



Peer Reviewed

Title:

Daybreak is Near, Won't You Become Sour?

Journal Issue:

[Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 22\(1-2\)](#)

Author:

[Ahmed, Ali Jimale](#)

Publication Date:

1994

Permalink:

<http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/5gq197fb>

Local Identifier:

international_asc_ufahamu_16716

Abstract:

No abstract

Copyright Information:

All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author or original publisher for any necessary permissions. eScholarship is not the copyright owner for deposited works. Learn more at http://www.escholarship.org/help_copyright.html#reuse



eScholarship
University of California

eScholarship provides open access, scholarly publishing services to the University of California and delivers a dynamic research platform to scholars worldwide.

DAYBREAK IS NEAR, WON'T YOU BECOME SOUR?¹ *

Ali Jimale Ahmed

Somali society ought to be regarded as the product of interactions among small groups of herdsmen, farmers, itinerant Shaykhs, and townsmen who came together under diverse circumstances in the past and whose modern sense of national identity derives less from primordial sentiments than from a set of shared historical experiences.

Lee Cassanelli, *The Shaping of Somali Society*

"Nation" as a term is radically connected with "native." We are born into relationships which are typically settled in a place. The form of primary and "placeable" bonding is of quite fundamental human and natural importance. Yet the jump from that to anything like the modern nation-state is entirely "artificial."

Raymond Williams, *The Year 2000*

Where explanation and interpretation "come to an end," surely is... When we arrive at a certain interpretative logjam or sticking place and recognize that we shall not get any further until we transform the practical forms of life in which our interpretations are inscribed.

Terry Eagleton, "Ineluctable Options"

Let me start with an anecdote, one whose punchline is central to situating the locus of the Somali negative dialectic. In the town of Afgoye (in southern Somalia), they say, there was a man who was seen one day beating the waters of the river with his stick. The residents of the town were amazed. They then asked the man, "why are you beating the waters of the river since you know that water is innocent and that it sustains life?" To which the man answered: "Once in a while, there is a crocodile down there?"

[*This article is a compressed version of a longer article due to appear in *The Invention of Somalia*, Ed., Ali Jimale Ahmed, The Red Sea Press, Forthcoming, late 1994/early 1995 (Editor).]

There is always a tendency among Somalis to hunt for crocodiles, real or imagined, rather than examining things and ideas on merit. For me, therefore, an intellectual (of any sort) is the person who, to quote from Gramsci, "assume[s] that the purpose of discussion is the pursuit of truth. . . ."²

Such an intellectual is one who attempts to identify problems, reflects on them, and does not shy away from asking hard and unpleasant questions, and who suggests, not imposes, some type of solution to the problem under his/her scrutiny. An intellectual is also one who understands the validity of Somali poet, Qamman Bulhan's words: "*Maashaan La Saarin waa dambey, sare ka caantaaye*" [Pus that is not tended to and cared for timely, will eventually suppurate with devastating consequences.] On the basis of this practical, albeit crude definition, it is not hard to see why I had earlier suggested elsewhere that Somalia has never had that many intellectuals. Instead, I argue, we had university or college "graduates." For, "education" which does not bring about a transformation in the consciousness of the "educated" is hardly beneficial to the individual, let alone to society. For, as a Chinese adage has it, "To know and not to act is not to know."³ Implicit in the proverb is the notion that action prefigures and is inscribed in theory. The two complement one another; thus, the importance of praxis—"the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it."⁴

The trouble with Somali intellectuals emanates from what Hisham Sharabi calls "a fetishized consciousness" which manifests itself in both imitation and passivity.⁵ In the case of the traditional intellectual, this form of consciousness shows itself in most of our playwrights' inability to reflect in their works the *modus vivendi* of the urban dwellers who constitute the largest group of theatre goers in towns. This is why much of our literary production, which employed too much of pastoralist imagery, did not fare well among town dwellers. Lest we disqualify the importance of town dwellers, we should remember that all regimes in Africa—one city nation-states that they are—work towards contentment and, at the same time, containment of this group of people.⁶ Thus, one could argue that literary production which uses imagery and technique that is not reflective of the town dweller's mode of living is only, in a round about way, an upholder of the status quo. This point will be clarified later in the discussion when we talk about Abdi Muhumed's play *Muufo*. Suffice it to say that undue valorization of the pastoralist ethos in modern Somali literature only contributes to the perpetuation of certain values that impede any real development.

