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Somali Women's Poetry:

Lullabies, Men and Politics

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Abstract

Somali women's poetry was largely played down by the male-dominated society and little study that specifically analyses the poetry of Somali women has been taken. In this dissertation, I will present a literary analysis of some of the poems by Somali women. I will look at three types of poems in particular, which are the Somali lullabies, poems about their relations with men, and poems about political and social issues. I intend to engage with the poems by Somali women closely to investigate the relationship between the language use and the messages in the poems to discover how the women poets make their voices persuasive and rhetorical. I shall also bring in this analysis to the discussion of the genre of Somali poetry and the status of women's poetry judged by the elite men. I will demonstrate how and why Somali women's poetry is by no means unsophisticated or less important than poetry by men, which I hope will provoke further discussion about rethinking genres, status and impact of Somali women's poetry in the gendered world.

Table of contents

Abstract……………………………………………………………………………..3

Acknowledgements…………………………………………………………………6

Chapter 1: Introduction………………………………………………………..…7

Theoretical and Methodological Framework……………………...………13

Metre in Somali Poetry……………………………………………….……20

Literature Review ……………………………………………………………25

Research Questions …………………………………………………………37

Poems in This Dissertation……………………………………………..…39

A Note on the Reference ……………………………………………...…..40

Chapter 2: Somali Lullabies…………………………………………………..…41

Introduction……………………………………………………………..…41

The Somali *Hobeeyo*………………………………………………………43

'*Hobeeyo*' and the Variation in Spelling ……………………………………45

The Formal Characteristics and Classification of the *Hobeeyo* ……………..51

The Poetic Contents and Lyric Address in the *Hobeeyo* Poems……..………57

Gender Preference in *Hobeeyo* Poems………………………………………60

Admirations and Blessings in *Hobeeyo*………………………………………63

Womanhood in the Hobeeyo for Daughters…………………………………69

The *Hobeeyo* and the Modern Somali Mothers………………………………73

Chapter 3: Poetry by Somali Women about Relations between Men and Women…..77

'Dookh' (Taste) and 'Calaf' (Fortune) by Caasha Luul …………………..…79

On Arar 'Dookh' ……………………………………………………………80

On Arar 'Calaf' ………………………………………………………………90

On the *Dhexdhexaad* and *Gebaggebo* of 'Dookh'……………………………95

On the *Dhexdhexaad* and *Gebaggebo* of 'Calaf'……………………………109

Poems by Xaawa Jibriil……………………………………………….……133

‘Waa ii Gunuunucahayaa?’ (Why Is He Crouchy?) ……………………..……134

‘Awr Qabbiran Maahi’ (I Am Not a Bridled Camel) ……………..…..…….140

‘Waa noo Xarrago’ (For the Sake of Elegance) ………………..………….143

‘Jawaab Talo Guur’ (A Marriage Proposal) ………………..……………...146

Chapter 4: Poetry by Somali Women about Politics and Social Issues……………..149

Poems in the Struggle for Independence…………………………………...…153

Poems on Women’s Rights in the Post-colonial Movements ……………..……174

Poems Made After 1991…………………………………………….……...…….184

‘Waad Garan Lahaydeene’ (You Understand) by Saado Cabdi Amarre..…...185

‘Tahriib’ (The Sea-Migrations) by Caasha Luul Maxamuud Yuusuf……….....196

Conclusion………………………………………………………………………..…211

Bibliography…………………………………………………………………..……216

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Oral poetry has been the core form of cultural expression in Somali society for as long as we know. It is considered as a vital part of communication and affects not only lineage or local affairs and political affairs but also the everyday lives of the Somali people. As John Johnson observes, Somali poetry is 'employed as a running commentary on the latest news, a lobbying pressure device for social and political debates, a record of historical events, a revered form of aesthetic enjoyment, and an expression of deep feelings about love' (Johnson 1974, p.1). Following these roles that Somali poetry has played, Johnson introduces the status of a Somali poet and writes: 'the poet is a prominent public figure who commands a following, and his prestige corresponds to his poetic ability' (Ibid). We see here that Johnson uses the masculine possessive pronoun 'his', implying that the poet who has such a high status, must be a man.

Indeed, Somali poetry was considered mainly a man's domain. In the patriarchal Somali society, while men were granted the privilege to either comment on political and other serious matters or travel freely and carry a piece of poem over vast distances to transmit it to a larger audience, women were not allowed such an opportunity. Somali women were placed in an inferior social position by social norm. Gender inequality sets the basis for a series of sexist moral standards imposed on women, and these standards were reflected and recorded in the oral literature. For example, Somali scholar Axmed Cali Abokor, quotes the saying in his *Somali Pastoral Work Songs: The Poetic Voice of the Politically Powerless* (1993, p.21), 'Bravery, generosity and eloquence are laudable in men but shameful in women.' These moral standards were further combined with suppression of women's speech, which was reflected in poetry as well. Axmed argues that women's genres were largely played down by the male-dominated society and regarded as 'unsophisticated and less serious and important' than adult men's genres only because the composers were women (Ibid.). Since memorising and reciting poetry is a male occupation and these men feel that it is 'unmanly or demeaning' for them to recite poems by women, a woman's poem would only be performed, most of the time, within a limited circle of female relatives and friends. This eventually led to not only a form of silencing women's voices in the male-

dominated world, but also the exclusion of women's poetry from the Somali literary canon.

The official Somali orthography was introduced in 1972. Prior to that, poetry was mostly composed, retained and transmitted in oral form. Before the introduction of an official script, there had been writing down of the oral texts by collectors of oral literature in several different scripts, including an Arabic-based system known as Wadaad's writing, a Latin-based alphabet, and the Borama (or Gadabuursi), Osmanya and Kaddare alphabets.[1] They were developed in different parts of the Somali territory in the early 1900s. It was after 1972 that more orally made poems were transcribed. Some of the first major publications after the official writing system was introduced were collections of oral poetry such as Sh. Jaamac Cumar Ciise (1974) and Axmed F. Cali 'Idaajaa'[2] (1974). These scholars were called the preservers by Andrzejewski (2011b), and these collections were regarded by Andrzejewski as part of the history of written literature in Somali. At this time, there were also more poets, including the renowned Maxamed Ibraahim Warsame 'Hadraawi', using the aid of writing when making poems. They would read from the written texts when performing their poems. This is also the case with Caasha Luul Maxamuud Yuusuf, one of the contemporary women poets whose poems I shall be looking at in this dissertation. Although with the use of writing, the poets would not need to memorise their poems, it is important to note that Somali poems are still *heard*. They are listened to, and not read by Somali people. There are still many poets who do not use writing in the composition process at all today.

As mentioned above, writing made it possible for Somalis to preserve the oral art, but it also enabled academic researchers from other cultures to collect and translate the Somali poems into other languages. The vast majority of the poems that have been documented from oral sources, whether by Somalis or people from outside of the culture, are men's work, based on the fact that most of the scholars who collected the poems are male. In the introduction of *An Anthology of Somali Poetry* by B.W. Andrzejewski, the anthologist wrote: 'I myself regret that there is no women's poetry

[1] For a more detailed account on this, see Qubti (1961).
[2] Apart from being the editor of the work of several poets, Axmed F. Cali 'Idaajaa' has been a poet himself.

here; I found it difficult, as a man, to collect any myself, and there is as yet little documentation on it, but there are hopeful signs that women researchers are taking on the task.' (Andrzejewski with Andrzejewski 1993, p.1)

The Somalis classify their poetry into different genres based mostly on the rigid criteria of the quantitative metrical patterns. Each genre has a specific name. All these genres of poems can be broadly divided into two types: *maanso* and *hees*.[3] *Maanso* poems are considered as 'classical' poems that are noble enough to discuss serious social and political matters, among which four of the major genres are the *gabay*, the *jiifto*, the *geeraar*, and the *buraambur*. A more comprehensive account on the genres and categorisation of Somali poetry will be given in the next section. While the first three genres were supposed to be performed by and for men only, with the *gabay* being the most prestigious, the *buraambur* is considered as the genre particularly by and for women. Women used *buraambur* to give voice to their feelings and concerns and to comment on the world around them despite the limited circulation of their words. Some *buraambur* poems by women discuss matters as serious as those discussed in *gabay* poems by men. For example, a *buraambur* poem called 'Gaajo See ku Hari?' (How can hunger be defeated?) made by Xaawa Jibriil in 1971 addresses the food crisis, one of the most severe issues that puts the lives of millions of Somalis in danger (Faduma 2008, p.160-161).

Female Somali researcher Zainab Mohamed Jama notes that 'over the centuries and generations there have been women who composed poetry on political and other serious matters', and it was men's refusal to recite women's poems that limited the circulation, hence preservation of women's serious poetry (Zainab 1991, p.44). Zainab uses 'fighting to be heard' as the title of her paper on poetry by a group of Somali women who were active in the independence movement during the 1940s and 1950s. During the times of great political changes, these women made use of the occasions of public gatherings and rallies made possible by the independence movement to recite their patriotic poetry to mixed or male audience. Some of these women made poetry in the male genres, including the most prestigious *gabay* form. These women sacrificed a

[3] Note that the term '*hees*' used here is as the broad poetic type with a large number of constituent genres, which has been referred to as 'traditional *hees*' by some scholars, to distinguish it from modern *hees* (*hees casri*), a new form of poetry developed roughly in the 1940s.

lot in their personal lives because their public performance of poetry broke the cultural taboo. Despite their devotion to the liberation movement, as women, they were punished for not behaving according to the gender norms constructed by society. They were severely criticised not only by the general public, but also family and friends for their 'misconduct'. Some of them never got married because of such a reputation. Even so, their poems were mostly neglected, with only a few exceptions preserved and documented in published work. Analytical writing on these poems are even scarcer.

In addition to the *maanso* type, women's voices were also heard through *hees* poems, the less serious poems associated with work and dances performed by women and younger men. The dance songs are called *hees cayaareed*. Under the genre, there are different types of dance songs with similar metrical pattern. The work songs are called *hees hawleed* and have constituent genres based on the specific pastoral labour work assigned to women and young men, respectively. According to Kapteijns (1999, p.51), Somali women's work fell into three categories. As a good wife, a woman was expected to serve her husband, relatives and guests. As a good mother, she took care of the children. As a 'competent married woman', she 'did most of the work related to the processing, preparation, and distribution of the food of the household, manufactured, maintained, and repaired the collapsible house and woven household utensils, and took care of livestock other than camels'(Ibid). When doing each type of work, Somali women sing a specific type of work song, sometimes alone, sometimes in a group of women working together. For example, weaving the *kebed* mat for the portable house is usually communal, with about a half a dozen women working together. These women will sing the mat-weaving song called *heesaha kebedda* together.

The gendered labour division is very specific. While the household tasks are almost all under women's responsibility, animal work is undertaken by both genders, depending on which animal it is and the specific working situation with the animal. Camels, as the most cherished stock and symbol of wealth and prestige in Somali culture, are herded by men only, because this type of work is considered as requiring strength and the distance from grazing areas to watering points can be very far. However, loading and unloading camels is mostly a woman's task when the portable house is being moved to a new site. Therefore, it would be men singing the camel work songs while taking the camels to water points or grazing areas and women singing the camel loading songs

while loading house utensils (Axmed 1993, p.43). Camels are also milked by men only, but milking is a situation where singing is not accompanied, hence no genre is assigned, as all disturbance that may irritate the animals are avoided in this process (Ibid, p.29). The husbandry of sheep and goats is generally women's responsibility, but it is men who water them since watering is considered heavy work that demands more muscular activity (Ibid, p.50). Again, those who do the work are the ones that sing the specific work songs.

