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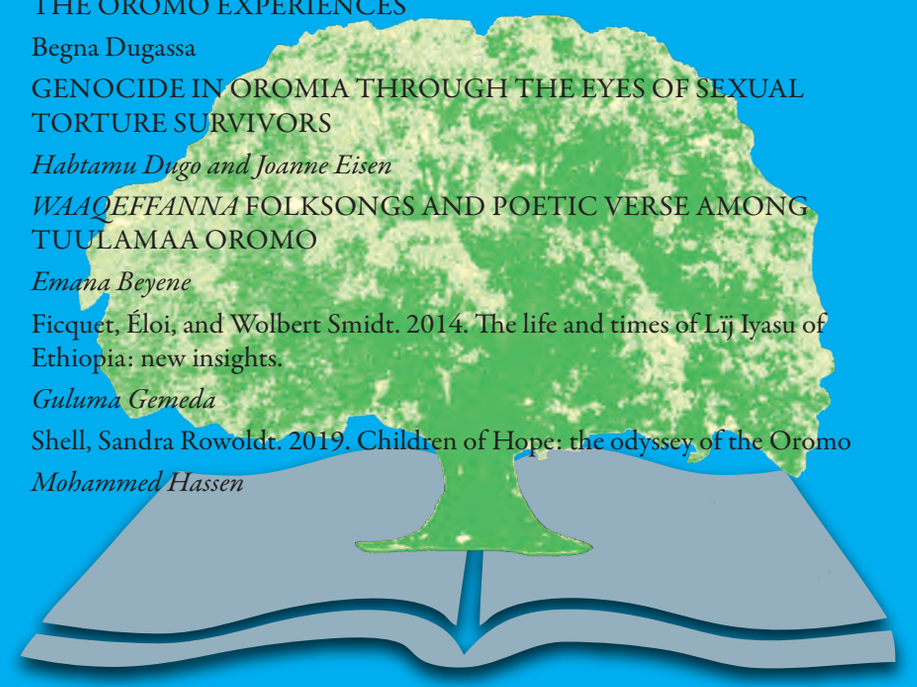

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Editor's Message

It is with great pleasure that I serve as the newest editor of the Journal of Oromo Studies (JOS). As woman of Oromo heritage born in the diaspora, the Journal of Oromo Studies was one of the first publications that I looked to in order to gain a better understanding of Oromo culture, history, economics, politics and identity. It is one of the first and longest running publications dedicated to the treatment, discussions and analysis of the Oromo globally. JOS has been published continuously since 1993 and has built a respected legacy.

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Zakia Posey
Editor
2018

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INDIGENIZING UNIVERSAL PRINCIPALS: OROMO PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Ezekiel Gebissa
Kettering University

Since the United Nations proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, the concept of human rights has become internationalized in global discourse and action. Governments around the world have progressively embraced human rights and publicly declared their commitment to respecting human rights. In a relative short period of time, the Declaration has "profoundly changed the international landscape, scattering it with human rights protocols, conventions, treaties, and derivative declarations of all kinds." As such, there is currently "not a single nation, culture or people that is not in one way or another enmeshed in human rights regimes."[1] The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed the official acceptance of a broad concept of human rights globally.[2]

There is, however, a wide gap between a declaration of ideals and implementation. The UDHR introduced the concept of human rights into the arena of international politics and law dominated by states and other powerful actors who have

1 Johannes Morsink, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Origins, Drafting, and Intent* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), X.

2 Michael Freeman, *Human Rights,* 2nd edition (Polity Press, 2011), 37-60

priorities other than human rights and whose primary interests do not lie in empowering citizens. They view the defense of the state and maintenance of law and order as their primary role. Attending to these interests, many governments have massacred millions of men, women and children under their control. According to R. J. Rummel, more 169 million persons were killed by governments in the twentieth century, out of which 45 million were political murders carried out between 1945 and the early1990s.[3] All of this occurred even as the number of governments declaring official commitment to human rights increased dramatically.

In the last two decades, authoritarian ruling elites have adjusted their tactics to match prevailing expectations. Keeping up with international trends, they pay lip service to the rule of law and the protection of human rights while deploying treacherous schemes to use their power to persecute, incarcerate and murder. Governments routinely declare a commitment to respecting human rights by writing into their constitutions articles and provisions protecting human rights and officially ratifying international conventions of human rights. But they proceed to violate those declared rights with impunity.[4] If the recent history of international human rights practice has shown anything, it is the fact that governments do not dutifully protect human rights. In fact, they tend to expand their political space and act to implement the desires of the elite who control them.

For a more robust defense of human rights to occur what is required is not more constitutional guarantees, commitment to international conventions and establishment of national human rights commissions but the emergence of a culture respecting human rights. As Makua Mutua put it, the

3 Rudolph J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (Transaction Publishers, 1997), 3-21.

4 William J. Dobson, *The Dictator's Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy* (Doubleday, 2012).

international standards of human rights would assume a clearer meaning and legitimacy if they are understood as categories of rights that have contextual cultural resonance. This is because people are more likely to rise to defend their rights when they comprehend and value those rights.[5]

This paper explores the Oromo conception of human rights and the ways in which those rights are understood, interpreted, protected or enforced within the traditional Oromo cultural and political milieu. The goal is to reveal points of convergence between universal standards and Oromo indigenous human rights conceptions with the hope of spurring a similar examination among other peoples whose human rights are not protected by the state. Here Oromo is taken to be a case in point where protection of rights requires a deeper understanding and adjusted practice.

Such concepts are usually expressed in vernacular language in certain forms of taboo, proverbs or legal norms. I employ the concept of "indigenization" as a hermeneutical tool for developing a model to understand the interface between universal human rights and, in this case, Oromo worldview, cultural norms, and political system concerning the inherent dignity of a human being. This approach reveals the links between global trends and local cultures and also provides the basis for establishing a broader pattern of connections between globally expressed principles and local understanding and practice. Such a model is necessary because rights are better respected and upheld when they support existing principles derived from local populations rather than imposed by political elites or foreign entities.

HUMANS IN THE OROMO WORLDVIEW

5 Makua Mutua, *Human Rights: A Political and Cultural Critique* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Malcolm Evans and Rachel Murray, eds, *The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: The System in Practice, 1986-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

It is impossible to think of "human rights" without referring to the "humans" and "rights" separately. The importance of the exercise in this section is not to define what a human is but to introduce the culturally embedded person that possesses the right in question. The Oromo have a distinctive idea of what constitutes a human being and this idea has meanings that are directly relevant to Oromo perspectives on the "rights" or the inviolable aspects of that human being. Put simply, our purpose is to identify the "right-holder" in the Oromo context.

In Oromo worldview, a human being is a product of three inputs which are different from each other but are not mutually exclusive. These are the blood (*dhiiga*) input, the creator (*uumaa*) input and the personality (*ayyaana*) input. The first pertains to the contribution of parents to the making of a human being. The second refers to the creator, otherwise known as *Waaqa*, who fashioned everything in the universe and animates each being. The third concerns *ayyaana* which is different from the second because the Oromo understand *ayyaana* to be *Waaqa*'s creative capacity, by which and through which the creator made and shaped everything. *Ayyaana* is not restricted to human beings, but is also contained in all creation, thus defining the character and quality of each dimension.[6] Human beings are inexorably embedded in that complex of nature.

In Oromo conception, the blood is the biological genesis of a human being. In the making of the baby, the father contributes *dhiiga* in the form of semen. When the woman becomes pregnant, the Oromo say "*garaattii hafee*," literally "something was left in her belly" or *qabaateeti*, meaning "she has captured it." The saying connotes that the father deposits "blood" in the mother's womb. In a way, the father is responsible for the seed which, in due course, would become

6 Lambert Bartels, *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia, An Attempt to Understand* . Berline: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1983), 14.

the frame of the potential human being and which gives rise to the physical characteristic of the forthcoming individual. Regarding the mother's role, the Oromo say "*dubartiin qalqala*," which literally means "a woman is a sack." The aphorism doesn't diminish the mother's contribution. In this particular context, the saying indicates that the mother receives the seed from the father and then provides everything that the fetus needs to grow. Her input is to nurture the fetus by providing nutrients through the umbilical cord. As such, the parents create the biological makeup of a human being which provides the basis of lineage and identity.

But humans cannot generate life. The Oromo saying, *lubuu waaqatuu laata* (only God gives the soul), testifies to the Oromo conception that only *Waaqa* can give life. The moment of conception is itself perceived as a creative act of the Oromo divinity. *Waaqa* gives out of himself a gift of life along with a specific destiny. He not only creates but sustains life in every creation. Lambert Bartels quotes one of his interlocutors as follows.

> Children are born from the blood of the father and the mother. If *Waqa* wishes, he causes a child to sprout in the mother's womb. Man does not know how *Waqa* does this; he can only ask *Waqa* for a child. No man on earth has any idea of it; it is a mystery. We do not see when *Waqa* creates a child, but we know that it is he who creates the child, he alone. All men [humans] are his creatures. *Waqa* alone creates.[7]

The principle that brings forth life in humans is the same principle in all living things. Whether it is human reproduction or agricultural production, the principle of fertility applies. In Oromo culture, the notion of fertility constitutes one of the underlying generative principles through which all aspects of the productive and reproductive life are cognitively structured.

7 Bartels, 91.

According to Oromo belief, the earth (*dachii*) is described as being a mother and the sky (*qolloo*) as a father. The seed that a farmer puts into the ground sprouts only when *Waaqa* sends rain from heaven.[8] This process is encoded in the concept of *finna* or fertility, derived from *fiduu* or to bring forth. Its core meaning refers to different forms of fertility, whether of a human (*finna namaa*), vegetal (*finna lafaa*) animal (*finna horii*), abstract (*finna baraa*) or ancestral (*finna durii*). The process of fertility is ultimately brought about through the harmonious relationship of the people with their Supreme Deity (*finna Waaqaa*).[9] In human reproduction, the father acts basically like the farmer who puts seed into the ground. Because *Waaqaa* is not visible and inscrutable, the father also acts as a sign of divine presence on earth. In all, however, life begins with *Waaqa's* intervention, when he gives rain or when he gives out *lubuu*.[10]

The being that results from a combination of the parents' *dhiiga* and *Waaqa*'s endowment of *lubuu* achieves personhood with the third element, which the Oromo describe as *ayyaana*. While the *ayyanaa* denotes a force that came out of *Waaqa*a to give life to the individual person, it is also the kind of personal presence that the individual has, the unique impression that gives him distinction. In this sense, *ayyaana* is the cause of the characteristic of the person.[11] In Bartels words,

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8 Bartels, 110.

9 Aneesa Kassam, "The Oromo theory of development." In: *Between State and civil society in Africa: perspectives on development.* ed. by Eghosa Osaghae (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1994), 16-40; idem, Ethnotheory, ethnopraxis and ethnodevelopeint in the Oromia Regional State of Oromia," In: *Participating in development: indigenous knowledge approaches* . ed. By P. Sillitoe, A. Bicker and J. Pottier (London: Routledge), 64-81.

10 Eike Haberland, *Galla Süd Äthiopiens* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963): 567ff.

11 Lambert Bartels notes, *ayyaana* "may be personalized, feared, and, at times, invoked, but, in spite of this appearance of multiplicity, each one is also seen ultimately as a manifestation of one divinity.

ayyaana is, "Waqa's creative activity in any creature or group of creatures making them the way they are, assigning to them their place in this world and their relationship to others. 'Something of Waqa' or 'Waqa in a particular way.' The *invisible part of man, his personality, good luck* [italics mine]."[12] It is in this sense that the *ayyanna* is thought of to constitute the essence that gives personality to and shapes the destiny of the human person.[13]

In one sense, the possessor of the inputs of the parents, of the creator, and of *ayyanaa* may not complete the Oromo conception of a person. A human person is different from other beings because of its capacity for awareness of its own *ayyaana* and *uuma* (nature). In other words, a person has a special endowment of knowledge or consciousness that enables him to understand cosmic events and order. A person is expected to act in harmony with the cosmic whole. This consciousness is in part the speck of divinity that comes from *Waaqa* and in part from the socialization of the person into the laws of the social world. Gemechu Megerssa summarizes this kind of human consciousness as some sort of organic knowledge. Quoting one of his informants, Dabassa Guyyoo, he states:

> Knowledge has flesh; knowledge of the world as sensed through the flesh is physical knowledge: it is the knowledge of *uumaa*, of the created world. The knowledge that is felt through the bone is knowledge of the inner qualities of things; it is the knowledge of *ayyanna* or the cause of creation. The knowledge that comes through the blood knows the moral values

According to Gemechu Megerssa, *ayyaana* are of the same substance but not the same as *Waaqa*, and they act in the world independently of Him.11 In Oromo religion, the *ayyaana* are viewed as a kind of independent divinity and, at the same time, *Waaqa*'s link to creation.

12 Bartels, 371.

13 Bartels 1983:14; "The Oromo World View." *Journal of Oromo Studies* 12, no. 1-2 (2005): 73.

> attached to things; it is the knowledge of *saffuu*, of the right and just path. This is sometimes referred to as *qalbii*, 'thought."

The term *qaalbii* is better thought of as consciousness. In part, it is *Waaqa's* endowment. It is the essence that reminds humans their place in the universe and in the social world. The Oromo believe everything in the natural universe obtains meaning only when it functions according to its natural design. For instance, grazing grass is appropriate and natural to a cow; but not for a human being. Speaking in articulate language is proper and natural for a human being but not so for a cow. If these functions are reversed, the Oromo say it is *safuudha*, implying an act proscribed by cosmic laws.[14] By conforming to their naturally designated functions, each creature can attain its individual identity and destiny. If a human being grazes like a cow, then the Oromo question the humanity of the individual.

The *qalbii* is also a result of the human socialization. In other words, a human has an identity as a person that cannot be completed without the socialization of the individual. As the Oromo saying goes, "*ilmii kan gossattii*," meaning "a child belongs to the *gosa*,"[15] implying the parents are custodians of the child who are responsible for making him/her *gosa* member. A person must behave according to another important concept in Oromo culture that in fact completes the personhood of a human being. This is the concept of *safuu*, the respecting of sacred boundaries. A person who violates the cultural sanctions and moral expectations stipulated in *safuu* may not be regarded as someone belonging to the *gosa*. In fact, a person that violates the cultural boundaries with impunity is

14 Megeressa, 75.

15 Sometimes translated "clan" which does not embrace the full meaning of the *gosa* societal entity).

referred to as *nama mitii* or not a human being. In the Oromo perception, a person is a cultural being.

In sum, a person is a biological entity that has *Waaqa's* endowment of life and a personality shaped by *ayyaana*, and is distinguished from other living things because of its capacity for self-awareness and is shaped into a cultural being that is aware of the ways of its physical and social surroundings.

RIGHTS IN THE OROMO CONTEXT

The concept of rights is closely associated with that of "right" in the sense of being proper or correct. Something is "right" if it conforms to a standard of "rightness." Many philosophers treat a "right" as synonymous with *claim.*[16] If any pronouncement of claim is expected to mandate obligation, the result would be chaos. The concept of right does not have to be necessarily complex. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a right as a "justifiable claim, on legal or moral grounds, to have or obtain something, or to act in a certain way. A right is a valid claim someone has to something recognized by legal rules or moral sanctions."[17] The simple definition captures the essence of a right: *a right is a justified or valid claim.*[18]

In the Oromo context, the term used to denote right is *mirga*. The term could mean variously east, privilege, right (as opposed to left), or right in the sense of claim. Of these, right as a claim is one that has direct relevance for human rights conception. For instance, if a group of people went hunting and someone kills an antelope, the person that hit the animal first is said to have a *mirga*. The hunter is entitled to the right

16 Joel Feinberg, "The Nature and Value of Rights, *Journal of Value Inquiry* 4 (1973), 64-66.

17 Joel Feinberg, *Rights, Justiec and the Bounds of Liberty: Essays in Social Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1980): 159-60

18 H. J. McCloskey. "Rights – Some Conceptual Issues," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 54 (1976):

hind limb and also to an equal share of the rest of the meat with the hunting party. In this practice, we witness that the Oromo conception of right encompasses two principal dimensions, *claim and entitlement*. Everyone in the hunting party have the duty to honor the claim that came from the first hit and the entitlement of being a member of the hunting party. It is perhaps appropriate to view the concept of *mirga* as a combination of both a claim and entitlement.

To suggest that a claim is at the core of the Oromo conception of right doesn't mean the right-holder must announce his claim to assert his right. Such an act is necessary only when the duty-bearer who is unaware of the rules needs to be reminded or when the right-holder demands more than what is established by custom. In the Oromo context, as will be shown later, there is an evolved culture of any social action in which the participants are aware of the rules governing behavior.

GROUNDS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Oromo concept of human rights depends less on human nature and human rationality and more on human needs and human dignity. It is about how one treats the other. Rights are granted by law, both divine and social, to honor the principles laid out above. Divine laws are all based on *dhugaa* or truth because *Waaqa*, in Oromo conception, is the ultimate truth. For example, the fact that someone is *angafa* or was born first in a family isn't a choice made by humans. That truth is not given by society. The right of the first-born is a truth of *Waaqa* that even a father cannot take away. To take another example, that someone is born a female is a truth established by *Waaqa*. She cannot claim a right that doesn't come with being a female. Any act that contravenes the truth of *Waaqa* is a violation of cosmic truth that disturbs the rational order established by the creator. The Oromo believe that nothing can stand in the way of *Waaqa's* Will. What he willed is the truth that remains standing when everything fails and holds

uumama or nature itself together. Humans are expected to live in harmony with the cosmic whole or the Universal Nature or *Waaqa* himself who represents the unity of the physical world.

All human laws emanate from the divine or cosmic laws. Divine law is considered to be the standard against which all other laws were to be judged. Human laws consist of three elements: *seera* (law), *aadaa* (custom) *and c'eera-fokko* (distance and respect). *Seera* is made by the legislature, the *gumii gayyoo* (assembly) of the Oromo *gadaa* system.[19] *Aadaa* are cultural practices that become mores over time. As the Oromo saying puts it, "*aadaan turteetuu seera tatii*" (cultural practices over time become custom), *aadaa* is a powerful repertoire of proscriptions based on evolved traditions. *C'eera-fokko* are norms that guide human behavior based on the system of avoidance and reverence. The Oromo refer to these guides as *saffuu*, moral precepts that lead one on the right path and show how to live life well.

All of these categories of laws made by humans are devised to keep the action of man in harmony with the cosmic whole. The laws are meant to be reflections of *Waaqa*'s Will as a universal order of nature. Human laws thus act as a social control, preventing evil deeds from overwhelming the harmony of the cosmic whole. In Oromo conception, human rights are not rights to which a person is entitled simply because she or he is a human being claiming a position in the cosmic order. Human rights are about acting in accordance with standards of human behavior prescribed according to moral principles and norms believed to ensure stability and continuity of the very cosmic and the social order humans are

19 Asmarom Legesse, *Gada: three approaches to the study of African society* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 97; Abdullahi Shongolo, The Gummi Gaayo Assembly of the Boran: A traditional legislative Organ and its Relationship to the Ethiopian State and a Modernizing World." In *Zeishcrift fur Ethnologie* 119 (1994), 27 -58.; Dirribi Demissie Bokku, *Oromo Wisdom in Black Civilization* (Finfinnee [Addis Ababa] : s.n., 2011).

a part of. In other words, human beings are expected to act only in such a way that helps maintain order and balance in the universe that is *Waaqa*'s creation. Transgression of these natural laws constitutes an act of inhumanity for the violator is a non-person, *nama mitii* in Oromo parlance.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In Oromo thought, there are at least three fundamental human rights categories. The first is the right to life or existence. This is a right that all living creatures possess because they are *uuma Waaqa* or they have *ayyaana,* the speck of life that came from the Creator and is resident in them. This category may be termed as *mirga uumama*. The second is the category of *mirgaa dhaloota* or birth rights. These are rights that human beings have by virtue of being human. The third is what might be called *mirga lamuuma* or citizen rights, which humans have because they belong to a group.

Right to Life

The foundation of Oromo human rights assumptions is a well-grounded belief in the sacredness of life. Concern for the integrity, worth, and dignity of person is the basic presupposition in the Oromo conception of human rights. By virtue of having the inputs of *uumaa* and *ayaanaa* humans are presumed to have a right to life or existence. Because every person possesses *ayyaana*, the divine element, every person has an intrinsic value which he doesn't owe to any earthly circumstance. This is at its most basic level the right to life. The right to life, in Oromo conception, is a "God given right" that is absolute, inviolable, and inalienable.[20]

This right to life extends to all creation, including animals and plants. Humans don't have the right to destroy life. But humans have *special rights* to use other lives under carefully stipulated laws. The special rights that humans enjoy flow

20 H. J. McCloskey, "The Right to Life," *Mind* 84:335 (1975), 403-425.

from two considerations that distinguish humans from the rest of creation. The first is that the human body is an embodiment of the entire creation, a cosmic symbol of the Oromo cosmos.[21] Second, among all creatures, only a human is endowed with consciousness to comprehend his own *uuma* and *ayyaana* through which he is able to understand cosmic events. According to Oromo sages, this gift places humans at an advantageous position vis-à-vis other natural beings in the universe.[22] As a sacred symbol of the universe and a creature capable of understanding good and evil, a human (man/woman) occupies a very distinguished place in the universe.

This privileged position brings with it the obligation of being the custodian of all creation. The first of human's obligations is to act in harmony with the cosmic whole. The Oromo cosmos is ordered. To act against the boundaries that *Waaqa* made is to lose sight of human's place in the universe. Humans are not supposed to act with impunity because of their unique position among all creation. The human person is expected to make rules that govern his own action toward other creatures and respect divine laws that are immutable.

One such rule is encoded in the Oromo saying "*ol adeema hinkutaanii*," literally, "it is not proper to cut down a young plant." The Oromo often are careful not to step on young shoots. Children are taught not to cut a young plant if it is the only one of its type in the area.

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21 According to the Oromo creation myth, in the beginning, there was water. This primeval water, called Walaabuu or *Bishaan Ganamaa*, was divided into the *Bishaan Gubbaa* (Water of Above) and *Bishaan Goodaa* (Water of Below). The differentiation of creation into living and non-living things started with the *yayaba shaman* or when Waaqa spoke into existence five fundaments out of which all of creation derived. Three of the fundaments (the sun, moon, and the sky) were in Bishaan Gubbaa and the remaining two (earth and water) were in the Bishaan Goodaa. Humans above waist have three distinct features (two hands and a head) and below waist two legs.

22 Megeressa, 77.

The principle applies to domestic animals. Traditionally only male and fully grown cows are eligible for slaughtering. It is proscribed to slaughter a calf, a heifer, or a lactating cow for meat. An old cow or an ox is permitted. As a matter of rule, an ox doesn't bring forth an offspring and an old cow has outgrown its days of fertility permitted for slaughtering. Only under this stipulation can a human being take the life of a domestic animal.

Even animals in the wild have a right to life. If a monkey walked into one's garden, the owner has no right to kill the monkey. The owner's right is limited to chasing the monkey away. The assumption is that the monkey lives in the natural environment designated by divine law. It is humans that encroached on their habitat to grow food. This means, the monkey has the right to share in the gift of the earth. Likewise, if a python crawled into one's house, the owner has no right to kill it. It can only lure it out with scented substances or just watch what it does.

With regard to humans, a woman who miscarried is required to pay *gumaa* or blood money to her husband. The ritual is performed not to assign culpability to the woman for miscarrying the seed that was "deposited" in her (the fetus) but to perform a symbolic act that demonstrates the society's respect of life.

Respect for life and anything that supports life is a basic obligation of all humans. To do otherwise is considered a violation of the boundary that *Waaqa*a has established. As the Oromo saying suggests, "*daarii abba (Waaqa) hinqotanii*," meaning, "it is improper to plough a field adjacent to *Waaqa*a's abode." Simply put, the Oromo believe that all creatures live in a space adjacent to *Waaqa*a's abode. It is their refuge. To cross that boundary and displace creatures from their natural space is tantamount to perpetrating violence against *Waaqa*'s natural boundary, a grave violation.

Related to this is the idea of "respect for life" is the concept of human dignity, which implies that every human being is

entitled to certain basic respect. This respect for human dignity is encoded in the Oromo saying "*hundinuu ilmaan Waaqaatii*," meaning" "everyone is God's child." Directly implied in this doctrine is the right of each person, as a child of God, to pursue that unique destiny assigned to him by *Waaqa*. Humans have *ayyanaa* and they have the basic right to existence and to those things that are essential for existence. This they share this basic right with all creatures.

Birth Right

The next level is the right of is *mirgaa namuuma* or the right human beings have by virtue of being human. These are based on the recognition of the basic humanity of all human beings (*naminii namuuma*). The rationale for this category of rights is the Oromo view that all humans are *ilmaan namaa* (children of humans). All humans are products of the inputs of their parents, the Creator and in possession of personality and consciousness.

Conceived as such, a person lives in a network of kinship relations that generate a system of rights and obligations. These are best viewed as rights embedded in a complex of social arrangements. The most important kinship group is the lineage, which may be pictured as a system of concentric circles from the father's kinship network that, at its outermost reaches, can include people in widely separated geographical regions. In its outermost dimensions, a lineage becomes a *gosa*. It is important to note that the individual person only has rights that respect the community that shapes the individuality of each person.

The primary spatial location is the *warra* (household), which is built around *ibidaa* or the hearth and recognized by others as *balbaala* or door. This inner most circle comprises the nuclear family, with the father as the principal personage. To this group belongs the duty of assigning rights and obligations. At the household level, the person is entitled the right to nurture and protection. The child is defenseless and

dependent, this is the time a young person needs the most protection and care. In Oromo worldview, a child belongs to the *gosa*, implying that the village is responsible for the right of the child. This right never ceases for a human being, for one is seen at all times as insufficient unto oneself. Nothing is more despicable to the Oromo than the concept of a sacralized individual who lifts his private benefits over the community's (particularly *gosa*'s) welfare.[23] As the Oromo saying, *nama goala qaanuutu, gossa qaba* (it is one who has an inner room that also has a *gosa*), being a member of a wider community begins with the household.

The next circle is the *shannacha*. This space is a cluster of five or more *warra*. In this location, the notion that no one individual is sufficient in itself applies to the unit. It is presumed that, whatever is missing in one household is available in next *balbala*. Children are entitled to the resources of the *shannacha* and every household has the obligation of rendering assistance to everyone in the unit in the raising of the child.

Then there is the *olaa*, which is an agglomeration of five or more *shannacha*. This unit is organized to offer protection for the villager's properties and share important resources needed for survival. The Oromo say, *olaan ibidaa waalii laattii* (members of the olaa provide fire for each other). Fire is preserved overnight by burying the ember under a heap of ash. Sometimes the practice fails. The solution is to get it from the neighbors. This saying is symbolic of the intimacy of the members of the unit. Obtaining fire is a simple act of generosity. It is also symbolic of sharing a most critical item. It is a right of everyone. No one can refuse lending fire.

23 During the rule of Jaldessa Liban, the Abba Gadaa of all Borana, the gumii gayyoo banned a new saying, *anii mataa koo nan danda'a* (I can make it on my own), that had crept into Borana culture, saying, "*waan afaanii hin lagaanee, gochuun hin ooluu* (what the mouth doesn't refrain from, will soon be practiced)."

Then there is the *dheeda*, made up of five or more *olaa*. The term *dheeda* literally means grazing ground. Every member of the *dheeda* is entitled to grazing rights. The next unit is the *reera*, which simply means the collective territory of the *gosa*. In this spatial unit, members are entitled to water rights. In this outermost space, each household is entitled to a fundamental right to sustain life. They are entitled to *margaa* fi *bishaan* or simply *marabishaan*, which literally means pasture and water. Every household in the territory is entitled to these resources. These two resources are communal resources to which everyone is entitled.

Citizen Rights

The third category of rights is one which recognizes differences and establishes practices on the basis of what is best called "citizenship." All are equally human. But there are special rights that emanate from being Oromo and a member of the last of the Oromo concentric circles of spatial location and community. This is the *gadaa*, the politico-military and ritual system of the Oromo. The *gadaa* encompasses and provides an overarching structure for the concentric circles identified by kinship. It organizes a territory inhabited by many concentric circles representing several *gosa*. It is indeed at this stage that one can discuss respect for or violations of human rights because *gadaa* is the traditional Oromo government. It is the *gadaa* officials that can guarantee human rights or violate human rights.

Oromo human rights conception and practices cannot be understood outside the *gadaa* context. In the space of a paper, however, we can only state briefly that the system is designed to respect human rights and to restrict the government from violating the human rights of its denizens.

In the *gadaa* government, the indigenous conception of citizen rights is manifested in a number of prerogatives, which included popular participation in the exercise of political power, freedom of expression, access to social justice and

others.[24] A quite deep perception of social justice is rooted within the Oromo society, one that is entrenched not in individual claims against the state, but in the physical and psychic security of group membership. At the *gadaa* level, the most important categories of human rights of the Oromo that are not available to non-Oromo are the right to participate in decision-making within the community.

To understand the centrality of the *gadaa* system to Oromo conception and practice of human rights, a few critical points should be made. Many view the Oromo *gadaa* system as an age-grade social organization that served in the past as a system of governance. This is not entirely wrong but it is narrowly focused. *Gadaa* is a system-complex with many interactive and mutually-reinforcing systems within it.[25] As Asmarom Legesse has shown long ago, *gadaa* is "a complex system that regulates political, social, economic, and religious life and an indigenous mechanism of socialization, education, peacemaking, conflict resolution, judicial administration, religious expression, economic organization, and social harmony."[26] All of these institutions are governed by *gadaa*

24 Asmarom Legesse, *Oromo Democracy: An Indigenous African Political System* (Lawrencevill, NJ: The Red Sea Press, 2006), 100; Asafa Jalata.. "Oromo Peoplehood: Historical and Cultural Overview," The Selected Works of Asafa Jalata (2010). http://works.bepress.com/asafa_jalata/3. Accessed: August 20, 2015.

25 Paul Baxter explains the *gaada* system as a social organization, mainly as a ritual and religious system. Asmarom Legesse and Marco Bassi emphasize its political aspect. Asmarom, *Gadaa.* P.T.W. Baxter, "Boran Age-sets and Generation-sets: Gadaa, a Puzzle or a Maze?" In P.T.W. Baxter and Uri Almagor, *Age, Generation and Time: Some Features of East African Age Organizations* (London: C. Hurst, 1978); Marco Bassi, "Gada as an integrative factor of political organization," In David Brokensha, *A River of Blessings: Essays in Honor of Paul Baxter*, Syracuse NY: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 1994).

26 Asmarom, *Oromo Democracy*, 195.

laws, customs, and ethical rules, determining human behavior vis-à-vis the creator, nature and other human beings.

Specifically relevant for understanding Oromo perspectives on rights basic to humans is the fact that, in the *gadaa* system, the temporal is inseparable from the spiritual.[27] As Lambert Bartels observed long ago, Oromo social, religious and political systems ultimately reflected a recognition of *Waaqa* or a supreme creator who is the prime mover of the social institutions. In Oromo conception, human rights is not the concern of the realm of humans alone. It is very much the concern of the divine. Violation of human rights is a violence perpetrated against the cosmic and social orders of which the God of the Oromo is the principal guardian.

One dimension of *gadaa* that is cited as a shortcoming of the Oromo society being governed through democratic forms of participation in the decision-making process is that public participation was limited to adult men. At best, the observed exclusion of women in that publicly accessible forum is judging an Oromo traditional institution based on contemporary standards of human rights. In the Oromo traditional context, women are not part of age-sets. However, what is commonly referred to as "exclusion" is better regarded as an observation about division of labor. In the Oromo context, rights are correlated with responsibilities. Men are in control of military and political activities. They are therefore responsible for the defense of their community villages, wells, cattle and shrines. Correspondingly, women are in charge of the domestic realm and its important resources. Only married women are allowed to build huts and fully control the resources thereof. Men have the right to build kraals around homestead and actively excluded from building huts. This makes men are functionally dependent on women. In the

27 Mario Aguilar, "The Nagaa Borana: Contemporary Discussions on Ritual and Political Diversity," *Journal of Oromo Studies* 15:1 (2008): 181-202.

extremely rare case of divorce, the right of the women to remain in the martial home is uncontestable. Both men and women are permitted to participate in various communal ritual activities. Even though only men take part in the elections of the leaders of *gadaa* age-sets or *gadaa* classes, women are frequently consulted on difficult decisions made by the *gadaa* councils.[28] In cases where women felt their rights were trampled on, they have women-only institutions to demand restoration of their rights or redress.[29] In comprehensive terms, the nominal and actual right to political participation of Oromo women was therefore quite deeply protected in the traditional Oromo political system, perhaps even more than in any contemporaneous society elsewhere in Africa or even beyond.

Even members of non-Oromo communities are entitled to the basic rights available to citizens of the *gosa* territory. People who are adopted as individuals through the institution of *guddifacha* or adopted as a group through *moggaassa* are extended the same rights. Non-citizens or *nyaaphaa* are excluded from participating in the *gadaa* government.

Earning a livelihood in traditional Oromo society presupposed the possession of one basic resource: land. In an agricultural society such as the Oromo, land to till and land on which to build is deemed essential. It is in this connection that we see an Oromo person's most cherished positive right, the right to land. This right comes from a claim one has by virtue of his lineage and membership in a *gosa*. This pertains to the apportionment of use rights, not ownership. Land, according to the Oromo has a close association with *Waaqa* because He

28 Legesse, *Gadaa*, 1973

29 Kumsa, Kuwee. 1997. "The Siiqqee Institution of Oromo Women," *Journal of Oromo Studies* 4(1 &2); Marit Tolo Ostebo, 2009: "Wayyuu— women's respect and sexual rights among the Arsi-Oromo." In: Svein Ege, Harald Aspen, Birhanu Teferra and Shiferaw Bekele (eds.), Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies (Trondheim: Norwigian University of Science and Technology, 2009), 1049-1060.

is the giver of land to the Oromo. According to a story related by Lambert Bartels, the Maccaa occupied a land that *Waaqa* gave them, led there by a bull.[30] The land is given to the community. Everyone is entitled to usufractory right. No one is entitled to property right in land.

RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The idea of human rights in the Oromo context is not about ideals that we aspire to reach. It is about how one treats another human being, especially when one has power over another. For the Oromo, all human actions are governed by law, which is the source of what constitutes an appropriate act. In the Oromo world, the physical universe is held together by divine laws. An act of violating the law is regarded not as a simple infraction of the law *per se*, but as violence against the essence of the principle that holds the entire universe together. Laws, divine or social, create a series of sacred boundaries. Violations are crossing boundaries. As we have noted, if humans violate divine laws, the Oromo describe such crossing as *saffuudha*. The Oromo recognize the food chain but they do not condone a hunting party killing an animal for mere pleasure. Hunting takes place under rules organized by the *Abbaa Alaa*, the *gadaa* official responsible for the environment. A hunter cannot kill an antelope that is nursing its offspring. If an animal fled for his life from hunters in a section of the forest designated appropriate for hunting, into the wild, the hunter cannot pursue it into the next. Such an act would be a grave violation. It will be considered against the principle of life itself, an offense against *Waaqa*.

As such, social laws are reflections of divine laws. Violation of laws is no trivial act. If humans violate the law, the governing bodies step in for redress. If the sanctions of the immediate governing bodies within the concentric circles referred to above, do not correct the individual wrongdoer, the

30 Bartels, 71.

Oromo say the society *seeraa itti dabsuu* (turn the law against the individual). Sanctions include banishment, taking away the protective membership in the *gosa* (*gossuuma irra mulqaasuu*) or the glance (*milu'uu*) of the *gumii gaayyoo*. The whole import of such action is the defense of the law in order to maintain cosmic and social stability. In other words, if an individual wrongdoer rejects the redress of the law, the individual cannot expect the protection of the law. The person becomes *persona non grata* in the eyes of the society and the law.

For the Oromo, no one individual has the power to violate the human rights of another individual. Only an organized body can. This means human rights violations cannot occur as the result of an individual criminal act alone, but only when governing bodies violate the law. In the worldview of the Oromo, an act constitutes violating human rights when a lawfully organized body acts in contravention of the law it is responsible for safeguarding. In Oromo language, this is seen as *daba* (crookedness), *karamura* (waylaying), *haraamuu* (taboo), *koobuu* (hunchback), *maqamalee* (nameless), and other categories of *hamaa* (evil).

Human rights violations are considered by the Oromo as perpetrating violence against the harmony of the social and physical universe. Only people with unchecked power and gangsters are capable of willingly violating the human rights of others. It is that possibility that the Oromo political system is designed to prevent. The *lichoo dullatii*, the *gadaa* elected officials who have retired to their villages after completing their office duties as *gadaa* officials, are the guardians of the rule of law in the *gadaa* government. They are the face of the law and, as such, the face of the ultimate law-giver within their communities. If a ruling *gadaa* is found to act in contravention of the law, the *lichoo dulaatii* contact the *torbaan jila* to convene the general assembly (*gumii gayyoo*) and remove the recalcitrant officials from power. This action is called *buqisuu*

or uprooting them.[31] More importantly, the series of embedded laws are powerful deterrent against tendencies to abuse power.[32]

CONCLUSION

This paper takes up the case of the Oromo society as an example of examination of local concepts of human rights. Hitherto, the codification of culturally transmitted laws and human rights protections have have not characterized or translated into a form that enables the Oromo indigenous conceptions to be regarded at the level of legal sophistication that they embody. The argument of this paper is their principles and provisions, in fact comparable to currently available modern international codifications of human rights, can gainfully be recognized or incorporated into the human rights policies and provisions of Ethiopia as can the indigenous conceptions of other peoples in Ethiopia. Determining the extent to which the rights inherent in indigenous cultural principles and practice link with the universal declaration is a matter for investigation for which this paper offers a case study.

In the Oromo case, most individual rights arise from the circumstance of the person being a member of a defined community, and are complemented by individual duties conceived as a way to strengthen community ties and social cohesiveness, creating a shared identity and common destiny, giving rise to the expectation of protection.

