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THE JOURNAL OF OROMO STUDIES

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Asafa Jalata

Articles

Exploring Oromoo Proverbial Locutions: Their Orientation, Function, and Equivalence with Other Proverbs

Zelealem Aberra Tesfa (MA)

Helsinki / Finland

Abstract: The Oromoo are immensely fond of expressing themselves proverbially. This article explores the literal and figurative messages engraved in some of the Oromoo proverbial locutions. The social discourses and circumstances that influence their application shall also be analysed. To this end, an anthology of proverbs and Wellerisms,1- two hundred in total, have been randomly gleaned from different sources, (manuscripts, the internet, and the author's recollections) and translated to English. Adhering to Lord F. Bacon's proposition that goes: "Every proverb should be put down and transmitted to the reader, even the most vulgar ones, since they are very expressive and impressive" (in Gasparyan 2017:132) included in this collection are some of the uncensored, offensive, and obnoxious sounding proverbs. They are categorised according to their orientation; namely: *(1) Proverbs with divine orientation,*

1 **Wellerism:** an expression of comparison comprising a usually well-known quotation followed by a facetious sequel (such as "'everyone to his own taste,' said the old woman as she kissed the cow"). - Merriam Webster- an online dictionary.

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(2) Power or authority and wealth oriented proverbs, (3) Proverbs with sexual orientations, (4) Corrective adages, (5) Scatological adages, and *(6) Adages based on animal characters.* The article also intends to reveal the two main genres of Oromoo proverbs, i.e., the humorous and the non-humorous, which are both didactic and are geared towards the main purpose of educating, advising, entertaining and maintaining the social norms.

Key words: Proverbs, paremiology, folklore, adages, wellerism, sentences, wit, wisdom

Axeereera: *Sabni Oromoo mammaksaan of ibsuu hedduu jaallata. Barreeffamni kun hiika afaan Inglizii mammaaksa Oromoo muraasaa fi xinxaala akkasumas qoodasaani dhiyeessu yaala. Dhimma kanaaf mammaaksota dhibbaa fi saddeetamaa ol kan ta'an madda adda addaa kan akka galmee barreeffamaa, mar-sariitii fi akkasumas yaadannoo barreessa kanarraa funaanamanii, qomoodhaan goseeffamanii dhiyaataniiru. Yaada Lord F. Bacon dhiyeesse, isa "Mammaksonni hundi, warrumtillee arrabsoo fi addaggummaa calaqqisanille uggumsiisoo fi miira kan ibsan waan ta'aniif galmeeffamanii dubbistootaaf dhiyaachuu qabu (Gasparyan 2017:132)" isa jedhu fudhacuudhaan mammaksonni kun qooddaa malee funaanamanii gosa jahatti hiramaniiru. Isaanis, mammaaksota Waaqa waliin hidhata qaban, kan aangoo fi qabeenyaa, kan saal-qunnamtii, mammaksota gorsaa ykn sirreessii, mammaaksota boolii waliin hidhata qaban, akkasumas mammaaksota binoo irratti hundeeffaman. Barreeffamni kun mammaksonni dhiyaatan bifa qoosaa fi akkasumas bifa miti-qoosaa kan calaqqisan haa tanaiyyuu malee lamaauun kan xiyyeeffatan barsiisuu, gosrsuu, bashannansiisuu fi heeraa fi seeraa hawaasaa tohachuu akka ta'e muldhisa.*

Jechoota ijoo: *mammaaksa, paremiology, afoola, wellerism, hima, haasaa mi'aawaa, ogummaa*

1. Introduction

> "The genius, wit, and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs. In them, is to be found an inexhaustible source of precious documents in regard of the interior history, the manners, the opinions, the beliefs, the customs of the people among whom they have had their course."
>
> Francis Bacon (in Trench, 1852, 47)

"Proverb is the rough diamond of folklore."

Raymond Firth (1926)

Paremiography, even though it was a traditionally known as the collection and documentation of proverbs, in its modern usage, however, it has emerged as a system of compiling proverb dictionaries and proverb collections in one, two or more languages with contrastive objective in mind. This tradition traces its roots to the ancient civilisation of Egypt and Mesopotamia, where the first writing systems emerged.

As a student of written as well as oral literature, I find Oromoo oral art generally, and proverbs particularly, so fascinating. It is not surprising that proverbs, in the eyes of paremiologists or researchers that deal with proverbs, are affectionately seen and described with phrases of endearment such as "outspoken piece of wisdom"; "jewel of truth embedded in a quaint linguistic matrix" (Firth, 1926). Proverbs, (*mammaksa* or *makmaaksa,* in Oromoo) are one of the cherished epigrams that rank high in Oromoo oral literature. Their importance and venerability is so high that most speech communication that addresses any social issue seems void without their inclusion. The Oromoo are so fond of it that they have a frequently quoted metaphorical saying that underlines the importance of proverbs in verbal communication. It goes *"Dubbiin mammaaksa hin qabne, ittoo soogidda hin qabne"* which literarily means, "A speech without proverb is a stew without salt."

1.1 What is a Proverb?

Studies attest that because of their enigmatic nature proverbs prove to be resistant towards being defined, classified and properly characterised. In fact, as Coinnigh (2015) states it is a challenge that defied the will, patience, and intellect of scholars for millennia – from Western classical scholars – Aristotle, Socrates, Plato - all the way down to the more recent pioneers in the field, such as Archer Taylor, Bartlett Jere Whiting, Lutz Rohrich, and Wolfgang Mieder. In spite of its undefinable nature, scholars in the field of paremiology seem to have made a persistent effort to elaborate the term proverb and its concept to the extent that it ironically resulted in yielding too many definition attempts that prompted Wolfgang Mieder to comment: "We can almost state that there are more definition attempts than there are proverbs" (1989 p 13).

Let us provide few randomly picked definitions as examples; beginning with the one from Meider himself, for whom proverbs are concise traditional statements of apparent truths with currency among the folk.

In a further elaboration, he characterises proverbs as "Short, generally known sentences of the folk that contain wisdom, truths, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorisable form and that are handed down orally from generation to generation" (cited in Jan Harold Brunvand ed. 1996:1253). Meider's definition is long but embodies most of the intrinsic elements that one assumes proverbs could possess.

Selwyn G. Champion gives a definition associated with the idea of race. In his opinion "A proverb is a racial aphorism which has been, or still is, in common use, conveying advice or counsel, invariably camouflaged figuratively, disguised in metaphor or allegory (1950, XV)". On the other hand, Raymond Firth defines proverb as "a saying, concise in form, but pregnant in meaning, often of a witty or figurative nature, embodying some piece of wisdom and employed in common use." (1926, 136) Okpewho, on the other hand defines proverbs simply as a piece of folk wisdom expressed with terseness and charm." In a further note he adds: "…because of their neatness of structure and sharpness of poetic appeal, they might to some extent, be seen as a fine form of art than those longer forms (1992, 226)". The definitions presented all agree that proverbs among other things convey folk wisdom, are metaphoric, and witty and figurative as well. For our purpose, of all the definitions given so far, the one given by Meider shall be adopted on its merit of possessing all the intrinsic elements that better define what a proverb is.

Since not every uttered sentence is a proverb, there are tools to be employed to make a distinction. Phonological, semantic, and syntactic devices or what researchers call *proverbial markers* or signs that show the deviation of a sentence from a common language of discourse can help discern the difference between the two. In addition, what determines a sentence's proverbial status ***(proverbiality)*** are the literary devices amongst which are parallelism, ellipsis, alliteration, rhyme, metaphor, personification, paradox, and hyperbole are the most important. It should also be noted that certain poetic and structural features are recognizable in their construct (Mac Coinnigh, 2015, 112).

From syntactic perspective, based on the clauses and sub-clauses they are constructed from the structure of proverbs appear in four sentence types; namely, simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex (ibid, 113). The occurrence of these types of sentence construction in the samples of Oromoo proverbs presented in this article shall be shown as examples.

1.2 Origin of Proverbs

Paremiologists confirm that tracing the origin of proverbs is an intriguing, cloudy and difficult subject. The difficulty arises from the unyielding nature of its evolutionary development that is not specific time and space bound phenomenon but rather an imagined mystic accumulation of wisdom "that have crystallized out of the experience of the past ages" (Firth, 1926: 262). Unfortunately, as when this crystallization is launched in the history of verbal communication or as when proverb was inaugurated remains a guesswork. However, Richard Honeck (1997: 4) proposes that proverbs could have probably shown up shortly after the faculty of speech was developed. Nonetheless, concerning their popularity and general usage Selwyn Champion states, that it extends back in time to the ancient civilisations. In his *Introduction to Racial Proverbs* (1950), he notes, "some of these old folk sayings are of immense antiquity." In ancient Egypt, for instance, the sayings in *the Book of the Dead* were in general use as far back as 3700 B.C. As far as collecting proverbs is concerned, he states that in its recorded form the many proverb collections of Ptah-hotep, exceeds the Christian era by more than 3000 years. In addition, Champion recognises Aristotle, "as one of the first known collectors who made his collection more than 2,000 years ago (1950, p. xvii)."

The second important issue related to the origin of proverbs that boggled the minds of researchers is whether proverbs were created by individuals or by folk. This concern was gradually put to rest when the role of the individual as a creator of proverb attained verification in1823 by the British statesman, Lord John Russell who defined proverb as *one man's wit, and all men's wisdom.* In fact, soon this statement in itself became proverbial as "*The wit of one and the wisdom of many"* (Taylor, in Meider, 2014, 28). Finally, Meider confirms that "every proverb begins with an individual whose keen insight is accepted and carried forth as a piece of proverbial wisdom by people of all walks of life (2014, 28).

It is quite interesting to remind the reader of a noteworthy account of the world's oldest proverb that at present is commonly used among the Oromoo. This proverb, as Peter Unseth (2017:1) writes, was found documented 3,800 years ago on a tablet in ancient Assyrian Empire and is *discovered* (italics the author's) recently, among the Guji Oromoo. The proverb about the hasty bitch giving birth to blind whelps, as he notes have been expressed in many European languages such as English, German, Italian, Turkish etc. "What makes this discovery noteworthy is not merely that, yet another proverb is documented as having a wider

range than known before. Rather it is worth noting because this is the world's oldest recorded proverb and it has been studied by many, but previously noted only within the same limited geographical range, Europe and the Middle East," Unseth remarks. However, the Oromoo version of the proverb that goes: *Maal maqnee kan jaamaa sagal dhalne?jette sareen*; (What did we sin that we gave birth to nine blind pups?) said the bitch; in fact is not limited to the Guji Oromoo area, as Unseth remarks; but is frequented among the Oromoo population of Western Oromiya, and maybe in other areas too. It is used when one faces multiple tribulations or challenges one is unprepared for.

1.3 Proverbs and their Pragmatic Functions

Different scholars have presented a variety of proverb classification. Georgi Kapchits in his *On the Modern Classification of Somali Proverbs* notes the availability of three commonly known proverb classifications. These are the *alphabetical classification*, which implies arrangement that depends on the initial letter of the proverbs, the *lexical classification*, which involves dependence on key words, and the *content-based* type called *thematic classification*. (Kapchits 2021:144). Peter Grzybek (in Mieder 1977: 81) classifies the functions of proverbs into three categories known as *pragmatic function*, *social function* and *model function*. Among the three categories, the *pragmatic function* is easy to grasp; for it relies on the objectives or expected ends of proverbs that Mieder summarises as "warning, persuasion, admonition, reprimand, statement, characterization, explanation, description, justification, summarisation etc. (cited in Grzybek)". The second function known as the *social function,* according to Grzybek's definition "…is related to the function(s) which the proverb stock of a given society on the whole fulfils within its system of norms and values. Such functions might be, for example, entertaining or educating functions of proverbs, their being instrument for creating and stabilising certain social norms and behaviour." In general, they function as promoters of set of standards and norms or reminder of certain demarcations that should not be crossed in day-to-day life or in general social interactions.

The third and the final function is the *modelling function* which is described in relation to two entities i.e., the proverb situation and the reference situation, especially from its bases in creating and transmitting analogy between the two. The search here, according to Grzybek is for the kind of relationship that are actually created or modelled between the

two. Both the pragmatic and the social function of proverbs proposed by Grzybek better suit the purpose of this article. Hence, based on his proposition, Oromoo proverbs sampled in this study are categorised with content-based classification in mind. Even though the general purpose of Oromoo proverbs include advice, correction, warnings, entertainment, and education for individuals and the society in general, animal characters and behaviour contribute immensely towards the creation of the output. Output from both sources, according to the message they reflect and convey fall under different orientations, i.e *divine power, authority and wealth*, *sexual*, and *scatological*, to which the reader shall be introduced to, right after presenting below quite a number of Oromoo proverbs that have semantic equivalence with other proverbs of other lands.

1.4 Sameness of Proverbs across Linguistic and Cultural Boundaries

Proverbs are divers, yet similar. Their diversity depends on the land of their origin, for each group of people the world over has proverbs of its own. However, it is not unusual to come across two or more proverbs from two or more nations having sameness, regardless of the two nations sharing neither common linguistic and cultural heritage nor geographical proximity. From the contrastive study perspective, their similarity is displayed in the structure of two individual proverb's corpora, i.e., in terms of their logical patterns, their thematic concerns, and especially the messages, lessons, or kind of advice they are set to deliver. On the other hand, their peculiarities and difference are rooted in the origin of each proverb, i.e., specific geographical, historical, social and cultural environments and the images and materials (animals, plants, weather conditions, etc.) these factors provided towards their creation. Hence, the difference and peculiarity of proverbs on the one hand and their similarity on other is, determined by time and space. Accordingly, Petrova argues that "the more remote and specific the languages and the people (nations) represented in the proverb corpora compared are, the greater these differences and peculiarities will be. And vice versa, the closer the people that have created them in terms of geographical location and historical period are, the more similar they would be" (Petrova: 2015: 243.)"

Petrova's statement quoted above sounds plausible, especially when one considers the following two proverbs from two different languages (West Germanic and South Slavic) that Petrova, (ibid: 248) presents: [**"*Strike the iron while it is hot*"** (English)"; "***The tree is bent while***

it is still young" (Bulgarian).**"]** Beside their semantic equivalence, the themes they address, the message and lesson they put across are similar even though the proverbs are from two nations that do not share borders, linguistic and cultural ancestry, but whose people probably had some sort of historical and other social ties. However, the statement becomes shaky if one considers throwing in a proverb from the Oromoo, a people so distant from the rest of the two; "***The leather is rolled while it is wet***" (*Gogaa jiidhaatti maru*). Even though the two semantically equivalent proverbs from the two European countries are lucking geographical and cultural proximity, yet the one from Oromoo, regardless of its remoteness from the two, shares semantical equivalence and they all convey similar message that emphasises the importance of doing things at the right time, or act quickly before the opportunity is missed.

Though such proverbs are quite plenty and are included in the next few pages of this article let us present few more, just to shed more light on the semantic equivalence Oromoo proverbs share with some of its European counterparts. The English say, "***The tongue is not steel, but it cuts***" and the Oromoo say (*arrabi lafee hin qabuu, lafee cabsa)* ***"the tongue does not have bone, but it breaks the bone"***. It seems that when the German say, "***Starting is easy, persistence is an art,***" the Oromoo fully agree, but express it differently, or figuratively saying, *Qeerransa eegee hin qaban; qaban gad hin dhiisan"*, "***You don't catch a tiger by the tail; but once you catch, don't you let it go***." Here, starting a task or a project is equated to grabbing a tiger by its tail, which could become a serious loss (a matter of life and death) unless one carries it out.

As mentioned earlier, there are quite a number of Oromo proverbs that share semantic equivalence with proverbs from different linguistic backgrounds. The similarities are so fascinating that one is struck and prompted to ask how it could be possible for two linguistic groups, so remote from one another with no historical or social ties to have proverbs that possess thematic and semantic similarity? In fact, Petrova (ibid) in her research has noted how scholars found proverb semantics and proverbs equivalence a hard nut to crack. Nevertheless, it has been proposed that some proverbs through translation, others *through transference*; have planted themselves deep in a new environment. For instance: *mother's truth keeps constant youth* is such a proverb that has successfully transferred itself from its German and French equivalent and thus found a second home and a second root in the English society (Trench, 1852, 25). Here, Trench seems deliberately avoiding the term borrow and lend.

However, in his comparison of different proverbs of different countries, he gives a plausible conclusion that attributes their similarity to the sameness of human *thought* process that constructed them. He notes:

> Sometimes the proverb does not actually in so many words repeat itself in various tongues. We have indeed exactly the same *thought*; but it takes an outward shape and embodiment, varying according to the various countries and periods in which it has been current: we have proverbs totally diverse from one another in their form and appearance, but which yet, when we look a little deeper into them, prove to be at heart one and the same, all these their differences being thus only, so to speak, variations of the same air (ibid. 62-63).

Whether Trench's assertion, i.e., similarity of human thought pattern is behind the similarity of proverbs; or other reasons concerning human genealogy is responsible is yet to be investigated. However, without delving into contrastive analysis of semantic equivalence between proverbs of different linguistic backgrounds, let us see few Oromoo proverbs; - forty-five to be precise - that have similar meanings or deliver similar messages, presented as samples in the following few pages. To begin with, consider a dastardly sounding Spanish proverb that Trench has sampled in his book; and it goes ***draw the snake from its hole by another man's hand*** (ibid. 104). This proverb has semantically equivalent with two Oromoo proverbs and other proverbs from the peoples of the Far East; though the four Asian proverbs do not suggest the imaginable grave danger, i.e. the risk of getting burned or bitten by a snake that both the Oromoo and the Spanish proverbs are referring to. Nevertheless, they allude how one tries to gain advantage at others' expense. All the Oromoo proverbs presented are with their literal meaning, and with their English equivalent, if there is one.

1.	Oromoo	*Harka gowwaatiin ibidda qabatu.*
	Literally	With a fool's hand fire is grabbed.
	Oromoo	*Harka gowwaatiin boolla jawwee safaru.*
	Literally	With a fool's arm a serpent's pit is measured.
	Spanish	Draw the snake from its hole by another man's hand.
	Taiwanese	Using other people's fist to hit a stone lion.

Japan	Participate in sumo wrestling wearing someone else's loincloth.
Korea	Dance wearing other people's trousers.
Chinese	Take advantage of other people's generosity.

Advice on the importance of certainty, instead of rejoicing with a hollow feeling of anticipation of success, is embodied in the following proverbs:

2.	Oromoo	*Mee dura qurupheen foon haa taatu.*
	Literally	First, let the dick-dick become meat.
	Finnish	*Älä nuolaise ennen kuin tipahtaa.*
	Literally	Do not lick before it drops.
	French	Never sell the bearskin until you have killed the bear.
	Russian	Draw not your bow until your arrow is fixed.
	Equivalent	Do not count your chickens before they are hatched (English).
	Equivalent	First, catch your rabbit and then make your stew (English).

Escaping from a bad situation only to find oneself in a worst one, is what is implied in the following proverbs:

3.	Oromoo	*Kan bofaa utuu jennu, jawween kaakkisa dhufe.*
	Literally	While startled by a snake, a python came cackling.
	Oromoo	*Farda fuuloo nyaatu gurgurree, isa luugama nyaatu bitne.*
	Literally	We sold a horse that munches the halter and bought one that munches the bite.
	Finnish	*Kun menee sutta pakoon, tulee karhu vastaan.*
	Literally	Fled from a wolf, ran into a bear
	Equivalent	Jumping out of the frying pan into the fire (English).

The consequence of a traumatic experience on human behaviour:

4.	Oromoo	*Kan guyyaa bofa argee, halkan teepha dheessa.*
	Literally	One who saw a snake during the day, flees from a strap during the night.
	Equivalent	One bitten by a serpent is afraid of a rope's end. A burnt child dreads the fire. Once bitten twice shy (English).

Bygones or what is already happened and can't be changed, are beyond our power and should be left alone.

5.	Oromoo	*Bishaan darbee hin waraabani.*
	Literally	You don't fetch water that has flowed away.
	Finnish	*Ei auta itku markkinoilla.*
	Literally	It's no use crying at the marketplace.
	French	The mill does not grind with water that is past.
	Equivalent	It's no use crying over spilled milk (English).

Figuratively it implies the probable existence of truth behind a gossip.

6.	Oromoo	*Waa malee manni hin aaru.*
	Literally	Without a reason a house dose not smoke.
	Finnish	*Ei savua ilman tulta.*
	Literally	There's no smoke without fire.
	Taiwanese	Without wind the top of the tree does not move.
	Japan	Where there is no fire, there is no smoke.
	Equivalent	Where there's smoke there's fire (English).

A warning to refrain from rough plays and horsing around.

7.	Oromoo	*Quufan malee hin utaalani, utaalan malee hin cabani.*
	Literally	Unless satiated one does not jump; unless one jumps, one does not break.
	Finnish	*Itku pitkästä ilosta.*
	Literally	Tears after long-lasting joy.
	Equivalent	It's all fun and games until someone loses an eye.

Children get not only their physical appearance from their fathers, but their behaviour too.

8.	Oromoo	*Sanyii ibiddaa daaratuu nama guba.*
	Literally	Relative of the fire, the ash burns.
	Oromoo	*Qomoon luugama caalaa nama harkisa.*
	Literally	Ancestry pulls more than bridles and reins.
	Finnish	*Ei omena kauas puusta putoa.*
	Literally	An apple doesn't fall far from the tree.
	Equivalent	Like father, like son. As is the father so is the son (English).

Refers to the adding up of small things, or accumulation, results in creating bigger quantity.

9.	Oromoo	*Fincaan roobii dabala abbayyaa ta'a.*
	Literally	A hippo's urine is a supplement to the Nile.
	English	Many a little makes a mickle.
	Chinese	Drops of water make a river. Grains of rice make a basket of rice.
	Korean	Lots of dust makes a mountain.
	Japan	Lots of feather can sink a ship.
	French	Drop by drop fills the tub.
	Equivalent	Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves.

A measure taken too late, that would have changed the outcome of a circumstance, had it been taken earlier.

10.	Oromoo	*Eega waraabessi darbee sareen dutti.*
	Literally	After the hyena has already passed, the dogs bark.
	Taiwanese	The rice is already cooked.
	Japan	The festival is over.
	Chinese	The wood is already made into a boat To beat the drum in vain after the event has already ended.
	Dutch	To fill the well after the calf has drowned.
	French	It is too late to lock the stable door when the steeds are stolen.
	English	It is too late to cover the well when the child is drowned.

Respect for one's home, regardless of its size and quality.

11.	Oromoo	*Ulfina manaaf hindaanqoon gadi jetti.*
	Literally	Out of respect for the home, the chicken bows.
	Ewe people*	The rooster says that, it is because of humility that he bows down before entering its coop.

* Ewe people are found in Ghana and Togo.

It implies patience and biding one's time.

12.	Oromoo	*Obsaan aannan goromsaa dhuga.*
	Literally	It is the patient that would drink a heifer's milk.
	Igbo	A patient dog eats the fattest bone.
	Taiwanese	It takes nine months to have a baby.
	Chinese	A great enterprise is not accomplished in one day.
	English,	Rome was not built in one day.

Among Trenches (1852, 139) collections we find three proverbs, from three nations, - Spain, Turkey and Nigeria that have semantical equivalence with two proverbs from the Oromoo. One becomes a victim of one's own evil plan that one prepared for others.

13.	Oromoo	*Kan boolla hormaaf qotu ofiif keessatti kufa.*
	Literally	One who digs a pit for others falls into it himself.
	Yoruba	Ashes always fly back in the face of him that throws them.
	Spanish	Who sows thorns, let him not walk barefoot.
	Turkey	Curses, like chickens, always come home to roost.

The backfiring of an act of kindness or helpfulness on the very one that offered it.

14.	Oromoo	*Galatni nama hudduu koobanii dhuufuu dha.*
	Literally	Gratitude from a person cupped on the buttocks is a fart.
	Oromoo	*Haadu harkumaan qaranii harka namaa qalaa.*
	Literally	The very knife honed by one's hand cuts that very hand
	Arabaic	The end result of a good deed is a slap with the palms.
	Korea	The dog that ate my meal bites my heel.
	Japan	To have a hand bitten by one's dog.
	French	Take down a rogue from the gallows and he will hang you up.
	Equivalent	No good deed goes unpunished (English).
	Equivalent	Bring up a raven and he will peck out your eyes (English), (French).

The next proverb embodies the message that husband and wife can reconcile on their own without any external interference; for they are the ones who know one another better than anyone else through their physical as well as mental intimacy.

15.	Oromoo	*Dhirsaa fi niitii itilleetu walitti araarsa.*
	Literarlly	It is the mattress that reconciles husband and wife.
	Taiwanese	Quarrels between husband and wife starts at the head of the bed and ends at the other end.
	Japan	Even dogs would not touch a quarrel between husband and wife.

	China	Quarrels between husband and wife happens all the time, it is none of other people's business.
	Koreans	A quarrel between husband and wife is like cutting water with knife.
	Equivalent	The quarrel of lovers is the renewal of love.

Related:

16.	Oromoo	*"Kan taa'umsa hin beekne dhirsaa fi niiti gidduu taa'a.*
	Literally	One who does not know how to sit, sites between a husband and a wife.

It is those who make a valiant effort that achieve their goal; or that succeed.

17.	Oromoo	*Ija dhiibanii dhaqanii, garaa dhiibanii galu.*
	Literally	With a glowering eye you go, with a bulged belly you come back.
	Finnish	*Rohkea rokan syö.*
	Literally	The brave will eat the soup
	French	To a bold man fortune holds out her hand.
	Equivalent	Fortune favours the bold (English).

"Fortune favours the bold", "Fortune favours the brave" and "Fortune favours the strong" are common translations of a Latin proverb; writes Wikipedia.

In a foreign land put your bravado away and follow the rule and custom of the host environment.

18.	Oromoo	*Kormi biyya hin beekennetti hin bookkisu.*
	Literally	A bull does not bellow while in a strange country.
	Finnish	*Maassa maan tavalla.*
	Literally	In a country, according to its customs.
	Equivalent	When in Rome, do as the Romans do (English).

The following proverb explicates an egocentric, self-enhancing attitude that shows no regard for other's perception or opinion.

19.	Oromoo	*Haati mimmixaa kanumakootu guba jetti* (Oromoo).
	Literally	The peppercorn dealer says hers is the hottest available.
	French	Every potter vaunts his own pot.
	Equivalent	Every potter praises his own pot (English).

A fool presenting his head to untrained barber as an object of exercise or training, there by risking cuts and bleeding.

20. Oromoo *Mataa gowwaatti haaduu baru.*
Literally On a fool's head shaving hair is learned.
French On a fool's beard the barber learns to shave.

The moral is that some people keep somethings for no apparent gain, while others are in need of it.

21. Oromoo *Kormaan indaanqoo ofii hin nyaatuu, namaa hin laatuu foon mataarratti baata.*
Literally The rooster neither eats nor gives to others, but it carries meat on its head.
Portuguese The gardener's dog neither eats greens nor lets anyone else eat them.

Like the light house that provides light for faraway places, but not for the very structure it stands on, similarly they eye that sees all things fails to see it self.

22. Oromoo *Goorroo duubi hin margu, abbaan of hin argu.*
Literally Plants don't germinate in the sitting room; the self does not see itself.
Oromoo *Kan kunootti hin argine kuunnottii hin argu.*
Literally One who is unable to see what is here, cannot see what is there.
Korean It is dark under the lantern.
Japan It is dark under the light house.
Equivalent The eye that sees all things sees not itself (English).

*Related: To perceive what you are seeing, you need to focus.

23. Oromoo *Iji ilaaleef hin argu.*
Literally Just the eye is *staring* does not mean it is looking.
Oromoo *Qalbii malee ijji hin argu.*
Literally Without the sense of perception, the eye does not look.

The pot calling the kettle black is said to have first appeared in *Don Quixote*, the classical work by the famous Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. It is usually quoted when a person criticises another person for the very defect he himself has. The Oromoo have a proverb to the same effect but in a different and humorous way.

24.	Oromoo	*Waaqaaf jedhii gad itti deeffadhu jettee re'een saree dhaan.*
	Literally	For the sake of God, pull down on it said the dog to the goat.
	Oromoo	*Daaraan daakuutti kolfa.*
	Literally	The ash laughs at the flour
	Italians	The pan says to the pot "Keep off, or you'll smutch me"
	Spanish	The raven cried to the crow, "Avaunt, blackamoor"
	German	One ass nicknames another, long-ears.
	Taiwanese	The crow calls the hog black.
	French	The kettle smuts the frying pan.
	Catalan	Death said to the man with his throat cut, "How ugly you look."
	Equivalent	The kiln calls the oven, "Burnt house; the pot calling the kettle black (English).

The paradox of technical expertise employed to benefit others, but failing to benefit the expert.

25.	Oromoo	*Qaalluun kanshee hin beektu kan namaa fagdi.*
	Literally	The *Qaalluu** does not know his own but tells other's fortunes.
	Oromoo	*Warri suphee-dhooftu qiraaciititti nyaatti.*
	Literally	Pot makers eat from a potsherd.
	Taiwanese	The chinaware merchant uses one that has defects. The straw mat weaver sleeps on a chair.
	Japan	The dyer wears whites.
	China	The hair oil seller uses water to comb hair. The straw mat seller sleeps on the ground.
	Korea	The straw hat maker wears an old hat. The sorceress prays for other people.
	Equivalent	Shoemakers' children go barefooted (English).

**Qaalluu* = spiritual leader of the Oromoo traditional religion.

The next proverb is used in reference to behavioural development of a child, or rite of passage, i. e., to remind him/her to behave in accordance to his/her age or social status. It draws a comparison between the size of *amoolee* and the age and social status. It is interesting to note that not long ago *amoolee* (salt bar) was an official currency in Ethiopia. This salt

currency, approximately 10 to 12 inches long and 1.5 inches thick; had to be denominated into halves and quarters, etc. to serve as corresponding price for different commodities, depending on their quantity and quality. Better progress or grow gradually as the circumstance allows than rush and collide with adversity.

26. Oromoo *Utuu amoolee hin ta'in dura kurmaana ta'i.*
Literally Before you become a full salt-bar (*amoolee*), be a quarter (*kurmaana*).
Japan Buying a saddle without buying a horse.
Russian Master the first stages of a skill before you can do more complex things.
Equivalent Learn to leap before learning to creep (English).

To give advice to a person who is already an expert and more experienced on the subject.

27. Oromoo *Hin qaanofneen haadha ciniinsuu barsiisti.*
Literally The shameless teaches her mother how to push and give birth.
Japan Lecturing to Buddha.
Taiwanese The daughter in law teaching her mother-in-law how to cut the umbilical cord.
Equivalent Don't teach your grandmother how to suck an egg. (English)

Better suspect and cautiously study certain matters before granting it complete trust.

28. Oromoo *Hin amanin du'a saree, hamma ilkaan wal darbutti.*
Literally Never trust a dog's death, until its teeth are locked.
Croatian Don't measure a wolf's tail until he is dead.
Equivalent Don't trust a dog, even if he sleeps. (English)

A correspondence of meaning between blaming the skirt and blaming the tool, or misplacing the blame, seems to exist in the following two proverbs.

29. Oromoo *Fagaara dhabdee waalluu komatti.*
Literally Her lack of buttock, she blames on the skirt.
Equivalent A bad worker blames his tools (English).

Toiling with no payment for the service rendered.

30. Oromoo *Harreen isa baattu hin nyaattu.*
Literally The ass does not eat what it carries.
French The mountaineer's ass carries wine and drinks water.

In the following English and Oromoo proverbs familial relation more than other human bonds - love, friendship etc. is underlined. The Oromoo proverb expresses in a figurative and dramatic way to mean "it hurts when a relative is hurt".

31. Oromoo *Alaa migirri gubannaan, gingilchaan manaa boosse.*
Literally When the grass in the meadow is burned, the grass-sieve in the kitchen cried.
Equivalent Blood is thicker than water (English).

It is better to prepare for the hard times the future might bring.

32. Oromoo *Waan dhufu hin beekani saree kana akaayii barsiisaa" jedhe jaarsi.*
Never know what might come, teach this dog how to eat roasted grain said the old man.
Equivalent Forewarned is forearmed (English).

According to the Apocrypha2 the damage caused by the tongue exceeds the harm caused by the sword. It states: "Many have fallen by the edge of the sword, but not so many as have fallen by the tongue." Similarly, an Oromoo proverb and its English equivalent illustrate the damage the tongue causes in the following manner:

33. Oromoo *Arrabni lafee hin qabu, garuu lafee nama cabsa.*
Literally The tongue does not have bone, but it breaks the human bone.
Equivalent The tongue is not steel, but it cuts.

2 According to Wikipedia org. Apocrypha is Greek word that means "the hidden things" are the biblical books received by the early Church as part of the Greek version of the Old Testament, but not included in the Hebrew Bible, being excluded by the non-Hellenistic Jews from their canon. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocrypha)

The next proverb refers to the point that a speech that one considers elating could be irritating or embarrassing for others. It is expressed to rebuke a speaker who crossed the line. Better refrain from uttering objectionable views is the gist of the proverb.

