



# Guilt of Otherness

POEMS

Mohamed A. Eno

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## FOREWORD

Mohamed A. Eno, a Kenyan poet, has added to the various East African poets' works. His first and recent poetry collection, *Corpses on the Menu: Blood, Bullets and Bones* (Outskirts Press, 2012), was a wonderful piece; but his second collection, *Guilt of Otherness*, is the subject of this foreword.

Let me begin with what some critics have suggested – that East Africa is suffering from creative barrenness. Nevertheless, with the advent of the poetry by Dr. Mohamed Eno, that statement seems to be successfully challenged if not proven implausible. Dr. Eno's poetry represents a beautiful corona amidst the earlier African poetry like *Poems from East Africa* (David Rubadiri and David Cook, 1971), *When Bullets Begin to Flower* (Margaret Dickinson, 1972), *Song of Lawino*, *Song of Ocol*, *Song of a Prisoner*, and *Song of Malaya* (Okot p'Bitek, various dates), *Boundless Voices: Poems from Kenya* (ed. Arthur I. Luvai, 1969), *Daughter of My People, Sing!* (Micere Mugo, 1976), *Tensions* (Richard Nturu, 1971), *Drum Beat* (Leonard Okola, 1967), *Make It Sing and Other Poems* (Marjorie Oludhe Mcgoye, 1995), *Orphan* (Okello Oculi, 1968), *Echoes Across the Valley* (eds. Arthur Luvai and Kwamchetsi Makokha, 2000), *A Study of the Poetry of Okot p'Bitek* (Monica Nalyaka Mweseli, 2004), *Imagination Of Poets*, (eds. Selina Onochie and Monica Mweseli, 2004), and *Womantic Verses* (eds. Marie Nelson and Monica Mweseli, 2008), just to name a few.

In particular, *Guilt of Otherness* combines onboard diverse realities about the poet Mohamed Eno's observation of the ills and evils in our world society today. It speaks of oppression of the marginalized, the questionable wealth of the illiterate, and of the violence meted to the "other," who represents the excellent one as exhibited in the poem bearing the very title of this illuminating collection:

## **Guilt of Otherness**

The agony of being the *other*  
Stings harsher outside school  
As peers over half the class  
Engage you in a battle  
For answering accurately  
A question they all missed.

Punches on the back head  
Bitter blows on the face  
More pounding in the belly  
Bees of peers all over your body  
Barrages of beastly kicks in your back  
Bruises blown up on parts of your temple  
Profuse gush of blood buries your face  
Which now has puffed up brutally  
To the size of a pyramid  
Yet they brag at you:  
*Is it painful?*

Eno's poetry does not miss to provide a critical observation of the leadership, the Head of State, who behaves as a colonial gatekeeper – that is, a character who is disconnected from the masses, his own citizens, and behaves as an anointed outsider who serves colonial objectives for his own gains, as sarcastically penned in the poem “Prayers for the Decreed Incumbent”:

May the public remain blinkered  
To the incumbent's predilections –  
Amen!  
May his ingenuousness  
Endure him as Italy's blessed puppet –  
Amen!

May the Bantu-Jareer be oppressed  
 Alongside the Yibir and Tumaal  
 As expressionless humans  
 Invalidated, incapacitated forever –  
 Amen!  
 May the learned stay numb  
 Over the entirety of his undoing –  
 Amen!  
 May his progeny benefit plenty  
 From pro-colonial *Borsa di Studio*\* –  
 Amen!  
 May his in-laws emerge blameless  
 Over the oft played-down *Leylkase* plot –  
 Amen! Amen! Amen!  
 May the expropriated Bantu Jareer land  
 He *inherited* from his colonialist colleagues  
 Enjoy nationwide legitimacy –  
 Amen! Amen! Amen!  
 May every *hal xaaraan* stolen she-camel\*  
 Give birth to *nirig xalaal*/kosher calf –  
 Amen! Amen! Amen!  
 May we ordain him with affluence  
 In the annals of the national history  
 As the holy man unholy –  
 Amen! Amen! Amen!

\* *Borsa di studio*: Italian phrase for scholarship grant

\* From the Somali adage ‘*hal xaaraan ah nirig xalaal madhasho*’ meaning – a stolen she-camel can never beget a *xalaal*/kosher calf.

With conciseness and rhythm, Mohamed Eno narrates the depth of his experiences in acerbic notes, namely that due to their subscription to colonial doctrine, the African leaders who replaced the Western colonizers just stepped in the latter’s shoes. The poet therefore

portrays the resultant mass conflicts; elite against elite, elite against poor, poor against poor, tribe against tribe, and finally even angels against perpetrators in a dramatic confrontation in the afterworld. He unravels, with care and sophistication, the anger, frustration, and rage evident of people all over the world (and Africa in particular) who still remain ethnically, socially, politically, and academically “in chains.” The poet, in his creative work and critical view, makes his comprehensive social and political statement. Like Okot p’Bitek in “Song of Prisoner,” the poet Eno’s basic political views are that hopes of freedom have not been fulfilled, despite the virtual attainment of symbolic independence.

Furthermore, Eno points an accusing finger at scholars who compromise ethical balance in leadership issues or stay “numb” on the incumbents’ weaknesses, or might euphorically accept their scholarship to serve as the leader’s means to his own end. Consequently, he attempts to demonstrate in his poetry that the African people, including the academics, in post-independence times, are still frustrated, notwithstanding their being ruled by their own people. To display the societal resentment, Eno uses a variety of techniques to enhance the delivery of his message including irony, imagery, punctuation, experimentation, efficient vocabulary, narration, and experiential point of reality, among others. As such, he adds a passionate poetic voice to the continental outcry for an Africa that is liberated from the manacles of corruption, nepotism, discrimination, chaotic wars, and oppression. Employing verse as an effective vehicle of communication, the African poet airs the need to establish a platform for a genuine, more realistic African unity (*umoja wa ukweli*) in which citizens are equal both at the national as well as continental levels.

This collection is arranged into seven sections. In Part One, under the title *A Brief Personal Memoir*, Eno opens his lyrical discourse with what is presumably a cenotaph tracing of his childhood experiences. Here, as is also evident in other sections, he espouses vivid experiential account with lyrical creativity and sets out right with a beautiful note of appreciation to his teachers, followed by a poem, “The Bard’s Parlance,” where he quotes a traditional philosopher daring his colleagues over the quality and quantity of their contribution to the communal lore. From this very beginning, the poet

Eno is challenging us, the society, to unearth our hidden wounds through the power of the “Bard’s Parlance” which, as the poet himself tells us, “reveals social dismay” that potentially “provokes the status quo.” We don’t need to ask further what happens to the powers that be once the foundation of their status quo has been “shaken.” Besides that, the section discusses marginalization in a broad context, as well as the complexity of Somali identity from the inner circles of ethnocentrism and outcastism (in a nation most of the world believed to be egalitarian). With strong incantation, Mohamed Eno’s poetry scrutinizes the concomitant roles certain local communities and colonial writers have played in creating distinctions among indigenous peoples they knew very little about; thus contributing massively to “the guilt of otherness” that robbed sectors of the African society of their citizenship rights.

Mohamed Eno mirrors the anomalies of post-independence Africa through the image of Somalia where Part Two focuses on the costly path of dictatorship as the few, including the most illiterate, enjoy luxurious life at the expense of the loyal nation-builders who continue suffering under the rule of corrupted and dictatorial regimes. He demonstrates this phenomenon in “The Overnight Millionaire” and “The Lady of the Land Cruiser” among other poems. Part Three sets its landmark on the senseless wars in the continent. It is also in this section that the poet presents two very peculiar and shocking scenarios: 1) that despite the massive atrocities due to poor governance, ethnic affiliation, anarchy, and clan ideology, the dead are yet very prone to losing their final resting home, the grave, to none other than deceased compatriots in what Eno poeticizes as “The Grave-looting Game”; 2) that more interesting in the section is how it develops a new contour in the war narrative by unraveling an often neglected trend: the negative role women play in armed conflicts, which the poet exposes under the headline “War Fantasy and Female Warlords.” Eno concludes the segment by censuring the hypocritical nature of the International Criminal Court and the Western powers by setting a contrast between two categories of warlords: 1) those who stand to not only go scot-free with their war crimes but also gain financially from Western taxpayers’ money, and 2) the *others* who are hunted down and arraigned for trial and conviction at the ICC – as the

poet interpolates in the warlords' confessional statements "Confidential: From Abidjan to Mogadishu."

With six poems and a section prelude, Part Four wraps up the discussion of warlordism discussed in the preceding unit and is very critical of the failure of the Somali Transitional Federal Government whose approach of clan-based administration could not heal the nation's wounds, but instead went on a long self-serving journey of corruption and looting spree of public resources with no solution to the national impasse. Part Five embodies Eno's consciousness as a fervent participant observer of the world around him, digging into the fertile discrepancies within the academic world. Academia being the professional territory where his heart rests, the poet Eno portrays a plethora of traits that characterize poor academic leadership, disgust to neo-colonial elites, and incompetent academic leaders and administrators who resort to nepotism and favoritism in their bid to compromise the guiding ethics of academia. He writes satirically of the fate of dismay that awaits the unethical leader whose academic ethos suffers from the fractures of sound guidance and balanced wisdom. More specifically, it is in "Of Primates and the Boat: A Poetic Drama," that the East African poet informs the readers and stakeholders of the precarious ending to which poor academic leadership is doomed. To approach the subject from its complexity and justify his concern, Eno opens the section with a poem in praise of the social responsibility of the bard (meaning the intellectual or the academic); hence the necessity for scholars and those in academic leadership to give a keen ear to not only the poet's arguments but also, rather critically, to his predictions.

In Part Six, the poet Eno embarks on a fact finding mission to the hereafter. Here, he offers a presentation of a long dialogue (by eavesdrop?) between two former dictatorial leaders in recall of their miserable leadership in the first world and the repercussions they keep experiencing consequently in their eternal life. Part Seven closes the journey of Mohamed Eno's multi-thematic collection with a dramatic piece of poignant verse. It is in this concluding section that the East African bard eviscerates the rot at the incumbents' quarters in a sardonically worded, nerve-chilling form of prayers, as excerpted above in the title 'Prayers for the Decreed Incumbent'. A brilliant piece!

The poetry's vocabulary is accessible and hilarious, the experimentation in style is refreshing, and indeed the poet Eno is keeping the fire of African creativity burning by writing about urgent issues in the region, the continent, and the world over. In this volume, Dr. Eno inventively manipulates language and style in conundrum simultaneity, with an invocation of their coterminous relationship with social thought and environment. The poems, as discernible from the title, deal with the portrayal of stigma and pain as caused by various natures of marginalization, discrimination, hypocrisy, incompetent leadership, devastating wars, and poor governance, among other factors. With unique prudence, imagery, and foresight, the poet has added a very loud voice to the plight of the voiceless; he delivers a powerful message to the world to explore viable solutions for the deprivations laden to the social pandemics of marginalization, oppression, inequality, and injustice. With that motto, the poet believes, the world community will be able to finally address the anguish lived by the oppressed amongst us. This is a very informing, beautiful poetic excursion to experience and enjoy!

Alluta Continua!

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Chancellor, Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology

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critical reflection of this work as an invaluable input. To the administrative team and colleagues at St Clements University Somalia and the extended family of St Clements Education Group go big thanks for their motivation and superb scholarship. Equally, my appreciation is due to Mr. Habib Souissi (Abu Writing), Abulqassim Abdulwahab, and all the rest of my colleagues and friends at the ATI, and of course my students across the continents.

My parents, Hagi Abdulakdir Eno and Hagi Halima Hussein Hassan (the best parents ever!) have a special place in my heart. They deserve even much more for being farsighted and inspirational, for being there for us whenever the destructive stigma of otherness bit on us deeper in the academic as well as other social situations. Their teaching of the values and moral strength in resisting against submissiveness and submission to oppression has contributed a lot towards the realization of our aspiration while growing up in a society so fraught with an inundated nature of severe otherization. The extended families of my brothers and sisters in various continents deserve a special admiration too, in a few words but extensively in affection, respect and value.