We have mentioned some quite important rights. These are rights that, in the Oromo context, people possess simply because they are the handiwork of the divine. Rights are entitlements entailed by the intrinsic network of kinship that

31 Asmarom *Oromo Democracy,* 204

32 Yacob Arsano, “The Impact of State Intervention on Land and Traditional Leadership in Borana," A research report submitted to the Institute of Social Studies (The Hague: ISS, 1997).

grant status to the human being. Every human being has a certain freedom to express his or her particular strengths and foibles, with the restrictions that ultimately one's choices are must recognize the boundaries of the circles of society that offer protection. In general rights are protected by legal rules, custom and moral strictures that it is incumbent on those groups to enforce

The rights examined above can be codified and universalized. More importantly they can be explicitly linked universal concepts of political rights (rights to participate, to express, to assemble), economic rights (land use rights, livelihood rights), and equality rights (women and non-citizens) and legal rights. This paper demonstrates that each of these universal principles is extant in Oromo conceptions of human rights. We contend that the potential for such a demonstration lies within the legacy of most indigenous peoples whose traditions have not yet been codified and acknowledged. It is this recognition of local perception and protection to which human rights advocates must give attention, so that these understandings might be represented in constitutions, conventions and commissions administered by the governing elite in countries where indigenous people have not yet been fully integrated into the state. It is the failure to recognize these active principles that have led to egregious violations of human rights despite official acceptance of universal rights by the elites in the offending countries.

THE OROMO STRUGGLE: KNOWLEDGE AND OROMO AGENCY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

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This paper critically explores how Ethiopian colonialism and global capitalism have slowed the development of Oromo agency through 1) the suppression of an Oromo epistemology, 2) the denial of formal education, 3) the practice of physical and mental genocide, 4) the destruction of institutions and leadership, and 5) the denial of the rights for self-expression and organization. All of these mechanisms have impacted forms of Oromo organizational capacity. By denying the Oromo freedom for production and dissemination of knowledge and by preventing them from building their own independent institutions and developing their own leadership, Ethiopian colonialism and global capitalism have kept the Oromo people incapacitated and in the darkness of ignorance and poverty for more than a century. Under these conditions, Oromo nationalists have faced monumental challenges in developing liberation knowledge. Hence, the Oromo national struggle has not yet achieved its full organizational capacity, a necessary condition to fulfill its political objectives of national self-determination and egalitarian democracy. This condition applies despite the fact that Oromo nationalism emerged in the 1960s along with other African national liberation struggles, all of which gained at least "flag independence."

Nevertheless, the Oromo national movement is slowly and surely progressing and mobilizing Oromo society, Oromo

students in particular. The ongoing Oromo protest movement (#OromoProtests) led by Oromo students clearly demonstrates how the Oromo people are mobilized all over Oromia and beyond to oppose the policy and practice of land grabbing in the name of the so-called Addis Ababa Master Plan and other colonial policies. In critically analyzing and understanding the complexity of the Oromo national struggle in relation to the questions of knowledge and agency, I ask the following four interrelated questions and answer them: First, what are the cultural, epistemological, and institutional factors that facilitate the progress or stagnation of a society? Second, why did Ethiopian colonialism and global capitalism destroy or repress the epistemology and cultural knowledge of the Oromo? Third, what are the major factors that delayed the achievement of the political objectives of the Oromo national struggle? Finally, what should be done to accelerate the development of the organizational capacity of the Oromo national movement in order to fully mobilize the Oromo nation toward achieving these political objectives?

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Every society has its unique epistemology and civilization, i.e., the world is epistemologically diverse and culturally plural. As Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007: xlvii) notes, "There is no ignorance or knowledge in general. All ignorance is ignorant of … certain knowledge, and all knowledge is the overcoming of a particular ignorance. There is no complete knowledge" (emphasis in the original). Colonized peoples like the Oromo had developed epistemologies that produced cultural-centric knowledge before their domination and subjugation. Prior to colonization, the Oromo epistemology underlying its cultural knowledge had produced a democratic governance called the *gadaa/siqqee* system, their indigenous religion known as Waaqeffannaa, and their practices of farming, cattle herding, environmental protection, and their

techniques of military organization and warfare for national self-defense. Since colonization, the Oromo have been subjected to various means to prevent them from developing the cultural, political, military, religious, and educational institutions.

According to Smith (1999:69), a feature of colonial domination is that it seeks to destroy "every last remnant of alternative ways of knowing and living [in order] to obliterate collective identities and memories and to impose a new order". Colonialism and imperialism oppose the plurality of cultures and diversity of knowledge. Modern sciences, more or less, are the tools of colonial and imperial institutions. "The epistemological privilege granted to modern science from the seventeenth century onwards, which made possible the technological revolutions that consolidated Western supremacy, was … instrumental in suppressing other [forms] of knowledges and, at the same time, the subaltern social groups whose social practices were informed by such knowledges." (de Santos 2007: xix). The suppression of indigenous knowledge is a form of "epistemicide … the other side of genocide" (de Santos 2007: xix). Mainstream scholars call the modern sciences, both natural and social sciences, universalistic; I call these kinds of sciences knowledge for domination and exploitation. There are scholars who call such sciences colonial knowledge that must be decolonized (see Smith 1999).

Mainstream academic, religious, and other institutions have promoted knowledge for domination and corrupted the minds of the colonized, above all, the minds of the educated elites. Linda T. Smith (1999: 23) writes, "The reach of imperialism into 'our heads' challenges those who belong to colonized communities to understand how this occurred, partly because we perceive a need to decolonize our minds, to recover ourselves, to claim a space in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity." The implication of this position is that until intellectuals of colonized communities decolonize their

minds, including an escape from the domination of modern sciences, they cannot contribute to a true human liberation. Audre Lorde (1979: 98-101) made the point that mainstream knowledge cannot facilitate human freedom and justice when he stated, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (emphasis in the original).

By contrast, indigenous theories and modes of knowing are essentially counter-hegemonic interpretive and political frames. They highlight the fallacies of hegemonic theories that justify, and promote modern social hierarchies in the name of "scientific rigor." Even though mainstream theories claim to have universal application, they have little room to address the fundamental problems of indigenous peoples such as the Oromo and other subaltern groups. Scientific knowledge – including social-scientific knowledge – is not value-neutral, but, rather, proves to be self-contained and self-referential, based on standards that reflect specific, not universal socio-historical contexts. According to Third World Network (1993: 485), "Scientists are strongly committed to beliefs and certain cultural ethos, which compel them to convert diversity and complexity into uniformity. In addition to this belief system and cultural ethos – which manifest themselves in the propositions that scientists embrace – science has its own power structure, reward systems and peer groups. All of these [factors] combine to ensure that [dominant] science is closely correlated with the existing, dominant and unjust, political, economic and social order of the world."

Mainstream and some oppositional critical social theories and knowledge embody primarily Europe- and North America-centric perspectives, which at the same time constitute their horizon of concern and inquiry. As Sandra Harding characterizes, Euro-centrism adheres to "the assumption that Europe functions autonomously from other parts of the world; that Europe is its own origin, final end, and agent; and that Europe and people of European descent in the Americas and elsewhere owe nothing to the rest of the world"

(1993: 2). Consequently, in the name of modernity and progress, dominant theories and scholarship have suppressed and distorted the cultures, traditions, and knowledge of indigenous peoples (McGregor 2004). These dominant theories and knowledge have presented the destructive capacities of more than 500 years of global capitalism and colonialism as if they were actually beneficial to indigenous peoples. As D. McGovern (1999: 27) observes, indigenous "knowledge systems have been represented by adjectives such as 'primitive', 'unscientific', and 'backwards', while the '[dominant] system' is assumed to be uniquely 'scientific and universal' and superior to local forms of knowledge …. The modern knowledge system 'is merely the globalized version of a very local and parochial tradition' arising with 'commercial capitalism' and 'a set of values based on power.'" Hegemonic scholarship and the ruling ideas it has perpetuated have ignored that the colonized peoples have been "a data mine for social theory" (Connell, 2007: 369) and the source of objective knowledge production.

For the purposes of this paper, it is important to note, that hegemonic and state-centric knowledge limits our understanding of humanity as a whole by ignoring the geo-cultures of indigenous and other subaltern groups. The case of Oromo is a prime example of this phenomenon. Of course, there have been critical and leftist scholars who have labored to expose the exploitative and oppressive aspects of global capitalism by focusing on hierarchies based on gender, class, and race/ethno-nation. However, due to the confining horizon of dominant thinking, their limited knowledge of indigenous societies, and proclivity toward versions of evolutionary and modernist thinking, most critical scholars have glossed over the problem of indigenous peoples like that of the Oromo.

With the exception of a few instances, dominant works on indigenous peoples have been contradictory, incomplete, or distorted. In a tradition of abyssal thinking (Santos, 2007), the dominant theoretical and intellectual knowledge from right

and left has been prone to reject or neglect multicultural knowledge and wisdom, thus disregarding the very humanity of indigenous peoples. To a greater or lesser extent, these intellectual traditions have tended to see indigenous peoples as organized socially in forms that are unable to withstand the onslaught of the process of modernization. These dominant theories and approaches have carried over into the conduct of social research by supporting colonial and neo-colonial agendas, explicitly and implicitly, particularly with regard to methodology. The research has neglected to engage in the requisite critical reflexivity, thus promulgating attitudes about indigenous peoples that originated in ideological definitions of societal reality. "If the success of these sciences required the military and political defeat of non-Western peoples," Sandra Harding (1993: 8) writes, "we are entitled to skepticism about claims that the history of these sciences is unmitigated the history of human progress; progress for some has been at the expense of disempowerment, impoverishment, and sometimes genocide for many others."

I employ a "social-constructionist" model of making societies (Roy 2001). Furthermore, I use critical comparative political economic and sociocultural approaches to demonstrate the deficiencies of dominant social theories and systems of knowledge production. Social theories, as all forms of knowledge, are socially constructed. Hence, I reject the essentialist theoretical perspective that assumes that "things are the way they are by nature" (Roy 2001: 8).

My approach is grounded in the position that since the beginning of the modern age, the emerging capitalist class and its intellectual supporters and advocates have utilized liberal Enlightenment claims to "universality" as the ideology promoting human equality. This was an effective instrument in overthrowing the feudal order. Yet, later on, liberal Enlightenment ideologues "naturalized" the capitalist order, thus impeding, if not undercutting entirely, the project of emancipating ordinary people. They did this in order to defend

positions of power and influence that had been established through the creation and perpetuation of private property via dispossession and exploitation of the "other". Mainstream scholars constructed theories, concepts, and ideologies of race and racism, and further consolidated gender and class hierarchies, to facilitate and intensify the ongoing accumulation of capital and wealth (Janata 2012 [2001]). In reality, there is evidence of an extensive period in human history when racial and class categories and gender hierarchies did not exist, and when all human groups were non-hierarchical and non-exploitative (Trigger 2006: 21-28). Elites began to construct and maintain social hierarchies of gender, class, and race/ethno-nation through the invention and establishment of institutions that protected a hierarchy: "What becomes socially constructed is disproportionally the result of dominant institutions in society. Institutions are groups of organizations, categories, and ways of doing things that do something important in society" (Roy 2001: 22).

My research and methodological stance confirms the need for scientific methods to be enlarged toward demystifying ideological constructs that treat inequality as the norm. This is important to overcome the pitfalls of traditional research methods and theoretical approaches that justify the destruction of the Oromo epistemology and original culture which is our subject.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SOCIAL CHANGE

Societal transformation takes place primarily through social innovation and technological advances in production and exchange. Social formation also takes the form of organizational capacity building through educational, political, and religious institutions and ideologies. When people were hunters and gatherers, all human groups started their slow development with stone tools until they engaged in the production of metal, improving their weapons for hunting animals and for fighting their competitors for control of

resources. With metal tools, other technological improvements, and the development of agriculture in the forms of cattle herding and production of grains, the emerging elites of certain societies developed religious and political institutions that organized populations within and beyond ethno-national boundaries.

Starting from the Middle East, Christianity, Islam and the need for commercial expansion and empire-building played decisive roles in expanding spheres of influence into Africa. This occurred through the spread of religion, war, slavery and conquest leading to the reorganization of societies on local, regional, and global levels. The development of Christianity and Islam took place within this reality although most followers of these religions do not have access to these historical facts. For instance, the history of north, east, and west Africa from ancient times to the arrival of European slavers and colonizers demonstrates the effective roles of commerce, empire-building, and Christianity and Islam. These forces hierarchically organized and legitimized colonialism, slavery, cultural destruction, and dehumanization of various indigenous Africans (Shillington). The rationale for applying that force came through the introduction of new ideas in religion and technology. Both contain forms of knowledge that can help in either building or undermining the institutional capacity of a given society. Furthermore, the innovative ideas of Christianity and Islam that focus on life after death while empowering elites on the earth and the liberal ideology of capitalism and the oppositional ideology of socialism have played great roles in large-scale and long-term social transformations or destruction beyond a single society.

The Oromo can be counted among indigenous African groups that have been negatively affected by imposed technological, religious and political knowledge. Technological advancements and scientific and organizational knowledge and skills that emerged with global capitalism have also undermined the interests of indigenous peoples including

the Oromo. As Linda T. Smith (1999: 63) states, "The globalization of Knowledge and Western culture constantly reaffirms the West's view of itself as the center of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of 'civilized' knowledge. This form of knowledge is generally referred to as 'universal' knowledge, available to all and not really 'owned' by anyone …"

The Ethiopian state, with its scholars and religious elites, have benefited from Western and Eastern knowledge and civilization by becoming agents of global imperialism in the Horn of Africa. Under these conditions how can the Oromo benefit from these ideological, religious, and technological phenomena that work as forms knowledge and human agency in the current era of globalization? When capitalism was developing in Western Europe in the late 15th century, the Oromo and Abyssinians started to confront each other on the issues of land, religion, and power in the Horn of Africa without dominating each other. Until the late 19th century the Abyssinians were on the defensive side because of the well-developed institutional capacity of the gadaa system and its military structure.

In almost three and a half centuries, the Oromo established their homeland that they called *Biyyaa Oromoo*, later Oromia, even sometimes penetrated into the heartland of Abyssinia by joining the Oromo who were already in there (Hassen 2015). The balance of power started to change in the last decades of the 19th century, when Europeans, particularly England, France, and Italy initiated the partition of the Horn of Africa. As history demonstrates, using Christianity the Abyssinians established linkage with Christian Europe specifically with Portugal that saved them from the destruction by an Islamic Jihad war led by Gran (Ahmad ibn Ibrahim) in 1529 (Shillington). Again, during the second half of the 19th century, Christianity and the willingness to collaborate with European colonial powers positioned the Abyssinians under the leadership of Menelik to receive military skills, firepower

and diplomatic assistance necessary to defeat and colonize the Oromo, an adversary that Abyssinians had considered a dangerous enemy to be destroyed.

Some elements of Oromo society, under the leadership of Gobana Dache and others, collaborated with the Abyssinian colonial project. However, most Oromo resisted and later engaged in programs of cultural revitalization, armed resistance and civic movement. Starting in the 1960s, forming a political organization was prevented in the Ethiopian empire. During those years, a few elements of Oromo society initiated a self-help association because; in the same decade cultural movements and armed resistance struggles emerged. Because of the repression of these efforts, a few Oromo nationalists created the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) in the 1970s to engage in the protracted political and armed struggle to achieve Oromo national self-determination. However, after almost a half century, the Oromo national struggle has yet to achieve the organizational capacity required to defeat Ethiopian colonialism. The replacement of the Amhara colonial state with that led by TPLF has intensified the processes of state terrorism, genocidal massacres, and gross human rights violations in Oromo society while at the same time the Oromo national movement gained momentum, galvanizing the society since the early 1990s.

In order to clearly understand the challenges faced by the Oromo national struggle and how to overcome them, we need to explore critically the barbarism and effects of Ethiopian colonialism on Oromo society. This includes in no small part an exploration of how the Ethiopian colonial state has continued to control the minds of its colonial subjects. First, by killing Oromo political, cultural, and religious leaders during the colonization of the Oromo people and their country, the state created submissive and less informed leaders for Oromo society. In so doing, the Ethiopian state committed physical and mental genocide. Second, by expanding its religious and colonial institutions into Oromo country, the

colonial state, aimed to delete Oromo cultural knowledge and epistemology from the minds of the Oromo people. Only a few Oromo nationalists understood what was going and initiated an Oromo cultural renaissance and the development of *Oromummaa* or Oromo nationalism. Such farsighted intellectual activists have been targeted for elimination by successive Ethiopian colonial regimes; there is not enough space here to list the names of Oromo heroes and heroines who have been killed, imprisoned, disappeared without a trace or forced into exile. The Oromo national movement aims to establish a robust organizational capacity. Our argument is that to achieve this aim requires seeking and retrieving the Oromo epistemology that empowered the Oromo nation before colonization.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE OROMO EPISTEMOLOGY

Our premise is that when Oromo society was free and independent, it had its own authentic ways of producing and disseminating knowledge based on Oromo-centric culture, and worldview. Consequently, Oromo family, cultural, political and religious institutions were informed and framed by a unique Oromo epistemology explored in this section. The Oromo have a theoretical concept of social and cultural development known as *finna*, which explained phases and features of development in Oromo society by embodying cumulative historical and recent changes that take place to produce social order. Finna "represents the legacy of the past which each generation inherits from its forefathers [and foremothers] and which it transforms; it is the fertile patrimony held in trust by the present generation which it will enrich and bequeath to future generations… it describes a movement emanating from the inside, a developing of the inner potential of society based on the cultural roots it has already laid down" (Kassam: forthcoming). It has seven interconnected cumulative development phases, namely

guddina (growth), *gabbina* (enrichment), *ballina* (broadening), *badhadha* (abundance), *hoormaataa* (reproduction and rejuvenation), *dagaaga* (development with sustainability), and *dagaa-hoora* (reciprocity, sharing and cultural borrowing with neighboring communities).

Guddina is a concept that explains how Oromo society improves itself by creating new experiences and adding them to its existing cultural life. Gabbina is the next concept that explains the enrichment of cultural experiences by integrating the cumulative past experiences with the contemporary ones through broadening and deepening the system of knowledge and worldview. According to Aneessa Kassam (forthcoming):

This can only be achieved through the full knowledge, consent and active participation of all members of the community. This implies the existence of a political organization, the forum for debate and the democratic means of reaching consensus on all decisions affecting the common good. This should be obtained without force and coercion, without excluding the interests of any group, within the Oromo society and outside it, in the broader context of the national or international arena. To this end, the Oromo evolved a political process of power sharing reputed for its highly egalitarian nature: *Gadaa*.

The Oromo people believe in democracy, consensus, peace (*nagaa*), fairness, and social justice. They also believe that without Oromo democracy, there is no sustainable or egalitarian sociocultural development. These characteristics are not marks of backwardness, as mainstream theories and knowledge have depicted. Ballina refers to the expansion of enriched cultural experiences from one society to another through the reciprocity of cultural borrowing, based on the principles of social equality, fairness and social justice.

The cumulative experiences of guddina, gabbina, and ballina lead to the stage of badhadha. This phase is the stage of wholeness and peace. According the Oromo tradition, this stage indicates the maintenance of peace among *Waaqa* (God),

nature, and society; theoretically speaking, there is no conflict, poverty, disease or natural calamity because a balance of Waaqa, nature, and society is maintained. The development of badhadha leads to the stage of hoormata. In this stage, people, animal, and other living things reproduce and multiply because of the availability of conditions such as of rain, resources and peace. The next stage is *dagaaga*, which is the phase of the development cycle that is integrated to maintain an even and sustainable progression of society. The final phase is *daga-hoora* in which full flourishing takes place in Oromo society and expands to neighboring societies through reciprocity, sharing and cultural borrowing.

As the destruction and suppression of Oromo epistemology occurred, indigenous Oromo culture, and knowledge fell victim to colonial mental genocide as the destruction of Oromo lives and institutions were exposed to colonial terrorism and genocide. The surviving Oromo who used to enjoy egalitarian democracy under the gadaa/siqqee system were forced to face state terrorism, political repression, and impoverishment. Alexander Bulatovich (2000: 68), who was familiar with gadaa/siqqee, notes: "The peaceful free way of life, which could have become the ideal for philosophers and writers of the eighteenth century, if they had known it, was completely changed. Their peaceful way of life is broken; freedom is lost; and the independent, freedom loving [Oromo] find themselves under the severe authority of the Abyssinian conquerors."

Once the Abyssinians effectively colonized the Oromo, always with the help of European colonial powers, they started to propagate their ruling ideas and mythology starting with the discourse of Orthodox Christianity. The document known as the Kebra Nagast (The Glory of the Kings) rationalized and legitimized the monarchy using this Solomonic narrative (Budge 1932) and, by extension, related the Abyssinians to the chosen people of Israel. According to the Kebra Nagast: "God has appointed all these rulers and given them authority; one

that opposes the ruler and is against him, rebels against the ordinances of God, his creator. Those who rebel against the rulers secure their condemnation" (Strauss 1968: 29). Using this rationale, Menelik sought to stamp out the democratic traditions of the Oromo. He and his followers destroyed the political function of the gadaa/siqqee institution and officially abolished all pilgrimages to the Abbaa Muuda, the spiritual leader of the Oromo, who was the person responsible for maintaining the democratic nature of Oromo society (Legesse 2000/2006). Menelik took all these and other actions to prevent the possibility of these pilgrimages developing into an Oromo insurrection and to eliminate the memory of a democratic tradition among the Oromo (Hassen 2005).

Oromo epistemology sustained a complex balanced sociopolitical system whose operating components were held in intricate arrangements. The gadaa system had the principles of checks and balances (such as the eight-year periodic transfer of power and division of authority among executive, legislative and judiciary branches), balanced opposition (among five gadaa grades) and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power from falling into the hands of despots. Other principles of the system included balanced representation of all gosa, lineages, regions and confederacies, the protection of women from abuse, the protection of women's economic resources, accountability of leaders, the settlement of disputes through reconciliation and the respect for basic rights and liberties. In the gadaa system, there are age-sets and generation-sets (gadaa class). Male children join age-sets as newborn infants. Males born in the same eight-year period belong to an age-set, but they enter into the *luba* class 40 years after their fathers, and since one grade is eight years, fathers and sons are five grades apart. Male children also join generation-sets at birth, joining men or old men who are considered to be members of their genealogical generations. In these cross-cutting generation-sets, older men mentor young males in teaching rules and rituals, but the

former treat the latter as equals since there is no status difference between the two groups in a gadaa class (or grades).

Between the third and fourth gadaa grades, boys becoming adolescent are initiated into taking serious social responsibilities. The ruling group has responsibility to assign senior leaders and experts to instruct and council these young men in orientation to leadership, organization and warfare. Young men are also trained to become junior warriors by taking part in war campaigns and hunting large animals; they learn the practical skills of warfare, military organization and fighting so that they can engage in battle to defend their country and economic resources. As Paul T. Baxter (1978: 177) notes, the Oromo have used age-sets for war because generation-sets "cannot be an efficient means to mobilize troops, and a quite distinct organisation based on closeness of age ... exists for that purpose."

The rule of law is the central feature of the gadaa system. Those leaders who violated the law of the land or whose families could not maintain the required standards of the system were recalled before the end of their tenure in the office. Leaders selected or elected under gadaa implemented the laws that were made by male representatives of the people (though women had informal/indirect influence). Oromo democracy allowed the Oromo people through their representatives to formulate change or amend laws and rules every eight years. The siqqee/gadaa system accepted the Oromo people as the ultimate source of authority and believed nobody was above the rule of law.

Gadaa officials were elected by established criteria by the people and received rigorous training in Oromo democratic philosophy and governance for eight years before they entered the luba grade (administrative grade); the main criteria for election or selection to office included bravery, knowledge, honesty, demonstrated ability to govern, etc. Today, aspects of siqqee/gadaa still exist in some Oromo regions. In the Boorana

Oromo community, for example, the *Gumii Gaayyo* (assembly of multitudes) brings together almost all important leaders, such as living *Abbaa Gadaas* (presidents of the assembly), the *qaallus* (spiritual leaders), age-set councilors, clan leaders and gadaa councilors, and other concerned individuals to make or amend or change laws and rules every eight years. In August 1996, the 37th Gumii Gaayyo Assembly, reflecting a tradition that began in 1708, was held to make, amend or change three kinds of laws that the Boorana Oromo classifies as cardinal, customary, and supplementary laws (Huqqa, 1998). The Gumii Gaayyo assembly has a higher degree of ritual and political authority than the gadaa class and other assemblies because it "assembles representative[s] of the entire society in conjunction with any individual who has the initiative to the ceremonial grounds", and "what Gumii decides cannot be reversed by any other assembly" (Legesse, 1973: 93). However, under the Ethiopian colonial system, the surviving gadaa/siqqee and the Gumii Gaayyo do not have the sovereignty it used to have.

The Oromo claim that in understanding the laws of Waaqa, nature and society moral and ethical living according to those laws is necessary. They believe in God's law and believe that the law of society, established through the gadaa/siqqee system of democracy, maintains the necessary balance to achieve *nagaa* (peace) and *safuu* (moral and ethical order) among *Waaqa* (God), society and nature. To do this is to achieve the full human destiny known as *kao* or *kayyo* (Hinnant, 1978: 210). Respect for the laws of Waaqa and the institution of siqqee/gadaa are essential to maintain nagaa Oromo (Oromo peace) and safuu in society (Hinnant 1978: 207–208). Most Oromo believe that they had full kao before their colonization because they had freedom to develop their independent political, economic, cultural and religious institutions.

Emphasizing the centrality of an Oromo religious institution to democracy Kelly (1992: 166) notes the following:

> Qaallus have had a moral authority and the social obligation to oppose tyrants and support popular Oromo democracy and gadaa leaders, and to encourage harmonious and democratic relations based on the principles of safuu, kao, Waaqa and uumaa. The qaallu is thought to possess sacred characteristics that enable him to act as intermediary between the people and ... [God] ... he had no administrative power, but could bless or withhold blessings from gadaa leadership, and had an extraordinary power to curse anyone who threatened the wellbeing of the entire community by deviating from ... [God's] order.

The qaallu institution had been committed to social justice, the laws of God, the rule of law, and fair deliberation; the qaallu "residence was considered politically neutral ground, suitable for debating controversial issues and for adjudicating highly charged disputes, although he himself might not take a prominent role in proceedings" (Kelly 1992: 166). The qaallu institution had played an important role in protecting original Oromo culture, religion, worldview and identity. When those Oromo who were influenced by this institution kept their Oromo names, most Oromo who were converted to Islam or Christianity willingly or by force abandoned their Oromo names and adopted Arab or Habasha or Jewish or European names depending on their borrowed religions. The qaallu can be credited with having played an indirect role in the preservation of the Oromo identity and the remnants Oromo political system. The leader of all qaallus was known as the Abbaa Muuda (father of the anointment and original Oromo religious leader) who was considered to be the prophet and spiritual leader of Oromo society. Oromo pilgrims travelled to the residence of the Abbaa Muuda to receive his blessing and anointment to be ritual experts in their respective regions (Knutsson 1967: 148). The Abbaa Muuda served as the

spiritual center and symbol of Oromo unity and enabled all Oromo branches to keep in touch with one another over the centuries: "As the Jews believe in Moses and the Muslims in Muhammad, the Oromo believe in their Abbaa Muuda" (Hassen 1991: 90–106). The Abbaa Muuda, like other qaallu leaders, encouraged harmonious and democratic relations in Oromo society. According to the qaallu mythology, the Abbaa Muuda was descended from heaven (Gololcha 1988; Knutsson 1967). Oromo representatives travelled to the highlands of the mid-south Oromia to honor the Abbaa Muuda and to receive his blessing and anointment that qualified them as pilgrims, known as jilas, to be ritual experts in their respective areas (Knutsson 1967: 148).

When Oromo representatives went to him from far and near places to receive his blessings, the Abbaa Muuda commanded them "not to cut their hair and to be righteous, not to recognize any leader who tries to get absolute power, and not to fight among themselves" (Knutsson 1967: 148). In its modified form, the qaallu institution still exists in some parts of Oromia such as in the Guji and Borana areas. It still protects an Oromo way of life, such as dispensing of local justice based on Oromo customs and providing solutions to problems created by a changing social condition (Knutsson 1967: 133–135). The qaallus of Guji and Borana are ritual leaders, advisors and ritual experts in the gadaa/siqqee system. The qaallus "possess the exclusive prerogative of legitimizing the different gada [sic] officials, when a new gada [sic] group is initiated into the politically active class" (Knutsson 1967: 142). The Oromo still practice some elements of Oromo democratic values in the areas where the siqqee/gadaa system was suppressed a century ago. This system is still practiced in the Borana and Guji regions under the control of the Ethiopian colonial system. In its modified form, it helps maintain peace, exchange knowledge and practice rituals among some clans and regional groups (Van de Loo 1991: 25). The current siqqee/gadaa of Borana and Guji cannot fully reflect its

original political culture under Ethiopian colonialism. Theoretically, most Oromo, including those intermediaries who are collaborating with the enemies of the Oromo, recognize the importance of gadaa/siqqee, and some Oromo nationalists struggle to restore genuine Oromo democracy.

The Oromo culture, identity and epistemology have been distorted or suppressed by Christianity and Islam, too. The suppression of gadaa/siqqee by Ethiopian colonialism allowed other societies to impose their Christianity and Islam by force and/or persuasion on Oromo society. These religions are wrapped by the cultures of Jews, Arabs and Habashas; consequently, these religions negatively affected Oromo culture, identity, as well as names. The main challenge that faces Christian and Muslim Oromo today is to reconcile the epistemologies of these religions with that of the Oromo and how to restore their original culture, identity and humanity while maintaining their Christian or Islam religion and to develop their national Oromummaa through diverse religious experiences. Furthermore, the serious question Oromo Christians and Muslims need to ask themselves is the following: Can we be Christians or Muslims without culturally and ideologically imitating Habashas, Jews and Euro-Americans or without imitating Arabs? This is a very difficult question that Oromo religious scholars of these religious must answer through religious and interfaith dialogue in order to build national Oromummaa that will reflect multi-religious Oromo society. Today, there are a few Oromo extremists in these religious who try to attack and undermine an indigenous Oromo religion and authentic Oromo culture by directly imitating fundamentalist Christians or Muslims. Oromo religious scholars, priests, Sheiks, and Imams can learn a lot from notable religious scholars like Abba Gamachis, Bakri Saphalo, Gudina Tumsa, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Desmond Tutu and others.

IMPACT OF COLONIALISM ON INTELLECTUALS AND THE OROMO COLLABORATOR CLASS

Most Oromo elites uncritically accepted the colonial and imperial epistemology that glorified the West and Ethiopia without questioning its validity. Ethiopian schools and their Western or Eastern counterparts trained Oromo scholars to be loyal servants of the Ethiopian colonial state and its global masters. These scholars like other colonized intellectuals have been aligned with their Ethiopian intellectual overlords as Smith (1999: 69-70) described, "colonizers in terms of their class interests, their values and their ways of thinking… [They have been] estranged from their own cultural values to the point of being embarrassed by, and hostile towards, all that those values represented." This description still applies to some Oromo intellectuals who collaborate with the enemy of the Oromo people or not actively participating in the Oromo struggle. Even Oromo nationalist intellectuals, who have not been affected by imperialist theories and knowledge, did not yet realize the potential of an Oromo epistemology and agency in mobilizing the Oromo masses for the Oromo national struggle.

Much of the discussion about intellectuals in social and cultural life, and their participation in anti-colonial struggles, is heavily influenced by Marxist revolutionary thought, framed in the language of oppositional discourse, and was written during the post-war period when the struggle for independence were underway. Included within the rubric of 'intellectual' by liberation writers such as Frantz Fanon are also artists, writers, poets, teachers, clerks, officials, the petit bourgeoisie and professionals engaged in producing 'culture.' Their importance in nationalist movements is related to their abilities to reclaim, rehabilitate and articulate indigenous cultures, and their implicit leadership over 'the people' as voice, which can legitimate a new nationalist consciousness (Smith 1999: 69).

In the relation to the Oromo national movement, Oromo nationalist intellectuals and professionals did not yet fully participate in the development of an Oromo nationalist consciousness often referred to as Oromummaa.

The Oromo collaborator class emerged in the process of the colonization of the Oromo people and this class still serves as the agent of the Tigrayan regime. Gobana Dache and others participated in the colonizing the Oromo people for Menelik. Presently the so-called Oromo People's Democratic Organization, which was created by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), is the servant of the TPLF-led colonial system in Oromia. Why do the members of the Oromo collaborator class side with the enemy and perpetuate Ethiopian colonialism on their people? The attack on Oromo selves at personal, interpersonal and collective levels has undermined the self-confidence of some Oromo individuals by creating an inferiority complex within them. Consequently, the manufactured Oromo elites are abusive to their people and they confuse their individual ambitions and interests with those of the Oromo nation. What Frantz Fanon (2005: 7) said about other colonial intermediary native elites applies to such Oromo elites: "The European elite undertook to manufacture native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouths full with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth." Since most Oromo elites who have passed through colonial institutions have not yet achieved psychological liberation, they consciously or unconsciously prefer to work for their colonial masters rather than promoting the Oromo liberation project.

What Walter Rodney (1972: 248-249) says about the consequences of the colonial educational system in Africa also applies to the situation of Oromo intermediaries: "The colonial school system educated far too many fools and clowns, fascinated by the ideas and way of life of the European

capitalist class." "Some reached a point of total estrangement from African conditions and the African way of life…. 'Colonial education corrupted the thinking and sensibilities of the African and filled him with abnormal complexes.'" Similarly, some Oromo intermediaries who have passed through the Ethiopian colonial education system have been de-Oromized as they were Ethiopianized, and have opposed the Oromo struggle for national liberation. Colonial education creates submissive leaders who facilitate underdevelopment through subordination and exploitation (Rodney 1972: 241). Considering the similar condition of the African Americans in the first half of the 20th century, Carter G. Woodson (1990: xiii) characterized the educated Black as "a hopeless liability of the race," and schools for Blacks as "places where they must be convinced of their inferiority." He demonstrated how White oppressors controlled the minds of Blacks through education: "When you control a man's [or a woman's] thinking you do not have to worry about his [or her] actions. You do not have to tell him [her] not to stand here or go yonder. He [or she] will find his [or her] 'proper place' and will stay in it" (Woodson 1990: xiii). The behaviors and actions of most of the educated Oromo collaborators parallel what Woodson claims about educated African Americans.

But, starting the mid-20th century, most African American elites developed nationalist political consciousness by overcoming their inferiority complex and participating in their national struggle for liberation. By contrast among the Oromo, there are biologically and culturally assimilated elements that like to disassociate themselves from anything related to the Oromo. Most biologically and culturally assimilated former Oromo, like their Habasha masters, are defenders of Habasha culture, religion, and the Amharic language and haters of Oromo history, culture, institutions, and Afaan Oromoo. The slave psychology of such assimilated and collaborator Oromo has caused them also to prefer the leadership of the Amhara or Tigrayan oppressor.

Furthermore, the attack on Oromo families and national structures introduced forms of psychological disorientation to Oromo individuals, and incapacitated a mutually -understood personality. The family—as a basic institution of any society—provides guidance in values, norms, and worldviews and acts as the educational and training ground for entry into that society. Because Oromo families have lived for more than a century under colonial occupation and because Oromo national institutions were intentionally destroyed or disfigured by Ethiopian colonial institutions, the Oromo families lack the educational, cultural, ideological, and experiential resources required to guide their children in the process of building national public institutions. Oromo individuals who have lived under such conditions of deprivation face social, cultural, and psychological crises and, as a result, become conflict-ridden. These sorts of complex problems, the low level of political consciousness and an imposed inferiority complex lead those who claim to be nationalists sometimes confuse their sub-identities with the Oromo national identity or with Ethiopian identity. The Ethiopian colonial system—together with alien cultural and religious identities—was imposed on the Oromo people, creating regional and religious boundaries. Under these conditions, personal identities (e.g. religious affiliation) replaced Oromoness—with its unique values and self-schemas—and Ethiopianism replaced Oromummaa.

Through these various political, educational, religious and media institutions, Ethiopian elites and their successive governments have continuously created and perpetuated negative stereotypes and directed racist values and judgements against the Oromo people (Jalata 2012 [2001]). These practices have led some Oromo to think negatively about themselves. That is one reason that some Oromo parents reject Oromo names and give Amhara or Arab names to their children in order to facilitate their assimilation into the cultures they consider superior. Some educated Oromo also develop self-hatred and self-contempt, choosing to wear the masks of

other peoples. Ethiopian colonialism and racist invectives have made some Oromo elites hate their culture and language and moved to avoid self-discovery. The process of de-Oromization creates alienation among some Oromo and imbues them with distorted perceptions of their own people. Amhara-Tigray culture is praised and Oromo rejected and denigrated; the colonialists have depicted the Oromo as "barbaric", "ignorant," "evil," "pagan," "backward," and "superstitious."

In order to avoid being associated with these perceived characteristics, some Oromo elites who pass through the Ethiopian colonial education system assume Amharized and Ethiopianized identity. The colonization of the Oromo mind has isolated affected individuals from their families and communities and distorted their identities by disconnecting them from the epistemology, heritage, culture, and history of the families by which they were raised (Dugassa 2011: 55-64). Oppressors control not only the body of the oppressed but also the mind, thus ensuring the effectiveness of domination and exploitation. Na'im Akbar succinctly explains how the mental control of the oppressed causes personal and collective damage and political passivism: "The slavery that captures the mind and imprisons the motivation, perception, aspiration and identity in a web of anti-self-images, generating a personal and collective self-destruction, is [more cruel] than shackles on the wrists and ankles. The slavery that feeds on the mind, invading the soul of man [or woman], destroying his [or her] loyalties to himself [or herself] and establishing allegiance to forces which destroys him [or her], is an even worse form of capture" (Akbar 1996: v-iv). The mental enslavement of some Oromo elites is the major reason why the Oromo, who comprise the majority of the population in the Ethiopian empire, are vulnerable to being brutalized, murdered, and terrorized by minority Tigrayan elites.

