are used as a gendered genre in Abagusii society in legitimizing hegemonic masculinities. The study has actually established that legitimization and assertion of male authority is usually negotiated within the discursive and dialogical context and situation. The proverbs analyzed have objectified women, portrayed them as evil beings posing sinful and horrible nature, portrayed the physical and social potency of men in Abagusii sexist society, they also doubted their wholeness and integrity by regarding them as thankless, unreliable and inconsistent and revealed the society's denial of female psychological and social existence without a man. Women have been also regarded as weak and the cause of men downfall.

From the research, observation and findings, the proverbs have been used to justify traditions that are used to favor men at the expense of women. Other proverbs discussed disregarded women's feelings as human beings. The proverbs also justified polygamy whereby two or more women may share one man but under caution. The study analyzed pervasive features of style employed in the proverbs to express the gendered belief that women are subordinate to the men and should be in inferior position in the society. The images used in the Abagusii proverbs to legitimize hegemonic masculinities were derived from, places, plants, animals and domestic scene. The proverbs also existed in two parts which are equal in length. They also contain mnemonics that make them pleasant and memorable. Economy of words, humor and hyperbole were also evident.
5.2 Conclusion

This study has taken a research priority in analyzing proverbs that clearly depict women as inferior to men in physical and intellectual capacity. The society has given men power to control economic structure of the Abagusii community by regarding women as cheap labor in agriculture sector; the observed ways in which women and cattle were symbols of prestige and valuable commodity that were treasured by men in the society.

Women were depicted negatively through the proverbs as weak, unreliable, unpredictable, treacherous and evil. The Abagusii society therefore used the proverbs as an ideological tool to legitimize hegemonic masculinity in regulating the behavior and roles of women in the society. These create gendered inequalities and are accepted by members of the Abagusii society and they can’t be changed easily. This has led to women being economically discriminated.

The study exemplifies the existing interrelatedness between the proverbs and the way they legitimize hegemonic masculinity in the economic sector among the Abagusii. The proverbs perpetuate gender legacies and ideology. They associate maleness with respect, firmness and strength while women are associated with meekness, indignity, inconsistency and powerlessness that must depend on males for recognition and support.
5.3 Recommendations for further research

The research recommended that there was need to replace proverbs that legitimize hegemonic masculine by doing selective application of the proverbs in preserving the positive proverbs and rejecting the proverbs that portray women negatively. The biased proverbs should be discarded and new ones formed. This is because proverbs of a particular society express the collective wisdom of the people as they reflect the values, aspiration and the way of thinking of that particular society. There is also need to review the assumptions underlying the proverbs to create an androgynous society in which men and women lead equal lives through a transformational process which can be accomplished through educational, political and cultural approaches. This can be achieved by recognizing proverbs that talk about women and their consequences on gender equality.

There is also need to have a community exercise which will be directed towards the articulation of women’s cultural role, status and positions shown through the proverbs do not have biological basis but are socially constructed beliefs. This study can be a measure for research into other subgenres of oral literature from the Abagusii community. An example it can be used as a model for the study and analysis of the way narratives, and riddles are used in Abagusii society to legitimize hegemonic masculinity.

This study will sensitize scholars and audience of orature into analyzing and criticizing other genres from the same perspective. This research has not exhausted all the Abagusii proverbs that legitimize hegemonic masculinity. We therefore recommend that the researchers in the future should carry out more proverbs that do the same. This kind of investigation can also be used to carry out a comparative study on the role of proverbs, riddles and narratives of different communities.
WORKS CITED


Frank, A. "Hausa Concepts of masculinity and the Yan Dauda". African Masculinities


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: THEMATICALLY PROVERBS ANALYZED AND THEIR TRANSLATIONS

1. *Chiombe nachio masangio, chiasangia mwaasi noonde mware motamanyaini*  
   (Cows are a tool of facilitating and uniting unknown person from far who is a stranger)

2. *Mwanyabaiseke Bange Inchara tekobaria, kerandi getakwoma Botaka na Botakoera*  
   (A home with many daughters never starved. It is like milk guard will never went dry and poverty never ended)

3. *Omokungu Agokunga, Omosacha Osacha*  
   (A woman takes care of what a husband brings while a husband’s role is to hunt.)

4. *Mochi otabwati baiseke baroke bana*  
   (A family which does not have girls to name children)

5. *Okoibora Okuya, gokagera Omokungu Omonyaka Akarokwa Nting’ana*  
   (Giving birth is very good for it caused a despised woman to be respectable).  