Ali Mohamud Osman (Caleey), Mohamed Yacub of WFP Somalia, and minority rights advocate and scholar Dr. Rasheed Farah, scholar Mohamed Hagi Ingiriis and their families have constantly assured me of their support, and I remain endlessly grateful. My family, from Cinta to Ramadhan alias Darel, have been supportive all the way and I thank them for their incessant love and motivation. Prof. Justus K. Makokha of Kenyatta University has motivated me in more ways than I could ever think of, and it is to that effect that I acknowledge my appreciation. Last but not least, the staff at Adonis & Abbey Publishers, you have done more than I expected and you certainly deserve my respect and gratitude for your professional approach, outstanding advice and editorial work. In fact, all those not mentioned, please accept my assurance that I am very proud of your contribution – with the deepest of humility.

## **DEDICATION**

To all the men and women anywhere in the world who have undergone and/or resisted against any form of discrimination, marginalization, stigma and oppression, as well as the wise men and women in any society who have in one way or the other contributed to the fight against the evils in our human society in the forms of oppression, alienation and otherization of any nature, in any context and environment.

## BACKGROUND

This project has come to birth because of Prof. Ali J. Ahmed's mentoring. His continuously encouraging words "Let the world hear you" extended the focus to a more engaging perspective: "Why don't you write a memoir?" Ahmed's words were so inspiring that they made the dim light at the end of the tunnel so bright, the long journey too short to cover, and the entire project nothing but stimulating. Therefore, in order to appreciate the Professor's encouragement, I had to undertake a project that responded to the issue from two fronts: a) a volume that had the reflection of a 'memoir', an account of experiences as lived and learned; and b) one which at the same time appealed to our (Ali and I) literary food for thought: poetry. Accordingly, I started the project with the title *Guilt of Otherness* and subtitle 'A Brief Personal Memoir in Poetry', which categorically interprets the impact of *otherness* as seen and/or experienced in various contexts and across diverse stages of my life. However, when the work reached final stages, the publisher and Prof. Ahmed advised on dropping the subtitle from the front cover. Significantly, this work coincided with other projects that were ongoing as individual as well as collaborative works. The manuscript was ready by mid 2012, immediately after the completion of my first poetry collection *Corpses on the Menu: Blood, Bullets and Bones*; but again it was Prof. Ahmed's suggestion to push *Guilt of Otherness* to around mid 2013, in order to avoid a clash between the two volumes. It worked really well.

## INTRODUCTION

### Memories of Otherness!

Like a dwarf in a world of menacing giants, he [the otherized child] cannot fight on equal terms. — Allport (1954:139)

Discussing past societal evils such as inequality, marginalization and oppression experienced at early age takes you to a hideous memorial archive of what have for a long duration been masses of unhealed, torturous psychological wounds. The unforgettable emotional experiences remain so vivid that the wounds keep suppurating recurrently with incurable devastation, mentally and in many ways emotionally. Negotiating your means of survival in a hostile environment, where you are so easily prone to the teacher's punishment after you seek his/her recourse from your peers' bullying, taunting, degrading and physical abuse, makes your world not just a miserable space of earthly hell but a place not worth living in. When that space which represents the 'home of knowledge', the very centre designed to mold, shape, develop and produce an empowered future generation, concurs with the tyranny of ethnic segregation rather than incubate academic performance, it leaves a tainted mark in the memory of the *otherized* young victim. All this tragedy of otherness and exclusion, with its tormenting degrees and varieties of anguish, has left a recurring impact on me to this very date.

It is worthwhile mentioning at this point that, for some reason, after we had passed our entry test to the first grade, my father summoned us (me and my older brother Sayid-Ali) for an orientation. He, together with my mother, gave us a sincere prediction of the unavoidable circumstances of open marginalization, physical assault, psychological torture, and other kinds of hatred that lay ahead in our academic path. The advice was that we had to determine between submissiveness to the situation or resistance to any form of degradation. As we learned to hit back violently at aggressive peers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, we won a hard earned respect and some peace in the school environment.

However, our hard-won victories were undermined by the actions of some grown-ups or the insouciance of some teachers. To this day,

I'm haunted by our Math teacher and popular singer Mohamed Mooge's continuous repetition of the racial epithet "*reer tima adag*" (those of the kinky hair, or Africans) in class, during my fifth or sixth grade at Hodan Intermediate School. The teacher's words, in essence a not-so innocuous race-baiting, incited a few Northern female classmates from *Casa Popolare* area to follow suit even after he had left the school a very short while later. The legacy he left was awfully enduring, harsh in nature, psychologically traumatizing and academically demoralizing. It was only after my sister engaged two of the females in a bloody battle and we were summoned at the police station that I got some sort of relief from their uncouth tongue. Despite Mooge and a section of educators or artists of his thinking, I had some good quality teachers like Ustad Ibrahim, Mohamed Hagi, Alwan Hagi Hussein, Shamsa Abdillahi, Faduma Ahmed, Abdiaziz Hosh, Said 'the Djiboutian', Farah 'Dacas', and others during the critical period of my early years of education in Hodan, Casa Popolare and Hawl Wadaag elementary and intermediate schools. School principals like Sheikh Muse 'Ileey', Ahmed Geddi, Adan Omaar and Abdalla Ali Murshid alias Ustad Abdalow, were nice leaders who always endeavored to manage volatile situations in very modest and professional manner.

Demonstrating our worth among our elementary student community in the school environment (at a time when certain scholars still praise the state administrations in the sixties as 'democratic') was one thing; 'liberating' ourselves along the route we took to and from school was quite a different thing. For some time, we were targeted and harassed again and again for no other reason than 'belonging to Jomo Kenyatta'. The connotation here bears more weight and is tied much deeper to ethnic background in the sense that we were seen to belong to Jomo Kenyatta, a Bantu Jareer Kenyan. That 'Jomo Kenyatta' identity (being Kenyan or African) was employed as a good case to deny us the respect and rights we deserved. In the eyes of the perpetrators, we were *others*, outright aliens from another land; with less human dignity than the rest. The reason for our alienation and degradation was, as Somalist scholars who studied the Bantu Jareer factor in Somalia would later discover, that due to some peculiar reason, the 'noble'-claiming nomadic Somalis consider every black African inferior to the Somali. Moreover, it reflects the Somali belief that degrades every black African, regardless of his/her social status, education, intelligence or dignity, to slave status as long as that

African has s big nose, dark skin pigmentation and hard hair. According to those apocryphally constituted calibrations, we became regular objects of hate to the extent that even our sharing of the forms in the classroom, the classroom itself, or even the street was something many considered as unbecoming, totally unacceptable.

At Sudan Interior Mission, an English language private institution run by the American Peace Corps, I had some very nasty experiences. Here, whenever I answered a question, older boys sitting behind me pinched my ear time after time to distract me and/or force me out of the school. My books were either stolen or grabbed from me and torn into pieces because, to those boys, it was unpalatable that an *adoon*, or a Bantu Jareer (slave) could do better than them in learning a foreign language. But I had a deeper conviction and greater lust for learning than their jealousy could disenfranchise my young mind. I thanked God when the teacher saw the problem one evening and put me at the front chair, away from them and close to the blackboard. Later, my father had to come to the school and launch a complaint and explain the problem from an ethnic point of view. I was not only transferred from the class but I was also allowed to sit for a qualifying test to move to an upper level than my distracters. Consequently, my father arranged for me a means of transport as a safer way to reach home after classes. Even then, the problem didn't stop until one evening my brothers Omar and Sayid Ali and my sister Amina came for a battle; the kind of engagement one would call in Kiswahili '*kufa na kupona*' (to die and be relieved). A week or so from that night, I could walk home with less fear and anxiety. But it had to come with the cost of spilling precious blood from both sides, leading to police intervention and the American school teachers (not students) giving witness in my favor.

In my other private school study, mainly in the morning hours or during holidays, Hodan National School run by Adan Omaar, was a good experience, although I had to resist initial pressure by the students and prejudice by a few of the teaching staff. It was only after I had proved my point in performance that I became one of Omaar's favorite pupils, felt easing of pressure from class and school mates and also received some fairness in attitude from the other teachers. These squabbles in Mogadishu persuaded my parents to enrol me in Shabelle Secondary School in the agricultural town of Jowhar, about 92kms from the capital, a school managed at the time by the American

Mennonite Mission. The school was later nationalized by the military regime, but allowed to retain its U.S. curriculum along with its American teachers.

Here the environment was somewhat better, but once in a while the language and attitude of some of the students were emitting unmistakable reflections of hatred and *otherness*, in the dorm, in the dining hall and at the sports ground. In one of several instances, one Thursday afternoon, while we were playing football in the fenced basketball court, I was wrongfully encountered by an older mate but in a lower grade, O. H., simply because I aborted several of his attempts to go past me and score. Students on his team/side blamed him for his being stopped by a ‘Hawash’, (an inferior Jareer) as some admitted to a schoolmate, Mohamed Abdullahi Addow, after the match. The next thing I knew was blows flying at me. I responded in a wild counteroffensive, despite his huge physique. When I was about to wrestle him down, Mohamed Abdullahi Addow, the oldest of the three Addow brothers moved in to separate us. He also gave a very severe warning to O.H., saying, “If you dare touch him again, it will be between you and me.” That support from Addow was quite a sigh of relief, although I had to prove to the cynics and stigmatizers, those with pastoral mental incapability in understanding human equality and dignity that I did well whatever I participated in, be it curricular or extra-curricular activities. This was quite a good experience though, and somehow better than the continuous fighting my brother and I had experienced in Mogadishu. My brother Sayid-Ali was at the time in a boarding school in Baidoa, about 250 km away from the capital and roughly 350 km from my school town of Jowhar.

When I joined college, I started looking at the society from different perspectives. With professional certificates in Journalism and Writing from the British Tutorial College, Nairobi, Kenya, I had a good standing for exemptions at the College of Education to complete a Bachelors Degree majoring in English. Later, I couldn’t secure permanent recruitment so I started assisting my father at the farm until I started working part time for Heegan Newspaper, where I had been working unpaid for some time and despite a hard effort by the editor-in-chief, Mohamud Mohamed Afrah for my recruitment. I later got part time jobs at the English Department of the Somali National University and at the Technical and Commercial Teachers Institute known as the Polytechnic.

Elsewhere in my first volume of essays, *The Bantu Jareer Somalis: Unearthing Apartheid in the Horn of Africa*, and in verse form in this volume, I described how our neighbor was overcome by envy upon seeing us immaculately dressed in our uniform and heading to school. She told my mother how it was a waste of time educating us when indeed it was obvious that we wouldn't be employed by the state at any level, given our ethnic Bantu Jareer background. I also provided, as have several other scholars done, a clear description in prose and poetry of the political alienation, social discrimination and economic marginalization impacted on this segment of the society. Needless to say, the plethora of derogatory epithets, hatred and degradation flies in the face of the oft-quoted Lewisian doctrine of Somali homogeneity, pastoral democracy or egalitarian society in the Horn of Africa; descriptions presented subjectively but also inappropriately.

### **Blinkers and Twisters in Somali Scholarship**

*Nin dhiigaayo gadaashiis, nin dhinti ka daymoo.*

Behind the bleeding one (of your kinfolk) could be a dead one (of the other kinship).

Although a good corpus of literature exists on the prevalence in Somalia of a very rigid caste system, severe forms of ethnic marginalization and proven physical evidence to that effect, the post colonial administrations and the treacherous proponents of the self-same political agenda have done everything in their power, from politics to the pen, to obscure the multiethnic and multicultural reality about the country. The manipulation encumbered all forms of scholarship save that which heaped encomia on pastoralism and its camel complex. The notion was tantamount to a state-purported scheme that was utilized as a socio-political device to suppress and oppress, in simultaneity, the culture as well as existence (among other communities) of the Bantu Jareer section of the society. It was, furthermore, in tandem with the societal campaign that hinges on the principle of supremacization of the pastoral nomad who claims Arab ancestry as compared to the inferiorization of the Bantu Jareer as a claimant of his African descent.