Also this fetishized consciousness is one that Somali intellectuals share with their western counterparts. There are two reasons for this. First, the prevalent tendency among intellectuals to tow the line—not so much of a party line as it is fear of the established scholar. Secondly, this consciousness is indicative of sheer laziness. In other words, it is much easier to glean information from existing sources rather than breaking new grounds and be taken to task. The consequences from this servile imitation and passivity have been devastating for Somalia, while the rest of the world found itself in utter amazement. Nothing they had read about Somalia could have prepared them for this shock. This prompted the former American Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Herman Cohen, to say: "Perhaps we did not really know that much about Somalia."⁷

Four important groups have contributed to this "misrepresentation":

1. The historians' (both Somali and non-Somali) reconstruction of the past. Clan narratives and genealogies were accorded undue importance. In the process the genealogist gave legitimacy to what I call the "dervishization" of the Somali state.⁸ By dervishization is meant a conscious effort on the part of successive Somali regimes and their intellectual acolytes to monumentalize, at the exclusion of other groups, the dervish experience in Somali history.

2. The colonial anthropologist's warped method of sifting through the raw and the cooked in developing countries. This is perhaps due to what Johannes Fabian terms "allochronic discourse" which finds no other alternative but to "align the Here and Now of the signifier (the form, the structure, the meaning) with the Knower, and the There and Then of the signified (the content, the function or event, the symbol or icon) with the Known."⁹ It is not difficult to understand why Levi-Strauss called this kind of anthropology "the handmaiden of colonialism."¹⁰

3. Our unscrupulous politicians—not so much through writing as through actions, off the record comments and interviews given to equally unscrupulous Western and non-Western journalists. The mediocrity of the Somali political scene is perhaps unparalleled in East Africa.

4. And finally, Somali orature, especially the oral poet. Poetry in the Somali context is important in that much of their experience is kept in the bardic memory. In the last 30-40 years, however, the nation has made use of only the dervishized poetry. In this sense, by focusing on the *Gabay*, the poetry of a section of the society (and one form of poetry at that), and masquerading it as universal, Somali poetry has

been robbed of its most salient contour: engaging dialogue with tradition and sub-cultures. This statement bespeaks the need to "de-tribalize" Somali poetry. To compound the problem, the poet's localized utterances find a wider audience through the noble endeavors of Somali and non-Somali transcribers. The latter cultivates a lasting friendship with poets and/or reciters. Based on these encounters the non-Somali writer and critic especially relays to the rest of the world his or her understanding of Somali culture as gleaned from such oral (or written) texts as available to him/her. The mode of their contributions is in essence "narrative and descriptive."¹¹ Their informants' voices are inscribed in the narrative aspect of their contributions. Thus the importance of the problematic of the informant/interlocutor who is aware of his/her importance in shaping the consciousness of the ethnographer/critic.¹² The descriptive aspect of the latter's contributions focuses on the elucidation and exegesis of the narrative. In short, absent in their contributions is oppositional, i.e., unofficial narrative hidden in women's and other groups' sub-cultural poetry. By conferring a mantle akin to what Levin calls "an institution of literature,"¹³ to a form of poetry that is panegyric of the "dervishes," these writers failed to anticipate the day when the unofficial narrative would be written in blood. Thus, the words of Mr. Cohen whose knowledge of the Somali as a construction of "a textual attitude," as Edward Said puts it, came from the persona in the official/ethnographic narrative.

These four sources, inter alia, are mainly responsible for the myths about Somalia that we read in books. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the contemporary intellectual to sift through these myths and half-truths. The task is daunting, to say the least.

Here are some of the myths that need an urgent re-evaluation. First, that Somalis are Arabs with a tan. Early writers, especially some British anthropologists, unable to situate the origin of the Somali, opted for the easy way out and concocted the Arab factor in Somali history. This went well with the 19th century European obsession with "origin." The Somali in the ensuing enigmatic paradigm became endowed with European physical features. Fiction writers caught onto the idea. This is what Marjorie Perham wrote in *Major Dane's Garden*:

They were a striking couple: the woman, Khedichu, was the most beautiful Somali I have ever seen. She stood as straight as a spear and had regular features, a European profile.¹⁴

Senghor, writing the preface to William Siyad's collection of poems, *Khamsine*, calls Siyad "a marginal negro"—whatever that means.