34. Oromoo *Haasaa fi gororri abbaatti hin mi'aawa.*
Literally Speech and sputum is sweet to the subject.
Japan One is not aware of one's foul smell. One does not know one's stool stinks.

Realted to the above is:

35. Oromoo *"Wadalli harree hamma alaakee malee hamma dhuufee hin beeku."*
Literally The jackass is only aware of how loud he brayed, but not how much he farted."

Small amounts if accumulated will become a big amount.

36. Oromoo *Fincaan roobii dabala Abbayyaa ta'a.*
Literally The hippos pee becomes supplement to the Nile.
Chinese Drops of water make a river. Grains of rice make a basket of rice.
Korea Lots of dust makes a mountain.
Japan Lots of feather can sink a ship.
Equivalent Many a little makes a mickle (English).

An already simmering problem, suddenly getting a fuel to explode.

37. Oromoo *Anumaa iyyuuf jedhu jabbiin miillarra na ejjette.*
Literally Just when I was about to shout the calf stepped on my toe.
Taiwanese Husband's death followed by having a terrible mother in law.
Japan A crying face stung by bee.
China Misfortunes never come singly. When the roof is leaking the rain continues to fall night after night.

There is a quotation attributed to Robert Green Ingersoll that goes: "A mule has neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity." On this matter, the Oromoo seem to have first-hand information; right from the mule's mouth:

38. Oromoo *Gaangoo abbaankee eenyuu gaafannaan eessumi koo farda jette.*
Literally "Mule, who is your father?" when asked; "My maternal uncle is the horse" she responded.

It is the common interest or an objective and similarity of taste that brings people together.

39. Oromoo *Wal fakkaattiin wal barbaaddi.*
Literally Those of a kind look for one another.
Japan Horses with horses, cattle with cattle. Same kinds make friends.
Equivalent Birds of a feather flock together (English).

Missing a target is not productive, for it results not only in wastage of time and energy, but few babies too; as an anonymous Oromoo woman who is dying to become a mother complains.

40. Oromoo *Bira dabarsaa kee kanatu dhala sagal na dabarse jette niitiin.*
Literally It is your passing by the side that made me miss nine births, exclaimed the woman.
Equivalent Don't beat around the bush (English).

In Oromoo society, for women incensing themselves with herbs, roots, and fragrant leaves was/is customary. These herbs, roots, and fragrant leaves are made to smoke in a pit and women sit on a stool above the pit and incense themselves, thereby confiding some sensitive personal information in the pit. Both the loyally all-serving-serving and all-hosting incensing pit and the-all-eating, all-drinking rabbit of the Martiniquans give an important advice on maintaining confidentiality:

41. Oromoo *Waan argan hunda hin odeessani jette boolli qayyaa.*
Literally You don't tell about everything you see said the incensing pit.
Martiniquans Rabbit says, 'eat everything, drink everything, but don't tell everything'.

The proverbs sampled below are thematically similar and show semantic equivalence. They are the result of social conflict and tension. Except the Russian proverb which is explicit, the rest are metaphorical, implicit and

figurative; and express the consequence of a war wagged between two mighty powers for the poor and the helpless.

42. Oromoo *Arbi lama yoo wal lole kan miidhamu marga.*
Literally When two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.
Korea When wales fight the shrimp's back is broken.
Russians When the rich make war, it's the poor that die.
Portuguese When bulls fight, woe is to the frogs.

"*Lion's share*" is an idiomatic expression believed to be from one of Aesop's fables; in which the lion, the fox, the wolf, and the jackal agreed to hunt together and share the spoil equally. After catching their prey, the lion is said to have divided it into four portions and came up with four different reasons why he must take all; mainly because he is the mighty. In modern usage it refers to claiming the largest share of a commonwealth. The following Oromoo proverb that appears in a dialogue form sheds light on the reflection that "Partnership with the mighty is never trustworthy."

43. "*Leenci maal nyaataa?" jennaan, "Liqeeffatee jedhe". "Maal kaffalaa?"jennaan, "Eenyutu isa gaafatee? jedhe.*
When asked, "How does the lion feed himself?" He responded: "By borrowing". And when asked, "What does he pay?" he responded, "Who would dare to ask him?" he responded.

Implies whatever plan people make it is God that determines how things will turnout.

44. Oromoo *Namni kadhachuu hin dhiisu, rabbi waan murtee hin dhiisu.*
Literally Man does not stop beseeching; God does not withhold what is decreed.
Equivalent Man proposes, God disposes.

2. Oromoo Proverbs and their Functional Orientation

Based on their orientation, the sampled proverbs are classified into five categories. These are (1) Devine oriented, (2) power or authority and wealth oriented, (3) proverbs with sexual orientation, (4) correction oriented proverbs, (5) scatological proverbs and (6) proverbs based on animal character. However, regardless of their classification boundary, proverbs from different orientations do share functional similarity and literary form; i.e. advice, entertainment, warning etc., in one literary

form or the other: the humorous or the non-humorous. In the following few pages, sample proverbs for each of these classifications shall be presented.

2.1 Proverbs with Divine Orientation

The notion that God moves in a mysterious ways or God's intentions are unclear is an old cliché frequently expressed by the Church clergies. According to some historical documents it is so old that it predates the Abrahamic religions. Chilukuri (1915, 4) notes, that the papyrus preserved precepts of Ptah-hotep, documented about 3440 B.C is considered to be the oldest book in the world. Among these precepts, one particularly refers to the incapability of human beings to predict God's intentions. It reads: "God's doings are unknown." Like the ancient Egyptians, the Oromoo who call both sky vault and God *Waaqaa*, have illustrated similar view through analogy between simple but rather perplexing natural phenomena; for instance: "***kolfi saree fi jiruun Waaqaa hin beekamu***" that literally means: one cannot foresee, foretell or predict what God intends to do in the same way as you can't foretell whether a dog is smiling or going to bite when it shows it teeth. Similarly, while one can tell whether a woman is pregnant or not by looking at her physical appearance, however one cannot make such conclusion from the appearance of a bird. Related to this belief is "***Waaqa gannaa fi fagaara ijoollee hinamanani***" "You can trust neither the rainy season sky nor babies' bottoms" according to Bartles is a pleasing saying that reflects on the unpredictability of *waaqaa* – the sky vault, that can give rain when least expected, like babies' bottom.

Karl E. Knustsson (1967) makes a distinction between the western tradition of the concept of reality and that of the Oromoo, and notes that there is very considerable difference. According to the Maccaa Oromoo there are two concepts of reality namely, *the human* and *the more than human* or *waan namaa* and *waan Waaqaa* as the Oromoo term it; – that which belongs to man and that which belongs to heaven, respectively. (note that the Oromoo word *Waaqaa* has double meaning; - the sky vault and God). "All the Macha representations and actions referring to the nature and meaning of reality are in fact based on such an idea" Kuntsson notes. Hence, the demarcation set by the Maccaa between the different parts of their reality is quite different from that of the two realities which the western tradition terms as *natural* and *supernatural* and the implication attached to them. According to Knutsson's interpretation the

supernatural is a real world but of another quality than the human reality. On the other hand, the natural or the human world is a barely perceptible reflection of the supernatural world (ibid. 44-45).

The above presented Oromoo world outlook employs different types of oral expressions, among which proverbs, praises and incantations that significantly delineates the inter relation between Waaqa and human. Proverbs manifest the authority and judgment of Waaqaa over all his beings, his benevolence and kindness towards his creatures and his decree to each his own individual endowment according to its character and protected as such by the heavenly power. For instance, the following proverb says is in a simple sentence form: "how fast the hawk could be, it cannot take what is meant for the slow and lazy tortoise." However, figuratively, or in Roumyana Petrova's (2014, 248) words, its less obvious, implicit, idiomatic, or metaphorical meaning stresses the notion that, in accordance with Waaqaa's decree, what is meant for the weak, or for the helplessly slow, cannot be taken by the strong and the swift.

45. *Isa Waaq qocaaf kaa'e culullеen hin fudhattu.*
What God allotted for the tortoise; the hawk cannot take.

In Oromoo the phrase *mana ijaaruu* (building a house) is not in reference to the physical construction of a house only, but figuratively means establishing a family. The following Oromoo proverb puts across the same advice and message similar to the Church fathers' teachings concerning the significance of God in engineering and keeping the family establishment standing.

46. Oromoo *Manni Waaq ijaare hin jigu.*
Literally A house that God built does not fall.
Biblical Marriages are made in heaven.

The next saying, a good example of a simple sentence of metaphoric nature, is usually used to refer to an individual who intends to cause malicious damage but lacks the necessary tool to realise it. The literal message is that God knowing the harm a venomous snake could cause if he was granted legs, created it without legs. On the other hand, its figurative reference is that He denied the evil person the means with which he could realise his hidden evil intent.

47. *Waaqayyo beekee bofa miilla dhowwate.*
God purposely denied leg to the snake.

There are quagmire-like situations in which we suddenly find ourselves entangled and unable to come out. Becoming bed-ridden due to accident or serious illness could be one example. The next saying is used to portray similar condition.

48. *Bakka Waaq itti nama hidhe, funyoo malee ijaajju.*
Where God imprisons one, one stands without shackles.

On the other hand, God helps His creatures, especially the handicapped, the weak and powerless.

49. *Isa ilkaan hin qabneef Waaqatu alanfata*
For the toothless, it is God who chews.

There is a general belief that early in life we are physically strong but mentally less mature while late in life we are mentally wise but physically not strong, i.e., sagacity or good judgement is not coextensive with physical strength. Hence, a combination of a vibrant body and an old man's mature and wise head/intellect is what the next saying wishes for a raw young man.

50. *Gatiitti dargaggeessa irrati mataa jaarsaa siif haa kennu.*
May God give you an old man's head on youngman's shoulders.

As Chilukuri (1915, 4) notes, the papyrus preserved precepts of Ptah-hotep, documented about 3440 B.C is considered to be the oldest book in the world. Among these precepts, one particularly refers to the incapability human beings to predict God's intentions. It reads: "God's doings are unknown." Oromoo proverb illustrates similar view through analogy between simple but rather perplexing natural phenomena. The following two humorous or sort of sayings are usually uttered to underline the unpredictability of God's intention. Better wait and see whether punishment or reward is coming. Both proverbs 1 and 2 appear as an affirmative simple sentence built from compound subject (***God, dog*** and ***God, bird***); a verb (***are***) and a conjunction (***and***):

The next saying reflects communal coexistence and indicates that neither grief nor happiness is hidden from immediate neighbours and, of course, from God.

51. *Ollaa fi Waaqatti gadi bahu.*
It is to God and to neighbours that one comes out to.

Forbearance is the advice expressed in the following gnomic expression:

52. *Dubbiin Waaqa suuta.*
God's affair is in no haste.

Here are declarative proverbs in a simple declarative sentence formation that portray the omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent nature of God.

53. *Waaqayyo gooftaadha, jireenyi tooftaadha.*
God is the lord master, life is a strategy.

54. *Jabaan Waaqa, dhugaan kan Waaqaati.*
God is almighty, truth belongs to God.

55. *Waaqayyo yeroo si badhaasu baayyee sin dhamaasu.*
When God grants wealth, it is without tiresome labour.

When the rains are late and severe drought seems inevitable, dejection and hopelessness engulf the farming community. As a remedy the community usually resorts to prayer. But, when it rains, everybody runs to take shelter and avoid the very rain they were earnestly praying for; and that sounds a sort of irony for from the way they earnestly praid it seemed that they did not care a bit if it rained and soaked them wet. There are incidents that people deem important and dream for, but when the dream is realised they wish it didn't.

56. *Rooba kadhatanii roobu baqatani.*
"Begged for rain and ran when it rained."

Accomplishing more than one task at the same time helps economise time and energy is the message conveyed in the following saying.

57. *"Yaawaaq siifan ka'a, achumaanan gaayyaa koo fudhadha" jette jaartiin.*
"O, God, I get up for you, and take my pipe also," said the old woman.

The exclamatory expression below is usually applied when unbelievable stories are told. In the Western society *liar, liar pants on fire*; and *lying like a rug* are few idiomatic expressions used to make a mockery of a liar. One way of avoiding calling someone a liar to his face is to equate the substance of the person's story to a hard-to-believe-phenomenon. In Oromo society one of the expressions to make a mockery of a liar is:

58. *Ajaa'iba Rabbii! Tafkiin arraba qabdi; allaatiin booqaa qabdi.*
O, God's handiwork! The flea has a tongue, and the crow has a blaze.

2.2 Power or Authority and Wealth Oriented proverbs:

Dairy products are not only a necessity on the dining table of a wealthy farmer, but a source of pomade for women to groom their hair with. However, the same products, especially butter for a poor Oromo farmer is a rarity that his family perhaps might afford once in a year during a holiday. It is such a background that gave birth to the following sarcastic proverb that figuratively reflects on the extravagance and unimaginable ideas of expenditure of the rich and the spoilt, who would not hesitate to groom a body hair that does not need grooming at all.

59. *Kan sa'a baayyee qabu dhadhaa saphii dibata.*
One who owns many cows grooms his pubic hair with butter.

60. *Maraatuu fi sooressi akka argetti dubbata.*
The insane and the rich, speak as they want.

When expenses are doubling and income is dwindling, and on top of that one is forced to make repetitive financial contribution regardless; the following proverb becomes handy. The situation is made analogous with a girl who claims to have suffered mutilation twice. It says:

61. *"Kaleessa nandha na qabani, hardha huuba-qoonqoo na murani, anoo qunxuuraan dhumee jette intalli."*
"Yesterday they circumcised me, today they cut my uvula; jeez, I am being obliterated bit by bit." said the girl.

Another variant of the same saying reads as follows:

62. *"Kaleessa nandha qabanne, hardha huuba-qoonqo muranne. Irraa fi jalaan gubanne" jette intalli.*
"Yesterday they circumcised us, today they cut our uvula; we are burned from top as well as from bellow" said the girl.

Dictators are blamed for their boundless appetite for power. Theirs and only theirs is the last word on public affairs, and more than often on personal affairs too. The following proverb from an ailing slave woman hopefully gives a hint:

63. *"Bakka na dhukkubu anatu beeka, bakkuma gooftaankoo jedhe na kooba" jette garbittiin*
It is "I who know where my ailment is; but cup me up wherever my master says", said the slave woman.

The following three proverbs also deal with power relations:

64. *Kan humna qabu reebee booyicha dhowwa.*
He who has power, hits and forbids crying.

65. *"Utuma gubannu kofalla."jette ijji bisingaan*
"While being roasted, we laugh" said the sorghum seed.

Behind an overly confident person is an invisible but a solid source of power on which he relies.

66. *Hoolaan gooftaa cimaa qabduu duboo ala keessee rafti.*
A sheep that has a strong owner sleeps with her tail outdoors.

Another variant of the same proverb is staged this time not by the sheep but by the cat, in a dialogue form. And it gives an inkling of why the cat does not wag its tail like the dog, and why it is so confident in life and even attempts to domesticate its very owner. The Yoruba say: *The insect that is dancing near the road, its drummer is in the bush.* The Oromoo version is not an insect but the cat as imagery, and it is said in a dialogue form:

67. *Adurreen maaliif akkas koortii? jennaan; Eessuma daggalaa qabdi jedhe.*
"Why is it that the cat is so conceited?" When asked; "She has a paternal uncle in the forest" he answered.

According to the following saying, the ox seems to go extra miles not only to forget and forgive, but also to attest his loyalty to the very master who did to him a grievous act:

68. *Sanagan isuma tumeen harka arraaba.*
The ox licks the very hand that castrated him.

One could be in a position as to compel others to labour for one, while avoiding work, even the physically not demanding types, and enjoy luxurious life idly. However, there are still certain tasks that should be done by the individual himself and should be left as such. The following saying seems to be a sarcastic reminder of one such personal responsibility:

69. *Kan jilbaa olii abbaatu dhiqata jette garbittiin giiftiif miilla dhiqxee.*
It is the owner who takes care of what is way up the knee said the slave after washing her mistress's feet.

Toiling or "working one's fingers to the bone" for insignificant income that does not match one's labour and sweat is what necessitates the utterance of the following proverb:

70. *Waan hin nyaanneef hudduu gubanna jette xuwween.*
For what we do not eat, our bottom is burned said the cooking pot.

A victimiser's pretence of innocence by robbing the victim's voice of appeal for attention and justice is what the following two proverbs (70, 71) suggest, while (72, 73 and 74) are utterances on the distressful punishment that an innocent party suffers while the guilty goes free:

71. *Kan tumamu buna, kan iyyu mooyyee dha.*
It is the coffee that is pounded; it is the mortar that cries for help.

72. *Kan garafu qacceedha; kan iyyus qacceedha.*
It is the whip that lashes; it is the whip that shouts too.

Penalizing a mistaken identity or punishing the innocent while the culpable goes free.

73. *Kan dhagaan daakuu balleessetti gingilchaan kabalama.*
For the mistake the grindstone did, the sieve gets slapped.

74. *Kan bonni ajjeese, ganni maqaa fuudha.*
For murder the dry season committed, the rainy season is blamed.

75. *Kan gumbii uree hantuutaa, raachii gara-guddina duuti.*
It is the mouse that pierced the granary; the frog was killed for having a fat belly.

2. 3 Proverbs with sexual orientations

Generally speaking, proverbs are known as a time-tested folk wisdom that serves to impart advice in a concealed manner. The nature of the

concealment employs or depends on, among other things, private human relations or body parts and depiction of animal characters. On different social occasions, throwing in sexually flavoured sayings during arguments or debates on communal gatherings seems to be effective. They possess the power of attracting the audience's attention and help them swallow the honey coated bitter message easily with a smile on their face. Under this title are presented some sayings that implicitly refer to sexual matters, or body parts related to sex.

The first proverb presented below is based on the fear of incest. Holcomb explains how the Oromoo society avoids incestuous relations between blood relatives in the following way: "A child shares a *qomo* name with all the people related to him by blood through his father as far back as the oldest *Oromo* who ever lived. He could never marry someone from that group. That would be incest, *haramu* (1991, 110)." Accordingly, avoidance of such relations is warned against through many reminders; proverb being one. One of the selected proverbs that doles out a warning against the intermixing and physical interaction of children; for there is a sexual risk how so ever they are related by blood, reads as follows:

76. *Hiddi ka'e hidda hin beekuu ijoollee walirraa naa eegaa jette jaartiin.*
A *root* in erection doesn't recognize its own *root*; keep the children apart exclaimed an old woman.

The Oromoo word *hidda* has double meaning. It means root, relations by blood as well as blood vein. When an Oromoo says *nuyi hidda tokko* it literarily means *we are one root*; or we belong to the same root or clan. We have similar blood in our veins. The old lady, out of modesty, tried to avoid the word penis and rather preferred to say *hidda ka'e*, - a blood vein in erection.

There were few types of traditional marriage arrangements practiced among the Oromoo, including abduction, though these days abduction as a form of marriage arrangement seems no more in vogue. Usually, abductions took place when the man asks for the girl's hand and the parents do not approbate. However, there are also times when concerted abductions took place, i.e., with the consent of the girl as opposed to her parents' disagreement. In such cases an ostentatious abduction is usually performed. In such events, unbeknown to the relatives and neighbours, they make the usual attempt of rescuing the girl. Thinking that the girl is in a desperate need of help, they make the phrase "release-her-immediately"

their battle cry and chase the abductors who are running away carrying the girl until they reach their village or a safe territory. But, what if, while both sides were enthusiastically at it, an honest opinion from an expected source gave a devastating blow to the fighting spirit of the rescuers? Such is the background to the following adage:

77. *"Akkasuma jedhuu naan kaadhaa jette intalli," namootaa "Irraa hin buustaniii? Irraa hin buustanii?" jedhuu dhageesse.*
That is what they usually say; just keep on abducting me said the kidnaped girl, upon hearing rescuers shout: "To her rescue, to her rescue!"

Among other situations, the adage is applied to downplay flattery, discouraging remarks, out of place comments and fruitless talks. On the other hand it is uttered as word of encouragement for one to keep moving regardless of criticism. It has a similarity with the popular saying of many lands known as: "The dogs bark, but the caravan goes on."

Related to the point in hand, the following rhyming *abduction-wish* is used as a reflection on a difficult situation one finds himself in when all the best options are missed because of one's own miscalculation and the last resort becomes settling for the undesirable.

78.

Assayyee, Gudayyee	*Assayye, Gudayyee*
Aseennaa natu dide	I refused running away
Kennaa warratu dide	Family refused giving me away
Utuu na butayyee!	Gee, I wish I am abducted.

Discussing adult issues with children could produce an unexpected and unethical response. Consider the following enquiry and response it attained. It is expressed to imply the piling up of tribulations on top of one another without the already existing being solved or dealt with. A neighbour comes across a child whose mother he knew was pregnant and kindly enquires:

79. *"Mucaanana haatikee desseettii?" "Abbaankoowoo galgaluma-galgala itti dabalaa eessa deessi?" jedhe mucaan.*
"Has your mother delivered a baby?" The child responds: "How could she when my father keeps on adding some more every night?"

When one preaches about the importance of saving, one might need to cross boundaries to absurdity to snatch a point of reference that advocates saving even the-not-meant-to-be-saved as proposed below by an old lady:

80. *"Waa kaa'uun hin badu jette jaartiin durbbummaan haftee."*
"Saving somethings is not bad, said the old woman who remained a virgin."

81. *"Haati hattuun intala hin amantu."*
"A mother who is a thief, dose not trust her daughter."

Caution:

82. *"Sin gonfa jennaan, nan mariyadha jette."*
"When told, "Let me crown you", she said: "let me consult."

83. *"Kan taa'ee dadhabe dhangalaasee funaana."*
"One who is fed-up of indolence scatters and collects."

More than often, lack of resilience and will power could enforce rationalizing the less desired; as the following elderly lady tells it with her chin up:

84. *"Lafttis bayeessa!" jette jaartiin siree 'rraa kuftee.*
"The floor is good too!" said the old woman falling off the bed.

The word ***garaa*** – (stomach); symbolically is what the *heart* represents in other cultures. Thus, the word *garaa* in combination with an adjective becomes a symbolic expression for individual characters and emotions. *Gara-laafessa*, (he is kind) *gara-jabeessa*, (he is cruel), *gara-kuteessa* (unflinching), *gara-baldheessa* (tolerant), etc. An occurring of some situations contrary to the order of things or "cart in front of the horse" as a popular idiom tells is an indication of incongruity of some sort. For instance, what the conventional Oromoo pair-bonding dictates is childbirth after marriage; not vice versa. In the same token, a pre marriage intimacy of a girl that could result in pregnancy is like putting the cart before the horse. Hence, the following saying is some advice for girls not to succumb to flirtatious attitudes and enticements that could lead to premarital intimacy:

85. *Intalli garaa laaftu, garaa qullaa hin heerumtu.*
A girl with a kind *stomach* will not get married with empty *stomach*.

Managing one's emotions regardless of the circumstances, keeping one's mood as constant as possible, or to be level-headed is the moral message of the following adage:

86. *Kokkolfaa ulfooftee bobbooyaa deesse.*
She got pregnant laughing; and delivered crying.

Committing horrible mistake and looking for an excuse, by accusing the wrong subject, or blaming it on unrelated things is considered to be means of avoiding humiliation and embarrassment. However, claiming mental insanity or memory-loss might be the only recourse to save one-self from humiliation incurred for breaking certain social taboos, like mistakenly pinching a mother in-law.

87. *"Ani barana qalbii hin qabu jedhe namich amaatii qimmiidee."*
"I think I have lost my sense of memory these days," exclaimed the man after pinching his mother-in-law.

Here is a girl who tries her best to sound as innocent as possible and keep to herself the hidden desire of being proposed to by a local boy. But how-soever her desire is veiled, and masked by pretence, her true intention sounds too obvious.

88. "*Ofiif jechuukoo miti, ilmi keessan kun fuudha hin geenyee?" jette hintalli.*
"I don't mean for myself but hasn't this son of yours reached a marriageable age?" inquired the girl.

The next adage is mostly expressed during pledging of donations on certain community gatherings. It is an expression with double meanings. On one hand, the donator seems to say he is making a non-parsimonious, generous donation; on the other hand, it is a statement of excuse for contributing so minimal. It seems to say no need to underestimate the little contribution I made for that is what I can afford. It also means to participate with no reservation, with all one can afford: with one's maximum ability and knowledge. Please note that the expression is usually uttered among the male memebers of the community.

89. *Hammuma qabnu walitti suuqna jedhe wadalli harree.*
We ram into one another all that we have said the jackass.

Wastage of resources is harmful on many levels. Extravagancy, inappropriate use of materials and wastage has been warned against

through different Oromoo sayings. For instance, when the Oromoo say *"Raafuu xuwweerraa hafte"*or ("cabbage left from the cooking pot") though it bears wider implication, it simply states that the cabbage is neither cooked and eaten nor remained on the plant to mature and become oil-seed that could have earned the family some income. Parallel to this issue of wastage is the discontentment of a lady expressed as follows:

90. *"Anaaf ulfa hin taane, gurbaaf humna hin taane" jette niitiin.*
"It neither became pregnancy for me, nor saved energy for the boy," said the woman.

Sever draught usually causes hunger and starvation in many parts of the world. Its total effect on a society in general and on family relations in particular is devastating. As a discontented Oromoo lady complains, its victims are not people and animals - domestic and wild only, but love and sexuality as well as adultery and jealousy:

91. *Dhirsi bara kanaa…*
as galagali jedhee nama hin xaarsuu
ganda dhaqees nama hin aarsu.
Trouble with a husband these days…
He neither bothers you saying turn around,
Nor visit the neighbour and make you mad."

There are some inherent similarities between certain social or natural phenomena that cannot be observed at the first glance and elude our sense of intellect and bamboozle us to trust its neutrality:

92. *Intalli haadha hin fakkaattu jettee haadha hin hamatini, garaa jalli haadhumaa.*
Don't gossip with a girl about her mother, trusting her facial dissimilarity, for under the belly she is her mother.

93. *Haadha ilaalanii intala fuudhu.*
Observe the mother and marry the daughter.

The following is an utterance of a girl's reaction, maybe after taking a look at her private part for the first time and exclaimed a proverb of a simple exclamatory sentence. The proverb is used to express one's surprise and dismay at some unexpected happenings.

94. *"Uumaakee!" jette intalli of jala ilaaltee.*
"O, your handiwork!" said the girl looking down under herself.

2.4 Corrective and warning adages

Like all proverbs the world over, one of the functions of Oromoo proverb is serving as an argument supporting tool during discussions on public affairs. Public speakers, be it politicians, or religious affiliates employ proverbs to emphasise points they deem important and make it an impressive as well as persuasive presentation.

Some of these proverbs can be characterised as humorous. Humour has been considered as an alternative to the idealistic notions forwarded for the betterment of human life. Avner Ziv who has written extensively on humour argues that the idealistic notions so far proposed for the advancement of justice, peace, and equality is far from achieving its objectives. The reason behind the failure is attributed to the method applied to implement these idealistic notions that resulted in leading the society to wars, revolutions, mass murder, inquisitions, and other social calamities. Moreover, serious people have bestowed on themselves the responsibility of preaching and explaining to humanity what constitutes "right" and "wrong" and are promising eternal life for the good as a reward and eternal fire for the bad as a punishment. Avner Ziv, influenced by the works of Henry Bergeson (1859-1941), the famous French-Jewish philosopher who understood laughter as "a social reaction which punishes and puts down deviant elements in man's behaviour and in various events", goes as far as proposing humour as an alternative for the advancement of justice, peace and equality, on the merit of its less tediousness of its approach:

> Man makes a mockery of man. In his efforts at changing and improving mankind, man turns matters he thinks grave into absurdities. He does this sometimes with delicate casualness, sometimes with disrespect, and sometimes with ferocity. The laughter that derives from the perception of absurdity reforms the world (Avner: 1988: 357).

95. *Utuu lafarratti walii hin galin, muka waliin hin yaabani.*
Reach an agreement on the ground, before climbing a tree together,

96. *Hiriyaan wal hinamanne, laga bultu hundatti wal kaksiisti.*
Untrusting friends insist on taking an oath at every stream they cross.

97. *Abjuu sodaa hirriba malee hinbulan.*
One does not stay awake because one is afraid of dream.

Do not let a problem ossify; nip it in the bud; or halt the progress of a problem as early as possible:

98. *"Dubbiin kun dhagaa ta'a, dhagaa kana qotto falaxatu dhiba."*
"This problem will become a rock, and there will be no axe to cleave this rock."

The stress and frustration that follows a long day's hard work sometimes brings emotional explosion. The serenity of the family as well as the neighbours could also be disturbed by someone who has too much to drink during the day.

99. *Afaan galgalaa karra sa'aa caalaa baldhata.*
An evening mouth is wider than a cattle's kraal.

The notion that short people are cleverer than the tall ones is central to the following proverb.

100. *Kan gabaaban taa'e fannise, dheeraan ka'ee hin buusu.*
What a short man hanged sitting; a tall man can't take down standing.

The following proverb is a moral illustration of growing old together by cultivating mutual love, understanding and appreciation.

101. *Ormaaf jaartii luqqaatee anaaf daadhii buqqaate*
For others she is a sheared old woman, for me she is a fresh honey-mead.

If need be, break the social taboo; forestall and make the situation favourable to you.

102. *Waraabbessi nama nyaachuu mannaa, waraabessa nyaatani luluuqachuu wayya.*
Better eat a hyena and rinse out one's mouth than to be eaten by a hyena.

Rely on what you saw with your own eyes, less on what you heard with your ears.

103. *Waan gurri dhagaye dhugaa dha hin jedhin, waan ijji arge soba hin jedhin.*
Don't say what the ear heard is true; don't say what the eyes saw is a lie.

Keep your words, stick to what you said; or what you promised, is central to this proverb.

104. *Afaan tokko, arrabi lama.*
One mouth, two tongues.

105. *Abbaan damma nyaateef ilma afaanni hin mi'aawu.*
The son does not have a sweety mouth because, his father has eaten honey.

A wife's responsibility in the family is analogues to that of the central pole that carries the ceiling of the house.

106. *Abbaan manaa muka alaatii; niitiin utubaa manaati.*
The husband is an outside tree; the wife is pillar of the house.

Praising, and appreciating the departed could implicitly imply blame the living for his setbacks and setting a standard of achievement expected from him.

107. *Kan jiru arabsuuf kan du'e faarsu.*
Insulte the living, to praise the deceased.

The proverb refers to partiality or favoritisme in wealth distribution

108. *Kan qalu orma haa ta'u, kan hiru fira haa ta'u.*
May the butcher be a stranger; may the distributor be a relative.

The end result of the most awaited things could be contrary to what is anticipated or calculated.

109. *Kan tuffatantu nama caalaa*
Kan jibbantu nama dhaala.
The spurned one exceeds.
The hated one inherits.

Act in unusual yet ridiculous way to create an impression of good manners and reputation.

110. *Sodaa warra soddaa marqaa alanfatu.*
For fear of the in-laws, one chews porridge.

A struggle for survival between both the victim chaser and victimizer is reflected in the following proverb.

111. *Qurupheen lubbuuf kaattii, sareen qoonqoof ariiti.*
The dik-dik runs for her life, the dog chases to satisfy his hunger.

The possession that nature has granted you (good looks, natural resources) could be a cause for your demise. Hunters kill the harmless primate for no other reason than its beautiful skin.

112. *Weeniin bifa isheetiif duuti."*
The colobus monkey is killed for its looks."

The following proverb alludes to fragile unity

113. *Manni gogaa harreen ijaarame yuusa waraabessaan diigama!*
A house built from a donkey's skin falls apart by a hyena's howling.

It is up to you; shoulder your own personal responsibility, is the message implied.

114. *"Abbaatu of mara" jedhe bofi.*
"The self coils itself", said the snake.

The necessity and importance of creating alliance according to the circumstances, is illustrated in the following saying.

115. *Hamma laga cehanitti naacha firomfatu.*
Until one crosses the river one befriends the crocodile.

Practicing what one is preaching is central to the next proverb. "Walk your talk"

116. *Waan hojjennu jennaa, waan jennu hojjenna.*
We do what we say, and we say what we do.

The indecisive state of mind is what the following saying illustrates.

117. *Dhugaa dubbachuuf naman sodaadhe, soba dubbachuuf Waaqan sodadhe.*
Can't speak the truth for I am afraid of people; can't speak lie, for I am afraid of God.

This proverb might pass as a selfish person's rationale why he does not share or be generous.

118. *Hundaaf muruuf foontu dhuma; hundaaf qaluuf loontu dhuma.*
To cut for all, the meat will be exhausted, to slaughter for all the cattle will be finished.

Pomposity is not encouraged for one who lives away from his kin.

119. *Kormi biyya ofiitti bookkisu biyya ormaatti ni mar'ata.*
A bull that in his own land bellows; in a foreign land bleats.

Proverbs 87 and 88 illustrate the notion that strange and unbelievable things can be delivered from the womb of time. There comes a time when the weak and the fragile become strong overpower the strong.