What about the Oromo nationalist elites who are struggling for Oromo national self-determination? Are they

mentally free? Why have they failed to build a united Oromo national leadership? There is no question that most of the founding fathers and mothers of Oromo nationalism were mentally liberated heroes and heroines. They had access to Oromo epistemology, leading them to create the Macha-Tulama Self-Help Association and the Oromo Liberation Front. There have been thousands of Oromo nationalists who have followed in their footsteps and paid dearly. What about other Oromo nationalists (particularly leaders) who have partitioned the Oromo national movement by dividing it into different political factions? Oromo nationalists have failed to unite Oromo divided communities, which have been easily infiltrated by the enemies through clan and/or religious bonds. In addition, because of the inferiority complex that the enemies have inculcated in Oromo minds, some Oromo have failed to respect Oromo leadership, just as Oromo leaders have failed to respect their followers. The nationalist Oromo elites have failed to establish a united national movement by failing to overcome the deeply entrenched divisions created by enemies of the Oromo. Generally speaking, the necessity of liberating the Oromo minds from psychological oppression through liberation knowledge and consciousness-raising is ignored or unrecognized.

Due to their political ignorance and ineptitude, Oromo intellectuals and political leaders have failed to organize the masses into a grassroots movement. Consequently, Oromo collective norms and organizational culture are currently at a rudimentary level. Adversaries of Oromo nationalism have found ample political opportunity to mobilize some Oromo against the Oromo national movement. Without the emancipation of Oromo individuals from the inferiority complex and without overcoming the alien worldview imposed on them, the Oromo cannot have the self-confidence necessary to facilitate individual liberation let alone emancipation and empowerment of Oromo more broadly. Although it is uncomfortable to recognize the impact of the

psychology of oppression on Oromo minds, the Oromo national struggle must engage in mental liberation by restoring Oromo epistemology and building liberation knowledge and political consciousness.

THE RELATION OF KNOWLEDGE TO AGENCY AND ACTIVISM

Our argument is grounded in the assumption that psychological liberation is achieved via the development of political consciousness. In the case of the Oromo, it is essential to critically address the process by which oppression works to deprive its victims psychologically by learning about the bankruptcy of assimilated Oromo elites. Methodologically, we track this process by looking into specific cases of crisis in both individual Oromo biographies and into collective Oromo history. As Hussein A. Bulhan (1985: 55) asserts, "The experience of victimization in oppression produces, on the one hand, tendencies toward rebellion and a search for autonomy and, on the other, tendencies toward compliance and accommodation. Often, the two tendencies coexist among the oppressed, although a predominant orientation can be identified for any person or generation at a given time." The oppressed are chained physically, socially, culturally, politically, and psychologically; hence it is difficult to learn about these problems and search for ways to overcome them. Conscious elements of the oppressed "opts for an introspective approach and emphasizes the need to come to terms with one's self—a self historically tormented by a formidable and oppressive social structure" (Bulhan 1985: 56). As the current national crisis in Ethiopia unfolds, Oromo nationalists should start to engage in critical self-evaluation to identify the impact of oppressive and destructive values and behaviors on Oromo political performance. Without restoring Oromo epistemology and building liberation knowledge, psychological liberation cannot be fully achieved.

Colonialism can be maintained in a couple of ways: by committing genocide or ethnocide and/or by organized cultural destruction or mental genocide and the assimilation of a sector of the colonized population. Ethiopian colonialists expropriated Oromo economic resources and destroyed Oromo epistemology, institutions and cultural experts and leaders; they have also denied the Oromo the opportunity to develop the Oromo system of knowledge by preventing the transmission of Oromo cultural experiences from generation to generation.

All these policies have combined to uproot Oromo cultural identity and to produce individuals who lack self-respect and are submissive and ready to serve the colonialists. Under these conditions, the Oromo basic needs and self-actualizing powers have not been fulfilled. The Ethiopian colonialists—having caused the physical death of millions—have further attempted to eliminate the social and cultural vitality of the Oromo people. Both the Amhara and Tigrayan colonial elites have attempted to destroy or control the Oromo selfhood by denying both Oromo individual selfhood and national self-determination. From all angles, the impact of Habasha policies on Oromo identity has been to prevent the Oromo from achieving clarity and integrity of the Oromo self; they have prevented the Oromo from establishing cultural and historical immortality through the reproduction and recreation of their history, culture and worldview, and from achieving maximum self-determination.

The founding fathers and mothers of Oromo nationalism purposely engaged in political praxis to save the Oromo from psychological, social, cultural, and physical death. Without a measure of self-determination, a person cannot fully satisfy his/her biological and social needs, self-actualize, and engage in praxis as an active agent to transform society and oneself. “Self-determination refers to the process and capacity to choose among alternatives, to determine one’s behavior, and to affect one’s destiny. As such, self-determination assumes a

consciousness of human possibilities, an awareness of necessary constraints, and a willed, self-motivated engagement with one's world" (Bulhan 265). As individuals and groups, the Oromo face the challenge of overcoming this legacy by restoring the cultural and historical knowledge required to achieve their personal and national self-determination. The Oromo have the internal power to make their choices from the best possible alternatives and to have control over what they do. Yet through successive regimes Ethiopian colonialists have assumed almost complete control over the Oromo in an attempt to deny them the right of self-determination, both individually and collectively.

Unfortunately, the oppression is not limited to national borders. Ethiopian colonial education has had psychological impact on Oromo in the diaspora as well, and its ideas have infiltrated diaspora communities and their organizations, systematically dismantling them. Oromo individuals and groups who do not clearly comprehend the essence of self-determination and who do not struggle for it are doomed to alienation from Oromummaa, which is the equivalent of psychological and cultural death. "History and social conditions present [not only] alternatives but also constraints. We can choose to act or not act. But even when we lack alternatives in the world as we find it, we do possess the capacity to interpret and reinterpret, to adopt one attitude and not another. Without the right of self-determination, we are reduced to rigid and automatic behaviors, to a life and destiny shorn of human will and freedom" Bulhan 265-266). The founding fathers and mothers of Oromo nationalism as a social group reclaimed their individual authentic biographies and Oromo collective history and defined the Oromo national problem; they sought the political solution of national self-determination. However, the Ethiopian colonial state killed these leading nationalists. The present Tigrayan-led regime of Ethiopia has continued the same policy of eliminating nationalist leaders whom the state cannot control.

In the capitalist world system, might is right. Those people who cannot empower themselves through liberation knowledge combined with the will to organize and defend themselves in a united movement cannot survive as a people. We know that one of the major reasons that colonialists were able to destroy most indigenous peoples in the world was because these peoples lacked political consciousness, unity and strong organization. "A psychology of liberation would give primacy to the empowerment of the oppressed through organized and socialized activity with the aim of restoring individual biographies and a collective history derailed, stunted, and/or made appendage to those of others. Life indeed takes on morbid qualities and sanity becomes tenuous so long as one's space, time, energy, mobility, and identity are usurped by dint of violence" (Bulhan 277). Oromo elites and leaders must realize that the Oromo cannot achieve their liberation objectives without understanding and overcoming the internalized values that they have learned from their oppressors and the inferiority complex that they are suffering from: "To transform a situation of oppression requires at once a relentless confrontation of oppressors without, who are often impervious to appeals, to reasons or compassion, and an equally determined confrontation of the oppressor within, whose violence can unleash a vicious cycle of auto-destruction to the self as well as to the group" (Bulhan 277-278).

For instance, vicious cycles of auto-destruction recently arose in the Oromo diaspora communities, due to clan and regional politics, as some Oromo groups engaged in the destruction of the OLF from a distance. In my view this phenomenon is a case of failure on the part of the Oromo leadership to confront the oppressor within. By using the tool of liberation knowledge to build political consciousness and restore their usurped biographies and history, the Oromo can confront and defeat the oppressor within. The Oromo national movement is still suffering from the oppressor within and the lack of effective leadership. Since the Oromo masses were not

organized and educated in the politics and psychology of liberation, they were passive politically until November 2015. At that juncture the masses joined the Oromia-wide protest movement led by students from elementary, high school and university. As Gilly Adolfo (1967 [1965: 2] states, "Liberation does not come as a gift from anybody; it is seized by the masses with their own hands. And by seizing it they themselves are transformed; confidence in their own strength soars, and they turn their energy and their experience to the tasks of building, governing, and deciding their own lives for themselves." Likewise, Oromo liberation can only be achieved by the active participation of an effective portion of the Oromo people.

Developing national Oromummaa among the Oromo elites and masses is the path to increase Oromo self-discovery and self-acceptance. Even as the Oromo people are gradually overcoming political ignorance, passivity and both national and individual perceptions of inferiority, the Oromo national movement continues to face multi-faceted problems. Patricia Hill Collins (1990: 227) in her book Black Feminist Thought has argued that, "People experience and resist oppression on three levels: the level of personal biography; the group or community level of the cultural context…and the systematic level of social institutions." Since the Oromo have experienced oppression in these three areas they as a people are faced with challenging and overcoming multiple levels of domination and dehumanization through multiple approaches and actions simultaneously. First, developing individual political consciousness through liberation knowledge can generate social change by creating a sphere of freedom through the power of self-definition. Collins' work reveals this step to be absolutely necessary for the liberation of the mind. Without liberated thinking, the Oromo cannot resist oppression on the multiple complex levels required. Dominant groups oppose such mental liberation, and emply institutions such as schools, churches or mosques, media, law and other formal

organizations to stifle expression and to inculcate worldviews which restrict free thinking and limit our minds. According to Collins (1990: 229), "Domination operates by seducing, pressuring, or forcing … members of subordinated groups to replace individual and cultural ways of knowing with the dominant group's specialized thought. As a result … 'the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situation which we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor which is planted deep within each of us.' Or…'revolution begins with the self, in the self.'" Every Oromo must be continuously reminded and educated to pursue his/her individual freedom and psychological empowerment. "Empowerment involves rejecting the dimensions of knowledge, whether personal, cultural, or institutional, that perpetuate objectification and dehumanization … individuals in subordinate groups become empowered when we understand and use those dimensions of our individual, group, and disciplinary ways of knowing that foster our humanity as fully human subjects" (Collins 1990: 230).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Currently the Oromo national movement is at a crossroads. It is a moment when capitalist globalization and the Ethiopian empire state are facing their deepest crises. Despite the fact that national Oromummaa has been developing and that the Oromo national struggle has achieved an ideological and moral victory over the particular form of Ethiopian colonialism designed by the TPLF-led government, the Oromo national movement still lacks organizational capacity. Although the Oromo nation has been mobilized to protest against the Addis Ababa Master Plan starting in November 2015 under the leadership of students, the lack of organizational capacity and military power, has left thousands of people defenseless -- vulnerable to be gunned down, beaten, tortured, and imprisoned by forces of the government and its

security apparatus, the army and the police. So what should be done?

The first priority is to restore the Oromo epistemology and original culture that empowered the Oromo people during the age of the Oromo gadaa civilization. The knowledge and ideology that the Oromo elites have borrowed from Ethiopian institutions, foreign religious institutions, and Western and Eastern civilizations are unsuitable for developing liberation knowledge and building the kind of independent institutions capable of liberating Oromo society and building a free and egalitarian democratic society. The second priority is to liberate the minds of Oromo elites who hold colonial and imperial knowledge in higher regard than the sacred knowledge of their own tradition. Through this sort of worship of alien knowledge they end up serving the interests the enemies of Oromo society at the cost of their people. These elites include both the servants of the enemy and those who are not committed to participate in the Oromo national struggle because of their opportunism and/or lack of Oromo knowledge, culture and history. These elites function as a kind of "collaborator class" whose influence must be curtailed by any means necessary. This not possible without overcoming the regional and religious affiliations these collaborators used to divide our people and empower their enemies over them. Furthermore, the lack of ideological clarity, political confusion, and organizational and leadership shortcomings in the Oromo national movement are internal problems that hinder the movement from building strong national political leadership and organizational capacity.

These leadership and organizational weaknesses have allowed the Tigrayan-led government to terrorize and repress Oromo society and loot their resources despite the fact that there are several millions of Oromo who are determined to fight and die for the liberation of their people and country. Specifically, with the mobilization the entire Oromo society to oppose the so-called "Addis Ababa Master Plan" and the land

grab policy generally, the Tigrayan-led regime is engaging in genocidal massacres, beatings, imprisonment and torture of Oromo school children and others starting in November 2015. The saving of the Oromo people from extermination requires being serious about solving the problems of leadership and organizational crises. As I argue here, the best route to achieve that is through total mobilization of human, intellectual and cultural resources at the grassroots and national levels.

Oromo activists must be able to mobilize every self-respecting Oromo to engage in self- and national emancipation. All Oromo must realize that it is necessary to have state power to make sure that the Oromo nation and Oromia survive. Critically comprehending these complex problems and solving them require developing and applying liberation knowledge and avoiding common sense politics. Oromo nationalists in general and the Oromo political leadership in particular have yet to fulfill their national obligation of enabling the Oromo nation to liberate itself from all forms oppression, degradation, and abject poverty.

The Tigrayan-led regime is completing the forced removal of the Oromo from the areas surrounding Finfinnee. It has settled millions of armed Tigrayan settlers in Oromia by removing the Oromo from their ancestral homelands. Furthermore, it has already leased several million hectares of Oromo lands to so-called "investors", such as the Chinese government as well as Arab, Indian, Malaysian, Israeli, and European business people and local capitalists. This has only been made possiblle by evicting Oromo farmers from their lands. To achieve its political and economic objectives, the Tigrayan-led regime engages in political repression, state terrorism, genocidal massacres, and gross human rights violations in Oromia and beyond. What amounts to genocidal massacres carried out by the regime to make way for investors face little or no opposition from Western powers, particularly the United States, but also China, an emerging imperialist power. All these crimes against humanity are committed

while Ethiopia is officially recognized as a protector of democracy, human rights, and development.

Oromo religious institutions, while participating in mobilizing their nation for liberation from Ethiopian colonialism, have other obligations. It is their historical obligation to restore authentic Oromo culture, identity, history, names and the Oromo personality that have been attacked and undermined by imperial and colonial cultures and worldviews in the name of borrowed religions. As Jewish, Habasha, and Euro-American cultures should be separated from Christianity, Arab culture must be separated from Islam. Both Oromo Muslims and Christians can build on these respective religions based on authentic Oromo culture that helps in overcoming inferiority complex and in developing Oromo dignity and personality in ways that cannot be adulterated by colonial and imperial cultures. While maintaining their respective religions, Christian and Muslim Oromo can learn many lessons from indigenous Oromo religion that protected the Oromo democratic tradition from tyranny by teaching to disobey leaders who would like to undermine gadaa. All Oromo religions have a national obligation to participate in the Oromo national struggle to liberate Oromia and Oromo society to freely build their institutions such as mosques, churches and other religions centers in their country, and to work for improving the living conditions of Oromo society while teaching about life after death. Oromo followers of Waqqefanna, Islam and Christianity need to engage in interfaith dialogue without being religious chauvinists and extremists because lack of critical knowledge about religions, and also need to start developing national Oromummaa that would reflect the diversity of Oromo society.

Recent Oromo earth-shaking peaceful protests demonstrate that national Oromummaa and the Oromo agency have developed in a fulsome manner throughout the entire Oromo society. Oromo Diaspora communities are gradually overcoming the backward-looking worldviews that divided

and made them powerless. Most of them are united to support protest movements and the Oromo national struggle in Oromia and beyond. These are great victories that must be built on to defeat the enemy and to facilitate the organization capacity building of the Oromo national movement. This is a natural route to creating Oromo national power and achieving the objectives of the Oromo national movement. Establishing a state that reflects the gadaa/siqqee principles and other best elements of democracy would eliminate all forms of social hierarchies and exploitation by destroying all forms of tyranny from outside and inside. Oromo society should avoid the pitfalls of other national movements that only achieved "flag independence" replacing external tyranny with internal one. This can take place by focusing on dismantling Tigrayan colonialism and ethnocracy. Oromo movements at the grassroots are starting to discuss how they can construct their state on the foundation of the Oromo democratic tradition that would empower the Oromo people to achieve true liberation by restoring kayyo and saafu that capitalists try to destroy.

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THE MATTER OF LAND IS A MATTER OF LIFE "DUBBIIN LAFAA, DUBBII LAFEETI": EXAMINING CULTURAL MESSAGES IN AN OROMO PROTEST SONG, "KA'I QEERROO"

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In a cell phone video released January 2016, a large crowd of men are shown to have gathered in the Oromia town of Hirna, all with their *mancaa*, chanting and moving from foot to foot. A *mancaa*, a simple hoeing instrument with a rounded metal blade attached to a wooden stick, denotes a man's livelihood as a farmer and is held with pride. On this same day, thousands of miles away in Oslo, Norway, Oromo women were gathered to demonstrate in the streets holding Oromo banners and dressed in bright sheeting of red, green and yellow with emblems of trees (*odaa*) beaded onto their headbands. Both Oromo groups were raising their voices in protest. Both were responding to threats of the takeover of Oromo ancestral lands by the Ethiopian government. Both were asserting their cultural and spiritual connections to land and displaying symbols central to Oromo identity. Many of the participants on both sides of the oceans were mobilized in part by protest songs conveyed in music videos. This paper examines and unpacks some of the layers of meaning in one of

those sophisticated songs through a close analysis of the key cultural symbols and codes expressed in the lyrics and images.

Land dispossession throughout Oromia is not a new phenomenon. Efforts to dislodge the Oromo from their land has historical depth reaching to the imperial conquest of the nineteenth century and earlier. In the past five years in particular, many Oromo have been forcibly relocated and have lost access to their family farming and grazing lands due to massive government programs which actively promote large-scale foreign and domestic agricultural and industrial corporations to invest in Ethiopia through contracted land leases.[33] The governments of Meles Zenawi and Hailemarian Dessalegn have been accused of forced removals, political coercion, and imprisonment even before the design of a "Master Plan" (Integrated Regional Development Plan) for Addis Ababa was disclosed in April 2014 in the Ethiopian media.[34] In fact, the Master Plan for Addis Ababa served as the initial trigger, but was not the underlying cause of the widespread protests. Proof of this premise lies in the continuation of the protests after the government officially

33 The award of millions of hectares of land by the Ethiopian government to foreign and local investors has taken place without the income from the contracts passing to the departing inhabitants who are forced into makeshift settlements across the country or to seek refuge elsewhere.

34 The Master Plan was designed to move arable Oromo farm land from the jurisdiction of the National Regional State of Oromia to the control of the federal government. This rapid growth development plan, part of a "developmental state" approach to increasing economic growth, involved expanding the size of Addis Ababa to twenty times its current scope. The design had been drawn up without involvement of Oromia representatives in government, without much, if any, public scrutiny and in a virtual blackout of scholarly research or media attention to the impact on the affected farmers and livestock herders who were displaced. Once revealed, the contours of confiscation, including removal of established familial dwelling places, water sources, sacred groves, and ancestral lands, increased pollution, and the outright loss of livelihood, resonated with Oromo and some other populations across the country who joined the protests.

suspended the Master Plan in mid-January 2016. Fellow scholars have documented key aspects of the historical, political, economic, and human rights dimensions of the systematic and large-scale dispossession and transfer of Oromo land to investors and planners.

Oromo protests (#OromoProtests) were fueled by longstanding grievances at being marginalized, repressed and displaced from their lands by the current and previous governments under a number of guises. Initially, protests erupted in April of 2014 when the Master Plan was first made public. A second outbreak of more sustained protests began on November 12, 2015. Thereafter, demonstrations quickly spread across the face of Oromia and the Oromo Diaspora. From east to west, north to south and especially in the central zones of Oromia, protesters, led by young people collectively referred to as qeerroo and qarree, were composed largely of students, farmers, and supportive townspeople. They marched and chanted similar slogans. Demonstrations in the global Diaspora expressed support for the Oromo in Ethiopia and called for awareness from the international community. At home and abroad, Oromo united through protests broadcast daily on social media and framed through music videos and popular song lyrics. In June/July of 2016 Amhara youth joined in protesting land policy, i.e., government appropriation of land that lies at the border between Tigray and Amhara regions.

The Oromo have a long tradition of using song to interpret current and past events within an Oromo worldview. These often provide a summons to action as well. A prominent form of such performance is known as *geerarsa*. As the protests unfolded, widespread demonstrations (#OromoProtests) were informed and stimulated by cultural messaging in song and poetry. Songs, in particular, provided near instantaneous and deeply felt interpretation of land confiscation and other events over which the Oromo express grievance. What the Ethiopian government has confronted

beginning in 2016 has been the power of a modernization of a dynamic cultural art form embedded in Oromo traditions of interpreting their situation and affirming their identity, now amplified via modern media.

In response to the *Ka'i Qeerroo* song and video performed as *geerarsa*, protestors were immediately and intimately aware that the actions taken by the government to implement the Addis Ababa Master Plan specifically targeted and violated the fertile *garra*, [often translated either as "belly" or "heart" in English] of the Oromo nation. *Geerarsa* immediately signaled the historic significance of this development. Listeners were reminded that the positioning of Addis Ababa into Oromia as the administrative center of Ethiopia following the conquests of Emperor Menelik in the late nineteenth century created a significant disruption in the life of the Oromo. Menelik's capital city, Addis Ababa [translated as "new flower" in Amharic] was situated at the site of a ritual center – the crossroads between Oromo regions, occupying the most centrally-located territory within Oromia. We argue that ongoing land confiscation and the further loss of land projected by the Master Plan, recorded in the song *Ka'i Qeerroo*, prompted an instinctual response among the Oromo for two reasons. First, in the song, the targeted government expansion into the Oromo nation was depicted as a takeover the navel or umbilicus (*handhurraa*), the site considered to be the life-giving center of Oromia. Secondly, it signaled that what had been regarded as sacred was despoiled and, hence, all Oromo were equally vulnerable and slated to be similarly dispossessed across the full expanse of Oromia. The public expressions of resistance coincided with a surge in the cultural production of the type of protest music, particularly the *geerarsa.*

The 40 million Oromo who reside in Ethiopia are quite diverse in terms of religion, livelihood, and political affiliation. Yet Oromo from every region, religion, profession, education level, gender, and age have consistently reacted to

land confiscation in a shared response tellingly revealed through interrelated forms of Oromo expressive culture: protest songs and the icons of Oromo identity they espouse. As public gatherings were increasingly dangerous and rare in the climate in which these songs first emerged, singers and song writers were quite effective in overcoming the restrictions on public assembly, successfully using art to convey the scope and implication of the land loss that Oromo face. These artists created and expanded an established legacy of reaching, enlightening, rousing, and mobilizing disparate Oromo groups, of delivering hope and sustenance through depictions in *geerarsa* of the strength and resilience of *Oromummaa*, and of helping a nation to mourn.

"KA'I QEERROO": PROTEST SONG AND VIDEO

Since late 2015, protest chants and songs, including the revival of *geerarsa*, gained unprecedented popularity across the country. Particularly fueled by the narrowing of democratic space and the near total absence of opportunity for face-to-face forums to carry out deliberation, young Oromo with access to social media and the bootleg music industry voraciously consumed and discussed this form of music.

In the Ka'i Qeerroo music video Hawi Tazara appears attired in simulated leather situated in green space. She raises her hands while performing *geerarsa*, an ancient form of communicative art that is usually male-dominated. Use of *geerarsa* alerts listeners of the historic continuation of land confiscation while calling young people – both male and female – to action in response to government takeover of lands, resources, livelihood and sacred nurturing home spaces.

The *Ka'i Qeerroo* music video with key images of land, cows, the Oromo national banner[35], protestors marching, and the singer with her arms variously raised and crossed over her head, instantly became popular and was shared widely on social media with tens of thousands of "likes" and "shares" within days of the YouTube release on December 16, 2015. This release was close to a month after the initial response in Ginchii to renewed implementation of the Master Plan for Addis Ababa. Subsequently, others followed suit to create their own videos with images of the struggle.

The value of the lyrics of *Ka'i Qeerroo* for our purposes here is to provide a window into Oromo culture and cosmology through its use of sacred natural allusions—to fertility, intimacy with the natural world, social connection, vital sustenance and sacred resources on which life depends. It compels the viewer and listener to appreciate what is at stake for the Oromo who are being separated from the parts of the natural world that nurtured their ancestors and should, by all measure, nurture their offspring.

The song *Ka'i Qeerroo* expands the use of a traditionally male art form, *geerarsa*, a heartfelt personal narrative account about tribulation and triumph. It is invoked here in the voice of a woman – calling to young people and to mothers who will not sit while their sons are falling. This song upon release was

35 The red and green odaa tree flag with sunburst was long attributed by Ethiopian authorities solely to the Oromo Liberation Front rather than a general sign of national pride.

celebrated for acknowledging the participation of women activists in the protests. This *geerarsa* is, in part, framed as a woman's message. As such, it invites us to explore some of the little-examined roles that women play, not only in knowingly and effectively instilling deep-seated values when teaching the Oromo language to their children but also in instructing them and interpreting for them Oromo precepts in the intimacy of the home (*q'ee* and *arradda*). One of the key messages of the song is the importance of protecting that intimate nurturing formative home space.

The form and content underscore that women have not only given birth to the youngsters who were protesting in the streets, it highlights that women also conveyed to this generation the cultural messaging which enable it to embrace *Oromummaa* and to so clearly articulate the essence of *abba biyummaa*.[36] This is despite the fact that the cohort in the streets and in detention at the time that the song was heralded came of age entirely since 1991, i.e., they were raised under the administration of a government that did not welcome or appreciate their Oromo cultural heritage or honor their legacy.

Examining the cultural messaging in a popular song, particularly one as complex as *geerarsa*, poses several challenges. First, there is the matter of establishing "accuracy" in working from a video recording of a performance. We did not utilize a written text of the lyrics of *Ka'i Qeerroo* which might have introduced an inappropriate notion of "inerrancy." We relied on what was heard and understood by a wide range of Oromo listeners. Secondly, in several places we encountered differences reported in the meaning of what was heard.[37] We have decided to include a range of interpretation attributed to the oral message. Moreover, the multiplicity of

36 ***Abba biyummaa*** refers to the collective right (sovereignty) of the Oromo to exert custodial care over their lands and their affairs as they deem appropriate without external interference.

meaning in much of the song text allows listeners to interpret according to their own experiences and perspectives and resonates with a broad population who are linguistically and geographically diverse.

OROMO-ENGLISH EXPLORATION OF "KA'I QEERROO" [38]

The song is presented as follows:
Afaan Oromo lyrics are transcribed as heard by listeners in ***bold italicized font***
Translation into English from Afaan Oromo lyrics are - indented with text in plain font. Brief cultural interpretations intended to convey concepts in [brackets and *italics*].

Title: *Ka'i Qeerroo* – Rise Up, Young Heroes[39]

Mee, Ka'ee geeraruu ree, quuqaa kan garaa koo jiru

- I am compelled to rise up and sing *geerarsa* (a song of heroism and struggle) to express the grievance that is lodged in my heart.
  [Interpretation: I must get something off my chest. This is a call to action. "Let's rise up" in this context means, 'Are you ready?' 'It's our time!' Time for

38 Recorded and transmitted in the following performance: **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIkYYRtulh.** The video contains two related songs. This translation is of the first portion, ending at 3:42 minutes.
The visual images available in the video are a combination of the original production with overlays added later by a different producer. The later releases were edited by Abrahaam Raayyaa.

39 Vocal lyrics transcribed and rendered from Afaan Oromo to English by Lubee Birru and Bonnie Holcomb with grateful acknowledgement to Kuwee Kumsa for extensive and insightful comments and to Ezekiel Gebissa, editor of the volume for which this was originally intended, and to several others who explained in various ways how they understood the song's message. Authors assume responsibility for the form of the final translation of language phrases as heard by listeners to the oral performance transmitted on video as well as for interpretation.

change, time to challenge the status-quo, stagnation etc.]

Hafuura baafadhuu ree!

- By exhaling (singing out), I unleash my spirit, my breath.

  [Interpretation: I am venting/expressing what has been blocked within me. I am also calling for the control and the composure to take on the challenge with confidence. It is a process which requires calmness. It's urgent to rise up, but it is important to address this matter with maturity.]

Dubartiin hin geerartu enyuu tu jedhee murteesse?

- Whoever decided that women should not sing *geerarsa*?

  [Interpretation: There is no authority or reason that women cannot participate in the old tradition of expressing grievance or heartache in song. This highlights the collective contribution women make, but also paves a way for women to be part of the process which they aren't typically involved in. This is progressive and gives credibility to women's empowerment and importance of their participation.]

Dubartiin haadha dhiiraa, goota finiiina deesse

- It is women who give birth to strong, passionate heroes.

  [Interpretation: Being a hero is not determined by gender; women who give birth to (and raise up) heroes are also patriots. Women are the back bone of our society.]

Hoo ilmi jiksee lolu hinilaaltu teesse, hinilaaltu teesse (ilmi)

- When a man (her son) wrestles an enemy to the ground, a woman (his mother) is not a mere spectator.

  [Interpretation: Women are not indifferent or sitting on the sidelines when action is required. They act with the family. This is a specific mention of all the mothers

who have suffered loss of their young. It uses common references to honor mothers as known contributors.]

Ilaameeti yaa ijoollee, yaa joollee biyya kooti, kan hundeen Oromootii

- Hear me, oh children, children of my country, whose roots are Oromo
  [Interpretation: Children produced in this country are part of it, their identity is one; they are Oromo.]

Finfinnee handhuurri koo

- Finfinnee is my umbilicus.
  [Interpretation: Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) is the source through which life flowed into me, it is my connection with the life-giving land. (See extended discussion of ***handhuuraa*** *below).]*

Biyya Tufaa Munaa tii

- It is Tufaa Munaa's country.
  [Interpretation: This home that is my lifeline, Finfinnee, is also the country through which life flowed to Tufaa Munaa[40]*, the great Oromo leader from the part of Oromia that was taken to become Addis Ababa. Tufaa Muna never agreed to accept Menelik's rule. In retaliation, Menelik selected his personal homestead and the intimate center of his home, i.e., his personal* ***araddaa,*** *to locate the imperial palace. This was perceived by all as a personal attack on Tufa Muna. By doing this Menelik supplanted Tufaa Muna, publicly humiliating him and those who followed and respected him. By extending the takeover of Tufaa Muna's country in the current day, TPLF is saying to Oromo: "We are finishing Menelik's job of taking over Tufa Munaa's part of Oromia despite your resistance."*]

Diinni hirriiba dhabee akaa biyya abbaa dhabe

- The enemy toils without sleep as if he had lost his own fathers' land.[41]
  [*Interpretation: The enemy of the Oromo toils restlessly working day and night as if to lay claim to his own heritage. But it is not his, he has no claim at all!*]

Oromiyaa nu dhaaluuf wallitti lallabe. Oromia wallitti lallabe, wallitti lallabe

- They call out to each other, claiming Oromia, our inheritance, as their own.
  [*Interpretation: It is not their inheritance, it is ours. Yet they are calling and calling to one another over our heads as if we are not there, as if we don't hear them, lusting after our land, Oromia.*]

Chorus: ***Finfinnee, roobsi cabbii***

- In Finfinnee the hail/sleet falls.
  [*Interpretation: Let the sleet, the hail of resistance (or revolution), descend on all Oromia, starting with Finfinnee. Things are changing. Oromia is on the verge of revolution which reaches every corner of the territory.*]
- The sleet (small hard ice pellets which indicate the extremes of weather) pelt down
  On Sulutaa,
  On Sabbataa
  On Dukami,

41 There is an Oromo proverb "***biyya abba hinqabnee harree dhaan itti garaaman***" which states that when the land/country is up for grabs, when there is no *abbaa*/caretaker/father/owner, everyone scrambles to grab it. Some listeners, not all, attributed the allusion "***biya abbaa dhabee*** ["like land missing its father"] as resonating with that proverb. In other words, the land is being treated as if it doesn't belong to anyone in particular, with the result that the ones who are the real historic caretakers are pushed aside for anyone who can grab it.

On Laga Xaafoo
On Buraayyuu
On Holotaa

Abbaan biyyaa Oromoodha, irra nu aansi, Rabbii!

- The father/nurturer/custodian of this country is Oromo, let God/***Rabbii*** help us to prevail.
- [*Interpretation: The authority over this land derives from the family being produced here, belonging here and assuming, as does a father, a responsibility for the well-being of the resources, animals and people. 'O God, who gave us this land, raise us, make us strong, give us victory in this struggle. We don't look elsewhere for the strength we need for the task.']*

Abbaa biyyaa Oromumaa, irra nu aansi, Rabbii!

- The father/nurturer/custodian of this land is Oromo; O, God, put us on top!
  [Interpretation: The Oromo hold the moral authority over this land because they nurture it and are the real caretakers of the country—a responsibility that derives from Oromo cultural principles. May God empower us to prevail.]

Master planii keessani nuti hinbeeknu! Hinfeenu!

- (*addressed to government officials*) We don't want your "Master Plan." We don't want it.
- [*Interpretation: We don't know anything about your "Master Plan" for our land. We won't accept it. This is alien/foreign to us. This decision was made without consideration of our input. We don't recognize it; we don't like it; we have no use for it. Take it back!*]

Lafa akaawoo kiyaa, lafa akaakayyuu kiyyaa

- This is my grandmother's land, my grandfather's land

[*Interpretation: I am inextricably attached to this particular land. It is part of my heritage from female and male ancestors*.]

Hin mummurinaa, dhiisaa, lafaa akaakayyu kiyyaa, hin tuttuqinaa

- Don't cut it into little pieces! Stop it!! It is my ancestors' land. Don't touch us!
  [*Interpretation: Don't cut up our heritage, our source of life, like you would dismember/carve up/butcher an animal that has been slain! Cease and desist! Hands off! It is an outrage! Keep your hands off of us!]*

Hin mummurinaa, dhiisa! Hin tuttuqinaa, dhisaa!

- Don't cut us up! Don't violate the lands of our forebears. Don't poke around in our intimate space. Stop it now!
  [Interpretation: You are out of line! Don't provoke us by inappropriate grabbing. Don't violate us by poking your fingers in our untouchable, inviolable personal space. It is improper! Stop it! Leave us alone!]

Hin mummurinaa dhiisa, hin tuttuqinaa dhiisa!

- Repeated: Don't cut us up into pieces, don't poke around in our personal space. Hands off!
  [Interpretation: You are crossing the line of impropriety by touching our most intimate parts! If we respond we will be within our rights!]

Lafa akaakilii keenyaa loon keenyatuu irra ciisa, gota akaakilee keenya loon kenya [x 3]

- The bones of our ancestors rest on the land where the offspring of our forebears' livestock rest. Repeated three times.
  [Interpretation: The connection we have is so significant that the bones of our forebears are buried

at the very place where generations of the family's cattle lie peacefully on the earth with us – where they belong. The intricate intermingling of bones with the earth make the place inextricably connected with us, sacred and inalienable. The implication is that the nexus of generations of cattle and human beings lay claim to the land. It is where they have always belonged and should be left to lie in peace, undisturbed. The alternative is a violation.]

"Sirrii isin galchina" jettee, Abbay Saayiyyeenii

- "We will set you straight!" said, Abbay Tsehaye.[42]
  [Interpretation: The well-known TPLF party official has publicly threatened and demeaned us, saying, "Just you wait. We will control you and straighten you Oromo out. We will show you that you should not interfere with development which is our business, the government's business!"
  (This offers a strong counterpoint to the image of peaceful existence of cattle resting on the land and identifies the party officials and their agents as the violators who destroy the well-being.)]

Biyyi tiyyas takkuma lubbun kootis tanuma

- I have only one country and I have only one life.
  [Interpretation: My land is one and the same with my life and my soul; there is no difference.]

Maal yoon ta'e biyyee, mall yoon ta'e biyyee

42 Abbay Tsehaye is referenced by name and quoted in the song for his high-handed denigrating of the Oromo. Abbaye Tsehaye was the government official who, in a publicly televised encounter on Ethiopian television sternly warned Oromo representatives who objected to the Master Plan for Addis Ababa, saying, "We will straighten you out."

- Why should it be an issue, if I became part of the earth right here?
  [Interpretation: When we die, we turn into soil itself. Why not here? For the sake of our land, we ourselves will become dirt. We might as well stay here and die so that our bodies join the bones of our ancestors, rather than disintegrate in some other alien place.]

Goota ariin manaa baasee yertuun maqaa yakkitii

- The hero who leaves the house in a rage is vilified by small-minded persons.
  [*Interpretation: Heroes who act with passion are subject to criticism by small minded people.*]

Gowwaaf dubbiin hin galuu. qomoo ofii gurgurtii, lafa Oromo gurgurtii, lafa Oromo gurgurtii

- The foolish do not understand these things. They sell out their own close family members and even sell out their own land, Oromia.
  [Interpretation: Foolish, shortsighted people who do not understand what is at stake – implied OPDO collaborators –they betray their own family lineage, their people, for short-term gain by informing on them; by selling land they let go of their heritage without realizing what they have destroyed, or have opened the way for others to destroy.]

Chorus

Roobsa galaana biifa

- When the fine rain falls, it accumulates in rivers and ponds (***galaana***) across Oromia. [*Interpretation: Repeated: Water from the sky reaches from every corner of Oromia and fills the area creating ponds. Change comes through the combined efforts of each person who asserts himself or herself; small pieces of ice can come together from many corners taking many*

forms to become a flood that cannot be contained. The small pellets falling on all parts of Oromia join to form an unstoppable force.]

Roobsi cabbii (cabbii isaa or cabbii kaa)

- Let the hail/sleet fall
  [Interpretation: The hail, hard pellets of resistance are falling across Oromia indicating a coming revolution.]
  On *Bishooftuu*
  On *Galaan*
  On *Caancoo*
  On *Arsii*
  On *Dirree [Dawaa]*
  On *Baalee*
  On *Adaamaa*

Abbaan biyyaa Oromoa dhaa, irra nu ansii, Rabbi, x 2

- The authority/custodian over this country is the Oromo. Rabbi, give us strength to overcome *[Interpretation: Give the ones who truly care and love this land, its rightful owners, the strength to overcome the adversity we face. Here the concept of* ***abba biyummaa,*** *which inspired and powered the protests, is clearly articulated. It presents a rationale for sovereignty, spelling out the dimensions. The custodial responsibility for managing the land and its people is rightfully carried out by guardians who receive the role of sustaining family and resources via hereditary lineage and embrace a sacred commitment to sustain those resources for future generations.]*

Oromo saba bal'aa, warra qe'en guddaa, araddaa hin buqqistanii!

- Oromo is a great nation; its homestead is expansive; you will never be able to uproot us from our most sacred ancestral space ***araddaa***[43].
  [Interpretation: The Oromo are a big nation who live in a vast homeland which they have sustained for eons. You will not be able to target its sacred grounds within the common dwelling; you will not succeed in pulling out or taking over our most precious spaces!]