Jack Mapanje's poem "At the Metro: Old Irrelevant Images" is the first conscious effort by an African poet to understand the myth for what it is:

They are still so anthropologically tall here
Still treating you in irrelevant metaphors:
Somalis have softer skins, they drink milk, they say
And yours is cracking, you drink Kachasu.¹⁵

These perceptions have contributed to the creation of a Somalia that is in Africa, but not of Africa. The tragedy emanating from these perceptions need not be catalogued here. Suffice it to say, in the words of one *Washington Post* reporter: "Poor Somalia—not enough Arab and not enough Africa." The fate of the proverbial person attempting to straddle two horses needs no further comment. The Somalis are also aware of the consequences of such an attempt. As the lyrics of a popular Somali song have it, the endeavors of the straddler are compared to a she-camel that likes to rest in the shade simultaneously under two different trees. The outcome of such an endeavor is tragic for the camel as she is killed by a hyena somewhere in between the two trees. Thus, the aptness of the reporter's insightful remark about the fate of a Somalia that does not identify itself with one or the other—African or Arab.

Second, the myth of the homogenous Somali which is based on the 19th century European view of the nation-state—same race/ethnicity, language and religion, etc. (We forgot that there is unity in diversity that the Reewin (in the riverine area) and their Maay language are as Somali as those with Maxaatiri (the official language of the state); that persons speaking in Chingwene or Kizigula are also authentic Somalis. This is not to discount the relevance and importance of myths in—to use Nietzschean terms—rounding off a social or national movement to unity.

Third, the question of what is meant by "nomadic Somalis" also needs a re-appraisal. Is the concept connected to region? Clan? Mode of living? How are the nomads in Huddur (Reewin) different from those in Gedo (Barre's birthplace), for example? Are the Hudduri (nomads) camel herders who live with their counterparts in Gedo less nomadic because of their clan background?

Fourth, what constitutes Somali culture/literature also needs a re-examination. I remember literary discussions I had with some members of the Somali Academy of Arts and Sciences in the early eighties. Some of these "intellectuals" were of the opinion that certain parts of the country did not have literature. In relation to this we have to redefine the role and function a future Somali Academy is to play in a new Somalia. This is important. The Academy played a central role in

shaping, facilitating and/or distributing of the findings of some of the groups mentioned above. It is not accidental that none of the Academy's past presidents came from outside the Dervishized circle. This assertion does not suggest that all past presidents of the institution were part of the conspiracy to institute the primacy of the Sayyid and of tribalized poetry in Somali culture. What it asserts, however, is that Barre and his close associates did not appoint a president for the Academy solely on the basis of merit. To put it bluntly, the overriding qualification for the post was that one had to come from (i.e., be born into) the circle. The elites at the Academy did not and could not object to the structuring of the institution in such a way that it had to serve the interests of the Barre regime. This is partly so because these elites had a vested interest in the production and dissemination of "operative tropes" that were reflective of the regime's goals.

Thus, the need is to overhaul and re-define the objectives of the institution. Such a re-definition, by necessity, calls for the creation of a new intellectual who is aware of the magnitude and gravity of his/her historical responsibility at this juncture of Somali history. If we are to avoid a repetition of the mistakes of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, we must take note of what Farah Seefey, a traditional intellectual living in the 50s, called attention to: "Beware of a hollow liberty midwifed by travellers." The allusion is to the Somali concept of "*Nimaan Kuu Fureyn, Yuu Kuu Rarin*" (make sure that he who helps you with the packing will also be there for the unpacking). This traditional intellectual could discern a hidden compromise between the moderates of the SYL (Somali Youth League) and the Italian colonial administration in the South. Farah Seefey's keen analysis of the dynamics and dialectics of the colonial enterprise led him to believe that the latter's departure was not out of a sudden epiphany, nor was it impelled by an altruistic reason. Rather, such a compromise could be explained in the words of a Punjabi adage: "when halter and heel-ropes are cut, don't give chase with sticks, but with grain." Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth* came to a similar conclusion in 1961. He writes:

This idea of compromise is very important in the phenomenon of decolonization, for it is very far from being a simple one. The partisans of the colonial system discover that the masses may destroy everything. . . . As a general rule, colonialism welcomes this godsend with open arms, transforms these "blind mouths" into spokesmen, and in two minutes endows them with independence, on condition they restore order.¹⁶

Farah Seefey's prediction of a hollow liberty turned out to be true, for the old order in Somalia came to a stand still in 1969. Again, Fanon:

That is why in certain underdeveloped countries the masses forge ahead very quickly, and realize two or three years [nine years in the Somali case] after independence that they have been frustrated, that "it wasn't worthwhile" fighting and that nothing could really change.¹⁷

Thus came in Siyad Barre who was initially conceived as a stop-gap. The 1969 *coup* was unanimously received with a great deal of enthusiasm and encomium. Even the skies were generous to the coup makers: long awaited rains fell in abundance. Only a week before, the late President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke was in Las Anood in the north encouraging people to pray for rains that were long overdue. It was a strange coincidence that the brutal assassination of the President "triggered" a heavy downpour. The ideologues of the new regime quickly utilized the event to their advantage and interpreted it as a divinely symbolic act. The coup was interpreted as a good omen. With the exception of a few individuals who knew of the impending danger now that the reins of the country fell into the hands of some of the colonialist-trained soldiers, the majority seemed ignorant of the past histories of some of the coup makers. Siyad Barre immediately put to good use the traditional intellectuals and artists. It seemed that someone well versed in Gramscian ideology gave Barre a crucial piece of advice. Gramsci writes: "One of the most important characteristics of every class which develops towards power is its struggle to assimilate and conquer "ideologically" the traditional intellectuals."¹⁸ The Somali intellectual came up with moral justifications from the lore of the people for Barre's ascendancy to power. Songs like "*Geediga wadaay*" (lead the track); "*Guulwade Siyad aabihii garashada*" (Siyad the victory-bearer, and the father of knowledge) and "*Caynaanka haay*" (may you hold onto the reins of power (forever) became the hue and cry of the traditional intellectual. These traditional intellectuals seemed to confer legitimacy to Barre by delving into the lore of the people. Barre's actions were justified through an elaborate system which showed how his brand of leadership not only had affinities with, but also emanated from, the deep recesses of Somali tradition.

This Somali obsession for finding a putative genealogy is close to what Alioum Fantoure describes in his brilliant novel, *Tropical Circle*. The concepts of *koi* ("reserved for the aristocracy of the central power, ministers, chief counsellors, provincial governors" in the old

Mandinga Empire) and its derivative "koism" are now employed for political expediency by rulers of the newly-independent country of "South-Majiland" to simulate a farcical return to tradition. The strategies used to legitimize such a return to tradition ironically unveils the hidden underbelly of the rhetoric, for it suggests, as cogently explained by Aliko Songolo, how "the modern power structure misuses tradition and history to mystify the people and justify the violence it perpetrates upon them".¹⁹ Therefore, the words—"koi," in the case of Fantoure's fictional country and "*caynaanka*," in the case of Siyad Barre's Somalia—betray their users' intentions. Such intentions are best captured in Ellul's categories of propaganda, viz political, vertical and integration.²⁰ In the case of Somalia, the poet's attempt to connect Barre's style of leadership to the pastoral concept of the trailblazer not only reveals the inadequacy of the pastoralist language to capture the essence of the new nation-state, but it de-mystifies the widely-held notion of Somali egalitarianism. Absent in the idiomatic use of *Caynaanka* (reins) is the notion of collective leadership flaunted at the time by Barre whose official title was "*Guuddoomiyaha Golaha Sare ee Kacaanka*" (Chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Council). The implication in the "*Caynaanka*" is that the country is like a camel or horse; the leader is the one with the reins. This is reflective of a Confucian ideology where the leader of the country is like the wind, the subjects are the grass; and the grass bends where the wind pushes it. Laden in the imagery of the rein is the existence of a stubborn/untrustworthy animal that responds to and is prodded to progress only by brute force. Absent in this kind of logic also is the concept of consensus.