From the grim reality of such gruesome background (see more in M. Eno 2008), I would like to correct Professor Lidwien Kapteijns' unfounded and profoundly spurious assertion: "Socially discriminated, they [the Bantu Jareer community] nevertheless enjoyed considerable political and economic opportunity in post-independence Somalia" (2013:271 note 136). Kapteijns' new discourse into the Somali studies is not just shockingly outrageous but in fact academically disappointing, if not at all mythically exaggerated and wantonly misinformed. Yet, without contributing any credible evidence to corroborate her statement, Kapteijns dispatches a powerfully misleading assertion of Bantu Jareer enjoying a 'considerable...opportunity' in the Horn of Africa!

On the contrary, and specifically starting from the post-independence period of the so-called democratic administrations down to the end of the military dictatorship of Siad Barre, neither can Professor Kapteijns nor any of her dubious informers provide the name of just one single Bantu Jareer army general, minister, permanent secretary, director general, ambassador, or general manager. Kapteijns' bold but reckless allegation is not corroborated by empirical reality upon which the reader can draw factual findings. Had she done her homework with some diligence, she would have realized that no field researcher nor, for that matter, Somali society at large, have witnessed a Bantu Jareer benefiting from investment loans, agricultural development funds, scholarships and education grants, land grabbing, nor any other opportunity for development. This pithless discrepancy renders a serious flaw in her basic conceptualization of the very problem under her scrutiny. It is a flaw that would ultimately cast aspersions on her overall 'clan-cleansing' project.

Credible field studies/research conducted by serious Somalia scholars and Bantu Jareer social memory, reveal how these communities have experienced nothing except being victims of ethnic-based economic cleansing, ethno-political cleansing, ethnic up-rooting as well as being recipients of all sorts of hate discourse and discrimination. Ironically, much of this scholarship was/is available to all scholars, including Kapteijns. That said, it would be very useful, for the sake of academic debate and discussion, if Kapteijns could identify the source of her information or the outcome of her empirical research in order to share with the rest of scholarship the

epistemological facts that inform her arguments about the Bantu Jareer. In any case, Kapteijns' conjecture invites the poetic allusion of whether one can merely twist at will a theme whose details and possible trajectories one clearly lacks:

*Gableey (shimbir) ma gashaa gariir gogoshiisa?  
Gamuum gana weenaa guf laaga dhigaa*

The degree of fallacy contained in her malicious statement delivers Kapteijns absolutely out of touch with the undercurrents and crosscurrents of what constitutes ethnic marginalization and ethnic cleansing (as compared to her apocryphal 'clan cleansing'). Her lack of knowledge of the Bantu Jareer community veritably lays open Kapteijns' narrower scope of Somali studies than her measly 'clan cleansing' project deems the focus on, for whatever reason. By further observing the work in general, one cannot help but stumble on Kapteijns' struggle in the mist of clan relations in Somalia as exhibited in her lack of clarity and inability to disentangle between the Reewing-Digil-Mirifle constituents and the Bantu Jareer community on the one hand, and the Bantu Jareer within that confederation's cluster of communities on the other (a study to shed light on the origins of such lacunae is underway). Suffice it to say, Kapteijns' 'clan-cleansing' reveals the scholar's blind spots as she egregiously misrepresents the Bantu Jareer condition in Somalia. Apparently, her exaggerated bias and intentions to pave the way for the subjects of her 'clan cleansing' project to be seen as 'victims' runs counter to the reading of the situation by those of us (at the time I was editor-in-chief of Banadir Newspaper) who witnessed the dynamics of the unfolding events of the Daarood-Hawiye or Hawiye-Hawiye (Mahdi vs. Aideed) wars of 1991-1992 and beyond.

By contaminating her work with what certain scholars would term as "intellectual contraband" (Grigorian, 2007:186), Kapteijns must have perceived that the best method (without supporting field research) to justify a case for yesterday's oppressors to assume (alongside the Bantu Jareer) a position as today's victims of 'clan cleansing' (Kapteijns' academicized fabrication) was for her to somehow layoff conventional knowledge far back in this context. Therefore, by transforming a beaten armed warrior into a civilian victim (at least in her writing), she would then dismiss existing

scholarship that reveals the vicious atrocities of discrimination, hatred, and stigma, which her supposedly *cleansed clan* had been perpetrating not only against the Bantu Jareer people but by extension against the whole country and in distinct modes; from pre-colonial period through post-independence as well as during the current situation of anarchy, to introduce just a tip of the iceberg (consult ‘*Libro Verde*’ doc. 2, p.27 – communication between Filonardi in Zanzibar and Crispi, then Italian Prime Minister; Robin Hallet, 1999:130, 131; ‘*Libro Verde*’, doc. 11, annex 1, p.40 – Treaty of Protection; ASMAI, pos. 59/1, f.8 – communication between Lunay in Berlin, Germany, and Crispi, March 1889; ASMAI, pos. 59/1, f.5 – containing Yusuf Ali’s declaration in Alula in April 1889; ‘*Libro Verde*’, doc. 29, annex II, p.69; Douglas Collins 1960; Ahmed 1996; Besteman 1999; Mariam A. Gassim 2002; O. Eno 2004; Abdulahi Osman 2007; M. Eno 2008; BRT Somalia 1995; Martin Hill 2010; Mohamed Ingiriis 2012; A. Kusow & M. Eno forthcoming).

The concern thus remains, when academics suffocate the truth about Bantu Jareer oppression by overriding all the literature available, and most recently the US sponsorship of the Bantu for resettlement at a staggering number of about 14,000 people, one would be enticed to join in Kapteijns’ circus of theatrical satire, if only for the sake of illuminating the *fadhi-ku-dirir* stance chosen by the scholar, though not worthy slithering off the academic ladder with her. For, from an analytical point of view, Kapteijns’ accounts on the Bantu Jareer need no further interpretation than classify them within the domain of hatred, hate narrative and denial of academic facticity, despite her accusation of the same on others. But facts should be untapped in their consistent manner, and sometimes by engaging the communal lore that sets the premise of our social culture:

*Gani ii gabalaalooow gaanjiwaa taqaan  
Gambaalo ad gaarin see ku guntaheey?*

*Gabalaalow* (classic design) gold jewellery is for high life females  
How dare one dress (haut couture) *gambaalo* one is yet to attain  
the class?

This is to reveal that, from the outset, Kapteijns contradicts herself (as she does throughout the work in concern) by first describing the Bantu Jareer as ‘socially discriminated’ before adding in a quick glimpse that they also benefited from ‘considerable’ advantages. Here again, and in line with the mist and inconsistencies I mentioned above, one wonders how a research scholar would be oblivious of the paradigmaticity that a ‘socially discriminated’ community has, by that act of discrimination, automatically been excluded from existing opportunities; and that one in that kind of social oppression would not perform on equal platform with his oppressor who is simultaneously the composer and conductor of the discrimination orchestra. However, evasiveness from accuracy, (not to mention academic factuality) seems to have created self-obstruction to Kapteijns, especially her potential to explain how in the Somali context a community excluded as the *other* could at the same time be offered ‘considerable’ opportunities by the same proponents who are also the creators and corporate leaders of the exclusion enterprise. Worse even, Kapteijns’ hypothesis regarding ‘considerable...opportunity’ to the Jareer suffers from lack of necessary supporting evidence that might help it hold its firm ground to disprove the conventional version suggesting the oppression and ethnic discrimination the community has been entangled with.

With that uncorroborated note, and regardless of any intrinsic or extrinsic motives, a devastating compromise of academic credibility is evident in the chronicling of *sheeko-xariir*-like concoctions of myths and trails of inaccurately conceived and consumed datum of whatever kind. Needless to suggest the informants constitute the affiliates and affinities of the very core players who consciously wrecked the country into the mayhem, drained state coffers, sucked the blood of the hardworking citizens (read also M. Eno, 2012, *Corpses on the Menu*), but who for some time now have been striving to switch position as victims. They have been desperate to attain the position to the extent that they could utilize every possible means, from mean propaganda to the nib of those not deeply conscious of the ethno-political conundrums locked in the underbelly of the Somali society in its holistic nature. The enormity of such manipulation is luminous from the ‘*clan cleansing*’ work itself that the selected informants were crafty enough to capitalize mainly on the information gap in the part of the researcher; particularly the investigator’s lack of analyticality to

sift through the idealistic account offered and the realistic environment that she vehemently compromised. Additionally, they provided her with half-baked data supported by their knowledge of the researcher's limitations concerning her lack of fieldwork information, thus apparently exploiting the constrictor.

Professor Kapteijns' study reminds us of earlier studies about the southern Somalia communities in general and the Bantu Jareer in particular, where they have been victims of misleading and utterly biased academic works whose authors had neither set foot in the area they were investigating nor had any contact with the communities they claimed to have studied and become authority on. If Lewis was blamed yesterday as a 'colonial writer' (and to some degree a 'racist') serving the purpose of his nation and its interests, '*Clan Cleansing*' has been devised as a clear clan mouthpiece through which dishonest diasporic informants attempt to conceal their culpability in the role they played in the national impasse. By far, though, the work is so shy of demonstrating relevant field study to support the contextual assertions it tends to mitigate about the multi-layered deprivations of the Bantu Jareer people to whom Kapteijns refers collectively as slaves from parts of Africa, thereby denting the historian's ethics in approaching the subject from its multi-diagonal spheres. The conspicuous elements of compromise on the one part, and the mythical nature of the study on the other, give a reason for the bard to an accusing finger at the culprit:

*Been ku baytamoow ninkii besi waayo*

*Banaan bood leheenaan baal laaga tifaa*

The necessitation is urged partly by the academicization of the fallacies Kapteijns has smeared against the Bantu which, in turn, entices not only a redirecting of the truth in its right course, but indeed as a message to the producer about people's awareness, lest the reappraisal of the consequences of the discrepancies is orderly placed for future consciousness of her work. In effect, the contention derives from the reality that according to factual academic paradigm, a work whose pillars were built on the foundation of irrelevant (know-all) informant unrelated to the theme, only contaminates the essence of the study in its material and moral value in both validity as well as

reliability, internally much so as it spreads the contamination externally.

My contention here suggests that the categorical distinction between the fieldwork approach and the *third party* approach can be gleaned from the quality of the works of the scholars who conducted their inquiry in the respective areas in the country and those from the mindset of simplistic hearsay paradigm of scholarship. In other words, those who seek ‘authority’ status through affinities, affiliations and short-cuts do not in any way deserve comparability to the researchers who based their investigation on participation; by taking that academically daring extra mile of living with the community, and accessing their sentiments and emotions in the context of their day-to-day life. The latter category of scholars avail themselves to the opportunity of acquiring firsthand information from the subjects themselves, thereby accessing the communal culture and life as experienced in their natural undertaking. Relatively, the poet’s classification of the two types of scholars reflectively ensues, as explained in the couplets below:

*Buug baani-hawaas (lee) ma loo barahaayo*  
*Besteman bur sooraay Bantu la cuneeysi!*

That learning (about a community) does not occur in vacuum (is true of)  
Besteman who has surely lived the Bantu culture and philosophy of life

*Bilaaajo nin gaarin Buufoow agahiis*  
*Bal ganleey ku taalaaw bariid u mudaa!*

A researcher ignorant of the subjects of his study  
Meets pitfalls of mistaking maize with rice (sullyng his work)

*Adoo bukureey bariito ku boowin*  
*Bu’aalena gaarin buug see ku dhigeey?*

How can one unfamiliar with a culture  
Chronicle a volume about its community?