Mormi koo haa citu malee, haa darbu lubbuun koo illee, Oromiyaa dirree gudda

- If my neck is cut and my soul departs, I will remain here on my large and lush home, Oromia
  [Interpretation: I would rather let my neck be slashed and my soul escape than lose this wide and fertile home. If I am going to die, let my soul depart here on my beautiful country rather than in some unknown place.]

Kenninee callisnaa ree, fixnee mancaafna malee; dhumnee mancaana malee, dhumnee mancaana malee,

- We will not quietly give up the land. Either we will destroy and banish them or we will be destroyed and be banished in this place.
  [Interpretation: *We are going to finish or be finished here on the land. Are we going to keep quiet and give those who come to take our land the thing that is most precious to us? No, we will not give up the land and stay quiet. We will use our tools (**mancaa** hoes and reapers) to protect our people! We will finish (verb-**mancaasuu**) those who come into our land to attack us. We are destroyed either way; we might as well*

43 The ***araddaa*** is the intimate space, near sacrosanct, in the center of the Oromo family compound.

defend our land with what we have and die here than be driven somewhere else to die there!]

[Note: please correct format]Uumaa tu nu uumee hangana guddisee, hedduunu baayyisse***

- It is our Creator who brought us forth, who took care of us to this day and blessed us to become numerous. [*Interpretation: The same divine Creator who gave us life, also blessed us with (and through) this great gift of abundant land and made us thrive. That is why we are so great and so many*.]

Lukkuun hin iyyitee laftis bariyuufi –

- Chickens make noises that start the process of waking to a new day.
  [*Interpretation: Like the chickens (specifically hens/females) whose rustling and chirping are the very first signal that the dawn of a new day approaches. The hens wake the rooster and then the rooster rouses the household. What is happening in Oromia alerts us that a new morning is coming, i.e., small but significant warnings.*]

Ka'i Oromo dammaqi bilisoomuudhaafii!

- O, Oromo, wake up! Rise up! The morning of freedom is coming!
  [*Interpretation: Be roused from your slumbers. The darkness of night is over and no one can stop the inevitable dawning of the morning light. Freedom is upon us!*]

Qotee bulaa fincilii, maal barataa qoftii?

- Farmers, wake up and actively resist. Shall the students stand alone?
  [*Interpretation: Farmers, come out of your dark night and break your chains, throw off what impedes you.*

Resist like a strong mule resists what he will not tolerate. Be out of control. Refuse to be bound.]

Warra guddaadha malee koo lammiim joortuu mitii x 2

- We are a great people, not an aimless people.
  [*Interpretation: We are not wanderers on the territories of others with nowhere to call our own. We have created and been brought to life on a great land to which we are connected. We are not homeless. We are at home.]*

Chorus
Roobsii cabbi

- Let the hail (sleet) come down!
  On *Booranaa*
  On *Wollo*
  On *Amboo*
  On *Dembii [Dolo]*
  On *Qellem*
  On *Shambuu*

Abbaan biyyaa Oromo dha, irra nu aansi, Rabbii

- The father [nurturer/loving caretaker] of the land is Oromo. O, God give us the strength to overcome. Put us on top.
  [Interpretation: May God help the Oromo to prevail over those who would take the ancestral land out of the hands of the Oromo, who make the land thrive (are father to it) and are its rightful protectors. This is another articulation of ***abba biyummaa****, which, for this generation embodies the concepts of* ***Oromummaa****,* ***dhugguma*** *and* ***bilisummaa*** *of the previous generation without appealing explicitly to any of them, rather championing this practical approach.]*

CULTURAL MESSAGING IN "KA'I" QEERROO

When the video of *Ka'i Qeerroo* produced by Raayyaa was released, the production was accompanied by an eclectic series of powerful images – protestors moving through towns in Oromia, bleeding broken bodies on gurneys with the *odaa* banner inserted onto the foreground, the singing Hawwii depicted in a rural area raising her fist, images of Oromo diaspora groups and figures like Bekele Gerba[44], women in traditional dress with beadwork at their foreheads and long cloth belts at their waists, elders attired in traditional garb associated with the *gadaa* and resting cows juxtaposed with images of the sprawling capital Addis Ababa.

As this song and the accompanying images which were applied to the final production gained popularity throughout Oromia in the Oromo diaspora, the performer, Hawwi Tazaraa herself, was arrested, beaten, detained and tortured by the Ethiopian authorities, accused of contributing to "instability" in Ethiopia by instigating unrest through her music. Upon release, her situation deteriorated. When she was returned to the hospital, she helped to make popular a gesture of solidarity with the protesters by crossing her wrists above her head from her gurney – a sign universally recognized as one of nonviolent defiance, indicating bound wrists, hands free of weapons in a defensive, non-threatening pose. Following that hospital admission, Hawwi was eventually released, returned again to prison and, ultimately released under restrictions that have not been disclosed.

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44 The appearance of Bekele Gerba's photograph in the first moments of the song was a grim reminder of the cost of protest. He was free at the time of the video release, but after his arrest on December 23, 2015, his image on the video came to stand for the tens of thousands who then languished in prison. Bekele, an outspoken advocate of non-violent civil resistance had translated the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. into the Oromo language. His arrest by Federal Police in December 2015 was carried out under the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation.

As noted above, at the early stage of the protests, when this video became available in December 16, 2015, Oromo students and farmers were responding to the immediate prospect of the takeover of Addis Ababa at the center of Oromia by means of implementing the "Integrated Development Master Plan for Addis Ababa and its Surroundings." The singer is depicted in the music video and lyrics as a daughter of the land of Tufaa Munaa, the famous Oromo leader of 1880s, who aroused the ire of the Shoan King Menelik by refusing to submit to Menelik's overlordship or give up his land to the monarch. Tufa Munaa's story of dispossession and disgrace has many dimensions that tie the present to the past in significant ways. The story of Tufaa Munaa is a central referent in this song and to its translation and symbolic interpretation of history, culture and politics in Ethiopia. Menelik's decision to locate his capital in the middle of Oromo country to secure a military conquest was strategic; it provided the central connection for laying down institutional structures for administration of the recently-conquered regions. According to Oromo oral historians, not only did Menelik take over Tufaa Munaa's broad farming and grazing lands in creating Addis Ababa in retaliation for Tufa Munaa's resistance, but he went so far as to locate his own palace on the *araddaa*, the inner sanctum, of Tufa Munaa's home. This is widely perceived as an act of personal vindictiveness and revenge on Menelik's part. References in *Ka'i Qeerroo* to Tufa Munaa as well as *akkawoo* and *akaakoo*, grandmother and grandfather, who have kept this story alive in song and verse, clearly communicates that today's effort by the Ethiopian regime to forcefully dislodge the Oromo from Finfinnee is historical and continuous.

The severance of people from their home environs violates a core principle of Oromo cosmology– that human beings are created as a part of the natural universe and sustained only by an intimate connection with that universe through life-giving resources. Land, with its water, trees,

animals, vegetation, pollinators, etc., is inseparable from human life. In this sense, people's connection with land is often expressed as that of an umbilicus (*handhurra*) through which the essentials for living are delivered. In the video, sweeping shots of the rural agricultural landscape of Oromia coupled with images of cattle/livestock (*loon*), who eat the grass and provide milk and meat for human beings, and the sacred trees (*odaa*) that sustain vegetation interspersed with images of people in protest suggest this symbiotic connection. The following section identifies the most common references:

Livestock

Cattle/livestock (***loon)***, are ubiquitous and powerful in the Oromo

narrative, serving as the real and iconic link between human beings and the earth, resting between the land and the heavens, transforming grass to milk and meat.

The centrality of image and symbolism of cattle/livestock is measured in the renewed popularity and creative and aesthetic uses of leather (and now leather simulation) in Oromo cultural dress and material culture. In the performance video, for example, Hawwi is wearing a dress

made to simulate a traditional Oromo women's leather dress, *waalluu*, made of tanned and softened rawhide. Note that the song mentions specifically that those herds resting in peace on the soil themselves belong there; they are descendants of herds belonging to the forefathers of the protesters. This heritage of the ancestors creates another link to the land that symbolizes a core connection for Oromo agro-pastoralists who recognize and underscore the significance of cattle and other livestock in their daily and religious lives.

Umbilicus and the Wrapping of the Stomach

The song refers specifically to Addis Ababa/Finfinnee as the umbilicus, the *handhuuraa*, of the performer Hawii herself. Finfinnee is also regarded as the *handhuuraa* of Oromia itself due to its central location connecting eastern and western parts of Oromia, Christian and Muslim, agriculturalists and pastoralists, from a place accessible to south and north. Finfinnee served as the ritual center for the entire Oromo people.[45] The Master Plan was slated to pluck out the ritual and physical heart of Oromo country, to appropriate the specific location of sacred *odaa* assembly sites and then to expand to such a size that Oromia would be split into separate two parts. The lyrics say, "do not cut us into pieces."

45 *Odaa Nabee*, an ancient site of *gadaa* law-making, became the center of gravity for the Oromo *gadaa* system after the slave wars of the 1600s, when the main *Chafee* assembly was relocated from *Hora Wallabu*. This decision made the area around Central Oromia the political center to the nation, connecting West and East, North and South. When King Menelik conquered Oromia, his capital was located near the site of Odaa Nabee, and the *gadaa* assemblies, which were held in the shade of the *odaa* canopy, were banned. This history of conquest, targeting the *odaa* assemblies, and outlawing self-governance, adds an additional layer of significance to Finfinnee as the target for development and of the symbol of the *odaa* for Oromo identity.

A particularly potent image among the Oromo is that of a woman's midsection (the literal site of *handhuuraa* and womb). The midsection is marked and protected by the cloth belt (*sabbata*) that encircles it. The practice of dress in Oromia, especially for women, is a revered expression of one's connection to the terrain.

The act of putting on that type of traditional dresses mimics an active assertion of rights to land and Oromo identity in innumerable ways, because the act of wrapping the belt requires an incantation of named land rights. While each item of dress has regional significance, the pan-Oromo belt *(sabbata)* signifies the family's connections to land rights and fertility, making a woman's body a walking representation of what is precious to Oromo. One could argue that for some, this simple cloth is a tangible expression of an oral land deed that women, as witnesses and carriers of cultural knowledge, bind and seal around their fertile bellies. The video opens with images of women attired to display the particular type of dress worn by Afran Qallo Oromo.

The significance of this ritual and symbolic act of women wrapping themselves in white fabric sheeting is elucidated in a chapter focused on unrest and dress among the Oromo quoted here at length[46]

> The Afran Qallo Oromo say it is Hayomeetu, the mother of Barentu (Barentuma) and Boorana brothers (the heads of the original Oromo lineages), who first binds her great midsection with *sabbata*. Oromo oral tradition states that it was the responsibility of the Great Mother Haromeetu to divide the land for her five grandchildren. Hayomeetu sat down in Hirna, a town

46 From 'Unrest and Dress: The Symbol of the Sycamore Tree in Oromo Adornment' In *Creating African Fashion Histories: Politics, Museums and Sartorial Practice*, edited by JoAnn McGregor, Heather Akou, Nicola Stylianou and Lou Taylor. Indiana University Press, Forthcoming.

west of Harar, which would become the central meeting place for the five sons of Barentu. There, Hayomeetu began to wind a *sabbata* around her waist five times. Young women watched attentively and followed her motions.

This Great Oromo Mother, embodied the Oromo homelands. Her act of dressing by wrapping the waist serves as a metaphor first, for claiming and legitimizing of the Barentuma Oromo homeland, described today as the fertile 'belly,' site of the umbilicus in the valley west of Harar. The final tie of the *sabbata* seals the locations for the Qallo patrilineage. When Oromo women are given the *sabbata* by their mothers at marriage, they repeat the actions of the Great Mother and other female ancestors before them, reenacting the migration narrative, instructing the watching children and shaping their identity as they literally map the locations where the Oromo belong on the landscape.

While many Barentuma Oromo men and women, especially those who have been forcibly displaced and no longer receive proper education in traditional law, may not be consciously aware that womens' waist cloths function as a symbolic land deed that legitimizes parcels of lands to be rightly farmed and utilized for cattle grazing according to traditional Oromo cosmology and law. The tying of an Oromo woman's sash is still an important right of passage during marriage. Whether or not the woman and her husband will ever be able to officially claim land as their own under state legal procedures, they reenact this symbolic assertion of the "right" to inalienable land access and their rightful inheritance.'[47]

47 Ibid.

As places in Oromia are currently being partitioned and sold to outside investors, Hawwi's song and video utilize the literary and visual tropes of the umbilicus and the waist cloth as a means to link the Oromo identity to the earth itself.

Sacred Homeland – *Araddaa*

The *araddaa,* innermost sanctum of the home compound, is also a deeply resonate term used throughout the song to reference the most intimate area created within the family quarters, which forms the heart of the household complex. It is where the house is sited; it is where spiritual/ritual practices are performed, sometimes dating to the time of great grandparents; a place where children play under the watchful eye of mothers; where people place flowers in memory of ancestors who are likely buried there. *Araddaa* can extend to the area immediately around the house that builds up over generations of use, where the soil is well cared for and can absorb the rain without getting muddy. It is especially fertile, good for grass, kitchen gardens or bringing small livestock near for close tending and grazing. It is also women's domain, a place of familial security. The implication is that when the *araddaa* with its history and spirit is lost, what has been built for generations is destroyed and the people remain bereft and empty-handed. Also the sentiment expressed here is that it is better to become one with the soil by being buried in that *arraddaa* than to give away that place of abundant life and die another way. The song underscores the significance of this space for Oromo by warning the adversary not to touch it, poke around it or to make designs for plucking it away from those who were nurtured there.

Like the *handhuuraa* is to one's person, the *araddaa* is to one's home, i.e., an inviolable intimate space. The invasion of the government into this nurturing place of privacy is an outrage to Oromo. The intense response to the proposed capture and repurposing of the area surrounding Addis Ababa confirms that in the eyes of the Oromo, Addis Ababa serves as

the symbolic *araddaa* of Oromia – the sacred center where national collective life is focused. The song treats the aggression launched against the Addis Ababa and its surrounds as an attack on the geographical, ritual, symbolic and, one could argue, economic heart (*garra*) of the nation. The attack on Finfinnee constitutes a violation against the very peoplehood of the Oromo the way a rape is a violation against personhood of an individual. The message is especially potent when sung by a woman.

Water

Water is the quintessential life-giving force in the Oromo worldview**.** By invoking water in each chorus – either as *roobsi cabbii,* hail or sleet that comes rarely and portends big changes, or as *robsissa biifa*, gentle fine sprays of droplets, as life-giving soaking rain that falls on Oromia – the appearance of water introduces the sacred into the song. The presence of water is the gift of God. Acknowledging that gift is the purpose of the central ritual in the Oromo calendar carried out at the annual *irreeccha* ceremony at the turn of the year. It is a celebration embraced in Oromia and in Diaspora which brings all core precepts together in ritual and symbolic relations. Fertile women carry grasses to the lake or other water source to reconcile the earth. The occasion is an opportunity to appreciate the alternative to destructive development and lift up the environmental ethics contained in the practices which sustain Oromo livelihood. At a time when much of the world is seeking to create better ways to sustain the Earth's capacity, Oromo seek to hold onto the environmental values of *Oromummaa* that support sustainability.

The Odaa Tree

The ***odaa*** tree's massive canopy of foliage is always located at a water source, making it a symbol of life and fertility. Its fig wasp supports biodiversity throughout the vicinity. It also

offers shade for scores of people to sit together for deliberation in comfort and be heard, thus making it a prominent symbol of participatory democracy as well. It has also long been the site of rituals of thanksgiving for prosperity and blessing as well as political discussion. Under the *gadaa* system of governance, major conventions of representative delegates from across regions and across the nation gathered at sites named for the *odaa* where these massive meetings have taken place, such as *Odaa Nabee, Odaa Bultum, Odaa Galan*.

Irreechaa Celebration in Bishoftu, October 2016. Participants wear the odaa tree on their dress, hold grasses and cell phones, and raise their arms crossed at the wrist. *Photo courtesy of Tiksa Negeri*

While the experience of sitting in the shade of the ***odaa*** or appreciating its shape against the horizon is no longer accessible to all Oromo as it once was, its symbol is important even to those in exile. For Oromo in diaspora the ***odaa*** tree embellishes logos, banners, letterheads and the websites of

Oromo institutions, invoking both environmental fertility and deliberative governance.

The presence of the ***odaa*** tree on a banner or as part of jewelry or clothing or website symbolizes connection to and celebration of the natural environment, prosperity (green) and democracy (public deliberation in the shade).

In some instances, it is displayed against a yellow sun which bearers explain represents hope for a new day, a new season of freedom and equality. When red is added there is a specific connection to sacrifice and heroism. The *odaa* tree which appears on the Oromo national banner is used explicitly as a symbol of fertility and democracy.[48] The Oromo protestors called out by the *Ka'i Qeerroo* performance often bear this banner.

Conclusion

The *Ka'i Qeerroo* video was released in mid December 2015. By February 23, 2016, a young Oromo told a journalist from the Daily Mail of the consequences of listening to such protest songs. "If you go out in the evening, the police will arrest you, check your papers and your phones. If you have music or photos linked to the protests, you're in serious trouble"[49] This young man in his twenties is from Ginchi, about 80 kilometers from Addis Ababa. Availing oneself of Oromo grievance and aspiration in artistic media by listening to Oromo songs, chanting Oromo proverbs, and lifting one's voice to protest continued to be dangerous throughout 2016-2018.[50] Yet, auditory and visual forms of popular resistance–

48 See Klemm, Peri 'Unrest and Dress: The Symbol of the Sycamore Tree in Oromo Adornment' in *Creating African Fashion Histories: Politics, Museums and Sartorial Practice*. Edited by JoAnn McGregor, Heather Akou, Nicola Stylianou and Lou Taylor. Indiana University Press, Forthcoming.

49 Human Rights Watch, "*Such a Brutal Crackdown: Killings and Arrests in Response to Ethiopia's Oromo Protests*." June 2016, www.hrw.org

50 Longstanding abuses of Oromo human and civil rights under the current government have been well documented. Refer to reports by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights League

the objects, activities, poetry and performance with which people identify and define themselves and their experiences – became strengthened as significant traditional and actively developing art forms, conveying and interpreting both visual and oral repositories of cultural knowledge. This knowledge has always been informed by land and the natural universe – land rights and distribution, land breaches, and land loss. Today, with the rapid increase in land loss instigated by government policies, mass protests throughout the region, and a constant flow of refugees forced out of Oromia, longing for land has intensified and has spawned numerous forms of artistic expression which focus explicitly on this issue. Tangible and performance-based art informed by Oromo relationships to land have become a framework by which the *qeerroo* generation interprets and connects with the long-standing Oromo struggle. What we find through an analysis of these lyrics and images is a deeper understanding of the shared fertility between women and the land that sustains all Oromo people. Many verses in this popular and influential *geerarsa* both lament the dispossession of land and violence against the Oromo and also broaden and strengthen the protest movement through empowering lyrics which include women, women's bodies, and fertile land.

Over the period of 2016-2018 the issues raised in this song intensified rather than waned. A proliferation of Oromo protest music extended the messaging contained in *Ka'i Qeerroo* until it became a classic. But protesters who chanted the seemingly innocuous phrase, "Land is Life!" in massive peaceful demonstrations organized across Oromia did so at great risk to their personal safety. The protests drew tens of thousands in the first August weekend of 2016, and led to a region-wide cessation of social media and Internet access, ostensibly to avert demonstrations. Oromo protests were

of the Horn of Africa, Africa Watch, Oromia Media Network, Oromo Studies Association and the Oromia Support Group.

joined by demonstrators in the Amhara region on August 6 when over 100 participants were killed by security forces who fired into the crowds there. The total number of protesters killed in the course of asserting rights to land is estimated between 1000 and 5000 persons. With estimates varying so widely, an authoritative investigation poses a logistical and political challenge. Resistance to the TPLF-led government spread to other regions and other groups, grievances varied. The call for greater opportunity for youth, for basic rights to be protected and for inclusive governance was embraced by all who resisted. But in the Oromo case, the cherished linkages of people to the land remained central to the widespread visceral response of those who will no longer be moved.

Within the Oromo proverb "*dubbiin lafaa, dubbii lafeeti*," "the matter of land is a matter of life", lies the explanation for #OromoProtests. Nationwide engagement against government land policy is revealed as a proactive rather than destructive force. It cannot be explained away as caused by "external instigation," attributable solely to "pervasive unemployment" or is it indication of "forces of instability." Quite the opposite. The turnout for the protests was prompted by a desire to protect the sacred connections with the land that we have explored here, led by inspiration and desire to identify and preserve the life-giving resources of the land, nourishing and being nourished by the land. It is simply and profoundly that the matter of land is indeed a matter of life, and both are inextricably linked to Oromo identity.

NOTES

Accessing and explaining Oromo sacred knowledge through which the core concepts of Oromo cosmology are understood, and making it available as a collection of interconnected beliefs, has been one of the great scholarly challenges of this generation of scholars of the Oromo. Until the current day, Oromo persons called ayantu have been identified and trained

to remember and teach the precepts of Oromo wisdom and law. It remains for researchers and scholars to locate, retrieve and explain this knowledge. Lambert Bartels, a Catholic missionary to the Oromo wrote in 1983 the first attempt to spell out the essential components of what of what can be called Oromo cosmology or worldview in his book *Oromo Religion: Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia, an Attempt to Understand.* Currently Gemetchu Megerssa's 1994 PhD thesis ("Knowledge, Identity and the Colonizing Structure: The case of the Oromo in East and Northeast Africa") provides the most complete compilation in writing of Oromo knowledge gleaned for many sources. Gemetchu's and Aneesa Kassam's forthcoming book on *Sacred Knowledge Traditions of the Oromo of Northeast and East Africa* expands that dissertation and takes up the task of interpreting and explaining Oromo knowledge and worldview for a wider English-speaking audience. Its publication is eagerly awaited. Asmarom Legesse, in his books *Oromo Democracy: an Indigenous African Political System (2000 and 2006),* and his revised edition of *Gada* (2016), has examined repositories of knowledge among the elders who are responsible for social and political continuity through the Gadaa system of governance. Some, particularly philosopher Workineh Kelbessa, have applied the manner in which the Oromo philosophical system determines and guides the daily practices of earth care in many works, the most recent of which is, "The Oromo Conception of Life: An Introduction, *Worldviews 17 (2013) 60–76.* Chikage Oba-Smidt has recently published in English translation, *The Oral Chronicle of the Boorana in Southern Ethiopia: Modes of Construction and Preservation of History among People without Writing. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2016.*_ Mohammed Hassen in his recently published volume, *The Oromo and the Christian Kingdom of Ethiopia 1300-1700*, London: James Currey, 2015, has demonstrated that the antiquity of the language and concepts is much deeper that originally understood. Ezekiel Gebissa has prepared a useful

short summary of Oromo religion and cosmology in a piece prepared for Appleyard (2016).

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE TO SELF-DETERMINATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH: THE OROMO EXPERIENCES

Begna Dugassa

INTRODUCTION

Healthy and prosperous societies do not arise by chance. They are the results of creative thinking, extensive planning and thoughtful actions that identify the social determinants of health and tackle social ills. Public health interventions have to be based on both past and present pathological social problems. Historically, understanding the past is significant in order to understand the contemporary public health problems in Oromia. From the public health perspective, we need to put the Ethiopian and Oromo relationships under a microscope and examine the deeply believed assumptions of Abyssinians about the Oromo people and the pathological social relations that have existed for over 140 years. Understanding the pathological social conditions that are hindering the development of public health in Oromia are prerequisite to find solutions.

From the 1880s to the present, successive Ethiopian regimes have banned Oromo institutions, stripped their lands, evicted them from their homes, and exploited their human and natural resources (Leta, 2000; Holcomb and Ibsa, 1991) and denied them the development of Oromo social, economic, political, cultural institutions and leaderships (Jalata and Schaffer, 2007; Dugassa, 2012). Eviction, dispossession of lands, attacking Oromo institutions and leadership as well as

the exploitation of human and natural resources have kept them in poverty and ill-health. For example, in Oromia, only about 25 percent of people have access to clean water. The percentage of people who have access to proper sanitation is only 7 percent (WHO). The roots of the dysfunctional public health system, the collision of the epidemics of communicable and non-communicable diseases in Oromia can be traced to consecutive Ethiopian government policies, from the initial colonization (1880-1913), consolidation of power (1913-1974), socialism (1974-91) and the present (1991- to today). Poverty and illiteracy have exposed the Oromo people to old and new diseases.

During the formation of the present state of Ethiopia, Oromia was conquered by the Abyssinian kings Yohanis and Menelik II. Since then, the Oromo people have been denied the right to decide on their social, economic, political, cultural and environmental affairs (Holcomb & Ibsa, 1990). Kings Yohanis of Tigray (1868 to 1889) and Menelik II of Amhara (1889 to 1910) both committed full-scale genocide against the Oromo people in Raya and Azebo (now in Tigray region) and ethnic cleansing against the Oromo people in Wallo (now Amhara region). In their letters to the European rulers, these kings clearly stated their desire to wipe out the Oromo people. For example, in 1878, in a decree signed by Yohanis and Menelik at Boru Meda, they stated that any Oromo who refused to adhere to Orthodox Christianity must either leave the area or face mass killings (Dugassa, 2017).

The leadership of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) that currently dominates the Ethiopian government instilled, formally at school and informally at home the heroism of King Yohanis, who had basically committed genocide. Evidence shows that Tigray children have been playing the game of normalizing the killing of Oromos. Consistent with his childhood story, in 2016 the Ethiopian Minister of Information, Mr. Getachew Reda, revealed his deeply-held views about the Oromo people when he described

the Oromo protesters as: ኣጋንንት (demons), ሰይጣን (Satan) and ጠንቋይ (the work of witchcraft). When Mr. Reda described the Oromo protesters as demons and devils and their demands as the work of witchcraft, he was on the one hand revealing the deeply embedded racist view about the Oromo people and on the other providing racist narratives about why it was morally acceptable for the TPLF army to kill, displace and imprison Oromo people.

Since 1991, the TPLF government has perpetuated ethnic cleansing and genocide by attrition against the Oromo people. Now the TPLF leadership has realized that continuously killing and imprisoning the Oromo people could make them accountable. For that reason, they adopted the strategy that the Sudan government has employed in killing people in Darfur by arming the *Janjaweed* militia. The TPLF is now using a Somali group known as *Liyu Police*, Special Police Force, and the paramilitary group that they initially organized and armed to suppress the movement of the Ogden National Liberation Front (ONLF).

Since the TPLF took power in 1991 to the present, they have killed over 150,000 Oromos, have imprisoned over half a million, and generated over three million international refugees and four million internally displaced people. For example, by the order of the TPLF military commanders, in 2017/18, thousands of Oromos were killed and over 1.1 million evicted from their homes. The number of people who have been evicted from their farms with no or little compensation is staggering. In the last ten years from Finfinee and surrounding regions alone over 350 thousand households were evicted from their farmlands (Legesse, 2014). One of the dreadful crimes of the TPLF government has been the deliberate burning of the natural forests of Oromia (Dugassa, 2017) and the generating of intra/enter ethnic conflicts. Those killings, evictions, imprisonments, dispossession of lands, forced migrations are designed to stop the aspirations of the Oromo people to have full control of their social, economic,

political, cultural and environmental affairs. Such crimes represent the textbook definition of ethnic cleansing and what Fein (1997) called "genocide by attrition".

Societies can develop faster when the people are empowered in their affairs. Empowered communities can more effectively identify their needs and find workable solutions. Disempowering people hinders their creativity and the development of problem-solving skills (Abrey & Stancliffe, 2003). In Oromia, most of the causes of deaths and disabilities are infectious diseases and malnutrition. They are easily preventable. In my previous work, I have explored the public health impacts of collective violence in Oromia (Dugassa, 2017). Public goods are created by collective efforts. Among the many roles government plays in our daily lives is protecting and promoting public health and ensuring national security. Based on those core analyses, in this paper, I raise several questions regarding whether the collective rights of Oromo people would better foster the development of public health. The question I ask and try to answer is as follows. What is the significance of people having the rights to self-determination (the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights) in relation to the development of public health?

This paper has four major parts. The first part covers the introduction, outlines the objective of the paper and the conceptual framework on which this research paper is developed. The second part covers a review of the literature of public health under colonial rule. The third part explores the significance of collective rights in the development of public health. The fourth part consists of discussions and conclusions.

OBJECTIVES

The major objective of this paper is to explore the significance of the rights of people to self-determination- i.e. self-governing and self-managing- in relation to the development of public health. In understanding that the rights of people to

self-determination consists of five major categories i.e. social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights, in this paper, I make efforts to explore if regarding those rights fosters the capacity of people in those specific categories and also closely look at if the development of those capacities support the development of public health.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework of thinking of research provides concepts and theories in which the research questions are designed, data are collected, organized and interpreted. The theoretical framework of this paper is grounded on public health theories and human rights principles. Public health is "the art and science of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society" (WHO, 1998). The core objective of public health is to guarantee public good and create healthy social conditions. On the other hand, human rights principles ensure the conditions that make life as humane as possible. The principle of human rights creates favorable conditions for social justice to flourish, enables people to live together in harmony and have a dignified life. Respecting human rights prevents discrimination and its negative cumulative health impacts. Therefore, consistent with the analogy of Mann et al. (1999) the goal of linking public health and collective human rights is to advice population health going beyond what could be achieved through an isolated promotion of health and human rights-based approaches.

Colonialism as Cultural Violence

Violence consists of acts of abuse intended to cause harm. Galtung (1969) classified forms of violence into physical, biological and structural. Physical violence means torturing, hurting or killing people, constraining human movements, as when people are imprisoned, or denying them access to transportation or keeping large segments of a

population in the same place with limited mobility. Biological violence is reducing the body capability, below what is potentially able. Structural acts of violence are invisible actions caused by direct violence and are manifested as exploitation and subjugation (Galtung, 1969).

Violence can be perpetrated against individuals and collectively (Roche, 2001; Cormier, 1971; and WHO, 2002). The concept of collective violence can be physical, biological, and structural as well as socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental (Muro-Ruit, 2002). The WHO (2002) defined collective violence as "the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group – whether this group is transitory or has a more permanent identity – against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives". The WHO document (2002) explained the motive of collective violence as political actions committed to advancing a particular social and political agenda over others.

The WHO (2002) document defined collective violence in wider perspective. Collective violence is committed by a group (s) or a state (s) against another distinct group (s). This includes wide ranges of attacks such as physical, sexual, and psychological, as well as deprivation or neglect. Collective violence also includes social, political and economic violence. From the perspective of the colonized people, the term collective violence should comprise both cultural and environmental violence.

Collective violence is social control – a process by which powerful groups define and respond to what they call "deviant race, culture or behavior." The forms of social control depend on the nature of the conflict. The nature of collective violence varies with the social, cultural and ideological distances between the groups. The greater they are culturally distinct, politically unequal and functionally independent, the more severe the violence. Genocide is an extreme form of collective violence (Staub, 2000; WHO, 2002).

Colonialism is forcible, physical, economic and ideological occupation and it is the violation of the sovereignty and liberty of people and it is collective violence. Colonial power relations constitute socio—economic-political relationships in which a group of people collectively overrun the political, social, economic, cultural and ideological sovereignty of another people. Colonial territorial conquests are inspired by economic interests, racial and cultural superiority theories. Territorial conquests are usually followed by colonial power relations and discriminatory social policies. Although individuals are the ultimate victims, the colonized people are collectively attacked. Colonialism is, therefore, an act of collective violence that is contrary to public health.

Public Health as a Common Good

The Oromo people are attacked in a number of ways, mainly because they are Oromos (Amnesty International Report, 2015). From the onset of the formation of the Ethiopian state to the present, successive regimes have violated the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights of Oromo people. They have dispossessed their lands, evicted them from their homes, and violated their economic rights. They have forcefully converted them to Orthodox Christianity and denied them Oromo language legitimacy. This is a violation of cultural rights. The Oromo institutions and leaderships such as *Gada, Qaalu* and *Siiqee* are either fully banned or incapacitated, which is a violation of political rights. Consecutive Ethiopian regimes have committed physical violence and perpetuated mass killings, imprisonments and torture. Not only that, they perpetuated structural violence and permitted discrimination against Oromo people, neglected their needs and ignored their suffering from famine (Clay, and Holcomb, 1986; Dugassa, 2004) and epidemic diseases (Dugassa, 2003).

The term common good describes a specific "good" that is shared and beneficial for all (or most) members of a

given community. In essence, the rationale for the common good is providing services to all people, or at least the vast majority of them. However, given that peoples' needs can vary in different situations, there is no strictly agreed- upon definition of the common good. The good that is common between person A and person B may not be the same between person A and person C. This suggests that the common good can change; however, there are things that are permanent goods, important for the betterment of the population's health everywhere. For example, providing clean water can be seen as a public good.

The concept of the common good is often regarded as a utilitarian ideal, "the greatest possible good for the greatest possible number of individuals". The concept of the common good is collective property acquired by collective effort. It is for this reason the expert in social medicine Virchow argued that the state is obligated to provide public good and public health. It is the right of everyone to have the opportunity to freely shape her/his life in a responsible manner, the pursuit of virtue in accordance with the moral law. The common good, then, is the sum total of the conditions of social life which enable people to more easily and straightforwardly achieve their goals.

For colonized people, the efforts they make to guarantee their collective rights is part of the effort they make to establish the common good. For the Oromo people, the common good means those things that would serve them to promote their culture; help them build the social foundations of public health, defend, and rescue themselves from unwanted external pressures and maintain internal stability. For them, the common good includes safety, reasonable public health conditions and peace. According to Etzion (2004), without some shared formulation of the common good, it is impossible for society to flourish. A common good pulls people together when the interest and values of the group pull them in conflicting directions. It provides a rationale why

members of society need to sacrifice to achieve short or long-term benefits. The principles of the common good provide the vision for society and guide their collective efforts. Although Etzion (2004) maintains the view that the common good is essential if society is to flourish, the author also underlines the idea that there is a need to maintain a delicate balance between the common good and individuals' rights.

Human Rights as a Common Good

Individual and collective rights are common goods. The purpose of political community is to secure the conditions of living. Human rights are interdependent, indivisible and interrelated (UN, Vienna Charter, 1993). This means that violating individual's rights and/or collective rights i.e. the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights hinders the attaining of the highest possible quality of health. Violation of such kinds often impairs the enjoyment of other human rights, such as the rights to education or work, and vice versa. Human rights charters oblige states to respect (refrain from interfering with the enjoyment of the right), protect (prevent others from interfering with the enjoyment of the right) and fulfill (adopt appropriate measures towards the full realization of the rights).

Human needs and human rights principles are interrelated. The TPLF policies that are responsible for ethnic cleansing and genocide by attrition as well as suppressing the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights of Oromo people, violated the rights of people to have a decent standard of living. Good social, economic, political, cultural and environmental conditions are essential for the maintenance and improvement of good health. The violation of such rights denies the Oromo people the opportunity to achieve the highest possible level of physical and social well-being. Relative neglect of the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights hinders public health development.

The UN human charters obligate all the states to respect, protect and fulfill human rights. However, the Ethiopian government has failed to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of Oromo people and this has hindered attaining progress in accessing clean water and guaranteeing food security. The core objectives of the Ethiopian government agenda are to deny the Oromo people the right to determine their own destinies. Denial of the collective rights of the Oromo people has exposed them to both overt and covert harms and this has created pathological social conditions.

The rights of people to self-determination is understood as the right to collectively self-govern and develop the public good. This includes freely determining political status. Although the principles of collective rights have been used in effectively challenging the colonial power relations, empowering people to freely determining their (social, economic, political, cultural and environmental) affairs and creating favorable conditions for the people to change the underlying social conditions that are limiting their choices in life. Despite the importance of this issue, there is limited literature on the relationships between collective rights i.e. the right of people to self-determination and public health.

The Ethiopian government has adopted European colonial racist theories and practices. Just as the European colonizers banned the social, economic political, cultural, religious institutions of the colonized people, so too the Ethiopian government banned all Oromo institutions. European colonizers exploited the natural and human resources of the colonized, and the Ethiopian government did exactly the same. As European colonizers did in South Africa (Chapman, 1998) the Ethiopian government also allocated privileges to the Abyssinians and the risks and burdens went to the Oromo people. Although public health is supposed to be inclusive, the TPLF- led Ethiopian government public health policies are developed only having the Tigray people in mind.

Colonialism and Public Health

Critical historical analyses of the colonial public health system suggest that as the Indigenous peoples lost their sovereignty, colonial social policies either compromised their safety and security or ignored their needs. Although the colonizers claim to be healers, under colonial rule, the health conditions of the colonized people usually retrogressively deteriorate or stagnate (Crichlow, 2002). When Rudolf Virchow, the father of public health, once said, "medicine is a social science, and politics is nothing else but medicine on a large scale", he made clear the relationships between public health and colonial policies (Taylor & Rieger, 1985). In understanding the severe damage perpetrated by colonial policies, anti-colonial activists have been promoting the need for collective rights of people. In response to such demands, international human rights covenants of 1966 recognized that all peoples have the right of people to self-determination (SD). The charter makes clear that "by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development".

Colonizers violations of collective rights have caused the social conditions of the Oromo people to stagnate and retrogress over time. As the Oromo people lost their sovereignty, the Ethiopian social policies either compromised their safety and security or ignored their needs (Crichlow, 2002). The ongoing efforts of the Oromo people to free themselves from colonialism are part and parcel of widening their choices in life and improving population health. This makes the struggle for social justice is part of the foundation of public health (Krieger & Birn, 1998). Promoting the rights of people is an essential condition to improve public health conditions. Consistent with the view of Sen (1999) we see that if the Oromo people are able to assert their social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights, they can prevent many preventable diseases.

UN Mandated Human Right Principles

The UN human rights principles cover a wide range of issues. These can be categorized into the right to be respected, protected and fulfilled. The charters that obligate the states to respect prohibit the state not to interfere in the enjoyment of those rights. The charters that obligate to protect mandate that states interfere having in mind enhancing security and reducing risks. The charters that obligate to fulfill obligate the states to progressively provide basic necessities in life (WHO & UNHCHRC).