120. *Bara barri toleef buqqeetu dhagaa cabsa.*
When time is in its favour, a calabash breaks a stone.

121. *"Bara!" jette lukkuun farda dhiittee."*
"It is the times," said the chicken kicking the horse."

If you are given the assurance that your emancipation will be tomorrow, don't ruin its eve by being ungrateful and impatient.

122. *"Bor ni agarta jennaan edana akkamitti bulee?" jedhe jaamaan."*
"You shall regain your eyesight tomorrow"; when the blind was told; "How can I stay this night?" he exclaimed.

An alliance deemed to be fruitless, like in the idiom/metaphor "The blind leading the blind."

123. *Cabaan baqaqatti erkate.*
The broken leaned on the fractured.

Displaying for others to see, behaviour of a narcissist

124. *Namni ilkaan miidhagu, hidhii walitti hin qabatu.*
The lips of one with beautiful teeth stays ajar.

125. *Kan of jaju hin dogoggoru.*
A self-admirer never errs.

126. *Bareedde, bareedde jennaan, mucaan ija babaasete.*
When told "You look pretty; you look beautiful, the **child dilated** and **dilated her eyes**.

The proverb is expressed when seniors are denied the respect they deserve from the juniors.

127. *Abbaa gabaabaa ijoolleen hiriyyaa seeti.*
Children take a short father for an age-mate.

The virtue of working to earn a living

128. *"Aartu qotadhu" jedhe namichi saree biddeen dhoowwatee.*
"If you are angry, go and plough" said the man denying the dog food.

Respect seniority, order and chronological arrangement of things.

129. *Jarjaraniif Abbaa dura hin dhalatan.*
Howsoever in haste you are, you would not be born before your father.

A good name broken is hard to mend.

130. *Maqaan erbaniif haarawa hin taatu.*
Reputation can't be darned anew.

Remember the fox in Aesop's stories that rather than admitting defeat complained about the grapes being sour? The Oromoo replace the fox with hyena as in the following proverb.

131. *"Maali fardi ni maraatee?" jedhe waraabessi ari'ee dadhabee."*
"Is the horse insane?" said the hyena chasing but failing to catch it.

Have no bad records that might attract the attention of the authorities.

132. *Harree hin qabnu, waraabessaanis wal hin dhabnu.*
We don't own a donkey, we don't quarrel with the hyena."

Your temptation to fulfil a desire should not blind you as to forget a lurking enemy.

133. *Re'een baala agarte qeerransa hin argitu.*
The goat saw the leaf but not the leopard.

It is performance and behaviour that earns one respect.

134. *Barcuma ulfinaa abbaatu of jala baata.*
A chair of respect the subject must carry under himself.

An expression of a metaphorical nature concerning why those who have the means do not complain.

135. *Jabbiin hootu hin mardhattu.*
A suckling calf does not bleat.

Beware of your speech, for once the words are out of your mouth, you can't pull them back.

136. *Eeboo darbatani jinfuu hin qabatani.*
Once you have thrown a lance, you can't hold on it by its ferrule's end.

Solutions are according to and based on one's ability

137. *Yoo dheeraan tarkaanfii malu, gabaabaan hulluqaa malata.*
When the tall schemes a stride, the short schemes a slip-through.

On the unwise

138. *Gowwaa kofalchiisanii, ilkaansaa lakkaawu.*
Make a fool laugh to count his teeth.

139. *Kan dandeessu dhaani jennaan gowwaan galee niitii dhaane.*
When told to beat someone he can beat, a fool went home to beat his wife.

A work-shy feels pride in his indolence. He holds the opinion that the attempts others make to earn a living by working hard is pitiful and does not worth the effort. Looking at those neighbours who have to run here and there to herd their cattle; from where he is laying down, he comments:

140. *Ni rakkatte warri saawwa qabdu; inni hin qabne maratee ciisa jedhe hiyyeessi.*
In trouble are those who have cattle; the-have-nots are sleeping wrapped up.

Prioritizing, making the right choice, performing one task at a time is the gist of the following proverb.

141. *Miilla lama qabaataniif muka lama hin yaabani.*
You have two legs does not mean you can climb two trees at a time.

Like in many other societies, sorcerers and evil eyes are superstitious beings that the Oromoo think are around to cause harm to human beings (children, women etc.), to their cattle, and farm. Among literate societies talis-

mans are widely used as a protective device. In addition, since their prey/victims are thought to be those who have appealing appearance, distorting children's look by shaving their hair in an irregular fashion, or giving them odd names, is believed to make them an appetizing or less appealing to their eyes as well as to their ears. Hiding children, especially the pampered ones from their direct gaze, not dining while they are around, are also the supposed remedies. In general, much is gossiped about sorcerers and evil-eyes, and even if they are not an openly ostracised outcast, they are not welcome. Such is the background to the following two adages.

142. *Tokko hin toollee, budaan lakkuu dhalti.*
The single she had is no good; the evil-eye gives birth to twins.

A disappointing result of both quality and quantity evaluation of a family made based on the social value scale:

143. *Kanumaa lamatuu, kanumaa ija hamatu.*
It is a pity that they are only two; worth, much is gossiped about their eyes.

"Set a thief to catch a thief" or "It takes a thief to catch a thief." Or "An old poacher makes the best gamekeeper;" are all expressed to illustrate that a dishonest is one who better knows another dishonest person. A mischievous person also thinks that others are as mischievous as he is.

144. *Haati hattuun intala hinamantu.*
A thief mother does not trust her daughter.

Exposing pomposity, ostentatious behaviour and other related characters to ridicules, is gist of the following four sayings. The first in line tells not only how a pretentious character and a sycophant are in need of one another, but inseparable bedfellows the two are.

145. *Manni of jajjuu karaa dura, hengerebbexxuutu goree bula.*
A pretentious person's house is by the roadside; a sycophant stops off to pass the night.

146. *Of-jajjuun kormaa lukkuu: "An iyyinaan laftti bari'e" jetti.*
A pretentious rooster says: "It dawned because I crowed."

147. *Mana bubbeen diigee moortuun natu diige jetti.*
A house is demolished by hurricane; the sorcerer says it is he who demolished it.

On the other hand, the following two sayings deal with humility as opposed to the above presented ones that mainly echo self-importance. They seem to possess a soothing property for one pressured by predicament.

148. *Adunyaan faldhaana; takka siif fuuti, takka si fuuti.*
Life is a spoon; sometimes it scoops for you; sometimes it scoops you.

149. *Kan kadhaa baree abjuudhaan qalqala baata.*
One who is accustomed to begging carries a sack in his dream.

An experience earned; a lesson learned the hard way.

150. *Akeekkatee ejjechuu nama miilla madaatu caala.*
One who excels in carefully stepping is the one with a wounded leg.

Individual mood-swings can happen unexpectedly and disrupt a family's and the neighbour's peace. Moreover, social custom and norms such as mutual respect can also suffer from it. The idea of an old lady kicking her old man right on the head is not something that triggers laughter as an absurd athletic feat that mismatches her age; but it manifests the transgression of the code of manners and social ethics. The following saying is expressed when something unusual, something strange takes place:

151. *Toleera, toluu jira.*
Jaartiin jaarsa dhiitte moluu bira.
It turned good, it will even better up
The old woman kicked the old man near the scalp.

When relations between couples turn from sweet to sour what follows is humiliating and penalizing one another for what they did together in full consent yesterday. This might sound perplexing, but the following Oromoo proverb confirms otherwise:

152. *Waciitiin gaafa jaalalaa wajjin arraaban, gaafa jibbaa arrabsoo taati.*
Cooking pot licked together during love, turns into a subject of insult during quarrel.

Here is a sentimental woman who is in a dilemma. She suffered robbery, but could not expose the robber because she is bound and gagged by marital relation:

153. *Callisuuf manatu na bade*
Himachuuf dhirsatu na hate!
I can't keep quiet for it is my home that is robed
I can't speak out, for the robber is my husband!

Don't let other people treat you badly, defend yourself, do not give in.

154. "*Situ diriiree of qochisiise," jedhe gaarri lafa diriiraa gadi ilaalee.*
"It is you who sprawled for them to farm you", said the mountain looking down at the plain land.

A behaviour that one has developed over many years is hard to give up; "Old habits die hard."

155. *Afaan oduu baree utubaatti asaasa.*
A mouth accustomed to backbiting whispers to the pillar.

If you respect your possession others will respect it too; is what the following two sayings allude:

156. *Mana abbaan gube hormi taa'ee qaqqammata.*
A house burned down by the owner is a campfire for others.

When you are disrespectful or negligent for what is yours the neighbour will follow suite.

157. *"Sangaa abbaan gaanfa cabse, ollaan ija jaamsa."*
An ox whose horns are broken by the owner; its eyes would be blinded by the neighbour.

The following two proverbs reflect the view that before you point fingers at others better know yourself:

158. *Lilmoon ofii seenuu malee, kan ishee seenu hin agartu.*
A needle is aware of what it is entering, but not what is entering it.

159. *Kan harree hin qabne farda ollaa tuffata.*
One who does not own a donkey spurns the neighbour's horse.

160. *Kadhattee fiddee weeddisaa daakti.*
Begging she fetches, singing she grinds.

Going to the temple to beg for forgiveness after hurting someone with an insult.

161. *"Afaaniin maqanii miillaan hooda dhaqu."*
"One offends with the mouth and on foot visits the temple."

Those that are engaged in constant chase and pursuit game know one another's tactic and strategy.

162. *"Isa adurreen beektu hantuunnis beekti."*
"What the cat knows, the mouse also knows."

The harm that disagreement brings on unity

163. *"Walii galtee dhabaaf sareen tokkittiin qileetti nu naqxe" jedhe jaldeessi.*
"Due to our lack of agreement, a single dog chased us all into the abyss," said the baboon.

An Australian proverb reads: "None are so deaf as those who would not hear." The Oromo express similar message in the following way:

164. *Isa beekaa rafu raasan hin dammaqsu.*
The one that feigns sleep, shaking does not awaken.

Showering one with insincere praise so that he dashes to a risky business.

165. *Sobii jaji dhaqee haa du'uu.*
Flatter him, so that he goes and dies.

Climbing down the political ladder is not as blissful as climbing up.

166. *Muka kolfaa koran bowaa bu'u.*
A tree one ascends laughing, one descends crying.

One needs support both during sorrow as well as during happiness:

167. *Utubaa qabatanii sirban qabatanii boo'wun hinhafu*
"A pillar one holds to when singing, one would need to hold to when crying."

The transfer of knowledge from a generation to the next is reflected in the next proverb.

168. *Hantuunnii haadha jalatti gumbii uruu bartii.*
The mouse learns how to pierce a granary under her mother.

2.5 Scatological adages:

Proverbs classified under this topic do sound funny yet carry serious and irrefutable truths. There humorous nature makes the delivery easy. The audiences are compelled to receive with relaxed eyebrows and stretched lips. In the following proverb, the word fart could be a representation of any topic. It implies if a consensual agreement is reached on any topic under discussion; even those that can harm a sector of a population, it doesn't matter, because it is agreed that it is not harmful.

169. *Dhuufuun mariyatani dhuufan hin ajaawu.*
A consensually emitted fart does not stink.

The following proverb is handy when the rich lack empathy as well as sympathy for the poor, or the strong for the weak.

170. *Inni jabaa hagu isa alba'uuf hin beeku.*
One who excretes solid, does not comprehend the trouble the dysenteric is in.

Fart is a sign of a full stomach; grumbling is a sign of an empty stomach. A rather funny way of saying I know all, I have seen all.

171. *Tabbi nuyi itti hin dhuufin hin jiru jettee harreen.*
Never is there a hill on which we didn't fart said the donkey.

A presumptuous behaviour or the consequence of not knowing one's capacity and boundary is what is implied in the following proverb. The disrespect one shows towards social values and norms, to elders, and the family etc., is a sign of ones' demise. That is what the following an unhealthy calf that fails to show respect to *Waaqaa's* abode symbolises.

172. *Jabbiin hin guddanne Waaqatti ol albaati.*
A calf deemed not to grow gushes diarrhoea sky wards.

Causes and effects or consequence:

173. *"Du'aan indhuufaa?" jennaan; "Bokoknaan maa dhiisa?" jedhe.*
When asked; "Does the deceased fart?" He replied: "If bloated why not?"

The following saying is said to have been uttered by a lady during a homecoming of her husband from a battle he has been to. After a long absence he finally arrives home; with a donkey for booty. The lady who

seemingly expected much more got disappointed at his spoil and greeted him with the following remark:

174. *"Akka ati harree boojitee galtu, yeruma manaa baatee balbalarratti lama dhuuften bare."*
"I knew that you would come back with a donkey, the moment you farted twice on your way out of the gate on your departure."

As mentioned earlier, flatulence, or gassiness in public or around people is considered impolite and inappropriate. As Oromoo custom dictates, interaction with a mother-in-law needs an extraordinary caution. The son-in-law is expected to be, or at least appear as gentlemanly and polite as possible in the eye of the mother-in-law. But if the unthinkable happened and pass gas in the presence of a mother-in-law, it is an embarrassing act.

175. *Fagaarri hin yeellaane amaatii biratti dhuufa."*
A shameless behind farts in the presence of a mother-in-law.

176. "*Siachan nama ta'aa?" jedhe namichi amaati biratti dhufee.*
"Would I ever expect any human respect?" said a man after farting in the presence of his mother-in-law.

When lack of proof dictates the reliance on assumption as the only available option; when circumstances or phenomena fail to give their true and clear picture and appear foggy in the eyes of two interactors; that is when the following proverb becomes handy:

177. *"Gaashumaan dhuufuun daalattii dha."*
"Presumably, fart is greyish."

The word *masaanuu* defines the relation between two women who share a man as a husband. Women who are in such a relation are called *masaanuu* (rival-wife). As the following wellerism indicates, intense rivalry is expressed in the form of outwitting one another; like in the suggestion a rival-wife gave to another below:

178. *"Manakootti qayya ulanna; manakeetti udaan hagna" jette masaanuun.*
"In my house we shall incense, in your house we defecate" suggested the *masaanuu.*

The consequence of not giving enough attention to one's own affairs is figuratively stated in the next proverb.

179. *Hudduu abbaan dagate, tusseen sagal ciniinti."*
A behind neglected by the subject is bitten nine times by the ant.

The influence of a bad company is reflected in the following proverb. It has a similarity of message with that Greek saying: "Show me who your friend are, I will tell you who you are."

180. *Goromsi harree waliin oolte dhuufu bartee galti.*
A heifer that stayed with an ass comes back learning how to fart.

2.6 Wellerisms based on Animal Characters:

Fables, parables, and proverbs are the product of both human and animal characters. Mostly they are a means to convey moral and ethical messages. Some of the Oromoo sayings are statements supposed to have been made by wild animals. Usually, they appear as a closing statement, uttered by the hero of an animated miniature story, hence a quotation. In the following few pages, we shall find some funny sounding sayings from the animal world. Since traditional wisdom is embodied in them, they offer guidance and ethical direction in challenging situations. Few introductory words to the background of each saying will be provided. We shall begin with the ironic but wise decision of a baboon that turned a rock and found not a snack but a snake.

181. *"Haabulu" jedhe jaldeessi dhagaa galagalchee.*
"Let it stay the night" said the baboon after turning a rock.

The baboon is quoted so often especially, whenever one chooses to refrain from making hasty decision, or when an agenda presented for discussion becomes a-hard-nut-to-crack; and solutions seem unforeseeable. The story that gave birth to the saying is, while foraging for food the baboon turned a rock and under it, to his dismay, found not a snack but a snake. With as much composure as a baboon could manage, he placed the rock back in its original position and told himself and the world: "Let it stay the night". Be patient, do not make a hasty decision that you may regret in the future is the moral of the saying.

As the following proverb indicates, there comes a time when an embarrassing situation or misfortune befalls one and brings with it chains of humiliation and disrespect from unlikely sources.

182. *"Bara xaddeen nama nyaatte fociin hangarfaca nama ilaalti.*
"The year porcupine devours a person the skunk gives a disdainful glance."

There is no love lost between farmers and the hyena for ages. The hyena snatches calves, donkeys, sheep and other domestic animals from the grazing field or from the kraal. Men curse, chase, and spear it. There is also a myth that depicts the hyena as the evil-eye's night ride. And yet the hyena is far from working to mend his shattered reputation. He rather accuses people for not being sympathetic towards him. It even complains that keeping their animals outdoors is a deliberate act to frame him and shatter what is left of his reputation. Thus the hyena complains:

183. *"Kankoo duruu maqaan hin tolu, hardhammoo harree karaa 'rratti hidhanii?" jedhe waraabessi.*
"My reputation has never been good; and yet today they tied a donkey right on my path?" said the hyena.

Blaming others for one's own wrong deeds, playing innocent to justify a crime is the central message of the above saying.

As the following saying tells us there are two important factors that contribute to building a personality: nature and self-effort. The baboon may not have an attractive facial appearance but his attempt to walk as graceful and as lightly as possible is near to perfection. It is the catwalk of the primates. Hence, he proudly declares:

184. *"Bifa Waaqatu kenna; deemsa abbaatu bareechata" jedhe jaldeessi.*
"Appearance is God given; walking is self-adorned," said the baboon.

We might have been told time and again that man does not leave by bread alone. That is good for man; but warthogs and wild pigs think otherwise. They are known for being busy foraging for all kinds of *bread*, which seem to make their ultimate objective the acquisition of nothing else but their daily bread. They operate from dawn to dusk year-round regardless of the ferocious enemies that surround them and threaten theirs' and their offsprings' existence. But they still insist that their worst enemy that should suffer defeat is none other than – as a wild boar is frequently quoted:

185. *"Mooneen garaa dha" jedhe kormi booyyee.*
"To defeat is the belly!" said the wild boar.

186. *"Kan garaa malee kan maqaa yoom nu dhibe" jedhe waraabessi.*
"That of the belly, yes; but when has that of a good name ever worried us?" said the hyena.

They also have an-ear-witness-account of what her father, who seems to be stubbornly proud and has long attentive ears had to respond. Upon overhearing the identity crises of the very daughter he sired suffers from, he contemptuously commented

187. *"Gabaabbadhuyyuu anumatu abbaakeeti" jedhe wadalli harree gaangeedhaan."*
"Even though I am short, still it is I who sired you." said the jackass to the mule.

This wellerism is quoted, among other similar situations, when the verticality of power relations (be it at family or official level) are threatened.

It pays to always be attentive, alert, and ready for action. In the following saying, that is what man's best friend seems to give as a friendly advice:

188. *"Deemuu mannaa sussukuu wayya; taa'uu mannaa quphanuuu wayya." jette sareen.*
"It is better to jog than to walk; it is better to squat than to sit." said the dog.

The following proverb is handy when one's fate is governed by circumstances imagined or recall. Those cattle that sipped from the salty pond or water-well last season may or may not have similar rendezvous next season. They can't say if they are going to meet one another at the salty pond or at the tanner's house via the butcher. Hence, their farewell is:

189. *"Yoo tole laga horaatti, yoo kaan mana duugduutti walagarra;" jedhan loon.*
"We shall meet in the salty pond if things are alright; if not at the tannery." said the cattle.

The next proverb suggests that a goal set, a task planned should be achieved by any possible means, if need be, by attempting the impossible also. It goes:

190. *Dhufnaan, bishaan gingilachaattuu.*
If it could come, may water come in a sieve too.

Blaming one's incapability using improbable reason may not help one to get others' understanding or sympathy, but will definitely make one deceive oneself. The next proverb could be a good example:

191. *"Bishaantu afaan na jiraaf malee silaa waan baay'een jedha" jette raachi.*
"Had it not been for the water in my mouth, I would have said a lot," said the frog.

The following two sayings are suggestive of foreseeable situations, yet deny or pretend that they are otherwise. Among the domestic animals Oromoo farmers keep, while all the cloven hoofs are edible, all the ungulates are not. Among the ungulates the donkey is the clumsiest and easy prey for the hyena. Its natural death too is a feast for the hyena. Hence the sayings:

192. *Jiraattees duutes harreen kanuma waraabessaa ti.*
Dead or alive a donkey belongs to the hyena.

193. *Harree wraabessarraa eegu, garuu isumaaf eegu.*
You protect the donkey from hyena, yet you protect it for him.

194. *"Gaafan si tumadhu inboossa, gaafa na waraantu ingeerarta" jedhe gafarsi.*
"When I gore you, you cry; when you spear me you sing self-praise," said the buffalo.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to present the practical details of the functions of Oromoo proverbs as well as their orientation, with supporting samples. From the samples presented, it can be deduced that Oromoo proverbs as an important tool of verbal communication, expresses issues both pertaining to the heavenly as well as the earthly affairs - political, social, economic and familial. Secondly, though the proverbs are of the bygone ages, the resonance of their message still strikes the chords of today's social interaction and communication. Above all, since these utterances are the outcome of Oromoo's observation, understanding and interpretation of their surrounding they carry a people's world outlook; a philosophy if you may; that could be examined from metaphysical, ethical, epistemological and logical perspectives. In other words, Oromoo proverbs, like other proverbs the world over are depository of indigenous wisdom. It is also fascinating to find Oromoo proverbs that have a matching message, as well as meaning with proverbs of other cultures that have no geo-

graphical, historical and cultural proximity with the Oromoo; a subject that other disciplines might find interesting to decipher the secret behind this semantic similarity. As for their literary value and communicational importance, Lord Bacon has said it all, when he noted "not only for ornament and delight, but also for active and civil use; as being the edge tools of speech, which cut and penetrate the knots of business and affairs." (In Trench 1852, 15).

* * * *

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External versus Internal Self-determination: A Plea for the Full Implementation of the Ethiopian Constitution[1]

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Self-determination as classic principle of international law

The internal and the international debate related to the 1994 FDRE Constitution revolved around the principle of self-determination, strongly asserted within the Constitution itself. As known, in international law this principle was designed and defined to promote the process of de-colonisation. In its classic formulation the right of peoples to self-determination can be considered to consist in the possibility to free themselves from foreign, colonial or racist domination, by establishing an independent State. For most African countries this process took place in the early

1 This paper was first presented at the 5th Annual International Conference of the Network of Oromo Studies (NOS), 'Self-determination: Prospects and predicaments in Ethiopia with special reference to Oromia', January 2021, London (in remote modality).

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1960s, with the effect of leading to the formation of new independent Sates along the borders designed during the colonial phase. The result was the formation of independent States composed by different linguistic groups, meaning that they incorporate different 'peoples' or 'nations', or, otherwise said, that they are multi-national or multi-cultural. Since the early independence phase, the internal relations across peoples incorporated or encapsulated within the same post-colonial State have been asymmetric, a condition that has soon fuelled many destructive conflicts across the continent. To avoid feeding this fire, the international community and the African Union have become very restrictive on the application of the right to self-determination. This right was meant to free Africa from European domination, not to liberate African people from other African peoples, a case that is better expressed in terms of 'right to secession'. Under international law, it is now universally accepted that the right to secession can only be accorded under two combined circumstances: a) the demand by the majority inhabiting the seceding territory and b) the full agreement of the country the people is seceding from, expressed through a resolution valid in terms of national law. The implication is that the State at large, through its legitimate representative organs, must recognise secession before this can be done by the international community and the United Nations.

The Ethiopian political history and the FDRE Constitution

Being a country that was not colonised (except for the Italian period before the end of World War II), Ethiopia holds a peculiar position within African political history. After of the victory of Adwa (1896) the kingdom of Abyssinia was legitimated as an African empire. Exploiting the militarisation achieved in preparation of the war, it rapidly expanded in competition with the European colonial powers, turning itself into the political entity that is now referred as modern Ethiopia. The dominant ethnic and military elite built highly asymmetric relations with the peoples that were incorporated into the empire. Since the 1980s the concept of 'domestic', 'internal', 'indirect' or 'settler' colonialism' has been used to describe the analogies with other colonies[2].

2 Megerssa, Gemetchu. 1985. "Knowledge, identity, and the colonizing structure. The Case of the Oromo of East and Northeast Africa", unbs. Ph.D thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, university of London. Holcomb, Bonnie, Ibssa. 1990. *Invention of Ethiopia: The Making of Dependent Colonial*

The decolonising process of the 1960s never took place in Ethiopia, because in terms of international law the country was not considered a colony. The intense and perduring conditions of internal domination and exploitation, and strong assimilation policy fuelled intensive ethnic-based insurgency, first in Eritrea, then in Ogaden (Somali region) and parts of Oromia. From the 1970s to 1991 most of the country was affected by large scale, militarily organised and persistent ethno-national and irredentist conflicts, including in Eritrea, Ogaden, Oromia and, at a later stage, Tigray.

The 1991 overthrown of the military junta by the ethnic-based armies marks a paradigmatic change in the country. The Transitional Charter of Ethiopia opened to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and it recognised the rights of the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia to self-determination, up to secession. These principles where further elaborated in the 1994 FDRE Constitution.

Emerging international understandings of self-determination

The Indigenous peoples' experience and civil struggle led to the emergence of new international understandings related to self-determination. In America independence was achieve since the 18th century through wars mainly led by European descendants against the European States. The European descendants or creole elites took the control of the independent States, but, similarly to the conditions of many ethnic minorities in post-colonial Africa, the Indigenous peoples have continued to face cultural diversity and political marginalisation.

The international community has been responsive to the Indigenous peoples' demands by developing a special set of 'indigenous' rights within minority rights. In the context of the UN these were asserted for the first time with the 1989 *ILO Convention 196*. Two decades later they were further elaborated and universally recognised with the 2007 United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. In the meanwhile, some regional organisations adopted binding instruments at continental scale, and many States have incorporated elements of indigenous rights within their own national legal system. All UN agencies dealing in areas where indigenous peoples live are bound to apply specific internal policies

State in Northeast Africa. Red Sea Pr. Jalata, Asafa. 1995. "The Emergence of Oromo Nationalism and Ethiopian Reaction", *Social Justice,* 22, no. 3.

or guidelines, while international corporations are progressively complying to voluntary guidelines for responsible business.

Indigenous rights imply recognition and a degree of autonomy in the following main areas:

- Linguistic and educational rights
- Territorial rights
- Customary institutions
- Control over the development process, mainly through specific procedural rights

Since these rights were labelled under the heading of 'self-determination of the Indigenous peoples', the distinction between 'external' and 'internal' self- determination was adopted by international law scholars[3]. External self-determination refers to the classic understandings of it, as related to the process of de-colonisation and the possibility to achieve full self-government. In the current context it implies the right to secession. Internal self-determination instead refers to the rights of Indigenous peoples, hence to the capacity by minorities and sub-national identity groups to autonomously take certain decisions within selected spaces of the existing States. It entails the relationship between a people and its own government, opening new ways to influence policy and to establish, in asymmetric power contexts, a just democracy by recognising group or collective rights. Internal self-determination does not imply secession, and this is in fact formally restated in all the international instruments of international law on Indigenous rights.

Clearly, internal self-determination, if properly implemented, can provide the ideal answer for the multi-ethnic and multi-national composition of the African post-colonial states, thus avoiding the violent answers that have been enhanced by both marginalised ethnic peoples and by the States' repressive apparatus in the continent and, more specifically, in Ethiopia until 1991.

3 Anaya SJ, Lenoir J, Rogers JE. 2009. *International human rights and Indigenous peoples.* Austin: Wolters Kluwer Law & Business.
Quane H. 2011. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: New Directions for Self-Determination and Participatory Rights? In S. Allen, A. Xanthaki, (eds.) *Reflections on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Oxford Hart Pub, pp. 259-87.

External versus internal self-determination in the FDRE Constitution

The FDRE Constitution assures strong provisions both in terms of external and internal and self-determination. It allows for the possibility of secession by defining a legal procedure that, in line with international practises, require a two steps democratic processes, first within the geographical space aspiring to secession, then confirmation at Federal level.

The FDRE Constitution also provides for the adoption of multiparty liberal democracy, including the full corollary of the required political and human rights. Such rights are both directly recalled in the constitution and reinforced in terms of compliance to international law. In these regards, art. 13 in Chapter Three claims: "the fundamental rights and freedoms specified in this chapter shall be interpreted in a manner conforming to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenants on Human Rights and international instruments adopted by Ethiopia." Art. 9 (4) goes beyond most national legal systems by establishing that "all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land", without a need of specific legislation at federal level in addition to international ratification.

The FDRE constitution is also very elaborated in terms of minorities and cultural rights. Its provisions for the federal restructuring of the State go in the direction of assuring the exercise of cultural rights and internal self-determination. The 'nations, nationalities and peoples' of the country are defined by communality of culture, language and identity. Self-determination is ascribed to such groups, referring both the political sovereignty through the self-definition of the administrative spaces, and to development through administrative devolution of decisional capacity in planning and policy. In terms of minorities, it explicitly protects the land rights of farmers and pastoralists, and it considers customary law. In association with the devolution of powers, it potentially enables the different Regional States and administrative subdivisions to establish their own governance and consultative mechanisms, in line with the specific cultures, values and customary institutions.

Despite the notion of indigeneity is never mentioned[4], the FDRE Constitution seems to provide for the protections granted under international

4 Despite similarities in the dynamics of internal relations across the identity groups of the State, the category of Indigenous rights is hardly applied in the context of Africa, due to the lack of a clear contraposition between 'indigenous' inhabitants and a governing elite associated to trans-continental

law to Indigenous peoples in a diffused and embedded manner, to all the peoples of Ethiopia. The underlying assumption is that external self-determination is balanced by strong provisions for internal self-determination, favouring the decision by the peoples and nations of Ethiopia to stay in the federation by consensus.

What went wrong?

The FDRE Constitution met strong criticism both within the country and by some international scholars, on the ground of its divisive potential. The fact that under the previous regimes the peoples of the country could not deploy their cultural and economic potentials and that this situation led to at least 20 years of pervasive military conflict was completely overlooked by those observers. Much of the criticism was indeed ideologically grounded in classic nationalism, since the new constitution was breaking the strong centralism that had marked modern Ethiopia, both during the imperial and socialist historical phases. However, the early implementation of multi-national federalism has produced some adverse effects that immediately went under scholarly scrutiny. These include the 1993 Eritrean secession — and, with it, the lost access to the sea — and persistent inter-ethnic conflict and ethnic cleansing along the borders of federal states and at the lower administrative level, especially in the process of demarcating them. These elements were taken by opponents of federalism as evidence of the intrinsic divisive risks of the FDRE Constitution, a view contested by Bassi who instead argued that the manifestation of violent ethnic conflict at the internal borders was not produced by the intrinsic characteristics of the FDRE Constitution, but by failure to properly implement it.[5] Several scholars have identified

migrants. However, in terms of international law it is perfectly possible to apply the concept in Africa as well, taking the construction of the modern State — as it emerged by the colonial and decolonizing processes — and linguistic and cultural internal differentiation as reference.

5 Bassi M, 2014, "Federalism and Ethnic Minorities in Ethiopia: Ideology, Territoriality, Human Rights, Policy,", *DADA*, no. 1 (2014) http://www.dadarivista.com/Singoli-articoli/2014-Giugno/02.pdf
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'revolutionary democracy' as the working ideology of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the governing party until 2019. Revolutionary democracy is based on the notion of a 'vanguard' party leading the development process of the country with a centralistic approach and State-controlled economic planning. Centralistic power and planning were achieved by the party's control over the federal governmental institutions through elections. However, the emergence of competitive political parties and of ideological alternatives was prevented by the systematic suppression of political rights, including the freedom of the press, by inhibiting civil society' action and by forcing challenging political parties into underground activity[6]. Most international studies have confirmed that after the adoption of the FDRE Constitution the country has been in a *de facto* one-party system, a condition described by Asafa Jalata in terms of 'State terrorism'[7].

The official UN reports listed in Box 1 confirm the systematic abuses of political rights, but also the disregards for minority rights. The adoption of the *Charities and Societies Proclamation* No. 621/2009 curtailed civil society's independent action both in human rights monitoring and in the standard practice of engagement in local procedures for the protection of community's rights. Box 2 and box 3 illustrate cases of legislation and policy adopted in clear contradiction to the constitutional protections related to the land rights of both farmers and pastoralists.

In relation to borders' ethnic conflict, it should first be acknowledged that the Ethiopian peoples are clearly intermixed, especially along the area of linguistic contact. In the process of building administrative spaces identified with one or the other ethnicity, all actors should feel confident that their rights would be secured should they find themselves in condition of minority. Failure to guarantee minority rights has exacerbated the consequences of having specific geographical spaces attributed to one or the other administration, and fuelled ethnic conflict related to this process. The case of border demarcation between the Oromo-Borana and some Somali speaking groups is well documented through papers and thesis[8]. It took place at a time of full suppression of democratic rights

6 The OLF, one of the three main organisations that had formed the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, was the first important party to face this destiny after the 1992 'snap' elections.

7 Jalata, Asafa. 2017. "The Oromo Movement", *Social Justice*, 44, No. 4.

8 Bassi M., 1997, "Returnees in Mooyyale District, Southern Ethiopia:

and military control of the area. The Tigray Peoples Liberation Front has centrally manipulated refugees' policy and favoured forced movement of population before holding the referendum. This responded to strategic objectives to locally achieve political and military control, against political organisations that were challenging at the level of federal politics. After about 3 decades, recurrent outbreaks of ethnic conflict continue to affect all local groups.