Since I sprinkled a few *shurub* couplets in Somali Bantu Jareer dialect of the environs of Afgoye, let me now take a brief poetic

excursion into the Somali pastoral medium, one which the author of the work concerned in these few paragraphs might find it easy to decode:

*Runta lama saluugo oo saani baa loo sare adkeeyaaye*  
*Subac nin akhriyoo salaadi gabay janna hore usoo seegye*  
*Sanado tagey nin suulayoo sibraarkii biyo daadshey*  
*Wallee suus baad qooyatoo kaa sid weyn sarbeebti garanweyday*  
*Siriq qabiil adaa ku sirmayoo siiri colaad kugu yeeray*  
*Sabi la hasaawgi saq dhexe waa kaa ku sarjimeeyaye*  
*Saangudubka soo kuma seejinin saldhiggii aqooneede?*

The verse undergirds the fact that an unanalysed or haphazardly construed discourse of any nature bears the potential of portraying its author as a negligent victim of the author's very work, especially what pertains to ethnic studies in Somalia and more specifically the complexity of the Bantu Jareer factor whose study has been (and still is) a kind of taboo to Somali scholars. It further denotes how reckless oblivion to the biases of mono-dimensional informants can make an investigator treat a sensitive subject from the perspective of *rati-ishooli*, a one-eyed camel that grazes only from one side due to the burden of his disability.

In contrast, what the lyrical corpora in this collection reveal, and what experts (Eno & Eno 2010, 2009, 2007; Eno 2008; Lewis 2008; Ali 2004; Kusow 2004; Farah et al. 2002; Gassim 2002; Luling 2001; Besteman 1999, 1996, 1991; Ahmed 1996, 1995; Cassanelli 1995, 1982; Menkhaus 1989) as well as relief agencies and human rights organizations (Hill 2010; Lehman and Eno 2003; BRT Somalia 1995) have written about the community in question, represent the broader context of the unfilled gaps that amount to the depreciation of the 'Clan Cleansing' hamlet of narrative. Regardless, a more expressive incantation reflective of Somali Bantu Jareer dialect is also imbued here in its right order, if only for further invocation of the communal lore to bridge the lacuna:

*Bileey-shalab hadiid naqatayood been lee ka badsaweeysi  
Buugna ood ku qorati baas ma arkin Bantu Jareerweyne  
Bandarki ood fidhisiyaad bi'isi boos aqoonyahaneedka  
Baashaal hunkiis lee maad boqno-goos uskugu rideeysaa  
Barshidhac adoo ku jiro amaa taxdi been wareerkaan*

Concluding couplets:

*Boog baarka ku taal maa baanteeda heleey  
Buuta baarinkaada maxaad u berxeeysi?*

Since you are unable to remedy a contagion in the liver  
Oh Buuta! Wasn't it unworthy contaminating your learned status?

*Buuy basiiradaa waakaa buriyeen  
Been baalal leheen aay buug kuugu shuween*

Oh Buuy! With those unfounded conjectures  
They've surely dented your (academic) prowess

Kapteijns' unanalyzed statement aside, the Bantu Jareer and the other oppressed ethnicities in Somalia, call them minorities or outcasts, have not had in their memory a harmonious living environment in the peninsula. At best, they have been (and still are) treated as second class citizens and, in many circumstances, as non-citizens, (Kusow 2004; Eno & Eno 2010). One need not look far for evidence as it is factually engrained in the 4.5 political power-sharing ideology of the country. A vast majority of so-called learned men and women with titles such as Dr, Prof., Avvocato (Lawyer), Sheikh, Ugaas, Suldaan, Culumaa'uddiin, Aqoonyahan (intellectual) have all in their entirety failed to consult their faculty of reasoning (if at all they had any over and above clanocracy) over the varied consequences of the Four-Point-Five pandemic to the image of the country, nationally and also internationally.

To that extent, even a section of scholars (from the point of gain to their clan interests) procured this apartheidist segregation and oppression as a milestone, describing it a "famous 4.5 system", one which those with the internalized superior/inferior mentality saw as a

“victory” with “practical relevance” (A.M. Abdullahi [Baadiyoow] & I. Farah 2007). Yet others equated it to an “important achievement” (Mukhtar 2007), notwithstanding the fact that not only all of these are Muslims who should abide by the equality enshrined in the Islamic doctrine but, shockingly, that some are indeed specialists in Islamic Studies who should have been at the forefront of censuring the un-Islamic bond and anomaly inherent in the system! In effect, and apart from the exaggerated titles, the decision-makers of the segregationist, oppressive, degrading, derogatory and infamous Four-Point-Five (4.5) power sharing plague have in the most irresponsible manner demonstrated an enormous lack of wisdom, diabolical judgment, massive hatred, violent social marginalization, political ineptitude, and deeply entrenched moral impurity against the constituent enterprises of Islamic ethics and doctrine.

The Four-Point-Five debate and in general the issue of equality among citizens and their cultures has penetrated deeper into society that an opposing section of scholars raised the moral decadence laden to this exclusionist road map and denial of equal rights to the ethnically marginalized. Among the erudite who deprecated the contagious menace of segregation and in fact vigorously contested against its application include Abdi I. Samatar, Ali J. Ahmed, Ahmed I. Samatar, Omar A. Eno, Abdi M. Kusow, Mohamed A. Eno, Mohamed H. Ingiriis, Catherine Besteman, and ordinary citizens from all walks of life, who expressed their sentiments in forums and blogs on web sites as well as formal and informal gatherings. It is due to the enormity of the oppression and the willingness of the continuation of the epidemic by the section of society allergic to equality and human dignity, that this section is added as a clarification to Kapteijns’ disheartening comment exhibited above.

To add insult to injury, some of the advocates of the Four-Point-Five system have expressed its irreversibility because it was the *only* way the delegates at that time and in that conference could craft a method on sharing power. This, sad and deplorable as it is, makes one pity the *indheergarad* (intelligentsia) and *aqoonyahan* (intellectuals) of a nation who could not devise a solution more just and appropriate than one in which they determined the legalization and constitutionalization of the debasement and discrimination of a very important sector of the society, mainly because (among other factors mentioned above) these marginalized communities did not participate

in the insanity of looting public treasury and the ensuing atrocities of warlordism -- factors many short-sighted people consider as the yardstick for awarding accolades and accepting a clan's equality to others (see Eno & Eno 2009).

# **Part I**

## **A Brief Personal Memoir**

In appreciation of Moallim Abdulle Ali, alias Macallin Cabdulle Dheere, senior scholar of the Moallim Nuur Qur'anic and religious center (Moowlaca Macallin Nuur) at Suuqa Siigaale in Hodan District of Mogadishu, and the late Sheikh Hassan Suleen, both my Qur'anic teachers, and all the dedicated educators, men and women, from whom I learned formally or informally.

**Edification prevails  
In the essence of its being  
When  
In the memory it archives  
Sequences of experiences  
As  
Nostalgic moments of facts  
From which one retrieves  
Very  
Worthwhile resolutions  
To engage with current quandaries  
While  
One arduously prefigures  
The tussle with future challenges**

## The Bard's Parlance

*Nimbo juunigiisaan soo jooji lahaay*  
*Maxaa jib ka siiheey oo noo jiriheey?*

If I may set for each bard a container (just to dare you)  
What best thing would you fill it up with?  
—Mohamed Ali (Weershe)  
(My translation)

The potency of the bard lives in the parlance  
The parlance is nurtured in the expressive mind  
The expressive mind embodies vision  
Vision transpires human desire  
Desire becomes the host of reflection  
Reflection mirrors inspiration  
Inspiration triggers the drive in the soul  
The soul relates reality to the mind  
The mind transmits the bardic image  
The bardic image entices the tongue  
The tongue hurls the bardic parlance  
The bardic parlance reveals social dismay  
Social dismay provokes the status quo  
Status quo provoked shakes its foundation  
Foundation shaken informs disequilibrium  
Disequilibrium denotes daunting dysfunction  
Daunting dysfunction entices doom and destruction.

## Somalia: A Nation So Egalitarian?

To the colonial writers and students of Somalia's mythical egalitarian doctrine.

And their confession was in daylight:  
...So we anointed at midnight  
The imperial anthropologist  
With the egalitarian ideology:  
*We're all equal.*  
Though under the surface  
Inequality was the agenda  
We obsessively fed him with  
From the potions we stirred.  
No matter the off-track attributes  
Or the inscriptions of egalitarianism  
We have *others* forever among us  
As he approved by the colonial ink.

*Somalis* are all equal  
Of Arabian nobility  
The *others* are not our equal  
Due to their Africanity.  
Nor are they of equal intelligence  
To us, the pastoral democrats.

## **The Stigma of Identity**

Oh, how painful the stigma  
When they belittle the birthmark  
The pride of the big nose  
The particulars of the kink  
Bristle that banes them

Or

When they vilify  
Your aesthetic beauty  
And punditry at the skills  
The technological prowess  
Bestowed upon you!

Oh, how painful the stigma  
When they besmirch your being  
To cover their absolute poverty  
Of nature's beauty.

## Memories of Otherness

Coming a little late on Saturday  
Brings you to reality  
With the “harsh stick of Saturday”  
That knows not forgiving  
Over errors minor  
As minor as sleeping  
Until the sun opened  
Its face in the east.

How dearly you pay  
With harsh flogging on Saturday  
That devours your small body  
For playing with peers on Friday –  
That you may expect  
A gift of extra flogs  
When you are the *other*.

## **Otherness in the Classroom**

Another strange world  
This intimidating environment  
Peopled by small creatures clad  
In white and blue:  
The symbol of the nation  
As they say.

Steal a quick gaze to the right  
A few keen lookers at you  
Another gape to the left  
All the way to your back  
Eyes inquisitive  
Yet alert on you:  
A tale of their stunning experience  
Of how you became among them  
You who renders the atmosphere  
Of their all-nobles classroom  
Unholy, impure.

## **Ensconcing Identity**

Unlike seeds  
Are best sown apart;  
Weeds shouldn't wither  
A harvest well watered.

Falcons and fowls  
Don't feature as same  
Though all full of wings  
Each flies unlike the other.

Distinct formulas apply  
To Somali proper  
And the Somali improper;  
Though we're all humans  
Not all of us are humans.  
We are the humans  
The *others* less humans.

## **Guilt of Otherness**

The agony of being the *other*  
Stings harsher outside the school  
As peers over half the class  
Engage you in a battle  
For answering accurately  
A question they all missed.

Punches on the back head  
Bitter blows on the face  
More pounding in the belly  
Bees of peers all over your body  
Barrages of beastly kicks in your back  
Bruises blown up on parts of your temple  
Profuse gush of blood buries your face  
Which now has puffed up brutally  
To the size of a pyramid  
Yet they brag at you:  
*Is it painful?*

**‘A Shame to the Nation’: Or a Shameful Nation?**

Every ornament in a house  
Preserves its beauty  
In its place at home;  
Neither the mortar  
Nor the pestle  
Nor the sweeper  
Nor the floor  
Defers the duty  
In its domestic function.

Loading books on children  
Overburdened already with  
The stigma of a broad nose  
Assumes a mythical panacea  
Of parents beleaguered  
By wishful thinking  
Against a state policy  
That ignores low ethnicities.  
For a noble approaching  
A functionary of the ignoble  
For assistance in a public office  
Smears shame unto a nation  
So ennobled in the literatures  
Of colonial scholars.

## Stings of Otherness

Oh! Look at them!  
Look! What an irony!

Immaculate dressing we can't afford  
Albeit our status above them  
Invites a question enough genuine  
About the ownership of this land.

Is it for us, the Somali offspring,  
Or the *others* from Kenyatta land?  
Either we engage them  
In an endless fight  
Or they take from  
This route a flight.

Flight from a route  
Embodies cowardice  
Odd to our culture  
Despite our *others* status;  
Fighting all the way home  
Became our practical option  
Of the imminent engagements  
Before it took an organized gang  
To encounter us, the *others*,  
Every day on our way to school.

**“Don’t Call the Outcast ‘an Outcast’”**

One whose string was severed  
From its bond to the kinship  
Survives in a tumultuous low life  
A kinless untouchable, unwanted

He must have psychological stamina  
To endure the pejorative epithets  
We advance to acknowledge him of his  
Outcasthood, as the unacceptable inferior

Even when our offspring insults  
And the offended seeks redress  
The inferiority epithet comes  
Reaffirmed in the reproaches  
To the offending child:  
Don’t call the outcast ‘an outcast’!

