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Shifting cultural identities, urbanity and globalisation in Christopher Monyoncho's popular music

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Abstract

This paper delves into the intricate shifting AbaGusii cultural identities using Christopher Monyoncho's popular music. Employing cultural identity theory, the paper also analyses effects of urbanisation and globalisation on the people's culture populates the daylight of reality among the Gusii people as seen in Monyoncho's selected popular music. From the historical perspective, the research unveils the enduring AbaGusii cultural identity against the forces of Westernisation, highlighting key aspects such as evolving social structures and political transitions from the effects of colonisation, westernization and globalisation. The findings underscore the resilience of Gusii culture, portraying it as a hybrid identity that retains a robust primordial foundation despite the challenges posed by globalisation. In conclusion, Christopher Monyoncho's popular music illuminates the dynamic nature of AbaGusii cultural identities, offering valuable insights into the coexistence of African traditional practices amidst globalisation.

Keywords: cultural identities, urbanity, modernity, globalisation, primordial, shifting



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Transient and evolving cultural identities among the AbaGusii

Every time one studies shifting cultural identities, the influence of alien forces come to the forefront. This strengthens the fact that cultural identities are dynamic and ever-evolving, shaped by historical, social, and political factors. This is particularly evident in the case of the Gusii community, whose cultural identity has undergone significant changes over time. One of the most influential figures in this process is Monyoncho, a pioneer popular Benga music crooner whose poetry was produced between the 1970s to 2004 and touched all aspects of Gusii life.

This paper explores Monyoncho's poetry from the transient and evolving cultural identities' perspective. Specifically, this paper examines two key aspects of this relationship: the influence of external factors namely globalisation and urbanisation on the Gusii cultural identity vis-à-vis the evolving political dispensation and the role of popular culture in shaping cultural identity as brought out in Christopher Monyoncho's popular poetry. To attain these ends, the tenets of the two selected theories would come to play. Cultural identity theory emphasises the role of power dynamics in shaping cultural identity and perceptions of different cultures. The tenet was useful in interrogating the power dynamics vis-à-vis the transient and evolving identities among the Gusii following the impact of migration, colonisation, Christianity, urbanisation and globalisation.

Additionally, the employment of literary stylistics theory analysed the language, structure, and form of Monyoncho's poetry and the application of literary devices, such as metaphor and symbolism, as well as the role of musical elements. Further examination of the themes, narratives, and symbols in Monyoncho's poetry offered insights into the construction of AbaGusii cultural identity and nuanced aspects of transient and evolving AbaGusii cultural identity following the clash of indigenous people's traditional ways of life and imperialism/Westernisation. This analysis using tenets of cultural identity and literary stylistics theories would be replicated throughout the following section which deals with transient and evolving identities.

Transient and evolving identities

Gargano (2012) explored the identity negotiations of two international undergraduate students who were migrants and how they were adapting to life in a public research university in the United States. Studying abroad constituted a culturally contested space for educational sojourners, with ruptures that required constant sense-making and negotiations of identities as students attempted to combine the foreign and the familiar. Situational contexts, interpersonal interactions, and imagination, combined, determined what these students learnt and how that learning occurred. However, the influence of cosmopolitan learning on the identity negotiations of students was remotely understood. The experiences of foreign students in many ways challenged the traditional understanding of an international education, neglecting discourses that explored the complexity and range of meanings students ascribe to educational sojourns, thereby resulting in a series of undocumented generalisations about students. On the one hand, perspectives of globalisation included Americanisation and Westernisation, creolisation, hybridisation, and fragmentation, illuminating the heterogeneity of nations, highlighting the homogenising effects of global flows and processes on nations, cultures, and identities. A Westernised view conceived of globalisation as a uniform and linear process of cultural homogenisation achieved through cultural imperialism and domination, ultimately leading to an impending Westernisation that forced individuals to assimilate.

Further, a fragmented view conveyed globalisation as emphasising diversity and complex conditions where the forces of ruptures, the juxtaposition of the foreign and the familiar, affected individuals in different ways. Between these two views of globalisation was a plethora of metaphoric language to describe the processes, influences, and factors associated with identity negotiations. This study would be enriched by these alien values that found themselves embedded in the Gusii community psyche. They might have led to an evolution of some kind though there was no known case of migration to overseas countries as in the above study. There was evidence to the effect that every time different cultures meet, something new happens as was in the case of AbaGusii community.

Wakoko and Orina (2018) examined how the dynamic circumstances of the AbaGusii community have influenced conception and deployment of symbols in oral texts emanating from the

community. Their study specifically examined the nature and the role of symbolism in what they recognised as contemporary texts of Gusii Oral Literature and Gusii Popular Music. Their aim was to determine what had become of the old representations in the face of new realities: whether they had fallen out of use and got discarded and if they were still in use what was their impact or import. The researchers reckoned that with the content and structure of the traditional oral genres having evolved too, their boundaries were shifted and their mode of delivery and even reception reinvented. They employed the theory of semiotics for their study.

Wakoko and Orina discovered that there were symbols that had been conceived within the contemporary reality and they were therefore totally new and uniquely suited to the modern realities. Similarly, there were traditional symbols that had been assigned new meanings in a process that was totally subversive as evident in the works of both Henry Sagero and Christopher Mosioma. They concluded that a modern Gusii oral artist was not hindered by lack of an in-depth understanding of the alien traditional context but rather, he/she was determined to create relevance for himself by experimenting with old representations in new situations or even creating his own new ones. This proved that symbolism in oral literature was not dormant but had taken up new trends that reflected the existing social dynamics. Thus, changes of ideology and interpersonal relationships had a bearing on the transient nature of cultural identities. Monyoncho's research would seek to establish which factors contribute to existing social dynamics and whether these trends are part of AbaGusii cultural identity.