Box 1. Official United Nations reports on serious minority rights violations in Ethiopia, delivered between 2006 and 2010.

CRC. "Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention. Concluding Observations: Ethiopia", United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Forty-third session, CRC/C/ETH/CO/3, 1 November 2006.

McDougall, G. "Implementation of the General Assembly Resolution 60/251 of March 2006 entitled 'Human Rights Council'. Report of the independent expert on minority issues. Addendum. Mission to Ethiopia (28 November-12 December 2006)", United Nations Human Rights Council, Fourth Session, A/HRC/4/9/Add.3, 28 February 2007.

CERD. "Consideration of the Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 9 of the Convention. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Ethiopia", United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Seventieth Session, 19 February to 9 March 2007, CERD/C/ETH/CO/15, 20 June 2007.

New Means for an Old Inter-Ethnic Game", in R. Hogg (ed.), *Pastoralists, Ethnicity and the State in Ethiopia*, London, Haan, pp. 23-54.

Fecadu Adugna. 2004, "Inter-Ethnic Relations between the Oromo and Somali: The Case of Borana, Digodia and Maarehan", Master's thesis, Department of Social Anthropology, Addis Ababa University.

Bassi, M., 2010, "The Politics of Space in Borana Oromo, Ethiopia: Demographics, Elections, Identity and Customary Institutions", *Journal of Eastern African Studies,* 4 (2): 221-46.

Boku Tache, Gufu Oba, 2009 "Policy-driven Inter-ethnic Conflicts in Southern Ethiopia", *Review of African Political Economy,* 36 (121): 409-26.

CERD. "Consideration of the Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 9 of the Convention. Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Ethiopia", United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Seventy-fifth session, 3-28 August 2009, CERD/C/ETH/CO/7-16, 7 September 2009.

CaT. "Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 19 of the Convention. Concluding Observations of the Committee against Torture. Advanced Unedited Version. Ethiopia", United Nations Committee against Torture, Forty-fifth session, CAT/C/ETH/CO/1, 1-19 November 2010.

Box 2. Legislation paving the way to land grabbing.

From the FDRE Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation N0. 456/2005:

Preamble: "Whereas, it has become necessary to establish a conducive system of rural administration that promotes the conservation and management of natural resources, and encourage private investors in pastoral areas where there is tribe based communal land holding system"

Art 5 (3): Government being the owner of rural land, communal rural land holding can be changed to private holdings as may be necessary.

Box 3. Pastoral policy

In contrast to a growing body of international soft law stressing the relevance of mobility and collective resources rights for pastoral groups the *Statement on Pastoral Development Policy* and the *Pastoral Development in Ethiopia* delivered in 2002 by the Ministry of Federal Affairs speak about the need to 'transforming the pastoral society to agro-pastoral life complemented by urbanisation', 'along the banks of the main rivers', and to promote the shift 'from mobility to sedentary life', with the purpose to exploit the 'immense natural resources potential' of the rivers in the pastoral area for irrigation and energy developments.

This policy has especially been applied in the lower Omo Valley, where the local peoples had lost the added environmental value brought by the regular flood of the Omo River, key to their livelihoods. Their lands have massively been transferred to corporations for large scale irrigated agricultural schemes.

Concluding remarks

The FDRE Constitution had an impact in terms of the spatial restructuring of the country and recognition of linguistic and cultural rights. However, it was not implemented in the directions that are key to assuring internal self-determination. Specifically:

- Democracy has never been established.
- No effective mechanism of enforcement of human and minority rights has been put into operation.
- Persistence of a highly centralistic political practice

Today, we see armed struggle resuming in Tigray. This fact is rhetorically presented as a confirmation of the divisive potential of the FDRE Constitution, and instrumentally used as motivation for engaging in constitutional reform. We are at a time whereby nationalistic insurgency is reviving in the country. Re-opening the constitutional process now has a high potentiality to fuel it by escalating to several regional States, especially if the constitutional reform will be perceived as motivated by the old-style centralistic ideology and aimed at drawing back from the conquered cultural rights. I hope I have shown that for 3 decades the FDRE Constitution has been successful in preventing the large-scale ethnic-based insurgency that has marked the previous 2 decades, despite the identified problems in political practice. International experience shows that internal self-determination can provide an adequate answer to the problem of cultural difference and political marginality, but it requires a corollary of respect of political and minority rights. Ethiopia is not an exception: the formal implementation of multinational-federalism, by itself, is not enough. All components of the FDRE Constitution need to be properly implemented before its basic mechanism of balancing external self-determination with internal self-determination can properly work.

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The Laudatory Nature of Oromoo Lullaby

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Abstract: Lullabies or cradle songs, believed to be sleep inducing songs for babies, are one among the many genres that folklore constitutes. Their function is dyadic; i.e. while their soothing melody, and rythimic rocking relaxs a baby and lull him/her to sleep, they also serve as a cathartic release for the prforming mother. They are a universal phenomenon though their origin varies from place to place. Some are adaptation from preexisting adult songs, while others are believed to be original songs created solely for infants. Investigating the literary content of their lyrics and the message they embody and the attitude they reflect within their respective cultural context shall be the main objective of the present study. The study relies on a qulaitative as well as discriptive research methodology, to investigate sample lullaby lyrics of some cultures from the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas; and juxtapose with that of the Oromoo. This research dependes on data collected from secondory sources, a collection that shall be investigated and classified according to the message they display; i.e whether they narrate creepy or tender message. Oromoo cultural ethos has given birth to *Gadaa;* an egaliterian and democratic system of administration that depictes infants as "mediators between men and God." All well and good; what this study attempts to reveal is, whether *Gadaa* has created an Oromoo lallaby that is corrosponding to, and reflecteive of this divine image it gave to its infants.

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Key words: *Ish-ururuuu*, lullaby, lyric, postnatal, prenatal *Gadaa*, cathartic release, folklore, Social norms,

Axareera: *Weedduun hirribaa ykn weedduun ururuu jedhamu, weeddota daa'immaniif hirriba fidan jedhamanii amanaman, gosoota hedduu afoolli of keessaaa qabu keessaa isa tokko. Hojiin isaanii waa lama; isaanis: faaruun isaanii tasgabbeessaan, raasee ururee daa'imaaf boqonnaa fi hirriba kan fidu yoo ta'u; haadha ururuu weeddistuufimmoo yaaddoo, hawwii fi abdiishee keessa sheetti ukkaamsitee turte sana akka himtee baafattu gargaaraan. Ka'umsi isaanii bakka bakkatti garaagarummaa qabaatus afoola saboota adunyaa kana hundaa keessatti argamu. Gariin sirboota ga'eessotaa duraan turan irraa kan fudhataman yoo ta'u, kaanimmoo weedduu jalqabumaa daa'imman qofaaf uumaman ta'uun isaanii ni amanama.* Qabiyyee ogbarruu *jechoota isaanii fi, ergaa isaan of keessaa qabanii fi ilaalcha isaan haala aadaa isaan uume keessatti calaqqisiisan qorachuun kaayyoo isa guddaa qorannoo kanaa ta'a. Qorannoon kun mala qorannoo qulqullinaa ykn taliilina (qualitaative) akkasumas ibsituu (discriptive) irratti kan hirkate yoo ta'u, walalota ururuu saamuda aadaa ykn biyyoota tokko tokkoo ardiilee Afrikaa, Eeshiyaa, Awurooppaa fi Ameerikaa irraa dhufan qorachuuf; fi kan Oromoo waliin wal cina qabuu ta'a. Qorannoon kun ragaa maddoota sadarkaa lammaffaa irraa walitti qabame irratti kan hundaa'u yoo ta'u, raagaaleen kun qabyyee ergaasaaniitiin addaan bahanii, qoratamnaii ramadamuu ni mala. Kana jechaan ergaa nama rifachiisaa moo ergaa gammachiisaa of keessaa akka qabataan qorachuu jechaa dha. Afuurri aadaa Oromoo (etoos) Gadaa ykn sirna walqixxummaa fi dimokiraatawaa kan daa'imman "Ergamtootaa dhala namaa fi Waaqa gidduuti" jedhee amanu uumuunsaa beekamaa dha. Kun waan bayeessaa dha. Wanti qorannoon kun muldhisuuf yaalu, Gadaan, weedduu ururuu Oromoo kan fakkii waaqummaa daa'imman gonfe kana kan gituu fi calaqqisu daa'immansaaf uumeeraayii kan jedhu dha.*

Jechoota ijoo: *Urururu, dawumsa dura, dawumsa booda, gadaa, walaloo, afuura-baafanna, afoola, noormii*

1. Introduction

It is believed that folklore in its diverse forms portrays the true image of a people; or in Alan Dundes'(1969: 471) words, it is an "*autobiographical ethnography";* that reflects a people's true description. "Folklore consists of a variety of genres most of which are found among all people of the earth

(Ibid: 472)." These genres include myths, legends, folktales, folksongs, proverbs, riddles, gestures, games and dances. Accordingly, a lullabies or cradle songs belong to the folksong classification of folklore.

They are songs that mothers the world over sang to put their babies to sleep, specially long before modern devices of communication and entertainment such as CD recordings, audiocassettes, cell phones etc. appeared. They are one among the many genres that any folklore constitutes. To calm, comfort, please, entertain and lull an infant to sleep was/is what they are meant for (Bledar Kondi: 2019, 2)." They are one of the oldest genres of traditional children's lore that date back to antiquity. Their age ranges from the Babylonian song of 5000-years ago [1]; to the popular lullaby of the western world, known as "Rock-a-Bye-Baby;" which is of the recent years. In general, lullabies are known as a genre in children's folklore with sleep-inducing task for the recipient– the baby; and therapeutic release for the performer – the mother; or other female custodians; "grandmothers, sisters, female relatives, or babysitters (ibid: 2019, 3)". On the other hand performing lullabies to an infant is not exclusively a female task; for, there are some cultures where male members of the society also share this responsibility. Kondi, (ibid; 3) notes that "Amerindian fathers in Latin and North America, Vietnamese grandfathers in rural areas, and older Mindanao men in the Philippines" as among the few who "lull children with crooning songs and rhymes."

1.1 Lullabies and their Origin

Some lullabies are original songs solely composed by adults for children, while some are adaptation of an old adult song. For instance, Iona Opie (in Scheiding 2019:37) remarks: "the overwhelming majority of nursery rhymes were not in the first place composed for children;" i. e. they were originally adult anthologies and plays that later turned into lullabies. Similarly, as Goldy Kent (2017) states, "Rock-a-Bye-Baby," for example, is an adaptation from Lillibullero [2], (an English satirical ballad of the 7th century) and appeared in print for the first time in as recently as 1765 in London.[1] Another good example is the *Lavender's Blue Dilly Dilly** song whose original version in 1672 was an English rhyme about two young lovers with no relevance to nursery. However, in due course of time it developed into a much liked cradle song. It is read thusly:

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock-a-bye_Baby

Lavender's blue, dilly dilly,

Lavender's blue, dilly dilly,
Lavender's green
When you are King, dilly dilly,
I shall be Queen

Lavender's green dilly, dilly
Lavender's blue
You must love me, dilly, dilly
'cause I love you.

Who told you so, dilly dilly,
Who told you so?
'Twas my own heart, dilly dilly,
That told me so

Call up your friends, dilly, dilly
Set them to work
Some to the plough, dilly dilly,
Some to the fork

Some to the hay, dilly dilly,
Some to thresh corn
Whilst you and I, dilly dilly,
Keep ourselves warm

Lavender's blue, dilly dilly,
Lavender's green
When you are King, dilly dilly,
I shall be Queen.

*Source: http://www.lullaby-link.com/dilly-dilly.html

1.2 The Two Types of Lullabies

Carissa Scroggins (2021, iii) makes distinction between two categorises of lullabies; the practical and the performance. While the practical are those traditional cradle songs used to lull babies to sleep; the performance are those "composed as art song" and presented in concert halls for the

consumption of the public; accompanied with musical instruments such as the piano. Moreover, "Lullabies" she notes; "can be written from many perspectives. They can be nationalistic, violent, and frustrated." Though this article mainly deals with the practical ones, for which samples shall be provided; however, the reader shall be given few examples of the performance lullaby in the following paragraph.

The lullaby genre has come a long way over the centuries from lulling babies in the cradle. Their artistic version has been employed to address various subjects (Honig, 2005). Throughout ages the melodic and rhythmic properties of lullabies have made themselves available for authors and writers to be armed with new lyric contents that address socio-political and economic issues. Bertolt Brecht; the famous German dramatist and poet's lullaby, - (in *Mother Courage and Her Children* scene eleven); in which Mother courage sings a lullaby over the dead body of her daughter, is one example. As an online account remarks, the lullaby, according to Brecht, was to be sung "without any sentimentality or desire to provoke sentimentality" so that it could reflect the materialistic ambition of the competitive capitalist world where a child is supposed to compete with other children to become prosperous.[2] Arn Kurtz's lullaby entitled "*Song of A Substitute Mother*" included in Aaron Kramer's poetry collection "*The Last Lullaby*" (1999); that narrates about the horrifying torment children, women and men experienced inside Nazi concentration camps is another example. Here are few stanzas from Arn Kurtz's lullaby:

Song of a Substitute Mother:

Life's gone to ruin and rack
Not one crumb in the sack
Hush, my child, my curse
Such is our universe.
Typhus grips your mother
They've shipped your dad away
In wicked times another
Must rock you night and day.
For Sudeten child

2 Mother Courage and Her Children, Summary and Analysis of Scene Twelve https://www.gradesaver.com/mother-courage-and-her-children/study-guide/summary-scene-twelve

the muddy ground's a bed
your cradle-thorns gone wild
your joy- a crust of bread.

It has also been observed how lullabies served as a medium of communication through which social critics could air their opinion on social issues of their day. Gladys Rich's (1932) composition; "*American Lullaby*," narrated by a nursemaid to a baby of absentee parents: *(Daddy has gone to his stockbroker's office a keepin'(sic)the wolf from the door" and "Mother has gone to her weekly bridge party to get her wee baby the prize.")* is worth mentioning as one instance. The lullaby has been portrayed as double-faced lyrical text with a message that targets the parents as well as the system. As Wikipedia[3] notes, some might argue that "*American Lullaby*," is nothing but "a saddening commentary" on the unintended result of the "American Dream" that put the full responsibility of taking care of the infant, including lulling him/her to sleep, in the hands of the nursemaid.

American Lullaby*

Hush-a-bye you sweet little baby and don't you cry anymore
Daddy has gone to his stockbroker's office a keepin the wolf from the door
Nusrie will raise the window shade high
So that you can see the cars whizzing by
Home in hurry each daddy must fly
To a baby like you
Hush-a-bye you sweet little baby and close those pretty blue eyes
Mother has gone to her weekly bridge party to get her wee baby the prize
Nurie will turn the radio on
So you can hear a sleepy-time song.
Sung by a lady whose poor heart must long
For a baby like you.

*Source: https://songofamerica.net/song/american-lullaby/

Concerning those that are meant for mothers to lull babies to sleep, as Bledar Kondi (2019) notes, the text of many such lullabies are constructed

3 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Lullaby

of playful musical words and onomatopoeically formulated words; that, in some instances, became the name of the lullabies of different countries are known by. For instance, as the Oromoo call their lullaby *Ish-u-ru-ru,* the Spanish cradle song is known as *arroró*; the Southern Cook Islanders call their infant-dandling songs *oriori;* in Sardinia *duru-duru*; in Italy and Corsica, *nanne*, *ninna-nanna;* in Albania, *nina-nana* and *ninullë nana-rismata* in Greece, *nana* in Georgia, *cantos de nana* in Brazil, *naneli* in Germany (Kondi, ibid).

1.3 Benefits

It is a long standing assumption that the benefit of practical lullabies was solely for the baby and is postnatal. But, as studies ascertain lately, the beneficiaries of the practical lullaby song are both the infant audience and the performing mother. In fact, the baby starts benefiting from lullaby songs all the way back from the prenatal period (Baltagi, 2018; Evered, 2020; Luisa Del Giudice, 1988). Moreover, a discovery by group of researchers from Limerick (Ireland) confirms that, singing lullabies during pregnancy had significant physical benefits for both the babies in utero and the pregnant mothers (Carolan, et al, 2012: 176). In postnatal period its significant effect on a child's life starts "during the first couple of months after birth"; when the child's "brain processes music in specialized areas." This helps "the baby connect, communicate, move, relax, coordinate, and feel pleasure (Weishaupt: 2022)." It is interesting to note here that this period according to Jean Piaget's theory, is known as the *sensorimotor stage*, when infants' intelligence mechanism operates through their senses of touching, sucking, seeing, hearing, and feeling (Jean Piaget, in McLeod, 2015).

1.4 Objective of the study

So far we are modestly introduced to the lullaby genre; its purpose, origin, and its benefit both for the recipient and the performer. What follows is the main task of this study: i.e. investigating the characters that decide the thematic categorisation of lullabies into creepy and tender or laudatory? Why is it that a soft and gentle melody is employed to be a wrapping for a harsh and grim lexical content? Could there be some social and/or emotional issues that led to the creation of a creepy text? This study shall investigate these questions and other related issues. Oromoo cultural ethos is said to have given birth to *Gadaa;* an egalitarian and democratic system of administration that depicts infants as "mediators between men and God." All well and good; what this study attempts to

reveal is, whether Oromoo mothers under Gadaa leadership has composed a lullaby that is corresponding to, and reflective of this egalitarian system that bestows on children a divine image.

For this purpose the study relies on a qualitative as well as descriptive research methodology, and seeks to investigate sample lullaby lyrics of different cultures from the continents of Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas; and juxtapose with that of the Oromoo. This research depends on data collected from secondary sources, a collection that shall be investigated and classified according to the message they display; i. e. whether they narrate creepy or tender message.

2. Narrative Features of Lullaby Lyrics

Even though the main purpose and objective of lullaby is to comfort a baby to sleep, however, their lyrical text embodies different emotionally charged messages, the major ones being motherly love, hope, worries and wishes. Alice Sterling Honig (2000) of Syracuse University, for instance, thematically categorises the emotional message this melodic expression carries across into the following varieties of categories, for which a sample or two shall be provided.

1. Religious and spiritual themes
2. Tenderness
3. Crabby and sorrowful caregiver themes
4. Promises of treats and sweets
5. Wonders for the child's future
6. Other maternal feelings

2.1 Religious and spiritual themes

Religious beliefs are embedded in lullabies. Mothers seem to sing and pray at the same time for the wellbeing of their baby. In their songs they invoke angles to protect and guide their baby; like for instance in the following two lullabies:

Brahams' lullaby*

I
When at night I go to sleep,
Fourteen angels watch do keep,

Two my head are guarding,
Two my feet are guiding;
Two upon my right hand,
Two upon my left hand.
Two who warmly cover
Two who o'er me hover,
Two to whom 'tis given
To guide my steps to heaven.

II

Lullaby and good night, with roses bedight
With lilies o'er spread is baby's wee bed
Lay thee down now and rest, may thy slumber be blessed
Lay thee down now and rest, may thy slumber be blessed
Lullaby and goodnight, thy mother's delight
Bright angels beside my darling abide
They will guard thee at rest, thou shalt wake on my breast
They will guard thee at rest, thou shalt wake on my breast.

*Source: http://www.lullaby-link.com/sleep-my-baby.html

2.2 Tenderness in lullabies

The tenderness in lullabies includes blaming the baby's resistance to falling asleep on the naughty dreams' not coming soon (Honig 2005: 23). Mothers' imagination in agreement with their emotion and motherly instinct could create a world of fantasy in which their baby could dwell. As much as they have composed lyrics for scary ones, they have also created lullabies that are not only tender but full of myths, rich in fantasies and imaginary dream like world. In the following lullaby an Armenian mother sings to her baby; a baby who according to the mother is no ordinary baby but divinely; for he is sired by the sun and delivered by the moon; and plays with the stars and fed by the wild deer, and whose cradle is rocked by the southern wind; a shining member of the personified heavenly bodies if you may:

With small leaves I will cover you
The wild deer will give you milk
But she has no heart
And will give you little milk

The sun is your father
The moon is your mother
And the tree is your cradle
The south wind rocks you back and forth
Let the stars converse with you
And the sun and moon calm you
The wild deer will offer its milk
Sleep, sleep.[3]

*Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lullabies_of_Armenia

Some lullabies generously depict the baby not as priceless being only but as a divine being too. A Nicaraguan mother for instance, sings "Precious child, more priceless than ermine, smiling child, God love (Honig: 2005, 23)." The Polish mother goes as far as depreciating herself to praise her child: "Though I am not beautiful and will never be rich, I ask for nothing darling, because you are my own (Cummins in Honig, 2005, 23)." Some lullabies are rich with words of endearment and with message that verbally coddle the baby. The messages carry words of assurances of serenity and safety in the arms of the mother and between her gentle breasts. The following is one good example:

Sleep My Baby Lyrics*

Sleep my baby on my bosom
Warm and cozy will it prove
Round thee mother's arms are folding
In her heart a mother's love

There shall no one come to harm thee
Naught shall ever break thy rest
Sleep my darling babe in quiet
Sleep on mother's gentle breast.

Sleep serenely, baby, slumber
Lovely baby, gently sleep;
Tell me wherefore art thou smiling
Smiling sweetly in thy sleep?

Do the angels smile in heaven
When thy happy smile they see?
Dost thou on them smile while slumb'ring
On my bosom peacefully.

Do not fear the sound of a breeze
Brushing leaves against the door.
Do not dread the murmuring seas,
Lonely waves washing the shore.

Sleep child mine, there's nothing here,
While in slumber at my breast,
Angels smiling, have no fear,
Holy angels guard your rest.

*Source: http://www.lullaby-link.com/sleep-my-baby.html

2.3 Crabby and sorrowful caregiver themes

Though, lullabies are sung in gentle, soft and rocking melody; however, what they enfold most of the time is creepy and scary lyrics. Some carry dark undertones, others full of suspense, while some are tender and heart-warming. Jenny Marder, a digital managing editor for the PBS News Hour, remarks that: "Judging by lyrics alone, the lion's share of lullabies are not sweet and soothing; they are dark and creepy and macabre" (2014). Scary tactics and words that denote violence and aggression are heavily relied upon.

Moreover, mystic creatures or real wild animals are invoked to make the lullaby more horrifying. This strange practice is part of many cultures. To mention few instances, in Brazil where lullaby is called "*Nana Nene*" a creature called "Cuca" is revoked to quieten a crying baby. In Spain and Latin America it is a shape shifting monster called "Coco"; in Russia it is the wolf; in Italy the "wolf and the bogeyman", in Haiti the "Crab", in Java we find a nameless scary giant that looks for children, and the list goes on (Okrent: 2015) . Danielle Mowbray (2019) notes that the Yoruba of Nigeria also have a lullaby called *Boju, Boju* that carries a warning message for children to stay in bed with eyes closed, so that a monster does not find and kill them. The Warao, a people in eastern Venezuela sing a lullaby to their children that includes a line "Go to sleep, little child or the jaguar-ogre which has no bones will think you are a deer and eat you (Kondi 2019, 5.)"

In general, depending on the provision that the surrounding forest makes, frustrated parents invoke any locally feared wild animal to scare a child to silence. One good example of such a lullaby is from western Kenya; sung by the Luo people and a line in the song goes: "The baby who cries will be eaten by a hyena" (Nina Perry, 2013).* The Oromoo have a similar line, not in a lyric form of a lullaby but as a Wellerism of a humorous nature; humorous for the adults, not for the child of course; formulated in a question form, uttered as a reminder of unfulfilled promise. It goes: "How about that child you mentioned a while ago? Said the hyena;" or in Oromoo: "*Waayee mucaa silaa maal jettanii; jedhe waraabessi.*"[4]

Luisa Del Giudice in her: *Ninna-nanna*-nonsense? *Fears, Dreams, and Falling in the Italian Lullaby,* characterises the language in the Italian lullaby (Ninna-Nanna) as far from pampering; because death-wish is frequently uttered though not as frequent and as direct as fear of death (1988:274). The Spanish playwright, poet, and theatre director, Federico García Lorca[4], in a lecture he gave on lullaby in 1928 expressed his wonderment on this strange practice. Lorca, after categorising the literary wealth of his native land as a construct that contains "sober sadness and rhythmic fury" on the one hand, and "joyous songs, jokes, jests, lyrics of delicate eroticism and enchanting madrigals" on the other; then, with a tone of bewilderment, asked: "Why then has Spain reserved the most potent songs of blood to lull its children to sleep, those least suited to their delicate sensibilities." In general, most lullabies tend to be carrying cold and creepy expressions; full of frightening monsters that lurk outside, and few that express soft and warm motherly love.

As Goldy Kent (2017) says, getting a baby to fall asleep is not an easy task. For the most part, it requires a lot of patience, repetition, and praying. The exhaustion of these elements leads to the utterance of lullabies that are indicative of how a mothers' intolerable frustration could turn them into a raging brute, regardless of their motherly instinct and makes them wish something harmful to the baby. One of Arika Okrent's (2015)[5]

4 "A Lecture Given in Madrid in 1928," and translated by A.S Kline in 2008. https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/Lullabies.php last accessed 22.07.2023

collection provides a perfect example of such a lullaby. It is a two liner that she calls an "Icelandic classic", and is read thusly:

> Sleep, you black-eyed pig,
> Fall into a deep pit of ghosts.

There are yet creepier lullabies that could be a result of a mother's irritation, that make an unpleasant and a belligerent-to-the-ear-suggestion as a remedy for pacifying a baby that cries non-stop and drives the family to anger. Velle Espeland (1995), a Norwegian folklorist and writer, has a lyric that could be one good example of a gruesome lullaby; a result of non-stop crying of the baby that provoked an outburst of anger from the mother:

> If the child won't sleep
> Grab it by the leg
> And bang it against the wall.
> Then the child will sleep.

One of the classic lullabies of the western world is "Rock-a-Bye-Baby". Few lines from the lullaby focus on a baby in cradle falling from a tree top. Imagining a baby in a cradle, rocking - of all places on a tree top - is rather disturbing and perplexing. It is understandable that the lyric, as the writer clarifies, "depicts how people used to place their children in birch bark cradles and suspend them from a tree branch to rock them to sleep" (Kent, 2017); but still it does not eliminate the image of a baby coming down crushing if the branch cracks. The lyric of the "Rock-a-bye baby" goes as follows:

> "Rock-a-bye baby, on the tree top,
> When the wind blows, the cradle will rock,
> When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall,
> And down will come baby, cradle and all."

As this modest collection reveals, "Rock-a-Bye-Baby" is not as creepy and frightening as other lullabies are. It is rather mildly suspenseful than scary in comparison with other lullabies from different cultures. What makes this particular lullaby suspenseful is the idea that the branch that carries the cradle breaks and the baby plummets to the ground.

Lullabies are embedded not only with different kinds of wishes, dreams and hopes, but with "death-wish" for the baby too. Mari Sarv in her *Traditional Estonian lullabies. A tentative overview* elaborates the rationale behind the death wish song expressed in one of her Estonian lullaby collection as a midwife's professional pronouncement of an inevitable death of the new born:

The song type "Sleep towards death" represented with 13 texts in our material creates an awkward atmosphere where the singer is as if waiting or wishing for the baby's death. The song is quite known and widespread, but it is not clear what the context for its use was. The comments in the typological anthology of folk songs mention that it was sung to stubborn, bad-tempered or grumbling children. Another note in the archive states that a midwife sung this song to announce to the parents that the baby is not going to survive.

The lyric of the Estonian "death-wish" lullaby reads as follows:

> Hush, hush, baby
> Hush, baby, towards your death,
> Grow, baby, towards your grave,
> Limp towards the church,
> Legs first, head after,
> Hands crossed on the chest,
> Hands in the wet sand,
> Feet in the black sod. (page: 167)

Lullabies also become a medium for passing judgement on children. Through lullabies the singer hands down both death and praise depending on the behaviour of the children; in which the good ones are praised while the bad ones are condemned to punishment; i e. death and to be stuffed in to the bag:

> Hush, hush,
> Good children into a cot,
> Bad children into a bag,
> Evil children into a pouch,
> Angry children will be birched,
> Wicked children into the grave,
> Legs towards the black sod,
> Head towards the light of the day. (page: 168)

2.4 Wonders for the child's future

In lullabies mothers express what is dear to them for their child's future. There are quite a number of examples of such lullabies that carry mothers' hopes and dreams from different countries. Honig (2005:24) provides us with Welsh fishermen's lullaby and its version from Scotland; and another from Greek. They read as follows consecutively:

> Dance to your daddy, my little laddie
> Dance to your daddy, my little man
> You shall have flounder, you shall have a fin
> You shall have a haddock when the boat comes in.
>
> When you grow to manhood, you shall take a wife
> You shall wed your lassie and love her all your life.

In the Greek lullaby known as *Now Then, Sleep, Sleep, My Child* the mother promises not simple material things but territories and cities if only the baby slumbers to sleep. She promises "The City of Alexandria with sugar, and all of Cairo with rice." Not only that, she promises the child "to reign as a monarch for three years in rich Constantinople."

While a mother from Greek with an expansionist attitude promises her child cities and territories, a mother with agrarian background, from Estonia, has a diametrically opposite lullaby. Mari Sarv, in her previously mentioned work (166) provides us with a lullaby that sounds like a blueprint of an upcoming farmhand sang to him by a patient mother. This up-coming farmhand must grow and become a strong man by inheriting his parents' physical stature and shoulder the responsibility of looking after the cattle and sheep, clearing farm plots, making hay, chopping fire wood, fetching water, picking wild fruits from the forest and "heating the sauna" too. It is read as follows:

> Rock, rock, hush, hush,
> Sleep, sleep, little baby!
> Grow, grow bigger,
> Grow, grow to be a herder,
> As tall as your daddy and mommy,
> As big as your relatives,
> To bring the horses from the valleys,

To get the oxen from the meadow,
To milk the cow for your mommy,
To keep the oxen for your daddy.

2.5 Rewards, Threats, and Bribes

So far, from the samples given, we have seen a variety of lullabies, especially those that are creepy, and those that raise a mother's hope and expectation; all emanating from the mother's emotions. On the other hand some lullabies carry messages that attempt to wheedle the baby to sleep through a give-and-take approach. This approach involves promises of gifts and rewards - bribery, threats if you may, to quieten or lull the baby to sleep so that they could go to their other affairs. One good example is "Hush little baby," one of the most popular American children's' songs, whose author and date of origin is unknown, but is said to be from the Southern United States; that Hogins (2005:24) call "a beloved African-American lullaby." It reads thusly:

"Hush little baby don't say a word.
Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird.
And if that mockingbird won't sing,
Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring.
And if that diamond ring turns brass,
Papa's gonna buy you a looking glass.
And if that looking glass gets broke,
Papa's gonna buy you a billy goat.
And if that billy goat won't pull,
Papa's gonna buy you a cart and bull.
And if that cart and bull turn over,
Papa's gonna buy you a dog named Rover.
And if that dog named Rover won't bark,
Papa's gonna buy you a horse and cart.
And if that horse and cart fall down,
You'll still be the sweetest little baby in town! "

Aaron Copland's songs are lyrical and rhythmically precise. "The Little Horses" is full of promises of sweet cake and pretty little horses.

The Little Horses *

Hush you bye, don't you cry,
Go to sleepy little baby.
When you wake, you shall have
All the pretty little horses.
Black and bays, dapples and grays
Coach and six-a little horses.
Hush you bye, don't you cry,
Go to sleepy little baby.
When you wake, you'll have sweet cake,
And all the pretty little horses.
A brown and a gray and a black and a bay
And a coach and six-a little horses.
A black and a bay and a brown and a gray
And a coach and six-a little horses.
Hush you bye, don't you cry
Oh you pretty little baby.
Go to sleepy little baby.

*Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_the_Pretty_Little_Horses

For mothers, failure to perform duties assigned and responsibilities entrusted to them by the family or by the society could lead to frustration. Especially when after a long day's work a mother attempts to put a baby to sleep but the baby resists. In such situations, lullabies, as have been mentioned earlier, serves as means of catharsis; or an outlet to release the frustration and get relief. Carissa Scroggins (2021, 107) in her *The Lullaby as Art Song: Engaging Repertoire For Study and Performance;* presents *"Charm"* from *A Charm of Lullabies* as the most accurate portrayal of a distressed mother who attempted to get done with the task of putting her baby to sleep and attend to other duties that seek her attention; but failed, because the baby resisted to sleep. She resorted to singing a lullaby the lyric of which carries horrific threats and the bad things she would do if the baby does not go to sleep; and sleep quickly. Here is *"Charm",* a lullaby written in 1947.