In a society where rules and institutions favour men, one of the main ways in which women conveyed their attitudes and emotions was through oral poetry. In his introduction on household work songs, Axmed writes that the pastoral women 'employ the singing situations as forums to which social conflicts are brought, discussed and solved without undermining existing social relationships' (1993, p.57). This accords with the idea that Somali pastoral poetry is often a verbal act that serves a social purpose. The author also points out that the verbal elements of the pastoral work songs convey important messages which cannot be regarded as 'meaningless' as described by some scholars in African oral literatures, who state that the significance of African work songs lies in the rhythmic movement rather than on the verbal element (Ibid, p.26). Through the rhythmical lines, Somali women speak of things that they are not permitted to discuss openly or in ordinary language. According to Axmed, the fact that household is the woman's domain has enabled women to have more freedom of expression than they are allowed in other places (Ibid, p.57). The tradition of poetry has hence become a coping mechanism through which women make their voices heard and to introduce change in the existing order, even if minimal.

Gender and identity representation is often explicit in Somali women's poems. Somali women speak of the values of women's lives, their wife-, mother-, sister-, and daughterhood in the poems. Oral poetry not only gives Somali women a space to express their ideas, values and beliefs, through which it provides a sense of control in their struggle as the politically powerless, but also gives them an audience with which they can share their feelings and opinions, assuring them that they are not alone in confronting their struggle. Sometimes their voices may serve to reinforce the existing gender inequalities; sometimes they are artistic negotiations or resistance with the aim of agency and even activism. In reflecting the accordance and contestation, the

mediation and subversion, orature made by women is evidence of the reality of the hardship of women in the patriarchal society, and how women engage in a continuous debate about relations between men and women (Kapteijns 1999, p.76-77).

Somali poetry also constitutes a distinctive corpus of commentary that reflects changes in Somali history and in historical consciousness. From the pastoralist world to contemporary urban life, along with the social changes, new themes and features emerged in Somali poems are also found in those made by women. Poetry has been the medium for them to explore their complex, personal, familial, political and international identities. The political upheavals since 1991 have led to the displacement of a great number of Somali people throughout the world. Women poets in both the Horn of Africa and the diaspora choose to engage in the discussion about the ongoing civil war and the displacement. These powerful woman poets have not only used the women's genre, *buraambur*, but also the men's genres, such as *gabay* and *guurow* to compose long political poems. There are also a number of younger poets who have grown up in the diaspora adopting new forms and new languages in their poems. The intertwined identities of being a Somali, an immigrant, a woman, a Muslim are in a different context in these poems compared with those made in the Horn of Africa. There are also values and beliefs shared by Somali women poets from different backgrounds, only expressed in different ways. However, these poems in Somali by contemporary Somali women poets have not gained enough attention in academia either as a corpus of literature or as traces of their social commentary.

My intention in this thesis is to take some of the poems by Somali women, in different genres and made in different periods of time, on different topics, as examples, to explore the messages conveyed in these poems, and how these messages are expressed, hinted at, emphasised and communicated through the poetic language that not only represents the collective wisdom of the Somali culture, but also embodies the poets' thoughts, emotions and creativity. I intend to look at the way language is used and tease out the expressive strategies in Somali women's poetry through close textual analysis. I will look closely at the words, sounds, and structures displayed in the Somali poems and explore how they can be devices that deliver the poets' feelings to the audience's heart.

Among the existing works on Somali poetry and Somali women's poetry, there has been very little analysis with a view to describing and accounting for the use of certain aspects of language and style in Somali poems, in detail, except for some pioneering close textual analysis by Ahmed Adan Ahmed (Ahmed 1983) and Martin Orwin (Orwin 2000, 2006, 2020). Their analyses were all on men's poems, no such studies have been undertaken for poetry by women. It is with this in mind that I hope this dissertation is a contribution. It is the first study that analyses specifically the poetry of Somali women. Following Orwin's approach, I intend to engage with the poems by Somali women closely to investigate the relationship between the language use and the messages in the poems to discover how the women poets make their voices persuasive and rhetorical. I will demonstrate how and why Somali women's poetry is by no means unsophisticated or less important than poetry by men, which I hope will provoke further discussion about rethinking genres, status and impact of Somali women's poetry in the gendered world. By referring to ideas from lyric theory in this corpus of poem in a non-European culture, I also hope to instantiate some of the possibilities that may stimulate further discussion not only in the field of Somali Studies but also in Lyric Studies.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

How to read a Somali poem? Somalis do not *read* a Somali poem, as I mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, Somali oral poetry is mostly experienced through the ears rather than through the eyes. A Somali ear will be able to tell the metrical pattern and the textual logic, decode the messages hidden in the alliterating words and decide if a poem is good or bad. Even though this process is completely done through listening, for most it also involves reading. To read is to comprehend, to generate meaning from signs. There doesn't even have to be a text. For example, we can read a picture, or a facial expression. In the case of Somali poetry, we can *read* an oral poem. When we engage with the poems made available in textual form to analyse, we are reading written oral poems.

In using the term 'text' though, I need to be a little more precise. What do we mean by the word 'text' and how am I using it when discussing and analysing Somali poetry? I refer mostly to Barber (2007) in this discussion along with references to what has been

written in the literature on text in Somali specifically. For Barber (2007, p. 2) a text 'in the sense in which I am using it in this book, is utterance (oral or written) that is woven together in order to attract attention and to outlast the moment.' This encompasses a lot of possibilities and she goes into the issue more deeply in a section called 'What is a "text"?'. The first thing to say is that she does not link the idea of a text with writing, an oral text can be a text just as much as any written text can be. The key thing that makes a text for her is the 'idea of weaving or fabricating – connectedness, the quality of having been put together, of having been made by human ingenuity – that I want to capture, rather than the idea of writtenness.' (Ibid, p.21). This idea is expanded on and she introduces the idea of a text being 'detachable' (Ibid, p.22) through the process of 'entextualisation'. This is something which has been written about in Somali and there is a clear sense that the text is something that is detachable and that can be replicated even though it is not written down. In this dissertation, I am writing about poetry and so will discuss the idea of poetic text in Somali in more detail.

Through which tools and methods should we engage with indigenous poetics so that a reader who is not familiar with the language or the culture can appreciate the aesthetics in Somali oral poems? While the literary theories in general currency have been formulated with a view to European literary histories, how can we negotiate the complex dialectic of understanding what is inherent in Somali poetry while making the most of tools available to academic scholars writing in English? Failing to engage with this dialectic potentially mires us in Eurocentrism. Yet, if we refuse to engage with the discourse in its widest currency within our immediate academic spheres, the results we obtain will communicate nothing to the broader world.

John Miles Foley tells us that oral poetry is 'not a 'thing' but a process, not a set of discrete items but an interactive way of speaking' (Foley 2002, p.127). It is communication via a special language, and it is a special language. To decode this special language, we need tools. As I am writing this dissertation in English to read Somali poems, English becomes one of the tools. As I pick up elements from the Somali text and use English to explain their meaning and rhetorical effect, I look for tools in systematic poetics conceptualised by Western theorists from their study of poetry in European languages. They may be terms like 'line', 'half-line', 'metre', 'alliteration', or 'voice', 'address', 'repetition', 'metaphor', etc. Some of these terms have been

conceptualised and used by Somali scholars when discussing structure and content in Somali poetry. This will be discussed below. Some of these terms are concepts that are not yet raised by Somali scholars but which are inherently reflected by the language of the poems. In the reading of the written Somali oral poems, I find theory of the lyric particularly useful.

Lyric poetry has a long history in the West. In the introduction of *Theory of the Lyric* by Jonathan Culler, the theorist quotes the great comparatist Earl Miner, 'Lyric is the foundation genre for the poetics or systematic literary assumptions of cultures throughout the world.' Mutlu Konuk Blasing, although in a footnote, also claims that 'the lyric is a universal genre and it is the foundational genre in diverse languages' (Blasing 2007, p.28). Culler picks out some major aspects of the ritualistic dimension of lyric poetry, such as metre, rhythm, repetition, lyric structure and lyric address, to develop a general model of lyric that seeks the possibilities inherent in the tradition and offers these resources for future comparison and discussion of some salient features shown in different poems. As Culler says, 'there are, of course, very rich lyric traditions in other cultures, which I am not competent to address' (Culler 2015, p.355). A theory of the lyric is thus not presented by Culler and Blasing as being limited to the European languages and cultures which have been written about most in this field of study. Culler invites us, as readers of poetry in languages that are not limited to European cultures, to use the theory of the lyric for more fruitful and pleasurable engagement with poetry.

A broad conception of lyric is helpful for thinking about Somali poems in that, first, all of the poems that I am looking at are short and non-narrative, therefore, present the potential of speaking about them as lyric. There are no epic poems in Somali culture. Epic poetry is found elsewhere in Africa, particularly in West Africa and Central Africa but not in Somali. I do not know of any epic in other languages in the Horn of Africa either. Second, the theory of the lyric that Culler suggests 'makes salient the discursive strategies and possibilities in a range of periods and languages' (Culler 2015, p.90), hence the ideas he presents offer the possibility for poems made by Somali women poets in different times and in different languages to be discussed together. Following Culler (2015), I intend to take an inductive approach with the corpus of poems by Somali women and tease out the possibilities inherent in the Somali poems that can be seen to be something similar to the terminologies that Culler conceptualised through

the close reading. I shall look for the major devices that are evident in the poems and consider how the language of the poems reflects concepts such as voice and address, which, I will argue, are crucial elements that can be picked up from the Somali poems. In using these terms in English, I will consider to what extent these ideas allow us to speak of these Somali poems as lyric poems in the sense given by Culler.

Admittedly, there is not an equivalent Somali word to the notion of lyric. In the tradition of Somali poetry, genres are differentiated by the metrical pattern with various names given to subdivided groups on different themes. While the Somali terms for genres such as *gabay*, *geeraar, jiifto* and *buraambur* cannot be translated into any other language, the names that describe the specific types by the theme of the poems in the group, such as *hobeeyo* and *hoyal* can be translated into 'lullaby' and 'mat-weaving work song' respectively. There are also terms for the specific intent of poems, such as *baroordiiq* for lament poems, and *jaceyl* for love poems. This points to a claim that when it is the content rather than the metre that is highlighted for discussion, the Somali terms can find their analogues in other cultures. In this research, I intend to take the Somali terminology in the Somali poetry tradition and present how the Somalis conceptualise their poetry in a manner that can be compared with how Western theorists conceptualise poetry in European languages.