Parsons (2011) noted that in order to generate labour, protect European settler interests, and rationalise administration, the Kenyan imperial regime sought to impose a new ethnic geography on the African majority that confined communities to specific native reserves based on their supposed ethnicity. Theoretically, each tribe had a homeland that the state set aside for their exclusive use. Problems developed when more populous ethnic groups outgrew their assigned reserves and coveted the territory of European settler farmers in the white highlands and that of less populous tribes. The resulting infiltration, or illegal movement between the reserves, threatened the rationalising ethnic geography of colonialism. The British authorities were in a dilemma where they wanted to encourage cross-border settlement to relieve population (and thus political) pressure in the overcrowded reserves, yet the unchecked movement of people threatened to break down tribal divisions, thereby undermining a vital cornerstone of indirect rule. In an attempt to balance these conflicting commitments, colonial officials developed a policy of interpenetration in the late 1940s that allowed migrants to settle in sparsely populated reserves if they were legally adopted into the tribe of their hosts.

Parsons showed how interpenetration proved unworkable in the Gusii reserve as illegal Kikuyu settlers and their Gusii hosts invented, adapted, and blurred distinctions of identity to circumvent and exploit the imperial regimes official ethnic geography. This ethnic creativity by the Gusii community proved that colonial efforts to determine the physical and imagined tribal boundaries merely set the scene for African identity. In practice, Kenyan identities in the late-colonial era were more flexible, adaptable, and informal than either tribally focused colonial ethnographies or the scholarly literature on identity formation would suggest (Parsons, 2011, p.491). This prompted the current study on Monyoncho's poetry which was informed by evolving identities due to its historical past and the survivalist strategies in the flexible, adaptable and informal context.

Nayar (2008) noted that the political, social and cultural concerns in the seven Northeastern states of India with distinct state, region and culture are kind of homegenised. This occurred yet within an integration and cultural identity, problem of migration, insurgency, and cultural and linguistic nationalism -seperatism versus integration from mainstream India. Similarly, Westernisation versus regional identity, English versus the tribal languages and dialects were subjects of academic and public debates in the region. He observed that shifts in poetry from the aesthetic aligned with an imperial ideology and politics. To that, he added descriptions of rural landscapes, focusing on agrarian -pastoral views, harvest gardens, ruins and some built up areas- to aesthetics of suffering. The harmonious natural picturesque between the elements, plants, animals, seasons, rivers, wilderness were juxtaposed with the aesthetic of suffering, poverty, hovels, humble countryside, catalogue of violence and despair, scores of dead bodies. There were shifts of registers from the rich visual vocabulary of topographic descriptions to sentimentality and affect. The overall picture was the theme of tragic transformation,

the depth of tragedy, mapping the politics of the aesthetics.

Therefore, it is until one fixes their analytical lens on Monyoncho's popular poetry when they begin to realise how several interactions, contact with modernity, have evolved into multiple constructions of shifting identities. The task at hand was to determine the extent of these constructions and transformations on the level of othering, language, religion and social contexts.

Cultural Identity Theory

Identity is too broad in scope because it permeates social, religious, political, class, regional and gender tensions. It was necessary to narrow this down to an approach that spoke directly to the variables of shifting cultural identities and popular poetry with specific tenets. This study was guided by the Cultural Identity theory (CIT) which plays an influential role in shaping an understanding of (cultural) identities. Cultural Identity Theory was developed by Stuart Hall, a Jamaican-born cultural theorist. This theory was first propagated by Mary Jane Collier and Milt Thomas in 1988 (Collier & Thomas, 1988) during a time when intercultural communication moved to being paradigmatic. It was originally conceived as an interpretive inquiry to cultural identities but later it would incorporate critical perspective. Collier (2005) viewed cultural identity theory to include moves to locate oneself and one's identity positioning and alignments in complex cultural structures and dynamic relations with others. Since its inception, CIT has posited different properties and processes associated with cultural identity enactment and negotiation, including avowal, ascription, scope, salience, and intensity. Cultural identity theory emphasises the importance of the cultural context in shaping an individual's identity. Similarly, in studying poetry, it is essential to consider the cultural context of the poet, including their historical, social, and political context, as these factors can influence the themes, language, and style of their poetry. The tenet was used to extrapolate the cultural and historical context vis-à-vis AbaGusii cultural identity. Cultural identity theory also emphasised the role of language and communication in shaping an individual's identity. Similarly, in studying poetry, it is essential to analyse the language and communication styles used by the poet, including the use of metaphors, symbolism, and other literary devices. It was employed to appropriate the question of language and communication against the background of primordial Gusii identity.

Urbanisation and Globalisation

The power dynamics in the above section are still played in this section. Monyoncho's *Eteni Nembe* portrays the greatest challenge of urban life facing low-income earners and possibly those who lead a hand to mouth livelihood. In a dramatised interlude, the husband directs the wife to tell an approaching creditor that he is not at home. As a sign of shifting power dynamics and against primordial values, the man deliberately gets under the bed to escape the coming wrath. The creditor's lamentation is proof that his debtor has been playing a hide and seek game for some time. The wife's conspiracy seems to be working, *soa bwango rende, omogaka*, do it faster, my lord, until she unveils sarcastically the kind of debt, *otakonyora besa chinde*, only 300 shillings, the husband is fleeing. The creditor threatens unknown consequences after toying with the idea of carrying away some tables. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

While urbanisation introduced an escape from the village life and offered some venerable sophistication to the urban dwellers, its challenges are numerous. From the literary perspective, in the poem, the man's role as the head of the family is intact and he seems to order about a pliable wife and one ready to play ball. The urging that the husband makes his hiding quickly and the confirmation of the same is either a sign of desperation or something akin to someone abetting crime. The creditor's shouting in annoyance does not scare the woman who later degrades the kind of debt that should not pickle this man. But is it not his money and would people not learn to live within their own means? The Gusii of years gone by did not have such a dramatic unfolding of events for when such happens, cultural values are definitely eroded by the emerging identities.

Man: *Omokungu oyo, noigwete?*

Woman: *Ning'igwete, omogaka*

You, woman, do you hear me?

I hear you, my lord.