## ***Nobility Debased***

Ina-Gob returns home  
With bulging sweat  
The size of African beads  
Pouring from his face  
Profusely all over his body  
As he misses the bench  
The wife placed for him.

She welcomed him with dismay  
Her failure to secure funds  
From the journeys to the kinship  
Failing to fusion to life a kitchen  
Now dead for the third day.

In a pragmatic nature the husband boasts:  
I paid a visit to the *Tumaal* blacksmith  
Who filled brand-new hundreds  
Into my penniless pockets.

Negation of wealth from Allah  
Negates me nothing as a noble  
For the non-nobles next door  
Have long been known to that narrative.

## **When the Outcast Is Adored**

When the exam questions  
Overwhelmed the entire class  
Of the so-called nobility  
And I worked out the answer  
They called me Aboowe\*  
Not “the outcast”.

When the opponents asked  
For a soccer encounter  
The nobility offered  
No outstanding striker  
And I took the day for them  
They called me Aboowe  
But not “the outcast”.

When the educational competition  
Of interscholastic achievement  
Arose to its apex  
And I bore the school torch high  
They called me Aboowe  
Not “the outcast”.

After pulling victory  
In every encounter  
The outcast asserts:  
Elevate me with endless applause  
For ensconcing your interests  
Until I’m again tomorrow  
The same old outcast  
Abused as the inhabitant of *Ureyso*\*

## Notes

*Aboowe*: means respected older brother; it is the equivalent of the Kiswahili term *kaka*.

*Ureyso*: denotes stink, filth. It is also the name of an isolated slum in Hargeysa, capital of Somaliland, where the marginalized ethnicities live, lest they *contaminate* the so-called noble society. (See also M.A. Eno & A.M. Kusow “Racial and Caste Prejudice in Somalia” forthcoming.)

### **From the Outcast's Diary**

They came in the land  
Scaring skeletons, undressed  
Ignorant in the art of survival  
By average well under  
Our living intelligence.

We embraced, humanized  
Enshrined, anointed  
Incorporated them  
Into our royal cult  
As equals among us.

When a ferocious foe from  
Across the seas attacked us  
We engaged them with spreads  
Of arrows as heavy downpour;  
Our valiant archers advanced  
To a victory so imminent  
Till the aliens we'd adopted  
Seized the opportunity  
To stab us in the back  
So they might rule the land  
Alongside the foreign raiders  
After our ill-fated defeat.

## **Part II**

# **The Debauchery of Dictatorial Leadership: A Diary**

**It was an act of mere  
Derogatory  
Mean leadership  
Mockery  
That you opted for daylight  
Robbery  
To replace the dark night  
Burglary  
Of a nation dying  
Hungry**

## On Clan Vagrants

Voraciousness rendered the leader less virtuous  
Vitiating the morals of the versed to vituperation  
The vestige of nationhood shrunk to verbosity  
Jargons verily vilifying the vibes of austerity.

He vents human variation on clan vines  
Virilities vying along kinship votes  
Vindictiveness resonating vilification vices  
Making vagabonds and villains vast and vivacious.

Viciousness reigns vibrant in the kinship vein  
Venerating the clan virus up to the vertex  
Vicars and vigilantes void of virtuoso  
Vacuous vampires victimized the public vaults.

They ventilated the ambiance with vendetta  
Often venturesome with vulgarity  
By their villainy eventually vanished  
The verdant brains the land had valued.

## **Of Alien Eponym(s)**

They purported propaganda  
On their purity of blood  
Blurring all the way  
The reality  
Of their pedigree.

Can an indefinite  
Alien immigrant  
Over-flood the earth  
With offspring many millions  
More than the entire  
Nation that adopted him!

Mendacious inscriptions  
By imperial abnormality  
Obfuscated, undermined,  
The indigenes' account of history,  
Alluding to academic entombment  
Of the aborigines' existence  
In the annals of a nation's ancient past.

## **From a Boatman to a Pedigree: A Somalo-Mythicology**

In search of identity status  
Above their Africanness  
They elevated a strange boatman  
To be their original ancestor  
Airing a mythical history impossible.

Our forefather came  
Alone,  
They say,  
Across the wild seas  
From hinterland Arabia  
In a small canoe  
That wrecked  
On the shores  
Of a then bustling Horn  
Where he married  
A local beauty  
So he'd initiate  
A phenomenal lineage  
That'd absorb into it  
The indigenes of the land  
Where he was hosted.

## **Clan Coronation**

As a haggard hag in hypnosis  
Helen fell in a horrendous hallucination  
Hollering in her waffled hangover  
For...  
Singing a hymn of wild hugger-mugger  
As she rose from hysterical hibernation

Helen then puked a misjudgment  
Through a mouthful of organism:  
I convict the citizens of the rivers  
For being hardcore oppressors;  
Period!

I duly sign the affidavit that  
Only my affinities were affected  
Period!

I authorize them for aggression  
Upon whose failure they attain  
A status of the oppressed  
Or those ethnically evaporated  
Period!

## **Nation-Building: An Irony**

In a faded dusty wear  
Tattered with holes like fishnet  
Bunde returns home hungry  
Dominating the atmosphere  
With heavy stench of cement and lime  
A symbol of his nation-building;  
He drops down in a squeaky stool  
To betray the daunting fatigue  
Of a delirious day-long duty  
Before a husky voice familiar  
From the waves of the wireless  
Proudly praised the latest projects  
And progress made in the nation.

An air of suspicion and disgust  
Got Bunde embellished  
Agitating his eons-old anger:  
Is the incumbent out of his mind?  
Ever since he entered office  
I wake up earlier than everyone  
Ending my activity later than all  
In the dark gloomy evening  
Eating once a day a meal meager  
Unable to afford a pair of slippers  
Or an attire to change this old outfit!

### **The Nation: Eaters vs. Builders**

The engine of my obsolete companion  
Struggles to rumble in its unhealthy condition  
Both of us weary and fatigue-ridden  
In a hot day's duty of late '80s Mogadishu.

I stop for a glass of water to refresh myself  
And a gallon to refill my *Dibille* tipper aged  
At shacks of kiosks in the vicinity of Hotel Taleh  
After taking two or three soothing sips  
A colleague cries out to cut short my repose:  
“Keep yourself up in quelling your dryness  
The couple of us sitting to quench our thirst  
May diminish the pillars holding a nation of  
Crippled crocodiles caged in this  
Glamorous hotel to consume on our sweat.”

As I looked at the hotel side I discovered  
Cute cars parked clean in every corner  
Crowds of army men, courses of functionaries  
Consciously committed in fruitless conversation  
Over kettles of *caff  nero*, *caff  latte*, and *cappuccino*  
Compromising the conscience of work ethics.

## **Effigies of Tribalism**

Dummies impregnated down to the feet  
Depict directions of opinions different  
Dipping with them tribalism  
Into deep earth  
As we dream of drawing into one  
Diverse ethnicities  
A symbol of impossible deviation  
From old days' path  
When in duels we devastated each other  
For clan dignity.

Death, as they say, is attributable  
To the destiny of one mortal  
Its decreeing rests on the authority  
Of the Immortal divine  
Who taught us that neither dummies  
Nor effigies are due to death;  
Disentombing clan dummies  
Does worry no man  
As death in no way occurred  
To my dear clan!

## **Blessed Revolution: Breadless Nation**

Blessed be the revolution of our nation  
Our saviour from the subtleties of urban democracy;  
The ubiquity of monuments, and control of folklore  
Dances by illiterate victory pioneers malfeasant  
Reveal the indicators of years of success realized  
Remarkable guidelines our ruling junta charted:

Land expropriation, political prisoners,  
Kangaroo courts, elite disappearances,  
Misappropriation of public funds,  
Capital flight and massive brain drain  
Mark the great passion for social development.  
Our daily praise songs of the nation's father,  
The beloved teacher of the breadless nation,  
Add footnotes to our appreciation  
Of jubilation when we jump in jovial ululation  
Not brave enough to break our bond of loyalty  
As we build the nation his puppets plundered  
And he butchers people who plead with pain;  
Yet we're obedient in our participation of  
The Starvation Competition he infused  
Into the national sport agenda,  
Which we *voluntarily* play  
In the massive graves  
He made our stadium.

## **The Social Interpretation of XHKS**

Fresh from his rural home at sunset  
An artist's billboard attracts Aw Caraale  
Who scrutinizes the images with anxious look  
Admiring the expertise of artwork implemented  
But unable to decode the inscription, *XHKS hanoolaado*.

His grandson helps to decode the difficulty as  
Xisbiga Hantiwadaagga Kacaanka Soomaaliyeed hanoolaado  
An urban dweller's revolutionary jargon wishing  
Long life to The Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party.

Dissatisfied with the notion of the revolutionary edifice  
Aw Caraale injects a thought-provoking interpretation  
Deductively engraving the tone into an inquisitive mode –  
Xoow-Hee Ku Siiyey hanoolaadee?  
What has XHKS offered you (society)  
To deserve your wish for its longevity?

## **From Camel Rustling to Aid Rustling**

My barbaric cousin was born  
In a bustling field of beasts  
Profuse with illegal property  
Stolen booty from the public –  
Indeed a child-breeding norm  
Inherited from pirating ancestors.

Hence he professes:  
State budget and public coffers  
Run at perfect par to the clan property  
Of which we are the prime beneficiaries  
Regardless of the poor citizens  
Whose productivity we exploit  
To contain them in chronic poverty.

## **Clan Kiosks**

As the dictator's candidate of choice  
Nominated on the lunchtime news  
Suddenly a figure important  
Called a minister prominent;  
Wishes and congrats continue  
Culminating to uncountable numbers.

Calibrated losers among clan idlers  
Quintessential idiots of the kinships  
Impregnate the arena with imprudent chatter  
Of cabinet kiosks whose keys  
Kinfolks were made the custodians of  
To cater for the contagion of clan avarice.

## **“And Boots Too”**

The incumbent’s frequent trips  
Often destinations in Arabia  
Left astonishment among the citizenry  
Who sang: He who often trots to and fro  
On a torrid terrain long and harsh  
Tends much to tire the footwear.

Is he back? The daring elderly asked  
Announcement stated he’s in, answered another  
Has he got any aid funds? Asked the sneering citizen  
And boots too! Ended the dialogue.

## **The Overnight Millionaire**

In our African homeland  
Millionaires are made miraculously  
Men who once made a living as  
Mini drivers doubling as messengers  
Discovered the demonic rhythm  
Of a dance called *Clan Disease*  
In a society so much dedicated  
To demonstrate national dignity.

Before the night waned to dawn  
Mini drivers were decreed millionaires  
By clan-manufactured miracles  
Molding a mix of ideas beyond the metaphor  
Of mocking renowned millionaires.

The newly made millionaires malign  
Manhandle top managers and ministers.  
Our mighty millionaires mapped  
Their model of the military police  
Mass murderers of the meanest mindset  
In minutes shelling mankind like maggots  
Before making away with millions  
They mugged from the ministries.

## **The Lady of the Land Cruiser**

Lady of the Land Cruiser  
Have you a better name  
Or any name at all?  
Yesterday you drove blue  
I called you Ms. Blue  
The other day you drove brown  
I dubbed you Ms. Brown  
Today you man a red one  
So I call you Ms. Red  
If you're in a white car tomorrow  
Won't you be Ms. White?

Lady of the Land Cruiser  
How many are your degrees?  
How big are the wages  
That afford you the affluence?

Alas! Blushed as you were in the bank  
That day you sought my assistance  
To inscribe for you figures monstrous  
On the leaf of your personal check  
Insisting I sign it in your place  
Though strangers to each other.

## **Lamentations: A Forsaken Leader**

Big promises you made  
To die by my side  
But you unfulfilled to take pride  
During the fratricide;  
Most of you sought to hide  
A majority made a quick ride.

Bedevilled as you are now in every stride  
When all you feel is: what a deride!

## Royal Reminiscences

How fast the flip of time!  
Wasn't I the absolute authority,  
A great incumbent in yesteryears  
Ruling under me a nation strong  
Autonomous sovereignty enjoyable  
Dispatching orders none could ignore  
An investment evident of my powers?