The 1966 UN Human Rights Charters clearly assert the rights of people to self-determination. These charters obligate states to respect the right of people to freely determine their social, economic, political and cultural rights (ICCPR; ICESCR). Later on, the Stockholm Declaration included environmental rights. From the Oromo perspective, the Ethiopian government has failed to respect the rights of Oromo people to freely determine their social, economic, political, cultural and environmental affairs. In the next few sections, I explore the impacts of the violations of those rights on public health development.

Social Rights

Social rights is the meeting between social security, safety and an adequate standard of living. It is also about developing and maintaining social support networks. Security, safety and social support networks are among the social determinants of health and they are essential for human survival. Social rights guarantee members against severe deprivations such as poverty and famine. Social rights progressively guarantee reasonable housing, nutrition, clean water, basic education. Social rights also include adequate health care, public health and decent work conditions. They also include the right to get organized. For over a century consecutive Ethiopian regimes failed to guarantee those rights. Consistent with Sen's (Sen, 1999) analogy, freedom of one

kind leads to freedom of the other kind; the Oromo people are saying that if their collective rights are respected they can effectively meet their security, safety needs and have an adequate standard of living.

If societies are safe and secured they can work together to progressively acquire basic necessities i.e. clean water, adequate quality and quantity of food as well as reasonable shelter. In the absence of safety and security, societies lose their human and natural resources to violence. Violence destroys public health infrastructures, health care centers, housing, business, farming and others. In the absence of security and safety people will face difficulties in organizing their human and natural resources. The absence of safety and security hinders creativity. Safety and security foster stability and freedom of thinking. Freedom of thinking is necessary to identify emerging social problems and new opportunities. As I have mentioned earlier in this paper, the violation of social rights of Oromo people compromised their safety and security and allowed the displacement of over a million of people this year alone. Promoting social right is essential to guarantee social security, social care and social protection.

Economic Rights

The economic rights of people include the right to control their natural and human resources as well as freely deciding to allocate the taxes they have paid. The widespread eviction of Oromos from their farms, and the dispossession of their lands is a violation of economic rights. From the public health perspective, health is understood as a choice in life. The colonial agenda is intended to exploit the human and natural resources of people and it limits people's choices in life. The quality of food and drink has long been thought to impact our health. Improving the quality of foods we eat and water we drink, and also the quality of housing have major impact in prevention of diseases. Colonizers exploit human and natural resources, and that makes society languish in poverty and

disease. The prevalence of famine in Oromia is the manifestation of the violation of the economic rights of Oromo people. Extreme poverty, homelessness and the number of street beggars in Oromia is a manifestation of the violation of economic rights.

Let me bring an example where violations of economic rights lead to unhealthy behavior. As I have discussed elsewhere, the TPLF leadership dismantled the Dergi military and sent them to their villages and towns. Most of these militia were known to be HIV positive (Dugassa, 2003). In 2010, I interviewed health professionals in Oromia, and found out that HIV positive individuals were receiving a few kilograms of wheat and oil[51]. Many healthy individuals who are languishing in poverty saw the few kilograms of wheat flour and oil that the HIV positive individuals received as an opportunity- many of them tried to bribe health professionals and register as HIV positive persons so they could receive the food aid[52].

Political Rights

The third important element of collective rights is political rights. If the political rights of the Oromo people are respected they will develop the capacity to develop policy and implement it. Political capacity includes developing effective institutions and leadership. Developing such capacity makes decision making effective and timely. This helps leaders to early identify social problems and find timely solutions. In addition, leadership is important in identifying emerging opportunities and paving directions and coordinating their

51 Give that they are fighting the HIV virus in the body and medications they take, HIV positive individuals require 20% for adults and -100% more foods than healthy individuals. For that reasons quarterly, NGOs provide 10kg wheat flour and 2 liters of oil.

52 To control the data, the Ethiopian Ministry of Health has set a policy that is strictly implemented. The policy suggests if a person is diagnosed with HIV in one lab test, the person needs to be tested a second time in another lab.

human and natural resources. When public health is understood as "the science and art of promoting health, preventing disease, and prolonging life through the organized efforts of society" (WHO, 1998), the WHO made clear the significance of organizing and making collective efforts. Under colonial rule, if the colonized people are allowed to develop their leadership, they could say the root causes of their problems are colonial power relations

Leadership is about envisioning the emerging problem and opportunities and coordinating the society to achieve their collective goals. As has been well recorded, the colonizers' intent is to control the colonized people and that makes the development of effective institutions and leadership impossible. Hindering the development of leadership makes the social problems of the people persist. For example, social problems and their solutions are socially constructed. The intellectual history of agenda setting i.e. the definition problems, the scope and methodology, are set by the dominant groups. The dominant group frames the agenda and primes the problems. When colonizers deny the development of leadership they damage freedom of thinking, and the agenda setting autonomy to act creatively.

Given that the political rights of Oromo people have been and continue to be violated, they are not allowed to build institutions that can guarantee them security and stability. Oromos are not allowed to have their defense forces, or even police and security. This has meant easy attacks on Oromos by foreign forces and neighboring people. For example, during the 1977/78 Ethiopian-Somali war, the Oromo people were seen as the enemy by both fighting forces. On the one hand, the Ethiopian government accused the Oromo people of collaborating with the Somali army and have indiscriminately attacked them. On the other, the Somali army accused the Oromo people of collaborating with the Ethiopian army and indiscriminately attacked them. In those multidimensional indiscriminate attacks thousands of Oromo

villages, stored grains and crops in the field, were completely burned, cattle were looted, thousands of people killed, women were raped and millions of them were forced to flee as refugees.

That in turn led to famine. Of those who survived the war, many of them died from starvation and easily preventable diseases. For my PhD thesis, (Dugassa, 2008) I interviewed volunteers who survived the war and fled as refugees. In the interview, my informants mentioned that many people have died after the war. When I asked them the cause of the death, one of them said: "many children have developed edema, swelling of ankle, feet and belly and died". The symptoms my informant described represent the textbook definition of Kwashiorkor – energy-protein deficiency. One of the clinical characteristics of Kwashiorkor is a suppression of the immune system and an increasing vulnerability to infection.

Cultural Rights

The fourth important category of collective rights are cultural rights. Cultural rights include teaching their children in their own language, reproducing their worldview in the school and freely exercising their religious practices. In violating the cultural rights of Oromo people, the Ethiopian government invalidated Oromo knowledge and experiences. Knowledge and power are intertwined (Foucault, 1980) and invalidating the Oromo knowledge incapacitated them. The Ethiopian government's language policy is a good example. Although the Oromo people are the single largest ethnic/national group, the Ethiopian Federal government's official language is Amharic. The Ethiopian government's language policy denied the Oromo people health information (Dugassa, 2006) and job opportunities in the Federal government (Dugassa, 2016).

If the cultural rights of Oromo people were respected, they would effectively develop their cultural capacity. For example, media is one of the elements of culture. The Ethiopian government suppressed the development of Oromo

media. As I have elaborated in one of my works, media has eight major functions. The media informs, educates, entertains, molds opinion, advocates, provides a framework of thinking, connects people and ideas, and records events-hence, it plays a major role in producing knowledgeable and empowered citizens (Dugassa, 2016). For this reason, media is seen as one of the social determinants of health. Not only that, public health science is an art and science that societies need to progressively build. If the cultural rights of people are not respected they cannot develop such essential skills.

Knowledge is power and it is something created collectively for people to understand and use to solve their own problems (Foucault, 1980). The major objective of teaching/learning and research institutions of a society is to create knowledge that strengthens the foundation of the society. There are strong theoretical and empirical grounds to suggest that research questions asked, methods of data collection and analyses are not value free (Smith, 1999). Research conducted by the dominant groups are framed within their ways of knowing and the data produced validates their epistemology. Researchers provide for their society a lens through which practice can be seen and brought into focus for particular purposes and in particular contexts. This makes knowledge production a sociopolitical effort in which the power to establish meaning plays a crucial role (Abma, 2002). Obviously, giving meaning and interpretation to events is more than a matter of style. Giving meaning to an event involves the choice of order used to connect parts and the portrayal of people, and providing the perspective from which the account is told. For obvious reasons, colonial powers are intolerant to ideas and ideologies that are critical of their thoughts.

Assessment is one of the core duties of public health and it is based on the importance of sound knowledge. Scientific knowledge is the outcome of a lengthy process operating through history and it is a socio-cultural and

ideological product (Garvin, 2001). Research data are actively collected not passively discovered. In order to bring about sufficient improvements in the public good, society not only needs to develop an appropriate theoretical understanding of the social production of diseases but also needs to create political tools that will ensure the production of better data and make certain that it is interpreted in the best interest of the group (Krieger, 1992). The ways data are collected and interpreted have profound effects on how health professionals perceive health problems. One of the reasons for the struggle of Oromo peoples to self-determination (SD) is that it allows them to construct their own knowledge and institutions that would then collect, interpret the data, put them into practice, construct knowledge and set up social policies.

The central issue surrounding cultural rights and knowledge construction in public health is that diseases are social constructs. These constructs determine what- if anything- should be done in an attempt to limit or contain disease transmission. Winder (2002) has argued that our beliefs serve as cognitive filters that determine what we can and cannot observe. Balsa et al (2001) noted that when a doctor hears symptoms from a patient, he/she makes an inference about the likely cause of the problem and what actions should be taken.

For over four decades, the social determinants of health have been well recognized. It is also known that social structures influence the pattern of distribution of health, disease and determinants of health. The Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) estimated the impacts of determinants of health. According to OPHA, the healthcare system takes 25%, Biological Endowment 15%, physical environment 10% and the Social and Economic environment 50%. This means that it is only 15 percent of the determinants of health over which we have little or no control. Such knowledge is supposed to shape the research approach, Oromo policymakers need to understand the social conditions that have contributed to, and

increased the vulnerability of, colonized people. The impetus to redress inequalities and correct the inefficiencies associated with disparities can be better translated into effective policy if the mechanisms by which disparities arise are well understood (Balsa et al, 2001). However, understanding alone is not enough to tackle the social roots of ill health. Asserting and exercising collective rights are central in solving public health problems.

Different societies have distinct cultures, living conditions and belief systems and they all are naturally predisposed to have separate health problems. That is why Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis (2002) write that marginalized groups produce kinds of knowledge that are valuable and attractive to them. Knowledge is crucial for any emancipatory movement. For example, the slave trade and colonial agenda were guided by the idea of the "superior race and culture", coupled with the right and duty to civilize the "inferior" races. That is why colonial conquests were usually carried out under the banner of a civilizing mission. However, colonialism never ends with formal political freedom (Ashis, 1998). The ideas of domination and exploitation are in the minds of the colonialists. This means unless societies assert their cultural rights and are guided by their own worldview they cannot expect progress in public health or attain the highest possible health.

Knowledge shapes policy-making, because without generating data we cannot see and deeply understand social problems. If we cannot see and understand we can't solve them. It has been found that dominant policymakers knowingly and unknowingly discriminate while they apply apparently reasonable decision-making rules and practices. Balsa and McGuire (2001) argue that the dominant employers do not observe the true productivity of the minority groups, and health professionals do not observe their true health needs. Thus, culture and ethnicity have been shown to affect the interpretation of health conditions and other aspects of clinical

care. Cultural knowledge is the tool necessary to address public health problems.

Let me provide another example where the violation of cultural rights are implicated in the public health problem. In the 1880s, most of the Oromo people were *Waqefaatas*. Soon after Oromia was conquered, the Ethiopian government banned *Waqefaata*. As consecutive Ethiopian regimes banned *Waqefaata*, they allowed several foreign religions to propagate their world views. Even today, the Oromo religion has no legal status; however, different sects of Christianity and Islam are allowed to compete for the minds of the Oromo people. Epistemologically the *Waqefaata* religion is founded on one major idea that encompasses a very wide range of issues-peace and health. The teaching focuses on personal peace-health, community peace-health and peace-health of the natural environment as well as peace and social order with the divine power. If the Oromo religion had not been banned there would have been more sustainable development. This would have reduced deforestation, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, carbon-dioxide emissions and reduced the impacts of climate change in Oromia. In its turn, this would have led to less famine, malnutrition and conflicts over resources. In the era of climate change, the Oromo worldview can be a crucial tool.

Environmental Rights

The last important category of collective rights are environmental rights i.e. the right to live in a healthy natural environment. This right includes the right to breathe clean air, have clean water and food, and working and living in neighborhoods free from chemical, biological and physical pollutants. In several ways, human health is connected to the environment. This makes public health an intrinsic part of ecosystems. Polluting the environment by degrading it adversely affects population health and threatens life. If the environmental rights of people are respected they can develop

the capacity to protect their environment and remediation and have a better quality of life.

Environmental rights guarantee that environmental pollution and deforestation problems will be eliminated or reduced. Colonizers rule and exploit the natural and human resources of the colonized people in absentia. Colonizers exploit human and natural resources, and this makes society languish in poverty. Environmental degradation and pollution prevail. Indeed, in the past human beings lived in fear of the scourges of diseases caused by biological agents such as smallpox, cholera and plague. Now due to climate change, the concern is more about the diseases caused by chemical pollutants and climate change. For this reason environmental health and the right to a healthy environment are central to the contemporary public health agenda.

Discussions

Health and disease are socially created (WHO.2008; OPHA). Recognizing the social origins of health and illness makes promoting human rights and social justice the essential components of a public health system. Indeed, when Virchow stated that "medicine is a social science, and politics is nothing but medicine on a grand scale" he made clear the significance of collective rights. Virchow's famous words followed his investigation of typhus in Upper Silesia, the Polish region predominantly ruled by Germany at the time. Consistent with the analogy of Virchow, now we know that violations of social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights cause erosions of social protection, social care and denials of access to the social determinants of health (Jones; Shahrokh, 2013). Promoting social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights is the powerful means of tackling the underlying risks and vulnerabilities and guaranteeing an adequate standard of living.

The other reason for promoting collective rights is that if societies are guaranteed their social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights they will develop capacities

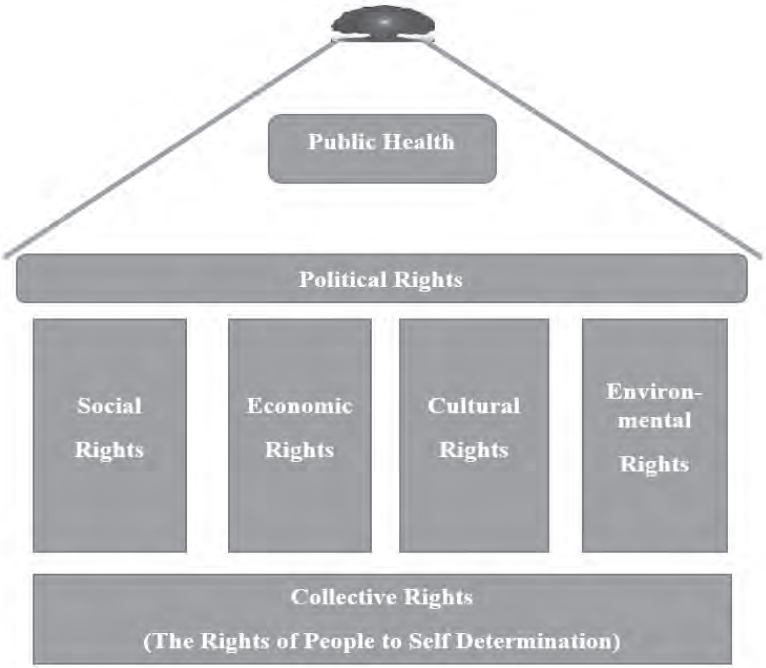
in those areas. These capacities work synergistically to develop better public health conditions. This means the efforts that Oromo people make to guarantee their collective needs are part of the effort they need to make to build their capacity and improve their public health conditions. For example, if the social rights of people are respected they will develop their social capital. This means they can progressively guarantee their citizens the basic necessities of life such as adequate food, reasonable housing, safe workplaces, clean water, basic sanitation and non-discriminatory social conditions. If the Oromos' economic rights are respected they will develop their economic capital. As they develop their capacity, they will allocate the available resources in the areas where they need it the most. Right now, they are collectively dispossessed from their lands, evicted from their homes and have no say in the taxes they pay. This limits their choices and keeps them in poverty and exposes them to old and newly emerging diseases.

Many people who are under colonial rule advocate the right of people to self-determination as a legal tool that can be used to end enduring injustices. For example, Dodson, an Indigenous activist, precisely explained the significance of Self-determination when he said, "Self-determination is the river in which all other rights swim" (Dodson 1994). This means the right of people to self-determination is essential for the enjoyment of all other rights, including the right to enjoy the highest attainable health. As illustrated in figure 1, consistent with Dodson's analogy, promoting the right of people to self-determination guarantees the development of their social, economic, political, cultural and environmental capacity. As these capacities expand progressively, societies better understand their social problems and find workable solutions.

The Oromo social, economic, cultural and environmental capital would grow on the foundation of collective rights. In Oromia, guaranteeing the development of

public health conditions requires asserting these collective rights. As shown in figure 1, collective rights are the foundation for other rights. Political rights are essential in order to effectively coordinate the social, economic, cultural and environmental capacity development and the human and natural resources management, the development of institutions, leadership and envisioning better directions. This makes political rights a catalyst that promote the development of public health. Political right is the the essential components of collective rights. It coordinates, regulates, formulates and upholds the interests of all of society.

Figure 1. The right of people to self-determination as the foundation to the development of public health.



From the public health perspective, the right of people to Self-determination means that we better understand our problems and are in a better position to find culturally relevant, financially feasible solutions. Even if we do not have solutions to our problems at the moment, as we strive to find solutions we develop the capacity and the skills necessary to address them. Exercising the right to SD fosters freedom of thinking and creativity.

CONCLUSION

This paper has raised seven major issues. The first issue is that the core objective of public health is a public good and it is intended to widen people's choices in life. On the contrary, the motive of colonialism is to perpetuate collective violence and deny the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights of people. In many ways, colonialism hinders the development of a healthy social environment and limits people's choices in life. Under colonial rule, achieving the best version of public health is unthinkable.

Second, better development of public health can be achieved by the collective efforts of society. If the collective rights of Oromo people are not respected they cannot organize their human and natural resources to achieve their desired public health goals, i.e. adequate standard of living (adequate food, access to clean water, reasonable housing), preventing famine and epidemic diseases. Efforts individually made to foster healthy social environments are inadequate.

Third, respecting the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights of Oromo people fosters the social conditions necessary to develop their capacities. Building those capacities are essential in developing problem-solving skills, identifying risks and finding solutions. It also creates social conditions where all citizens can have access to the social determinants of health and attain an adequate standard of living.

Fourth, asserting the collective rights of Oromo people is essential to bring peace, stability and sustainable development in the Horn of Africa. The presence of peace, stability and sustainable development in Oromia can effectively foster the development of public health and social transformation in that area.

Fifth, under consecutive Ethiopian regimes the collective rights of Oromo people have been violated- as have the Oromo individual's rights. The two go together. If the Oromo people can guarantee their collective rights, this will create favorable conditions for the individual's rights to flourish.

Sixth, if the social, economic, political, cultural and environmental rights are respected they can work synergistically to improve the access of people to what the WHO (2008) calls the social determinants of health and widen their choices in life.

Seventh, the struggle of the Oromo people to self-determination is one of the efforts they make to build their social, economic, political, cultural and environmental capacity. From the Oromo perspective, the developments of those capacities are essential to guarantee their citizens an adequate standard of living.

Eighth, the demand of the Oromo people to the right to SD is about setting their own social, economic, political, cultural and environmental agendas and making these agendas synergistically work to guarantee sustainable development and widen their choices in life.

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GENOCIDE IN OROMIA THROUGH THE EYES OF SEXUAL TORTURE SURVIVORS

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Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.

Raphael Lemkin, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation-Analysis of Government-Proposals for Redress (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944:79).

INTRODUCTION

In Ethiopia, the culture of secrecy and the presence of foreign donors and visitors have forced the regime to engage in what is now called genocide by attrition in order to cover up the reality of massive numbers of dead and maimed and to keep the coffers of the regime full of donor funds. Rosenberg and Silena (2013: 106- 126) observe that many examples of genocide are not recognized because during a slow genocide, the acts are viewed as singular criminal events and not as the mass horror that the word 'genocide' brings to mind. As did Raphael Lemkin, they view genocide as a complex process that includes direct killing in addition to the more subtle acts

that indirectly destroy the group (Rosenberg and Silena, 2013: 110; 106-126). They acknowledge that indirect, covert acts aid the concealment of the intentions of genocidal governments (2013:112), which creates difficulty when accusing such a government of genocide.

Lemkin, the first person to use the term 'genocide', described many aspects of German rule in Europe, which is little discussed scholastically, but is important here because of the similarities to the policies of the Abyssinian rulers of the country known as Ethiopia. Lemkin (1944: xi-xii) observed, "Genocide is effected through a synchronized attack on different aspects of life of the captive peoples…" These aspects of life include harming the leaders of the group such as religious leaders, cultural leaders, politicians and teachers. Government policies that encourage theft of wealth from targeted groups, degrading education of specific groups, limiting food to the point of starvation, limiting water, air and housing, and encouraging immorality. Lemkin (1944: xii) also included, almost as an afterthought, information about the mass killings of captives such as Jews, Poles, Slovenes and Russians. These cultural, political, social, religious, moral and physical attacks on chosen groups were intended to cripple the group and to sap the strength of the group (Lemkin, 1944: 82-90).

Lemkin describes biological measures, "calculated to reduce the birthrate," of non-German national groups. The policy of depopulation of non-Germans included encouragement of German births. He advises that poor nutrition of parents reduces the birthrate and the "survival capacity" of the offspring. Policies that separated the sexes, deny permission for marriages as in Poland and subsidies provided for parents of German or half German children were also common (Lemkin, 1944: 86). These policies were designed to replace non- German captive Europeans with people of mostly German descent. Lemkin's definition of genocidal acts includes, "every action infringing upon the life,

liberty, health, corporal integrity, economic existence, and the honor of the inhabitants when committed because they belong to a national, religious or racial group," and, "every policy aimed at the destruction or the aggrandizement of one of such groups to the prejudice or detriment of another," (1944: 93).

Not taking this definition lightly, one can assume that many different acts, given that intent to destroy the group is present, are genocidal in nature. In his book, Lemkin described the situation we now find in Oromia and south Ethiopia. The Abyssinian rulers, in addition to occasional covert mass killings, create and carry out policies designed to destroy the vital life force that drives creativity, growth and success of the group. While evidence of intent to destroy the group[s] may not be visible, the pattern of totalitarianismindicates otherwise. Under Axis (Nazi) rule, non-German nationalities were crushed. Under Abyssinian rule, the Oromo nation living in Ethiopia and peoples of the Ethiopia's South are slowly dying. Unlike Axis rule where stunningly huge masses of people were killed, under Abyssinian rule, direct mass deaths are more covert and less obvious to outsiders. What are covert killings to outsiders is very well known to locals who face it everyday.

The words of Article 2 of the UNGC do not change if the genocidal acts are slow or if they are rapid. Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide describes genocidal acts as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such, " (UNGC, 1948). It does not place limitations upon types of the murderous acts and does not even require that those acts successfully result in the destruction of the targeted group. That is, there is no requirement for a visible process of mass murder to exist in order to bring charges of genocide. When policies are enacted that are designed to reduce the strength and numbers of the group, as long as the requisite 'intent to destroy the group' is present, these acts are indeed, genocidal.

Along with the dolus specialis of genocide, that is the intent to destroy the group, Lemkin was actually describing in Nazi ruled Europe what we now name "genocide by attrition" or "slow genocide" (Rosenberg & Silina, 2012).
The acts we describe including the attempted castration of both men and women, concomitant with exhortations of intent to prevent births to Oromo, surely fit both the old and the new descriptions of genocidal acts.

Dugo and Eisen (2016) described policies with which the Ethiopian government created famines and forced deportations over decades of time which led to the deaths from multiple causes of uncountable Oromo people and other Ethiopian peoples of the south. They explained that many social scientists, including Amartya Sen, recognize that famine is easily prevented and is caused, not by draught or disease, but by government policy. These faminogenic policies of food reduction and relocations were carried out without attention to life's requirements of air, food, water, sanitation and medical care, and were similar in intent and effect to policies described by Lemkin during the German occupation.

SEX CRIMES AS GENOCIDE

In this paper, we focus on the use of rape and genital mutilation as one aspect of the slow destruction of a group in Ethiopia. In order for sex atrocities, even globally visible horrific mass rapes such as occurred in Darfur (Hagan, 2015; Joeden-Forgey, 2012: 89-107) and other sexual atrocities to rise to actual genocide, one must show the existence of special intent, that is, the intent to destroy the group (s) by harming the individual victim, rather than only to criminally harm the individual victims.

However, many governments now fully understand the fine point of the definition of genocide that requires proof of intent to destroy, including the Government of Ethiopia, and so work hard to prevent the shame that is attached to the charge of genocide. Regimes also work hard to avoid future and

current criminal responsibility. So the sexual mutilations and rapes in Ethiopia are hidden out of sight of international media cameras in prisons and army camps, not only because of the fear of losing foreign aid, but because of the embarrassment that the charge of genocide would bring. Hence the lack of global outrage unlike events described, for example, in Bosnia, Darfur and Rwanda. Those rapes were too public to be hidden and helped pave the way to a global understanding that genocide occurred and that both male and female rape was used as a tactic.

If sexual and other atrocities, including famines and forced deportations are not considered to be actual genocide, these atrocities do not attract significant media attention. Yet, even without a court, we find it wise to prove 'intent to destroy a group' that would lead to a verdict of genocide in order to focus light on the situation that exists now, decades in advance of a court decision, because today's victims do not have the time to wait for the verdict. The destruction of Oromo and peoples of Ethiopia's south by Abyssinian rulers should not be permitted to continue unnoticed. We would hope that media would accept the presence of genocide, even though a genocide court might not.

Genocide scholars agree that intent can be inferred from the patterns that emerge from the details of the acts. Fowler (2005:32) states, "Inferring intent from conduct in the absence of direct evidence is widely accepted." Despite the lack of evidence of great amounts of these acts, these acts do occur and data are slowly emerging from the darkness of societal shame. We interviewed victims who related that their torturers repeatedly stated that the torturers intended to sterilize them. Unfortunately, those few brave powerless people who give voice to such complaints are not considered to be credible by foreign governments and most NGOs. In Ethiopia, although the number of these acts that tend to limit births are hardly acknowledged and are difficult to assess, they are,

nevertheless, present. We posit that the pattern of these acts, if not the statements of the actors, are also part of the proof of intent to destroy.

Sexual Torture in Ethiopian Political Prisons

Lemkin (1944:xi) noted that social cohesion can be disrupted by "killing or removing" group leaders. He quoted from Hitler's Mein Kampf, "the greatest of spirits can be liquidated if its bearer is beaten to death by a rubber truncheon, " (1944:xi). In Ethiopia, Oromia, death is not the only method of committing genocide. To avoid visibility the regime gathers Oromo people in prisons and concentration-camp style military camps and covertly tortures them to death or renders them unreproductive by destroying reproductive organs of women and men.The regime does not wish to explain the presence of multiple broken, scarred bodies to the foreign donors, and NGOs. However, people who value children can be sterilized, 'great spirits' can be destroyed even though their bodies live on and their value to the success of the community can be eliminated. The Istanbul Protocol (2004:45 para 235) notes, "One of the central aims of torture is to reduce an individual to a position of extreme helplessness and distress that can lead to a deterioration of cognitive, emotional and behavioral functions….By dehumanizing and breaking the will of their victims, torturers set horrific examples for those who later come in contact with the victim. In this way, torture can break or damage the will and coherence of entire communities."

In Oromia, victims of sexual torture that can lead to sterilization consist of activist leaders, successful business people, student protestors, those who were accused of any form of political dissent and families and relatives of Oromo intelligentsia. Physical and psychological destruction of this group permits the regime to silently and slowly continue with the genocide. The victims themselves become part of the cover-up. Because of the culture of sexual privacy and shame

of the victims, the cover-up becomes almost complete. We have minimal data with which to estimate the number of acts. Only a few brave souls have dared to make public their ordeals which occurred in the hidden bowels of Ethiopian political prisons. However, during the interviews, we were told that many other Oromo prisoners were undergoing the same kind of torture. Although these are second hand reports, we find it likely that the data we present is only the so-called tip of the iceberg. We believe that a shocking number of people remain silent and that those who speak out do not fit into a cohort that is numerically or sociologically understandable.

Our method of questioning the victims led to testimonies relating to acts of sexual torture that indicate that the acts were authorized by Ethiopian authorities with the desired intent to destroy the Oromo as a group. In addition to asking about the acts of torture, we also asked the subjects to relate the words of their torturers. Our in-depth interviews with five Oromo survivor of sexual atrocity reveal that they were targeted because of their membership in a group—the Oromo. These interviews are important because they transform what appears to be isolated cases of sexual torture into intentional genocidal acts. A common theme emerged from the responses, indicating that the survivors were targeted not just as individuals, but as members of an ethnonational group who were marked for destruction. In other words, the interview data provides essential information to prove the intent by Ethiopian authorities to destroy the Oromo by imposing measures intended to prevent births. We thank the victim survivors for their time and for their willingness to remember.

The elements that are required to prove the presence of genocide exist in full measure. There is the presence of a targeted group (s), the Oromo nation upon whom measures were imposed that prevent or reduce births. There is the ubiquitous presence of intent to destroy the group, in whole or in part, and there is a continuous pattern of genocidal policy by Abyssinian elites that could lead to the destruction of the

targeted group (Schabas, 2009: 267). We posit in this paper that sexual atrocity in Ethiopia rises from crimes against humanity to the crime of genocide, and that these hidden crimes exist in greater numbers than realized because of the failure of both the victim and the perpetrator to expose the acts. Article II of the UN Genocide Convention states "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such." We show that the description "Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group" (UNGC article II d) has occurred and still occurs in Ethiopia. We charge that acts of rape and sexual torture that creates forced sterilization in men and acts of rape and of sexual torture of women leading to failure to procreate are tactics commonly used to prevent or reduce births.

Dugo and Eisen (2016: 80-82) previously described the cases of two male victims, subjects 1 and 2. Both victims described torture that included the attachment of weights to the genitals for long periods of time. They knew where these events took place and they could often relate the names and fairly high ranks of the torturers. This included Moni Mengasha, a chief inspector at Maekelawi prison and Alemayehu, also an inspector. They both declared that statements of intent were made. These statements included, "People like you will not also be born and this is your end. You will not live and you will not also reproduce. Even if we release you from here, you will never reproduce.", and, "People like you should not be born in the future."

INTERVIEW DATA PRESENTATION

We recently interviewed two additional men who had fled to Kenya and a woman who found a home in the United States. They related similar narratives and also had knowledge of the names and ranks of their torturers. What we found was that these events occurred from twenty years ago until recently.

Subject 3

Subject 3 is a male 31-year-old science teacher who was tortured after imprisonment in 2010. He defined the torture called 'castration' as the process of tying heavy weights to the male genitals and forcing the victims to stand for hours. The events took place in Ma'ikelawi prison. He could remember the names Twelde and Harinat and said that they tried to cover their rank markings. He said, "They beat me on my penis and they tied containers of 3-5 litres of water to my male parts with a rope. They said to me, 'We don't want Oromo people like you to have children from now on; we will castrate you. We want to disrupt Oromo from having babies'

Subject 3 continued. He said that he was raped by prostitutes who told him they suffered from AIDS. He remembered, "The women who raped me began the act by declaring that they did not want me and other Oromos to live and have children. On some days, the prostitutes pulled my penis and tied 3 liters of water to it. I can't reproduce now because my male part was rendered dysfunctional from all the torture. They (the jailors) openly told us (the prisoners) that they would infect us with HIV/AIDS and when we begged our torturers to shoot and kill us, they refused to shoot and kill us and told us that they preferred to see us suffering slowly."

Subject 4

Subject 4, a male now 27 years old, was imprisoned several times since he was 14 years. He was imprisoned for 8 months in 2014. One of his torturers was Addisu Badhasa, a high-ranking security official for Oromia Region. Other high placed security officials he named were Tasfaye Urge, who was transferred to Adama, and Samuel Dhibisa. Subject 4 stressed that especially Samuel Dhibisa repeatedly participated in his imprisonment, interrogation and torture. He relates that about 1.5 liters of water was suspended from his genitals for hours until he was unconscious. They also burned his genitals with hot metal rods and pierced them with sharp needle-like

objects. He was told, "You Oromo people must never have children…"

Subject 4 knew of a 22- year- old female student who had been gang-raped in the security station in Nekemte town and said the leader was Ahmed, who was head of security in Eastern Wallaga. The female sexual torture survivor fled to Kenya later. He also knew of other torturers who had tortured and killed other prisoners, but who were not directly responsible for his own suffering.

Subject 5

Subject 5 is a female in her early 40s, whose rape and sexual torture occurred in 1993. She knows that her captors referred to each other as Shalaka (Major), Matoalaka (Leutenant), Hamsa Alaka (NCO), and Asir Alaqa (Corporal). She said that General Abraha, deputy Commander of the Diredawa military camp, was among those who raped her. Abraha used hot melted wax and a broken beer bottle to mutilate her vagina. She said, "My womb and female parts were all torn and damaged. I could not hold my urine. They knocked out 6 of my teeth so that my tongue was sticking out. I am not able to give birth because of all the torture I endured."

General Abraha said that they would stop Oromo women from giving birth. General Abraha told her that, "It's the decision of the Tigrean leaders to wipe out Oromo people. We don't want Oromo to reproduce. We will stop Oromo women from giving birth and replenishing the generations. Oromo women must be wiped out because they sustain the Oromo population." She was told, "From now on the Oromo women can't give birth; those who are born will be killed." A Tigrean Commander, Berhe G Medhin, said, "We will send our agents to hospitals and village clinics and even go door-to-door and have them give vaccines that would permanently stop births."

She related that "The wife of the vice Commander who was known as Leliti came and threatened to wipe out the nearby Oromo village and settle others in their place. After the

threat was made, water wells were poisoned and many Oromo farmers died. The killing of the settlement happened as the commander's wife threatened. Then people named the "Nexi people" came from the north who settled the land. These Nexi people forced out the survivors and forced surviving Oromo women to take a lot of pills and suspicious poison-like substances."

More recently, during the demonstrations against the master plan in Hararghe, her entire family were killed or went missing. Dismembered arms of one of her sisters who attended Haromaya University were found in the bushes. Another sister of hers is still disappeared, which Volunteer 5 says is either enduring sexual torture in secret prions like she was or is killed in secret. We learn the continuity of genocide across generations within one family from this case. Family members were systematically eliminated one by one in a span of two decades. This is a story of many other Oromo families.

CHARGES

Unknown Numbers of Biological Acts that Limit Reproduction

In Ethiopia, the acts include rape and genital torture that can easily be construed as designed to limit or prevent births to the Oromo people. These acts are committed secretly in political prisons and are rarely spoken of by the victims or the perpetrator(s). Most of the group members are aware, but remain silent with that knowledge. These prisons include, but are not limited to Maekelawi and Kaliti (Qaliti) prisons in the capital Addis Ababa, and unofficial detention centers in Oromia areas like Didessa, Tatek, Holeta, Sankele and Birshalako (Bir Sheleko) (USDOS, 2013). Trevor Trueman (2006:134) reports that a defecting official, Yonatan Dhibisa, former Minister of Justice of Oromia region, told him of the

"existence of secret detention centers...and 'ghost houses' in Finfinnee/Addis Ababa (the capital of Oromia and Ethiopia)." About 30,000 unofficial Oromo political detainees were incarcerated at that time. The detainees included Oromo intelligentsia, business men, politically active college students and their families, among others.

Rape of women in prisons by their guards is nearly ubiquitous for women in many countries. Available statistics in Ethiopia reveal similar findings. Female detainees report that about 50% of women are gang-raped multiple times while in prison. This figure might be grossly understated. One Oromo woman said, "rape is very disgraceful in Ethiopia. Women are blamed," (The Advocates, 2009:30). Polluck (1996:12) reports that aside from gang rape, vaginas are impaled with stakes, glass and electric shocks.

Physical damage that may result from this trauma might impair subsequent fertility. Dr. Lawrence Tydings told us, "If there is significant trauma to the vulva, vagina and pelvis, subsequent infertility is a possibility." Psychological and social difficulties arise after sexual torture that also tend to limit births to Oromo women.

At this point in time, courts may recognize rape as an aspect of genocide, if other elements of the crime of genocide exist (Karagiannakis, 1999: 479-490). The general understanding that rape obscures the identity of offspring and creates negative desire for rape victims by their present or future husbands is part of what drives the ubiquitous presence of rape in war and genocide. Technically, the crime of rape against even a single person can transform that act into an act of genocide if the crime is seen as an act against a targeted individual of a group and that act is committed with intent to destroy the group (De Vito etal., 1999: 479-490).

It is not yet widely accepted that male rape occurs. Yet, of 607 male prisoners from 45 countries, 25.2 % had been sexually assaulted (Peel, 2002:180). Michael Peel, M.D., reports, "[I]t is clear that where torture of men exists, a

significant proportion of them will have a sexual component to that torture," (2002:185).

Even though males are not considered impure after sexual torture or rape, they do not easily report these incidents. Michael Peel , recognizing that there is usually a significant proportion of sexual torture among torture victims writes, "Men who have been sexually tortured, and particularly those who have been raped, find it difficult to disclose, principally because of shame"(2002: 189). It becomes easy to understand that even when men disclose, few specify the details. The Advocates (2009:30) confirms the existence of the "unique torture...of Oromo men having weights tied to their testicles." And, they continue, "Oromos referred to this as virtual castration, intended to make you infertile and not productive anymore."

Trueman (2006:34) documented the case of a man who stated, "They then wet some string. They filled a one and a half litre bottle of water and tied it to my genitals with wet string...for one hour...I started to bleed...The pain was indescribable...") Amnesty International (2014:87) reported a case in which 70% of an infected penis needed to be removed after weights were suspended from a man's penis. Polluck (1996:12) reported sexual torture of both men and women. She also detailed 2-3 kilogram weights hung from men's testicles and outright castration. An ACAT report also documented beatings focused on the genitalia and weights suspended from genitals (2011: 216-222).