6. *Roiboro kiegeso gekoroma*  
   (Giving birth is like a hiccup that causes pain)

7. *Sira Ngiri Moiseke*  
   (Unsettled debt cannot marry a woman)

8. *Omoiseke Omonyakieni Agoeta Isiko ya chinyomba chia chintakana*  
   (A beautiful girl passes through the homes of orphans)

9. *Omokungu Omuya Omonyene engombe namoroche*  
   (A good girl is seen by the herder)
10. *Omosacha Omuya noyokoringa nkundi gochia bwoye omogoko osara baka abanto baye bamoroka isebanto*

(A good husband is the one who carries something in his fist for he becomes famous to his home and his family calls him father to the people)

11. *Ore na Moiseke Omwabo tomoira kiara chiombe nkomanwa chikare Nyakoe inani.*

(Whoever who has a sister should not be pointed finger at for dowry is being paid at nyakoe)

12. *Ngombe ndongi chiarongia Nyarinda ochia komesera ronde*

(Cows can take nyarinda [a girl] to shine in any part of the country)

13. *Kaya Nkaya kange Mwango Omatara ko mbuya atatoete mwango*

[Good is good like Mwango [person] but she never gave birth to another Mwango[daughter]]

14. *Engareka yagerete bokayia*

(Competition caused proper cooking)

15. *Konyuoma Abakungu Abange Nekebera Kwerentereire*

(Marrying many wives causes many troubles)

16. *Omoibori Omino Kerecha kere enyasi Mosukondakwe Irongo reta obori*

(A Co- wife is like a devil on the wall; if I die she goes to the ceiling and fetches millet to eat)

17. *Omokungu Omongiti Akoruga igasi mbeba chiaria Magachi. Omokungu Omuya koruga isiko bagesi babega*

(A selfish woman cooks at night the rats steal the food to eat. While a good woman cooks day time for bachelors to eat)
18. Omoiseke Omobe Momura Bware Aganyete - Omomura Omobe Moiseke bware aganyete

(A wicked girl waits for a man from far and a wicked man waits for a girl from far)

19. Omokungu Oisiko Moina kae Bosibori ensi yaye Nero Yoka Abwate Agosera

(The woman of the other house let Bosibori (Name of a woman) has her grinding stone since it is the only one that she possesses)

20. Tosanera mokamomura Otaramorora

(Do not wish to see a daughter-in-law before you see her)

21. Omokungu Nyagetiara Moigwere monu okobanga

(Bad women seen by bad mouth)

22. Yamokungu teri koriegwa keu

(A woman’s belongings is not eaten)

23. Abakungu nabaya ko! Nemenu yabasareirie

(Women are good but their mouths have spoilt them)

24. Kobeka Mokeira igasi kebera kweretereire

(Placing mokeira [a person] at your shoulder is like you have brought yourself a lymph node)

25. Maiso Abakungu

(Eyes of women)

26. Inche tingotama buna baba agotama gochia matunwa abana

(I cannot run away as my mother runs away towards the hills like a child)

27. Chinkomoni chiame kiabiraa oyotabwati bamura tagochiaa

(Sweet wild fruits will grow at Kiabiraa (a place) and whoever who doesn’t have boys whoever doesn’t have boys will not harvest.)

(A lazy woman is allocated unproductive land to till. When she cultivates she holds her head.)

29. Omokungu Omweanya Motarere etoigo

(Rigorous woman doesn’t know to do things properly; she goes to her home without anything).

30. Omokungu oyomo ngeteni kere riko.

(One woman is like small firewood)

31. Esinyo makwanwa bobe, bamura etabwati

(For a border to be talked about badly, it does not have boys)

32. Monto Mosacha gocha korera igo Obutorigwe

(For a man to cry, he must have had a through beating)

33. Nguru chia momura nchogu egwatia mbara

[A man’s strength is like an elephant splitting firewood]

34. Enkoba ekori Omomura tiga egende manga inse echi koria omogumo noro nyamato magare

[Thunder that strikes a boy let it go to Manga down to strike a Mogumo tree with wide leaves]

35. Koreta Itinge Konya kwaretire Nonde

(To marry a woman who was already married means that you had also married)

36. Ritinge Mogoroba Rikonganya

(A divorced woman migrates at night)
37. Mokungu Machana Takoreiri
(For a woman to cry she was not done for)