The masses were duped by these well-meaning poets. One such intellectual is the great poet, Abdi Muhumed. Abdi, however, found out that he had been had. His play (performance piece) *Muufo* was more than an atonement. It was a classical case of "*mar i dage*" (once bitten twice shy). Once the poet finds the locus of his weakness a whole new vista opens for him. The keen perspicacity of his actions crystalize in the manipulation of language. As Fanon explains "By losing its characteristics of despair . . . [Abdi's play] becomes part of the common lot of the people and forms part of an action in preparation or already in progress."²¹ Here, the poet breaks with the past, both in terms of content and form. In this sense, "he will note unusual forms of expression and themes which are fresh and imbued with a power which is no longer that of invocation but rather of the assembling of the people, a summoning together for a precise purpose."²²

Muufo was the first performance piece that began to speak in the language and idiom—to borrow from Gramsci—of the people.

Mandeeq (the pastoralist image of the she-camel) now became *Muufo*—"bread". The allusion is to the widening gap that now exists between the rich and the poor in urban centers. The poor are represented by the workers and the city lumpen proletariat. Reminiscent of Bertolt Brecht's poems, "The Zinc Coffin," and, especially, "A Worker Reads History" [but especially the latter], *Xoogsato* (workers), one of the poems in the play, attempts to defetishize the reified helplessness induced in the worker. The poet asks questions that prick the conscience of any worker: who builds castles? Who produces both industrial and agricultural goods? At first value, the questions sound naive, as we must assume that any producer knows the product of his/her sweat. On closer examination, however, Abdi's questions echo those of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. Freire conducted a research among Brazilian peasants who were reluctant to answer certain questions, even some that were related to their own work. They intimated that the feudal lord, presumably somewhere in the city, knew more about farming than them. This led Freire to write in his book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, that docility is not an inherent character, but the result of a long socio-political indoctrination. Cognizant of this fact/reality, Abdi's role now becomes similar to that of the "problem-posing educator" who "is to create, together with the [audience] the conditions under which knowledge at the level of doxa is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the logos."²³ The old invocation of the nomadic trailblazer (read the inculcation/imposition of a personality cult) through such doxologies as "*Guulwade and Aabe*" (Victory bearer and father) now give way to reasoned analysis of the lot of the workers. Consequently, the old paenegyric songs are now replaced by "*ilowsho dhowinaa innagu Soomaaliyey*" (O Somalis how prone we are to forgetfulness). The allusion is to the circumstances that brought Barre to power in 1969. He came to power ostensibly to restore hope and revamp a decadent system. *Muufo* in this sense becomes for the poet (playwright) what Helene Cixous hoped writing to be: *anti-oubli*.²⁴ It was not unexpected, therefore, that the piece infuriated Barre who was in the audience. Barre's anger is similar to that of the necrophilous person who "can relate to an object . . . only if he possesses it; hence a threat to his possession is a threat to himself..."²⁵ Abdi's play was a daring attack on the sacrosanct edifice of Barre's hegemony.

Latent in the song "*Xoogsato*" (workers) is also an intention on the part of the poet to reveal a tragic flaw in the Somali nomad's character: his disdain for all sorts of manual labor. Needless to say, this character lingers on in the Somali nomad now in the diaspora. *Muufo*, the play, marks the beginning of the end for Barre's hegemonic hold on

the Somali cultural scene. In one of the poems of this writer, this hegemony is traced to the initial successes of the coup which made a lot of people complacent about "a curse lifted/But never put to rest."²⁶ The curse is the original one that made Farah Seefey and Frantz Fanon unfortunate Cassandras.

One does not need to catalogue the various manifestations of the curse. By 1976, with the founding of the Somali Socialist Revolutionary Party it became apparent that Barre had run out of most of his tricks. Fanon's words capture this period succinctly: "This party which of its own will proclaims that it is a national party, and which claims to speak in the name of the totality of the people, secretly, sometimes even openly, organizes an authentic ethnic [clan] dictatorship...[Heads of government like Barre] are the true traitors in Africa, for they sell their country to the most terrifying of all its enemies—stupidity."²⁷

This enemy has inflicted on Somalis what no other enemy had ever succeeded in doing: the disintegration of the country into a mosaic of fiefdoms. The ensuing events of the last two years could perhaps be understood through the following proverbs:

Ayax teg, elna reb (Don't be fooled by the migration of the locusts. They leave their larvae behind.)