As mentioned earlier, the terms '*maanso*' and '*hees*' refer to two broad categories of Somali poetry. The distinction has been discussed in Orwin (2003), in Banti (2007), in Mohamed (2013) and also more recently in Orwin (2021). The main differences between the two types are in relation to the text of the poem and its performance. This brings us back to the idea of 'text' mentioned above and to considering it in light of this Somali terminology. *Maanso* is poetry whose composer is known, which is composed prior to performance and which must be presented verbatim. That means that anyone who memorises and recites the poem must do this without changing anything. This, of course, also relates to writing the poem down in more recent times. No one can possibly change the text of a poem apart from the poet. The possibility of a poem being changed by the poet is not something I have looked into, but what is important is that no one else can change the poem. The reciter must also always name and acknowledge the poet who composed the poem. This relates not specifically to the text itself but to the way it was composed and the person who composed it. It implies

that the text is one which is associated with a particular individual poet who, in a way, owns the poem. These qualities of Somali poetry have led to what has been called an ‘unwritten copyright law’ by Andrzejewski (2011). Orwin (2003) has used the term ‘definitive text’ for the text of *maanso* poems which have these qualities. The term is important as it incorporates the word ‘text’, especially in the situation where we are talking about a poetry tradition which has been mostly oral and which is still very much an oral tradition. I shall look at this shortly below.

The other type of poetry, known as *hees*, is mostly poetry performed in association with work or dance whose composer is not generally known and there is not the expectation of verbatim performance. This is poetry which is more ‘folkloric’. We do not know who the person was who originally composed a *hees* type poem even though there must have been someone who did. The way we approach these poems is therefore different. We may consider them to be part of the heritage of the society as a whole and they are texts which anyone can change. This change may be deliberate sometimes in that someone singing a work song *hees*, for example, might wish to present a message to someone else in a hidden manner.

In addition to these differences, there are more detailed aspects in the structure and content of the two genres that are worth exploring and comparing. Orwin (2003) discusses these but I will not mention them in this section specifically. With regard to structure, it is important to remember that all poetry in Somali, whether it is *hees* or *maanso* poetry must show alliteration and metre. These stylistic characteristics are systematic in Somali and are present in all poetry apart from a few exceptions with respect to alliteration. There are no exceptions to poetry being metrical; every poem follows one of a large number of metrical patterns. I will discuss some of the basic features of the metre below.

Alliteration in Somali is very important and pervades the culture not just in the poetry, but in other areas also. Orwin (2011) has written about this and points out that alliteration may be found in other areas of line, like naming children in a family as well as in poetry. In poetry, the alliteration means that in every line of a poem there must be a word which alliterates in the same consonant. In poems with long lines like the *gabay* or the *buraambur*, there is an alliterating sound in each half-line in the poem which

begins with the same sound. As mentioned above, alliteration and metre is a part of all poetry in Somali. I will now discuss *maanso* poetry in more detail with the aim of introducing some terms which are specific to Somali. I do this with reference to Ahmed (1983) which is a very interesting and important paper on Somali poetry. It was the first article, and the first publication of any type, which discussed the structure and content of an individual poem, in this case, one by Sayyid Maxamed Cabdille Xasan called 'Dardaaran' which was one of the last poems by the Sayyid. In addition to the analysis, the article introduces a lot of terms in Somali which are used to describe and talk about poetry. As a Somali scholar, Ahmed provides us with a Somali perspective for thinking about Somali poetry, and I draw on his work in my own analysis and so will present his ideas here.

When discussing the *maanso* structure and content, Ahmed (1983, p.338) gives a list of key Somali terms that are used when Somali people discuss poetry. He also gives their equivalent English word in a chart structured into three groups entitled 'sound', 'meaning' and 'structure'. Under the 'sound' group, there are five words: '*qaafiyad*' (alliteration),[4] '*qaafiyad jaban*' (defective alliteration), '*luuq*' (melodic chant), '*jiib*' (vocal style), and '*adkeyn*' (emphasis). Under the 'meaning' group, there is '*humaag*' (imagery), '*deelqaaf*' (incoherent imagery or language), '*shareere*' (metaphor), '*eekeeye*' (simile), '*qofeeyn*' (personification), '*adkeyn*' (emphasis), and '*legaado*' (irony). Under the structure group, there are six terms: '*hal-beeg*'[5] (balance), '*luuq*' (melodic chant), '*meeris*' (poem), '*tix*' (verse), '*hojis*' (first hemistich, supporting part) and '*hooris*' (second hemistich, principal part).[6]

We can spot some interesting correlations between groups. The terms in 'sound' and 'structure' reflect the formal features shown in a poem and the performance of a poem. Interestingly, the word '*luuq*' (melodic chant) can be found in both groups. According to Ahmed (1983, p.341), the *luuq* functions as a structural framework for composition and a parameter for the measurement of the *hal-beeg* (balance), which can be seen as

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[4] Note that the word '*qaafiyad*' is rarely used now. The word for 'alliteration' that is used nowadays is '*xarafraac*'.

[5] Ahmed writes this word with a '*q*' at the end in the text but with a '*g*' at the end in a footnote. The correct spelling is with a '*g*'.

[6] The English translations of the Somali terms mentioned in this paragraph are as given in the chart by Ahmed (1983, p.338).

‘a feeling of rhythm’. A poet chants the *luuq gabay* over and over in the process of composing a *gabay*. A reciter relies on the *luuq* as a mnemonic device. The *luuq* also rests in an audience’s subconscious mind even when a poem is recited without a *luuq*. With the *luuq* being the basis, other sound features such as *qaafiyad* (alliteration) and *adkeyn* (emphasis) can then stand out. Another term that is shared in two groups is ‘*adkeyn*’ (emphasis). The term comes from the verb ‘*adkee*’ which means ‘to strengthen, to make something strong’. In the case of poetry, both a sound in a performance and a word’s textual meaning can be emphasised. It is often the case that a poet or reciter puts the sound *adkeyn* on certain words that carry the meaning *adkeyn* when reading or reciting a poem.

The connection between sound and meaning in Somali poetry not only rests with the *adkeyn*, in fact, the *qaafiyad* (alliteration) also works closely with the figures of speech listed in the ‘meaning’ group. The alliterating word in each line or half line is often an imagery, a metaphor or a part of a figurative expression which delivers the key message. A poet strives to choose the correct alliterating words that are rich in connotation and put them in the right positions fitting the metrical pattern to make a good poem. A Somali audience can immediately detect *qaafiyad jaban* (defective alliteration) or *deelqaaf* (incoherent imagery or language) if a poem is badly made.[7] When a Somali poet brings this aesthetically crafted piece of language to her audience to deliver a message, the characteristics of the poem, the sound, the structure, the consistency of the images, provide the authority of the poem as a verbal artefact. It is the characteristics of this materiality of language that is one of the things that is discussed by scholars when approaching western lyric poetry. In my dissertation, I shall look for the materiality in Somali poetry, especially in the *gabay* and the *buraambur* genres, that is crucial to understand the artefacts, and explore how these inherent characteristics of this materiality of language allow us to speak of these Somali poems as lyric poetry.

How to read a Somali poem by women? Culler argues that ‘lyric can be a form of social action, which contributes to the construction of a world and works to resist other forms of world-making carried out by instrumental rationality and reified common sense’

[7] The word *deelqaaf* is derived from the two words *deel* and *qaaf* which mean the letter or sound ‘d’ and letter or sound ‘q’ in the Arabic alphabet. Having these two sounds together is done to represent alliteration that is not correct and so also has the more specific meaning of bad alliteration.

(p.9). I intend to look for elements in the language of the poems that I analyse that explicitly or implicitly point at the relation between women and their sociopolitical world. I shall take the features which reflect the poems as lyric poems and analyse how these express this relation in different contexts and in different ways.

Gender identity is a salient aspect in Somali women's poetry. When a woman composes a poem, she is doing so as a woman in a context in which her voice may be less prominent than the voice of a man. In this dissertation, I ask the questions: 'who are the women talking to', and 'who are the women talking as'. The poet and the person or people talked to in the poem are the voice and the addressee, both of which are important things to think about in the discussion of any poetry. In lyric poetry, these are particularly important and I shall look at the details of these in the poems that I discuss. I will think about these issues in particular in regard to how they reflect the poetry as the poetry of women. I will ask if the addressee and the voice in different types of poetry show particular features that represent women identities and women's agency in the male-dominated world.

Metre in Somali Poetry

In this section I will present an outline of the major features of metre in Somali poetry. This is very important to understand, though it is a big topic and one which can become technically complex. I shall present the basic principles on which the metre works and will give the metrical patterns of the genres of poetry which I will look at in this dissertation so that the reader has a basic understanding of the metre which is behind the poems I discuss. Even if the reader is not aware of all the technical details it is important to bear in mind that they are always there.

The first work on metre in Somali was published in Maxamed (1976), other works were published during the 1970s and the 1980s particularly by John Johnson and Cabdullaahi Diiriye Guuleed. Antinucci and Idaajaa (1986) is an anthology of Somali poetry with the original texts and Italian translation. There is an introduction to Somali poetry generally and they include some discussion of the metre. Two articles published in 1996 looked at the way that the musical performance interacted with the metre of

different genres; these were Johnson (1996) and Banti and Giannattasio (1996). Other important more recent works are Orwin (2001) and Orwin and Mohamed (2010) which discuss the role of consonants in the metre from a more technical perspective.

Somali metre is a quantitative metrical system in which syllables are distinguished into two types: short and long. The short syllables are all those which have a short vowel and the long syllables are all those which have a long vowel. This is different to the way many other quantitative metres work. In Arabic, for example, a vowel which has a short vowel but which has a consonant at the end of the syllable counts as long, unlike in Somali. Diphthongs are the same as long vowels when they have a consonant at the end of the syllable but not when they are in open syllables. That is there is not consonant at the end of the syllable then they may be either long or short. In a private communication with Martin Orwin he has mentioned that some are always short and some are always long and the research is still ongoing to find out more about the details of that. In this dissertation I shall consider diphthongs as being either short or long, for the purposes of my discussion this is enough.

I shall give the metre for the *gabay* form here as an example. I discuss some examples of *gabay* poems later in the dissertation and take some example lines from these. My information on metre generally is taken from the works cited above, and on the *gabay* form, it is taken from Orwin (2000, 2001) and from discussions with Martin Orwin on his research on metre in Somali poetry.

We can represent short vowels with a breve symbol, '⏑' and long vowels with a macron symbol '–'. In the *gabay* and some other metres, there are positions in the line which can be either one long syllable or two short syllables. These are shown by the symbol '⏕'. The full template for the *gabay* metre is as given below.

(⏑) ⏕ (⏑) ⏕ ⏑ ⏕ ⏕ ⏑ ⏕ | ⏕ ⏑ ⏕ ⏕ ⏑

The two short positions in brackets show where an optional short syllable may occur at the beginning of the line. There can only be one of these in the line, although the poem 'Dookh' which I shall look at in Chapter 3 may be an exception to this and has two.

The *gabay* is formed of two half-lines and the vertical line shows the break, the caesura, between them. Note that I have used the vertical line to indicate the caesura in the template above. In the published transcription of the texts, there is the possibility that the caesura is indicated by a comma and there are also cases when the caesura in a line is not expressed by any punctuation marks at all. It is important to note that the comma may not always indicate the correct position of the caesura. In the *gabay*, the caesura lies always between two words. [8]After the caesura, there must be at least two long vowels. They can be in any position but the line is not metrical without them. This means that there are always six syllables in the second half-line (the *gabay hooris* in Somali). In addition to the positions where the short and long vowels can occur, there are positions which are restricted with regard to consonants. In the *gabay* line when we have two short syllables in a position which is marked by the symbol ⏑⏑ then there cannot be a consonant at the end of the first syllable except for the first position in the line marked ⏑⏑. In this position there cannot be a geminate consonant or a virtual geminate consonant either. I shall not discuss these here but further details can be found in Orwin and Mohamed (2010).