Alone in my thoughts unconscious  
In the environment of a strange land  
Alienated from the world outside  
Including the amenities of my authority  
Ending up an immigrant without identity  
Encapsulated in a hotel room with less accolade.

Today's emergency call empties my soul  
Opposition party of my host nation  
Enforced the motion for my abdication  
Inquiring into the amounts incurred  
On the expenditure of my sojourn  
In a few days spiralling over a million.  
It entails yet another migration murky  
Obscure future, unknown destiny,  
Anguish at my unfilled aspirations  
Foretell of an anomalous omen fastidious  
An unremitting blizzard in the backyard.

## **Part III**

# **Losers and Gainers: Glimpsing Africa's Civil Wars**

**Some died of blood money  
Some died for blood money  
Some died in blood money  
While some gained blood money  
In the “fight against terrorism”  
By Uncle Sam’s mannerism  
Justified with pragmatism  
In the Horn’s warlordism**

## War Sonnet

Significance holds  
In me to save  
My kin serpents:  
They send me to battle  
Every secret mission  
And I am satisfied.  
If I cease to sustain  
In the salient warfare  
Suspend me to be  
A sacrificial lamb  
So others may survive  
To sing my sonnet  
Of clan sanctity  
And superiority.

## **The Heartless**

He who was born hungry  
For human blood  
Remains as the heartless  
Who hail from *Hawd*,  
The inhabitable forests.

He who is habituated  
As heinous to hurt  
Heeds not harmony  
In human dignity  
But to cause harm  
To innocent humans  
Hallucinating the helpless  
In every hideous manner.

## **Armed for Booty**

On that fateful day  
They ventured fatally  
As a team exceeding twenty  
To the teeth armed technically  
Tipped to attack two herders  
Tending a treasure of livestock.

Lo! Scores of tens and twenties  
Turbans tightly knotted on the head  
Took us from every open turf  
Tormenting every hell to break loose  
On the arena in their timidless fight  
Two of us left lucky to survive  
In a typical set of tacit trap!

## War Fantasy and Female Warlords

What many a Browning machine gun  
We manned along male colleagues madly  
We were hiding out in the farmhouses  
And dry forests in a remote land unreachable  
Firing from muddy trenches during heavy downpour  
Ambushing, engaging columns of enemy convoys  
Killing senior colonels and commanders-in-chief  
In the bombardments of our Best Bride Brigade.

Who said we didn't clinch victory  
With the Kalashnikov and the M16;  
Who said we didn't climb into the tanks  
Or the armored personnel carriers,  
The field artillery that rocked the earth?  
Who said we didn't launch the anti-aircraft missiles?

Who else could afford the espionage operations  
We executed under cover of our exquisite veils  
When in the streets of Mogadishu men often  
Fell easy prey in targeted enemy territories?

From feeding the clan army to  
Physical fighting in the frontline  
We functioned far too well  
Than one could fathom from our felony!

Though our fame as the *forsaken females*  
Fitted to down-fume our ferociousness  
The fantasy of killing felt fair and fine with us  
Finally honoring our female warlords!

## **Exodus into the Wilderness**

First in the west  
Then in the east  
Later in the north  
Last in the south.

Unleash the artillery  
Enemy out of the hideouts  
Aeroplanes in the air  
Armed men in arrays  
Automatic rifles ruinous  
Citizens caught in  
Chaotic cross-firing  
Sickly smell of gunpowder  
Confusion, frustration  
Giant salvos jostled homes  
Leaving dozens deaf and dumb;  
Hand grenades were hurled  
Huge hugger-mugger ensued  
Past the doorstep lay tens deceased  
Fed on by millions of fat maggots.  
Restless survivors escaped into a wasteland  
Through audacious expedition  
Sharing the wilderness with wildlife  
Than sharing word with humans wild.

## **Killing a Close Kin**

The Kalashnikov cocked  
Coughing out bits of hot copper  
Freshly spilled blood  
Covered the cute car outside  
Crowds of people keenly observe  
The young killer in combat gear  
Carrying the corpse calmly aside  
In complacent admiration of its keys  
That caused him to kill a caring uncle.

## **The Grave-looting Game**

Grief-stricken relatives perspiring at sunrise  
Paying painful homage to a dear one who  
From rocket shells the night before retired from life.

While reciting the invocation verses  
Before interring the corpse in its rest place  
In the horizon appeared an army anonymous.

Rumbling bullets shimmered into the crowd  
Adding more anxiety to the stampede  
As the dead was abandoned at the graveyard.

Upon returning after resumption of calm  
Indeed in the coffin the body still lay intact  
Only alienated from its tomb by another corpse  
Ending up a victim again after death  
Of a grave-looting game by an armed gang.

## **Kinship Loyalty**

Beyond significance  
It is so sacrosanct to save  
My serpentine kin;  
Send me to battle  
Every secret mission;  
If I cease to sustain  
In salient warfare  
Suspend me to be  
A sacrificial lamb.

## **A Proud Killer**

Born hungry  
For human blood  
A hideous hawk  
Hailing from heartlessness  
Heinous to hurt.

He heeds nothing  
But to cause harm  
To innocent humans,  
Hallucinating the helpless  
In every hateful way.

### **An Ill-fated Attack**

A team exceeding twenty  
To the teeth armed technically  
Tipped to attack two herders  
Holding tangible treasure of wealth  
Taking them to task turbulent  
In a timidless fight.

Lo! Scores of tens and twenties  
Turbans tightly knotted to the head  
Took us from every open turf  
To break loose a tormenting hell  
As the try for wealth tempted us into  
A typical set of tacit trap!  
Two of us survived to tell  
The tale of that fateful day.

### **“It Needs Bold Men Today!”**

Heavy gunfire deafened the environment  
Premonition of the unprecedented baffled  
The dozen or so skinny young warriors  
Who fell in disarray of team organization.

From his bed their ailing intrepid leader states:  
“Under-equipped boys less than ten or eleven  
Leave little to stand for the thunder blast roaring –  
Oh! How today’s burden needs men enough!”

The groaning of the guns intensified  
Precursor of untameable enemy closing in:  
Victory is unlikely in our situation  
Evacuate me right away, snarled the commander.

The touching words traumatized the frantic  
Militia who paced out in the open with  
A piece of white cloth tied around their heads  
As a token of bravery on the path to death;  
A signal shot burst to take up positions  
Two teams dispersed to left and right  
The middle column responding and retreating  
Blasts of gun powder pounding unabated  
Exchanges of bazookas and rockets sprawled  
The sickly commander crawled to the door  
To die a manly death: fighting,  
Than die in bed, as a coward *hiding*.

Soon the boys returned home  
Fantasized at the height of joy  
Stomping in the rhythm of folk chant  
Hollering to a hyper hymn of fiesta:  
“Oh! How today’s burden got men enough!”

## **Confidential: From Mogadishu to Abidjan**

So abruptly... heh!  
Those who hypnotized Taylor in a hunt down  
Entered me into the ICC book of culprits  
Over the death of thousand Ivorians unknown  
Omitting those eliminated from my side  
As undesirables invalidated from earth.

The astounding knowledge in me  
The average wisdom I employed  
Did not attract Uncle Sam to the options  
I laid in the academic resolutions I offered;  
Instead, they abducted me against my wish  
Airlifting me in front of Africa to the ICC arena  
Before indicting my innocent wife;  
What is your opinion, experienced warlords  
Of Africa's Northerly Horn?

*Balaayaa ka dhacday!* Hell broke loose!  
When you sought the resort to reasoning  
You spoil every opportunity in your docket  
By ignoring Uncle Sam as the elderly authority  
Of evil, all things irredentist, irrational.

Understanding Uncle Sam needs not academic intellect,  
We liquidated away from life over half a million humans  
And went scot-free with it we engaged him once or twice  
In the '90s; only God knows what happened!  
From those misunderstandings emerged this bilateral treaty:  
We implicate a few youths and radical Islamists  
To affiliation with Al Qaeda and unknown dissidents  
Scare the sh\*\* out of him: that another attack could be  
Imminent on the shores of the US in view of  
The reliable information we access from  
The local agents of Al Qaeda. And Uncle Sam, scared to death,  
Offered us monthly stipends in hundreds of thousands

Every end month, for incriminating others against him  
As we seek his consent to disincriminate us – reciprocally –  
Of all the atrocities we committed over the last two decades,  
Understanding Uncle Sam needs not academic intellect.

## **Part IV**

# **Leadership Lost: The Somali Transitional Administrations**

**The burst of whispers  
Into the height  
Left us frozen  
In our fright:  
That  
Lucifer courted them  
At night  
To constitute the state  
At day's light,  
Convening them  
Into horrible fight  
That blew public coffers  
Into flight**

## **The *Ideal* Warlord!**

My way, or their way?  
Who makes the real law?  
Memos signed in the middle of the night?  
Or the mindless adamant in my persona?

Monies were spent on mean delegates  
Seeking recourse from harsh life at home  
Celebrating honeymoons in the hotel rooms  
Folks lacking hope to harness a nation.

I'm here to hobble head-on  
Every noble initiative named nationalism;  
Either I gain, or it ends a zero-sum game  
No matter the consequences I'll meet  
For the obstinacy installed in me.

Make a memo of understanding with me  
The master of the marauding militia  
Who man much military equipment  
In most of the major townships.

## **Parliamentarian Pugilists**

The criteria for our parliamentarians  
In the TFG charter in quotations  
Informs qualities high in notions  
In the art of Kung Fu and Karate  
Kickboxing, wrestling, and conquering  
The cowards seeking cabinet posts  
Corner each other along the corridors  
Unleash fast jabs followed by uppercuts  
Bare-knuckled blows in athletic styles  
Until the body of the weak is bundled  
Over the podium with brilliant maneuver.

## **A Cult Called Clan Cabinet**

In his briefcase  
Carrying a portfolio  
As beautiful a souvenir  
As a bouquet of roses  
Albeit its blossom not beyond  
The borders of the bag itself  
Though a belligerent tribe  
Bellows it out as a pride  
A potent membership to  
A cult called cabinet  
Assigned to cater  
For the clan compatriots.

Betrayed by a passion  
For clan politics  
The bouquet briefcase  
Borders poignant promises  
Bulging with pride bolted  
On merely plastered pillars  
Breaking from inside  
Due to poor workmanship.

## Modern Minister's Confession

Over the past two decades and a while  
Us Somalis sprouted into two Diaspora entities  
*Adeegte: He who serves himself to public property* and  
*Aqoon-lafadhiye: He who loafs around with knowledge*  
I opted to settle for *Adeegte* for self-service.

I'm an immigrant enrolled  
In several countries around  
At the end of every month  
Or even a fortnight term  
I wait in a dole queue long  
To claim state alimony.

As an expert in the art as *Adeegte*  
I also squandered a cabinet post  
In my country of origin  
To access the unlimited funds  
Entering our nation from outside  
To extend our cabinet income.  
*Aqoon-lafadhiye*, though erudite,  
Is sitting idle to educate others  
While earning one income small  
Every period of two fortnights –  
After insurance bill and taxes axed  
Barely earning enough for a living.

## **Kiosks, Coffee Shops, and Corner Garages**

Our Transitional Federal Charter  
Adopted recent changes further  
Vital for our sovereign state  
That Mogadishu despite the capital  
Cabinet meetings as well as  
Crucial legislative conferences  
Could be held in the coffee shops  
And small kiosks in Kenya's  
Squalid Eastleigh quarters.

For reasons of convenience, comfort, and class  
As clarified in the clauses of the canon charter:  
Coffee shops for cabinet meetings  
Kiosks for legislative conferences  
Corner garages for the committee congress.

## **Today and Tomorrow**

If tomorrow does promise no rains  
Any better than our today's droughts  
Won't the dark of the night cast plagues  
Of malice into the new dawn's plights?  
Among beloved brothers and sisters  
When hatred engulfs the hearts --  
Won't prudence vow communal deviations  
From the details of the social norms  
That border personal ideals  
With natural realities?