A Charm

Quiet, sleep! Or I will make
Erinnys whip thee with a snake,
And cruel Rhadamanthus take
Thy body to the boiling lake,
Where fire and brimstone never slake;
Thy heart shall burn, thy head shall ache,
And every joint about thee quake;
And therefore dare not yet to wake!
Quiet, sleep! Or thou shalt see
The horrid hags of Tartary,
Whose tresses ugly serpents be,
And Cerberus shall bark at thee,
And all the Furies that are three –
The worst is call'd Tisiphone, -
Shall lash thee to eternity;
And therefore sleep thou peaceful

Carissa Scroggins (2021, 95) states that though it is generally believed lullabies are soothing, gentle and comforting; which in fact is true for many, however, this universal perception is not true for all; for there is a theme in lullabies that convey threats and rewards. As a good example, she provides Francis Poulenc's "*Berceuse*" a song about a frustrated village girl who is entangled to babysitting. She further states, "Though the title indicates that it is a lullaby, the song is anything but gentle or soothing." Here it is:

Your father is at the Mass,
Your mother at the cabaret.
You will have your bottom spanked
If you continue to cry.
My mother was a poor woman,
On the moor of Auray,
And I, I make some pancakes
While you I rock with my foot.
If you should die of the croup
Colic or diarrhoea,
If you should die of the scabs

That you have on your nose.
I would fish for shrimp
At the hour of the low tide,
To make the soup of fish heads
One has no need of hooks. (95)

2.6 Other maternal feelings

As mentioned earlier, the main purpose of all practical lullabies is to sooth the child, or to placate its anger with hypnotic melody and recurring lyrics, yet there are still other messages conveyed through lullabies. Such messages include, the sudden outburst of reminiscences of the bygone times' passionate love, romance and kisses that paved the way for the arrival of the baby comes to surface while the mother lulls her baby to sleep. In some cultures shifts in emphasis to convey other messages that are meant to target the mothers has been observed. Hence, some are self-ridiculing lyrics wrapped in a soft and sweet melody, to verbally drag oneself through comedic roast. Here is one example:

Poor little child of so many fathers;
Priests, and students, and other stray wanderers.

Velle Espeland (1995), the Norwegian folklorist and writer, who provided us with the lyrics, makes the following plausible comments to decipher what the song is meant for:

> "This may be a useful self-therapy for a sleepless mother of a screaming child, and as long as the rhythm (sic) and melody is in order that should not make any difference to the child. When the child gets older and acquires a language the lullaby changes its function. Then it is no longer necessary to sing the child completely into sleep (1995: 4)".

2.7 Lullabies as Medium of catharsis

As Finnegan (2012: 292) contends lullabies are governed by social customs and norms and influenced by the elements that a society constitutes. Hence, what is supposed to be a simple, natural and sentimental song that a mother sings to lull a baby to sleep, turns to a medium

for venting a suppressed comment; expression of insecurity, hope and expectation of mothers. That is not all; in some circumstances lullabies become a medium for expressing resentment; at times thematically subversive such that they convey complaints and anger that emanates from the harsh treatment the hired nannies suffered in the hands of their cruel employers. Two examples can be provided here. The first one is the case of the Ngoni women of Malawi, and the "rank-conscious" women of Nyoro of Uganda who are well-off economically and can hire nurse-maids from other economically less advantageous groups to look after their children; cited by Finnegan (ibid). The second one is the "*komori-boko*" of Japan that according to Lauren Renée Castro (2013, 30) forced teenage girls, usually of poor families, to serve a wealthy family as a live-in nanny and look after new-born babies. Finnegan cites the following lullaby that the resentful nurse-maids sing to vent the disappointment they hold towards the mothers' of the children they are looking after:

> Ha! that mother, who takes her food alone.
> Ha! that mother, before she has eaten.
> Ha! that mother she says, 'Lull the children for me'.
> Ha! that mother when she has finished to eat.
> Ha! that mother she says 'Give the child to me.[6]

Another lullaby, an expression from a frustrated girl is from Japan. In the case of the "*komori-boko*" custom of Japan teenage girls from poor family in exchange for ninety-five pounds of rice are hired for at least one year to work as a nanny; far away from their family. As Lauren R. Castro (ibid, 30) explains the working condition of these teenage girls so gruesome that, "No matter how discontented or homesick these nannies felt, they were never allowed to complain aloud about their feelings, as they were supposed to be submissive to their masters." Their only choice is to vent their frustration through a lullaby. The "Itsuki Lullaby" with a beautiful melody that is said to have become a very popular tune in Japanese is one such example. It is read as follows:

> I certainly hate
> Taking care of the crying child.
> They hate me for keeping the child to cry,
> They hate me for keeping the child to cry.

The sleeping child's
Cuteness and innocent look!
The crying child's ugly look,
The crying child's ugly look.
I will be here until Bon Festival,
After Bon Festival, I will not be here.
If Bon Festival comes earlier, I would return home earlier.
If Bon Festival comes earlier, I would return home earlier.

So far, the reader is introduced to samples of lullabies from different cultures. that display thematic diversity of lullabies (creepy and suspenseful) and the message they convey as a literary medium have been presented. Hoping that they suffice as to fulfil that purpose, let us now see the Oromoo lullaby that can be classified as laudatory and heart-warming, and seems to have much in common with the Armenian lullaby presented earlier.

3. Tenderness and Oromoo Lullaby

Like most lullabies, though it is performed by an individual, however, it is unlikely that its lyrical content and narration could escape the dictate of the society's norm, conviction and values. In case of the Oromoo, norms, convictions and values are all emanation from the Gadaa socio-political system; an egalitarian and democratic system that governed every sphere of the society's life. Thus it is rather likely that this social conviction had strongly influenced the message that the Oromoo lullaby conveys. As Finnegan, (1970:291) states "Lullabies provide a good example of the way in which what might be expected to be a simple, 'natural', and spontaneous expression of feeling in all societies—a mother singing to her child—is in fact governed by convention and affected by the particular constitution of the society." Similarly, Sheryl A. Spitz, (1979) in her *Social and Psychological Themes in East Slavic Folk Lullabies* notes, "As a genre, the folk lullaby is a part of the whole fabric of a community's lore"

According to Asmerom Legese, who made a pioneering contribution to *Gadaa* studies, in Oromoo society, children enjoy a unique privilege and are cared for by the family as well as the society at large; because of the deep set belief that children "are among the principal mediators between men and God, invested with powers and attributes similar to Kallu[7] (in Hinew 2012)."

The second sample under this sub-title, and the one with which we shall sum up our discussion is uniquely tender and laudatory. It reflects the mother's religiosity and spirituality. For instance, in the first seven lines the mother sings songs of gratitude for *Waaqaa* and the womb that carried the child. The second portion is full of praise for her baby. The poem is geared towards a specific gender. The mother showers the baby with adulation. The child's smell and sweetness is praised excessively. She sings how mollycoddled her child is, and wishes for the indulgence to be ever continuing. The mother rather seems to be worshiping this "holy" and "principal mediator between man and God"; and sounds as if she makes offerings and libation to him in the form of milk, rather than in a style that any mother feeds and lulls an ordinary baby to sleep.

Ish… ururuu, mucaakoo, ururuu!	Lull, baby mine, lull! [8]
Ish…ururuu… ruruu… ruruu	Lull…ull…. ull
Ish…ururuu… ruruu… ruruu	Lull…ull…. ull
Ish…ururuu, yaamucaakoo!	Lull, baby mine, lull!
Sinbinnee yaa sinbinnee	You were not bought, no, you were not!
Saani mooraa sinbinne	You were not bought with cattle from the kraal
Calleen golaa sinbinne;	Neither with the beads from the stall;
Garaa toletu si fide,	It is the blessed womb that brought you,
Garaa toleef haatolu,	May the blessed womb be ever blessed
Waaqa kenneef haakennu.	May *Waaqaa* who granted you, be granted.
Aannanii boossu dhugi	If it is milk that you are crying for, drink more
Qabeen qammana hinqabu	It is not curdled in the gourd
Qoraasee sii naqeeraa;	In a freshly fumigated container I have poured;
Hirribaa jettu rafi	If it is sleep that you are crying for
Itilleen huuba hin qabu	There is no smut in the bed
Haxaayee sii afeeraa.	I have swept it clean, go to sleep, go ahead.
Mucaakoo maaltu dhaanee?	Who dare punished my baby?

Qananiitu dhaane malee	Indulgence dare punished my baby
Kooratu boossisa malee;	Pride made my baby cry
Kooraa haboowuu lakkisi	Pride, let him cry turn him loose
Qananii hin lakkisini.	Indulgence, hold him tight like a noose.
Xinnaayyoon hamma qubaa	My little one is thumb-size, it's a fact
Urgaan damma qumbiiti	With a scent of honey myrrh-extract
Mi'aan damma soogiddaati.	And sweet like honey made of salt.

In the following stanza the mother's activity is metaphorically expressed. Her wish of becoming a mother of a large family suggests her vulnerability to the unpredictable life she leads; her insecurity, especially of old age. Thus she justifies her wishes by stating the benefit of having as many children as possible. Children for her are a source of security, a sort of life insurance that one turns to in case of emergency, sickness and death. Above all she conjures up indulgence as if it were a mysterious force to hold him tight so that her baby remains pampered.

Ururuu…yaa mucaa koo…!	Lull… baby mine; lull…!
Mucaa koo xinnayyoo koo	Baby mine little one
Haati mucaa simbira	A baby's mom is like a bird
Obboroo kaatee wacci	At dawn you hear her chirping
Barii kaatee dubbatti.	Rises and talks in the morning.
Haadha mucaa nagodhi	Make me a baby's mom, God
Obboroo na dammaqsi	Wake me up at dawn
Warra guddaa nagodhi	Make me a large family
Waarii natti dheeressi.	Make my evening long and homely.
Haati guddayyoo qabdu	A mother who has the little one
Baddu barbaada hin dhabdu	Has a search party if lost
Duutu awwaala hin dhabdu.	a funeral party if dead.
Guddaayyoo maaltu dhaanee?	Who dare punished my baby?
Qananiitu dhaane malee	Indulgence dare punished my baby
Kooratu boossisa malee;	Pride made my baby cry
Koora haa boowuu lakkisi	Pride, let him cry, turn him lose
Qananii hin lakkisini;	Indulgence, hold him tight like a noose.
Qananii ilma lubaa	Indulgent son of a counsellor,
Kooraa ilma qondaalaa.	Proud son of a hero.

The complexity of the lyric formation in Oromoo lullaby can be observed from the usage of different literary devices such as imagery, simile, symbolism, and digression. In collaboration they make the song a manifest of the mother's role and the traditional responsibility that society assigns to a woman in general, i. e., procreation, rearing children and housekeeping. It conveys her dream of creating a big family, and becoming an industrious house wife, a morning bird of the family, if you may. The song is more than a lullaby; it rather is an expression of her hopes, aspirations, expectation and in/security. The mother expresses her gratitude to Waaqaa for making her fertile, and her fear for his wrath. She praises her child, paints him with an exaggerated brush; like enduing him with the status of a counsellor's offspring, or a hero's offspring – regardless of the family's economic class or social status. Traces of the initial humour eliciting (a subtle one) phrases, especially similes, - such as likening the waist of the child to that of a heifer wasp can be observed.

The following final stanza is a digression of the mother from the earthly affairs to address the heavenly affairs. She temporarily departs from praising the baby to addressing the mighty and miraculous power of *Waaqaa* that expresses itself through devastation as well as protection. The song is no more a ditty, to lull a child to sleep; but a hymn to praise God. It is changed to a petition or worship song in a melody of a lullaby. In this hymn she promises offerings to *Waaqaa's* temple and glorifies His benevolence in protecting and bring-up the baby that He granted her, while at the same time she underestimates the role of the *giver* (the husband) in getting the baby.

Kennaatu namaa kenna	It is the giver that gives
Waaqatu namaa guddisa.	It is *Waaqaa* that up-brings.
Kennaan galata miti	No gratitude for the giver
Guddisatu galata;	Gratitude is for the up-bringer,

In the final lines of the lullaby she addresses the paradoxical aspect of tolerating something that is unpleasant because of what makes it bearable on the side; - the uncleanliness of the groin and the slimness of the waste. She juxtaposes the chest filled with drools with the dreadlocks loose-hair; and the unclean groins, with the slimy waste that she equates with that of a *heifer* wasp. She compensates one for the other and graciously praises *Waaqaa* for giving her that baby. Her lullaby enfolds religious

belief, gratitude for Waaqa's miracles works, and libation and offerings for his temple; including the baby.

Adamoo keessa roobee	It rained in the hunting grounds
Dakkuu lummuccuu dhaye	and ruined the tattered hide-dress
Somaayyuu jajallisa;	It twisted the lance shaft; what a mess
Elemaa keessa roobee	During milking time it rained
Gaadi ilummuccuu dhayee	And the milking strap it ruined
Okolee jajallisa;	The milking utensil it twisted.
Kennaatu namaa kenna	It is the giver that gives
Waaqatu namaa guddisa.	It is *Waaqaa* that up-brings.
Kennaan galata miti	No gratitude for the giver
Guddisatu galata;	Gratitude is for the up-bringer,
Galata kee hin balleessu	I will uphold your gratitude
Tola kee hin irraanfadhu.	Never forget your generous mood.
Yaa kennaa anaa kennee	O,the giver, who gave me thou
Yaa Waaqa anaa guddisee	O, *Waaqaa*, who made him grow,
Sooyee Yaabaloo Galmaa	A *Yaabaloo* rush-plant for your temple
Aboottee bishaan galmaa	A palm-full of water for your temple
Deesistuu mucaa galmaa	A mid-wife for your temple
Ajjeesaa faacha galmaa	A hunter's trophy for your temple
Guddoo guduruu reeraa	Baby with hair dreadlocks loose
Guddoo qoma gororaa	Baby with a chest full of drools
Kaldhichoo bixxilleedha	A tiny leather mat for his nap
Mudaamuddiin xuriidha	His groin needs cleaning up
Mudhiin soonsa goromsaa.	But, his waist is that of a heifer wasp.

Conclusion

Practical lullabies are ubiquitous cultural song of entertainment in which both the child and the adult participate with different roles; one as an entertainer the other as audience. Regardless of the creepiness of some of the lyrics contained in them they all have a single objective in common: to calm, comfort, and soothe the child to sleep. They are sung with a soft melody and words whose contents are mostly incomprehensible to the child/audience. In fact, one might say the unintelligibility of the words to the infant sounds to have indirectly encouraged the emergence of some creepy lullabies. As most of the lullabies demonstrate the harshness expressed in the poems sound more appropriate for the ear of an adult than for an infant. The suspense, anxiousness, and

emotions reflected seems more to do with adult world, though they are expressed all to serve the purpose of soothing and comforting that single audience; the baby. While the baby benefits from this sleep inducing rocking movement and rhythmic soft melody, for the mother it serves as emotional out let, through which she vents her hope, her worries and her aspirations and even her anger. For the spectator, it could be said that they serve as literary yardstick to measure the emotional relation between infants and mothers. They are also one of the cultural mirrors in which a society sees its true self, like every other gender in its folklore. Accordingly, why the Oromoo lullaby is more laudatory than scary and creepy is thus because it grew out of a Gadaa governed society that venerates children; a society that conceptualise children as sacred, cherished divine gifts. Hence, it is plausible to say that this conception became instrumental in moulding a lullaby that is concomitant and in harmony with the social conviction.

Endnotes:

[1] Rivka Galchen (2015): *The Melancholy Mystery of Lullabies:* On the bonds made between parents and children during a night ritual. The New York Times (Feature) Oct. 14, 2015.

[2] The reader can get a detailed background history of Lillibullero at: https://en.wikipedia.org /wiki/Lillibullero

[3] Source: Wikipedia.org (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lullabies_of_Armenia)

* Nina Perry: The universal language of lullabies https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21035103

[4] The origin of the reminder is a story that narrates about a child who is said to have started crying for reasons unknown to the parents and wouldn't stop. To scare the child to silence the parents said: "Unless you stop crying this very minute we shall throw you out to the hyena." It happens that a hyena was passing by while this was said, and he overheard this good news and sat down waiting for the child to be thrown out so that he could grab it for a snack. Time went by and the child stopped crying; and serenity was back to the house finally. But the hyena was still waiting for his snack. And when the waiting became unbearably long, he reminded the seemingly forgetful parents by enquiring: "How about that child you mentioned a while ago?"

[5] Arika Okrent (2015):*12 Creepy Lullabies From Around the World That Will Keep You Up at Night.* http://mentalfloss.com/article/67896/12-creepy-lullabies-around-world-will-keep-you-night
[6] Bansisa in Finnegan 1936: 110
[7] Kallu or Qaalluu in Oromoo traditional religion – *Waaqeffanna* – is a spiritual father; a mediator between God (*Waaqaa*) and man.
[8] Source: All the Oromoo lullabies are from *The Galla (Oromoo) Spelling Book* (1894: 48-50) by OnesimosNesib, in Moncullo, Eritrea. All the translations are by the author.

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Race and Racism in the Ethiopian Context

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Introduction

The article introduces the concepts of race, racialization, racism, and discrimination to explain the colonialization, enslavement, exploitation, dehumanization, and the continued subjugation of the Oromo and other colonized nations by successive Amhara-Tigray colonial governments and their supporters. These concepts of race, racism, racialization and discrimination are very complicated because they have manifested themselves differently in different historical periods and other parts of the capitalist world system. Although race does not had objective existence, elements of racism or "proto-racism," racialization, and discrimination had existed without the objective reality of race between antiquity and the Middle Ages (Heng 2018; Isaac 2006). The consideration of phenotypic differences and slavery as variables existed since classical antiquity (Isaac 2006); however, they converged by placing Sub-Saharan Africans at the bottom of the global hierarchy of peoples and cultures during and after the era of the transatlantic slave trade and the emergence of the capitalist world system.

Racists discriminate against people they consider "others" and naturalize visible and nonvisible physical, social, and cultural differences. Hence, phenotypes, such as the combination of phenotypes and sociocultural factors, including languages and religions, have been used to assign race to categories of people to dominate, oppress, and exploit. Racism can also exist between two people who have similar skin color

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based on visible and nonvisible differences (Bowser and Hunt 1996). The racialization, discrimination, and oppression of the Irish by the English, the Palestinians by the Israelis, and the Oromos by the Habashas are actual examples. The case of Ethiopian racism illustrates the complexity of the practices of racialization, racism, and discrimination. The complexity includes the framework of visibilities and invisibilities by highlighting why the Oromo, the largest national group, have been enslaved, colonized, and subjugated in the Ethiopian Empire and how they are engaging in their national movement to liberate themselves.

Even though several scholars associate racism, racialization, and racial discrimination with the emergence and development of the capitalist world-system (Malik 1996; Marx 1998), there are also scholars who demonstrate that all forms of empire-building processes, and imperial formations involved racialization, enslavement, discrimination, and exploitation (Isaac 2006). The case of the Ethiopian Empire demonstrates this reality. From antiquity, the Habasha (Ethiopian/Amhara-Tigray) kingdoms or empires had their ideological, social, and cultural foundations on which they had built racism and racialized practices. The modern Ethiopian Empire has practiced racialization, racism, and discrimination. As we shall see below, these practices have been bolstered by visible and nonvisible characteristics, such as skin color variations and ancestral, cultural, religious, and linguistic differences. Through racial slavery, colonial terrorism, and the incorporation of different parts of the world into the European-dominated capitalist world system, the concepts of race, racism, racialization, discrimination, and exploitation have become a global phenomenon (Marx 1998). Racism combines the discourses of phenotypical and cultural characteristics and visible and nonvisible differences to justify unequal treatment of different population groups. Race and racism are "scientifically," culturally, and politically constructed since all human groups are genetically more alike than others (Malik 1996). This paper critically examines the essence of Ethiopian racism through exploring the processes of empire-building, enslavement, colonization, racialization, domination, exploitation, and continued subjugation, and their impacts on the subjugated peoples, such as the Oromo, in the Ethiopian Empire today.

The Processes of Empire-Building and Race Formations

Since antiquity, repeated episodes of migration from Arabia had led to a series of conflicts revolving around issues of cultural practices and

economic resources between the indigenous African population groups and the Africanized Arab descendants in the Axumite kingdom[1] that gradually expanded and developed into proper Abyssinia later (Jones and Monroe 1969; Micheles 1991). As the indigenous Africans phenotypically and culturally impacted the Arab immigrants, the Africanized immigrants influenced the cultures, religions, and identities of the original Africans through trade, colonial settlement, marriage, conflict, war, selective cultural borrowing, and cooperation. However, the descendants of the Africanized immigrants have been controlling state power and refused to treat as equal partners those indigenous Africans they have colonized, dominated, abused, and exploited first in the Axumite kingdom and then in proper Abyssinia and the "modern" Ethiopian Empire. The modern ideology of the Ethiopian state has evolved from the Axumite kingdom or empire formed in the 1st century A. D. by the Africanized Arab descendants that called themselves Habashas to differentiate themselves from original Africans (Jones & Monroe 1969; Michels 1991).

The Axumite Empire accepted Orthodox Christianity in the 4th century A. D. through the commercial relationship it developed with the Greco-Romans. However, the Arab immigrants who arrived after the rise of Islam in the 7th century spread Islam in African coastal towns and subsequently challenged the Axumites. As Islamic influence increased, the commerce of the Axumite kingdom started to decline. However, the final death blow was given to this deteriorating kingdom by the indigenous Beja and Agao peoples, who had been exterminated to some degree and enslaved by the Axumites (Gamst 1970: 376). The two groups revolted in the 10th century and occupied the northern trade routes to the Mediterranean world. In the mid-11th century, the previously colonized Agao people established a kingdom known as the Zagwe dynasty. This dynasty lasted until 1270 when it was overthrown by one of the groups called the Amharas that descended from the remnants of the Axumites. The Amhara ethnonational group and another group known as Tigray are collectively

1 The Kingdom of Axum was an ancient empire located in the present Tigray and parts of what is now Eritrea; "The kingdom was at the crossroads of the three continents: Africa, Arabia, and the Greco-Roman World, and was the most powerful state between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persia" (UNESCO). https://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-africa/axum-legendary-kingdom-ancient-ethiopia-006720, accessed on 2/16/202

called Habashas or Abyssinians, which have also later called themselves Ethiopians. The Habashas developed a common religion, tradition, and set of customs, but each group, the Amhara and Tigray, have developed and maintained different languages. Although phenotypically and culturally Africanized, the Habashas have suppressed their Africanness or blackness by linking themselves to the Middle East and considering themselves a Semitic people, claiming to be racially and culturally superior to indigenous Africans.

Gradually the Axumite kingdom expanded and became proper Abyssinia through colonization, destruction, and racialization of indigenous peoples, such as Qimant, Gafat, Agao and others. In Abyssinia proper, using their state power, the Habashas imposed their Christian religion, their languages—Amharic and Tigragna—and their customs on the peoples that they colonized, resulting in Abyssinization, which can be described as "the complete destruction of the identity of the colonized population groups by claiming racial and/or cultural superiority" (Jalata 1993/2005: 32). The colonization, racialization, and destruction of various indigenous population groups involved expropriation of lands and other economic resources, the establishment of military colonies, and the evangelization of the remnants of the colonized population groups; the cultural assimilation of the surviving elements was central to the continuous processes of marginalization and Abyssinization (Tamrat 1972). As we shall see below, the modern Ethiopian state that emerged in the last decades of the 19th century through the alliance of Ethiopian colonialism and European imperialism has continued similar policies of colonization, enslavement, terrorism, genocide, racialization, and continued subjugation (Holcomb & Ibssa 1990; Jalata 1993/2005).

In addition to domestic slavery, the practice of slave trade via the Red and Mediterranean Seas and the Indian Ocean was known in the Axumite Empire since antiquity;[2] Habashas enslaved and merchandized non-Habashas and non-Christians.[3] According to the *Fetha Nagast*,[4]

2 https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2012/01/ethiopian-emperors-and-slavery/, accessed on 2/13/2021.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *The Fetha Nagast* ('Law of the Kings') is a legal codec compiled around 1240 by a Coptic Egyptian Christian writer in Arabic. It was later translated into Geez in Ethiopia and expanded upon with numerous local laws.

prisoners of war, non-Christians, and the children of slaves were enslaved and sold. Habasha racism developed in the process of characterizing enslaved individuals and groups whom the Habashas called *barya* (slaves);[5] historical evidence demonstrates that slavery was a fundamental factor in the political economy of medieval Abyssinia, the name that later expanded to include the modern Ethiopian Empire in the 20th century (Holcomb and Ibssa 1990). The price of slaves, among other factors, depended on variations of skin color; the darker skin slaves were known as "Tiqur" (dark black) or shanqilla and sold cheaper than "qay" (literally "red," with the connotation of "light-skinned" Oromo, Sidama, and others.[6] Enslaved Africans arrived in India and became soldiers, palace guards, and some of them gradually rose to become administrators, generals or admirals.[7]

Like Christianity, Islam allowed the enslavement of non-Muslims.[8] As one sources says, "The sale of African slaves can be traced back to antiquity. It became popular in the seventh century when Islam was gaining strength in North Africa. [The Arab slave trade emerged] before Europeans explored the continent and ten centuries before West Africans were sold across the Atlantic to America."[9] Arab Muslims shipped enslaved Africans from East Africa to Arabia to work as field workers and harem guards. Castrating enslaved male Africans by Muslim slavers was a common practice: "The Arab slave trade was characterized by appalling violence, castration, and rape. The men were systematically castrated to prevent them from reproducing and becoming a stock. This inhumane practice resulted in a high death rate: six out of 10 people who were mutilated died from their wounds in castration centers. The Arab slave trade also targeted African women and girls, who were captured and deported

5 https://japansociology.com/tag/slavery/, accessed on 2/15/2021.

6 https://www.facebook.com/OneOromiaToday/videos/395518615100806, accessed on 2/12/2021.

7 https://www.nypl.org/blog/2013/01/31/africans-india-slaves-generals-and-rulers, accessed on 2/15/2021.

8 https://www.fairplanet.org/dossier/beyond-slavery/forgotten-slavery-the-arab-muslim-slave-trade/, accessed on 2/14/2021.

9 https://www.dw.com/en/east-africas-forgotten-slave-trade/a-50126759, accessed on 2/14/2021.

for use as sex slaves."[10]Arab slavers believed that blacks were naturally inferior to Arabs.[11]

Unknown numbers of Oromo and other population groups were victims of Christian Habasha and Muslim slave traders. Sandra Rowoldt Shell's book, *Children of Hope*, has increased "our understanding of how [enslaved Oromo] children were ensnared into the Indian Ocean slave trade, which connected much of the Eastern African interior to Arabia, the Persian Gulf and India. Long after the Atlantic slave trade was snuffed out, the Indian Ocean trade continued almost to the beginning of the 20th century."[12] Richard Pankhurst (1964: 202) called slavery in the Abyssinia/Ethiopia "great antiquity." Enslaved population groups were racialized, oppressed, and exploited, and considered inferior human beings. slavery was considered "a national custom"[13] until the Italians abolished it in the Ethiopian Empire in the mid-1930s.[14]

Ethiopia as an Empire of Enslavement, Colonization, and Racialization

The name Ethiopia originated from the Greek word *Aethiopes*. Classical Greek explorers and writers gave this name to the territories inhabited by all black peoples that they called burned-face peoples in Asia and Africa (Budge 1928: 120-121). Therefore, ancient Ethiopia and contemporary Ethiopia are not geographically coterminous, but the latter occupies a subset of the area of the former. Recognizing the political significance of the name Ethiopia, Abyssinian leaders claimed an Ethiopian identity and argued that their territories once included all regions that classical geographers and historians described as Ethiopia. In actuality, the official

10 https://jcpa.org/article/the-arab-muslim-slave-trade-lifting-the-taboo/, accessed 2/14/2021.

11 https://jcpa.org/article/the-arab-muslim-slave-trade-lifting-the-taboo/, 2/14/2021.

12 https://theconversation.com/the-story-of-oromo-slaves-bound-for-arabia-who-were-brought-to-south-africa-116607, accessed on 2/14/2021.

13 https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2012/01/ethiopian-emperors-and-slavery/, accessed on 2/14/2021.

14 The Italians directly colonized Ethiopia between 1935 and 1941. During this period the Oromo said that "ha'adatu shashi gabi wooya, ha'amatu Xaliyanii wooya," which meant even if Italians were cruel, their colonization was less harsh than that of Ethiopians oor Habashas.

adoption of the name Ethiopia for the Abyssinian Empire occurred in 1931 (Melba 1980: 32). As you can see below, the participation of the Habasha warlord, Menelik of Amhara,[15] in the slave trade, which merchandized millions of Oromo, Sidama, Walayita, Gumuz, and others, and in the Scramble for Africa during the last decades of the 19th century encouraged Habasha elites to associate themselves with European and the Middle Eastern peoples rather than indigenous Africans (Baxter 1994).

Menelik as an agent of European imperialism and the creator of the Ethiopian Empire, terrorized, enslaved, and colonized the Oromo and others with the help of France, Italy, and England; he colonized Oromia (the Oromo country) and other regions to engage in the slave trade and obtain commodities such as gold, ivory, coffee, musk, hides, skins, and lands (Jalata 1993/2005; Bulcha 2002). He controlled the slave trade (an estimated 25,000 slaves per year in the 1880s), owned together with his wife 70,000 enslaved Africans (Pankhrust 1968), and became one of the wealthiest men in the world: "The Abyssinian ruler had extended the range of his financial operations to the United States, and [was] a heavy investor in American railroads … with his American securities and his French and Belgian mining investments, Menelik [had] a private fortune estimated at no less than twenty-five million dollars."[16] During the Abyssinian/Ethiopian colonial expansion, Oromia, "the charming Oromo land, [would] be plowed by the iron and the fire; flooded with blood and the orgy of pillage," and became "the theatre of a great massacre" (de Salviac 1901: 349). The colonization of Oromo and other peoples involved human tragedy and destruction: "The Abyssinian, in bloody raids, operated by surprise, mowed down without pity, in the country of the Oromo population, a mournful harvest of slaves for which the Muslims were thirsty and whom they bought at a very high price. An Oromo child [boy] would cost up to 800 francs in Cairo; an Oromo girl would well be worth two thousand francs in Constantinople" (de Salviac 1901, 28). The Ethiopian colonizers massacred half of the Oromo people

15 Menelik was the main architect of the Ethiopian Empire during the European Scramble for Africa. Because of his Christian religion and his willingness to ally with European colonial powers, England, France and Italy supported his colonial project.

16 NY Times 1909: "King Menelik Has Investments Here," https://hornaffairs.com/2014/01/19/king-menelik investments/, accessed on 2/14/2021.

(about 5 million out of 10 million people) and destroyed their leadership and institutions (Bulatovich 2000: 68).

Menelik and his soldiers racialized the colonized and subjugated population groups, expropriated almost their lands, and reduced them to semi-slaves (*gabbars*) and slaves to work for the colonial settlers (Holcomb and Ibssa 1990). Asma Giyorgis, an Ethiopian official historian during the colonization of the Oromo, stated that the Ethiopian nobility and the Orthodox Church clergy "treated the *Galla* like slaves" (quoted in Tafla 1987: 125), and the Oromo suffered massive enslavement (Bulcha 2002:57). The enslaved, colonized, and racialized Oromo, who used to enjoy an egalitarian democracy known as the *gadaa/Siiqqee* system (Legesse 2000), were forced to face state terrorism, enslavement, genocide, political repression, and an impoverished life. According to Martial de Salviac (1901: 8), "[w]ith the power of firearms imported from Europe, Menelik began a murderous revenge." Before their enslavement and colonization, the Oromo had a republican government of the *gadaa/siiqqee* system (Oromo democracy) and a formidable military organization (lemmu 2004). Alexander Bulatovich (2000: 68) explains that following their colonization, 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 [was] broken; freedom [was] lost; and the independent, freedom loving [Oromo found] themselves under the severe authority of the Abyssinian conquerors."

The Ethiopian colonizers racialized and dehumanized the Oromo by changing their name to *Galla*. The appellation *Galla* was given to the Oromo and other colonized peoples as a name of contempt and degradation. This name has characterized them as slave, pagan, uncivilized or barbaric, inferior, and ignorant ((Melba 1988; Farago 1935). It was invented to destroy Oromo-ness and other identities and devalue the enslaved and colonized peoples' cultures, histories, traditions, and uniqueness. In Abyssinia proper, *Galla* and *barya* (slaves) have been used interchangeably (Donham & James 1986). According to John Sorenson (1998: 60), *Galla* "carries overtones of race and slavery as well as the imputation of lack of civilization." It has become a term of racist ridicule and insults like "Nigger" in the United States and "Kaffir" in South Africa. Gradually the *Galla* has become "part of a generalized and diffused discourse about the right of northern settlers to rule over Oromo tenants and other 'invisible' peoples under" colonial settlers (Hultin 1996 82). Mekuria Bulcha (2002: 83)

argues that *Galla* became a metaphor for Oromo invisibility, powerlessness, and low social status. The *Galla* name was invented by removing the Oromo and other subjugated peoples from their respective cultural and historical roots and making them the target of destruction, enslavement, colonization, and continued subjugation (Harris 1844: 72-75; Markham 1869: 39-40). For example, an Habasha scholar, Abba Bahrey (1954: 111), in the 16th century, rationalized that he wrote the history of these evil people (the Oromo) to express "their readiness to kill people, and the brutality of their manners." B. Telles (1710: 110-125) saw Oromos as "the scourge that God had used against Abyssinians." Similarly, James Bruce (1973: 86) saw the Oromo as the cruelest and most destructive people who "contributed more to the weakening and reducing the Abyssinian Empire than civil wars and all the foreign enemies put together."