Another rule with the *gabay* is that there must be an alliterating word in each half-line. Some example lines of the *gabay* are taken from 'Calaf' by Caasha Luul Maxmuud Yuusuf which is discussed in another section below. I give the text of the line followed by the scansion.

1 Cilmi gabayba waayadan ma furin, cutubyadiisiiye[9]

⏑⏑ ⏕ ⏑ – ⏕ ⏑ ⏕ | ⏕ ⏑ – – ⏑

'Lately I haven't opened the units of the knowledge of *gabay* poetry'

In this line we see the word *cilmi* in the first position in the line. The first syllable ends in a consonant which is allowed here but not in other first syllables of positions marked ⏑⏑.

[8] In the *buraambur*, however, the causura can lie between syllables within one word.

[9] Martin Orwin in a personal communication has pointed out to me that in this *gabay hooris*, second half-line, there is a virtual geminate in the word *cutubyadiisiiye*. This is apparently quite rare in this position and is an interesting feature of the metre of the line.

2 Caynaddii murtida waanigaan, dhigin culuumyeede

– ⏑ – ⏑ ⏖ – ⏑ – | ⏖ ⏑ – – ⏑

‘I did not set out the types and subjects of wisdom [of poetry] and advice’

In this line there is an extra short syllable at the beginning of the line. That is the middle ‘a’ vowel in the word *caynaddii*. The *-ii* could also be scanned as a short vowel. This is a regular feature of the metre so instead of scanning as – ⏑ – the beginning of the line could scan as – ⏖.

3 Caarad-dhuubtii maansada beryahan, kuma cillaalayne

– ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏖ ⏑ ⏖ | ⏖ ⏑ – – ⏑

‘Recently I did not pay attention to the “pointed tip” of poetry’

This line also has an optional short vowel at the beginning of the line and there is an instance of ‘*-tii*’ where the vowel scans as short. It has to be like that here because it must fit the first proper short position in the line.

4 Aan caddeeyo caawoo kalaan, caadka rogayaaye.

– ⏑ – ⏑ – – ⏑ – | – ⏑ ⏖ – ⏑

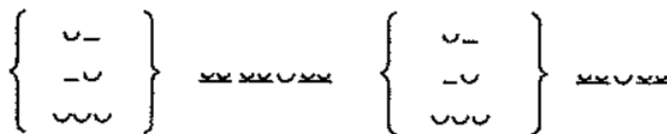
‘Let me make it clear. On a night like tonight, I clear away the cloud.’

The line here also includes an optional short vowel although in Banti and Giannattasio (1996) they say that the ‘*aan*’ pronoun can scan as short which means that the line at the beginning might also scan like this: ⏖ – ⏑ instead of like this – ⏑ – ⏑.

In this short section I have set out the basics of the metre in Somali. It is important for us to remember that this is always there. However, it is also important to remember that for Somalis, they don’t analyse the metre in the way I have done here and they simply know if the metre has been followed or if it is broken. There are very few people who can analyse the metre of a line. Good poets do not make poems with lines that don’t follow the metre, they would, of course, feel that a line is broken and would not make it part of a poem.

The other major form of poetry which I will look at is the *buraambur*, the form which is made particularly by women. I have taken what Banti and Giannattasio (1996) have written on this form as the basis of what I write here though I do not write about the musical performance which they do in their article.

The template which they give for the *buraambur* is reproduced below (Banti and Giannattasio 1996, p.106).



A *buraambur* line is also divided into two half-lines. The half-lines work differently to how they work in the *gabay* because there does not have to be a word break between them. This leads to a difference in the alliteration too in which the second alliterating word can begin in the first half-line. The rules about consonants at the end of syllables are not mentioned in Banti and Giannattasio (1996) and they have not been researched anywhere else, so cannot be given here. Some example lines from a poem I look at later are given below.

1 Dariiqa Hobyood warkay, nooga soo direen

◡ – ◡◡ – ◡ – | – ◡ – ◡ –

‘They sent us news from the road of Hobyo’

2 Sidaan u danqaday calooshaydii,[10] *weli ma demin*

◡ – ◡◡ ◡◡ ◡ – | – ◡ ◡◡ ◡ ◡◡

‘[It is like] the way that I was hurting [an already wounded spot] my stomach still has not extinguished.’

[10] Note here the caesura lies between ‘*caloo*’ and ‘*shaydii*’, the punctuation mark is not in keeping with the caesura here in the original text because ‘*calooshaydii*’ is one word together. I have kept the text as it is presented in Faduma (2008).

3 Raggii na daafici lahaa, bay[11] *haddeer dileen*

⏑ ⏑ ⏑ – ⏕ ⏑ – | – ⏑ – ⏑ –

'They have killed now the men who would have defended us'

In this last line we see an example again of the *-ii* definite article suffix scanning as short and not as long.

Literature Review

In this section, I shall briefly review the existing important publications in English which are central to what I have written in the dissertation. Most of the literature relates to Somali poetry which, when I compare it with other languages, has not had a lot of work written on it. I begin the review with works on Somali poetry more widely. I then review the literature on Somali women's poetry specifically. Finally I mention the works on lyric theory which I have used to present the discussion of Somali poetry as lyric poetry. My main aim in the dissertation is to concentrate on Somali texts and to analyse how women have expressed themselves in their poems. I refer to lyric theory, in particular the theory of Culler in doing this but my aim is less to contribute to discussions within lyric theory that are related more to how it is applied to European languages. I am aware that there is a large literature on lyric theory and in recent years there has been a big discussion regarding the issue of what lyric really refers to. I mention this below briefly but do not review the literature in this. Unfortunately I do not have access to some other languages, especially French and Italian, which means that works in those languages are beyond my ability to include in the literature review.

Since the second half of the twentieth century, a fair amount of research has been written on what has been termed classical Somali poetry. These works provide a foundation of my knowledge of Somali poetics. In *Somali Poetry, An Introduction*, Andrzejewski and Lewis (1964) provide readers of English with insights into the richness of Somali poetry. An overview of the social role of Somali poetry, the feature of alliteration, the oral transmission and the classification of poems is given. The authors find that the classification of Somali poems is mainly based on prosodic factors,

[11] Here, I have changed the position of the comma to keep with the caesura.

and they consider the *gabay*, the *jiifto*, and the *geeraar* as the three types of 'most noble' Somali poems (Ibid, p. 47). In addition to detailed accounts of the three types of classical poetry, other genres such as the *buraambur*, the *heello*, the modern *hees* as well as dance and work songs are also briefly discussed. When they published their work the prosodic aspects of Somali poetry were not known apart from general descriptions of the number of syllables in metre. Also, there was no literary analysis of poems in their work. It is nevertheless a pioneering work which is still important today. Another pioneering work that is important to this dissertation is Ruth Finnegan's *Oral Literature in Africa* (1970). In its Chapter 9 titled Lyric, Somali poetry is brought into the discussion of lyric poetry, although very briefly, and its occasions, subject-matter, form and composition. This provides insight into seeing Somali poetry as lyric poetry and looking broadly at the genres and features of Somali poetry from a perspective not only within, but also beyond the categorisation of Somali poetry itself, which is an approach that this dissertation adopts.

In a later work, Andrzejewski introduces the concepts of a time-bound stream of Somali oral and written literature and a time-free one (Andrzejewski et al., 1985, pp. 337–407). In the time-bound stream, Somali oral literature is divided into four periods: The Golden Era (the pre-colonial period), The Era of Fire and Embers (1899-1944), The Era of the Lute (1944-1969), and The New Era (from 1969) (Ibid, p.339). Poems within the time-bound stream that deal with serious themes are expected to be memorised verbatim. Before each recital, the name of the original poet must be given. Whereas oral poetry of the time-free stream consists mainly of the texts of dance songs and work songs of which the composers are not known, and fragments of larger poems which are long lost hence couldn't be placed on the time-scale (Ibid, p. 369). These important ideas which Andrzejewski presented refer to the difference between *maanso* and *hees* poems which were discussed by others later (see the discussion below on this distinction).

The four eras that Andrzejewski identifies in the time-bound stream have been widely acknowledged by scholars, however, an inevitable issue, particularly with the category of The New Era, is that it didn't extend to the post-1991 period. The most recent contemporary poems show a lot of striking features that differ from those made in the seventies. The time span of almost fifty years from 1969 until nowadays has witnessed

great social changes and significant development in Somali literature which point to the outdatedness of the category of The New Era and the possibility or even necessity of a revision. The late 1980s were a time of great upheaval in Somalia with civil war happening in some of the regions, particularly in the northern regions. The conflict widened and the former regime of Maxamed Siyaad Barre was overthrown in January 1991. Following this, there was a long period of further conflicts in different regions. Many people lost their lives and many others left Somalia or were internally displaced. We can say that this time of violent upheaval led to another era in Somali poetry. Some of the poems I discuss in this dissertation are from this time.

The Somalis classify their poetry into various distinct types, each of which has its own specific name. Each individual type of poem in Somali may be said to belong either to the category of *maanso* or that of *hees*. In his 'On the Concept of 'Definitive Text' in Somali Poetry', Martin Orwin presents the distinction between the two broad types of poetry (Orwin, 2003). He describes *maanso* as 'poetry whose composer is known, which is composed prior to performance and which must be presented verbatim' (Ibid, pp.336), coinciding with the expectation of Andrzejewski's time-bound stream of literature, while *hees* is generally performed in association with work or dance whose composers are generally not known and there is not the expectation of verbatim performance, which is also recognised in Andrzejewski's time-free stream (Ibid, p.336). He further shows the presence in Somali knowledge of *maanso* poetry of the concept of definitive text and brings in ideas related to intra-textual characteristics that support the concept of definitive text. The primary sources of my research consist of both the *maanso* and the *hees* type of Somali poetry. With the *maanso* poems including the *gabay*, the *jiifto*, the *geeraar* which used to be men's domain and the female *buraambur* genre being my main focus, dance and work songs, such as lullabies that are still sung by Somali women, which belong to the *hees* type, will also be discussed.

In the study of Somali poetry, there are works specifically looking at poetry in certain periods of time or on certain themes. Andrzejewski and Galaal (1963a, b, c) look at a poetic combat between three of the greatest Somali poets after the end of the Dervish war: Cali Dhuux, Qamaan Bulxan and Salaan Carrabey. These three early examples of articles which are on individual poems are based around the translations into English of the poems. The authors begin with a background to the Somali language and

comment very briefly on other even earlier works that have mentioned Somali poetry. Artistic aspects are mentioned in these references to other works but they are not in any detail. By this time there were no detailed analyses of Somali poems. The three articles do give some analysis of the language and of the cultural references which are very useful and were pioneering at the time but they do not talk about the artistic and poetic style much.

Said S. Samatar (1982) examines the Sayyid's use of oral poetry to achieve political ends during the period of Dervish fighting for independence. This is an important work and is the first book published in English which looks at the poetry of one Somali poet. Much of what is in the first chapters is an extensive and detailed introduction to Somali poetry as it was made and understood at the time of the Sayyid. In later chapters Said does discuss in detail the poetry of the Sayyid. He analyses many extracts of poetry but his extracts are all in translation and he does not give the original Somali text of any of the poems. The analysis of the poetry refers more to the imagery generally and the tone of the poems and the way this reflects the topics of the poems. The main aim of Said's work is to look at the poems in the historical context and also the social context. His knowledge and the detail that he brings to his work makes the book a very important one on early poetry. What he says about the relation between politics and poetry is still relevant today. Another important work on the poetry of Sayyid Maxamed Cabdille Xasan and early poetry in Somali is Yaasiin (1984) which is in Italian and so unfortunately I cannot comment on it.