38. Nyarinda kagwakinire, Tiga Ogotenga goisane
(Nyarinda as you grow up let your dancing stop)

39. Omoiseke Gechemba kore mogengi, obera mino tocha kongengeria Sarange,
Sarenge Neritiro rire Nyomba.
(Gechemba the gossiper stay at your home don’t come to gossip my husband for he is
the only strong pole in my house)

40. Tonywoma Itinge, Itinge moyo rikorongia
(Do not marry a divorced woman for she is washing her heart)

41. Ritinge kanya goesibia gwaikire mochi mogare
(Divorced woman start taking a shower for you have arrived wider homestead)

42. Omokungu Obande Nyabarati ere bweri
(Another man’s wife is like a freshian at byre)

43. Mokungu tana kwanga Ase rorera nase Getinge
(A woman will never refuse the place of the anklet/bracelet, the place of the marriage
and the husband’s home where the umbilical cord was buried).

44. Takona kondamera Omosacha bakungu nere ritiro rire nyomba
(Do not abuse my husband women for he is my strong pole in my house)

45. Omoiseke Omuya Nyakeini Kebariri
(A beautiful girl is the brown one)

46. Omoiseke Omomwamu, isangonde ekona gotebwa
(A black girl is not easily recognized)

47. Buya bwa Ngondi Sigiti etaratwata koyatwata irionya yasiria
(A young sheep’s beauty is the one that has not given birth for when it gives it loses its fur)
APPENDIX II: TENTANTIVE CHAPTERISATION

CHAPTER ONE
This comprised the introduction which included the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, research assumptions, justification of the study, literature review, scope and limitation, theoretical framework and research methodology.

CHAPTER TWO
This chapter discussed the Sample of proverbs collected from the field and their role in legitimizing hegemonic masculinities among the Abagusii.

CHAPTER THREE
This chapter dealt with the pervasive stylistic devices employed in legitimizing hegemonic masculinities among the Abagusii through proverbs.

CHAPTER FOUR
This chapter established via fieldwork discussions the economic factors which contributed to the manner in which proverbs among Abagusii propagates the ubiquitous attitude of discriminating against women.

CHAPTER FIVE
This chapter established if the study's objectives were attained. It offered a summary of findings. It established that Abagusii proverbs portray the community's worldview leading to the conclusions and recommendations for further study.
### APPENDIX III: THE STUDY PROGRAMME

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<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal writing</td>
<td>May, 2012 to September, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal presentation</td>
<td>January, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection and analysis</td>
<td>February, 2013 to June, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project writing</td>
<td>July, 2014 to October 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project presentation, binding and submission</td>
<td>January, 2015 to July, 2015</td>
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## APPENDIX IV: THE BUDGET FOR THE PROPOSED STUDY

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<tr>
<td>stationery, photocopying and binding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traveling to Kenyatta University and accommodation.</td>
<td>20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field research resources and handling informants</td>
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<td>Communication and ICT (telephone, internet and flash disk)</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>Sub-total</td>
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<td>Contingencies 10% of total expenditure</td>
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APPENDIX V: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN

1. What is your name? __________________________________________________________

2. How old are you? __________________________________________________________

3. Where were you born? _______________________________________________________

4. What is the name of your village? ____________________________________________

5. (i) Do you have proverbs in your community? _________________________________

   (ii) If yes, which name are they given? _______________________________________

6. (i) Who uses proverbs most in your community? __________________________________________________________________________

   (ii) When are they used? ____________________________________________________________________________________________

7. (i) How many proverbs do you know? ________________________________________________________________________________
(ii) How many proverbs talk about women?

8. (i) Do they say good things about women?

(ii) What negative characteristics of women are captured in the proverbs?

9. (i) Do you think the women enjoy when they hear the proverbs?

(ii) Explain why?

10. (i) Who do you blame for some negative portrayal of women in the proverbs?

(ii) Explain why?
11. How do the proverbs that devalue women legitimize hegemonic masculinity in Abagusii cultural heritage?

12. (i) Do women have any economic value in Abagusii society?

(ii) If yes, how is their value exploited?
APPENDIX VI: PICTURES OF VARIOUS ELDERS INTERVIEWED

(I) Elder Getanda at the foot of Sameta hills view.
(ii) Elder James Siriba and other elders at Omoringamu – Machoge chache
(iii) Mzee Charles Abeere at Manga hills
(iv) Elder Makworo and his fellow elder at Sensi-Kitutu chache.