Galla is the name of racist ridicule in academia and popular discourses. Even today, when an Oromo challenges the Habashas politically and culturally, this name is rediscovered and used to ridicule the Oromo. The term *Galla* has acquired the connotations of "pagan" or "infidel," "savage," or "barbarian," "uncivilized" or "uncultured," and "slave." According to Gemetechu Megressa (1993: 15-16, 289), "In the Abyssinian view, the name '*Galla*' is equated with the color 'black' and denotes social inferiority. While the Abyssinian conception of 'black' is regarded as 'evil,' for the Oromo, it stands . . . for more than color, it represents the notion of purity, truth, originality, and divine mystery." The Oromo conception of themselves is rooted in the African worldview, while the Amhara ruling elites have emphasized "their links to ancient Israel, as described in the Solomon and Sheba legend. The Amhara elites used such links to claim superiority over other peoples in the region and justify their conquests and civilizing mission" (Sorenson 1998: 27). The Amhara warlords who prefer to call themselves kings trace their lineage to King Solomon of the Jews. According to the legend, when Queen Sheba of Abyssinia visited King Solomon, and had a sexual relationship with him and gave birth to Menelik I, he was made a king by his father and became the first Solomonic dynasty of Ethiopia. Teshale Tibebu (1995: 14) asserts that a legend "based on a myth of sex (between Solomon and Sheba) ... has had such a powerful hold on so many people who were to follow the divine mandate."

The Amhara and Tigrayan warlords and their ideological and cultural descendants have seen themselves differently from various population groups such as the Agao, Qimant, Oromo, Sidama, Somali and

others, which they have terrorized, enslaved, massacred, colonized, racialized, and continuously subjugated. As I shall demonstrate below, the Ethiopian or Habasha elites have effectively used the discourse of racism in destroying or suppressing the peoples they have enslaved or colonized and dominated. The Habasha elites have claimed that they have a superior religion and civilization, and even sometimes have expressed that they were/are not black; [17] they have called formerly enslaved or colonized Africans *baryas* (slaves). Alberto Sbacchi (1997: 22) notes that the Habashas "have traditionally looked upon the dark-skinned people as inferiors and given them the name of '*Shankalla*' [and Galla] [*sic*]…. The Black Americans were known as Negro [*sic*], which in Ethiopia was associated with slavery. Hence to the Ethiopians the [African Americans] were *Shankalla* or [*Galla*]." William R. Scott (1993: xv), an African American who participated in a student work camp in Ethiopia in 1963, expressed his painful encounter with Habasha racism as follows: "I was called *barya* (slave) by young, bigoted Ethiopian aristocrats, who associated African Americans with slavery and identified them with the country's traditional servant class."

Although the colonizers and the colonized are black, certain national groups such as Gumuz, Berta, Nuer, and Anuak have a darker skin color. For people outside of the Ethiopian Empire, all national groups are black, despite a limited variety in their black skin color. However, the black skin color of the Habashas, Oromo, Sidama, and others are similar, and there is no difference. This did not stop Habashas expressing racism because they used invisible factors such as cultural and religious differences to claim superiority to protect their privileges. The Habasha elites have used non-visible characteristics and the sense of perceived phenotypical differences to racialize, discriminate, abuse, and exploit the dominated population groups. Menelik and his followers, known as *nafxanyas* (gun-carrying settlers), had used racialized practices to sell Oromo, Hadiya, Somali, and Sidama individuals to the Middle East later to dispossess lands and other economic resources of the colonized peoples (Holcomb and Ibssa 1990). Habasha leaders had disassociated themselves from Africans by linking themselves to the Middle East. John H. Spencer (2006: 306) testifies to the racist declarations of Menelik and Haile Selassie, the rulers of Ethiopia:

17 https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=201671574790851&_rdr, accessed on 04/04/2021.

"Menelik told the West Indian pan-Africanist Benito Sylvian that 'I am not a Negro at all; I am a Caucasian,' and Haile Selassie confirmed to a Nigerian nationalist that 'we Ethiopians regarded ourselves as a mixed Hamito-Semitic people, not as Africans.'" The Amhara elites see themselves as Semitic people who are racially, religiously, and culturally superior to indigenous Africans and the African diaspora. P. T. W. Baxter (1994: 172) explains that they "used to stress their Middle Eastern rather than African cultural roots, as is so obvious in the reiteration of the Solomonic legend, taught in schools as history and justification of imperial rule. Just as the expansion of the European Empire in Africa coincided with that of Abyssinian, the latter took on some of the same self-righteous assumptions of bringing civilization to the savages. Menelik and his courtiers became honorary if second-class, bearers of the 'white man's burden in Africa.'"

The Oromo were depicted as "the enemies of the Amhara" (Tafla 1987). Margery Perham (1969: 300) noted that the *Galla* were regarded as "heathens and enemies fit only for massacre or enslavement." The Amhara and Tigrayan elites have feared and despised the Oromo; they have feared them for their historical bravery and hated them for their cultural traditions and current powerlessness: "The *Galla* [have] presented a doubly negative image of fear and contempt: fear in that the Oromo were formidable fighters until the large-scale introduction of firearms in the nineteenth century tilted the balance of power against them; contempt in that they were identified as 'pagan barbarians" (Tibebu 1995: 16). Expressing how the racist views about the Oromo affected some contemporary scholars, Tesema Ta'a (1994: 989) argues, "old written records on the Oromo reflect some elements of racist ideology and have tremendous influence on some of the scholars of modem Ethiopian history, who have, for one reason or another, not been able to detach themselves from the archaic and wrong views about the Oromo." Furthermore, the Ethiopian elites have been victimizing Africans they have enslaved or colonized and dominated by using racialized practices and by using the discourses of racism to justify hierarchical relations and to maintain their privileges. These elites and most Ethiopianist scholars have tried to prove the racial, cultural, and civilizational superiority of Amharas and Tigrayans by Semiticizing and linking them to the Middle East and Europe. As Paul Baxter (1994: 172) notes, "evolutionists and racist assumptions, mostly unvoiced, have contributed to the belief that a Christian, Semitic culture with Middle Eastern leanings had to be superior to a black Africa."

Successive Ethiopian state elites and their imperialist supporters have used the Semitic discourse and the discourse of Christianity to mobilize assistance from Europe, North America, and the Middle East. These discourses have legitimized Ethiopian state power domestically and globally.

Racialized Discourses and "Knowledge" for Domination

By using the discredited racist categorization of human groups such as Semitic, Hamitic, Negroid, and Cushitic, Habasha elites manifest something like a racial worldview or ideology or commonsense, and many Habasha are reputed (or have been observed) to espouse perspectives that stigmatize Oromos and others along racial lines. These elites have established a racialized and stratified hierarchy in which they placed the Oromo and the others between themselves and the peoples they wrongly called *Shankillas*—people they considered Negroid (Donham and James 1986:123-124). Menelik and his followers racialized and sold some members of the subjugated populations regardless of the variations of their black skin color. The peoples the Habashas and later others commonly called *Shankillas* because of their darker skin color included the Nuer, Anuak, Gumuz, Berta, Shanisha, Kwama, and Awi. The Habashas have considered themselves Semitic by relating themselves to the Middle East, Europe, and North America. John Sorenson (1998: 229) expresses this racist attitude as "a multiplicity of Ethiopians, blacks who are whites, the quintessential Africans who reject African identity." In Ethiopian discourses, racial distinctions have been invented, reinvented, and manipulated to perpetuate the political objectives of Habasha domination and privileges. "The fact that racial distinctions are easily manipulated and reversed indicates," Sorenson (1998: 229) notes, "the absurdity of any claims that they have an objective basis and locates these distinctions where they actually occur, in political power."

During the Haile Selassie's government, particularly between the WW II and the early 1970s, the US government placed Habashas on "an intermediate position between whites and blacks" and considered them closer to "the European race" or members of "the great Caucasian family" (as quoted in Marcus 1996: 5). Furthermore, there were Europeans who considered Habashas as a very intelligent people because of their racial affinity with the "Caucasian race" (Marcus 1996: 7). There were also those who saw Habashas as "dark-skinned white people" and "racial and cultural middleman" between black Africa on one side and Europe and the Middle East on the other (Marcus 1996: 7). One German scholar

admired the intelligence of Habashas and noted that he never saw such mental capability among Negroes, Arabs, Egyptians, and Nubians (cited in Marcus 1996: 6). These racist discourses go unchallenged in academic and popular discourses because they help reproduce Ethiopian racist and colonial state power. U.S. foreign policy elites, diplomats, and other officials recognized and defended such "racial pretension of Ethiopia's ruling class" (Robinson 1985: 53). Certain racist Euro-American scholars, politicians, and diplomats have used racist discourses by racializing ethnicity and cultural differences.

While glorifying the culture and civilization of Habashas, certain European racist scholars such as Edward Ullendorff (1960: 76) characterized the Oromo as a barbaric people, who did not possess "significant material or intellectual culture" and failed to "contribute to the Semitized civilization of Ethiopia." He also claimed, "The Abyssinian is exceptionally intelligent, mentally agile, and extraordinarily eager to learn" (Ullendorff 1960: 46). To demonstrate the superiority of the civilization and culture of Amharas and Tigrayans, racist scholars downplayed "the African-ness of ancient [Abyssinia] . . . to emphasize its similarities to European societies" (Sorenson, 1998: 29). As John Sorenson (1998: 234) expounds, "along with the emphasis on a Great Tradition in Ethiopian history, came a specific configuration of racial identity. As in other discourses of race, this configuration merged power with [racial claims] in order to devalue the Oromo and other groups as both 'more African' and 'more primitive' than the Amhara [and Tigray]. The Oromo were presented as warlike, essentially 'people without history and without any relationship to the land." Dismissing the history and culture of the Oromo by certain Habasha elites because they are different from their history and culture is invisible racialization intended to destroy and replace them by their own that they claim superior. Even currently, Habatamu Tegegne (2020) characterizes the Oromo democratic system of *gadaa* as "a genocidal organization."

The Habasha elites such as Asma Giyorgis (Tafla 1987) and Alqka Tayye (1927/8: 8-20)assert that the "Oromo are not indigenous to Ethiopia since they originated from Asia and later invaded Ethiopia." Even though the Oromo are one of the indigenous peoples of the Horn of Africa, Ethiopian elites and their Euro-American supporters have considered them as newcomers to their homeland, Oromia. Because the Oromo are considered the "invaders" of Ethiopia, some Ethiopian elites argue that they do not deserve national self-determination and the land that

they call Oromia does not belong to them (Gerbee, 1993: 50). These assertions implicitly assume that the Oromo must accept their subjugation and second-class citizenship, or they must leave the Ethiopian Empire before they will be annihilated for continuing to demand national self-determination, statehood, and democracy. The Oromo relationship to their land is denied for two reasons. The first reason is to promote the idea that the Oromo are "invaders" (Mariam 1948 E.C), and Oromia, the Oromo country, does not belong to them. The second is to justify the dispossession of Oromo land by Ethiopian colonial settlers in Oromia.

The Oromo have been depicted as "crueler scourges" and "barbarian hordes who brought darkness and ignorance in the train" to Ethiopia (Harris 1844: 72-73). In addition, they have been seen as "a decadent race" that is "less advanced" because of their racial and cultural inferiority (Fargo 1935: 45). Therefore, their colonization and enslavement were seen as a civilizing mission. Due to the racist and modernist thinking, in which historical development is seen as linear, and the development of the society from a primitive to a civilized stage, the Oromo, who have been taken as a primitive people, are also considered as part of a collection of "tribes" or a single "tribe" or a "cluster" of diverse groups that cannot develop any nationalist political consciousness except "tribalism" (Clapham 1969; Gilkes 1975: 204-206; Marcus 1994: 4). Racist scholars have also denied the existence of a unified Oromo identity and argued that the Oromo cannot achieve self-determination and statehood because they are geographically scattered and lack cultural substance (Clapham 1994; Levine 1994; Perham 1969: 377). Both Ethiopian elites and their Euro-American supporters have built Ethiopianism[18] as a racial ideology.

18 The way Amharas and Tigrayans have used Ethiopianism is different from that of Africans and the African Diaspora because the former and the latter understand Ethiopia differently. Although the historical meaning of Ethiopia is applicable to all black peoples, its contemporary meaning only applies to Abyssinians, particularly Amharas and Tigrayans, who have dominated Ethiopian state power. The name Ethiopia originated with the Greek Word *Aethiopes*. Classical Greek explorers and writers gave this name to the territories inhabited by black peoples that they called burned-faced peoples. Recognizing the political significance of the name Ethiopia and especially its Christian Biblical connections, Amhara and Tigrayan leaders claimed an Ethiopian identity and asserted that their territories once included all regions that classical geographers and historians described as Ethiopia.

At the cost of indigenous Africans such as the Oromo, Sidama, Somali, Afar, Agao, Qimant, Konso, and others, Ethiopianism hides the true nature of Ethiopian racism and colonialism. As John Sorenson (1998: 232) writes, "Western discourse . . . duplicated many of the assumptions and ideologies that had been put in place by the ruling elites of Ethiopia, constructing the latter as the carriers of a Great Tradition which was engaged in its own Civilizing Mission with respect to what it regarded as other uncivilized Groups in Ethiopia." Certain popular and academic discourses on the Oromo and others promote racist prejudices and stereotypes. When certain Habashas elites have wanted to make a point of the alleged inferiority of the Oromo and others on the racial/ethnonational hierarchy, or to deny them their humanity, they have debased an individual and her or his nationality by asking, "*sawu nawu Galla*?" (Is he or she a human being or a *Galla*?) This query shows that certain Habashas consider the Oromo and others as inferior human beings. Orthodox Christianity is also used to promote racism in Ethiopia. For instance, an Ethiopian Orthodox Church publication denounced sexual relations between Habashas and Oromo and others by saying that Jesus would punish those who would have sexual relationship with "the cursed, the dumb, the Moslems, the *Galla,* the *Shankilla*, the *Falasha* [Jews], the horse, the donkey, the camel and all those who committed sodomy" (as quoted in Lata 1998: 143). This religious tract was written in Geez (an

Actually, the official adoption of the name Ethiopia for the Abyssinian Empire occurred in 1931. Without knowing the difference between ancient Ethiopia and contemporary Ethiopia, Africans and the African Diaspora have used Ethiopianism as black ideology of freedom; Habasha elites have utilized this historical ignorance and mobilized Africans and the African Diaspora to promote their political agenda. Most Africans and the African Diaspora still subscribe to the ideology of Ethiopianism without critically understanding its contradictions. So, this Ethiopianism is very different from the "Ethiopianism" that developed in the transatlantic diaspora, where references to the Bible, historical texts, and Selaissie's struggle against the Italians in the 1930s were interpreted through a pan-Africanist lens. Ethiopianism that was associated with Marcus Garvey and so many 19th and early 20th centuries black thinkers applies to ancient and historical Africa, the black world, not contemporary Ethiopia, which participated in slave trade and the colonization of other Africans.

old Abyssinian language) and translated into Amharic in 1968. While its original date of writing and authorship are unknown, the piece has been popular and widely recited by some literate Habashas. The Oromo, Ethiopian Jews or Falashas, Muslims, and various peoples have been categorized with beasts such as horses, donkeys, and camels. Also, Habasha racist stereotypes depict the Oromo as a dirty people; the expression "*Galla na sagara eyadare yigamal*" compares the Oromo to feces and claims that the Oromo continue to stink as human waste with passing days. This expression warns that the closer you get to the Oromo, the more you find how they are dirty.

This kind of racialized insult is intended to create non-visual differences by creating invisibilities between the Habashasa and the Oromo to kill, colonize, and enslave. Furthermore, Afawarq Gabra-Iyyasu noted that Ethiopians treated the Oromo as dogs: "[A *Galla]* is hassled like a dog that has trespassed into a church" (Quoted Zewde 2002: 131). Comparing the Oromo to dogs is a form of nonvisible racialization and dehumanization. This reflects the negation of Oromo "humanity and their exclusion from the moral concerns of the conquerors" (Bulcha 2002: 70) to justify their mistreatment. Another expression depicts the Oromo as a rotten people ("*timbi or bisbis Galla*"). Yet another expression explains that the Oromo cannot be clean even if they wash themselves again and again; it says that "*Galla na Shinfila ayisadam*," which literally means, "Even if you wash them, stomach lining and a *Galla* will never come clean." A Habasha expression claims that the Oromo's attempt to be civilized cannot be successful because they are predestined to fail in civilization projects.

The saying "*Galla sisaltin bacharaqa jantila yizo yizoral*" attempts to show that even if he or she is civilized, an Oromo does not know the true essence of civililization. Literally this saying translates, "When an Oromo is civilized, he stretches his umbrella in moonlight and walks around so that he [or she] can be seen by others." Simply put, because the Oromo are stupid, they do not know how to behave in a civilized manner. The expression "*Ye Galla chawa, ye gomen choma yelewum*" depicts the Oromo as a society that does not have respected and notable individuals. The literal translation of this expression reads, "As there is no fat in vegetables or greens, there is not a gentleman in the *Galla* community." Generally, the Oromo have been seen as a useless people who do not deserve respect. When Oromo individuals excel in their profession, they are Amharized/Ethiopianized and disconnected from their Oromoness. Their Oromo

identity is buried while their Ethiopianness is glorified. For instance, Abebe Biqila was an Oromo marathon champion who won the 1960 Summer Olympics gold medal in Rome while running barefoot, and the second gold medal at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics on behalf of Ethiopia. In this situation, his Oromoness was suppressed and his Ethiopianism was glorified.[19] The Oromo have been insulted for even trying to assimilate to Ethiopian/Amhara culture by speaking an Ethiopian official language called Amharic as explained above. Habasha racists have expressed their anger toward an Oromo who has mispronounced Amharic words by saying that "*Afun yalfata Galla; tabitaba Galla*" (an Oromo who cannot express himself/herself clearly).

To psychologically demoralize the Oromo, the Habasha discourse has also depicted the Oromo as a cowardly people who cannot resist subordination; the saying "*and Amhara matto Galla yinadal*" clearly shows the essence of this discourse. Literally, it translates, "One Amhara can force one hundred Oromo into submission or subordination." Nevertheless, historical evidence indicates that until they allied with European colonial powers and obtained modern expertise and weapons, Habashas saw Oromo fighters as their nightmare (Abba Bahrey 1954). Even a poor Habasha or a leper claims that he or she is better than a *Galla*; the expressions, "Even if I am poor, I am not a *Galla*," and "Even if I am a leper, I am not a *Galla*" clearly shows how most Habashas, including the sick and the poor, claim racial/ethnonational superiority. The Habasha elites have "looked upon and treated the indigenous people as backward, heathen, filthy, deceitful, lazy, and even stupid—stereotypes that European colonialists commonly ascribed their African subjects" (as quoted in Tibebu 1995: 44).

19 There have been also many Oromo long-distance runners, including Feyisa Lelisa, Keneisa Bekele, Daraartu Tulu, Genzebe Dibaba, Mesarat Dafar, and Almaz Ayana, who increased the recognition of Ethiopia in the world. The well-known singer of Ethiopia, Tilahun Gesese, was an Oromo who passed as an Amhara. Paradoxically, Haile Selassie and Mengistu Haile Mariam, who were the heads of the Ethiopian state, had Oromo fathers although they disassociated themselves from an Oromo identity and considered themselves Amharas in order to get legitimacy from the Amhara establishment and institutions such as the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the army.

Furthermore, Habasha social institutions such as family, school, media, government, and religion have produced and perpetuated these racist prejudices and stereotypes within Ethiopian society. Explaining how racial insults wound, Richard Delgado (1998: 346) says, "The racial insult remains one of the most pervasive channels through which discriminatory attitudes are imparted. Such language injures the dignity and self-regard of the person to whom it is addressed, communicating the message that distinctions of race are distinctions of merit, dignity, status, and personhood. Not only does the listener learn and internalize the messages contained in racial insults, [such] messages color our society's institutions and are transmitted to succeeding generations."

The racist prejudices and stereotypes consciously or unconsciously have influenced Ethiopian society. Ethiopians who have been affected by these assumptions have never respected Oromo culture, history, and identity, and they have opposed the Oromo struggle for social justice, democracy, statehood, and human rights under a variety of different pretexts. Some Ethiopianists such as Perham (1969: 377) and Clapham (1969: 81) confidently declared that there was no Oromo consciousness that would unite the Oromo for political actions against Ethiopian domination. Christopher Clapham (1994) defends the "central Ethiopian nationalism," which is Amhara nationalism, and claims that the Oromo cannot achieve national self-determination and statehood because they are geographically scattered, and they do not have an Oromo national identity. Similarly, many Ethiopian scholars argue that the Oromo lack cultural elements that are necessary to develop nationalism (Tareke 1990; Abbay 1992). For instance, Aleme Abbay (1992: 35) comments that "the Oromo do not have an Axumite history to glorify: they do not have 'heroes' like Yohannes and Alula to look up to; nor do they have a major insurrectionary history ... in their memory pool." In other words, Abbay argues that since Oromo do not have heroes and a civilization similar to that of Ethiopians, particularly to that of Tigrayans, they cannot develop a nationalist identity.

In the collective memory of the Amhara and Tigray societies, according to Teshale Tibebu (1995: 17), "the "barbarian infidel" is pictured as a two-headed hydra: "one '*Galla,*' and another Muslim." Although a large portion of the Oromo are Christians, they are made invisible to depict the Oromo only as Muslims and non-believers. The Oromo are religious people like other societies, and they adhere to three monotheistic religions, namely *Waaqeffannaa* (original Oromo religion,

Christianity, and Islam). There are still some Oromo who believe in indigenous Oromo religion known as *Waageffannaa*, which connects religious and philosophical worldviews and organizes spiritual, physical, and human worldviews; such Oromo believe that *Waaqa* (God) creates and regulates the human physical world in balanced ways (Megersa 1993: 255). Some Euro-Americans who have studied Ethiopia promoted the interests of the Ethiopian colonial ruling class at the cost of the Oromo and other colonized and racialized peoples. According to Thomas W. Heaney (1993: 41-42), "With the writing of history, knowledge became power, or rather an expression of power and a tool of maintaining it. History, and later, science, were frequently used not merely to understand, but to legitimize historically shaped political relationships and institutions." Scholars who have the ideologies of racism and false cultural universalism and a top-down approach that completely ignored or distorted the social and cultural history of the enslaved, colonized, and subjugated peoples (Wallerstein 1983) have dominated some African historiographies.

The Impact of Ethiopian Racism on the Oromo and Others

Successive Habasha regimes have engaged in terrorism and genocide (Jalata 2000) and exploited the resources of the Oromo, Afar, Anuak, Nuer, Shinasha, Berta, Gumuz, Sidama, Walayita, and others, and racialized and suppressed their national movements to maintain a racial/ethnonational hierarchy and continue exploitation and subjugation. While engaging in state terrorism in the form of war, torture, rape, and genocide to control the Oromo and others and loot their economic resources, the Ethiopian state elites and their collaborators have recently claimed that they have been promoting democracy, multinational federalism, and national self-determination. Of course, Amhara elites are even against these cosmetic changes and accuse these subjugated groups, particularly Oromo activists, as "narrow nationalists" or "racists" or "terrorists."[20] The Ethiopian state elites have used various techniques of violence to terrorize the Oromo who have been engaged in the struggle for liberation and democracy.

20 https://yooyyaa.com/2019/11/26/10-glaring-irrationality-of-nafx-anyaas/, accessed on 2/16/2021; https://zehabesha.com/delusion-of-oromo-and-pseudohistorical-of-emperor-menelik/, 2/16/2021.

The Ethiopian soldiers and security networks have committed the following crimes on Oromo activists. They have whipped or tortured; locked in steel barrels or forced into pits where fire was made on top of them; fixed large containers or bottles filled with water to men's testicles; or, if their victims were women, bottles or poles were pushed into their vaginas (Fossati, Namarra, and Niggli 1996). In addition, the soldiers have openly shot thousands of peaceful people in Oromia, leaving their bodies for hyenas, burying them in mass graves, or throwing their corpses off cliffs. Other methods of killing included burning, bombing, cutting throats or arteries in the neck, strangulation, and burying people up to their necks in the ground. For example, as Mohammed Hassen (2001) estimates, between 1992 and 2001 about 50,000 killings and 16,000 disappearances (euphemism for secret killings) occurred in Oromia alone.

Furthermore, he estimates that 90% of the killings were not reported. To hide these state crimes from the world community, the government did not "keep written records of its extra-judicial executions and the prolonged detention of political prisoners" (as quoted in Hassen 2001: 33). The regime killed or imprisoned thousands of Oromo students because they engaged in peaceful demonstrations. Saman Zia-Zarifi (2004: 1), the academic freedom director at Human Rights Watch, notes, "Shooting at unarmed students is a shameful misuse of government power" in Ethiopia. The political agenda of the destruction of Oromo society is not a new phenomenon. The West has been supporting this political agenda.

With the emergence of 9/11 terrorism in the U.S., the U.S. government and other Western governments have started to use the discourse of Islamic fundamentalism to support the Ethiopian regime and to suppress the struggles of the Oromo and others for self-determination, social justice, and democracy (Jalata 2011). This implies that since some Oromo are Muslims, they are "Islamic fundamentalists," and are not entitled to democracy and national self-determination. In the past, the colonization of the Oromo and others was rationalized and justified by various ideological discourses. It was explained that since these peoples were "pagans" and "uncivilized" and that Habashas were Christians and "civilized," the Habashas were entitled to colonize these peoples and impose their civilization and Christianity on them. Islamic fundamentalism has become an ideological tool for the rationalization, justification, and suppression of these peoples by the Ethiopian colonial elites and their Western supporters. The Oromo and other peoples are labeled as "Islamic fundamentalists" and their liberation fronts are implicitly labeled as

"bandits" or "terrorists."[21] Consequently, the violations of their human rights by internationally financed state terrorism have generated no sympathy from the world community.

In the thinking of Western as well as U.S. foreign policy experts, the peoples of the world are hierarchically organized because of the superiority and inferiority of genes, cultures, and civilizations (Jalata 2011a; 2011b). Such policy practices ignore the consequences of the racialization of state power and the denial of indigenous and colonized peoples like the Oromo to have access to state power and other opportunities. State terrorism, hidden genocide, and massive human rights violations are used to keep the Oromo and other peoples subordinated and exploited. Today, the Ethiopian colonial settlers have dominated cities and towns in Oromia. They have segregated the Oromo people both in urban and rural areas and have kept them under "Ethiopian political slavery" by using the army, modern weapons, the media, the telephone, the fax, the Internet, and other communication and information apparatuses and networks, as well as global connections. Using political violence, the Ethiopian government has denied the Oromo and others the freedom of expression and organization as well as access to the media and all forms of communication and information networks. Consequently, the Oromo are denied the privilege of self-definition and self-development and are forced to provide their economic and labor resources to the Ethiopian colonizers and their supporters while living under deplorable conditions in the twenty-first century. In opposition to colonialism and its racist ideology called Ethiopianism, the Oromo have developed national *Oromummaa* (Oromo-centric worldview, culture, and nationalism) to struggle and dismantle the racial/ethnonational hierarchy and its institutions.

Oromummaa Versus Ethiopianism

Ethiopian colonialism and racism has brought massive unfreedoms to Oromo and other colonized societies; as Amartya Sen (1999) identifies such unfreedoms include abject poverty, social deprivation, dictatorship, repression, social control, terror, ignorance, and disease. The Ethiopian colonial and racialized institutions have prevented the Oromo nation and others from exercising their agencies, denying them the economic opportunity, political freedom, and social and political power. National

21 *The Economist,* August 16, 1997: 36.

Oromummaa as Oromo nationalism, national culture, and history started to develop to remove these unfreedoms from Oromo society in the early 1960s[22] (Jalata 2007). At the end of the 1980s, the development of the Oromo national struggle forced the Tigrayan-led regime to create a puppet organization called the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) and later the dependent Oromia Regional State in the 1990s to fight against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). In addition, *Afaan Oromoo* (the Oromo language) has become an official language in the Oromia Regional State, which is still a colony of Ethiopia; it has been written in *Qubee*, an adapted Latin alphabet rather than Ge'ez, the Amharic-Tigre alphabet.

The Oromo national movement led by the OLF has forced the Ethiopian regime to allow Oromo elementary and high school children to learn in their language although the content of the literature they learn is controlled and manipulated by the neo-*nafxanya* (current colonial settlers), who have distorted Oromo history, culture, and politics. Although there are a lot of internal and external forces that are trying to abort the development of national *Oromummaa*, it is slowly and surely becoming a reality and a political power. The building of Oromo national leadership and national organizational capacity requires ideological clarity; resource mobilization in the form of money, human capital and critical understanding of the objective and subjective conditions. The theory and practice of national *Oromummaa*[23] as a backward- and forward-looking phenomena combine all these processes for the purpose of facilitating the development of cognitive liberation for further building Oromo national leadership and organizational capacity. An ideology plays many roles in a society; it defines and promotes the political, material and cultural interests of a group, nation, social class, state or other entity. Overall, ideology also "offers an explanation and an evaluation of political, economic, and social condition; provides its holders a compass that helps orient them and develop a sense of identity; and tenders a prescription for political, economic, or social action" (Hybel 2010: 1).

22 Even though the Macha-Tulama Self-Association, the Afran Qallo Cultural movement, and the Bale Oromo armed struggle were suppressed in the 1960s, Oromo nationalism survived and developed in the form of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which emerged in the early 1970s.

23 For further understand, read Asafa Jalata, "Theorizing *Oromummaa" The Journal of Oromo Studies,* Vol. 22, Numbers 1 & 2, 2015, pp. 1-35.

Therefore, it is a priority of the Oromo national movement to have clarity in its ideology, which national *Oromummaa* provides.

Theorizing and practicing national *Oromummaa* in general and its different levels are essential for increasing cognitive liberation and building the unity of purpose in the diverse leadership of the Oromo movement in order to consolidate its institutional and organizational capacity. Furthermore, the theory and practice of national *Oromummaa* help in exposing the ideological fallacies of Ethiopianism, false universalism, progress, modernity, development, civilization, and humanity that mainstream theories and knowledge use as legitimating discourses to hide the massive human rights violations of indigenous peoples such as the Oromo and other subaltern groups by contributing to the perpetuation of unfreedoms. By refuting the false claims of Ethiopianism, national *Oromummaa* advocates for freedom, social justice, national self-determination, and egalitarian multinational democracy for all peoples who are suffering in the Ethiopian Empire. The theorization and practice of national *Oromummaa* demonstrate at least five levels of conceptualization: at the first level, having a basic form of *Oromummaa*, which means to manifest Oromo-ness by practicing some aspects of Oromo culture, language, belief systems, values, norms, customs, and traditions. Since the Ethiopian colonizers have failed to destroy *Afaan Oromoo* (the Oromo Language) and replace it by their own language, Amharic or Tigre, they have been unable to successfully suppress this most basic form of *Oromummaa.* According to Bonnie K. Holcomb (2002: 1), "The essence of colonization was the replacement of the values of *Oromummaa* as the overarching, integrating mechanism of the Oromo superstructure and replacing it with the ideology and the resulting institutions of Greater Ethiopia." *Oromummaa* as the total expression of Oromo peoplehood has developed from the historical, cultural, religious, and philosophical experiences of Oromo society.

As a self and collective schema, *Oromummaa* encapsulates a set of fundamental beliefs, values, moral codes, and guiding principles that shape the Oromo national identity and make Oromo society different from other societies (Holcomb 2002: 1). Consequently, basic *Oromummaa* is built on personal, interpersonal, and collective connections. It is "a historically shaped form of knowledge that emerged out of the Oromo experience of several centuries of life and living (*jiruf jireenya*) ... [It has] served as a mechanism that built Oromo society in the past and left its unique mark upon the people, and their environment" (Holcomb 2002: 1). The Ethiopian government that currently claims that it has allowed

cultural autonomy for the Oromo and others opposes the manifestation of primary and other forms of *Oromummaa.* According to the November 2014 report of *Amnesty International* (2014: 8) entitled "Because I am Oromo," "Expression of Oromo culture and heritage have been interpreted as manifestations of dissent, and the government has also shown signs of fearing cultural expression as a potential catalyst for opposition to the government. Oromo singers, writers and poets have been arrested for allegedly criticizing the government and inciting people through their work. People wearing traditional Oromo clothing has been arrested at Oromo traditional festivals."