## **Part V**

### **A Limerick on Lame Academic Leadership**

**Oh, Mr. Guardian!  
Your proliferation  
Of a top brass inept  
Led to the celebration  
Of staff moral decimation  
As enviable glorification –  
Hence the unethicity vibrant  
In your leadership malignant  
Though only I can state it  
In the crowded open market**

### **The Poet: A Leader**

As the marine is bequeathed  
With miracles so magic  
And heavens take pride  
With beauties magnificent  
As the night stars and moon  
Promise another day and destiny  
And the wise query fairness  
In the balance of a judgment passed  
The poet engraves on the memory  
A textual contour of the theme  
Portrayed from the conscious mind  
And the searching eyes and soul  
Of the intrinsic social emotion  
Entertained with apocryphal talk  
Entrapped in an airtight realm  
Intrigued by long lost aspiration.

## **Moral Decimation**

Over a span of eons  
Your allergy to ethics  
Augmented the ailments

The torment of aimlessness  
Imbided in the appeals  
Of your emptied souls  
Abrogated the ideals  
Of our academic excellences

When eighty percent of our harvest  
Earn less than a projected eminence  
Anger grips the entire land  
But the two top cooks burst  
Shamelessly into laughter  
And the untouched, turban-clad  
Topmost chef takes tens  
Of compatriot kitchen cabinet to joyride  
While two toadying tobacco-teasers team up  
To turn over the outcome top down  
For the table of our earnings to read  
“Only twenty percent drop-out”

## Charlatans' Chicanery: A Poetic Barb

To the poor old boy of the Nile Valley who sounded convinced that colonialism had helped Africa.

When I gather momentum without goof or gibber  
I glow the verse to gravitate into gradual height  
So I grab the gadfly and gauge his glitch good  
To spill his garbage galore in the African griots' gala  
Rather than gawk and let go of one galvanized with graft.

A gangling African ganger's gibberish language  
Got me to gape at him in gimmick disgust with gloom  
On how he gurgled a gargantum account of colonial glee  
Garnishing imperialism as great achievement Africa gained  
From its grisly gang-raping by the Western ghosts!  
Such is the decayed grain the continent got:  
A go-between gob, glib-tongued gossiper  
Good-for-nothing gofer in global terms  
Colonial gardener elevated as super gatekeeper  
Gormless guide and graduate in gift-wrapping  
Master of grand jugglers ghastly in every gathering.

Woe to thee whom society cursed as:  
Genetic germ to the genre African genus  
Guru in the art of goading the good-hearted  
Goody-two-shoes genuflecting for the pseudo grandee  
So they may gate-crash you into a leadership gazebo  
To gerrymander the goalposts that gauge morality.

### **A Tactless Toady**

Wild whispers went around  
Waging war of words on  
The timid tactical survivors  
Within the turf of their tummies  
A cursed lot beaten of any edifying talent.

Our community calls them  
Toadying culprits tranquil  
With minuscule titbits,  
Tie-clad thieves who take  
A tiny ticket or twenty-fiver  
For which they topple  
The towering traits and token  
Of our top-notch center of talent.

## The Incompetent

Let me lampoon the worthless Luddite  
With the lancet of the luminous lines:  
Laggard laagers in long lullaby  
Lackadaisical lizards limping  
Low-level lackeys lagging behind  
Loathsome lapdogs lapping for largesse  
Landscaping for lucre as the lynchpin of life  
Liquidating a learning hub into lame duck  
Lewd bumpkins of letdown to the literati.

My look of things lured me hence to state:  
    Didn't they see how –  
Loopholes lay large enough in your leadership?  
    Leading to the description of –  
    Lotus-eaters in the locality of illiterate lords.  
Didn't I hear society say: the mean don't grow  
Above licking boots for gain of little opportunity? –  
    Before our octogenarian chief attributed them:  
Lumberjacks lowering the head down to the loin  
Less learned in the logics of leadership, though  
    Lumped into a top lacuna without a ladder  
    Like the lustreless loungers in ancient lores  
    Who took leisure amid a looming landslide!

## **Nefarious Nexus**

Strong and weak leaderships exist everywhere, in every profession, and academia is not an exception. This verse is dedicated to all men and women academics who at some point in their professional life felt oppressed, frustrated or marginalized for one reason or another by the powers that be in their respective institutions.

As a self-proclaimed property  
Nobility does not warrant  
Noblesse oblige, for  
Self-respect negates to be nestled  
In the nexus of a nefarious one  
Long forsaken by society.

Prudence once betrayed by prowess  
May play proxy to poetic justice, but  
As when boastful belligerents get beaten  
Procrastinators may bear the blame  
When breach of promises becomes virulent  
Scholars may place the guilt on wicked leadership.

## **Pitiable Leadership: So Noxious a Premonition**

On that day, like the era of the Arab Spring,  
Academics advanced to express the ailments  
That amputated the endurance of their tolerance  
As they uttered out and loud in front of inhabitants  
Astonished, abysmally emotional:

Unacademicality embraced unethicity  
Unethicity embellished immorality  
Immorality ushered in hypocriticality  
Hypocriticality hinged its fate on vanity  
Vanity celebrated academic unethicity.

When barren patches breed no more  
Like ponds of water in drought and thirst  
Psyches empty of reason glorify unjust  
Promising no meaningful remedy to adore  
Except the soul's violent persistence to exist  
In minds and morals decayed, defunct.

Our current observation alludes to  
Eruptions of evil in the environment  
Infections by wolves worthless, inept  
Elbowing the astute in favor of ethnicity  
So they insist on the application  
Of a pedagogy severely a calamity;  
A status quo horrendously insanity  
Stressed much as appalling, a pity!

Analysis of our observation entails  
Academics under oppression  
Unendurable commotion  
Antagonistic suppression.  
If unabated the frustration,  
Promptly with precaution,  
It may entice invincible petition

As an ultimate consolation  
That ejects as a solution  
The incumbent in desolation  
Desperation, dilapidation  
Derogation, denunciation.

Aside of the lurid lamentation  
We assure our loyalty  
To the lovely ones we lactate  
Inside the lecture hall.

## **Disadvantage: Dichotomous Diction**

We own no leverage  
In our habitat Disadvantage  
Where we live under bondage;  
Because in Disadvantage  
The elderly wear the bandage  
After inflicting others the damage.

Once upon in Disadvantage  
They endorsed sixty as the band age  
That one should quit Disadvantage.

One day, a senior delivered a message  
Asking a tenant to hit the passage  
For touching the ceiling of the band age  
Though the carrier of the message  
Had a decade ago crossed the limit age.

Lo! How that messenger in our Disadvantage  
Is mean to cover many a mileage  
Till we pay him the final homage!

## **Till We Became Unseen!**

We followed the decree  
That everything should be  
Unseen  
So we created the vocabulary quiz  
As an assessment based on the  
Unseen  
And the comprehension quiz  
Had to follow suit and be  
Unseen  
Weekly tests and unit tests  
Should reflect the same as  
Unseen  
Paving the way for the exit test  
To conclude all assessments of the  
Unseen  
Till our efforts and motivations  
Were tossed into the trash and made  
Unseen

## **Reshuffles, Stunts, and Servants**

A vigilant insider  
Is never fooled  
By the tricks  
Of the stunt master  
No matter  
What the perceived  
Magic he performed.

And as the Arabic adage goes,  
Sometimes:  
The likelihood of the coming rains  
May be predictable from the clouds.

Can reallocations  
Within hamlets  
Therefore  
Caution us as forewarnings  
For disturbing endings  
Looming for the chefs  
In the royal courts?

## **Languish without Lament**

In the wake of his authority  
The incumbent felt  
Like an enormous *angel*  
In the environs of heavens  
Built in his castle,  
The base of the beauty  
That portrays his prowess.

He saw with more eyes  
Than other humans;  
He heard every word  
Through the auditory organs  
Of the inauspicious spies  
He installed among us  
Innocent interlocutors.  
He admonished all to regard  
A state of expressionlessness:  
Look but do not see  
Listen but do not hear  
Languish but do not lament.

When the torrential rains  
From societal remorse  
Shook the foundations  
Of the castle into fractures  
Cracks, leaks, flakes  
Then came the loud calls  
To contain the king's courts;  
With comfort we cast our claims:  
We look but we don't see  
We listen but we don't hear  
When you languish we don't lament!

## **Of Primates and the Boat: A Poetic Drama**

### **Episode I**

#### **Sanura, the Rejects, and Desert Seal**

Admiral Desert Seal took over Sanura,  
A fast-sailing craft in the summer  
Which sustained the hardships of winter  
Spring, fall, and the damnedest  
Of wild monsoon weathers  
Till due to his dangerous daftness  
He siphoned the admiralship  
To an ineligible old ape from  
The environs of the white river.

Alongside came another  
An easy-going mandrill,  
A sibling of the ape,  
To operate under the command  
Of a lousy chimp labeled among  
The rejects of Uncle Sam's offspring;  
His amorphous errands included  
To oversee the chores  
Of an incapable brute,  
Immensely ineffectual,  
Though imported from  
Elizabeth's Isle.

## Episode II

### A Call Too Desperate

When sailors surmised the high seas  
As symptoms of sad endings  
For the sail of pretty Sanura  
The senior primates  
Suggested impractical solutions  
That made Sanura unsailable.

The ensuing anger of the sailors  
Spelled out sour afflictions  
Of a long-enduring curse.  
Gloom of spirits unheard of  
Eliminated a cunning couple  
Into high seas home-bound  
Humiliated with devilish haunt.

Then cruel waves turned turbulent  
Tossing Sanura into spins  
That took the tactless three weary,  
An overwhelm of gnawing anxiety  
In the overheated engine-room,  
An alarming SOS aloud:  
Shutters!  
Cracks!  
Floods!

### Episode III

#### The Sinking: May the Lord Save Sanura!

A besieged three began the blame game;  
Seal bombarded his pithless aides  
With baleful taunts unbearable  
Then burst at the bashed, belittled creatures:  
*Poor performance, bogus credentials*  
*Both of you sacked with no benefits!*

Feeling a betrayed perpetrator,  
Seal pulled a telegraphed paper  
From Sanura's parent owner;  
His period as the principal  
Was brought to blushing end  
Burgeoning the pustules  
Of the bad omen perturbing  
His ballooning potbelly!

Before airing his plea for pardon  
Against the board's bashing decision  
The potential saviors had parted ways  
With the three beleaguered primates  
Sailing off in the last safety boat  
Singing a sorrowful song  
In soothing smiles:  
"Hi De Hi, Hi De Ho!"

## **The Unethical**

Preaching what is not practiced  
Burgles the bosom and boosts  
Bankruptcy in brain-thinking,  
Belittling one's self-respect  
Also bruising old bonds bilateral.

Boasting and prattling big  
Do not in them portray  
Potent policies or power,  
While beholding no pale of truth  
Later blushes the bogus with  
The bleak burden of shame.

As the ironic elder informed me:  
The baleful place of the perjurer,  
The breacher of the promised word,  
Rests at the base and bottom of things  
Which pulps off the pillars of integrity  
Bred and borne in the heart of the betrayed.

## **Part VI**

# **Dialogue of the Dead**

**How dreadful reimagining  
The evils I committed  
In conceit when I enacted  
Injustice a life prevailing  
In the state I reigned  
With insanity people deemed  
Democracy 'a little' duped  
By clan advisors daunting  
In every respect damaging**

## **Arguments from the After-world: A Drama**

Immediately after accommodated into his resting place  
The argumentative newcomer yells aloud  
Raising complaint over insufficient space  
Unable to stretch sticky legs curved as a co ne  
Attacking neighbors absorbed in the depth of fun

The familiar voice disturbed a deep sleeper  
Astonished by the unexpected odd visit of  
The comer and his complaint unprecedented!  
Cautious listening clarified the question  
The comer was his colleague, an army colonel

**W.** Peace be upon you, comrade Colonel  
Calmness is a condition sacred in these quarters

**X.** Without chaos the course of the journey to here wouldn't count;  
But who called for your conciliation to this conflict?