Man: *Narore omonto oria mbwate*
Amateni korwa rogoro gaiga
Woman: *Eeee*
Man: *Agocha tometebia nao nde aa*
Tiga ndasoa nyaro
Omotebie tikwanya kondora ewiki engima
Woman: *Soa bwango rende, omogaka!*
Man: *Nasoire ime bono*
Man 2: *Hodi?*
Woman: *Karibu. Bwakire omogaka?*
Man 2: *Ee bwakire buya.*
Kai omogaka oo are?
Woman: *Tai aa korwa igoro.*
Inanya komorora.
Man 2: (Shouting) *Chibesa chiane nagotigera?*
Woman: *Yaya tantigereti.*
Man 2: *Bono inaki ngokora, omonto oyo?*
Chimesa echi nkoira gose binto ki
Mambia ngocha aiga nyore chibesa chiane
Onye tari boigo nache arore
Egento nkomokorera!
Kwaigure?
Woman: *Otakonyora besa chinde.*
Chisiringi mia tato chioka iga!

I've seen the man that I owe
 Money from the other side
 Yeah
 Don't tell him I'm around
 Let me get under the bed.
 Say I've been away for a week
 Do it, faster my lord.
 I've done so at once.
 Who is there?
 Welcome. Good morning?
 Good morning
 Where is your husband?
 He left yesterday.
 I am yet to see him.
 Did he leave you my money?
 No, he didn't.
 What can I do this 'person'?
 Do I take these tables or
 Tomorrow, I'll come for money!
 Shouldn't he do so?
 I'll teach him a lesson
 Do you understand?
 You could think it's so much!
 Only three hundred shillings!

The persona presenting the drama appears to digress from the topic of debts and advises school-going children to study hard in order to manage their future lives. He confides that while young, he disobeyed his parents and ran away from school. The end result is the difficult present life, a hand to mouth living where he cannot afford life's basic necessities while completion of his education could have secured him employment in a handsomely paying job. Maybe he would not be hiding from creditors.

Inwe abana b'esukuru baria bono mogosoma
Kamoranche mosome mono
Obogima nobokong'u
Ekeru narengi omwana omoke
Abaibori bagatema nainche nsome esukuru
Nche nkaimoka ngatama
(Nkang'a amang'ana ya baibori, tata)

School children after education
 Please work hard.
 Life is so hard.
 When I was young
 Parents tried to educate me
 I shunned school.
 I didn't listen to them, bro

The persona fondly remembers the parental advice when it is too late to reverse things, *asengencho nchandegete*, because life is unmanageable. The reason is the meagre wages, *agasara agasinini*, attained from his sweeping job. Indeed, when we conceptualise such a life in a city as Nairobi with housing, transport and upkeep challenges, one realises it is truly difficult to make ends meet. Falling into the trap of debts and hands of crafty creditors is a possibility and pointer at shifting dynamics. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

Bono nari nche nainyore aya baibori
Asengencho nchandegete
Gaki nsinyire tinkonyara
(Ndikire agasara agasinini nkonya kwabusa)

I've remembered their advice
 Life has become so difficult
 Please, I can't manage.
 With wages from sweeping.

He pinpoints the consequences of the low wages although employed in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. While such news could earn him respect from the community, he confesses that he earns too little, *omosara omoke mono* (a fact he repeats using different words) hence cannot educate his children and take care of his family. With all the good intentions he might possess as the family head, father and husband things seem not to favour him. Had he persisted with education, endured and advanced in that section perhaps things would be different and positive. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

<i>Nkagenda Nairobi inche nkarikwa</i>	I went to Nairobi and got employment
<i>Emeremo omosara omoke mono</i>	A job with a very small salary
<i>Otaisani ndasomi abana</i>	I am unable to educate
<i>Ndendere abanto bane</i>	And take care of my family.
<i>Ase engencho yo 'mosara amateni nigo</i>	Due to that salary I've so many debts
<i>Nasinyirwe korwa nyomba</i>	I can't get out my house
<i>Oborimo bwabochire</i>	Lies have multiplied
<i>Nkorora omonto nebisa</i>	I hide from people.

The further trouble he faces is that he has accumulated debts that have curtailed his freedom to move around for fear of creditors. He leads a recluse life inside the house thus a blow to his social life and interaction. He conscientiously flees creditors. He has become a terrible liar as a means of escaping his creditors. The persona understands what he needs in life, the best he desires for his family and himself but cannot suitably achieve it. He leads a phantom life, full of pressure, hiccups and escapades:

<i>Moibori kagoteba</i>	Whenever a parent advises
<i>Otagosoma oche gokonya</i>	Study so as to help
<i>Abanto bao, inche tinkoigwa ayio</i>	Your family; I was stubborn!
<i>Bono Nairobi abu nkonya kwabusa</i>	I'm stuck in Nairobi sweeping
<i>Omosara chisiringi mia mbili hamsini</i>	Earning paltry 250 shillings
<i>Bono nyaro abwo okomenya</i>	Will you live under the bed?
<i>Bono ngotama tama ore Nairobi</i>	Be running all over Nairobi?
<i>Otame amateni omanyeye kobwatwa?</i>	Dodging debtors before arrest?
<i>Abana baria more abake soma mono</i>	School children kindly study hard.

The poem strongly presents a case of contemporary urban culture that appears a norm to several cadres of people residing there. To make ends meet with a salary of 250 shillings is a tall order. The persona mentions the amount towards the end and although the wife was deriding the creditor's debt as a mere 300 shillings this is evidence the husband lives beyond his means. Presented in brackets and uttered in sotto voce are asides that Monyoncho perfected in his poems and which acted as either authorial voice or quick quips from the audience or members of society. They generally reflect the values or what ought to have been accomplished before the present scenario. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

The first one, *inkanga amang'ana ya baibori, tata*, I refused to listen to my parents, stresses the current helplessness and cornered situation. It is like a self-introspection and regrets that follow his hopeless situation. The long one at the end is an honest self-dialogue that seems to wonder for how long should he keep running. Which parts of Nairobi will continue being safe? It is like the poet is being factual about the remaining options of this shady life. He cannot fool all the people all the time and one day the long arm of the law would catch up with him. The best way out is to live within his means, stop borrowing or get out of Nairobi. It is like his days are numbered, and his arrest looming. The ignominy of being paraded as a criminal would be too much. The best a child in school would achieve is to listen to the voices that want him to acquire the best in education and it is the only way to survive in the changing power dynamics or get into lots of trouble as the characters here. The motto that there is no gain without pain should shape his current academic business and encourage hard work.

Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

Another common factor driving the social life in Nairobi is the relationships with friends and family members. *Mogisangio*, age mate, poem, portrays a situation where a close friend betrays one to his intimate family. Gossip and name assassination which was once a preserve of women from this proverb, *abakungu n'abaya ko menwa yabasariri*, women are good although their gossiping poisons their nature, marks the modern Gusii generation. This looks like an urban setting and is influenced by globalisation hence spell of shifting power dynamics. Later on, one will have to contend with the vibrant social media gossips that have destroyed not only marriages but promising careers.

<i>Amarwa twanywa naye</i>	The beer we've drunk
<i>Endagera twaria komo</i>	The food we've eaten
<i>Gwantiga ase amarwa</i>	You leave me at the club
<i>Kwagenda baka bwone</i>	Sneak to my home
<i>Naende kwamotebia chibesa</i>	Tell my wife all the money
<i>Nche nabwate nabageire</i>	I've distributed out
<i>Abanto chionsi chiaerire</i>	To people and remain broke
<i>Ngochia goika bwone</i>	The moment I arrive home
<i>Omorugi onchaka chisegi</i>	My wife starts fighting me
<i>Otama ogenda sobo</i>	Then she runs to her home
<i>Ontigera abana nyomba</i>	Leaving me with the kids.

One mark of a faithful friendship, as brought up in *Mogisangio*, based on age and sharing, is loyalty and zipping up! It is a social attachment that is culturally approved. A true age mate and friend knows all your weaknesses and should not be the first broadcasting them to your spouse. In the above lines, the two share so much. They walk, eat and drink together until they are bonded like blood brothers. The betrayal that involves *mogisangio* going to accuse him before the wife that he is wasting money on 'people' is unexpected. A loyal friend defends one at all costs to the point of qualifying bonding with blood. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here. Urbanisation and migration to other places have given the Gusii population a diaspora mantle and the strong network has been for the good progress of the Gusii community. The Gusii straddle economic, political, educational positions through this advantage compounded by hard work. Monyoncho uses Erena the nativised way of referring to Hellena, to portray what happens when a member does not comply with the conditions of her new environment. Driven by urban and global hype, and probable adaptation of power dynamics and cultural differences, she makes numerous and illogical demands on her husband.

<i>Ekeru Erena aikire seito, mama</i>	When Helena arrived at our home, mum
<i>Onyora oboremo naobore</i>	She found there was land
<i>Ebinto bia nyomba nao bire</i>	Commodities for use in the home
<i>Chianga kwamogoreire</i>	Clothes were bought her
<i>Bono ochaka gokwerorera</i>	She begins to scorn you
<i>Buna ekemoni kere etuka</i>	Like a cat that's in a shop
<i>Chingencho aye kwabwate seino</i>	Whatever life you had in your home
<i>Goika ochitige, obwatesi omogaka oo</i>	Leave it and work with your husband
<i>Nario moramenyane</i>	This is when you can cope together.

Even before the union, Erena looked impressive every time she sluiced herself but her bedding; a new discovery, was low class, a dry skin infested with fleas. In a literary analysis approach, outward looks can sometimes be deceptive. Although she has in her new home everything at her disposal according to the persona, land, household goods and clothes Erena demands more fashionable clothes. Due to her behaviour the persona asks her to choose between her unmarried days or make her marriage succeed. A contrast between poverty and some form of possession is portrayed when Erena and the

personas home are brought into perspective. There is transformation from the use of *egesero*, dry skin and *ebirombeta*, fleas, a picture of deprivation to a life of comfort, free of charge at the personas home. The wife was supposed to be a caretaker, *omokungu*, the one who took care and literally safeguarded provisions from outsiders for her family. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

Erena exhibits opportunistic, materialistic and self-centred tendencies, a voice that threatens the institution of marriage from the best practice of cooperating and mutual understanding. The market forces of female clothes' sales demand for the latest and relevant fashions in an ever fleeting and versatile industry is questionable. It is based on whims and ephemeral nature of aficionados. Do the skin mat and fleas signify more than the typical objects of reference? Erena is by all means not expected to complain but praise her benefactor who even goes to an extent to improve the welfare of Erena's home. Again, Erena's marriage is not a case of sheer deprivation but where one seeks extra provisions, more than probably her husband can provide. In fact, what attracted the persona to Erena was his need for a wife and not her physical features of beauty but her disposition to work and raise provisions, an objective being eclipsed by Erena's adapted behaviour probably influenced by emerging cultural identity.

AbaGusii cultural identity castigates arrogance and insatiable desire for fastidious lifestyle which is an attribute of pride. In the numerous cases that Monyoncho presents, land is a means of production and has close correlation with marriage. Whenever a man marries the expectations are that a good and hardworking wife would prove her worth through her working prowess in cultivating the portion of land allotted her. The AbaGusii culture views a wife's noble duty as related to land where food accrues from, the household items that furnish her home and then all manner of clothing. Unfortunately, Erena develops into a proud woman whose behaviour is likened to the kind of a fat cat associated with shop environment, a sarcastic punch line, lazy, overindulging, preening and proud. This is contrary to her a humble background, sleeping on a skin mat and a house that was flea infested. Her current demands show her changed attitude to life. She is expensive and vain as opposed to a responsible and benevolent husband and this hurts their marriage. Perhaps that is why when he at certain points takes the view of the omniscient persona the artiste distances himself from the complaining husband to an observer.