Until national *Oromummaa* (the second level) emerged, basic *Oromummaa* primarily remained at the personal and interpersonal levels because the Oromo were denied the opportunity to form and maintain national institutions and organizations. They have also been denied a formal education and free institutional spaces by successive Ethiopian governments, which have not tolerated the existence of independent Oromo leadership, institutions, and organizations. Oromo independent institutions were clandestinely formed and functioned. The Ethiopian colonialists have also expropriated Oromo economic resources and destroyed Oromo institutions, cultural experts, and leaders. Oppressors do not only want to control the oppressed economically, culturally, and politically; they also want to control their minds, thus ensuring the effectiveness of domination. The mental control of the oppressed causes personal and collective damage. The mental enslavement of most Oromo collaborative elites is the significant reasons why the Oromo people, who comprise almost half of the Ethiopian Empire population, are still brutalized and murdered and terrorized. The Oromo collaborators have lost their Oromo norms and values through Amharization/Ethiopianization and suffer from an inferiority complex.

The Oromo collaborator elites who are opportunists or lack a sense of Oromo nationalism have become raw material in the hands of successive Ethiopian regimes and have participated in implementing terrorist and genocidal policies. As Frantz Fanon (1961[1963]: 38) notes, "The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination…he is the bringer of violence into the home and the mind of the native." Ethiopian colonialism and racism were maintained by engaging in mental genocide, cultural destruction, and the assimilation of a sector of the Oromo population that has lost its sense of *Oromummaa.* The Ethiopian colonialists have denied the Oromo opportunities

to develop the Oromo system of knowledge by preventing the transmission of Oromo cultural experiences from generation to generation. All these have been designed to uproot *Oromummaa* to produce individuals and groups who lack self-respect and are submissive and ready to serve the colonialists at the cost of their people. The Ethiopian colonialists have caused the physical death of millions and further attempted to introduce social and cultural end to the Oromo by suppressing their *Oromummaa* and preventing them from developing Oromo nationalism. Those born from Oromo families and lost their *Oromummaa* have developed an inferiority complex and self-hatred that Ethiopian colonialism and racism introduced to them, and they have become the tools of the Ethiopian state.

In addition, to ensure its colonial domination, the Ethiopian state has destroyed or suppressed Oromo national institutions while glorifying, establishing, and expanding the Amhara-Tigrayan institutions such as government and Orthodox Christianity in Oromia and beyond. This state has also sought to destroy or suppress Oromo national history, culture, and language while promoting that of the Abyssinians. The main reason for suppressing or destroying the major Oromo institutions was to prevent the transmission of the Oromo system of knowledge and wisdom, and cultural norms from generation to generation and to stop "each new generation from engaging creatively with the circumstances in which they found themselves to find expression for the core values in the way they organized themselves" (Holcomb 2002: 1). Because of Ethiopian colonialism and racism, Oromo relational identities were localized and not firmly connected to the collective identity of national *Oromummaa*. Consequently, the Oromo have been separated from one another and prevented from exchanging goods and information on the national level for more than a century, and their identities have been localized into extended clan families and colonial regions until recently. The colonizers have never been content with occupying the land of indigenous peoples and expropriating their labor and other resources; they have also declared war on the psyches of the oppressed (Fanon 1965: 65). As Frantz Fanon (1967: 2-3) asserts, "All colonized people—in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave—position themselves in relation to the civilizing language . . . The more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of [the colonizers], the more he [or she] will have imitated his/her masters."

As the European colonialists did, the Amhara-Tigrayan colonizers manufactured the Oromo collaborator elites to use in their colonial projects. Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan (1985: 125-126) states, "in prolonged oppression, the oppressed group willy-nilly internalizes the oppressor without. They adopt his guidelines and prohibitions, assimilate his image and social behavior, and become agents of their oppression. The oppressor without becomes . . . an oppressor within . . . They become *auto-oppressor* as they engage in self-destructive behavior harmful to themselves, their loved ones, and their neighbors." The OPDO was manufactured in Tigray and Eritrean jungles by the Eritrean and Tigrayan liberation fronts from Ethiopian war prisoners in the 1980s, just on the verge of the collapse of the Mengistu regime, which clearly demonstrates what Bulhan says above. This organization has been owned, controlled, and used by the Tigrayan-led government to brutalize, kill, imprison, and as well as to evict Oromo farmers through land dispossession. What Fanon (1961 [1963]: 7) says about other colonial intermediary elites applies to the Oromo collaborators: "The European elite undertook to manufacture native elite. They picked out promising adolescents; they branded them with a red-hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouths full of high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words stuck to the teeth." Most Oromo intermediaries who have passed through colonial institutions have been de-Oromized, and Ethiopianized and have opposed the Oromo struggle for national liberation. Particularly, colonial education mainly creates submissive leaders that facilitate underdevelopment through subordination and exploitation (Rodney 1972: 241). Most Oromo started to develop national political awareness in 1991 when the OLF joined the Transition government of Ethiopia, which the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front dominated.

National *Oromummaa* as the nationalist ideology empowers the Oromo to build and strengthen their ideological determination, solidarity, and capabilities to define, defend, and struggle for the Oromo national cause. The ideology of national *Oromummaa* increases the resolve of Oromo individuals, groups, and communities to be ready to pay a sacrifice of different forms and levels, including sacrificing lives for the Oromo national cause. National *Oromummaa,* as the Oromo nationalist ideology, defines and promotes the Oromo political, material, and cultural interests to develop an Oromo political community and transform it into a state by destroying all powers and ideologies, mainly Ethiopianism, which have been keeping Oromo society under "political slavery" by all possible ways. According to Antonio Gramsci (1971), political domination is practiced

through ideological hegemony. Ethiopianism as an ideological hegemony has been imposed on the Oromo and others via physical coercion, including terrorism and mental genocide, and other political and cultural mechanisms. All forms of domination, including colonial and racial supremacy, cannot be practiced without imposing "a structure of meaning that [reflects] its leading beliefs, values, and ideas" (Hybel 210: 8); the process through which the dominated internalizes the ideology, worldview, culture, and mentality of the rulers as natural order is called ideological hegemony. National *Oromummaa* as a doctrine of liberation refutes false or biased knowledge and challenges reactionary narratives that naturalize and justify colonialism and racism and all forms of social hierarchies, injustices, and exploitation because the principles mainly inform it of egalitarian Oromo democracy of the *gadaa/siqqee* system.

Furthermore, as a theoretical foundation of the Oromo national movement, national *Oromummaa,* with other critical theories, enable the Oromo to produce knowledge for critical thinking and liberation to promote national self-determination and egalitarian democracy. Even though the development of this ideology is mainly based on the Oromo cultural foundation, it recognizes the importance of multicultural and critical knowledge and theories. Therefore, in developing the idea of *Oromummaa*, it is essential to use the vital aspects of resource mobilization, political process, framing, and social construction. These theories recognize that social movements such as the Oromo national movement are caused by collective grievances, the availability of political opportunities, political consciousness, cognitive liberation, shared interests, and social or group solidarity.[24] Depending on the theory of framing and social construction, the *Oromummaa* theory also focuses on the micro-level analysis of Oromo cultural studies that help understand Oromo social psychology to know how to increase micro-mobilization through

24 Resource mobilization theory, despite its weaknesses, informs the Oromo national movement that economic, political, ideological, and cultural resources are essential for developing leadership and organization capacity in Oromo society. Particularly, the theory of political process recognizes factors such as the availability of material, intellectual and cultural resources; the necessity of leadership and organizational capacity to mobilize resources for collective political action; the existence of pre-existing networks and institutions; and the rationality to participate in the collective action of social movements by weighing costs and benefits.

developing skills and knowledge. By recognizing that collective actions are socially constructed and not naturally given, the theory of *Oromummaa* assists in studying and suggesting ways of making meaning and understanding the essence of collective and individual grievances, motivation, identity formation, and recruitment.

The theory also helps critically analyze and understand social structures and subjective factors such as cognitive liberation by clearly recognizing the role of ideas and political consciousness in minimizing political ignorance and fatalism in shaping collective actions. It is only by cultivating Oromo political consciousness and building solid Oromo leadership and organizational capacity that the Oromo nation can survive the genocidal attacks it faces from its enemies, and it can also liberate itself from the colonial and imperial savagery of the 21st century. Attacking and dismantling the political ignorance, fatalism, and inferiority complex that have chained the minds of most Oromo is the first step toward freedom because the Habasha state has no power to control the Oromo nation if substantial numbers of the nation develop cognitive liberation by developing the nationalist ideology of *Oromummaa* that is replacing the false claim of Ethiopianism. On the third level, *Oromummaa* encapsulates a repertoire of knowledge and values that are prerequisites for building Oromo national leadership and organizational capacity for mobilizing and organizing the nation to liberate itself from all forces of unfreedoms. The *Oromummaa*-based knowledge that can be called Oromo cultural capital reveals the importance of getting access to an Oromo knowledge bank, which has been accumulated for centuries in Oromo culture and traditions to facilitate the development of knowledge for cognitive liberation in Oromo society. Without having the ability for liberation that develops mental liberation, Oromo society cannot effectively struggle against the forces of unfreedoms.

On the fourth level, *Oromummaa* as a national project mobilizes the nation to build its national culture, history, political economy, sovereignty, and ethos, which are the markers and emblem of the Oromo nation. Developing this kind of project requires the knowledge of Oromo national history and culture for many centuries, critically and thoroughly understanding Oromo and global politics, and predicting and assessing possible scenarios for the future of the Oromo nation. *Oromummaa* as the national project empowers the Oromo people to plan about the future of their society. Revolutionary Oromo nationalists not only need to know about the Oromo past and the current condition, but they also need to develop policies that will help them in developing

Oromo national culture, ideology, institutions, and actions. Based on the accumulated past traditions, knowledge, and wisdom, *Oromummaa* introduces an ideological and theoretical innovation and facilitates the emergence and development of new cultural elements. As Antonio Gramsci (1985: 325) explains, "Creating a new culture does not only mean one's own individual 'original' discoveries. It also … means the diffusion in a critical form of truths already discovered … and even making them the basis of vital action, an element of coordination and intellectual and moral order." In reviving the best Oromo cultural elements, "a critical form of truths already discovered," critical Oromo intellectuals have a central role to play; such scholars must unearth the Oromo past and provide a necessary theoretical guidance for the future of Oromo society. Again, Gramsci (1985: 330) asserts that "one could only have cultural stability and an organic quality of thought if there had existed the same unity between the intellectuals and the simple as there should be between theory and practice. That is, if the intellectuals had been organically the intellectuals of those masses, and if they had worked out and made coherent the principles and the problems raised by the masses in their practical activity, thus constituting a cultural and social bloc."

The fifth level of *Oromummaa*, which can be called global *Oromummaa,* expands the principles of freedom, justice for all, national self-determination, and egalitarian multinational democracy beyond the Oromo nation. Using the philosophy of *safuu* (Oromo moral and ethical order), global *Oromummaa* promotes horizontal and democratic relations among various peoples who have been oppressed and brutalized by the Ethiopian colonial state. Furthermore, since this *Oromummaa* is about uprooting unfreedoms and establishing a just, democratic, and peaceful society, the Oromo national movement is totally against the revenge and hate of many peoples, including the colonizing nations of Amhara and Tigray. Therefore, the Oromo national movement also struggles to demonstrate to these oppressing nations the importance of organizing societies horizontally and democratically rather than hierarchically and dictatorially to establish durable peace and justice. Overall, all forms of *Oromummaa*, as an aspect of critical ideology, builds on the best elements of Oromo democratic culture and traditions. At the same time, imagine true egalitarianism on local, regional, and global levels. This critical and egalitarian ideology criticizes, exposes, and challenges the doctrines of Ethiopian racism and false universalism, which practically promote the inequalities of race/ethnicity, gender, and class.

Even though the *qeerroo/qarree* (Oromo youth)[25] movement, which was clandestinely organized by the OLF, engaged in peaceful struggles between 1915 and 2018 and forced the resignation of the Prime Minister of Desalegn Haile Mariam of the TPLF/EPRDF regime and his replacement by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in 2018 of the same party, the transition to democracy is derailed by the latter. Abiy Ahmed came to power mainly on the shoulder of the *qeerroo/qarree* struggles, which he betrayed and systematically suppressed to continue the same *nafxanaya* government. That is why his government is characterized as the "neo-*nafxagna*" government by its critics because Abiy tries to modernize the Ethiopian state by glorifying Menelik II and other leaders. He is trying to continue the nation-building project initiated by Menelik II and continued by Haile Selassie. Of course, this project is rejected by the Oromo, and other colonized and dominated peoples. Most Oromo and other colonized peoples consider Menelik II and the institutions he created as their enemies. Although Abiy claims that his father was an Oromo, he openly sided with the *nafxanaya* system and started with his collaborators to try to make a false narrative about the *Habaesha* leaders and the Ethiopian Empire, which the subjugated peoples rejected. When Abiy articulates the greatness of Ethiopia and its leaders, the colonized peoples mainly remember Ethiopian state terrorism, hidden genocide, gross human rights violations, and recurrent famines. Currently, because of the intensification of the Oromo liberation struggle under the leadership of the Oromo national movement, the neo-*nafxanaya* regime led by Abiy Ahmed has established military command posts in some parts of Oromia and engaging in state terrorism, hidden genocide, and gross human rights violations,[26] and by imprisoning Oromo political leaders and shutting down independent media and civic institutions. These

25 **"'Qeerroo Fi Qarree': The Engine of Current Transition in Ethiopian Politics," http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0519/ijsrp-p8964.pdf, accessed on 04/05/2021;** *TERJE ØSTEBØ @TOSTEBO,* "ANALYSIS: THE ROLE OF THE QEERROO IN FUTURE OROMO POLITICS, May 26, 2020, accessed on 04/05/2021; Mosisa Aga, https://qeerroo.org/qeerroo-a-regimented-organization-or-a-spontaneous-movement/, accessed on 04/05/2021.

26 See https://oromiasupport.org/; https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/ethiopia-authorities-crack-down-on-opposition-supporters-with-mass-arrests/; accessed on 04/05/2021.

emerging conditions may soon result in similar situations in Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, or Somalia. The genocidal massacres and state terrorism in Tigray and Western Oromia by the combined forces of the central Ethiopian government, the Amhara special forces, and the Eritrean military illustrate this possibility.[27]

Conclusion

The Oromo and other oppressed national groups have developed "a victorious consciousness" (Asante 1988) that equips them with the knowledge of liberation. This knowledge of liberation "places the African person at the center of analysis" by making them the subject "and not object of study" (Asante 1990). National *Oromummaa* as oppressed nationalism and an intellectual and ideological vision places the Oromo man and woman at the center of analysis and, at the same time, goes beyond Oromo society and aspires to develop global *Oromummaa* by contributing to the solidarity of all oppressed peoples and by promoting the struggle for self-determination and multinational/multicultural democracy. It is built on over-arching principles embedded within Oromo traditions and culture and, at the same time, have universal relevance for all oppressed peoples. The main foundations of national *Oromummaa* are individual and collective freedom, justice, egalitarian democracy, and human liberation, all of which are built on the concept of *safuu* (moral and ethical order) and are enshrined in the *gadaa/siiqqee* system (Oromo democracy).

As a global project, *Oromummaa* requires that the Oromo national movement be inclusive of all persons, operating democratically. Global *Oromummaa* enables the Oromo people to form alliances with all political forces and social activities that accept the principles of national

27 "Tigray War: A tale of genocide, rape and starvation," https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/tigray-war-a-tale-of-genocide-rape-and-starvation/ar-BB1e2SXU, accessed on 04/05/2021; https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ethiopia-tigray-news-executions-rape-war-atrocities-genocide/, accessed on 04/05/2021; "Reported Ethiopia massacre: UN rights chief warns of spiralling situation, war crimes," https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1077592, accessed on 04/05/2021; Trevor Truman, 'Genocide against the Oromo people of Ethiopia? Western influence," https://advocacy4oromia.files.wordpress.com/2016/04/genocide-against-the-oromo-people-of-ethiopia-summary-report.pdf, accessed on 04/05/2021.

self-determination and multinational democracy in promoting global humanity that is free of all forms of racism, oppression, and exploitation. Specifically, national *Oromummaa* challenges the idea of glorifying African monarchies or chiefs or warlords, or dictators who have collaborated with the European and Arab slavers, colonizers, and imperialists that have destroyed Africa by participating in the slave trade and the projects of colonization and neo-colonialism. Challenging the view of Euro-American racist and "modernist" scholars, Asmarom Legesse (2000: 30) asserted that

> since the monarchy was in decline in most of Europe, the transition to democracy became the epitome of Europe's highest political aspirations, admitting that some varieties of democracy were firmly planted in Africa in the 16th century when in fact they were not fully established in Britain, the United States and France until the 17th or 18th century would have made the ideological premise of the 'civilizing mission' somewhat implausible. The idea . . . that African democracies may have some constitutional features that are more advanced than their European counterpart was and still is considered quite heretical.

Recognizing the existence of various forms of democracy before Africa was partitioned and colonized and challenging Euro-American–Ethiopian-centric scholarship that rationalizes and justifies racial/ethnonational inequality and dictatorship can help develop a human-centric and original scholarship. Successive Ethiopian state elites have built their power on the foundation of racial/ethnic hierarchy rationalized and justified by Ethiopian racism. They have maintained their legitimacy and survival through external connections and domestic political violence. Because they have failed to remove the political obstacles that have facilitated external dependency and state violence, they cannot build multinational democracy, peace, stability, and sustainable development. Learning about Oromo society—with its complex democratic laws, an elaborate legislative tradition, and well-developed methods of dispute settlement—the Oromo national struggle can present a new perspective for Africana studies and critical race and ethnic studies. Africans and the African diaspora can ally on regional and global levels by exchanging political and cultural experiences and re-creating the ideology of pan-Africanism from "below"

on the principles of democracy and egalitarian world order, which will be free of racism and all forms of unfreedoms.

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Utilizing Professional Expertise in Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Strategic Interventions preparation for Crisis Mitigation in Oromia

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Abstract: To fully comprehend the role of social workers in post-war restoration, one must first acknowledge the profound effects of war on the inhabitants of Oromia. The conflict in Oromia has led to significant displacement, loss of life, infrastructural devastation, and a tearing of the societal fabric. Professionals, both within Oromia and the diaspora, often find themselves in predicaments facing the general populace, with some even more susceptible to targeting by the Ethiopian oppressive system. Nevertheless, harnessing the involvement of these professionals in addressing the ongoing humanitarian crisis stemming from the impact of the war on Oromia presents an invaluable, yet underutilized, avenue for crisis mitigation and restoration of life. The professional community possesses the potential to steer their society towards rejuvenation and freedom. Employing a review of the related literature, participant

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observation, and primary sources, this paper attempts to elucidate the pivotal role of social workers in post-conflict scenarios.

Keywords: *Social work, professionals, reconstruction, restoration, Oromia, post-conflict, humanitarian service, peacebuilding, psychosocial support.*

Introduction

The Oromo-Ethiopian conflict is deeply rooted, tracing its origins back nearly 160 years to the African scramble during the colonization era. The Oromo were subjected to colonization by Abyssinian rulers, an annexation that has remained largely unacknowledged, fueling enduring tensions between the Oromo and the Ethiopian empire. The historical quest of the Oromo people for justice and freedom parallels the establishment of the empire in the late 19th century, which was marked by territorial expansions southward, into what is known as Oromia (Jalata, 2018; Tolera, 2022). This expansion was driven by the richness and potential of Oromo lands and resources.

The Oromo have grappled with numerous challenges under Ethiopia's successive regimes, from human rights violations to discrimination, displacement, and even warfare. Recently, these tensions have intensified, especially against the backdrop of political upheavals in Ethiopia, with Oromia emerging as a focal point of resistance against successive autocratic rulers. From 2018 onwards, the conflict took a devastating turn as the Ethiopian government declared an all-out war[2] against Oromia.

Looking globally, we find that the drivers of conflicts are multifaceted. Analyses of the Yugoslavian and Kosovo conflicts, for instance, initially points to longstanding ethnic animosities as the root cause. Yet, a deeper dive reveals a myriad of contributing factors, ranging from the instrumentalization of ethnicities by elites to secure power, economic disparities to international interventions (Gutlove & Thompson, 2004). Howard & Stark (2017) illustrate how outside entities played pivotal roles in both exacerbating the war and eventually securing peace in the Yugoslavian context (Prodanović, 2023). Similarly, the Oromo have borne the brunt of severe repressive actions, ranging from extrajudicial

2 *As all -out war the state of emergency was imposed first on October 16, 2018, all over Oromia dividing into eight command posts to oversee. It was lifted briefly in some places extended to the Western Oromia and southern Oromia till today.*

executions to torture, inflicted upon them by the Amhara-dominated Ethiopian empire. The ongoing violence has triggered mass migrations, both internally within Oromia, and externally across national borders. As a result, many Oromo are seeking sanctuary in neighboring regions and distant continents.

Social workers have paramount roles to play in alleviating the aftermath of such crises. The cascading effects of war— loss of life and property, forced displacements, and shattered livelihoods—demand urgent intervention. Using examples from various countries, this research thus delves into the pivotal contributions of professionals, particularly social workers, in post-conflict Oromia.

In Oromia, a region that is currently grappling with war, migration, economic turmoil, famine, and widespread instability, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive response. The plight of displaced Oromo farmers epitomizes the broader challenges faced by many in the region. Addressing their needs and ensuring their safety and wellbeing post-conflict requires planning, mobilization of resources, and a multi-pronged approach. Historical accounts of post-war reconstruction[3] efforts, ranging from Austria after World War I (Williams, 2005) to post-apartheid South Africa, provide valuable lessons (Williams, 2005; Gwekwerere, 2018; Vlados et al., 2022). While each nation's journey has its unique characteristics, overarching themes emerge around the necessity of inclusive development, reconciliation, and sustainable peacebuilding. Diverse post-conflict experiences abound, ranging from the challenging reconstruction of identity in South Africa's post-apartheid era to the rebuilding efforts in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Somalia (Arowosegbe, 2023. 651; Balthasar, 2018; Coffie, 2023; Mvukiyehe, 2018; Greer et al., 2023; Southall, 1987). Drawing from these accounts as well, this paper seeks to shed light on potential pathways for post-crisis reconstruction efforts in in Oromia. Central to this endeavor lies the role of social workers (Greenburg, 2023), whose contributions can be channeled through public sectors, non-profit organizations, and self-initiated endeavors of Oromos.

3 *In this paper reconstruction/restoration refers to a condition in which the population achieves a level of tolerance and peaceful co-existence; gains social cohesion through acceptance of a national identity that transcends individual, sectarian, and communal differences; has the mechanisms and will to resolve disputes nonviolently.*

Background of the Study

Political instability and military conflicts have become increasingly prevalent across the globe, impacting numerous communities. Professionals such as social workers, deeply embedded within these communities, experience the turmoil both personally and professionally. Despite their exposure to distressing events, many retain high levels of resilience and professional competence (Lavi et al., 2017; Lambert, 2022).

The ongoing conflict in the Ethiopian empire, overshadowed by global crises such as the conflict in Ukraine (Lo, 2023) and issues in neighboring African nations, has seen the Oromo people's long-standing struggle for justice. The different regimes that ruled Ethiopia have consistently shown intolerance towards the Oromo (Tolera, 2022). They have used state-sanctioned violence to quash the socio-political aspirations of the Oromo. As a result, Oromia has been tainted by repeated acts of aggression from consecutive Ethiopian governments, leaving its populace scrambling to rebuild their lives.

In addition to shedding light on the atrocities committed against the Oromo, the goal of this research is to nudge professionals to strategize for the restoration of Oromia during and after these conflicts. In this endeavor, the paper argues that amid the aftermath of conflicts—marked by displacement, trauma, economic hardship, and political violence—social workers stand as pillars of support. They facilitate healing, reconciliation, and rebuilding (IOM, 2023). Experiences from various African and European countries lead us to draw inspiration that emphasizes the pivotal role of social workers in post-conflict Oromia.

In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, for instance, Lavi et al. (2017) illustrates how resilience centers, staffed by multidisciplinary professionals, were set up to address the ongoing trauma of affected populations. Post-apartheid South Africa witnessed the significant role of educators and professionals in spearheading peace and reconciliation efforts, navigating historical racial and class disparities (Ngam, 2021; Hendricks, 2018; Gwekwerere, 2018; Ralph & Singhal, 2019; Southall, 1987). Besser et al. in 2009 and Diamond et al. in 2010 (as mentioned in Lavi et al., 2017), illuminate the emotional toll of consistent exposure to conflict, with residents reporting significant distress symptoms. As Oromia embarks on a journey of post-conflict reconstruction, the role of diverse professionals becomes paramount. Given their unwavering commitment to humanitarian values and community development, the present study attempts

to underscore the contributions of social workers in navigating the challenges of rehabilitation, fostering social unity, and promoting a sustainable recovery.

Study Methodology

To achieve the goal, we rely on three approaches: an in-depth literature review, participant observation, and primary data.

Literature Review: An in-depth analysis was undertaken, examining about sixty journal articles from 2006-2023. The key focus was on themes like restoration, displacement, and professional post-conflict intervention. The aim was to juxtapose the involvement of social workers in Oromia against global instances to identify best practices.

Participant Observation: From 2016-2023, the researcher attended over fifty meetings involving Oromo professionals and four (4) social work annual conferences to gain practical insights. The role of social workers in Oromia's rebuilding was a focal point for the study.

Primary data: Relevant data from non-profit organizations in Oromia and surrounding areas from 2016-2023 was sourced. This included international organizations, media outlets, blogs, and local NGOs. The goal was to grasp the professionals'[4] contribution in the post-conflict reconstruction or rehabilitation phase.

Justification

Oromia has endured extensive damage, both to its people and infrastructure due to prolonged conflicts. This study seeks to emphasize the critical role of professionals in steering the reconstruction process in Oromia's post-conflict era. The main goal is to spotlight the importance of expert involvement for a well-organized, sustainable, and inclusive recovery in Oromia.

4 *Professional role is the engagement of trained human power in any discipline that can facilitate the humanitarian services, peace builder, promote development of justice in the time of crisis. For instance, the professional mental health staff, trained principally as social workers and psychologists, found it easier than other staff to discuss their feelings about these issues and to express their struggles with the work. The nonprofessional staff hired as translators and data collectors, on the other hand, did not always find an easy mode of expression of their grief or anger of the people in post war crisis.*

Conceptual context

There exists academic contention regarding the definitions of "professionalism" and "discipline". For the purpose of this study, professionalism is described as a culmination of shared attributes such as competence, ethics, effective communication, responsibility, teamwork, and the pursuit of continuous improvement. It is not confined to a single field but stretches across multiple disciplines. Although the research champions social work[5], it envisions it as a converging point for various disciplines like sociology, psychology, counseling, law, public administration, and more, representing them in Oromia's post-conflict reconstruction. In several African countries, professionals from diverse backgrounds often function as social workers, extending humanitarian services (Soydan, 2023). The challenges of disasters can also be seen as an opportunity to cultivate new social ties, fostering a collective unity. The social work profession can harness this dynamic to bolster community relations, paving the path for enhanced civic participation.

Overview of Oromia's Present Situation

The Oromo people comprise the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, making up over 40% of the population. Historically, they have endured conflict and displacement initiated by Ethiopian security forces. As Debelo and Jirata (2023) highlighted referring Zeleza's (2008) finding, Ethiopia's long legacy of societal unrest characterized by interethnic conflicts, civil wars, and political disturbances since its formation. As a result, the Oromo have faced marginalization, discrimination, dispossession, unlawful killings, and political exclusion by the Ethiopian state. Recent times have seen a rising trend of excessive human rights violations against Oromo by Ethiopian forces, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary arrests, and orchestrated mass migration. Government schemes and crackdowns on opposition have forced many Oromo from their homes and communities.

5 *In most African countries social work is defined as an umbrella discipline that derives its knowledge base, values, and skills from other disciplines. Hence the researcher used social work as umbrella to represent professional without compromising each disciplines unique contribution in the post conflict reconstruction for Oromia.*

For instance, crisis factors in Oromia have been multifaceted, stemming from emergencies in 2015-2016, the 2017 Somali-Oromia dispute, and the 2018 Gedio-Guji conflict triggered by border and resource disputes (IOM, 2023). Per the UN, Ethiopia had over 1.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 2021, with many Oromo displaced because of development projects and regional conflicts (Crisis24, 2018; HRW, 2022; Debelo & Jirata, 2023). Many are seeking refuge in neighboring Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, and Yemen. Displacement statistics for Oromia (IOM, 2023) show 211,000 displaced from Wallaga zone alone by July 2020 due to communal tensions, government-Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) clashes, and state-backed raids causing mass atrocities (HRW, March 2023). Given the fluidity, actual figures are likely higher.

Recent violence has affected most Oromia zones, forcing individuals to flee. A 2020 IDMC report indicates over 100,000 IDPs in Oromia. This upheaval has created a humanitarian crisis, leading to the Oromos abandoning their homes and valuable assets when seeking sanctuary locally and abroad. Global entities have called for an end to the turmoil, urging Ethiopia's government to address the root causes and champion peace and reconciliation. While highlighting the humanitarian impact, this paper stresses the importance of engaging Oromo professionals in humanitarian work during and post-conflict in Oromia.

Role of Social Workers in Post-Conflict Settings

The end of the Cold War marked the conclusion of many ideological conflicts like those in El Salvador, Ethiopia, and Somalia. It has also sparked unrest in some ethno-federal regimes including Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia. While the first two had relatively peaceful transitions, Yugoslavia underwent a turbulent and violent dissolution, sparking wars across five emerging republics (Lise & Alexandra, 2017; Herscher, 2014). Professionals play vital roles in post-conflict reconstruction aiding humanitarian crisis management, fostering reconciliation, reinforcing sustainable peace, and rebuilding essential services and infrastructure (Roy, 2018; Kam, 2022; Herscher, 2014; Britwum, 2022; Yiğit, 2021). This wide spectrum encompasses experts in conflict resolution, human rights, governance, development, and security.

Post-conflict periods reconstruction efforts often involve diverse professionals from healthcare, psychology, community development, economics, education, peacebuilding, and humanitarian services. Within this broad group, social workers stand out for bolstering peace, stability,

and resilience in conflict-affected communities (Conaway, 2006; Suhrke, 2007). Education is a recognized cornerstone of post-conflict recovery, on par with food, water, shelter, and health (Barakat et al., 2013). Coordinated, collaborative delivery of psychological, physiological, and social services is crucial in such settings.

Social workers provide holistic biopsychosocial services, especially to vulnerable groups (Chatterjee, 2018; O'Halloran, 2018; Romero, 2020; Oppedal & Idsoe, 2015; Mason et al., 2017). A Kosovo study, for example, highlights the need for psychosocial assistance in forensic investigations dealing with human remains, emphasizing social workers' critical role (Keough & Samuels, 2004). In Oromia, this model combined with political could significantly enhance community restoration and rehabilitation post-conflict. Although modalities have varied, some foundational elements persist.

Social workers have multifaceted, dynamic, and invaluable roles in post-conflict scenarios, paving the way for sustainable peace, recovery, and resilience. Drawing from various studies, five key service areas can be identified for Oromo practitioners in post-conflict Oromia:

- **Humanitarian Aid:** Emergency provisions like food, water, shelter, healthcare, and fundamental services. Social workers play a crucial collaborative role, although international entities handle much of this (Lawrence, 2023; Alhuzail & Mahajne, 2021; Cox & Geisen, 2014).
- **Psychosocial Support:** Conflict severely impacts mental wellbeing, especially of vulnerable groups. Services like counseling, trauma healing and support groups are vital for emotional recovery (Lawrence, 2023; Alhuzail & Mahajne, 2021; Coffie, 2018; Lavi et al. 2017; Cox & Geisen, 2014).
- **Peacebuilding and Reconciliation:** Focusing on mending fractured relations and building peace. Activities may involve facilitation of dialogues, intercultural interactions, and support for local peace initiatives (Coffie, 2018; Barakat et al., 2013).
- **Restoration of Basic Services:** Post-conflict often disrupts primary services. Social workers can play pivotal roles in restoring housing, education, healthcare, market access. Economic revitalization like livelihoods and job creation also fall under their purview (Gutlove & Thompson, 2004; Angelo, 2018).

- **Capacity Building:** Strengthening capabilities of local institutions is vital for sustainable recovery. Examples include East Timorese musicians' involvement in cultural and identity restoration (Alhuzail & Mahajne, 2021; Soydan, 2023).

The reconstruction of Oromia can be organized at three levels: 1) the engagement of professional social workers through the existing public sectors lines, 2) through the non-for-profit humanitarian organization of different format and 3) through self-initiated and self-mobilized professional social worker of diverse disciplines from citizen of Oromia.

By implementing the specific methodological strategies, the researcher identified the following major social work roles in post conflict Oromia as strategies of reconstruction and restoration *(see Table 1)*.

Table 1. Summary of major services provided by the professionals (social workers) in post conflict Oromia.