Rashiid Sheekh Cabdillaahi (Rashiid et al., 2009) is a bilingual book which focuses on the theme of war and peace in the past and looks at the role of Somali poetry and stories in peacemaking. This is the most recent book which looks in detail at poetry from early times, particularly from the Era of Fire and Embers. Some of the poems are so important and famous that they are translated again in this book (the poems in Andrzejewski and Galaal (1963a, b) for example are presented and translated). This book does not give any analysis of the artistic and poetic aspects of the poems. Its main aim is to present the poems in the context of the way conflict and peace were dealt with traditionally in the past in Somali society.

Axmed Cali Abokor examines the significance and persuasive power of the Somali

northern pastoral work songs (Axmed, 1993). Unlike the works above, his book concentrates on the *hees* type poems. He gives in the beginning of the book an extensive introduction to the people and the way of life which gives a good sense of the context in which the songs are performed. He also has a quite extensive look at the categorisation of poems between *hees* and *maanso* and the social significance. His discussion includes an interesting section on gender differences and how these relate to poetry. He points out how women use poetry of the *hees* type to voice their thoughts which is something I discuss below:

> Both men and women are fully aware of the existence of this social inequality, and their distinct roles are recognised, if grudgingly, by both sides. Since open arguments and confrontations between the sexes are socially avoided, women usually employ singing in working situations as appropriate forums to express their feelings, transmitting messages through their songs. (Axmed 1993, p. 21)

Axmed categorises the songs into different sections relating to the work and I refer to some of the texts he gives in my discussions below.

John Johnson's interesting chapter in Furniss and Gunner (1995) provides a unique, but often overlooked case study of the performance of Somali oral poetry in non-formal situations. He describes four vivid and true scenarios in which he illustrates how poetry is employed as an act of communication and even defiance between individuals and groups which are marginal in the power structure in Somali society. Two of the scenarios in his description show how *buraambur* and goat herding song are used by women to deliver a message to their husbands to communicate sensitive issues in a household and also a society that does not give women the power to directly confront the authority of the husbands. By representing the voice of people who are marginal in the Somali power structure, Johnson argues that their poetry are 'nonetheless valid, and perhaps even more influential in the long run, within the daily flow of Somali social relations' (Johnson 1995, p.121).

John Johnson in Johnson (1974) examines the development of the genre *heello* in modern Somali poetry, which originated in the mid-1950s. He focuses on the historical

origins of *heello* from the *belwo* genre which appeared between 1943 and 1945. He finds that the change from *belwo* into the longer *heello*, and the changes in the *heello* itself, develop as Somali poets and their public respond to political and social changes in the world. The influence of modern communications, and more particularly the radio, which encouraged some changes by paying for poems by their length as well as disseminating the appeal of their increasing musical settings is also highlighted. What's more, Johnson notes that the *belwo* represents the 'beginning of new relationship between men and women'. This is because the *belwo* was recited by both sexes (Ibid, p.70). Women in the early period of modern poetry, such as Khadiija Ciya Dharaar 'Belwo', who composed *belwo* herself, and Khadiija Cabdullaahi Dalays, who 'weathered the widespread criticism of women in modern poetry' and 'established the right of women to recite the modern poem' are mentioned (Ibid, p.71).

This is an important development which continued into the 1960s and 1970s when women singers became increasingly popular and well known. They were seen as artists and important figures in cultural life and many songs are as well known for who sang the song as for the poet who made the words. Although Khadiija 'Belwo' did make *belwo* poems herself, not many women went on to compose poems to sing. The development of love songs out of the *belwo* and the *heello* continued to be dominated by men. This is even to the extent that men composed the words to love songs which were voicing the thoughts of a female voice. In other words, love songs which were sung by women with a female lyric voice were composed by men. This continues today and there is discussion of this issue in Kapteijns (1999) and more recently in Woolner (2018 and 2022) and in Orwin (2021). I will not discuss this issue in my dissertation. I have a section below in which I will discuss some poems by women which are about men.

Ali Mumin Ahad (2015) examines the *Deelley* 'polytext' through a critical discourse analysis, and looks at the language use and cultural concepts, in relation to the issues of national identity, the tribal system, power and state together. He points out that understanding the 'polytext' in Somali entails a cultural competence to nuance the discursive meaning and the socio-political context during the poetry debate from 1979 to 1980. Ali gives a detailed discourse analysis of three *Deelley* poems and discusses how they relate to each other with respect to their presentation of the major theme. He

provided detailed exposition of language use and the ways in which these reflect the attitudes of the poets and how subsequent poets respond to them. He also gives an elaborate interpretation of the metaphor of the *damal*-tree, the burden camel, and the smouldering dung, from which I have gained many useful insights for my textual analysis of Caasha Luul's contribution to the *Deelley*, 'Tahriib' (The Sea-Migrations) Ali also acknowledges that roles of youth and women in the *Deelley* poetry debate were left out in the discussions of the chain, even when some of the poets were youths and one of the poets was female.

Martin Orwin presents a literary stylistic analysis of a poem called 'Macaan iyo Qadhaadh' (Bitter and Sweet) composed in the mid-1960s by Axmed Ismaciil Diiriye 'Qaasim'. Through a close reading of the language structures and stylistic devices used in the poem, he interprets how the language has been crafted to contribute to the power and meaning of the poem as a whole (Orwin, 2000). He takes a detailed look at the language of the poem not only for linguistic interest, but also in terms of how it contributes to the meaning and artistic and aesthetic qualities of the poem. This is one of the articles which I use as a model for looking at the poems I consider in my work in this dissertation. Although Orwin does not mention lyric theory in this article, there are features which are related to that and he does mention this in later articles I shall refer to below.

In a later work, Orwin discusses the worldly and unworldly representations of love in 'Jacayl Dhiig Ma Lagu Qoray' (Has Love Been Blood-written) by Maxamed Ibraahim Warsame 'Hadraawi', through examining the use of time references, and references to people and imagery. He includes a comparison to another of Hadraawi's love poems, 'Beledweyne'. It should be noted that references to time, place and people could be a device used by a poet in any language. This article, hence can be considered as a precedent in which a close reading of a Somali poem is made with a focus upon aspects that are not solely rooted in the poetic traditions of Somali. In other words, the approach Orwin takes in this article is one which can be brought to a poem in any other language. These devices he discusses are ones which are related to the idea of lyric also.

In Orwin (2020 and 2021) he addresses the lyric theory directly in relation to Somali poetry. Orwin (2020) is an analysis of two modern poems, both by men, namely

Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac 'Gaarriyeand Xasan Daahir Ismaaciil 'Weedhsame'. He concentrates on specific features of lyric theory in the analysis. He analyses structure, lyric time and apostrophe in Gaarriye's poem and at the structure and sound-patterning in Weedhsame's poem. The analyses are very detailed and the poems are not compared but are presented individually.

In his doctoral dissertation, Jamal Abdi Gabobe probes into poems by Cilmi Boodheri and examines how the notions of and techniques of self and subject were manifested in poetry composed by Boodheri and others after him in a colonial and Sufi context (Gabobe 2014). The contextual analysis of the Somali poems from a certain perspective in these works provides examples that I could draw on for my methodology. The context in the case of Cilmi Boodheri was the aftermath of the campaigns of Sayyid Maxamed Cabdille Xasan and the colonial city of Berbera. The life in the city was very different to life in the countryside where Cilmi Boodheri grew up. Also the idea influences which were present in the city were different. In my work, the contexts in which the various women poets made their poems determined how they composed their works as I will discuss. Cilmi Boodheri was a very influential poet and is regarded by Gabobe as being 'instrumental for the rise of the modern Somali subject' (Gabobe 2014, abstract). As a man Cilmi Boodheri was part of the men's poetry tradition and all the poems he composed are in the *gabay* form.

Regardless of the time of composition, the overwhelming majority of the poems preserved and presented in the existing works are, as I have mentioned earlier, made by men. Although the special female *buraambur* genre is discussed, very briefly, in some of the works mentioned above, the significance of women's poems has been neglected. It is female scholars who took the first step and filled in this gap by looking specifically at Somali women poets. Amina Adan points out that the qualities of courage, generosity and eloquence in Somali culture are 'considered virtues for men are considered vice for women', hence women are excluded from this type of expression (Amina 1981, p. 116). What Somali women can compose are 'shorter and lighter' poems such as *buraambur* (the female style of poetry), *hobeeyo* (the lullaby sung to children) and certain work songs that are closely related to their daily housework. Amina claims that even though poetry is considered a man's domain, the formidable voice of the pastoral nomadic woman could be heard.

Zainab Mohamed Jama further discussed the role of Somali women's poetry in the independence struggle in Somalia during the 1940s and 1950s (Zainab 1991, p. 43). She finds that poetry composed by women concerning matters of political interest such as clan politics, the nationalist struggle, modern government politics and civil war is not in wide circulation. However, a group of Somali women who were members of the Somali Youth League made use of public gatherings and rallies made possible by the independence movements. This allowed them to recite their poetry to male or mixed audience during the colonial time. In her other article, Zainab studies some specific poetry by Mariam Haji Hassan and other women in the Allah-Amin ('those who trusted Allah') group whose work had been promulgated through direct performance as well as radio and cassette transmissions (Zainab, 1994). The role of written Somali script in helping record and preserve Somali oral literature is also emphasised. Some of the transcriptions and translations of these poems as well as their backgroud introduction provided by Zainab form the main source of my writings in Chapter Four where I give a texual analysis of the poems.

Another approach taken by Lidwien Kapteijns is to study the context of poems from dialogues with female artists. She looks at women and gender expectations in northern Somali orature of the period 1899 to 1980, foregrounding the oral texts that are in the voices of women (Kapteijns, 1999). The authorship of the oral texts sometimes is explicitly female, in other instances, women sing that which men had written. Kapteijns explores the representation of girls, married women's obedience and sexual fidelity as well as married women's work and competence through examination of the 'non-prestigious' oral genres associated with women and young men. Additionally, she looks at the emergence of popular love songs from 1944 to 1980 and women's roles in the development of the new genre. Topics such as being in love and suffering its symptoms, expression of sexual desire, debates over proper modes of courtship, ideal marriage and debates about gender expectations are observed through the analysis of the texts. I intend to engage the contemporary love poems by Somali women with the earlier modern poems presented by Kapteijns, and explore the development of gender ideologies and how it is represented. I will refer more to the work of Zainab Mohamed Jama, Amina Adan and Lidwien Kapteijns in the subsequent chapters.

Mohamed Haji Ingiriis (2015) explores the role of Somali women in the decolonisation and postcolonial movements through interdisciplinary approaches. He traces women's social movements and the historical status of women in the society during the movements. I drew on this work for an overview of women movements and voices in the 40s-50s and in the Siyaad Barre regime in my chapter on women's poetry about politics and social issues. Ingiriis also presents a few *buraambur* poems in which women voice their political rights. While some studies on gender roles and Somali women's agency imply that the rule of the military regime was a golden era of women in Somalia, Ingiriis argues that women failed to benefit from their feminist agenda as the notion of governmentality changed on the way–from democratisation to the dictatorial military regime.