The political transitions

With the establishment of a colonial state, Africans are simultaneously roped into other social networks beyond, nuclear, extended families, lineages, age sets, religious secret societies, village communities, chiefdoms, (Berman, 1998). The multiple identities continue into colonial period and are multiplied yet further by the introduction of Christianity, schooling and industrialisation. The colonial agenda was to subdue Africa and make it tenable for the colonial agenda through bureaucratic preoccupation, demarcating, classifying and counting subject populations and acquire its resources and utilise its cheap labour. In order to achieve that, the government and political structures had to be established. The provincial administration and its baggage of subhead men, assistant chief, chief, district officers, district commissioners, and provincial commissioners were put in place. Administrative units were created to make the work smooth, hierarchical with *mtu mkubwa*, big man syndrome with an accompanying armed forces to offer protection. Parliaments or quasi representative bodies, local councils and some penal court systems to settle disputes pegged on colonial constitutional mandate were forged. This is proof that there are serious dynamic power shifts when differences of culture are encountered.

Monyoncho creatively weaves how colonialism penetrated Africa from a simple act of an ant bear in his poem *Eguto*.

<i>Bakaumera eguto bagakaga neng'ondi</i>	They mistook an ant bear for a sheep
<i>Bakanyebeka engori bagatema gochia inka</i>	They tied it and led it home
<i>Akanyebeka ase ching'ondi akagenda mwaye korara</i>	Kept it with sheep and went to sleep
<i>Ekarema enyomba egasoka</i>	It dug through and escaped
<i>Amo neching'ondi chiaye, ee chigasira ee</i>	With his sheep also got lost, yes lost

The *eguto* although welcomed to the homestead unknowingly mutates and becomes an errant guest who destroys and takes away the host's property. A similar situation is attributed to the colonialists in their interaction with Africa hence drastic shift of power dynamics. The African who stuck to the old ways and opposed the colonial hegemony found himself overpowered and subdued (Ochieng, 1974) by a combination of alien forces, militarily, educationally, religiously and isolated or in bad books. The mental colonisation began slowly through the new instruments of socialisation such as schools and churches. The aggressor also took so many forms, always mutating as a trader, a missionary, an administrator, a settler, a medic and these eventually not only destabilised the old ways of life but also confused his victims. The efforts to check on the safety of the guest, *eguto* are rewarded by shocking revelations. The child, then the wife and later the homestead owner in the pecking order confirm that indeed they have terribly lost their legacy, the sheep. Monyoncho paints this picture below in a more dramatic manner.

Child: *Tata, enachikogenda nanyora ng'ondi chichiyo*

Old Man: *Ekige ngiasengekire?*

Child: *Eeee:*

Old Man[Calling]: *Eeee mosubati o Nyagechoka?*

Woman: *Eeee.*

Old Man: *Otakoigwa buna omwana agoteba*

Woman: *Inee? Moisirumbwa nabo are igo*

Nigo arora nechinyang'au chikomoria?

[Singing] *Motandeye bwamire rooche*

Motandeye bwamire rooche, nderoeee

[Screaming] *Obeee. Nyamerondo metambe?*

Kwanyora ekige ngiansengekire?

Nkigose kiaremete nyomba aiga?

Nao ching'ondi chiane chiasokerete?

Uiiiiuuuuuu. Motagocha morore

Inki eke? Bakari uuuuu!

Nki eke gose kiaremete nyomba?...

Old Man: *Mang'ana kiaya, neguto, twarentete?*

Woman: *Uuuuu. Neguto bandeterete?*

Uuuuuibakari? Motagocha morore. Uuuuu

Old Man (Commandingly): *Otagokira!*

Mosubati oNyagechoka, otagokira!

Naki ogotoaka enyaro iga

Abanto bagocha, bakoigwa nakibaratebe?

Woman: *Uuuuu. Eguto bandeterete? Uuuuu*

Old Man: *Eee.Ningoake! Kira!*

Dad, I found no sheep

Was the closure in place?

Yeah.

Daughter of Nyagechoka?

Yeah.

Listen to what the child is saying.

What? The lazy one is ever...

Could be fearing hyenas!

The gum tree is grown by the riverside.

A gum tree is grown by the riverside. What a day!

Alas! Long legged one?

Was the closure in place?

What was inside the house?

Did my sheep get out this hole?

Alas! Alas! Come and be witness!

What is this? Please come, alas!

What could have dug my house?

What next? Was it an ant bear?

Alas! Did they bring me an ant bear?

Alas! My people! Come and witness

Keep Silent!

Daughter of Nyagechoka, shut up!

You're embarrassing us.

What will people say if they find out?

Alas, they might have brought an ant bear!...

Silence! I am going to strike you!

In *Eguto*, through literary analysis, the child and wife account for the marginalised and peripheralised viewpoints when the man only orders them around while vantagely-seated, exposing the patriarchal comfort zone. On the other hand, the other sheep to which the strange sheep is imposed have no right of say or support. They are only heard of in the story. While the child's *eee*, for yes and simple answers against loud abusive remonstrations from both parents represent silent protest against verbal abuse and exacting demands. However, the mother takes charge of the situation at discovery of the truth and in loud protests that attract the villagers as witnesses, she embarrasses the culprits. Her screams and anger spare nobody as long as the truth is enthroned. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

The husband protests back for fear of embarrassment by issuing both veiled and open threats. In a society where wife battery was an insignia of honour and unrestrained, it scares one that the wife cannot stop screaming once the husband commands so. The loss of sheep whether owned by the husband are her property so long as they are within her fold and home. The husband's acceptance of messing up due to alcoholism hence error of judgement and worry of the public court torture are signs of giving room to her. Culturally, a woman in pain and despair screamed protest. In this case, it was a way of attracting attention and calling for assistance. Perhaps much has changed in the historical perspective and things are going to take a modernistic trajectory.

In *Omonyene Egoree*, the court is an instrument of imperial authority and an assertion of an alien penal code among the African communities. In this power shifting dynamics, the court introduced own elements of punishment and justice pegged to an alien interpretation of laws, values that ran counter to existing African social justice systems. While there were penalties and social sanctions imposed on deviant individuals in traditional society, citizen arrest, isolation in remand custody, strokes of canes and imprisonment were never in the menu. Nyankaragania's response to the questions shows the confusion the man is subjected to as he is being interrogated. His interrogators have new titles he is supposed to mouth. He has to play by the rules or else get exposed to ridicule. Another requirement is that in the new hegemony he has to go get some education to survive away from the primordial informal set up. This education offered in the four walls is going to be disseminated in the language of the court and this completely disfavours Nyankaragania and his ilk. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

Voice: *Nyankaragania Ogeturengia?*

Nyankaragania: *Oooo.*

Voice: *Togoitaba buna oo! Buna buo!*

Nyankaragania: *Naki rende ndaitabe?*

Voice: *Teba buna, Afande.*

Nyankaragania: *Ofwande*

Voice: *Nomanyete gosoma?*

Nyankaragania son of Ogeturengi?