Waxaad i baday waxaa iiga daran, waxaad ibartay. (What you made me go through, i.e., your brutal persecutions and oppression, is less innocuous than that which I learned from you, i.e., the possibility of having my way through the barrel of a gun.)

The mindset that was created under the reign of that "stupidity" still haunts the nation. Under Barre's autocratic rule, all attempts were made to create an infantile public. His paternalistic condescensions were all geared to stifling all forms of creativity; people were denied the opportunity to solve their problems and/or initiate new programs that were relevant to their lives and surroundings. Barre became the "father of the nation". Freire writes: "When their [people's] efforts to act responsibly are frustrated, when they find themselves unable to use their faculties, people suffer".²⁸ "This suffering due to impotence is rooted in the very fact that the human equilibrium has been disturbed."²⁹ This is paving the way for the destruction of the human spirit. Such a spirit will explode with a great force when it experiences "freedom." In the absence of legitimate fora to express their opinions, the people who are

caught in the highly compartmentalized clan system, organize themselves along the thing that they know best: the clan. The clandestine aspect of their association leads to more fragmentation within the society as one comes to trust and rely on only those of his/her clan. Thus, the clan character of all pre-Barre movements. The movements, in this sense, fell into Barre's trap of divide-and-rule. The clan in this respect plays and performs the function of what Somalis call "*awr kacsi*"—code words uttered to cajole a stubborn camel to stand on its feet. In this sense the movements' pending failure was already woven into the loom of their fate. They used the same tactics used before by Barre. The alternative they envisioned for the country "is itself a repetition of the structure it seems to displace. In fact, it is perhaps the most seductive variation on that pattern and perhaps even more dangerous."³⁰ If Barre's ascendancy to power was tragic, what has happened since his overthrow is farcical. This is important to note so that Barre does not become a footnote to this misery. The civil war prefigures in Barre's actions. This shows the need to read Barre as an authentic expression of the Somali culture—granted that such culture is characteristically hybrid and cosmopolitan by design. To be fair to Siyad Barre, he was only the last piece of a puzzle that has taken more than 40 years to unravel.

The curse is still with us. And this is where it becomes important for the Somali intellectual to muster courage and to tell his/her people that it is impossible in this age to run a "tribal" government or regime. All trials in this direction have come to nothing. All attempts to institute a clan government have failed miserably with devastating consequences for all who tried it. What we need, instead, is the construction of a new ethic. The intellectual can be the lightning rod for the implementation of this new ethic. We must teach our people by example. We must by the same token learn from them. We must install and strengthen, wherever it exists, the importance of tolerance and of accommodating the views of others. We must understand, with Gramsci, that: "in the formulation of the historico-critical problems it is wrong to conceive of scientific discussion as a process at law in which there is an accused and a public prosecutor whose professional duty is to demonstrate that the accused is guilty and has to be put out of circulation."³¹ Nothing is to be gained from that type of discourse; thus the importance of avoiding any pretense which claims to possess the "last word." Such a presumption is indicative of what Fanon calls "childish stupidity."³² The only way to break out of this vicious cycle is to initiate a politics of emancipation in which the combatants go through the clan system but emerge on the other side³³ ready and

empowered to imagine a just society. History will judge us according to the sincerity and integrity of our actions.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

¹The title is a translation of a pastoral work song in which a lady pleads with the churn: "*Haanyahay, dhigdhigo dhabaryar, Waagii dharaarowye sow maad dhanaanaatid?*" Employing a title that is reflective of the very thing I am going against is not meant to be seen as, what Umberto Eco calls, "guerilla tactics". Rather, it serves two related purposes. First, the call to transcend pastoralist language in the depiction of the city and of the nation-state is not a call to do away with all forms of pastoralist imagery in the parlance of the poet. In short, the baby should not be thrown away with the bath water. Secondly, the use of such title is indeed meant as a subtle intention to revamp and restructure the Somali language.

²Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. & ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 344.