Besides works in the area of Somali poetry, literature concerning the Somali diaspora provides a crucial background against which the contexts of the young diasporic poets and the notion of identity expressed in their poems can be further explored. Abdullahi Haji-Abdi examines the Somali diaspora community in the UK (Haji-Abdi, 2014). He looks at the case of the Somali diaspora from three perspectives: diaspora as a social form, diaspora as a type of consciousness, and diaspora as mode of cultural production. With inter-clan conflicts being the base of the ongoing civil war, the Somali case contradicts the expectation that diaspora communities maintain collective identity (Ibid, p.46). Furthermore, the diaspora consciousness raises the awareness of self-identity of the diasporic Somalis. The identification may be extended to social, political and religious affinities with cyber network facilities being powerful tools of mobilisation. In his analysis of diaspora as a mode of cultural production, Abdullahi Haji-Abdi notes that cultural production pulls together 'the residual cultures of the diaspora community and the impact of globalisation' (Ibid, p.48). While the civil war has reduced the degree of cultural production and reproduction of the Somali diaspora community, the younger generation of Somalis in the diaspora are observed to be involved in the revival of Somali culture by reproducing Somali music and songs with contemporary tunes (Ibid). Although the Somali young poets are not particularly mentioned here, the author states that the interpretation of Somali culture by the young people 'is sustained under the realm of their capability of understanding it and tweaking it by applying contemporary tunes, styles and productions', which accords with the young poets' case. On the one hand, the young British-Somalis adopt the English language and the free-verse style to

express their feelings. On the other, Somali words and proverbs are frequently found in these English works, which reinforce the *soomaalinnimo* that is manifested in these poems.

The concept of *soomaalinnimo* can be interpreted as Somaliness or being a Somali. It is one of the complex identities that are expressed by the modern Somali women poets. Caasha Luul asks: '*Yaa ka qaba su'aal tolow! Soomaalinnimadii*' (Does anyone survive to question the essence of being Somali?) in her poem 'Surmi' (Thirst). A number of scholars from different fields have probed this concept. For example, in her examination of diasporic Somalis in Cairo, Mulki Al-Sharmani notes that the notion of *soomaalinnimo* is imagined as a positive identity rooted in the moral values associated with being diasporic Somalis which contrast with the culture of violence and anarchy in the homeland and misbehaviours such as dishonesty and lack of commitment to the diasporic community (Al-Sharmani, 2007). By examining how Somalis in the diaspora construct and express *soomaalinnimo*, Al-Sharmani emphasises the fluidity and complexity of identity claims as a source of either cohesion or division, and the role of diasporic Somali communities in the reconstruction of a nation whose main grounding is moral rather than territorial. The idea of *soomaalinnimo* particularly as expressed by women poets will be part of the discussion of some of the poems in this dissertation. This will be in the context of poems by poets in the Horn of Africa in different historical periods and also poems by poets in the diaspora.

The main focus of this dissertation is the study of poetry by Somali women and my discussion will be based on looking in detail at the texts of certain poems. I am aware though that this study is set in the wider context of the study of poetry generally. Some of the main works which I use when looking at the poetic form and the ways that the poems are made are mentioned here.

When poetry is studied, the tradition of poetics makes available various theoretical perspectives. Fabb's *What Is Poetry* (2015) explores how language is shaped to fit human memory by surveying the functions performed by metre, rhyme, alliteration and parallelism in poetic forms across the globe and throughout history. Using examples taken from over 130 world literatures, he argues that each line of a poem fits as a whole unit into the limited capacity of human working memory, the main point being that it

is lineation based on this cognitive facility that defines in a fundamental way what it is that in English is labelled 'poetry'. He writes about the many ways that poems are structured and the systems of metre, alliteration and rhyme that are used as well as other ways in which poetry is structured. One of the important contributions he makes is that he defines poetry as follows: 'A poem is a text made of language, divided into sections that are not determined by syntactic or prosodic structure. The sections are lines, couplets, stanzas and so on. The definition does not distinguish between poems that are written, spoken or sung, or in sign language.' (Fabb, 2015 p.9). He does not give a definition of a 'text' but I have mentioned Barber's definition of a text. Both of these together give us all that is needed to be clear that in Somali, we have poems that are defined well by these two definitions together. In Somali the sections which make a poem are determined by the metre.

When we look at poetry, the linguistic structure is very important and this is linked also with other ways that make a poem a poem and also a poem of a particular type. Culler's *Theory of the Lyric* (2015) investigates the limitations of the existing two conceptions of the lyric - the older Romantic model which sees lyric as an intense expression of subjective life and the later New Criticism model which treats lyric as a representation of the action of a fictional speaker, and examines possibilities of a more accurate and capacious account of the lyric. Culler argues that both models 'falsify the long tradition of lyric and neglect some of the central features of lyric poetry' (Culler 2015, p.3). Working from a selection of the most famous poems from different periods and languages in Europe, he underscores lyric's continuities and some of the most salient features across centuries of change—its rhythmical resources, its strange modes of address, its use of the present tense, and the intriguing tension between, what he considers to be, ritualistic and fictional elements. He suggests that the ancient Greek model of lyric is a form of epideictic discourse, in which the speaker is not a character in a novel, but a performer presenting his or her skills to an audience who is expected to make observations. He also considers lyric as 'thought-writing': writing thoughts for readers to articulate, can contribute to a better model. It is in this way that the poetic acts, the memorable language, the hyperbole and the apostrophe can be foregrounded, and the rhythmically shaped and phonologically patterned verses become something that sticks in a reader's mind. Furthermore, Culler calls for a step back from exploring the historical manifestations of lyric, and encourages critics to consider lyric as a viable

critical category which has its distinctive language (Culler, 2014). According to Culler, lyric poems strive to be a public act of 'triangulated address' through which a poet offers language to listeners, and indirectly addresses readers through the act of address to an imagined addressee (Ibid, p. 164). Apart from the rhetorical figures that are not commonly found in non-poetic speech acts, Culler finds the distinctive lyric use of pronouns as well as the temporal-specification-free simple present tense in English worth exploring. It is these peculiar features that function as a special language of poetry which render the lyric a linguistic event in which the reader or the listener occupies the position of enunciation in a way he or she does not with a work of narrative fiction.

Although the lyric theorists have conceptualised poetry mainly in European languages, their intention to identify the central features of poems that can become the basis of a more capacious theoretical framework encourages us to look beyond the historical manifestations of lyric in European traditions and explore the possibilities of relations between the English terminologies and poems in other cultures. With this in mind, I shall approach Somali poetry and consider how women's poetry in both Somali and in English fits into the ideas of lyric and the models of understanding lyric. This follows on from work by Orwin mentioned above in which he has presented some Somali poems from the perspective of lyric also.

Research Questions

The main research questions central to my study are *what* the Somali women poets express in their poems and *how* they express what they express. The first question points to the themes and contents of the poems. As Lee Cassanelli (2011, p.12) observes that Somali poetry serves to be a major stream of intellectual discourse at the community level to record the historical and social events in the form of poetry. In times of unrest or dramatic societal change, poetic production proved to have risen greatly when people had much to debate. While the main corpus of Somali poetry preserved is the voices of male poets, my question is, what did the Somali women say in their poems? What are the aspects shown in the poems by women similar to those that are found in men's poetry? What are the unique aspects that show clearly a

perspective from women? In particular I will ask the question how women's poetry is expressed. What are some of the ways in which women express their feelings and thoughts in poetry and can we see these as being particular to women?

In the nomadic society, Somali women make themselves heard through reciting or singing about aspects of their lives. With different roles she plays in different occasions, a married Somali woman may sing as a competent wife, a good mother or a subordinated woman in the male-dominated society. For at least the last two hundred years, the nomad women learn these verses during childhood by listening to their mothers or to other older women (Amina 1981, p.117). What are the collective wisdoms passed down from generation to generation? How do women speak in different forms of poetry that they learn from one generation to the next? I will ask these questions in relation to the different forms: the *hobeeyo*, the *buraambur* and the *gabay* in the poetry of women poets from different backgrounds. I will also look at the different contexts women find themselves in. I will look, for example, at the poetry of Xaawa Jibriil, who actively made poetry to mobilise the public during and after the independence struggle, Caasha Luul, who lives in the diaspora and Saado Cabdi who has lived all her life in the Horn of Africa. The way women discuss some of the topics may be related to the circumstances they live in and I shall discuss these. In the poems by the diasporic women poets, for example, migration, trauma, the ongoing civil war and the notion of home are prominently discussed. These topics have also been discussed by women who have not left the Horn of Africa, but are there some particular features that we can see in each of these?

The next question points to the ways that the women poets choose to deliver their thoughts. In what forms do they make the poems? By making poems in what used to be men's domain, the *gabay* poetry, and making a contribution to the *Deelley* chain, Caasha Luul claims her confidence as a woman poet when she writes her poem 'Tahriib' (The Sea-Migrations). In the poems in English by the younger artists, Somali words, names, and proverbs are constantly found. How are their identities expressed in these poems? And how can we study their poetry for its aesthetic qualities, deploying the tools of literary criticism and performance studies? In the close reading of the Somali poems, the deixis is one of the elements that lead me to ponder: Who is the voice in the poem? Who is the poem addressing? For the reading and appreciation of these Somali

poems, can we use the terms and parameters that western lyric theorists have conceptualised to look for and discuss poetic devices in the Somali poems? In this dissertation, I shall try to present how I approach these research questions in case studies of poetry by Somali women made in different genres and times.

Poems in This Dissertation

Bearing these questions above in mind, I will analyse three groups of poems by women: the lullabies, the poems about relations between men and women, and the poems about politics and social issues. The reason why I chose these three particular themes is that I hope to look at women's different identities represented in different forms of poems made in different time and these three types of poems make a good combination in which we hear women's voices as nomadic mothers, wifes, daughters, sisters, women activists and women in exile.

Most of the poems I will use in this thesis are from published sources. They are *Somali Lullabies: Hobeeyaa Hobeeheey!* by Maryan Anshur published in 2015 and *Hobeheey, Hobeheey: Somali Lullabies* by Jawaahir Cabdalle Faarax published in 2016; Faduma (2008) *Saa Waxay Tiri: Maansadii Iyo Waayihii Xaawa Jibriil. And Then She Said: The Poetry and Times of Hawa Jibril* and Asha Lul Mohamud Yusuf (2017) *The Sea-Migrations*. I will also include a few poems made by women poets who were active members of the SYL, collected in Zainab Mohamed Jama's 'Fighting to be heard: Somali Women's Poetry' (Zainab 1991). I also draw on research I did during fieldwork in London and Hargeysa in the summer of 2019. I interviewed Caasha Luul and Maryan Anshur who are based in England and I collected lullabies and poems in other genres and interviewed some of the women and women poets who are based in Hargeysa. My research does not involve gathering personal information or confidential information. It is not sensitive politically or in any other way.