Oooo

You shouldn't answer that carelessly!

How then should I do it?

Answer with officer

Officer!

Do you know how to read?

For an old man whose only crime is tethering a hyena (should it be criminalized or celebrated?) and endangering the life of a 'thief,' the court sentence is really harsh. Maybe as a deterrent to future sin it served its purpose or for reasons of asserting colonial authority it plays its role. The length of incarceration which is twelve years, the caning of the man and then subjecting him to further humiliation under police surveillance is cruel and inhuman. Monyoncho seems to point at the transient characteristics in society and questions the appropriateness of such alien impositions. Further humiliation comes in a list of abusive words that Nyankaragania receives in an attempt to describe his thieving character, a mere act of stealing a hyena.

In apparent power shift dynamics, the new hallmarks of successful citizenry include one's Western education, Christian religious affiliation, all alien values and ideologies attributed to the new government while anything short of these marginalises one. To possess the above qualities is a hallmark of civilisation and empowerment that robs the old family heads prime positions of authority and prestige pointed out by Omosa (2014). Nyankaragania confusedly takes an oath to remain steadfast with the truth and swears to be disciplined by natural calamities if he does the opposite. While the modern court procedures are new, the swearing has characteristics of traditional penal process where swearing could be done under certain sacred trees or holding to some object. Nyankaragania's words draw from that rich background and there were cases where a retributive Engoro hit the guilt with vengeance, sometimes struck them by lightning (Ochieng, 1974; Nerlove, 1969; Levine, 1966).

Narrator: *Bakamobwata, bakamoira*

Goika kotini kogambigwa

Voice: *Omonyene egoree oyio*

Voices: *Oyioooo*

They arrested and took

Him to court to be charged.

There goes the he goat owner!

There goes him

Voice: <i>Motangerane tomobwate eee</i>	Surround him so that we grab him!
{Cry of the 999 sirens}	{A cry of sirens amidst mob noise}
Magistrate: <i>Nigo osoerere ase amamocho aya akobwatia</i>	Your charges are as follows
<i>Okomocha ogotang'ani, okabeka enyang'au engori</i>	First, you stringed a hyena
Magistrate: <i>Okomocha gwakabere. Ogatigera</i>	Secondly, you left it
<i>Omoibi onde oyio osibire emiaka ikumi netano</i>	To another thief imprisoned for 15 years
Nyankaragania: <i>Gete nakagoye nabete buna nokonyiagia</i>	I stringed it with a runner.
Magistrate: <i>Bono gwakumeirwe emiaka ikomi nebere</i>	You'll be jailed for 12 years
<i>Nebiboko bine naende gogokora egesib oekio</i>	With 4 canes; once the term is over
<i>Obe inse ya machiko a Polisi ase emiaka etano</i>	You'll be under police watch for 5 years

The beating or mistreatment of prisoners marginalises and peripheralises them therefore presents a voice of the discriminated. It similarly sends a message of state sanctioned violations maybe to deter natives from assumed numerous criminal 'activities.' Instead of the narrator telling the story, a dramatic character takes over the story and tells it from his point of view. We sympathise with Nyankaragania's predicament and likewise note his human nature factors to be behind his mistakes and hope for better outcomes.

From a clan system to a national state driven by nationalism and fighting for the national cake this was a great leap. From reverential respect of clan totems to a nation called Kenya a Gusii man is placed on an interesting stage where he has to fight for survival and retention of his cultural values. Nyongesa (2018) observes that the colonial masters were ever fanning cultural identities in their divide and rule agenda which meant the coloniser might have preferred the existing status quo. The national culture is definitely not an African culture but citing Fanon, Nyongesa observes that if that national culture means a return to precolonial traditions, efforts of resuscitating traditions, some elements of cultural fixity, then there is a serious challenge.

The poem, *Emeremo ya Masamba*, Tea Estate Work, though simply worded holds so much within its scope. The social cultural and economic dynamics are extensive and have far reaching effects. Colonialism has given room to independence, colour bar and discrimination to freedom of movement and then freedom of expression replaced repression, but unfortunately exploitation has begat favouritism. Yet in the independent nation, discrimination, nepotism and corruption are underscored in the last two lines. Those close to the independent government powerful forces feel entitlement to the throne and award their cronies, henchmen and relatives with positions. When you interrogate historical facts of 1973, 9 years into Kenya's independence, most senior management positions in the country, more so, tea estates had been vacated by whites who were replaced with favoured Africans by forces that were. In these power dynamics there are obvious evolving and transient identities reigning on created vacuums.

<i>Minto mwensi tegerera:</i>	All my kinsmen listen
<i>Monyoncho inche nkobatebia</i>	What I Monyoncho have to say.
<i>Tarehe ishirini na nne:</i>	On the date of twenty fourth
<i>Okutoba sabini na tatu</i>	On the month of October 1973
<i>Christopher Monyoncho bwAraka:</i>	Christopher Monyoncho son of Araka
<i>Nkamachia goiterwa inse:</i>	Was nearly killed for reason.
<i>Banto baito ba Nyanza:</i>	All our people from Nyanza
<i>Goika moinyore:</i>	You should remember this
<i>Banto baito ba Nyanza</i>	All our people from Nyanza
<i>Goika moinyore</i>	You should remember this
<i>Emeremo ya Masamba</i>	All the jobs in the farms
<i>Rift Valley yabeire eyabo yoka</i>	In the Rift Valley are occupied by them.