These acts of torture have the potential to cause sterilization in men. Dr. Eric Hochberg, Chief of Urology at Glen Cove Hospital, Nassau County, New York, confirmed this fear. He told us, "The fastening of heavy weights to the testicles could result in significant damage to the testicles themselves or possibly the vasa differentia (spermatic cords). This could lead to severe pain and possibly infection. In addition, hormonal deficiency and/or possibly infertility may result."35 Dr. Hochberg continues, "These injuries could be

diagnosed by physical examinations, blood tests and semen analyses. Treatment may be possible but would require corrective surgery." The Istanbul Protocol notes, "Individuals who were subject to scrotal torture may suffer from chronic urinary tract infection, erectile dysfunction or atrophy of the testes," (2004:43). This type of unusual torture does not tend to result in visible scars that might lead one to even suspect torture with intent to destroy a group by creating infertility in men. We note, that in keeping with the Abyssinian requirement for stealth, Dr. Peel (2004: 185-186) states that the skin of the penis and scrotum "is difficult to damage and generally heals without scarring" adding to the difficulty of diagnosis on the basis of a physical exam, alone.

Not having sufficient data, we cannot quantify the number of acts nor state the actual effects of these acts on the individual or the group. We should question whether or not it must be proved that these acts actually prevent births and present themselves as acts of genocide, but opinion, at present, is divided. According to Schabas (2009: 198), regarding Article II (d) of the convention, "it need not be proven that they (the measures imposed) have actually succeeded. Nevertheless, in its proposed 'Elements of Crimes' for the Rome Statute, the United States suggested that the prosecution must establish that 'the measures imposed had the effect of preventing births within that group ".

At this time, the difficulty caused by lack of sufficient data stemming from the double cover-up of the perpetrators and the victims again achieves importance. Exactly how many people suffered rape and sexual torture? What specifically was said and done? Exactly how many people have suffered unwanted infertility? Is this torture prevalent among jailed members of other Southern nations? We cannot yet know, and we ask that social and other barriers should be lowered so that such data may be more easily gathered.

ELITE AUTHORIZATION

In addition to the pattern of acts themselves and the declaratory speech of the actors as evidence of intent to destroy, a pattern of involvement by high authorities manifests and becomes additional evidence of intent to destroy. Fein (1993:26) asks "… at what level did the authorization occur? Is there prime facie evidence that the pattern of acts and personnel involved show that authorities had to plan, organize, or overlook a pattern of destruction?" The UN acknowledges that there is such evidence.

There appears to be a widespread use of torture in Ethiopia, which is condoned and encouraged by authorities and this is accompanied by a culture of impunity. However, we are not privy to the specific details known by the UN. With regard to Ethiopia, the UN Committee Against Torture, "is concerned about credible reports that such acts (torture) frequently occur with the participation, at the instigation or with the consent of commanding officers in police stations, detention centres, federal prisons, military bases and in unofficial or secret places of detention," (2010: para 51 C 10).

It should not be difficult to understand that these atrocities are more than individual crimes and are sanctioned and coordinated from above because there is consistent pattern, across time and distance, that can substitute for written orders commanding the destruction of a group (Apsel & Verdeja, 2013; Smith, 2013: 86). Such knowledge of planned actions by leadership adds even more evidence of intent to destroy a group. Authorization from high levels of government, a pattern of destructive sexual acts and admission by the actors of their 'intent to destroy a group', should lead to a difficult defense of the charge of genocide because of the presence of 'dolus specialis' in the pattern of this type of act.

The widespread use of this scar-free, potentially sterilizing, low-tech torture technique indicates premeditated instruction from centralized authorities and therefore a plan of intent to reduce fertility of males in leadership positions. So we can deduce that the answer to the question Helen Fein

asks about the origin of these crimes is that they are not committed willy nilly by the whims of low level political cadres, or of common criminals committing individual atrocities, but are organized at higher levels. We do not ask that these sexually destructive acts should be used as the only indication of the slow genocide in Ethiopia. We ask that these acts be considered as part of the totality of the massive evidence of the intent to destroy the Oromo nation by the Ethiopian elites, and extend this intent to the destruction of other conquered groups in southern Ethiopia. This mode of thought would parallel the ideas of R. Lemkin. It would also tend to show that the multiple errors of judgement by the Government of Ethiopia that have been so destructive to the lives of the population were actually pre-planned acts of genocide.

CONCLUSION

Although it may be understandable that huge numbers of deaths and atrocities have become the modern standard of genocide, a glance at the original writings of Raphael Lemkin is in order. Lemkin believed that the destructive act that harms an individual in the context of group destruction changes the vision of genocide from impersonal mass loss of lives to an understanding that is very personal in nature. The large number of Oromo survivors who have fled Oromia-Ethiopia in recent decades adds to the evidence of an attempted destruction of a group.

Despite the fact that elites in Ethiopia cling to the notion of superiority, they believe that they need external aid to stay in power. We agree that they would not be able to continue to self-fund the immoral genocidal behavior if outside aid ceased. We believe that they would readily change their behavioral patterns if threatened by the embarrassment of exposure of acts. However, although they might change behavior temporarily, such a change might not be permanent.

We call for the global press to acknowledge the years of atrocities which are well known to aid groups. If media are banned from certain areas, we ask them to accept the truth that the Ethiopian government has something to hide. We ask that victims are heard and believed. We have provided a description of sexual horror perpetrated upon Oromo men and women who do not speak the correct global languages and who do not possess computers, cameras and other instruments of communication with which to beg the world to acknowledge that something is terribly wrong with the narrative that the Ethiopian elite would lead global media to believe.

Erwin Staub (1999:259) states that observation and consistent condemnation of atrocities has been shown to be a "powerful influence" on state practice of genocidal torture. Trevor Trueman (1997) bemoans that observation and reporting of Ethiopian state activities against civilians "has been muted" by Western countries, that is, donor countries who finance the atrocities for strategic reasons. We must note that these countries have ratified the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, including the U.S. on November 4, 1988. Aside from strategic considerations, these countries also may fear the commitment to act which is required by the UNGC and its signatories (Scheffer, 2006: 230).

We call for more information. We suggest that additional research is required and that greater attention should be given to male and female rape that includes genital mutilation in general in order to better understand that these details indicate the existence of a covert pattern that reveals the intent of Ethiopian regimes. We ask that Oromo organizations, within and without the country, and aid organizations of the peoples of the South, encourage victims to come forward and speak about the atrocities they endured. We ask if there might be victims from other groups targeted by Ethiopian elites who might have suffered similar atrocities that might also rise to

genocide. We suggest that international pressure target the heinous genocidal acts of the Ethiopian government against Oromo and other peoples of the south in order to abide by the global norm of never committing genocide, nor permitting others to commit genocide.

NOTES

We interviewed two men survivors of sexual atrocity on tape in two separate interviews to ensure the confidentiality of the interview due to the sensitive nature of the subject. Both interviews lasted over four hours. Following their request, we coded and quoted the survivors anonymously as "Volunteer 1" and "Volunteer 2" respectively.

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WAAQEFFANNA FOLKSONGS AND POETIC VERSE AMONG TUULAMAA OROMO

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INTRODUCTION

Oral traditions and folkloric knowledge exhibit abundant diversity and impact day-to-day life in human communities. Paradoxically, folklore materials are understudied within the social sciences (Finnegan, 1970, Fakade, 1991EC [53], Sumner, 1997). The classification, analysis and documentation of indigenous folk genres is required in order to preserve the cumulative knowledge and experience of indigenous communities. Such preservation is necessary to impart the social functions, aesthetic value, literary significance and the forms of creativity exhibited by indigenous communities. Generally, folkloric genres help human beings realize their humanity (Salzmann, 2007:284). Furthermore, the study of folkloric knowledge provides a given community opportunities and values that enable members of the community to establish relationships, build social intimacy and enhance peaceful coexistence and personhood.

The prevalence of oral tradition in African communities indicates that it serves as a fundamental source of human civilization. Songs, stories, tales, proverbs, riddles, quips and jokes survive today in many villages across the continent with various functions (Okpewho, 1979:2). Both secular and

53 EC refers to Ethiopian Calendar, a reckoning that numbers 7 years behind the Gregorian calendar used elsewhere.

religious oral traditions provide education, thematic information, evoke impressive practical demands and express a society's complex worldview and their artistic qualities. The Okpewo goes on to African oral traditions as "[…] a living tradition of plastic art." On the other hand, Hill (1975:109), explained that the attention given to secular life through African folk beliefs such as spirituals and folk discourses illustrate "the faith, humor, and adaptability of the indigenous African people that enable them coping with, explaining and surviving in life."

The Oromo are an oral society which has preserved most of its thoughts, cultural values, philosophies, economic, socio-political and socio-cultural issues through folk traditions of which one is the folksong. As Tesema (1994) discussed, Oromo folksongs serve not only as main sources of historical information, but they are also the means by which the relevance of written sources is cross checked. He underscored that the corpus of Oromo oral sources can be categorized as traditions referring to historical origins, migrations, wars and settlement. Similarly, the study of *Tuulamaa* Oromo *Waaqeffannaa* folksongs and poetic verse will help us examine and communicate the values, wisdom and experiences of the Oromo reflected in their oral traditions over time. In spite of both external and internal impediments, Oromo indigenous practices have survived with rich oral traditions of *Waaqeffanaa* practices and songs. This tradition calls for scientific study and documentation. This is especially relevant among the *Tuulamaa* Oromo where the past social-political effects of homogenization, urbanization, population mixing and modernization have brought about cultural shifts.

This research examines the content, themes and form of songs from the Oromo indigenous religion called *Waaqeffannaa*, in order to highlight universal and local issues, the social realities and the philosophical thought of the Oromo people. Most of the data gathered, for this paper, was obtained in the setting of Waaqeffannaa rituals like *Irreechaa*, *Qaalluu*,

Ateetee, *Wadaajaa* and from unpublished texts and recordings. The research presents the results of classification and interpretation of Oromo oral poetry and Waaqeffannaa folksongs as they provide inference and elaboration for Waaqeffannaa rituals. Finally, the fundamental features of the songs, recorded in their contextual settings, are critically examined. The persuasive elements of the songs communicate a range of themes in the Oromo value system and worldview, a tradition which has been kept intact to the present in the form of religious norms and ethics, religious philosophies and folk-wisdom.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TUULAMAA

The *Tuulamaa* are one of the Booranaa groups who presently inhabit central Ethiopia. The *Tuulamaa* practice many Oromo indigenous traditions under antagonistic conditions. The name '*Tuulamaa*' originated from the word 'tuullaa' whose literal meaning is 'heap, mound or pile'. According to Bahere, the name *Tuulamaa* was adapted since the *Tuulamaa* clan was further divided into other numerous subgroups during the 16th century Oromo expansion (Buckingham and Huntingford, 1965:112). The word 'tuullaa', therefore, was adapted to *Tuulamaa* to designate the presence of numerous Oromo subgroups under the *Tuulamaa* moiety. Thus, the three major groups of *Tuulamaa*, namely the *Bachoo, Daaccii and Jiillee* clans and their sub branches have been living in the central part of Ethiopia for many centuries while preserving diverse Oromo indigenous institutions. Currently, the majority of the *Tuulamaa* Oromo live in the central part of Ethiopia, a major industrial zone bordered by Lake Danbal / Ziway in the South; the Southern Wallo Administrative Zone in the North; part of South East Shewa up to the area populated by the *Karrayyuu*, and extending to the vicinity of the settlement area of the *Maccaa* Oromo in the west (Alemayehu et al, 2006:117). In that setting, the *Tuulamaa* clan names are highly prevalent as names of Districts (*Ada'aa. Liinan, Bachoo, Waacaalee*…),

names of place/towns (*Xurrii, Jiddaa, Gullallee, Gumbichuu*), in the blessing recitations (*Obor Sadeen, Shanan Jiddaa, Jahan Galaan etc*.) and in many other things. Even the sub cities of Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) like *Gullallee, Eekkaa (Yekkaa*) and place names like *Burraayyuu* are given after the names of *Tuulamaa* clans.

The *Tuulamaa* territory is strategically important, with very fertile land and ample water resources. It is the site of many urban centers or towns of Oromia including Finfinnee (Addis Ababa), the Capital City of Ethiopia. In connection with this, different ethnic groups gradually influenced the *Tuulamaa* traditions and their indigenous institutions like the Gadaa system, *Qaalluu* institutions and their religious value systems through diverse social forces (Alemayehu et al, 2006, 26). The assimilation of the *Tuulamaa* Oromo and their traditions accelerated when Finfinnee (Addis Ababa) was founded as the capital city of Shewa in (1886) and that of Ethiopia in (1889) (Garretson 2000:4). From this time onwards, Finfinnee, which had been the center of Oromo indigenous ritual practices, i.e., the center of the *Tuulamaa* Caffee, lost much of its previous prestige because of strong resistance from the settlers. As a result, the name "*Hora Finfinnee*" was changed to "Fil Wuha," an Amharic term, and the ritual hall of *Tuulama* clans called *Galma Yaa'ii Gullallee* was replaced by the Minelek Monument. Following his coronation, Minelek II settled his armies, *fitawrari* (leaders of guards), *neggaderes* (leaders of mrchents), *dejjasmach* (commanders of reguard), his relatives, nobles, and lesser generals in their respective *sefer* (large and spacious settlements) (Garressowtz, 2000:4). He surrounded them settlers with impressive physical boundries and foreign merchants.

The social, political, economic and religious problems and other pressures exerted at the time exposed the indigenous *Tuulamaa* clans to displacement leading to a mass exodus to Maccaa, Arsii where they resided within neighboring

communities (Garretson, 2000:74-75). Many *gosa* (clans) were persistantly attacked by the regime. The displacement facilitated rapid assimilation of the *Tuulamaa* Oromo. It became the cause for replacing their existing traditions with new ones. The conditions were exacerbeted by the collaboration with Menlik's forces of Ras Gobena who was disloyal to the Oromo and and was assigned to act in the capacity of *ketema tebaki* (protector of the city) as the right hand of the king. All these factors caused *Tuulamaa* clans to be removed from their lands. Soon the king expanded his military camps and garrisons at the expense of the indigenous *Tuulamaa* and further took advantage by expanding his capital city (now named Addis Ababa) into the former Finfinnee and other fertile lands of *Tuulamaa* territory. He reserved the economic, military and geographical advantages for many of new settlers whom he had recruited and mobilized to the area from the northern part of Ethiopia. The name of the entire *Tuulamaa* land was soon replaced by the Amharic term Shewa.

Because of the strong assimilation that resulted from the forces mentioned above, it is currently difficult to locate *Tuulamaa* clans like Galaan and Eekkaa in Finfinnee. In *Tuulamaa* land, there were also social, political and economic conflicts that brought about *kooluu* (refuge) (Alemayehu, 2009:18). The above-cited social forces accounted for the decline through suppression, assimilation and diffusion of *Tuulamaa* indigenous institutions where Waaqefannaa rituals and folksong are practiced. Observers argue that *Tuulamaa* Oromo will soon encounter the same assimilation problem that the Waloo Oromo encountered in the past.

METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This paper employed qualitative research from an ethnographic perspective in the analyses of Waaqeffanaa folksongs and poetic verses. The theoretical framework is the

construction and interpretation of social reality from the views and practices of the indigenous community[54]. In constructing reality, the interpretation of folkloric experiences enables the researcher to discover various meanings for an objective purpose. The approach also enables them to describe and interpret folk traditions for the understanding of the community from an insider's perspective. According to Franchetto (2006:186), the aim of ethnographic research is to "recognize speech genres and registers, to describe the context of speech events and to identify significant terms and expressions." Folksongs involve direct observation, involvement and interpretation of speech genres. They also require attention to the discourse of its rituals, the description of physical and cultural environment under which folklore genres are performed. Ethnographic study and reveal cultural segmentation, too. Through *Waaqeffannaa* folksongs and poetic verses, the community's ritual knowledge, their artistic expressions, their philosophies and world view, their religion and cultural values are on full display.

This study was conducted in *Waaqeffannaa* ritual celebrations at national, clan family levels in the Ada'aa, Waacaalee, Liiban Cuqqaalaa, Sadeen Sooddoo, Bachoo and Dandii study areas. The rituals include: the *Irreechaa* (the annual thanks giving ceremony), the *Qaaluu* ritual celebrations such as *gubaa* (the igniting of torch) and *kudharfan* (the ritual held per 14 days), the *Ateetee* ritual for fecundity and the *Wadaajaa* rituals for alliance. Both primary and secondary sources were used for the study, supported by a triangulation approach to data gathering tools (FGD, interview, observation, DVR, DAR, and Document analysis).

The primary data was gathered from elders, cultural

54 The construction of social reality is "the making accounts of the world around us and gaining impressions based on culturally defined and historically situated interpretations and personal experiences" (Sarantaks, 2005:37-40).

and religious experts like *Qaalluu/Ayyaantuu* and *Gadaa* officials, performers of religious and secular life of the society, folklore experts among the target communities. The secondary data were collected from both published and unpublished materials and documents. The available manuscripts from each study district's Culture and Tourism Office were also used as sources. Among the six districts, most of the data was obtained from the Ada'aa, Waacaalee, Sadeen Sooddoo and Dandii Districts from June 2012 to December 2012, during field work for my PhD dissertation project. The data was analyzed using "qualitative content analysis," a method that helps to study the content of communicative events for their authenticity or meaning (Sarantaks 2005:300). The approach enables the researcher to make inferences about background, characteristics and effects of a communication objectively and systematically. *Waaqeffannaa* folksongs are analyzed for their techniques of persuasion, their style, the audience and motive, attitude or values to be manifested. The major attention in the analysis was given to approach to content analysis formulated by Stemler (2001), which can be used for folklore study by addressing the five key questions "who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect ?".

As theoretical frameworks, both the functional model[55] and the descriptive approach were used. According to this

55 Folklorists and anthropologists rely on functional model to analyze certain indigenous societies' cultural traits. The functional model helps cultural anthropologists to understand their data for several applications (Hicks and Gynne 1996:49). The writers argued "culture as a system consists of individual and mutually shared elements and if one of the systems affected, it affects and change the other system including its performances". They also added another view of functionalism as "the fact that aspect of culture functions to fulfill the biological and psychological needs of individual."In its sociological explanation, religion and rituals practices can be analyzed and interpreted for their capacity to promote social cohesions, encourage spirit of cooperation, and support the social structure of a particular community (Hendry, 1999:136).

writer, the religious systems can be related to social and political systems through a functional model to explain how ethnographic behavior and social facts form a coherent system. Therefore, this model is helpful to know the various social functions of *Waaqeffanna* folksongs in their ritual settings for immediate use in the social milieu of the target society. On the other hand, exploring indigenous knowledge practices usually employs the descriptive approach of qualitative research in the social and institutional setting (ECIS, 2010:12). Hence, most of the data provide good descriptive accounts of the socio-cultural setting of the society and local community. The descriptive approach answers Stemlers 'what?'question about the tradition in question. The same data can answer the 'why' of *Waaqeffannaa* folksongs.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC CLASSIFICATION

Classification seem to be the basis of folklore science which has to classify its non-orderly set, mixed and interdisciplinary materials to understand the way in which the folklore and literary facts function (Polonijo,1995:55). For an examination of the literature on generic classification of oral poetry traditions, particularly the genre of poetic folksongs as it applies to *Waaqeffannaa* folk traditions, see my dissertation. Coming to the studies and generic classifications of Oromo oral poetry, some researchers have tried to document various forms of Oromo oral poetry/ folksongs and the texts. Some of them like Tesema (1994), Ishihara (1996), Adem (2008) and Temam (2011), Dirribi (2011) have generated organic data focusing on specific local settings and treated the study of oral poetry in integration with other fields of studies. Researchers like Adisu (1990), Sumner (1997), Asafa (2004), and Abebe (2007) have focused on full-fledged investigations and thorough analysis of various forms of Oromo oral poetry.

Similarly, the series project work entitled *Wiirtuu,*[56] *from VI to V10* is another recent innovation in the area of combined efforts to document Oromo folksongs, generic systems of oral literature and to investigate the forms of literary value in Aafaan Oromoo. Studies on Oromo folksongs and literary works as oral wisdom are fragmented and less treated on the bases of exploring the wisdom using performance-based acts like manners, forms and style of acts, governing norms, symbolic issues, etc. Most of the stated research works presented an overview: generic names and with minor explanations, while disregarding major thematic areas, social functions, structures and other core classification criteria.

Among many of the works, Sumner's collection and analysis of Oromo songs is the most comprehensive in terms of its depth, breadth, and philosophical thinking and literary themes. In particular, Sumner (1997:17-23), presented the various criteria and principles set by scholars as background in the taxonomy of classifying Oromo folksongs in spite of their inorganic nature. In the classifications, the researcher tried to highlight the genesis of Oromo songs under the title 'the universe of Oromo songs'. In the classification, he identified eight categories by name taxonomy. These include love songs, heroic songs, historical songs, festival and religious songs, satirical songs, gnomic songs, and multiple literary types. The writer analyzed and elaborated the sub-genres in terms of their structures, content, forms and the concert life situations in which the songs are performed. Hence, the classifications would seem exhaustive in terms of their coverage and criteria for classifications and serve as a

56 The project consists of a comprehensive publication of book chapters contributed by teams of local researchers and folklore experts of local language promoters. Including many local studies and collection of oral literature, the studies conducted on Oromo folksongs are generally treated as supplementary themes in the foremost social studies: history, sociology, ethnography, philosophy,

model to be followed in the classification of *Waaqeffannaa* songs. Hence, this researcher's critical reading, evaluation and interpretation of the collected songs with conceptual explanation and commentaries are also taken as the base for the classification of *Waaqeffannaa* songs.

CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSES OF WAAQEFFANNAA SONGS

The *Waaqeffannaa* songs, prayers, recitations, maxims are the major religious expressions that demonstrate the indigenous Oromo belief system, worldview and spiritual life. They increase the imagination, exploit the communities' philosophical thinking and uphold their value systems. These songs, prayers, recitations, maxims and other forms were contributed by different group dynamics and personalities at various *Waaqeffannaa* occasions at the time of data collection. The subgenre, their forms, style of performances and many accompanying features were captured for their potentiality to exert wisdom of all types, philosophical, cultural, and folkloric and literary. In the analysis of oral poetry, audience-poets' (performers) interactions through texts or poetic verses accompanied by extra-linguistic features are the major components. These are also more practical in analyzing oral poetry like *Waaqeffannaa* songs in the authentic cultural setting. In more inclusive way, Dereje (2013:6) emphasized that the interaction can also encompass the deliberation of oral poetry "on a scene for purpose and endorsed by traditions and cultures [being] invited by the stage/ scene, whereupon performer/ poet and audience meet to actualize it in some way". As the writer suggested, this approach is the best way to study the contextual studies of creativity in oral poetry. Different *Waaqeffanna* rituals provide the context where diverse songs can be created by the talent dynamic groups to carry both secular and religious themes. The presentation, discussion, classification and analysis of *Waaqeffanaa* songs therefore will focus on different major and specific themes.

Classification and Analyses Based on Core Religious Values

The *Waaqeffnnaa* songs categorized under 'core religious values' hold different major and sub-themes and are highly prevalent, persistently used in every *Waaqeffannaa* rituals. Even if the messages on values and ethical code are the characterestic features of any religious song, *Waaqeffannaa* songs hold many inherited values that are essential for the day-to-day survival of the community. They explain society's deep-rooted thoughts and highly expressive *Waaqeffannaa* creeds. They are used in philosophizing religious values, people's imagination of the belief system, their general worldview, and their spiritual world and help us to understand and evaluate their world in general. Furthermore, they express deeply-held beliefs that characterize the monotheistic principles and values of the religion. Viewing nature and natural phenomena at the center of Oromo belief systems and *Waaqaa* as the Creator of all, the Oromo rely on diverse prayers, songs and chants or doxologies. They elaborate the knowledge of transcendental or supreme reality to establish the values of peace, harmony, trustfulness, fullness, fecundity, etc. Van Deloo (1991:269) also indicated that fertility, repletion, respect and peace, the sense of identity, trust in God and ethics and morality are the foremost values expressed in the traditional rites and songs of Gujii Oromo. Since the Oromo secular knowledge is highly interwoven with their spiritual knowledge, both aspects of songs reflect the stated values. The faith that the *Tuulamaa* Oromo submit themselves to *Waaqaa*, the way they extend their thanks for *Waaqaa*'s endless gifts using chants, songs and religious maxims are mainly in honor of *Waaqaa*, or address anthropocentric issues. The predominantly core *Waaqeffannaa* values are to extensively address and enforced the link between the spiritual and physical world and between the Creator and created beings.

Themes in Relation to Waaqaa, the Supreme Being

Godliness / Greatness of *Waaqaa*

The greatness of unique God, *Waaqaa* is perceived by *Waaqeffannaa* as an integral part of their worldview for salvation, deliverance and tranquility. He is manifested as an everlasting Supernatural Power of Oromo worldview in the dogma of *Waaqeffannaa* in achieving human wellbeing as a whole. It also testifies to their monothestic religion, the imagination and perception of Oromo in glorifying *Waaqaa*'s kingdom. This ensures that *Waaqaa* is uplifted as a Creator, a Governor, a life Perpetuator and the Beelii-Belelii (Beginning and Ending). Hence, there are countless songs which describe the fundamental attributes of *Waaqaa*, in uniqueness, miraculous deeds, mysterious purposes and glorious nature in mastering things of the universe.

Table 1. Thanksgiving Songs

Uummata uumaan dugdaa,	1 The people whose Creator is the back bone,
yaa abbaa uumama hunda,	You father of all the creations,
Urjii samiirraa kumsee,	Who makes the star in the sky many,
nama dhugaatii tumsee,	Who assists one committed to justice,
Waaqa dhugaa tumtee,	5 God that has formulated the justice,
Kan urjiin kumaa,	Who posses thousands of stars,
Waaq kan jaaman sumaa.	O God you are desirable to be prayed,
Waanjoo seeraa muree,	He formulated the cardinal laws,
Dhagaa gurguddaa lagaa,	The bigger stone of the river bank,
bishaantu walbaachisee,	10 The running water piled one on the other,,
Maseenni dahuu hindinnee,	The sterilized never refused to give birth,
uumaatu walcaalchiisa,	The Creator distinguished one with this attribute
Cuqqaalli gubbaa tabbaa,	The surface of Cuqqaalaa mountain is a hill,
tabbatu cillaanfataa,	It is the hill of the slanting mountain range
Dabeessi si hinyaaminii,	15 The coward should not pray to you,
jaamu si irraanfataa.	If so he forgets you [God] persistently,

The above songs praises the greatness of *Waaqaa* in serving as the backbone that holds people together and serving as his being Master and Creator of all created things (L.1-2).This reality is, moreover; demonstrated by *Waaqaa*'s unique talents and attiributes in making the stars many in the sky, to support

only one who is committed to justice, formulating the justice and many other principles which govern everything in the universe (LL.4-14).Hence, *Waaqaa* should be prayed to. For instance, *Waaqaa* has special capacity to hold countless stars in his unique abode (home), the sky. This visible world can also be spiritually interpreted as the great force of Oromo cosmological knowledge. *Waaqaa* is believed to be orderly, to set the terms of justice and cardinal laws that can be realized through *safuu*. The certainity of *Waaqaa*'s unique talent and greatness is illustrated in terms of the downpouring of rain that is considered as *Waaqaa*'s tears, drops or spit. As a result of rain, the force of the running water piles up huge stones in the river. *Waaqaa* has the ability to create Cuqqaallaa Mountain, Sacred place of *Tuulamaa* Oromo together with its features. He created people with attributes of fertility and infertility as fruits of his glorious deeds. That is why the Oromo pray to *Waaqaa* for birth, giving honor to *Waaqaa* for fertility. For many instances of the songs in signifying *Waaqaa's* greatness, people have to be careful in articulating the conditions of their spiritual contact with Him (LL.15 and 16) as He instinctively endows them with renewable gifts and blessings.

Pledging or Praying to *Waaqaa*

Prayer is an incantation or act by people seeking to inspire assistance from *Waaqaa*. The main concern for *Waaqeffannaa* followers is to pray to *Waaqaa* for His endless blessing and bequest for prosperity, fullness, peace, health, fecundity and others. They believe that their future survival and fate as a whole depends on the power of *Waaqaa* to assist them in all of their affairs. Hence, by praying to *Waaqaa*, the Oromo trust that they would soon get rewards for the purpose of their praying. They put down thinking and leave pledging His mysterious deeds in guarding the nation, one's family and all of one's domicile life. They pray to *Waaqaa* for His kingdom for enhancing harmony and relationships between the spiritual and physical world and among the individual people.

Especially *Waaqeffannaa* followers believe that there is a need for frequent praying to *Waaqaa* publicly or privately. Regardless of specific setting, they also pray to *Waaqaa* to hold spiritual proximity with Him and to express His glory of trustfulness to them. By enhancing the objectives of praying, they believe that people would receive abundant benedictions. The songs with different manners of praying communicate comprehensive themes in the *Waaqeffannaa* faith system.

Table 2: Songs of Praying

Gurraacha leemmoo rooba taliilaa,	1 Black God of vital force, donor of pure rain drops,
Hayyee ya Waaq siin oollee gallaa.	O God hayyee, we manage to live in your watch,
Ammaaree soree, ammaatee tolee ,	He piles and winnows, turns from mean to kind,
Hayyee ya Waaq siin oollee gallaa,	O God hayyee, we manage to live in your watch,
Fageenyaa roobee dhihoo lolaasee,	5 He drops from far-off, He gashes from proximal,
Hayyee ya Waaq siin oolee gallaa,	O God hayyee, we manage to live in your watch,
Ceekaan baalumaa beekaan Waaqumaa	The ceekaa tree smart in its leave, the God is absolute wise,
Hayyee ya Waaq siin oollee gallaa,	O God hayyee, we manage to live in your watch,
Gurraacha leemmoo rooba taliilaa,	Black God of vital force, donor of pure rain drops,
Hayyee ya Waaq siinhoolee gallaa,	10 O God hayyee, we manage to live in your watch,
Gurraacha leemmoo rooba taliilaa,	Black God of vital force, donor of pure rain drops,
Dhiyaa kiyyaa barihaa kiyyaa.	The dark night maker, the bright light breaker,

The God worshipped as unique Creator with masculine attribute is equated with a parallel unique planet, the Earth, which is identified with the feminine attribute. Thus, in every instance, Oromo admire both: God as father of all and Earth as the mother of all life, the former for rains and the later for germination and growth. But like the God, the earth is not directly prayed to as the Creator, perpetuator and provider of all. But as indicated, indirectly the Earth can play the roles of *Waaqaa* like ending life, breaching one, devastating things for which *Waaqaa*'s talent is popularized (LL, 3-4).This is because, as the Oromo proverb relates, the Earth and the God are inseparable: *Waaqni safuu roobeet, lafti safuu magarsa* "God downpours the rain that affects nothing, the Earth grows grasses that affects no beings".

Thematically the song generally implies that the audiences' pray to *Waaqaa* in search of His guidance, mastery and watches as human beings alone are incapable to manage themselves in their daily survival. The praying starts with admiring *Waaqaa*'s appearance and for His great gift, the drop of rain (L,1). The lines (LL, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9) illustrate *Waaqaa*'s unique faculty by stating certainty and paradoxical certainty in consolidating people's trust in Him so as to activate things beyond their imagination. For instance, He is absolutely wise; He drops from far-off but gashes from proximal; He makes the dark night and break the bright light, etc.

Delivering Thanks to *Waaqaaa*

Giving thanks to *Waaqaa* originated from people's success in their praying to Him for the purposes of their prayers. Their objectives could be either to achieve, regain or restore. They attempt to rectify disorder or imbalance in the universe and in the people's immediate environment. Under these conditions, *Waaqaa* is believed to be devoid of human beings and the earth for violating and being disobedient in retaining *safuu*. Thus, the indicators of imbalance are expected to be regained through praying. For instance, events like the praying for *Waaqaa* for the down pouring of the rain during drought season, peace during war and adversity, fullness during scarcity, endurance / stability during accidents, cure / healing during epidemics, etc., are instances of means and ends for praying and delivering thanks to *Waaqaa*. Generally, *Waqeffannaa* followers believe that thanksgiving is only addressed to *Waaqaa* as a reward for His offerings and blessings. It is beyond the knowledge and imaginations of human being to preview *Waaqaa*'s revelations and watch Him upon accomplishing those things. Therefore, gratitude, appreciations and recognition are the sole effects by which the *Waaqefannaa* followers express the massive aid, endowment and merit from *Waaqaa*.

The songs in Table 3, relate *Waaqaa*'s blessings and gifts to the water of the huge river with unpredictable inpurities due to its great volume (L,1). Apparently, the non-outdated gifts of *Waaqaa* are maintained through thanks delivering to Him frequently and prior to all domestic life (L, 2-4). High regard is given to peace, for which people address their thanks to *Waaqaa,* elaborated in comparison with critical observation of an event of Creator with reference to Dambal Mountain (Damboo in an expression of adoration) (L,5). The name refers to the five mountains found in the middle of the Dambal, the sacred lake found among *Jiillee* group of *Tuulamaa* Oromo. Actually, it is unthinkable to attempt to climb this mountain due to its location amidest lake Dambal (Ziway), its chilly effects and wild beasts like snakes. Likewise, nothing can block and look down on the blessing that *Waaqaa* endowed to human beings. Thus, people are conscious enough to understand the art, the kingdom and the secret deeds of *Waaqaa*. In doing so, they recognize and receive His blessings and give thanks to the God and the Earth exerting maximum pleasure and satisfaction while singing songs of peace (LL,6-9).

Table 3: Songs of Thanks Delivering

Hawaasayyoo kuni hinbora'uu yaa,	1 The huge river never gets spoiled,
Tollii Waaqaa kuni hinmoofa'uuyaa,	This gift of God would not get outdated,
dura sinyaamaa,	I pray to you first,
Nagee ya Waaq dura sin yaamahoo.	O God, give us peace, I pray to you first.
Tulluun Damboo kan hinkorreetii,	5 It is impossible to climb the Damboo hill,
Tolli Waaqaa kun hinsobneetii,	This gift of God is not a lie,
kan hinqolleetii,	It is not the one to be blocked,
Waaqaa-Lafaan walagarreetii,walgammannee	We contact with God-Earth, we get pleased,
Nagee ya Waaq, nagayaan yaamaa,	I sing songs of peace, O God, give us peace,
dura sin yaamahoo,	I pray to you first,
Haroon Bookee hinmaddinee,	10 The Bookee Lake never dried,
Tuujumaa guutuma,	It is complete, full,
Tolli Waaqaa hariitii hinqabu	The gift of God is not urgent,
Hinjarjaʀuu suutumaa,	Non hurry but slowly,
Dura sin yaamaa,	I pray to you first,
Nagee ya Waaq dura sin yaamahoo.	O God, give us peace, I pray to you first,

Another thing stated in reference to natural phenomena is a person's hope emphasising the fulliness and completness of Haroo Bookee instead of drying up, its water, said 'hinmaddinee' not streamed (L,10) to avoid expression of taboo (the drying up of the lake). The fullness and complectness of the lake can be related to the God's blessing considered to be the non-urgent, non-hastened but slowly set forth effects upon people (L,11). So, this art of *Waaqaa* requires careful observation and realization of expression of songs of peace addressed to God.

Hope or Promise in *Waaqaa*

Hope or promise is the fundamental aspect of *Waaqeffannaa* practices and are seen as guarantees for human existence and the means by which one achieves points of doubt in his/her faith trusting in *Waaqaa*. *Waaqeffannaa* followers reveal their hopes and promises in *Waaqaa* asserting certainty and promoting their positive outcomes in their faith system and spirituality. As a result, they experience the feeling of happiness, comfort, confident and achieve stable mind with an anticipated success and all-around productivity. Besides, the hope or promise one has in *Waaqaa* is considered as the source of one's endurance and means of perfectly achieving goals. The aformentioned attributes one possesses owing to experiencing hopes/promise in *Waaqaa* make man to be a curious observer of events. The songs below address these themes.

Table 4 : Songs Promising in God

Yoo Gibeefi yoo Lakkuu hoo,	1 If compared with Gibee and Lakkuu,
Lagni guddaan Abbayyaa,	Abbayyaa is the big river,
Yoo dhibeefi yoo rakkoo hoo,	When one suffers illiness and challenges,
Waaqni guddaan ni caaala.	The Supreme Being aids as the pioneer.
Acarabaa murreerraa	5 We have cut down the branchy wood,
Iaa isa manaan ijaarruu,	The one which helps us to construct the hut,
Nuti Waaqaan bulleerraa,	We entirely admited and trusted in God,
Ija namaa hin ilaalluu,	We never rely on our fellows for help,
Ilaallus maal abbaasaa!	Even if we rely on our fellows, so what!
Haajaa Waaqatu baasa,	The God is with potential to lend a hand,

The song started to demonstrate the justification why people do leave their hopes to *Waaqaa* in their survival. The big river, Abbayyaa having large size among other rivers used to be viewed as an analogy to articulate the greatness of the *Waaqaa* in solving peoples' problem during illiness and challenge (LL,1-4). A similar analogy is drawn from the confidence people have to build their huts from the branchy wood parallel with people's hope to be successful trusting only in *Waaqaa* among objects of belief (LL,5-8). That is why the Oromo believe that their souls are in His hands and He is merciful to them under various adverse conditions. They prefer to pray and submit their souls to God before seeking further solutions. As a matter of chance, inevitably one relies on his / her follow humans owing to weakness, it is believed that only *Waaqaa*, who is supposed to be a powerful one assists an individual (L,9 and 10).