A big part of my research for this dissertation was to write translations in English of the poems I analyse. To conduct a close reading of these poems, a literal translation of the poem is particularly essential. Only by looking at the literal meaning of the words in the original Somali poem, and by teasing out their further connotation, can we reveal

the detailed, often concealed tools that give the text stylistic consistency and rhetorical effect. Most of the poems had already been translated, but I was not happy using those for the analysis. What is more, I needed to fully understand the language of the poems in order to write the analyses. Somali poetry is not easy to fully understand. The language, as I shall show in this dissertation, is often figurative and rich in metaphors and extended meanings of words. This is especially the case with the alliterating words which can stretch their meaning more than other words in a poem. This relates to the idea of 'semantic stretch' which is mentioned in the section on alliteration. The literal translations in my dissertation were done with reference to the original translation of each poem as presented in the primary or secondary sources and with the help of my supervisor, Dr Martin Orwin. For the titles of the poems, I keep the original translation as presented in the published works so that it is convenient for readers who are not familiar with Somali to look for the poems by their titles in English.

A Note on the References

In the field of Somali studies there is a convention that Somali references are made using the first name of the author. This is because Somali names work differently to names in European languages. Somalis have their own given name and the rest of the name is the name of their father and then grandfather and so on. Generally only father and grandfather are used in daily contexts and this is the case also for the names of authors. So, for example Axmed Cali Abokor's book *Somali Pastoral Worksongs: The Poetic Voice of the Politically Powerless* which was published in 1993 is referred to as 'Axmed (1993)' and not 'Abokor (1993)' because the name of the author is Axmed and Abokor is the name of his grandfather and is not a surname. People in the Somali diaspora may use a grandfather's name or a father's name as a surname, but the convention of using the author's own given name has become well established and I use it here also. This is particularly the case with women's names. Zainab Mohamed Jama, for example, is Zainab, her given name, Mohamed is the name of her father and Jama the name of her grandfather. It is better to use her given name for referencing her work than either that of her father or grandfather. So, her article 'Fighting to be heard: Somali women's poetry' is referenced as 'Zainab (1991)' and not 'Jama (1991)'. Andrzejewski (1982) presents this issue in relation to library catalogues.

Chapter 2
Somali Lullabies

Introduction

The lullaby is a special form of musical and verbal act that is found around the world. The available information on lullabies mainly stems from anthropological sources, according to which, in cultures as diverse as Vietnamese, Hazara (central Afghanistan), Columbian, and Native American, cradle songs are created to send infants to sleep (Trehub et al. 1993a; cited in Trainor 1984, p.84). In Chinese, the indigenous term '*摇篮曲* (*yáo lán qǔ*)', literally meaning 'cradle song', is defined as 'a short song that lulls babies to sleep; vocal music or instrumental music that is simple in form and developed from a lulling song; normally with a soft and slow melody' (Modern Chinese Dictionary 1983). Among the Igbo, a popular term for the lullaby is *egwu okuku nnwa* ('song for baby-sitting') or *egwu igugu nnwa* ('song for pacifying a crying baby'), both of which can be 'translated as cradle song' (Ebeogu 1991, p.99). The English word 'lullaby' is defined as 'a soothing refrain used to please or pacify infants' (Oxford English Dictionary 1989) and 'a type of song by mothers and nurses the world over to coax babies to sleep; a cradle song' (Brakeley 1950, p.653). These terms across cultures and the conceptual possibilities they evoke describe and highlight the function of the genre as an instrument for lulling babies to sleep. Dogan (2004) gives a more detailed account of the form and performer of lullabies in his definition: 'they are rhymed, harmonious words in the form of either poetry or prose composed in a certain melody generally sung by mothers or some relative like grandmother, aunt, elder sister etc. to make the children sleep or soothe the crying baby' (Pathak and Mishra 2017, p.677). Trehub and Trainor (1998; cited in Doja 2014, p.126), suggest that 'lullabies account for a form that comprises performance features which, by their constant practice in a given group, fulfil the function of lulling children to sleep, even if it is not always clear whether the defining features of lullabies are in the text, melody, movement, performance style, or all of these'.

While the function of lullabies is realised by the harmonisation between melody and poetic texts, interestingly, the lexical contents of the songs and their function can be at

odds. Sometimes, a lullaby is a song saying something like 'hush, hush, go to sleep', yet often enough, the texts don't mention going to sleep at all. The subjects can be as varied as wishes, desires and love, the husband, co-wives, the mother-in-law, as well as moral or religious values, myth and divine beings (Pathak and Mishra 2017; Trehub and Trainor 1993; Güneş and Güneş 2012). Themes and lyrics that appear to be inappropriate for children, including but not limited to natural disasters, wars, violence and death may occur as well (Achté et al. 1990). A mother shares the happenings that make her happy or sad with the baby, despite the fact that the young listener is incapable of understanding. To quote Baruch (1988, p.2): 'were he able to comprehend the words of the lullaby, he would not fall asleep at all'. Nevertheless, mothers sing such songs, and infants fall asleep.

The implication of the above may suggest that the poetic text of a lullaby is not dominant and that the lullaby is more likely to be function-oriented through the way it is performed rather than meaning-oriented. The poetic texts that are sung to induce slumber do not achieve this only by reason of their verbal content, but also because of the prosodic and melodic sonority of words (Doja 2014, p.129). Thus, lullabies cross-culturally are characterised by performance features such as rhythmic reiteration or lengthening of certain syllables and placing emphasis on certain words and their semantic meanings. The lullaby's melody and slow tempo together with its rhythmic devices are all important musical elements which exude calm and invoke sleep. However, as Doja (2014, p.130) argues: 'the interactive relations between the poetic and melodic texts are not merely superficial manifestations of the underlying pressure exercised by the function. The interaction is also capable of acting indirectly, through the melodic text's influence on the poetic text and conversely'. He finds that poetic texts are much enriched by vocal traits privileging sentimental expression as well as the melody's soothing and sleep-inducing allure (Doja 2014, p.130).

Despite the fact that the poetic component of a lullaby seems to play a subordinate and unnecessary role in achieving the function, the lullaby is not only its social usage. It is, after all, oral literature that is crafted and then performed by a group of people in a certain way, which justifies the value of its semantic content. The genre of lullaby can also be that of folk literature, which according to Bascom (1954), allows an individual to escape from repressions imposed by the society. Therefore, lullabies are chanted

during difficult times and give voice to the troubles as well as the hopes of the mother (Baruch 1988, p.1). One possible explanation of a mother's singing elements of distress to a baby who is not able to understand her problems may be that the lullabies serve to calm the mother as well (Baruch 1988, p.2). Hawes (1974, p.147) suggests that: 'there are, after all, two people present and in the 'audience' when a lullaby is sung within context: the infant and the mother … the lullabying mother may in fact be singing as much to herself as to her baby'. That is to say, while the 'baby-talk' terms, the rhythmic reiteration of certain syllables, the rhymes and assonances are designed for the child, the verbalisation of the issues that a child is incapable of understanding, can be considered as 'autonomous units' which are meant for the mother herself (Doja 2014, p.127; Baruch 1988, p.2).

In this chapter, I intend to bring the Somali lullabies into the discussion. The Somali lullabies share some similar features that are found universal in the genre, and present elements that are unique to Somali culture as well. Through a close reading of the poetic texts in Somali lullabies through the lens of lyric theories, I shall explore how the rhetorical resources and the semantic resources carry out the harmonisation. My aim is to look at lullabies as poetry making some use of ideas and the lyric features which I refer to elsewhere in this dissertation. I consider the lullabies as poetry and analyse how they show some of these lyric features mentioned in Culler's lyric theory as well as elsewhere. I pay particular attention to the idea of address.

The Somali *hobeeyo*

Among the oral literature that is made and transmitted by Somali women, cradle songs have not given rise to as much investigation as other poetic genres. In the pastoral communities, raising children is an aspect of the gender division of labour that Somali women participate in (Kapteijns 1999, p.55). Mothers of young children are often helped by other female members in the house. According to Axmed Cali Abokor (1993, p.71), a Somali woman generally sings for her children when she is busy with the execution of some other important works, like mat weaving, as well as when she wants to lull her children to sleep. Some mothers I spoke with during my fieldwork in July 2019 in Hargeysa suggested that the Somali lullabies are sung to babies until around

the age of two when the babies start to speak. While Axmed Cartan Xaange (2014, p.20) notes that the songs may continue throughout the period of the young child's dependence on the mother, until about the age of five. Employing lullabies in the bringing-up of children is one of the social usages which are based upon an established set of socio-cultural values and the code of conduct in the pastoral communities. Nomadic Somali women learn the songs from childhood by listening to their mothers or to other older women and compose new ones in addition to the traditional ones (Amina 1981, p.117).

The Somalis employ their oral verse to deliver a message. Even though the lullabies are meant for listeners who are too young to understand the content, a mother expresses her feelings and views in the lines. Many of the lullaby verses show the mother's care and love for her child, her desire to compliment him or her, and her best wishes for the child's future. Sometimes Somali mothers also sing about their worries for the children as well as their own fears and anxieties, conveying deep messages, saying the unsayable. The lullabies can also be a mechanism to express their sentiments towards social issues that reflect and affect women's traditional roles in the pastoral community (Axmed 1993, p.71). We shall see these aspects in detail later in this chapter.

The preservation of Somali lullabies has mainly been the domain of women, given that singing for babies is exclusively a women's practice and men shy away from reciting verses made and performed by women. One of the earliest published works that incorporate and investigate Somali lullabies is Amina H. Adan's article 'Women and words' (Amina 1981) in which the songs were collected by the author in 1978, six years after the introduction of the official Somali orthography. Another early work exploring women's voices is Kapteijns (1991), in which the author inserts a few lullaby verses she collected and examines gender representation in the texts. Male researchers have also contributed to the collection of women's poetry of the traditional *hees* type. In Axmed Cali Abokor's (1993) *Somali Pastoral Work Songs*, he examines the poetic voice of the 'politically powerless' and includes lullabies in the 'household work songs' chapter along with mat-weaving songs, milk-churning songs and mortar-pounding songs made by women. According to Axmed, the lullabies presented in his book were collected by himself from two women from Buuhoodle named Ardo and Faadumo. Another male author who has dedicated himself to collecting Somali folktales and folk

songs is Axmed Cartan Xaange. He included and translated 191 songs of which nursery songs are one of the five main genres in his *Folk Songs from Somalia* which was finished in 1991 but published later in 2014. Two other recently published booklets of Somali lullabies collections are Jawaahir Cabdalle Faarax (2016) and Maryan Anshur et al (2015). Both works come with a CD of the lullabies sung in Somali.

The examples of lullabies that I will cite in this dissertation are partly from the existing works mentioned above and partly from my own collection during my fieldwork in Hargeysa in July, 2019. While there I worked closely with Nasra Daahir Maxamed and visited some families. I made recordings of lullabies and worked on the texts with Nasra while I was in Hargeysa. I continued to work on these when I returned to London and stayed in touch with Nasra who was very helpful in understanding more about the lullabies and the culture around them.