The Gusii voice leaps into play with *minto tegerera*, my kinsmen listen. This introduces the AbaGusii and Monyoncho as part of the nation building efforts in the new Kenya. The voice

revolutionises into one of the Nyanza communities of Luo, Kuria and AbaGusii, hence, a regional voice; seemingly the ones whom the discriminative forces had locked from their sphere of influence, the Rift Valley national largesse fronted by largely multinational tea planting firms like Williamson Fine Tea and James Finley (Muma, 2014). The experience of unfulfilled independence promises by the leadership to eradicate poverty, disease and illiteracy as soon as possible as proven to be a mirage. This justifies Berman's (1998) argument that colonialism in Africa did not reproduce the full range of European institutions and culture for the good of common citizenry. It instead produced a bureaucracy geared at chaining the African psyche and production to the European and American leadership and financial institutions. This is the permanent and enervating chain and bondage to which Africa unfortunately pays homage of tagging along some miserable and disillusioned citizens. These power dynamics should be seriously reassessed and even if it means severing links from them in order to deliver Africa from the imperial chains of bondage.

The next poem from the literary stylistics involves workings of power dynamics and shifts in a transient and evolving manner. The poem *Omong'ina Saddam*, Lady Saddam (a reference to the former Iraq strongman) the name of the main character in this poem is paradoxically grounded on masculine tendencies. Curiously instead, the name Saddam refers to a lady whose actions seem to get in the way of her village and because of that she is lynched. Saddam's unique boldness lose traction when one discovers she is only thinking of her interests, *akabeka monwa chionsi*, she consumed whole amount from a loan secured using the family land as collateral. This selfish spirit is unknown in the old Gusii set up and smacks of an emerging ideology that glorifies money. A new god has been evolved to override the cultural identity and Saddam ascribes to its idolatry. The poem's rendering starts with a chorus that summarises Saddam's character and fate.

Chorus: *Abana ba Kegogi rero nigo togotera* Kegogi's children, today we are singing
Omong'ina Saddam korwa nsemo ya Bobasi A woman named Saddam from Bobasi sides
Akaeroka ekerage nere erwoti ya Mosora She called herself great, the king of Mosora
Akanya gochanda abanto agakaga tagokwa She messed people she is invincible
Solo: *Akaimokia amaremo agasabera chironi.* She took loans using others land
Akanyora chibesa agachakera ebiasara She got money and began businesses

The chorus similarly foreshadows the narrative of dearth on basis of arrogance and terrorist like activities on her people, using other alien powers and antagonising everybody else. In the new economic ideology, she upsets the apple cart. She secures loans using family land to get money and establish businesses. This new form of emancipation and different from the traditional role of a Gusii woman is likely to elicit all sorts of opposition. Definitely, the lazy or uncreative family members are portrayed as her victims. This would be an ordinary woman in ordinary circumstances making strides in a local village and this obviously attracts all forms of opposition and nicknames. The solo and chorus relaying of information in several lines are on their own a dialogue. The chorus affirms and repeats the critical message of the persona. Each time the solo points to a new direction, it breathes fresh blood to the narrative while the chorus asserts the sad message of Saddam's cruel death. In this second fiddle role, a woman's status as the persona's chauvinistic voice describes this starring woman is rather curious (Silberschmidt, 1999).

The next section of the poem below is presented as a speech in order to clarify some aspects presented above. The speech part is a regaling and retelling of the first section. The graphic details of Saddam's ignominious behaviour: *konya obeire omotindi*, she was too aggressive, after the death of their husband whereby she might have ignored other heirs and appropriated all land rights. Furthermore, her selfish nature is manifested when she spent whole amount alone and buys the police to harass those who question her misdeeds and injustice. Her despicable actions widen beyond the family enveloping members of the village who protest her actions hence there is a legion of people against her actions. The persona advises on interpersonal coexistence as a form of survival amidst hostility. Hence, the death of Saddam, shocking as Monyoncho and Kegogi band reveal was a matter of time and probably inspired by mob psychology.

<i>Omong'ina oyio konya obeire omotindi abuo</i>	This woman was veryarrogant
<i>Ekeru omogaka asira omochi</i>	When the husband died
<i>Abangina mabere abwate</i>	He left two widows
<i>Na bamura mbaroo</i>	The widows had sons
<i>Omongina takoimokia amaremo onsi</i>	This woman used the whole land
<i>Abwatere eroni</i>	To secure loans
<i>Tachieti natebia monto nabwatire eroni</i>	She didn't inform anyone about the loan
<i>Nainwe abae besa chinde kanya</i>	Even give others some money
<i>Gochakera ebiasara</i>	To start own businesses
<i>Ere akabeka monwa chionsi</i>	She consumed whole amount, alone
<i>Akamanya kobwata abasigari bonsi pii</i>	She compromised all the police
<i>Akabakora nabuo abanto bamorendete</i>	She made them part of her security
<i>Onde ogochia komoboria naki omoimokera</i>	Whoever asked she turned on him
<i>Onde ogochia koboria omobwata</i>	Whoever questioned was arrested
<i>Omoruta ime</i>	And locked in the cells
<i>Bono akabwata abanto ekenyoro</i>	She had everyone arrested
<i>Ekegima akaruta ime</i>	A whole village in her area
<i>Bono nabo abanto bakoigwa obororo</i>	This irked everyone in the place
<i>Abanto kobacha korosa namang'ana aye</i>	People really got tired with her
<i>Abanto bakarwara ekenyoro</i>	Everyone got sick of her
<i>Tema oebereirie abanto moigwane</i>	Live peacefully with people

However, enterprising and well-meaning Saddam could have been, the voice of disapproval and condemnation of her actions overrides her enterprise. It also remonstrates on the fact that she grabbed everything for herself ignoring other family members. It voices concern on the damage done to the marginalised lot because of her selfishness and smacks of exploitation and highhandedness exhibited by her progressive growth. The next lines voice the oppression meted at those who were questioning Saddam's exploitative moves followed by a voice of irritation by the community, at the harassment most of them are subjected to. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