³Editorial, "UFAHAMU, xvii, 2 (1989): 2. This does not negate the role of traditional and organic intellectuals such as Hadraawi, Saada Ali, and Abdi Muhumed who, through thick and thin, stood by their people against the corrosive and corrupt system of Siyad Barre. As Edward Said writes in *The World, The Text and the Critic*, "there is some compelling truth to Julien Benda's contention that in one way or the other it has often been the intellectual, the cleric, who stood for values, ideas, and activities that transcend and deliberately interfere with the collective weight imposed by the nation-state and the national culture" (1983: 14).

⁴Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (1970; rpt. New York: Continuum, 1993), p. 60.

⁵Hisham Sharabi, *Neo-Patriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 24.

⁶(cf) "For this reason, development strategy was never people-oriented, and this is the crux of the matter. Development strategies were urban-biased, oriented to elitist consumption and outward-looking." - Ahmad Abubakar, *Africa and the Challenge of Development* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989), pp. 2-3. This harkens on a familiar universal theme—the inequities that exist between the city and the country-side. See also, Raymond William's excellent book *The Country and The City*.

⁷Herman Cohen, "Opening Remarks," a roundtable discussion on Somalia, organized by the U.S. State Dept., Washington D.C., January 21-22, 1992.

⁸This argument does not deny a role for the Sayyid and his dervishes in, to use Edward Said's words, the "nationalist anti-imperialist struggle," or what T. O. Ranger terms "primary resistance". What it attempts to get across is that the nationalist

anti-imperialist struggle was spearheaded by "Prophets and Priests," among them poets and visionaries, versions, perhaps, of Hobsbawm's "precapitalist protest and dissent." (See E. Said, "Yeats in Decolonization" in Eagleton, Jameson and Said, intro. Seamus Deane, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), pp. 69-95.

The Sayyid, contrary to what his supporters had argued in the state-run media while stifling all oppositional voices, was not the only priest/poet who took up the cudgels against colonialism. See Shaykh Abdi Elli (1954); Harlow (1960); G. B. Martin (1969); Christine Ahmed (1989); Said Samatar (the leading Somali authority on the Sayyid) (1992).

⁹Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 151.

¹⁰Quoted by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), p. 152.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹²This is not a flimsy remark that can easily be brushed aside. Sophistications of all sorts are not a guarantee that an ethnographer will not be duped. Even some modern—TV—ethnographers such as Oprah Winfrey and Phil Donahue, with all the intricate systems they have installed against fraudulent guests/interlocutors, are once in a while taken for a ride.

¹³Quoted by Said, *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁴Marjorie Perham, *Major Dane's Garden* (New York: Africana Publishers, 1970), p. 90.

¹⁵Jack Mapanje, *Of Chameleons and Gods* (London: Heinemann, 1981).

¹⁶Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington, Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), p. 73.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 74f.

¹⁸Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1980), p. 122.

¹⁹Alioum Fantoure, *Tropical Circle*, trans. Dorothy S. Blair, intro. Aliko Songolo (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989), p. xxiv.

²⁰Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, trans. Konrad Kellen & Jean Lerner (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 61-87; also quoted by A. P. Foulkes, *Literature and Propaganda* (London & New York: Methuen, 1983), p. 10f.

²¹Fanon, *Op. Cit.*, p. 241.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 243.

²³Freire, *Op. Cit.*, p. 62.

²⁴Helene Cixous, "From the Scene of the Unconscious to the Scene of the History," trans. Deborah W. Carpenter, in *The Future of Literary Theory*, ed. Ralph Cohen (New York & London: Routledge, 1989), p. 7.

²⁵Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man* (1966:41); quoted by Freire, *Op.Cit.*, p.58.

²⁶"Premonition," *UFAHAMU*, 18.2 (1990):84.

²⁷Fanon, *Op. Cit.*, p. 183.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁹Quoted by Freire, *Ibid.*

³⁰Paul Bove, *Intellectuals in power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 5.

³¹Gramsci, *Notebooks*, p. 343.

³²Fanon, *Op. Cit.*, p. 47.

³³See Terry Eagleton, "Nationalism, Irony and Commitment," in Eagleton, *et al. Op. Cit.*, pp. 23-39.