Themes in Relation to *Ayyaanaa* (Divinity)

Different *Waaqeffanaa* songs are also related to and address the guardian spirits which are believed to be endowed to human beings by *Waaqaa*. They are taken as the intermediaries between *Waaqaa* and human beings and believed to be useful to man in different ways. They are regarded as the sentinel of the people during calamities; they serve as sources of their pleasure; they assist them as messangers, they are viewed as the protectors of public morality like *safuu*; they are responsible for the different aspects of human life in the universe of man. The general name of the guardian spirits in Oromo is called *ayyaanaa* and one who is blessed by *Waaqaa* in possessing it is *ayyaantuu*. The merit of possessing *ayyaanaa* is *ayyaantummaa*, which embodies man's moral, spiritual loyalty to God and assists society's moral values. Yet *Waaqeffanaa* followers trust that *ayyaanaa* possesses everything and everything possesses *ayyaanaa* except dry objects; our body also believed to

constitute half *ayyaanaa* and half flesh. In Oromo religious philosophy, the *ayyaanaa* is said to have acted in the world of human beings including in people's domiciles (clans, rivers, mountains, lakes, cattle and environment) by *safuu*. *Waaqaa* is believed to snatch *ayyaanaa* from people who harm the society, their traditions, undermine fellow human beings and their belongings. Receiving this, an individual does not have grace before people; his / her prayers remain hypothetical, he / she lacks success and suffers from challenges. Morally, it is also taken as one act against one's inborn attributes as *ayyaanaa* and *ayyantummaa* are offered to people by God. One has to maintain, preserve and care for his/her *ayyaanaaa*, being obliged by the laws of *Uumaa-uumamaa* and *safuu* of society. Hence intermediaries (Daachee, Nabii, Maaram, Ateetee, Wadaajaa, etc.) are recognized and praised by songs.

Table 5 : Songs of Divinity

Dhaabaan girgiddaa jallatee,	1 The pole of the wall gets bent,
Daachee yaa michuu saragee,	Daachee, the partner of ordinary person,
Maaf teessa yeroon geessehoo.	It is your moment, please view us in your spirit,
Gaattiraan lamaa wal biraa,	The two trees are seen side by side.
Daache yaa michuu joobiraa,	5 Dache who is an intimate friend of the bird,
Joobiraaf qalee foon hiraa.	He slaughters and shares the flesh to the birds.
Haroo aannanii,	The Haro Annani pond (Milky Pond),
Bishaan haroo aannanii,	The water of Haro Annani Pond (Milky Pond),
Rakkataan rakkoo ba'aa,	The poor overcome the poverty,
Maseenni ilmoo argatti,	10 The sterile women give birth to children,
Yoo galma kee seenani	If they go and pray at your ritual hall.

The songs emphasize *Daaccee*, the guardian spirit which exists at a family level to be viewed to the audience through *ayyaantuu* by praising it for attributes of its intimacy to the ordinary person (LL,1-3) and species of birds (LL,4-6). These intimate associations signify its extreme kindness to the family. The pond water is associated with milk to fill up one's thirst. Likewise, in praying at the spiritual hall of the *Daachee*, they succeed in the subject of their praying: birth giving and progress attaining (LL,7-11). It is advised to visit the *galmaa* (ritual hall of local *ayyantuu*) as compulsory, just as Christians

visit the church and Muslim visit the mosque as compulsory religious principles and doctrine. The unique thing that distinguishes *Waaqeffannaa* followers from followers of universal religions is that its principles are essentially drawn from Oromo-oriented traditions and their indigenous value systems. For instance *Gadaa* rules and regulations are the guiding principles of their belief system just as the Bible and the Quran are for Christians and Muslim value systems respectively.

One of the religious aspects of *Gadaa* values is the existence of *ayyaanaa* among individuals, clans and moieties. So, when Oromo pray in the name of Goftaa (Lord) of Maccaa and Abeebee and Giiftii (lady) of Maccaa by the name of *Waaqaa*, the divinity is endowed to the clan to guard their surrounding land. As *Waaqeffanna* followers argue logically, the sun cannot set in the east, a female cannot be a male, a white man cannot be a black man, the earth cannot be a sky and one's national spirit cannot be another national spirit. Hence, one's praying to God of another nation, in foreign language, in a foreign culture and its setting instead of one's own spirit, language, culture and any belonging is considered as one act against the law of God. Therefore, *Waaqaa* is prayed in terms of the *ayyaanaa* he endowed to the clan like the *ayyaanaa* of Abeebee and Maccaa clans.

Table 6 : Songs of Divinity

Oofan waamaa oofa warra Abeebee,	1 I pray to Oofa, the gurdian spirit of the Abebe clan,
Ya abbaa Margoo garaan maal sikajeelee?	O, father Abbaa Margoo,what does you gut seek?
Qilleensa kee yaa Dandi qilleensa kee,	O, Dandi, your strong wind is not approaching,
Ayyee Jijoo akkam goota iyyeessa kee?	Listen, Jijoo, what would be the fate of your poor?
Nama dhalee hinqabne iddoo hinqabne,	5 The sterilized fellow,who posseses no resting place,
Qalqala lilmootu hodhaa mee qaalqala naa hodhi,	The needle nits the rack please net it to me,
Galgala ilmootu tolchaa, mee galgala naa tolchi.	A child is a hope for old age, make my old age better,
Aannanuma furdi kee aannanuma	Your ritual hall site is satisfying, it is really satisfying,.
Maal huba kan namaa maal na huba?	The act of fellow doesn't harm me, it doesn't
kan Waaqi maleehoo.	10 Except the acts of the God.
Wallaala koo malee maalan [allaaggaxaa],	I am not unwilling except my innocent to the subject
Allaaggaxa dhiisee, dhibba si kiisee,	I end unwillingness giving you indemnity as excuse.
Goodaa gamaa lafa deedaa fardaa,	The plain grazing land of horse at the river side,
yoona dhaduun baate,	The sun must rise in the moment,
Abbaa Magaal jajjabeeasa kadhaa,	15 You have to pray to Abbaa Magaal seriously,
yoo kana nuuf laafe.	He would be kind to us under this condition.

The songs substantiate the above view so that the attendants address their prayers towards Oofa, Abbaa Margoo and Jijoo *ayyaanaas* of the Abeebee Clan (LL,1-3) which are their innate spirits. The prayers started by stating the spirit of their own sacred land, Dandii to protect them from possible danger, to assist the poor and endow the sterile with the child that supports and manages the latter ages (LL,4-7). They also believe that the failure happens as a result of acting against the rules of God, for which they pray to their God going to the *ayyaantuu*'s ritual hall seeking their stability and satisfaction (LL,8-10). In the Oromo belief system one has to go willingly to the *ayyantuu*'s ritual hall for adoration. However, sometimes people do not go because of the absence of the way which might be taken as unwillingness from the view of self-critique (LL,10 and 11). Under this condition, persistent praying is the only means to get possible excuse going to the ritual hall of Abbaa Magaal, *ayyaantuu* of the clan (L,12-16) for his generosity to the innocent.

Themes in relation to *Dhugaa* (Justice) and *Nagaa* (Peace)

The concepts, *nagaa* and *dhugaa* are used as expressions of secular and religious themes in every Oromo clan regardless of their religions. They all greatly love and acknowledge them in every *Waaqeffannaa* rituals and use as commands of religious expression. The words *dhugaa eeguu* stands for expression of people's commitments to reality, justice, fairness and trustfulness. These issues are the backbone of *Waaqeffannaa*. They bind everything together harmoniously in their innate surrounding. Because of this, *Waaqeffanaa* followers highlight the concept of *dhugaa* by praising in unique expressions. Equally important, *nagaa* is predominantly used sometimes co-occurring with *dhugaa* in the blessings and *Waaqeffannaa* ritual practices as the basic requirements to entrench in Oromo worldview and their religious philosophy. There are many *Waaqeffannaa* songs which demonstrate the essence of peace and justice and stress

their significance in secular and spiritual world of man. In *Waaqeffannaa*, peace can be categorized as an internal peace and external peace. The former which is the base for the latter is the peace that people have within the self, or psychological peace. The latter is the peace which individuals uphold with their external physical world. The peace of an individual can be affected under circumstances when one disputes with someone, in an insulting, when one is beaten or experienced things that affect one's mentality arousing one's sense for revenge. *Waaqeffannaa* followers believe that to address prayers to God properly and to regain the foregone peace, one has to get out of the mindset of such revenge right before starting to pray to *Waaqaa* in a *fatii / araaraa* ritual . In this ritual, one is made to perform *waadaa* (oath) and thus regains peace with self, *Waaqaa* and with nature through praying to *Waaqaa* for peace and justice.

Table 7 : Songs of Justice and Peace

Nagee ya Waaq,	1 O God, peace,
nageenyi kee ganamaa galgalaa, ,	Your peace is at dawn and night,
Nagee ya Waaq, nagee ya Waaq	O God peace, O God, peace,
Nageenyi abbaa ganamaa galgalaa, ,	Father's peace is at dawn and night,
Nagee ya Waaq, nagee ya Waaq	5 O God, peace, O God peace,
nageenyi kee hinboora'u hinmoofa'u,	Your peace is undisturbed, unfolded,
Nagee ya Waaq, Nagee ya Waaq,	O, God peace, O God peace,
nageenyi kee guutumaa duubumaa,	Your peace is absolute in essence,
Nagee ya Waaq nagee ya Waaqi.	O God peace, O God peace,

The verses which have thematically different varieties, begins with praying to *Waaqaa* with an expression of asserting peace as *nagee ya Waaq* (L-1). The expression is repeated in other lines as feedback (LL, 3, 5, 7 and 9) to reinforce *Waaqaa*'s blessing of human beings in offering His abundant peace of dawn and night, a stable and unfolded; the peace which is absolute (LL, 2, 4, 6, and 8). At any moment of blessing and wish of peace at *ardaa jilaa* (sacred place), *Waaqeffannaa* attendants conduct worshipping by bending up of their twin palms and rubbing them against their face as symbolic means

to declare the recapitulating of peace. They verbally respond as reinforcement to elders blessing saying *nagayee / haata'u* / may it be peace). Even in the daily interaction, one opens the greeting as *nagaa ooltanii /bultanii*? / Have you been in peace during the night /day? This evokes response such as *nageenyi badhaadha* (peace is prosperous) and *nagaa galata Waaqa*a (thanks to God, I am /we are in peace). One shows his / her wish upon biding one goodbye saying "*nagaan gali*" (reach your destination in peace).

Themes in Relation to *Safuu* and *Cubbuu*

Safuu is the primordial and key issue in *Waaqeffannaa* and determines all sorts of values and moralities of the society from both spiritual and secular lives. *Safuu* identifies something as great with regard to the distinction of morally right-wrong, liking-disliking behaviors, taboo-non-taboo, all ethical and moral order of the universe and, in fact, all things. In *Waaqeffannaa*, *safuu* is perceived as the premordial set of norms and order as they are offered by Waaqaa in governing people under the law of nature. Hence, *safuu* is something sacred holding all things in the universe as naturally set in an orderly manner. *Safuu* is also used to safeguard *dhugaa* (truth or justice), it monitors wrong deeds; it puts the violated laws and norms of the universe in their appropriate place and enhances social harmony. If *safuu* is violated, that violation becomes *cubbuu* (sin). Before its violation, *safuu* should be preserved in its natural order through *laguu* (abstinence) and protected by *waadaa galuu* (oath of excommunication).The close reading of many songs helps us to notice *safuu* how they are practiced in *Waaqeffannaa* to maintain events of primordality.

CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS BY RITUAL NAMES, NATURE OF PARTICIPANTS AND STYLES

The ritual names, nature of participants and style of performance are highly interrelated and describe the folksong

meaningfully. The rituals attract the participants who glorify the ritual. They are usually distinguished by performance-based acts. The performance-based acts are the backbone of the folksongs and articulate the special talents of the ritual attendants. One specific genre is distinguished from the others in terms of its style of performance having various tonal melodies. In this view, the *Waaqeffannaa* ritual practices differ in terms of their occasions and the nature of participants (cultural groups, ages, purposes to achieve, styles, etc). One ritual and content of songs can also differ from occasion to occasion, in spite of their mutual exclusiveness.

Ireechaa (Thanksgiving) Ritual Practice

Of all *Waaqeffannaa* rituals, the *Irreechaa* is most common and widely celebrated at national, clan and family levels, involving huge numbers of attendants and greater diversity in group dynamics than with any other ritual form. Likewise, its songs differ in content, type and style. Some of them are the *gabbisayyoo, mareehoo, jeekkarsaa, haraar malkaa, Irreechaan siidhufee, hayyee roobaa, Ireechahoo, Irroo* and been *malkaa deemaa* etc. Most of these names are given for the categories after the first word or phrase of the specific varieties just to locate their types except *jeweekkarsaa*. Basically, the performance nature is more of egalitarian approach. Any group: whether, male-female, young-old, horsemen-pedestrian, girls-boys, old men old-women and others can sing most songs. The songs are acted out in the style of antiphonal; actors taking turns, performer-actor interactions and group productions. The patterns of audience upon singing are linear, rounded, hand-holding and singing-blessing or shifting styles. While the *jeekkarsaa* songs are accompanied by hand clapping and some sort of movement limited only to a sitting position, the rest lack hand clapping and disregard positions upon singing. All songs are not accompanied by any musical tools.

Specifically the *mareehoo, gabbisayyoo and jeekkarsaa*

songs (the common *Irreechaa* songs) are mainly sung by elderly men, cultural and religious leaders, but the first by both male and female and the second by male upon pilgrimage to *Irreechaa* ritual. Another very important *Irreechaa* song, the *jeekkarsaa* is essentially used to elaborate the core *Waaqeffannaa* themes. Besides, the contents of various forms of *jeekkarsaa* songs reflect *Waaqeffannaa* philosophies, unity and integrity, cultural and religious identity, Gadaa-oriented values and traditions. Of *Irreechaa* songs, *jeekkarsaa* are the most attractive in terms of their themes, styles of performance and their tunal melodies. Varieties of the songs are sung at the major session after *Irreeffannaa* by chorus just to attract the ritual attendants and to teach Oromo-oriented value systems. Especially at Hora Harsadii, the chorus mainly acts out the songs under the shady sycamore trees with various tonal melodies and styles. The participants are mainly those who took imitation to revitalize *Waaqeffannaa* traditions based on the knowledge they constructed from local religious institutions and the songs they collected from local *Waaqeffannaa* ceremonies. Doing so, they attempt to glorify the songs for its conventionality among different *Waaqeffannaa* followers which have currently flourished in many parts of *Tuulamaa, Maccaa, Sabboo, Goonaa* etc. Since *Waaqeffannaa* songs of the catagory are too long, it is difficult to present the analysis here.

The *Qaalluu, Ateetee* and *Waadajaa* Rituals

The *Qaalluu, ateetee* and the *waadaajaa* ritual practices are extensively celebrated at clan and family levels with specific and varying ritual setting but without specifically assigned songs. In other words, the songs with different contents and subject matter are performed at each ritual ceremony without any designation to the rituals. Hence, in general, there are no universal distinctions among the kinds of songs like *waadaajaa* songs, *ateetee* songs or songs belonging to *Qaalluu* ritual practices regarding contents. However, the songs in

praise of *maaram/ ateetee*, cattle and cattle products, full and fertility are usually focused in *ateetee* ritual practice. The songs are sung being accompanied by acts and various forms of material culture like *siinqee, okolee, callee* and different clothing styles for their artistic qualities, sacredness and symbolic attachments. Regardless of the issue of cattle, other themes are kept in *Qaalluu* and *wadaadaa* ritual practices.

It seems that, while some songs describe the behavior of the spiritual possessors and their spirits in *qaallu* ritual practices like g*ubaa, kudharfan, ammachiisaa*, etc, in *wadaadaa* and *ateetee* there are hardly any songs which focus on praising the spiritual possessor. In this ritual, only the identity of the participants and the *ayyaanaa* of the elders, of the family and of the clans and cattle and cattle products are praised. The songs in praise of *maaram* in the *Qaalluu* spiritual settings are called *jeekkarsaa* and the process of singing is called *jeekkaruu*. The name is currently adopted for the general and standard name of *Waaqeffannaa* Aassociations. Still, songs in praise of *maaram* in the *ateetee* and *wadaajaa* ritual settings are commonly known as *faarsaa* and the process is called *faarsuu*. The manner of songs, i.e., the smoothly delivering of thanks to *Waaqaa* and praise spirits with singing give a sense of evoking tonal melodies. Generally, the songs in this category are dealing with such issues as praising *maaram/ateetee* for fecundity, explaining the nature of the spirits and their human relations, and the conditions of the attendants and the issues related to the ritual holder. Besides, the songs sung at each ritual are accompanied by performances, acts and drumbeats particularly on the *dalagaa* ceremony, *ammachiisaa* and on the particular episodes of the rituals.

Table 8 : Ateetee Ritual Songs

A: burreen aaga burreen aaga warraatii,	1 The spotted cattle are fortune of the family,
B: burreen aaga burreen aaga warraatii,	he spotted cattle are fortune of the family
A: arboon aaga arboon aaga abbaatii,	The giant cattle are fortune of the owner,
B: arboon aaga arboon aaga abbaatii,	The giant cattle are fortune of the owner,
A: gurraan aaga gurraan aaga abbaatii ,	5 The black cattle are fortune of the owner,
B: gurraan aaga burreen aaga warraatii,	The spotted cattle are fortune of the family,
A: burreen aaga burreen aaga warraatii,	The spotted cattle are fortune of the family,
B: burreen yaa qananiisoo, karaa gaara barsiisoo,	O, the beloved spotted cattle that guide the road,
A: burreen aaga burreen aaga warraatii,	The spotted cattle are fortune of the family,
B: burreen yaa qananiisoo, karaa gaara barsiisoo, 10	The beloved spotted that guide a road,
A: burreen aaga burreen aaga warraatii,	The spotted cattle are fortune of the owner,
B: karaa gara barsiisoo, burree yaa qananiisoo	The beloved spotted cattle, lead journey in the hill.

The above songs also emphasize praise of cattle conveying a tremendously powerful feeling and love. The songs are composed of repetition of a key word *aaga* means 'fortune' in this context. In praising the cattle in their colors, the owner gets the strong relationship between the cattle and his family enhanced. That is why the cattle of various colors emphasized as subjects of fortune of the owner and for the family (LL, 1-9 and 11). Hence, the names *gurree, arboo, gurraa*, etc adapted to cattle just similar to the names Oromo give to their children as identification. So, calling the cattle these names, the cattle give response to their owner immediately saying *umbaa*… and progressing towards their owner. For this reason, in Oromo the fortune of the cattle and the child is equally emphasized, marking great importance of the two as *horiin qananiidha* and *ilmoon qananiidha* (one's cattle are the beloved ones, one's child is the beloved ones). That is why L (8, 9) of the verse emphasized praising of cattle in a lovely manner to affirm their intimate friend to human beings.

In spite of the above situations, the relationship between human beings and the cattle is not something simple. It is achieved similar to the cares and management the head gives to his family members. This can be realized under peaceful condition and stated in the context that the owner of the cattle affords available water, hay, grazing land and shelter to obtain good animal products in turn. Consequently, everything one sees and hears would be constructive and pleasant. This is called *aaga*, and its meaning is extended blessing like *gurri*

keessan aaga haa dhagahu "may your ears listen to pleasant things" in response to one's breaks of good news to someone. The repetitions of some words in distinguishing the cattle with their color and their fortune to the family with lovely expressions imply different purposes. Firstly, the labor of the cattle and their products like butter, meat, etc are the means of livelihood of the family. Secondly, their horn and skin are sources of income, raw materials for making tools and furniture. Thirdly, cow manure and cattle's by-products are used as sources of fertilizers and fuel. Forthly, they sell the cattle in case of emergency and to solve the immediate problems at hand. In the fifth place, cattle are the primary means to gather at *ateetee* ritual ceremony. Hence, the cattle and their product should be praised.

Other Ritual Celebrations at the Family level

Since a family is the the basic unit among the Oromo, there are many ritual celebrations with their versitile songs which take place at family level. However, these rituals vary from clan to clan depending on the names, the procedures, the contents and themes. Like other songs, their contents are used to praise the divinity, the cattle and their products, thanks-giving to *Waaqaa*, pray to *Waaqaa* for health, for peace and fortune, to show people's spiritual relations with *Waaqaa* etc. These are : a) *gafataa/ayyana sanyiii* ritual held up on *sanyii baasuu* (the first time of sowing seeds) is held at any family being supported by libation at the farm place, b), *Jaarichaa /Jaarii baasuu*, mainly celebrated for health of the cattle, peace of the family and to ask pardon from *Waaqaa* for the unknowingly committing *safuu*, c) the *maaram* ritual for birth celebrated upon *uulmaa ka'uu* (mother's awakening from dormant sleeping) as the first remarkable rite of passage, d) the *buttaa* ceremony or rite of passage as a marking of *Gadaa* power holding are the common ones. Since, these categories of the song are diverse, further research is needed into this rich theme.

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The functional classifications stand for the pragmatic lessons communicated through different constituent elements of verses of *Waaqeffannaa* songs. According to Shiach (1996: 61-70 and 73-96), the functions of the poetry may vary depending on the subject matter of the poems. Some of them are to comment on the society, to express emotions, teach specifically cultural and historical lessons, portray contemporary events, attack wrong deeds, communicate personal experiences, and describe social issues and many aspects of nature. These practical significances have great impact upon the people's day-to-day interactions and touch upon various aspects of their lives. The songs influenced the society for their realization and sensation regarding both religious and secular matters. With this in mind, among the various functions of *Waaqeffannaa* songs, the next is a vital topic to be addressed.

Expressing Historical and Philosophical Events

Many *Waaqeffannaa* songs perhaps were created in the past and have been prevalently used parallel with the development of the religious institution or used to reflect people's deepest and most powerful philosophical thinking. In the same way, the songs communicate historical circumstances that the people touch upon in their approaches to the Creator. Specifically, since the Oromo religious institutions have survived through a hereditary line, there are many indicators for some songs to be related to the ritual possessor at specific times in the past. In such cases, the verses of some songs could be analyzed in historical context from which the songs have emerged. In the philosophical aspects, many *Waaqeffannaa* songs narrate specially Supernatural Being-*Waaqaa* and His attributes, the essence of many intermediary spirits addressing the mythology of origin in answering some philosophical questions to deal with the why and how of people believe in

Waaqaa.

Table 9 : Songs of Historical and Philosophical Themes

Naanniga hoo,olii naanniga hoo,	1 It is drizzling, it is drizzing from the northern side,
Naanniga kee, kan beekutu naanna'ahoo.	The conscious person approaches your drizzle,
Baaliyyoon naannogahoo	It is drizziling from Bale of beloved land.
Arsiirraa naannigahoo,	It is drizzling from Arsi,
Maccatti naanna'ahoo,	5 It it directing toward the Macca,
Naanniga kee, kan beekut naanna'hoo	One who is conscious, approaches your blessing,

The songs are brief but highly thematic and constructed from limited repetition (refrain) of a phrase that carry underlined philosophical and historical events in addition to the original meaning. The key phrase '*naannigahoo*' which helps to understand the entire message of the poem is composed of two words '*naanniga*' and '*hoo*'. The first word carries both direct and implied meanings and the second shows affirmation of events. The phrase *nannigahoo* (L,1) shows the drizzling appeared from either abode sky or highland. This type of raindrop is demanded by Oromo specially during dry season. Hence, they pray to *Waaqaa* as "*yaa Waaq nuu naannigi, yaa Waaq nuuf gorori*" which imply the seeking for such drops of rain. The phrase *naannigahoo* (L,2) indicates the symbolic meaning of prosperity and fullness one receives from blessings from the spiritual father Great *Qaalluu* that can be elaborated in historical context. The same phrase (LL, 3, 4 and 5) stands for direct meaning of *naanniga* i, e, drizzle associated with Baalee and Arsii. While, the former is historically taken as the original home land of the Oromo, the latter is believed to be the place from where the *Qaalluu* Institution of *Tuulamaa* and *Maccaa* came to view.

Moreover, topographically Baalee is considered as a mountanious area and because of this one can imagine how drizzeling first appeared in Baalee, gradually progressing to Arsii and finally reaching Maccaa, perhaps following the mountainous areas. Besides stating this event, it indirectly alludes to the directions of pilgrim from Dirree Abbaa Muudaa

(the Site of Father of Anointment) in Baalee which was the great religious event of the past. This fact is elaborated by the verse *naanniga kee kan beekutuu naanna'ee galahoo* (L,6). This idea implies the believers recurrent visiting of the ritual site for pledge and the fact that only those attendants who are devoted to the ritual could receive the ritual blessing. This event in Oromo culture is called '*Eebbaan dhangijmuu*'-the process that the religious leader uses to give blessing to the audience for its lasting effect for fullness, health, progress and by maintaining the close spiritual contact with *Waaqaa* and activatiing the process.

The song *shunburaan margee baala baasee, Gudditii Jijoo, yaa nagaasee, gumaa galmakee situbaase*" means "the chickpea has germinated and bloomed, the Massive Jijoo, o, a peace reciter, you have had a revenge of your hall." It is related to the historical episode of the Darg regime. To exercise socialist ideology, the Darg cadres made a compaign to attack *Maraam Jijoo Qalluu* Institution and to end the traditions. To do this, the cadres had to chase away the ritual attendants and ruin the *galmaa* (qaalluu ritual hall). It is said that while others refuted the idea for fear of *qaalluu*'s holiness, the leader of the compaign picked up the axe, cut the door of *galmaa* apart and part of the wall so that the rest of the cadres would ruin it in a similar manner. Momentarily, the ritual possessor and the attendants did nothing except praying as, "*yaa Waaq, jaa Maaram Jijoo gumaa galmakee baafadhu*" meaning, "O, God, O Maaram Jijoo have a revenge of your ritual hall." In about an hour"s time, the members faced serious car accident on their way home. The brain and flesh of the individual cadre who led the devastation of the *galmaa* got ruined and it was difficult to collect his corpse; the rest of the cadres faced bodily fracture and psychological disorder. It is in this setting that the songs were created to glorify the sacredness and purity of the *Maraam Jiroo Gabataa*. In fact, this episode accounted for the total withdrawal of the Darg from speaking about the affairs of Maraam Jijoo Qaalluu for ritual prominance from

that long ago time to the present.

To Communicate Fullness and Fecundity

In *Waaqeffannaa* fullness and fecundity imply social harmony, peace of the nations, stability, safe and sound environment as well as hope and confidence, all enhancing an appropriate environment for breeding and perpetuation of the generations. If the living environment of all beings lacks these qualities, it is said to be hazardous to beings (the people/ mass or individual) and for the materials (any form of wealth/ economy). Therefore, in *Waaqeffannaa* fullness and fecundity are addressed in all areas of life: before and after feasts, at the coffee ceremony, at secular and religious celebrations, at social engagements like cooperatives, etc.

Table 10 : Songs of Fullness

Yamaaddolehoo yamaaddolehoo,	1 O abundant mother [spirit of fullness] O greasy mother,
Maaddiin warranaa, namaa tolehoo,	Fullness of the family is good for the people,
Maadiin warranaa karraaf tolehoo,	Fullness of the family is good for the cattle,
Maaddiin warranaa sanyii tolehoo,	Fullness of the family is suitable for the seed,
Maaddiin warranaa mortuu dhorehoo,	5 Fullness of the family is allergy for the mischievous,
Maaddiin warranaa namaa gabbinaa,	Fullness of the family is greasy for the people,
Maaddiin waranaa karraaf gabbinaa,	Fullness of the family is greasy for the cattle,
Maaddiin warranaa mortuuf salpinaa,	The fullness of the family is a shame for the mischievous,

The songs are in praise of *maaram* or *maaddolee* (alternative lovely expression) for the fullness on *maaram* ritual celebrations. In this setting, the name *maaddolee* means ‘mother of fullness’ denoting some aspects of the rituals. Firstly, it stands for part of the food reserved after tossing and libation and sacrifice to *Waaqaa* that the attendants have to test at *Waaqeffannaa* rituals. This food symbolizes a mercy, blessing and fullness. Since an individual tastes the *maaddii* is believed to receive blessings of *ayyaantuu* and the fullness with him/her to home, every participant could not go back home without tasting this food. The ritual owner also forces the attendants to taste it saying “please taste *maddii* of *maaram* for her respect”. Secondly, *maddii* refers to the cultural food

and drinks that the audience consumes after *gormaataa* (feast). They eat and drink their fill and this makes the fame of the ritual live long afterwards. Thirdly, *maaddii* is similar to *sugaa*, i. e; a very small food one eats but stays longer without feeling hungry as grace of *ayyaantu*u's blessing.

All aspects of *maddii* in *Waaqeffannaa* are believed to be offered by *maaram* and she is called *maaddolee /haadha maaddii* (mother of fullness). The songs in praise of *maaddolee* seem to address all the stated outcomes of *maaddii*. The repetition of the phrase *ya maaddolee* (L, 1) shows attendants' full physical involvements and spiritual commitments in praying to *Waaqaa* using *maaddolee* songs. The songs exploit the attendants' blessings (LL, 2-4, 6 and 7) and cursing (L, 5 and 8) inner emotions in reinforcing the blessed good things and cursed evil things respectively. The excessively full home of the ritual possessor, would make beneficiaries of the others, due to the effects of the blessings they receive from it. To the contrary, since the mischievous people exercise anti-social acts, they are cursed, so that the good /greasy rich/fatty fullness for the cattle and the people, and suitable fullness for the seed, are wished to have bad effect like allergy or shame for the mischievous.

Themes to Promote Harmony, Unity and Identity

The three concepts harmony, unity and identity are highly related. A group, a community or a nation that lack unity and harmony may face difficulties to attain its identity. As *Waaqeffannaa* followers stress, a society survives as a society if and only if it has a language, culture, religion and nation. If these could not be fulfilled, the nation remains an ideal, hypothetical and paradoxical entity with some of its values missing. Some *Waaqeffannaa* songs directly or indirectly comment on the aforementioned issues in different circumstances. A community can have specific traditions to attain unity and social harmony which are the focus of some *Waaqeffannaa* songs.

Table 11 : Songs that Address Harmony and Unity

Biyyaafoo biyyumatu tumsaa tuma naa bahii,	1	The people assist the fellow rushes to assist me,
Ilmoofoo abbumatu tumsaa tuma naa bahii,		A father assists his son and rushes to assist me,
Dhugaafoo Waaqumatu tumsaa tuma naa bahi,		The God assists the justice rush and assist me,
Ayyaanni biyya koo naaf tumsii,		The guirdian sprit of my country rushes to assist me,
Ayyaanni abbiyyoo koo naaf tumsii,	5	The gurdian spirit of my father rushes to assist me,
Ayyaanni hayyiyyoo koo naaf tumsii,		The gurdian spirit of my mother rushes to assist me,
Ya Gadaa duraa naa tumsii,		O, the senior Gadaa assist me,
Ya Gadaa jifuu na tumsii		O, you the Gadaa of marriage assist me,
Ya Odaa Nabee naa tumsii,		O, the Odaa Nabee assist me,
Ya Odaa Roobaa naa tumsii ,	10	O, the Odaa Roobaa assist me,
Ya Odaa Bultum naa tumii,		O, the Odaa Bultum assist me,
Ya Odaa Bisil naa tumsii,		O, the Odaa Bisil assist me,
Ya Odaa Bulluq naa tumsii,		O, the Odaa Bulluk' assist me,
Qallachaa caaccuu naa tumsii,		The kalla caa and caaccuu assist me,
Qaccee Tuulamaa naaf tumsii,	15	The Tulama clans assist me,
Boorana hangafaa naa tum		The elder Borana assist me,
Harargee Balloo naa tumsii,		The Harargee Balloo assist me,
Arisii biyya koo naa tumsii,		The Arsii my home base assist me,
Wallaggaa biyya koo naa tumsii,		The Wallaggaa my home assist me,
Walloo Kamisee naa tumsii…		The Walloo-Kamisee assist me,

The above songs are similarly created in the context of demanding, exerting or experiencing maximum emotional feelings to maintain oneself. These are evidently revealed through compulsory phrases stated from the narrator's perspective as '... assist me!' keenly observing the impact factoring in on Oromo traditional values. The recurrent assistances in need imply that the state of the influence on the traditions is serious. The existing external forces could either put them on the verge of disappearing or downgrading their significant values. So, making the culture and tradition a unified whole through direct involvement of the social group in unity and harmony for maintaining identity formation are carefully articulated through songs from spiritual and secular perspectives. In this song, L,1 and L,2 stress the assistance of people for their fellows; L,3 addresses assistance of *Waaqaa* for the justice seeker; LL,4-6, elaborates assistance from *ayyaanaa* of the country and *ayyaanaa* of the parents (the primary concerns) (L,7 and 8) bring to attention the *Gadaa* and its ceremony for its blessing; LL,9-13, give due respect to

the five major *Gadaa* among Oromo moieties for their sacredness and the *ayyaanaa* of the *jilaa* (pilgrims) and *jamaa* (audiences); L,14, emphasize sacred objects hold upon praying and giving thanks to *Waaqaa* and LL,15-20 address the Oromo moieties and clans for having *ayyaanaa* of their own. Generally, the messages of the songs seek unity, harmony and cultural identity that are all represented in ways variously implied and openly stated as people align them through indigenous value systems (mainly *ayyaanaa* of beings and things) expected to guard people and people's belongingness.

Themes in Relation to Social Comment and Cultural Resistance

The functions of *Waaqeffannaa* songs overwhelmingly address the two interrelated themes: commenting on various specific identifiable issues and evoking cultural resistance against alien norms and value systems. In the first case, the songs have potential significance to comment on contradictory opinions and various issues the insiders have to view regarding the current state and challenges to Oromo indigenous value systems. They bring into full view the concerns and the future prospects. Since the ritual practices of any Oromo traditional institution accommodate building identity and sense of belonging, the insiders usually are advised through the songs to have keen observation about the impacts. Some themes of *Waaqeffannaa* songs enhance the position of the insiders and push them to argue and resist the infiltration of alien traditions and value systems into their culture. In other ways, in the current social dynamics, the alien traditions advocated by different factors are deep-rooted in the indigenous value systems, so the messages call either to renovate the institutions or to do away with them gradually. Hence, in addition to religious matters, the *Waaqeffannaa* songs often address issues looking externally to comment on people's radical feeling about what the insiders deserve to do.

Table 12: Songs Address Social Commentary and Cultural Resistance

Yoo bishaanii maddarra, teteenya	1	If water, we sit now and then along the stream,
Yoo jaalalaa onneerra walteenyaa		If love, we like eachother from our heart,
Yoo alagaa eessatti walbeeknaa,		If alien, we have no any common value
Silaa hindhiifnuuu…Waaqeffannaan keenyaa		Then, we do not stop ...Waaqeffannaais ours,
Silaa hindhiifnuu … duudhan tanat teenyaa	5	Then, we do not stop...the traditions is ours,
Silaa hindhiifnuu …dirree tanat keenyaa		Then, we do not stop... this sacred medow is ours,
Silaa hindhiifnuu …Oromootu keenyaa		Then, we do not stop... the Oromo is ours,
Silaa hindhiifnuu …Gadaa kanat keenyaa		Then, we do not stop...this Gadaa is ours,
Silaa hindhiifnuu …ulfaa kanat keenyaa		Then, we do not stop...these sacred objects are ours,
Silaa hindhiifnuu …galma kanat keenyaa	10	Then,we do not stop...this ritual hall is ours,
Silaa hindhiifnuu … duudha kanat keenyaa		Then, we do not stop... this tradition is ours,

The songs are sung in the context of self-feeling and self-importance practicing indigenous traditions and resisting the alien ones as means of giving remarks to the insiders, to enhance their self-reliance and make them to have good judgment. Likewise, the theme of the song manifested in self-regard articulates inwardly the perspective of collective unity and markers of identity, saying "we." The "we" repeated across all verses being addressed to the target community implies that their belongingness and self-valuing in cultural preservation and revitalization are topmost. In this situation, L, 1 stands for the importance of possessing abundant water proximity to cultural groups so that they visit for thanksgiving to *Waaqaa* through *Irrreechaa*. The group of *Waaqeffannaa* followers always sings songs of unity, harmony and identity which exert maximum love among them. This is marked in L, 2 and L, 3, projected towards opposing the alien culture and rituals for the total absence of common base as it proved in science as 'like things attract each other and unlike things repeal each other'. LL, 4-11 present the actor-performer relationship, the first arguing one's refusal as 'indeed, we do not stop doing' and the second proving their common possession one by one. The antiphonal style of singing, the tone of actor-stating and perform-replying in this manner makes the *jeekkarsaa* song attractive and motivating for the audience to follow with certain feeling and enthusiasm.

CLASSIFICATION BASED ON LITERARY ELEMENTS

Poetry in general and verses of songs in particular can be best analyzed from the perspective of their literary elements. As Shiach (1996:133) pointed out, "poetry is one of the genres of literary form for putting language in specific ways". The special ways of using a language is due to the diction, which is the most important, and the use of words with powerful meanings, the sensual image, the figurative language, the style and tone of the poetic verse. These elements determine the literary significances and themes communicated through the texts of the verses. In fact, the use of these elements in oral poetry assists in full concentration on the themes and ideas. They enable one to look at the language and familiar ideas to perceive the reality in a fresh or unusual way. Even if most of oral poetry like *Waaqeffannaa* songs do not reflect many of such elements, there are still some archaic words, expressions, repetitions, onomatopoeic and rhetorical questions, figurative languages, etc., which are important for meanings and artistic thoughts related to Waaqeffannaa rituals and Oromo indigenous institutions.

Dialogical and Monologue Approaches of Presentation

Monologue and dialogue are perhaps key elements in short story, novel and drama rather than poetry in drawing meaning from the communicative events. However in some *Waaqeffannaa* songs, both elements are used in unconventional ways. In their conventional approach, P.Guth (1981:698-99) explains that the dialogue is witnessed in the give-and-take of the spoken word among the two characters and the monologue is seen only by one character speaks to himself and tell the audience what he /she feels and thinks. In spite of this, both literary elements are manifested in certain verses of *Waaqeffannaa* being represented by some sort of dialogical and monologue acts. However, the communications

are not maintained between the real characters but they are built from dialogical and monologue style of presentation as if the interactions are held between the objects of praying and the prayer being narrated by specialized character, i.e. a character takes both roles. Hence, in this approach while the style is a bit different from the standards of dialogue and monologue, the contents exactly address matters pertaining to conventional characters involved in both dialogical and monologue events as follows:

Table 13: Songs Presented in Monological and Dialogical Modes

Ya maaram ya maarehoo, hunda situ waamehoo,	1 O maaram the healer one, you are the healer of all
Yaa maaram jennaan,hookoo naan jettee,	Calling her 'maaree' she replied, "yes, my dear,"
Wallaaladha jennaan,dhiise naan jettee,	Saying "I feel labor" she replied, "As I released you,"
Ciniinsuudha jennaan, fure nan jettee,	Saying "I am innocent", she replied, "As I jumped,"
Tokkicha jennaan, dabale naan jettee,	5 Saying "I am lonely" she replied, "As I add you more,"
Kufeera jennaan ,siqabe naan jettee	Saying "I fell down" she replied, "As I held you up,"
Maarehoo ya maarehoo,	Merciful mother, O merciful mother,
Maal na hingoonehoo.	Nothing that you do not endow to me.
Yaayyoo maaree barariin dhaltee,	O mother maaree, the insects give birth,
Ya maarehoo qananii bartee.	O maaree you are accustomed to giving comfort.