**W.** Your critical complaint caused the earth quivering  
Awakening uncountable souls in earnest calm

**X.** Expansion of territory is my all-the-way aim  
Unless you already appropriated all the land

**W.** Our earlier expropriation should be adequate  
And abstain from evil doing in the approach to Accounting Day

**X.** When you ate alone prime areas ashore the rivers  
You assigned me duties overseas to your advantage

**W.** Later you ambushed my authority and ousted me  
Squandering alone the arable land in inter-riverine Somalia

*Upon hearing the dialogue  
Skeletal youths stood still in supplication  
Orphans and the elderly hands up in the air  
Widows dressed in white, praying in prostration*

*Asking Almighty the abrupt accommodation  
Of the new immigrant away from the environment*

Angels reporting to Allah about the rowdy comer  
Returned restlessly with rocks of red embers  
And huge metal rods of replenishable hellfire  
With harmful spikes stud on the head like horns;  
Hallucinating punishment ensued and heavy hammering  
The harrowing cries of the heartless comer were heard  
Hurtful to the ear of the heavenly souls in every horizon  
Lo, he hit back with hard kicks harmless in the heavenly world  
Before a crossfire of the hellish spikes were hauled in his head  
Opening up holes in his heart with harpoons  
His heartfelt call for clan help remained heedless  
His unsaintly vows for heinous retaliation rampant  
Received him the rage of God and many reinforced rocks  
The ruins of his rotten soul left to repose for recovery

**W.** Superstars before you have suffered here  
Certainly suffocating their hopes for mercy

**X.** I'll seek solace and summon a sophisticated army  
Surmounting my attackers into ceaseless subjugation  
Their secret hideout will not save them any the situation  
Once my superior technicals send soundless rockets;  
Sufficiently equipped boys seeking no surrogates  
Will succeed to severely subdue the enemy's sanctuary

**W.** These angels operate under Almighty's instructions  
The idea of attacking the invincible agents of Allah  
Ordained to be invisible, utterly sounds insane  
Especially old army men like us who established  
Undesirable records in our early first life  
Arrogantly avoiding adherence to Allah's word

**X.** Are we in another world other than that early one?  
What is your evidence that we're in the afterlife?  
Or, is your allusion to scare me again for your advantage?

W. Armored escorts are unavailable for your aid  
Your immediate engagement by Allah's angels  
Proves assurance to the extinction of your earthly authority  
X. Is Allah the other man in authority in this world?

W. Allah is not a man, but the Almighty authority everywhere!

X. Does another authority exist except you, me, and America?

W. *Allahu Akbar!* Allah is the Omnipotent authority of all!

X. Invite him to an ad hoc meeting among the three of us  
To achieve an agreement of mutual understanding  
Then we amass stealthily our undefeatable armies  
Assault *Afar-Irdood*, the inter-riverine, up to the gates of *Adale*  
Assail our opponents including Ethiopia and America across the  
Atlantic  
After victory we streamline angels and all armies against him  
As overthrowing him at once will usher in our authority  
Eventually ordaining the two of us overall lords in every world

W. The excruciating agony I encountered to achieve that ideology  
Annihilated my slight opportunity for Allah accepting my apology:  
Observant archangels tossed at me taboos of curses taunting  
Torturing me traumatically till my skin was tattooed, tattered.

*Incessant pandemonium from the outside  
Accrued into the ears of the old army men*

X. Theatrical animation or a world in its actual sense?

W. Spirits of those we oppressed in the old world.

X. Are they pledging allegiance to our authority?

W. In solemn supplication for our ultimate extinction  
Also a prediction of intolerable punishment ensuing  
Against each of their words we're entitled to suffer  
The equivalent to eighty-eight years' flogging

**X.** And what was I attacked for a while ago?

**W.** It was an introduction: a welcome offer!

**X.** Only introduction, all that I underwent!

**W.** Only an intro, if I know it only too well!

**X.** An attempt to escape?

**W.** Unthought-of; absolutely impossible!

**X.** What's our fate like in this odd world of eternal life?

**W.** Eternality of all types of punishment unknown to us!

**X.** And the angels always come invisible?

**W.** And invincible, too!

## The Unexpected Encounter

**Y.** In my terms the public enjoyed  
Peace and multi-party progress  
Bourgeoisies and penny lovers  
Had their pages closed permanently  
Clan politics and tribal bigwigs  
Both out of business during my politburo  
Till neocolonial pedants like you  
Politicized kinship paradigms  
With bag-loads of money  
And promises for posts

**Z.** The basis for African politics  
Praises clan partnership;  
Pedants portray power of knowledge  
Unlike political bankrupts like you  
Put in power by fascist bosses  
To plainly promulgate in parliament  
Bestial colonial purposes  
Blocking motions for peasant rights  
Seeking presidential approval for  
Litigation on land properties looted.

**Y.** Point of clarification, please;  
Parcels of the land properties  
Appropriated by the colonial power  
Part of which I, too, purchased from Bono<sup>1</sup>  
Belong not to the Somali peasantry  
Who practice pastoralism, but  
Bantu *Jareer*, the *Beyla-sanbuur*<sup>2</sup>  
Whose property and as a people are  
Partitioned by our hidden bylaws  
Not to benefit from the prerogatives  
Of my presidential powers and privileges

**Z.** Which of Plato's books purveys the portrayal  
That your Bantu policy bears no basis for clan politics?  
By far the public proposes you as the primary perpetrator

Potently paving the path for the political oppression  
Purporting the socio-economic poverty of the Bantu peasants

**Y.** As a political personality I'm proud to bear the burden of blame  
Particularly in protecting the interests of Paulo, the powerful  
Also the planners holding the potential to boost my portfolio  
Prefabricating my presidential post prior to its parliamentary approval  
Thus promoting me from barber and bartender to president of state

1. Bono is Italian name and represents colonial master  
2. *Beyla-sanbuur*: is a derogatory word which means broad-nosed  
African; it is used for the  
Bantu Jareer people in Somalia and for any other black African with a  
broad nose.

**Z.** Somalis were in subtle mood searching for sovereignty  
It sufficed their sentiment to sign to sadist sounding sanctimonious  
Not seeing the soiling and sabotage under the surface  
The severe side you took in the sappy *Leylkase* saga!

**Y.** The senior staff surrounding the sappy *Leylkase* saga,  
Solely the two main solicitors supervising the situation,  
Are superlative subscribers and supporters from your clan self-same;  
Selling me as a sacrificial lamb surmises my being the soft side  
Secrets unknown to Somali-*weyn* now deeply sink my situation  
Circumstances secluded from human sight now surface atop  
Serious complaints from the *sanbuur* and the sage submerged  
The submission of my case and the succor I so much longed for  
Suiting my stable suspension from the site of the sinless  
Summoning me as among the morally seized  
Those to be suspended into the simmering fire of hell

**Z.** I'm suggested safe with the Somalis but certainly save the *sanbuur*  
We selfishly sanctioned their suppression for our self-satiation  
Superimposing secured segregation against their society  
Subordinating them effectively from sources of economy  
We suffocated the salience of their right at the legislative circles  
So many of us perpetually suffer for the sins against society.

## **Part VII**

# **A Limn of the Looting Spree: A Presidential Decree**

To those who exalt leadership from the distorted premise of ‘willing seller, willing buyer.’

**...And we insisted  
As many before us admitted  
That we weren't duped  
When we created  
A history that wasn't  
For one who himself wasn't  
What we exalted  
Him of, which he wasn't,  
Albeit all he *was* was wasn't**

## The Decreed Army Man

The unamendable decree  
Declares the diverse duties  
Delegated to officers of the *nobility*:  
The top brass in the army  
Of the notable nobility  
Report late in office  
With a duty of drinking tea and coffee  
Departing office at their earliest desire  
On condition that they do so  
Only after a drop at the fuel depot  
And the department of finance  
Then drive to downtown  
To date drunkard dames dearly  
For dinner, wild drink and dance  
Or debate over debris of Qaat  
During which to discuss  
How the department head  
Could dignify their promotion  
And deem approval *tout de suite*  
Their demand for more dollars  
During their next departure  
To Denmark or Denver  
To decrease the drastic stress  
Due to the heavy duty at home.

## **The Decreed Civil Servant**

As the backbone of the nation  
The decree decorates this nation builder  
With privileges and rights of his wish,  
Unlimited visits to the coffers  
With prevalent conditions that  
Visits be as frequent as possible  
That his personal advantages supersede  
National goals and interests  
As much so as clan or kinship projects  
While not compromising the standard ethics  
Governing clan representation and  
Participation in the cooking pot  
Of Maandeeq's delicious meat;  
The more effectively he executes these  
The more guarantee the promotion  
With all types of due processes waived;  
The faster the frequencies  
Of visiting the coffers unaccompanied,  
The larger the pockets and bags

## **The Decreed Businessman**

Operating licenses will be  
Withdrawn from the idiot trader  
Reporting losses and other strains  
While knowing our service to him  
Stays sacrosanct and unbendable,  
Let alone broken by hammers  
Of jealousy or rivalry by other clans,  
Knowing the availability of funds  
Both in unlimited loans and  
In grants especially designed  
To protect his business  
Boost his personal income  
The arrogant behavior  
To engage, slap any human  
At will in the town streets  
Solemnly equipped with powers  
Above the entirety of the laws of the land  
Even exempting him from the hassle  
Of repaying his statutory loans whatsoever  
By daringly decorating his status with  
The *ka-aamus* letter we signed  
That none can hold him responsible  
For whatever funds he received  
From the financial houses we set up for him.

## Prayers for the Decead Incumbent

Elaborated, this decree affirms  
Head of state as an anointed outsider  
From the affairs of the administration;  
It empowers his lack of intervention  
In time of acute need for advice  
In the cabinet or at legislative level;  
It consolidates his authority to sway  
Any complaints against colonial Italy  
As forwarded by the indigenes  
The affected amongst the peasantry.

This presidential prerogative purports  
His legality to purchase plantations  
All properties the colonialists plundered  
From the Bantu Jareer peasantry.  
It further declares him an impotent player  
In the provocations of businesses in parliament  
Party issues pertaining to public interest  
Despite placing him as principled power authority  
With passion for the entire public,  
One who pledges loyalty to the people  
Apparently of two clans important  
As plainly stated in the pages  
Of Gassim's volume of politics;  
Say Amen –  
Amen!

That presidential power of attorney  
Be effectively practiced  
By his potent brothers-in-law  
Who preset the profanity of state property  
To ostracise the learned brand  
From performing in the public sector –  
Amen!

That the weaknesses conferred upon him  
By his utter lack of wisdom

So scholars may daringly (mis)ensconce it  
As apt neutrality of even leadership –  
Amen!

May arduous efforts be exerted  
Efficaciously, in the concoction  
Of an exalted, artificial biography  
That obscures his inner hypocrisy –  
Amen!

May his ineptitude alliterated in these prayers  
Fizzle out of the aerated biographer's eyes –  
Amen!

May the public remain blinkered  
To the incumbent's predilections –  
Amen!

May his ingenuousness  
Endure him as Italy's blessed puppet –  
Amen!

May the Bantu-Jareer be oppressed  
Alongside the Yibir and Tumaal  
As expressionless humans  
Invalidated, incapacitated forever –  
Amen!

May the literati stay numb  
Over the entirety of his undoing –  
Amen!

May his progeny benefit plenty  
From pro-colonial *Borsa di Studio*\* –  
Amen!

May his in-laws emerge blameless  
Over the oft played-down *Leylkase* plot –  
Amen! Amen! Amen!

May the expropriated Bantu Jareer land  
He *inherited* from his colonialist colleagues  
Enjoy nationwide legitimacy –  
Amen! Amen! Amen!

May the stolen *hal booli* she-camel\*  
Give birth to *nirig xalaal* legitimate calf –  
Amen! Amen! Amen!

May we ordain him with affluence

In the annals of our national history  
As the holy man unholy –  
Amen! Amen! Amen!

\* *Borsa di studio*: Italian phrase for scholarship

\*From the Somali adage ‘*hal xaaraan ah nirig xalaal madhasho*’  
meaning – a stolen she-camel can never beget a *xalaal*/kosher calf.