Biopsychosocial services	**Generic goals**	**Responsibilities**	**Professional actors**
Humanitarian assistance: the professions required for humanitarian assistance will depend on the specific needs and context of the crisis, but require a range of skills and expertise across different sectors to ensure that the affected communities receive the support they need	Emergency responders	trained to provide immediate assistance in emergency situations	first responders, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, social workers, sociologists, Protection specialists
	Logisticians	responsible for managing the transportation, storage, and distribution of humanitarian aid chain and supplies in emergency situations	Transit and logistics professional, Captains, fly attendants, Security personnel
	Healthcare professionals	provide healthcare services to those affected by conflict and migration	doctors, nurses, health officers, Lab technician, sanitary sciences, and other medical personnel
	Water and sanitation specialists	responsible for ensuring access to clean water and sanitation facilities in emergency situations	Engineers, technicians, and public health professionals

Biopsychosocial services	**Generic goals**	**Responsibilities**	**Professional actors**
	Nutritionists	provide nutritional support and guidance to most vulnerable populations such as children and pregnant or breastfeeding women	Nutritionist, biological sciences, home economics
	Mental health professionals	provide psychosocial support to individuals and communities affected by conflict and migration, including counseling, trauma healing, and support groups	Social workers, Psychologists, counselors, trauma healing therapists, and support group worker
Peacebuilding: the professions required for peacebuilding will depend on the specific needs and context of the conflict, but require a range of skills and expertise across different sectors to ensure that the affected communities receive the support they need to build sustainable peace.	Mediators and negotiators	These professionals are needed to facilitate dialogue and negotiation between conflicting parties, and to help reach agreements that promote peace and stability.	Community leaders, lawyers, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, social workers, religious leaders
	Conflict resolution experts	have expertise in managing and resolving conflicts and can help identify root causes of conflict and develop strategies to mediate disputes and promote dialogue among different groups to prevent further tensions and promote harmony	Mediators. Arbitrators. Conciliators. Contract negotiators. Fact finders, lobbyists, and advocates
	Community organizers	professionals work with local communities to promote peace and social cohesion, and to facilitate community-led peacebuilding initiatives	Social workers, community workers, teachers, religious leaders, clan leaders, abba gadas,

Biopsychosocial services	Generic goals	Responsibilities	Professional actors
	Political analysts and policy experts	analyze political contexts and policies to identify opportunities for peacebuilding and to develop strategies to promote peace and stability	Human rights advocates, discipline-based experts economists, social scientists, health scientist, curriculum experts, communication experts
	Educators and trainers	help build the capacity of local communities to promote peace and stability through training and education programs	
	Communication and media professionals	needed to promote peacebuilding messages through communication and media channels, and to counteract negative or divisive messaging that can contribute to conflict	Journalists, media personnels, speakers on media, professionals of different disciplines
Psychosocial support professionals	the professions for psychosocial support require a range of skills and expertise across different disciplines	provide individual, family, group therapy and community therapy to those who have experienced different forms of trauma and other mental health challenges related to conflict. The professions required for psychosocial support will depend on the specific needs and context of the conflict or migration, to ensure that individuals and communities affected by trauma receive the necessary support and assistance to recover and build resilience.	Psychologists, counselors, social workers, Psychiatrists, Nurses and other medical professionals, Community health workers, educators and trainers, Spiritual and religious leaders

Biopsychosocial services	**Generic goals**	**Responsibilities**	**Professional actors**
Restoring basic services and infrastructure	the professions for restoring basic services and infrastructure depends on the context of the situation, are built, or rebuilt to support the delivery of basic services.	responsible for designing, planning, rebuilding, physical labor, installing and repairing pipes/ electrical systems, and implementing infrastructure projects, such as water and sanitation systems, sewerages, roads, and buildings.	Engineers, architect, construction workers, Electricians, plumbers, mechanics, project managers, accountants
Economic recovery and livelihood support	the professions required for economic recovery and livelihood support depending on the specific needs, support they need to rebuild their livelihoods and promote economic growth	can analyze economic data and develop strategies, develop business plans, and provide support to entrepreneurs and small business owners, provide financial advice and assistance, technical assistance and training to farmers and other agriculture producers and help develop strategies for improving agricultural production and marketing, and work with local communities to develop strategies for promoting economic growth and improving livelihoods.	Economists, Business development experts, financial experts, Agriculture specialists, Marketing specialists, Vocational trainers, Community development specialists

Biopsychosocial services	Generic goals	Responsibilities	Professional actors
Capacity building for local institutions	professions required for capacity building for local institutions that have the capacity they need to effectively deliver services and support to the local community	can provide guidance and support to local institutions in developing strategic plans, improving governance structures, regulations, communications, financial management systems and building effective management systems.	Organizational development experts, Trainers and educators, Monitoring and evaluation specialists, Information, and communication technology (ICT) specialists, Legal experts, financial experts, and Social and community development specialist

The Role and Challenges of Social Workers in Oromia's Post-War Reconstruction

In the aftermath of the crisis in Oromia, social workers stand to shoulder significant responsibilities, operating under core assumptions. They can offer trauma/mental health support, assisting survivors through therapy and counseling, and thereby reshape lives. They can facilitate community reintegration, helping displaced children, elderly and unaccompanied minors to reestablish themselves, nurturing trust, and unity. They can help in prioritizing capacity building, enhancing local institutions including religious, educational, community, clan, and association entities. They can champion advocacy and human rights, ensuring marginalized communities and victims receive justice, especially those impacted by war atrocities. They can actively engage in peacebuilding, utilizing conflict resolution expertise to foster dialogues promoting peaceful coexistence. However, reconstructing Post-War Oromia has its hurdles: a) Resource Scarcity: Inadequate resources and funding in the nascent nation make sustainable development and effective interventions challenging; b) Cultural Sensitivity: Oromia's rich cultural diversity requires social workers to approach tasks respectfully, honoring local customs and traditions; c) Security Concerns: The uncertain post-war landscape may pose risks to social workers, underscoring comprehensive risk assessments and strategic safety planning for them and those they serve.

Reflections and the Path Forward

Oromia's intricate post-war reconstruction requires a united effort from various entities. Social workers remain at the forefront of addressing the multifaceted war repercussions, from trauma to migration to societal injustices, given their commitment to healing and justice. They have a critical role in tackling a myriad conflict-induced challenges in Oromia. Their efforts in peacebuilding, advocacy of rights and community assimilation can significantly shape Oromia's reconstruction. Recognizing and navigating the obstacles they face is key to ensure their continued efficacy in fostering a lasting peace and growth in post-conflict Oromia. Collaboration between the government, international organizations, and local communities are pivotal in creating an environment where social workers can drive lasting change.

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Book Reviews

In Memory of the Father: A Critical Commentary on the First Oromo Novel, *Kuusaa Gadoo* (A Pile of Resentment) By Gaddisa Birru

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This piece presents my short critical commentary on the form, content and reception of the first Oromo novel, *Kuusaa Gadoo (A Pile of Resentment,* 1991) by Gaddisa Birru. The commentary is the result of my reading of the novel, the discussion with friends and former teachers and an interview I had with the author in December 2018. Before I proceed to my discussion of the novel, I would like to say a few points about the Oromo people and the author to help my readers get some glimpse about the context of the novel. The Oromo is the most populous ethnic group in Ethiopia that comprises almost the half of the population of the country. They speak Afan Oromo (Oromo language) which belongs to Afro-Asiatic language family. The Oromo were forcibly incorporated into the Ethiopian empire in the second half of the 19th century (Holcomb and Ibsa,1990; Asafa,1998). The monolingual language policies that the successive Ethiopian regimes followed prevented the Oromo from speaking and writing in their language. Due to this, Afan Oromo remained oral language without getting the official recognition for the writing system of its own up to the last decade of the 20th century regardless the attempt

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to develop one by the Oromo scholars like Sheik Bakri Sapphalo since the 1950s (Mekuria, 1994, 1997; Mohammed, 2014). This severely hampered the development of Oromo literature, and the first novel was published only in 1991. The author of this first novel, Gaddisa Birru, was born in 1958 in Boqoji in central southern Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia, where the majority of the events in *Kuusaa Gadoo* took place. He studied English literature at Addis Ababa University, which became a source of inspiration for his passion to write novels in Afan Oromo. Moreover, as he explained in several interviews, the main cause for him to write novels is the absence of creative writing in Afan Oromo, and its political implication for the Oromo people, who were presented by the Ethiopianist writers as people without literature and history (See Edward Ullendorff, 1973 and Albert Gerard, 1971). Gaddisa shared to me that he was also inspired by the works of another acclaimed Oromo novelist, playwright and filmmaker Dhaba Wayessa, who was writing short stories, plays, and later on novels since the time of the dictator Mengistu Hailemariam (r.1974-1991) (Gaddisa, 2018). *Kuusaa Gadoo* is his first novel, and he also published several other popular novels and collections of short stories that proved his immense contributions to the Oromo literary development.

The commentary of this novel is needed at this time, first, due to *Kuusaa Gadoo*'s significant place in the development of the Oromo novel, being the first, but has not received sufficient critical reflections particularly in English that help it gets more visibility. The second is my personal conviction that the novel has still relevant narrative elements both at the form and content levels that make it a fully-fledged Afan Oromo novel. To this end, even though it is the first novel in a language without official writing by then, the complexity of the structure of the narrative, and the context-based thematic selection which is carefully attentive of actual Oromo life condition of *Kuusaa Gadoo* made Gaddisa to hold the prestigious place in the study of Oromo literature. More importantly, the novel's favourable reception among the Oromo readers even after three decades, and Gaddisa's continued contributions, not only through his three-decade persistent writing career, but also his selfless engagement in all the major activities that helped the development of Oromo literature including the establishment of the Oromo Writers' Association of which he served as the first president, compelled me to consider him the founding father of the Oromo novel. Lastly, this piece is written in memory of late Gaddisa, who passed away in July 2021 and I dedicate it to him.

Kuusaa Gadoo tells the stories of socio-economic and political crises marked by lawlessness, resentment, betrayal, revenge, and illicit sexual affairs that ravaged the people who lived in and around Boqoji during the regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. The stories can be presented under two highly related plots. The first begins with a budding love story between an Oromo protagonist Dachasa and Genet (an Amhara character from Addis Ababa), both were students at Addis Ababa University during the Mengistu's regime. However, their relationship has abruptly come to an end following the sudden visit of Dachasa's son (Gezahegn) to his father in Addis Ababa. When Gezahegn arrives at his father's place, only Genet is at home; the incident helps her to know Dachasa had another wife, but never revealed to her. Genet is infuriated and eventually abandons him. Compounded with the problem Dachasa has already been experiencing with his previous wife, Yadashi (this is part of another plot), this incident leaves him with debilitating emotional damage thereby he is engaged into excessive alcoholism. He abuses Gezahegn for revealing the family issues to Genet; Gezahegn is forced to leave home and starts living on the streets in Addis Ababa.

The second plot is introduced through the flashback about Dachasa's chanceful meeting of his first wife, Yadashi while he worked for Boqoji Health Centre. Yadashi's marriage to Dachasa disappointed her parents, who wanted her to marry an elderly man of their interest. Dachasa joins university for further education and Yadashi is left alone with her only son. Though Dachasa's relatives promise him that they will look after Yadashi, for she was already disconnected from her parents, they have not done as Yadashi expects. In order to support her husband's studies, Yadashi engages into a petty business of selling home-made beverages. A corrupted Amhara official, Asfaw Haile, who was already attracted to Yadashi, grabs this opportunity and seduces her to sleep with him. Their relationship eventually becomes public when Yadashi gives birth to a baby daughter from Asfaw. This event is extremely consequential as it affects the lives of several characters thus becomes the driving force behind some major conflicts in the novel. As a part of this plot, another conflict is initiated by Asfaw's wife, Aberash Kebede, who is enraged by the promiscuity of her husband, flogs Yadashi with an assistance of her brother, Lema Kebede, and leaves her with a bruised head and damaged genitals. The matter gets so complicated following Asfaw's retaliatory revenge on his own wife and her brother.

A vengeful push and pull among the trio Asfaw, Aberash and Lema exposes Asfaw's another hidden crime. In order to cover his affair with

Yadashi, Asfaw orchestrated the robbery of Boqoji Police Station and scapegoated on Dachasa's uncle, Guta Diriba, who was already aware of Asfaw and Yadashi sleeping together. Both Asfaw and Yadashi know that Guta is a fearless man with a history of murder over the similar case, and his knowledge of their relationship would be dangerous so that Asfaw gets him arrested. When Asfaw is unexpectedly exposed, Guta is set free. Eventually, Asfaw is arrested and Yadashi becomes helpless, hence she is forced to engage into the prostitution. When she is unable to lead her life through prostitution, she files an accusation against Dachasa for abandoning her after she is advised by a lawyer who once slept with her. She wins the case against Dachasa as he is not legally divorced yet. Dachasa, who is already frustrated by the court's decision and the family disintegration, resorts to revenging Asfaw. Finally, we are told that Dachasa abandons Gezahegn in Addis Ababa and returns to Boqoji when he learns that Asfaw bribed the police and has been released. He murders Asfaw, but Yadashi leaves Boqoji in fear of Dachasa's revenge. That ends the stories in the novel leaving the reader without the knowledge of the whereabouts of several Oromo characters including Dachasa, Yadashi and Gezahegn and this symbolizes the life of numerous Oromo families in Ethiopia during the Mengistu's regime. To this end, several points related to the form and content of the novel through which the above stories are presented worth discussing due to their relevance to the studies of the Oromo novel as well as for their contribution to the popularity (favourable reception/readership) of the novel itself to date.

First, the title of the novel is not only explicit indicative of the main themes in the novel and topic of several sub- stories, but also it captures a long-lived grievance of the larger Oromo people, who is expected to defend themselves against persistent harassment and humiliation. Resentments and revenges follow one other, they affect the lives of the characters involved in them, become the driving force of the plots of the novel and eventually captured in the title of the novel. The title and its clear message are still strongly remembered among the Oromo readers, who are still experiencing the similar humiliation in Ethiopia.

Second, from the perspective of the form, two points are striking. One is the novel's frequent draw on the flashback and dreams as the flash-forward technique that geared towards the creation of suspense. However, the use of dreams came with some limitations. Actually, dreams played a pertinent role in the plot development of the novel making the educative aspect of the novel stronger. For example, the disintegration of Dachasa's family and the death of Asfaw are symbolized in the early stage of the novel through a dream that Yadashi had seen before her husband left for

university education. However, some of the dreams are brought in as a surprise and sometimes as a true story and the narrator frequently tells us it is just a dream usually at the end the story. As a reader, this disappointed me several times whenever I find it is only a mere dream, too late. The other formal aspect that I found so intriguing is the characterization and character system, which were also taken on by later Oromo novelists and made more prominent and impactful. For example, naming of the characters plays pivotal role in this regard. Being the first novel written under the most brutal administration in Ethiopia, this novel landed over a long-lived assimilationist name changing practice, the scenario that the Oromo have gone through as they were usually forced to change their names since the time they were incorporated into the Ethiopian empire. By putting this practice into the dialogue among Addis Ababa University Oromo students (Dachasa's friends) that we read at the beginning of the novel, *Kuusaa Gadoo* alerts the Oromo readers to think of the practice as the way through which the Oromo were made to lose their identity. In order to capitalize on the problems that the Oromo face as a people, *Kuusaa Gadoo* addresses larger Oromo population in Boqoji in a holistic way and presents them as the victims of the oppressive local administration by directly connecting the problem that face the individual characters to the communal problems. In the meantime, the novel is still mindful of multiple identities among the Oromo where we read the majority of the characters bear Oromo names while some Oromo characters still have the Amharic names and Muslim names, which is spectacularly realistic to the inhabitants in Boqoji and its surroundings, but as the reflection of the external influence.

Third, from the content wise, some themes beg for brief reflection and that should be made against the Oromo political history. In relation to this, the novel selectively presents some major concerns of the Oromo people, mainly, the violent eviction from their lands, their exclusion from important government positions even at lower level of administration, family disintegration, gender-based violence, language issue and the relevance of orature. In this regard, the novel draws on some less conventional narrative techniques. For example, an illustration of one character on the front cover page of the novel and his depiction in the novel sheds the light on the seriousness of the eviction of the local people from their lands without any compensation. It is a portrait of a minor character, Kadiro Hussein, but strongly significant in this respect. His portraiture fits with the description on page 125 of the novel about this character. He is a short and well-built man with bald head standing with a gun on

his left hand. Behind him, we see an old hut with demolished walls and only the damaged roof without cover hanging on the slant pole. The field outside of the hut is covered with grass and scattered bushes. In a way it symbolises the experience of many Oromos, Kadiro himself is forced to give up his fertile land for the Amhara officials who came to the area as the government agents, but frequently resorted to land grabbing and several other corruptions. He declines their request only to be forced to change his mind after the officials arrested him and his family. Upon his release, Kadiro deports his family and cattle to the nearby Wabe Dessert and assassinates the officials and escapes back to the dessert. Kadiro's story is important aspect of the novel as the themes repeatedly raised of land grabbing and displacing local people are repeatedly raised throughout the novel.

The presentation of several important characters with the Amhara identity as the people with higher social, religious or political status, but excessively abusive, and the absence of the Oromo from such posts indicate the real structural problem in Ethiopian politics. These Amhara characters are subjected to revenges for abusing their power (Kadiro's and Dachasa's cases are good examples) and this made the novel seemingly didactic without seriously jeopardizing its literary and aesthetic aspects. Nevertheless, unlike many Oromo novels, *Kuusaa Gadoo* does not explicitly reflect the relationship between the ethnic-based marginalization and exploitation. The novel rather seems to focus on a class-based oppressions though ethnic-based marginalization is still implicitly perceptible as those who are on the higher-class position are the government officials with the Amhara background. To mention an example, it is only in the dialogue of university students who used a revolutionary poem to explain ethnic-based oppressions during the military government that the idea of ethnic-based oppression is highlighted. Similarly, unlike many other popular Oromo novels such as *Godaannisa (The Scar)* by Dhaba Wayessa, and *Yoomi Laataa?* (*When Shall It Be?*) by Isayas Hordofa as well as Gaddisa's second novel, *Dhaamsa Abbaa* (*A Message from the Father*) gender-based oppression is not ethnicised. The novel presents multiple gender-based oppressions and family disintegration which usually leave the victims (women and children) with dark future, and the victims of such crises are the mass population at the lower status of the society—which are still the Oromo in the context of *Kuusaa Gadoo* making the ethnic-based oppression appallingly present but embedded in class-based oppression.

Another theme that can be raised in relation to this novel is the issue of language— both the use of language by the author and by the characters— and this point is to be made against the linguistic scenario in Ethiopia during the time when the novel was composed. The novel is conscious of its linguistic ideology as it foregrounds the multiplicity of Oromo dialects and the presence of Amharic in the area. The language dominantly spoken in Boqoji is Afan Oromo and, surprisingly the novel does not raise problems of language use among this community. This seems contradictory with the historical reality of the time when the novel was composed. As it is mentioned in the prefatory note, the novel was denied permission for publication because it was written in Afan Oromo. The author was told that the novel could be published only when it is translated into Amharic, and its strength and weakness were evaluated, but he refused to do so, and waited until the fall of the military government (Gaddisa, 2018, Ayele, 2019). Meanwhile, given that it is the first novel, the language usage of the author is superbly original, and he managed it effectively. Even more, the novel reflects a multilingual reality in the society as the reader can feel the presence of other languages particularly of Amharic and Afan Oromo dialects.

One contemporary topic in the studies of world literature and African literature, which is also vital to Oromo literature, is the presence and relevance of orature in the novel. Being the first novel in the most marginalized literary tradition, which was denied official grant to develop its own writing system, and composed during harsh political condition, the connection between *Kuusaa Gadoo* and the Oromo oral tradition calls for due attention. The presence of Oromo orature mainly in the form of folksongs, proverbs and poetry, and use of them in meaningful ways in order to foreground the context and themes of some stories, indicates the novel is attentive of the oral tradition of its readers. The novel also implies that the mayhem and socio-political crises that ravaged the local people in Boqoji were caused by the disintegration of the overall indigenous Oromo social order as noted in the dialogues among some characters. By focusing on the socio-political and economic problems that faced the Oromo community in the specific context, the novel does not engage with the Ethiopian Civil War that Amharic novels (for example, *Oromai* by Bealu Girma), composed in the same era took as their primary concern. This is stunning and could have far-reaching implications about the relationship between Oromo and Amharic literary traditions, as the literary traditions produced in the same country, which is more disjunctive

and mutually exclusive from the very beginning as they approach the problems in Ethiopia from spectacularly different perspectives (see Ayele,2022 for further discussion). More specifically, though Gaddisa is familiar with the works of Amharic authors, through his academic engagement— both in his narrative techniques, thematic selections and contextual focus, he took different path from Amharic writers of his time. I would not push further for this is the area needs further investigation as it is beyond the scope of this piece.

Lastly, the reception of the novel was favourable from the very beginning, and this was bolstered by the use of radio broadcasting which was aimed at compensating the absence of Afan Oromo reading practice among the Oromo, which was caused by the politics of assimilation that forced them to read Amharic texts. Before its publication, the novel was broadcasted by the Ethiopian Radio Oromo Service Program under the title *Waa Lama Dhabuu* (Double Loss). According to the author (Gaddisa, 2018) and the testimony by Badhasa Sima on the back cover page of the novel, the whole novel was broadcasted for 19 weeks on Sundays (March-August 1990). As a reflection of the impact of radio's involvement in the reception of the novel, this title was later changed to *Kuusaa Gadoo* after the listeners commented that the former is overtly suggestive of the end of the main plots so that it may impact the readers' interest from the very beginning (Gaddisa, 2018). Besides, two testimonials on the back cover page of the novel give important idea about the implication and the understanding of the main theme of the novel. First, Badhasa Sima, who worked for the Ethiopian Radio Service Afan Oromo Program during the Mengistu's era, testifies that the listeners commented that that the novel can be a lodestar for others who want to pursue the similar task and work with Oromo language in general. The other testimony is by Dhaba Wayessa, and it also captures this important aspect of the novel. Dhaba's testimonial focuses on the overall message of the novel in relation to its title. He describes that *Kuusaa Gadoo* is composed of repeated and multiple resentments: a resentment of contempt, of abuse, and of conspiracy. Dhaba further speculates that the author himself seems harbouring a pile of burning resentment. In the end, one testimony that Gaddisa (2018) shared with me hints at the reception of the novel among the local community in Boqoji itself. Most readers and radio listeners considered the stories as real stories of some actually lived people. As a result, some characters (Asfaw Haile and Gezahegn) are associated with real people in Boqoji and those people seemed disappointed as they told the author. However, the author

believes that his novels are highly informed by the practical social circumstances, and the association between the characters and real people is entirely a sheer coincidence.

In conclusion, being the first fictional but realistic representation of economic and socio-political reality in a limited setting and, the novel blurs the difference between reality and fiction. In the meantime, the absence of translation of the novel into other languages and lack of critical commentary have hindered the popularity of the novel and the author beyond the Oromo readers. Furthermore, *Kuusaa Gadoo's* departure from the narrative and political paths of Amharic novels, sets the foundation for the Oromo novel, as a separate and independent literary field, which is based within the actual historical, political, social and economic reality of the Oromo people rather than the romanticization of the national and reckless war induced by corrupted dictators. In basing his imagination in the larger Oromo worldview, Gaddisa set the ideological, narrative and literary path for the young Oromo fiction writers and key themes he raised in this novel were later expanded and well-articulated by the Oromo writers such as Dhaba Wayessa, Isayas Hordofa and many others.

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Brian J. Yates, *The Other Abyssinians: The Northern Oromo and the Creation of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1913.* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press). ISBN-13: 978-1-58046-980-7. PP. VIII+236

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The book alleges that Northern Oromo groups, namely the Tulama and Wallo Oromo, became *Habasha* through cultural and political interactions with the Amhara kingdom of the Shawa plateau by abandoning their Oromo culture and identity. The author rejects ethno-racial categories by arguing that these categories essentialize Oromo and Amhara histories and undermine the reality of "the multiethnic *Habasha* cultural community in creating modern Ethiopia." He criticizes the areas of Ethiopian and Oromo studies for using ethno-racial categories and claims to be liberating the Northern Oromo from competing nationalisms by considering them as an integral part of "the *Habasha* community." Yates' intellectual effort to go beyond the current paradigms of Ethiopian and Oromo studies to explain the formation of the modern Ethiopian state is commendable, provided that he utilizes the critical approaches of social history and political economy. Unfortunately, the author does not analyze the contradictions involved in the cultural, political, and economic

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interactions of the Tulama and Wallo Oromo with that of the Amhara kingdom of Manz and later with the modern Ethiopian state. By ignoring the political economy and critical social history of the Tulama and Wallo Oromo communities, conquered and dominated by the *Habasha* kingdom, Yates focuses on the biographical narratives of Oromo collaborators such as Michael of Wallo and Gobana of Tulama. They sided with the Amhara and Tigrayan kings to benefit their personal and group interests at the cost of the larger Oromo society.

By rejecting the concept of ethnonational categories such as Oromo, Amhara, and Tigray, Yates expands the *Habasha* identity to include the Northern Oromo and defines "the *Habasha* as a cultural community." He explains how Tulama and Wallo Oromo elite members joined that of the Amhara by converting to Christianity, joining the military, speaking Amharic, marrying into Amhara families, and adopting Amhara cultural practices such as God-parentage, adoption, and *Habasha* land tenure systems. Nevertheless, Yates does not explain why such members of the Oromo elite chose to join the Amhara ruling class by abandoning their Oromo culture, language, and indigenous Oromo religion known as *Waqeeffannaa* or Islam. He focuses on personal and family relationships between the dominant Amhara elite and the subordinate, collaborator Oromo elite. He is silent on how these relationships negatively affected the Oromo farmers and pastoralists of Tulama and Wallo. In reality, the relationship between the Amhara kingdom and the affected Oromo groups involved various forms of conflict, conquest, war, banditry, robbery, slavery, and expropriation of cattle and land. This relationship also involved resistance from the Oromo masses and certain elites. Yates conveniently ignores this historical reality.

Yates claims that the northern movement of the Oromo in the sixteenth century, their contact with the Amhara kingdom, the disintegration of the *gadaa* system, the emergence of the Oromo warrior class, the borrowing of the *negus* (kingdom) system, and the adoption of *Habasha* cultural norms facilitated the development of the Oromo *Habasha*. He glosses over recent historical discoveries on the movement of the Oromo from north to south by certain historians, anthropologists, linguists, and sociologists. These scholars assert that Mormor (the Blue Nile) was the center of *the Gadaa* assembly and the indigenous Oromo religion until it moved to Odaa Nabee (near Finfinnee) in the fifth century A. D. This means that the Amhara came to northern Manz/Shawa plateau almost five centuries after the Galan Oromo. Between the ninth and fourteen centu-

ries, isolated Christian communities trickled to the south and gradually formed the Christian kingdom of Lasta and later Manz/Shawa. Yikunno Amlak (1270-85), who dethroned the Zagwe (Agao) dynasty and created the first Amhara *negus* (king), shifted the geopolitical center from Lasta to Manz/Shawa. Before changing its geopolitical center, this king established Orthodox churches in the Oromo community of the Shawan plateau.

The Abyssinian traditional ruling class produced a document known as the *Kebra Nagast* (Glory of the kings). It rationalized and legitimized the monarchy, linking its genealogical descent to the ancient king of Israel, Solomon. Based on this mythical claim, the Amhara monarchy began to consider itself a Solomonic dynasty and used this fictitious claim to perpetuate its political economy and dominance. From the fifteenth century on, the monarchy maintained political order through its loosely organized army, Christian ideology, the monopolization of firearms imports, control over the appointment and dismissal of officials, and the ability to mobilize human and economic resources in the kingdom and beyond through its officials. In search of land, slaves, cattle, and other resources, the Amhara kings and people expanded their colonial expansion into the Oromo communities of northern Shawa and later to Wallo. Yates does not explain how these colonial relationships emerged and affected these Oromo communities. Specifically, during the reign of Amda Tsion, between 1487 and 1494, the Abyssinians intensified their expansion into neighboring Oromo communities in two ways: first, they annexed "the areas occupied by the Christian communities dispersed among the Oromo in southern Shawa." Second, they forcefully converted some Oromo to Christianity by killing confident Oromo political and religious leaders. The establishment of military colonies, evangelizing the local populations, and the cultural assimilation of the colonized elite was the continuous process of colonial expansion and Abyssinization.

As a religion and state ideology, Christianity created a bridge between European and Amhara rulers. For example, around 1840, the British and French governments supplied Sahle Selassie, Menelik's grandfather, with firearms "so that he could spread the seeds of civilization [i.e., Christianity] among the Gallas [Oromos]." European missionaries, explorers, and merchants convinced their governments to support the *Habasha* against the Oromo and others they considered "pagan" and "savage." Sahle Selassie's forces made 84 raids in one year against the Tulama Oromo. In one attack, his forces massacred about 4,500 persons, looted some 43,000 animals, and enslaved more than 1,000 Oromo.

However, whenever the Amhara established their settlements among the Tulama Oromo, the Oromo collectively chased the settlers away. The result was that the Abyssinians could not effectively occupy any Oromo land during this period. Then, between 1855 and 1868, under the leadership of Tewodros, the Amhara re-initiated campaigns to colonize and convert the Wallo and Yejju Oromo to Orthodox Christianity or expel or exterminate them. Before this period, the Wallo, Yejju, Azabo, and Raya Oromo had accepted Islam "as a bulwark against being swamped by Abyssinian nationalism." Tewodros mobilized the Abyssinians against the Oromo, and after he defeated the Yejju Oromo dynasty of Ras Ali II in 1853, he concentrated on the de-Oromonization of the Wallo region. His first campaign of terrorism, mutilation, and killing began in 1855. He also took extreme actions against the Tulama Oromo and eliminated the Oromo living between Dabra Berhan and Angolala. Despite his vicious campaigns and the attempt to deport the Wallo Oromo *en masse* to western Abyssinia, Tewodros failed to control them effectively.

The Wallo Oromo kingdoms were conquered between 1868 and 1876 by the joint efforts of Yohannes of Tigray and Menelik. At roughly the same time, Menelik's army colonized the Liban Oromo. The Gulale, Yaha, Wachbacha, Bamici, and Mettaa Oromo came under Amhara's control in 1878. According to John Murray, "Convinced that much more was to be made out of the helpless Galla [Oromo] by their permanent exploitation, he began in the early seventies to occupy the districts that he overran with permanent garrisons of his troops, providing at the same time for their administration under a hierarchy of his officials." The eastern Oromo regions were occupied in 1882. Through his Amharized Oromo general, Gobana Daci, Menelik forced Oromo leaders, such as the Jimma and Wallaga kings, to submit to his rule. Gobana, an Oromo warrior of Tulama, welcomed Menelik and joined his court for his interests. Sahle Selassie had once occupied Gobana's birthplace, and Orthodox Christianity was imposed on the Oromo who lived there. According to Mohammed Hassen, he "was born into a Christian Oromo family, where the policy of forced Amharization weighed heavily, permeating the whole atmosphere, affecting the family, their psychological attitudes and their whole manner of life." In addition to Amharization, Gobana had developed a strong interest in his military career in Menelik's army. He helped Menelik in building the Ethiopian Empire and then lost his authority. To consolidate friendly relations with Gobana, Menelik arranged a political marriage between his daughter and Gobana's son.

Yates' book deals with the experiences of individuals like Gobana but ignores the historical conditions and context of the Tulama and Wallo Oromo, as overviewed above. Undoubtedly, individual Oromo collaborators assimilated as *Habasha* and were incorporated into the Amhara power structures. However, the author avoids explaining the violent impact of *Habasha* colonialism. His use of the concept of a *Habasha* community is abstract and cannot be unpacked without the critical historical and political economy analytical approaches. In constructing national identities and hierarchies, dominant classes and groups have used major political-economic, religious, and educational institutions to organize people hierarchically to dominate, oppress, and exploit. The dominant groups and classes have also developed identities and resisted dominant institutions. These conditions require a close analysis of class, culture, ethnicity, or ethno-nation as analytical categories. However, Yates ignores these categories and claims that the *Habasha* community was created through *Habasha/Amhara* inclusionary cultural practices that allowed the incorporation of individuals and groups into state power by preventing an ethnonational or racial colonial order. He confuses the assimilation of a few Oromo elites to the Amhara state with the inclusion and assimilation of entire groups. He also ignores the oppressed conditions of the majority of the Oromo people.

Colonialists use intermediaries to build exploitative and oppressive relations with the colonized people. By ignoring the issues of class and ethnonational contradictions, Yates asserts that the Tulama and Wallo Oromo became *Habasha* and formed the modern Ethiopian state with the Amhara-Tigray elite. This assertion does not explain how Menelik colonized the Oromo people by using an Oromo collaborative class, which became the tool of oppression and exploitation in Oromo society. The Amhara state elite imposed two forms of oppression: class and ethnonational oppression in Oromo society and consolidated class oppression in Amhara-Tigray society. The intellectual contribution of the book is minimal since it only focuses on the dominated and incorporated Oromo elite that lost their culture and identity for certain benefits; it is also biased against the ordinary Oromo and the Oromo people. Knowingly or unknowingly, Yates implicitly promotes the political and intellectual agenda of the *Habasha* elite, who struggle to maintain their dominance in the Ethiopian Empire at the cost of the conquered, dominated, and exploited various population groups, particularly the Oromo.