The above songs stands for kindness of *maaram*, the effects of her blessing and the relationship between the fecund spirit (*maaram*) and the attendants. The *maaram* is regularly prayed to for giving mercy for all, perhaps as a reaction to people's prayers for violating *safuu* and committing sins (L,1). The major purposes for why the attendants are dedicated to having faith in *maaram* is elaborated in specialized diological style (LL,2-6). The specialization is seen in the manner that only one person plays the role of dialogue in interrogating and answering style which make the songs more thematic. These dioalogical speeches are : "O maaram-yes dear"; "I am innocent"-"I jumped you"; "I am in labor"-"I released you"; "I am lonely"-"I added more to you"; "I failed"-"I held you up." The perception from positive spiritual feedback in this manner finallly comes to conclude that *maaram* activates

everything for her followers. Thematically, this spiritual link between the believers and subject teaches the norms of the ritual site. More importantly, the diological approach gives more appeal, elaboratiion, artistic beauty from the perspective of the literary value. On the other hand, the impact of fecundity or the spirit of fertility upon the individual's successful life addressed in an astonishing manner repeating as *maarehoo, ya maarehoo* (L,7). The repetition is held to attract close curiosity from the subject to make one imagine the gloomy effect one experienced and one's immedite healing. Hence, one expresses happiness declaring that the spirit of productivity contributes to the pleasure of life.

Expressions of Emotion and Onomatopoeia

The most important aspects of emotional feelings are expressed in *Waaqeffanaa* songs by the repetition of words of such powerful essence that they carry both literal and underlying meaning through onomatopoeic expressions. Repetition in poetry is the recurring of similar phrases or words in order to build up various feelings and emotion as a means to express people's attention towards one desired direction and to build up to the highest points of thought (P.Guth, 1981:543 and 635). *Waaqeffanaa* songs are built of many of such repetitions for various reasons of direct and underlying meanings as can observed in different songs in the classification.

On the other hand, onomatopoeic expressions stand for words whose meanings can be heard in their sounds. The sounds can be sounds of objects, animals, food, wind, water, etc related to their movement, emotions, actions or activities etc. The use of such onomatopoeic expressions and words are sometimes seen in verses of *Waaqeffannaa* songs. For instance, in the song "*baaburiin miḍaan shaffisaa, Joobbitoon marqaa laanqessaa Goolam yaa dutaa nyaanyinsaa, Gololeedha kaa galmisaa*," translated as " the millstone *shafshaf* the cereal, the stirring stick *laqlaq* the porridge, O,

Goolam with a barking and *nyagnyag* character, his ritual home is indeed *Gololee*". The sounds "*shaffisaa*" stands for sound of a millstone upon grinding cereal; "*laanqessaa"* for the stirring sound upon prepararion porridge; "*dutaa*" (barking sound of dog) and "*nyaanyisaa*" stands for sound of a person when he/she is furiously and angrily shouting. Beyond giving special decoration for ending in the same rhyme and making attract the verses and for some sorts of parallelism, the stated onomatopic sounds present analogy to maginify the furious attribute of Goolam perhaps agains some immoral acts or violation of safuu.

The Use of Figurative Language

Figurative forms of language are the major poetic devises widely used for evoking various emotions and making certain events to be in concert and appearing nearer to people's sense. P.Guth, (1981:543 and 648) pointed out that figurative language "brings the scene to life and calls to mind colors and that might be hard to recap in ordinary literal words". The figurative language and expressions are important for the underscored meanings. Some commonly used for the purpose are simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, verbal irony, rhetorical questions, intone, imagery and others. Of these, only the most important ones are presented as being reflected in *Waaqeffannaa* songs.

Table 14: Songs Presented in Simile

Yaa Nabi maaf cal jettee teessaa,	1 O Nabi, why do you view quietly,
Bobokkisi akka gissillaa leencaa.	Growl like the cub of the lion.
Boora eegee maraa,	The yelllow horse with twisted tail,
Yaa yaasaa daangulee,	That is realesed early for grazing,
Yaa gurraacha Jijoo	5 O of black son of Jijo,
Anoo sittan bula,	I believe in you,
Akka aadaa ture	Like people did in their past norm.

The songs in praying to *Nabii* and *Jijoo*, are related in comparing two unlike attributes. In the first case, the sound of

the *ayyaanaa* upon *dalagaa* ceremony is compared to the growling of the cub to break the unvoiced and mood experienced upon *dalagaa*. The comparison can also bring the great respect that religious group have for *ayyaanaa* (*Nabii*) to the psychic phenomenon of others. In the second case, the refutation of modernism is highlighted for taking sides in supporting the tradition so that the generation could be shaped by the legacy of fore parents. So, the comparison claims for the search of tradition preserved in *ayyaantuu* like *Jijoo* and declaiming the anticipated alien norms likely to dismantle the former ones.

RESULTS

Preserving and revitalizing indigenous tradition, like *Waaqeffanaa* and its folksongs, brings attention to the tradition through systematic studies that reconstruct indigenous knowledge and value systems from both secular and spiritual perspectives. Historical, religious, folkloric and philosophical and literary themes were employed for analyses, documentation and preservation of *Waaqeffannaa* folksongs in their contextual settings using various classification criteria. The approaches used revealed that folkloric wisdom, religious theme, philosophical thoughts and value systems provide knowledge helpful for the survival of the society. The *Waaqeffannaa* songs that are usually recited by senior *Gadaa* officials, *ayyaantuu*s and a few cultural thinkers import knowledge into the day-to-day lives of the communities. The systematic study of folkloric song revives that knowledge, despite various impediments – factors like globalization, cultural assimilation, historical impacts and universal religious – that made indigenous folk arts either to experience a change in their form or total immersion and disappearance. It is also one way of empowering the cultural community. In the midst of global cultural transformation, *Waaqeffannaa* songs are found to be vital for identity formation of ethnic groups. However, their current settings for performance are very

limited. This implies that the tradition could be overrun by popular culture. Hence, proper documentation is essential. It takes into consideration especially the oral society which is responsible for preserving both the societies' folk tradition and accumulated verbal knowledge. Otherwise the folk literature could disappear and fail to fulfill the current demands of the generation. The scientific documentation of folkloric heritages, therefore, provides basic background for the historical and linguistic knowledge of the society and helps its members to articulate more about cultural community and to promote multidisciplinary works.

Therefore, through scientific documentation of *Waaqeffannaa* ritual and its folksongs, the Oromo indigenous religious philosophies, worldview, value system, the artistic beauty and folkloric wisdom of the songs and their historical development can be preserved. Experience, experiments and cumulative knowledge and wisdom of the Oromo society are fully stored in oral tradition like *Waaqeffannaa* folksongs that have imparted diverse lessons to the forthcoming generation. In fact, without these value systems being taken into consideration, the survival of the community remains in question. Member of the existing generation can also be vulnerable to adopting alien legacies and inculcating those in place of the forefathers' wisdom preserved through persistent challenges.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and documentation of indigenous knowledge like *Waaqeffannaa* folksongs assist us in examining and communicating the values, wisdom and experience of the Oromo reflected in their oral traditions over a long period of time. The orally-preserved knowledge and value system contribute greatly to the current generation, enabling them to look retrospectively and prospectively at constructing the society through indigenous value systems. The Oromo in general and the *Tuulamaa* moiety in particular have been

relying on longlasting oral traditions such as *Waaqeffannaa* rituals and songs which have been preserved for many centuries under the *Gadaa* system.

Both external and internal impediments laid upon the Oromo indigenous practices have significantly affected the *Gadaa* and *Waaqeffannaa* through which many traditions operate. *Waaqeffannaa* and its folk songs have survived through long years of effort by forefathers who have been adherent to *Waaqeffannaa* and *Gadaa* traditions. It is only these people who preserved *Waaqeffannaa* rituals and songs for the current generation while others shifted away from the the mainstream of their ancestral culture. In fact, the *Gadaa* system holds the economic, political, military and religious aspects together and effectively monitors diverse Oromo institutions and value systems which determine many forms of ethnic identity, both in the global and specific senses. In global sense, the *Waaqeffannaa* rituals and their songs serve as important components of universal knowledge on development issues. It provides information in the way it transmits information about human genesis, socio-cultural development, social institutions, laws and order, customs, rules, justice and belief systems. In a narrow sense, especially the poor and the local communities, rely on indigenous institutions like *Waaqeffannaa* and its value systems to devise problem-solving strategies. Different *Waaqeffannaa* value systems and folkloric themes effectively control social norms, immoral acts and unethical issues and enhance social harmony, unity and identity.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu of Ethiopia: New Insights, edited by Eloi Ficquet and Wolbert G. C. Smidt. Berlin: LIT, 2014. Paper. viii + 209 pp. Pictures & glossary of terms and events. No Bibliography. No index. No price listed. ISBN: 978-3-643-904768

The brief reign of Lij Iyasu (1910-1916) has remained largely unexamined in modern Ethiopian history. The partisans of Ras Tafari/Emperor Haile Selassie (1892-1975), who played a major role in the deposition of Lij Iyasu in 1916, judged him—although unfairly—unfit to rule the Ethiopian empire due to his apostasy and conversion to Islam. Even Bahru Zewde (2002: 59), one of the most critical historians of this period, asserted that Lij Iyassu lacked "seriousness of purpose and steadfastness to application" of his reforms. Although the narrative Iyasu's incompetence and alleged conversion to Islam had persisted throughout the twentieth century, many unofficial sympathetic stories about the young prince had also survived in the popular imaginations of the Ethiopian people. Recently, reevaluating Lij Iyasu's short reign, historians have started highlighting his reformist agenda and broad vision for Ethiopia, such as forging a national unity out of a culturally heterogenous and politically very complex polity that he had inherited from his grandfather—Emperor Menilek II. Dispelling some erroneous perceptions and recasting old interpretations, contributors to The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu offer new insights about the young prince and his reign.

This monograph is divided into four parts. As a background to the life and reign of Lij Iyasu, Eloi Ficquet provides a brief history of the Oromo ruling dynasty of Wallo from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century. In "Understanding Lij Iyasu through his Forefathers", Alessandro Gori, examines the alleged Sharifian genealogy of Lij Iyasu's family, based on an Arabic manuscript found at the Vatican Library. Other contributor explored the childhood, marriages, reforms and foreign policies of Lij Iyasu through personal testimonies (Pankhurst), photographs (Sohier), and a new manuscript from private collections (Smidt).

Several contributors to this volume portray Lij Iyasu as a reformer (Augustyniak, Omar, Soule, Smidt). Contrary to the official image of the reign of Lij Iyasu in the twentieth century as a period of incompetent administration run by "a spoilt young" prince who was consumed with adventurous escapades, Augustyniak argues Iyasu "had his own vision of Ethiopia in the 20th century." He was both farsighted and reformist is a point that Ahmed Hassen Omar's contribution reinforces. Iyasu was ambitious; but he also fully understood the weaknesses of the Ethiopian empire. Ahmed Hassen Omar argues that Lij Iyasu engaged in meaningful reforms to improve tax collection, to modernize the administration, and consolidate the imperial state that he had inherited. Like Menilek, he utilized the services of foreign advisers, such Hassib Ydlibi, a Syrian national, whom he appointed as the governor of the town of Dire Dawa and Negadras of Harar. Besides foreigners, Iyasu had also utilized Ethiopians such as Nagadras (Bitwadad) Hayle-Giyorgis Wold Michael (d. 1924), who had served as the first minster of Commerce and Foreign Affairs under Menilek II. Omar concludes, Lij Iyasu can be regarded as a reformist prince because his policy was based on a 'reaction to former injustices committed by his predecessors." (p. 89).

Political marriages were important part of Lij Iyasu's domestic policy. For example, his numerous marriages to the

daughters of Christian and Muslim dignitaries were aimed at expanding and integrating the empire forged by force during King Menilek's reign. Through various marriages, he attempted to cultivate good relations with the indigenous elite in the north, southeast and west to challenge the entrenched power of the Shawan nobility and European colonial powers surrounding Ethiopia. As Soule points out, for example, Iyasu's relations with the Afar people had endured, and the region had served him as a place of refugee after his downfall.

In reinterpreting Lij Iyasu's reign, some contributors to this volume used newly discovered sources such as photographs, personal recollections, and privately held manuscripts. Estelle Sohier used a collection of photographs to reconstruct the life of the young prince. Far from being "a messy interlude" in the history of contemporary Ethiopia, Sohier argues, Lij Iyasu's reign "illustrates the adaptation of the monarchy to the unprecedented changes experienced by the [Ethiopian] kingdom." (p. 64). Richard Pankhurst, the veteran Ethiopianist, tapped the personal recollections of Avis Terzian, an Armenian resident in Ethiopia during the reign of Lij Iyassu. Wolbert Smidt's very interesting contribution on foreign policy of Lij Iyasu's government is based on the correspondence of Qagnazmach Beneye Yimer, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Making clear that Iyasu was not converted to Islam, Smidt dispels the central argument of the coup makers in 1916 as false allegation.

On the other hand, unlike other contributors to this volume, Haggai Erlich (pp. 135-6) continues to advance the traditional view of Lij Iyasu. He argues that Iyasu was not only converted to Islam, but he was an "inexperienced and ambitious" prince who wanted "to build coalitions" with the subjugated elite of Ethiopia's peripheries "in defiance of the already entrenched Shewan nobility." Hoping "an Ottoman victory" in the First World War and following an Islamic policy based on Harar, Iyasu miscalculated, gambled and lost his power. Erlich believes, besides his leanings towards Islam, the young prince

was misled by Mazhar, the Turkish agent in Ethiopia, into believing an alliance with the Ottomans served Ethiopia's interests. There is no indication that Iyasu was fully committed to an alliance with Ottoman Turks. Instead of committing himself to supporting the Ottomans, he followed a wait-and-see attitude until early 1916. Contrary to Erlich's assumption, Iyasu's actions—removal of Tafari from Harar, new appointments in Harar, his visit to Djibouti and continued collaboration with the Sayyid Muhammad Abdille Hassan, the Somali rebel leader—in August and September 1916, can be characterized as defensive measures in the event of Turkish defeat, and British and Italian advance against the Sayyid and southeastern Ethiopia. In this case, the major reason for Lij Iyasu's deposition—conversion to Islam—on September 27, 1916, remains a convenient propaganda piece for the Shawan Christian nobility and the representatives of the British, French and Italian governments who wanted to empower Tafari Makonnen, who was sympathetic to their interests.

Reconstructing Iyasu's movements in the towns of Dire Dawa, Harar and Jijiga, and his actions in late September and early October 1916, Shiferwa Bekele also tends to emphasize the young prince's inexperience, amateurish administrative decisions and "serious political and diplomatic blunders" (p. 154). Interestingly, Shiferaw characterizes the coup d'etat as an insurrection "because it was the result of a vast conspiracy of nobles . . . commanders and officers of many regiments of the imperial army" (p. 162). But it should be noted that the social and cultural bases of these commanders was very narrow. They were largely Shawan noblemen who participated in the imperial conquest under Menilek II (d. 1913) and committed to preserve their economic and socio-political status. These officers were threatened by Iyasu's vision to integrate the empire, forged by war of conquest, by coopting the non-Shawan and Muslim elites from the peripheries of the empire.

Of course, Lij Iyasu had his share of repressive actions. Although he had later attempted to improve the situation, his early campaigns in the Afar region and the harsh punishment of the Afar people and the Karrayuu Oromo were devastating. His brutal suppression of the Gimira revolt during his visit to the southwest in 1912, the enslavement of captives, and his lack of concern for the sufferings of the gabbar in the newly conquered regions and all peasants in general are some of the darkest spots in his leadership. The Gimira incident is included in the glossary of terms and events of the reign of Lij Iyasu at the end of this book (pp. 179-205). .

The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu is the first full assessment of a much maligned and misunderstood prince throughout the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie. However, one weakness of this monograph is the absence of adequate coverage of some prominent officials in Lij Iyasu's government. For example, despite his pivotal role in Lij Iyasu's government, this volume does not include much information on Bitwadad Hayle Giyorgis. Well known for his knowledge of commerce and foreign affairs, Hayle-Giyorgis was considered to have been one of the mentors of the reformist intellectual, Gebre-Hiywet Bykedagn (Caulk 1978). As a prime minister, a chapter on Hayle Giyorgis could have further illuminated the origin of Lij Iyasu's reformist agenda. This book includes some rare photographs, but no bibliography or index.

However, any shortcomings aside, this monograph is an important contribution to modern Ethiopian history. It legitimately restores Lij Iyasu's legacies and counterbalances the distorted narrative crafted by the partisans of Ras Tafari/Hayle Selassie. If he had succeeded, Lij Iyasu's reforms could have had saved Ethiopia from numerous troubles it experienced since the early twentieth century. In the context of the current political situation, The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu is particularly useful to read because the reforms, initiated now by the premiership of Dr. Abiy Ahmed, have

some resemblances with that of Lij Iyassu. Incidentally, both leaders come from diverse cultural, religious and family background; and they envision Ethiopia's national integration through love and inclusivity (medemer). But, as Lij Iyasu did, Prime Minister Abiy faces social and political forces with divergent political agendas. For now, only time will tell whether he would succeed where Lij Iyassu had failed a century ago.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Children of Hope the Odyssey of the Oromo Slaves from Ethiopia [1]

By Sandra Rowoldt Shell, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2018), 334 pages, $ 49.00.

Occasionally an inspiring book even on the morally abhorrent topic of slave trade emerges that touches our hearts and souls through the uniqueness of its story, the depth of its message, the freshness of its ideas, and so eloquently expressing the power of generous human spirit for doing good in the service of others and the power of education for creating condition for the freedom of enslaved Oromo children . Such is Dr. Sandra Shell's *The Children of Hope the Odyssey of the Oromo Slaves from Ethiopia*. The author is a fine historian by training and librarian by profession. Her excellent book gives examples of kind individuals, who showed profound desire for helping Oromo slave children by learning their language, meticulously recording their stories, providing them with education that altered their lives. The book depicts the Oromo children's experience from " their earliest memories to the moment they reached the Red Sea coast" (p. 2), the loss of one or both of their parents, their capture by slave traders, the pain and suffering they endured from the point of capture until their arrival at the ports of the Red Sea cost to be taken to slave markets of Arabia. This remarkable book is based not only on an impeccable scholarship supported by wide array of sources, but also by unmatched objectivity on the part of a very fine scholar, who after decades of labor of love, brought to life the untold story of Oromo slave children. The passion with which the author pursued her project for decades is genuinely beyond a call of scholarly duty. It shows her determination and deeply

seated commitment for shining light on the story of Oromo children.

Sandra Shell began "working for Rhodes University Cory Library for historical research in the eastern Cape" province of South Africa in 1972. It was while Ms. Shell was familiarizing herself with that library's manuscripts that she discovered cards referring a cluster of sixty-four " Galla slaves" (1-2). Galla was the name that imposed on the Oromo by their Abyssinian Christian neighbors. Abyssinians are the Amhara and Tigrayan people, whose elites dominated the political landscape of the old Christian kingdom in northern Ethiopia as well as the modern Ethiopian Empire since its creation during and after the 1880s. Gadaa Melbaa maintains that "the Abyssinians attach a derogatory connotation to Galla, namely "pagan, savage, uncivilized, uncultured, enemy, slave or inherently inferior".[2] The name with such negative concepts was imposed on the Oromo for the purpose of distorting their identity, denigrating their culture and belittling their human quality. The Oromo did not call themselves Galla. The reference to Oromo slaves intrigued and planted in the mind of Sandra Shell "a lifetime interest in and fascination with these Oromo children—their origins and their outcomes" (2) whose history she tirelessly worked for bringing to life with captivating scholarship.

The Oromo children were victims of the slave trade and the worst famine that engulfed the Ethiopian region between1888-1892. The slave trade had existed in the region of what is today Ethiopia, long before the nineteenth century. However, during the reign of King Menelik of Shawa, (1865-1889) and the Emperor of Ethiopia (1889-1913) slavery and the slave trade increased dramatically for several reasons. First, Menelik was the great sponsor of the slave trade, as he "was collecting a tax of 1 Maria Theresa (MT) dollar (or thaler) passing through his kingdom and as well as a tax of 1 Maria Thresa thaler for every slave sold"(p. 25) in the slave market of Rogge in his kingdom. Second, King Menelik

was involved in the war of conquest and continued raids into Oromo and other areas in southern Ethiopia which produced thousands of captives especially for him thus becoming the "greatest beneficiary "of the slave trade in Ethiopia.[3] Third, "prisoners captured in the course of his predatory battles, or z*amacha* , were sold in slave markets" (p. 25). Fourth, Harold Marcus maintains that Menelik was "…Ethiopia's greatest slave entrepreneur and received the bulk of the proceeds."[4] Fifth, some of his own generals' and their warriors were slavers who depopulated several areas. [5] Sixth, Emperor Menelik received prisoners of war " as tribute, and collected revenue in slaves from his [governors] of the conquered territories until his death."[6] Finally, while passing several proclamations abolishing the slave trade, Menelik, the Christian Emperor of Ethiopia, together with his wife, owned some 70,000 domestic slave population at the beginning of the twentieth century.[7]

In over three decades, while reading slave trade literature for teaching African and world history, I have never come across a single reference which shows an individual or a husband and wife team, who owned as many slaves as Emperor Menelik and his wife did. In short, the book under review, makes a wonderful contribution to our understanding of the connection between Emperor Menelik's expansion and massive increase in slave trade and slavery in Ethiopia.

Oromo children were enslaved either 1888 or 1889, during the time when Menelik's conquest weakened the Oromo population, which was accompanied by the worst natural calamities- the Great Ethiopian Famine of 1888-1892.[8] The famine was caused by a combination of disasters. First, there was an epidemic of rinderpest, which spread like wild fire and decimated almost ninety percent of all livestock in Ethiopia (p. 26). "Emperor Menelik was said to have lost 250,000 head"[9] of cattle. Those cattle were captured from the Oromo and other people of southern Ethiopia during

Menelik's wars of conquest. Second, the cattle plague destroyed plough oxen and was followed by drought which led to a serious dislocation of agriculture in the country. Third, there were swarms of locusts and worms of caterpillars which devoured the little that was planted by hand. This led to the worst famine in the history of the Horn of Africa.[10] That famine unleased " the war of the strong against the weak" [11], to the extent that the three most powerful governors, namely, *Ras* Darge, Menelik's uncle (who " massacred 12,000 [Oromo] on September 6, 1886", [12] and became the governor of Arsi region), *Ras* Makonnen (the father of the future Emperor Haile Sellassie, and the governor of Hararge and Dajazmach Walda Gabriel the conqueror and governor of Charchar area, they all plundered [13] one after the other, the resources of the Oromo regions of what are today Hararge, Bale and Arsi, thus exposed the Oromo to combinations of biblical disasters. The terrible famine was accompanied by murderous epidemics of typhus, cholera, dysentery, and small pox, which claimed the lives of "between one-third and one - half of the human population of Ethiopia" (p. 27). Mike Davis, an economic historian, cites contemporary observers who estimated " that somewhere between two-thirds and fourth-fifth of pastoral Oromo had disappeared".[14] Martial De Salaviac, a French missionary, who saw with "his own eyes" 400 brave Oromo warriors, whose right wrists were " cut in one day" in 1886 by the order of Walde Gabriel because of their heroic resistance.[15] The same missionary adds that pastoral Oromo "deprived of milk and meat ...their ranks" [were reduced] to eyesight" [16] This was because "cattle were central to the lives and livelihood of the Oromo [pastoralists] and farmers" (p. 30).

After Emperor Menelik's conquest, traditional Oromo "freehold [land] tenure" (43) system was abolished and replaced by the *Gabbar* system (serfdom) under which two-thirds of the lands of the Oromo and other conquered people of southern Ethiopia were taken away and distributed among

the naftayna (armed settlers), the Orthodox Church, and the state. Only one-third was left for the Oromo, on condition that they supplied forced labor to the armed settlers, as well as taxes, dues, and tithes to the imperial court and the Orthodox Church. Since the armed settlers were not paid salaries and did not engage in productive activities, they were given Oromo *gabbars* (serfs) in lieu of salary and "as material property to be owned and used as personal property."[17] The armed settlers were soldiers, policemen, judges, governors, tribute collectors and they who owned the conquered people of southern Ethiopia as they owned cattle and slaves. When governors and their followers were transferred from one region to another, they took with them their private *gabbars*. [18] When Oromo *gabbars* (serfs) were unable to pay tribute, the armed settlers captured their cattle and enslaved their children. For instance, "Liban Bultum" whose father failed to pay the onerous tribute, the armed settlers "seized his son in lieu of the tribute debt, carrying him off to a nearby slave market and selling him…to slave traders and merchants" (p. 36). According to Sandra Shell: "It was in the climate of political vulnerability and ecological disaster that the families of the Oromo children central to this study found themselves in the late 1880s" (27).

Most of enslaved Oromo children were victims of professional slave raiders/ traders coupled with raids by armed settlers. Those children were drawn from "every social stratum", i.e. from the lowest "to the local royalty…driven in part by the exigencies of Menelik's invading forces to feed Oromo slaves in large numbers into the train of the external slave trade" (p. 51). The professional slave raiders preyed on orphans who lacked full family protection. What is more, "slave raiders either kidnaped, purchased, or seized their Oromo captives as spoils of war" (p. 63). Timothy Fernyhough 's research confirms [19] that the children were victims of "state sponsored expeditions, the thefts of those already enslaved, the seizure of children as they tended livestock, house breaking at

night, ambushes, natural disasters such [as] famine and drought" (63).

It is impossible to know the number of Oromo children who were enslaved during the 1880s. However, few things can be said about it. First, all Oromo children experienced "a truly conjugation of natural and manmade plagues" [20] at some stage of their enslavement and to one degree or another (29). Second, Oromo girls, who were famous for their beauty "were the highest valued of all slaves in the Horn of Africa external trade. This might account for the higher percentage of girls than boys being captured specifically for the export network" (68). Third, "the range of the girl's journeys [to the sea ports] was considerably shorter than those of the boys…. This may indicate a need to get girls to the coast by the shortest routes possible" (81). Fourth, Oromo children, especially boys" changed hands [owners] up ten times" (88). Finally, a total of 204 Oromo slave children, who were packed into slave traders' dhows were intercepted by the British Royal Navy on the Red Sea on two separate occasions. The first larger group of 183 children were liberated "on 16 September 1888", while the second smaller group were liberated on August 5, 1889 (98). The children were brought to Aden and placed under the care of Colonel Edward V. Stace, who "was charged with finding an appropriate sanctuary for them"(111). The children, who endured unimaginable pain and suffering from the time they were enslaved until they were liberated, "had little resistance to the new opportunistic infections they now encountered", to the extent that "Fully one- fifth" of both boys and girls had died by the end of 1888 (p.114). The liberated Muslim Oromo children, who were the majority of the 204 children were adopted by established Arab families.

A total of sixty-four Oromo children were placed under the care of "Scottish Missionaries at Sheikh Othman, an oasis just north of Aden" (p. 111). The missionaries appear to have taken advantage of "having three fluent Oromo

speakers at the mission to assist them in interviewing the children for documenting their life stories, "which were transcribed and translated by Mathew Lochhead (111), a missionary who was fluent Oromo speaker. Another missionary, William Gardner, "devoted his time to learning" Oromo language. It was the documentation of those children's life stories, which makes this book unique in the field of slave trade literature.

I say unique, because for over three decades, I had a good of fortune of reading many books on the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans as well as the Red Sea slave trade, but none provides so much information about an individual slave, including "the names of their villages, towns, regions, and countries of domicile" (211). Additionally, every child gave her/his "name, age, parents names, orphan hood, number of siblings, total family composition, and kinship structures" (29).

No other book gives so much detail about a single slave as does The *Children of Hope the Odyssey of the Oromo Slaves from Ethiopia*. This remarkable book gives to the Oromo slave children their "authentic African voices relating their first passage experiences within weeks of their liberation" (3). What is more, the narratives of the Oromo children of Hope adds "a new dimension to our understanding of the first passage ordeal with their accounts of sickness, ill-treatment, torture and torment" (91). The Oromo children vividly recalled their journeys from capture to arrival at the Red Sea ports.

> The children detailed each segment of their journeys. Giving the names of every place they visited, how long each segment took, how long they paused or stayed in servitude in each place, how they were treated en route, whether or not they tried to escape, how they were punished for their attempts, how many times they

> changed hands, the identities of the slave traders and their owners, and how much the traders demanded in cash or kind for their human merchandise. The children's personal narratives also revealed whether or not they were sold into the local slave trade system, what their duties were, and the length of time they spent enslaved domestically (73).

The book under review gives several examples of incredible kindness shown toward Oromo children by so many individuals. Let me just mention four examples that will touch the readers soul and lift the human spirit. The first were three missionaries at the Free Church of Scotland at Sheikh Othman Mission, who warmly welcomed Oromo children and started school for their education. They were Mathew Lochhead, William Gardner (both devoted their time to learning the Oromo language) and Alexander Paterson (131). The three teachers who were fluent Oromo provided the Oromo children with basic education. The second was that of Gebru Desta, an Amhara Christian from northern Ethiopia, who was "a highly educated missionary". When he heard the news about the rescue of Oromo slave children, he left his "Basel Mission in East Africa" and joined the missionaries at Sheikh Othman for educating the Oromo children (114-116). As a fluent Oromo language speaker, who was well acquainted with Oromo culture and way of life, Gebru provided very practical and helpful guidance for those Oromo children. The third example of kindness was that of William Grant, a young Scotsman. In a slave market in Arabia, Grant spotted Berille Boko, a young Oromo slave girl, who was displayed for sale. Grant paid 175 Maria Theresa (MT) dollar (or thaler) for securing "her manumission and Freedom. Grant took her with him to Aden, where he put her into the care of the missionaries…'to be educated at his expense' What is more generous and truly uplifting than what William Grant did for Berille Boko, who ultimately realized her personal potential by becoming a

school teacher and raising a family in South Africa. She was the last of the Oromo children to be captured and liberated" (109-110). The final example of kindness toward the Oromo children was that the missionaries at the Free Church of Scotland at Sheikh Othman Mission, who together with some British officials, searched "for a new, healthier environment" for those children. In 1890, Oromo children were brought "to Lovedale Institution in the Eastern Cape [of] South Africa ("(121). The above-mentioned missionaries, Mathew Lochhead and Alexander Paterson followed Oromo children to South Africa, which demonstrated their genuine commitment for the welfare of those children. At Lovedale, Mathew Lochhead taught Oromo children in "their mother tongue"
(114).

From Aden to South Africa, these Oromo children had journeyed into hope and a new life at Lovedale. Their arrival at Lovedale was dramatic. It "signaled a rare unexpected link between South Africa and Ethiopia during the nineteenth Century" (130). Ironically, today there are thousands of Oromo refugees in South Africa, who fled from Ethiopia in order to save their lives in the face of a tyrannical regime. In that regard, Oromo refugees of the twenty-first century followed in the footstep of those Oromo children who arrived at Lovedale in 1890.

"Lovedale was in that era the leading missionary educational institution in [South Africa], with the reputation of nurturing, and training many of the country's future leaders across a wide array of fields" (144). At Lovedale, these Oromo children "had to adjust to a new environment, a new language, new customs, and a new curriculum" (131). Additionally, they had to fit with local Xhosa, and other children from what are today Malawi, Botswana, Basutoland and other African countries. Despite their traumatic background, the Oromo children "performed extraordinarily

well" (153) by dominating "the top ten class positions" (140). After six years of education, "the young adult Oromo began leaving Lovedale to fend for themselves" (150). Their departure from Lovedale was as dramatic as their arrival at that educational institution.

The education the Oromo children received at Lovedale enabled the young adult Oromo to realize their personal potential and determine their own destiney. Several of them were employed in different industries in South Africa and beyond. Three Oromo girls, namely, Bishp Jarsa, Berille Boko, and Watkitu Galatu" (150) who were trained as teachers, taught in different cities in South Africa. Two Oromo were employed for few years "in the Rhodesian railways" (in today's Zimbabwe). "Mulata Billi became a sailor and settled in the United States" (164). Gamaches Garba and Tolassa Wayessa were enlisted in the British army in Natal during the South African War in 1900. In his own words, Tolassa stated "I was very nearly blown to pieces by shells…After the relief of Ladysmith, I was transferred to the special Ammunition Colum of the Royal Artillery" (163). A total of twenty-three Oromo freely decided to remain permanently in South Africa as productive members of their adopted country. Of those twenty-three, it was Bisho Jarsa, who gave the "greatest gift to her adopted country in the form of her eldest grandson", Neville Alexander (166). After his graduation from the University of Cape Town, Neville Alexander "won an Alexander Von Humboldt foundation Fellowship, Germany's premier scholarship and [admitted] to the University of Tubingen [from] where he gained his PhD in German literature in 1961" (152). Shortly after his return to South Africa, he was involved deeply in the South African peoples struggle against the Apartheid system. The Apartheid regime imprisoned Dr. Neville Alexander "from 1964-1974 …on Robben Island (concurrently with Nelson Mandela) ". After his release, Dr. Alexander taught at the University of Cape Town, where "he emerged as one of South Africa's

leading intellectuals, recognized as a scholar of linguistic theory and a noted educationalist. He believed passionately in education, linguistic diversity, justice and equality" (152).

The final inspiring part of *The Children of Hope the Odyssey of the Oromo Slaves from Ethiopia* is the wonderful measure several young adult Oromo's took for responding to the call of their homeland. Eight of them financed from their meager savings, their expensive return travel to Ethiopia by 1902. In 1903 when the Lovedale missionaries "asked the surviving Oromo in South Africa, if they would return home if offered an assisted passage", several responded positively. However, when the missionaries failed to fulfill their tantalizing promise:

> The Oromo, under the leadership of Liban Bultum in Port Elizabeth, approached the German consul in 1908 to ask for assistance in returning to Ethiopia. This resulted in a flurry of correspondence between the governments of Cape [province], Britain, and Germany, and the court of Emperor Menelik II. With their return passage subsidized by the Emperor in Addis Ababa, a group of seventeen Oromo finally sailed for Aden on 9 June 1909 aboard Germany's Kronprinz. Their dramatic return to Ethiopia came, ironically on the back of the scramble for Africa (198).

Emperor Menelik subsidizing the return of seventeen literate and skilled Oromo to Ethiopia, probably symbolizes his "redemptive, restorative" action for his wars of conquest which led to enslavement of most Oromo children. Be that as it may, of those Oromo who returned to their home land, two individuals stand out above all others. The first is Liban Bultum, who was captured by Emperor Menelik's armed settlers and sold to slave traders [in 1888], because his father was unable to pay the heavy tribute demanded from him. As

indicated above on this page, it was Liban Bultum who successful corresponded with British, Cape governments and the German consul, which resulted in the return of Seventeen Oromo to their homeland. After his return to Ethiopia in 1909, Liban Bultum "assisted missionary and Lexicologist Edwin C. Foot in compilation of the second Afaan Oromo-English/English Afaan Oromo dictionary ever published" (36) up to that time. Almost a century after its publication, this dictionary is still very useful for researchers who are interested in the Oromo language. The other interesting person is Tolassa Wayessa, who was involved in "considerable personal correspondence" with Lovedale missionaries and his Oromo friends. In 1899, Tolassa was employed in "East London as a photographer's assistant". The following year he enlisted in the British army during the South African War. Later he financed his own return to his homeland and arrived in Ethiopia in 1903. In Addis Ababa, he was employed "as an interpreter for …London based International Railway Trust and Construction Company…agency in Abyssinia". Later, he was employed in the German Legation in Addis Ababa. He married and" raised a family of two boys and one girl". Today Tolassa's descendants are living in Addis Ababa, Canada and England (162-63). As the two best documented Oromo returnees to Ethiopia, I will be surprised if Dr. Sandra Shell, will not write at least an article about Liban Bultum and Tolassa Wayessa in the future.

The Children of Hope the Odyssey of the Oromo Slaves from Ethiopia has eleven chapters, interspersed with numerous figures, graphs, maps, precious photos of Oromo children, their teachers, their schools and domiciles. It has also insightful Reflections and appendices with wealth of information. This is an excellent book that systematically maps the journey the Oromo children traveled from the moment they were captured by slave raiders and armed settlers, the extremely difficult journey they endured to the Red Sea coast, the many challenges they faced along the way

and how they overcame all their obstacles with commitment to their education and iron determination for realizing their potential. What some of them achieved is beyond imagination, which feels one with pride, considering what they went through while they were young.

Finally, *The Children of Hope the Odyssey of the Oromo Slaves from Ethiopia*, is a magnificent tribute to the author's dedication for bringing to life the story of those Oromo children. It is a very insightful, extensively researched book. It was the wonderful "record-keeping of the Scottish missionaries [that] allowed for a comprehensive longitudinal analysis of the children's lives from cradle to grave, assuredly unique in the slave literature" (199). The author's life-long interest in the Oromo slave children shines on every page of this delightful book. With her razor-sharp mind, a zest for telling their story, Sandra Shell's has brought to "vivid life" the story of Oromo slave children that was unknown before the publication of this beautifully written book, with profoundly gripping story that is captivating to read from beginning to end. Sandra Shell has produced splendid scholarly book that will remain relevant for decades to come. Those in the field of Oromo, Ethiopian and African studies are indebted to Sandra Shell for bringing to life, the story of Oromo slave children, that "had lain virtually unexamined for more than a century" (p.2).*The Children of Hope the Odyssey of the Oromo Slaves from Ethiopia* is an excellent addition to growing literature on the Red Sea slave trade.

ENDNOTES

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