<i>Abanto bakaanga bonsi pii</i>	All the people were against her conduct
<i>Omoerio oye omong'ina agakembwa</i>	In the end she was ambushed
<i>Gakoeta abuo akabekwa koboko</i>	As she walked around got surrounded
<i>Bono eamate nigo yatamete</i>	Her kith and kin ran away
<i>Egachia gokonga</i>	And watched from a distance
<i>Korwa ngumbu, kore ase ekenyoro</i>	From another hill, so while in a village
<i>Nakio Nyasae ateberetebanto</i>	Reason why God told people
<i>Mwaigwana mwasikana</i>	To be peaceful and respectful
<i>Omonene no omoke eee hehe</i>	Old or young, yeah

It can be pointed out that the secretive nature of Saddam's actions helps fuel suspicion against her. The voice of corruption crops up when Saddam's actions involve the compromising of all the police to remain voiceless. Her aggression and oppression subjected to the community arouse a voice of provocation and accumulated anger. It is this anger and hostility that bursts out later in a deadly revenge. The voice of God's law and love for all resonates in with a characteristic AbaGusii tenet of peaceful living and cordial neighbourliness. Literally, there is a lot of correlation between circumstances that define Omong'ina Saddam and the new crop of Kenyan politician in terms of selfishness, insatiable appetite for land, money and abuse of power when these leaders turn instruments of justice to their favour. The public opinion lynch on these politicians is exhibited by the angry protest of ejection during national polls where the majority face the wrath of the electorate by failing relection. Mention the tenet of cultural identity theory or literary stylistics that you used here.

The fate of obstinacy and approved death by the majority of the community to get rid of the boil afflicting their body rises (however crude this act was). It is like the actions of the electorate against their underperforming, bloated and selfish member of parliament, member of county assembly, women representative, senator, governor and president every time there is a general election in Kenya. It is unfortunate that Saddam failed in her public relations exercise in spite of her business and security network success. Instead, Saddam exploited these links to her selfish advantage such that this *utumishi kwa wote*, service to all, mantra in the police motto meant security for herself only. Indeed, it is not easy to find a local woman who has links with the police. Maybe had Saddam learned to serve her people, her success would have been immeasurable and long-lasting. Unfortunately, the new world trends and power dynamics cultivate personal glorification and individualism at the altar of communal sharing and social capital that essentialised sense of pride, belongingness and security. The community was overall, uplifted while the individual was suppressed, downsized as a way of building a perfect cultural identity.

Thus, Saddam assumes powers of a despot, no wonder she gains the nickname of the King of Mosora, in mockery and fear of her. Like leaders in advantaged positions, she abuses power and makes everyone sick. Things are described as *ekerage*, complicated, beyond comprehension and yet her victims are her family members, and those who question her actions obviously those close to her. She later becomes victim of her own actions in her iconoclastic relating. Her refusal to support her family members is not because of their inability to be enterprising but a personal choice. Her actions somehow desecrate the AbaGusii cultural identity associated with collective and communal support. She ignores the fact that she hails from a polygamous arrangement hence an extended family. The assumptions further isolate and alienate her from her community. The introduction of a third party to Saddam's war is graphically described as irritating and cancerous and wears out the community's collective understanding to a point of violent eruption. It is like Saddam's death is endorsed by an irked society who wants to get rid of a common problem. All through, Saddam remains an alien entity, unknown by her Gusii name with alien values that do not fit into the AbaGusii cultural identity.

The above poetic explorations were aimed at deepening our understanding of the complexities and nuances of cultural identity in the Gusii community, as well as the broader implications of this process for cultural identity more generally. Like many other ethnic groups, Gusii identity is not static but rather transient and evolving over time. Before the advent of colonialism according to Lentz (1995) there existed certain precolonial hegemonies. Africans belonged simultaneously to various social networks, nuclear, extended families, lineages, age sets, religious secret societies, village communities, chiefdoms and so forth. Their loyalties and identities were complex, flexible and amorphous, sometimes overlapping, sometimes complimentary. The multiple identities continued into colonial period and were multiplied yet further by the introduction of Christianity, schooling and industrialisation. As these transient and evolving identities compete and threaten to overrun the core rootedness of the AbaGusii cultural identity all the competing forces should be taken into account. The Gusii community attachment stems from the sharing of a common geographical space, common ancestors, common culture, language and religion and which in turn produces congruities of blood, speech and custom and is valuable in the context of Monyoncho's popular poetry. The power plays here mirror the culture of the Gusii people as explained through cultural identity theory where recognition of the complex and fluid nature of relationships is evident, with individuals often incorporating elements from perspectives.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the transient and evolving cultural identities among the Gusii were influenced by external factors of urbanisation and globalisation hence leading to a transient and evolving social structures and political transitions. Berman's (1998) observation that the colonial legacy of bureaucratic authoritarianism, pervasive patron-client relations and a complex ethnic dialectic of assimilation, fragmentation and competition persists to the present is right. The patron-client networks remain the fundamental state-society linkage in circumstances of social crisis and uncertainty and have extended to the very centre of the state and engage the village operations. The end result of these interactions are transient identities that are ever evolving and oscillating into other identities such that it is impossible

to have one clear static identity that can be pinned on a culture. These accounts for the existing patterns attributed Deleuze and Guattari Rhizome principle responsible for multiplicity that begets multiple identities (Yang et al., 2019). Such networks penetrate institutions social and economic institutions and affect day to day communal life either positively or negatively.

Monyoncho's popular poetry showcases effects and consequences of these evolving and transitioning cultural identities on the move and ready to mutate into new possibilities. Therefore, Christopher Monyoncho's popular poetry foregrounds that culture has transitioned into new images and new symbols have emerged as brought out in *Mogisangio*, *Erena*, *Eteni Nembe*, *Eguto*, *Omonyene Egoree*, *Emeremo ya Masamba* and *Omong'ina Saddam*. Christopher Monyoncho's popular poetry foregrounds the cultures as transiting from one cultural space to another as a result of evolving modernity. Efforts to explore the impact of cultural dynamics on the traditional culture are equally recommended. Finally, the study also recommended the integration of traditional cultural practices into modern contexts to ensure the survival and continued relevance of AbaGusii cultural identities in contemporary times.

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