'*Hobeeyo*' and the Variation in Spelling

Rocking a baby in her arms, a pastoral Somali mother sings to her child with a soothing and repeating melody. In 'Women and words', Amina (1981, p.116) writes: '*hoobeyo* is the lullaby sung to children', and she classifies this type of song as 'another form of *buraanbur*'.[12] In a later section of the same paper, she introduces '*hobeeyo*', with a different spelling from the earlier one, as 'the chorus of the children's lullaby which Somali women have been repeating meticulously for at least the last two hundred years' (Amina 1981, p.117). The confusion over the spelling may result from the fact that the official Somali orthography had only been introduced nine years before the publication of the article and spelling has not become strictly standardised even till today. Somali is essentially written as it is pronounced. Each of the vowels in Somali can be pronounced long and short and in spelling, the long vowels are written with double

[12] There are several variations in the spelling of '*buraambur*' in existing academic works. In Zainab Mohamed Jama (1991), it is written as '*buranbur*'. The same spelling is also used in Safia Aidid (2010). In Amina (1981) and Dahabo, Amina and Amina (1995), it is written as '*buraanbur*'. In Zorc and Madina dictionary (1993), the entry is also spelt as '*buraanbur*'. In Andrzejewski and Lewis (1964), the spelling is '*buraambur*' and the same spelling is also used by other scholars in the field of Somali literature and linguistics including John William Johnson, Giorgio Banti, Francesco Giannattasio and Martin Orwin. I shall use '*buraambur*' in this dissertation.

letters and are pronounced about twice as long, in terms of time, as a single vowel. However, it is still common to see Somalis spelling long vowels or geminate consonants simply with single letters in practice when people can understand each other without any problems.[13]

The variation in the spelling of '*hobeeyo*' occurs again in a later work, in which Dahabo, Amina and Amina (1995, p.174) first write: 'the *buraanbur* is the highest of women's literary genres. Other female minor literary forms are the *hobeeyo* (lullaby) and the *hoyal* or work songs', yet in the next paragraph, the term is spelt as '*hoobeeyo*' with two long vowels, and the authors classify it as one of the main 'sub-categories' of the '*buraanbur*' along with the *hoyal* (work songs)[14] and the *sittaat* (religious song)'. Gardner and El Bushra (2004, p.xiv) also agree with such classification and refer to the indigenous term as '*hobeeyo*', translating it as 'lullaby'. Several Somali dictionaries and Somali-English dictionaries were published between the 1980s and the 1990s, however, neither '*hobeeyo*', '*hoobeyo*' nor a similar spelling that may be the equivalent of lullaby or cradle song is found in the entries (see for example, Zorc and Madina 1991). While the major prestigious poetic genres (i.e. *gabay*, *geeraar*, *jiifto*, etc.) are in the entries, terminologies of less important genres, such as '*hoyal*' and '*sitaat*' mentioned in the quotation above, are not included either. Many of the mothers who participated in my interviews were not aware of the word '*hobeeyo*' or '*hoobeyo*', which the Somali scholars suggest in their publications as the Somali term for 'lullaby', however, they know the words for genres such as *gabay* and *buraambur*. It seems that '*hobeeyo*' is a technical term in the field of Somali literature that is less known hence less used by the masses. The word that is more generally used for referring to the type of songs they sing to babies by the participants in my fieldwork in Hargeysa is '*hees carruureed*' which literally means 'children's song'. Other variations that are used are '*heesaha carruurta*' (the children's songs) and '*heeso carruureed*' (children's songs). The participants explained to me that although children's songs in other cultures may

[13] Sometimes missing a letter doesn't indicate a difference in meaning, but there are times when the variation in spelling can indicate different meanings. For example, *u* is a preverbal preposition particle which we might translate as 'to' or 'for', whereas the long vowel *uu* is a third masculine singular person subject verbal pronoun. The word *warran* with double 'r' means 'give news' whereas *waran* means 'spear'. Although the meaning of a misspelt word can be essentially different, people can make sense of it from the context.

[14] *Hoyal* is translated as 'work song' here, in Amina (1981) she explains the word as 'sung while weaving mats'.

be the songs sung by children, in the Somali context, they are the lullaby genre sung by Somali mothers. The word '*heesaha carruurta*' is also used by Somali scholar Axmed Cali Abokor (1993, p.71), with the translation 'lullabies', as a section title in the chapter of household work songs by pastoral Somali women.

There are also works in which the genre is mentioned only with the English terminology. For example, Kapteijns (1991) incorporates two lullaby texts in her paper on women and the Somali pastoral tradition. While most of the indigenous terms which are unique in the Somali culture are given in brackets, such as 'family law (*xeerka dheerta*)' and 'watering songs (*shubaal*)', the Somali terminology for lullabies isn't referred to. In a more recent work, Safia (2010, p.110) writes: 'work songs, lullabies, and other forms of *buranbur* poetry provided a platform for women's grievances and self-expression, allowing them to articulate their concerns through this socially acceptable medium'. She regards the *buraambur* as the broader female genre of poetry, and refers to the lullaby as 'a traditional *buranbur* lullaby' (Safia 2010, p.110).

The above reveals the variations in the indigenous terminology for the genre and also raises the question of classification. Although the word '*hobeeyo*' mentioned by the Somali researchers is not well known as the name of the genre, it is not impossible to trace the source of the word. In his study of folk songs from the central and north-eastern Somalia, Axmed Cartan Xaange (2014, p.20) suggests that the Somali nursery songs are called '*hobeeya hobeeya*'. He explains that the words have no specific meaning in themselves but serve as syllables which are often sung at the beginning of a song. Axmed also suggests that these sounds can be interpreted as 'Hey! Hey!' or 'Shssh!' that attracts a baby's attention especially when it cries (Axmed 2014, p.20). In his English version of the Somali texts, he translates the line as 'hey hey baby'. In the dialect of the southern regions, according to Axmed, the syllables become '*huwaaya huuwaya*'. In the Advanced English-Somali Dictionary by Ahmed Hussein Mire (2009, p.609), the entry for 'lullaby' reads: '*huuwaayeelo; hees debacsan oo carruur lagu seexiyo*'. While the second phrase gives a definition of the word, which is 'a gentle, relaxed song with which one puts children to sleep', the first translation, '*huuwaayeelo*' might come from the '*huwaaya huuwaya*' vocables mentioned by Axmed Cartan Xaange, and the verb '*yeelo*' 'to hold'.

In Maryan Anshur's (2015) collection of Somali lullabies from 'different clans and regions in Somalia and Ogaden', the vocables in the beginning line of each song are presented in the booklet and sung by Maryan on the accompanying CD as '*hobeeyaa hobeeheey hobeeheyaa*'. The editors use '*Hobeeyaa Hobeeheey!*', followed, interestingly, by an exclamation mark, this is presented on the cover page below its English title *Somali Lullabies*. Maryan Anshur's English translation of the songs keeps the original '*hobeeyaa hobeeheey hobeeheyaa*' in the first line. However, the editors didn't specify an indigenous term as the equivalent of lullaby in the introduction of the booklet. In the collection by Jawaahir (2016), the strings of vocables vary from '*hobeeheey hobeheey hobeeheeyaa*' to '*hobeeya hobeey hobeeya*', and are sometimes written with a hyphen in between such as '*hobeey hobeey hobeeya-aa*' and '*hobeeya-aa hobeey hobeey-aaa*'. One possible reason for such variation of the transcription lies with the different tunes that the lullabies are chanted to. According to Axmed (1993, p.72), there are two musical patterns for Somali lullabies, the *galbeedi* (western), which is a slow and sonorous melody used by the western pastoralists, and the *reer bari* (people of the east), which is shorter in length and livelier, applied by the eastern pastoralists. Somali mothers are aware of the two music patterns and their difference in tempo, even though the terms '*galbeedi*' and '*reer bari*' might not be widely recognised. In the CD of the lullabies sung by Maryan Anshur, she uses the slower and sonorous *galbeedi* pattern. She explained to me that she learnt from her mother both the rapid and the slow melodies and that both patterns are sung in her region, yet she sings all the lullabies in the CD recording in the slow and sonorous melody.

During my fieldwork in Hargeysa, most mothers who I heard perform sang the lullabies in a rapid melody. My transcription of the opening vocables in these songs is '*hobeeya hobeey hobeeya*', which exactly follows the genre's metrical pattern that I shall discuss in the next section. If we compare '*hobeeya hobeey hobeeya*' and the longer '*hobeeyaa hobeeheey hobeeheyaa*', we can find the '*hobee*' part remains the same in both versions and that in both versions, the first and last words end with an '*a*' vowel following the '*ey*' while the middle word ends without it. The '*a*' syllables in the same positions are written with a double letter in Maryan Anshur's transcription, reflecting the prolongation in the *galbeedi* melody. The hyphen in Jawaahir's transcriptions, '*hobeeya-aa*', while emphasising the prolongation, is also a clue showing that the position is originally filled by a short-vowel syllable rather than a long one. Another

distinct difference in the two versions is the extra '*hee*' or '*he*' syllable added after the '*bee*' in the long version. These syllables, with an extra voiceless consonant '*h*', are also added in accordance with the prolongation in the performance. The additional '*h*' plus a vowel can also be found in other lines in a lullaby transcribed by Maryan Anshur. For example, in the line '*Marnaba Tolyare ha guuhuursan*' (Do not marry a small clan), an extra syllable '*huu*' is added in between the verb '*guursan*' (to marry). In Maryan Anshur's singing, there is often an apparent pitch bend on the prolonged syllable marked by the extra consonant '*h*'. According to Banti and Giannattasio (1996, p.87), 'Somali verse is mainly sung syllabically, i.e regardless of the underlying metrical pattern only one musical sound corresponds to each syllable, with the exception of a handful of cases where a vowel is divided rhythmically'. The additional '*h*' and vowel syllable in lullaby performances is one of these cases.

If we have a look around lullabies in other cultures, we notice that the use of vocables is rather common. In her book on lullabies, Leslie Daiken writes that: 'of all our lulling songs, then, perhaps the oldest and most element is this croon without words' (Daiken 1959, p.36). In Christina Chamber's study of vocables in Scottish music, she finds that 'the semantic content or type of song can often determine the type of vocable or selection of vocables to be used' (Chambers 1980, p.201). The example given by Chambers is that Gaelic lullabies are often characterised by the vocable '*ba*', usually repeated twice in succession '*ba ba*'. In Spanish, the word for 'lullaby' is '*nana*' and in a Grenadian lullaby, the verse starts with '*A la nana, nana, nana*' (Cummins 1977, p.173), in which the repetition of the word '*nana*' also serves as vocables that attract a baby's attention. This aspect is very similar to that of Somali lullabies. There is also one lullaby song which I collected during fieldwork[15] that specifically mentions the word '*hobeey*' which may be seen as an account for the terminology of the genre.

Hobeeya hobeey hobeeya
Hobeeyadu hadalba maaha
Dhalaankaa lagu sabaayoo
Hobeey lagu seexiyaaye

[15] The song was collected during my fieldwork in Hargeysa in July 2019. A young mother named Bahja sang it to me. The transcription is by Nasra Daahir. The translation is by myself in collaboration with Nasra Daahir.

Hobeeyadu hadalba maaha

Hobeeya hobeey hobeeya
The '*hobeey*' words are not meaningful words
One tricked in order to calm down the children
[By singing] '*hobeey*' one put them to bed
The '*hobeey*' words are not meaningful words

The lyrics of this song echo the idea that '*hobeeya hobeey hobeeya*' are non-sense vocables. The words '*hobeey*' and '*hobeeyadu*' (which is the plural form '*hobeeyo*' with the definite article suffix in the subject case) in the lines stand for the strings of syllables. Although '*hobeey*' is a non-sense word, mothers sing the strings of '*hobeey*' words to put their babies to sleep. Presumably the terminology of the genre comes from the strings of vocables despite the spelling differences in the transcriptions mentioned earlier. Given that the first two syllables '*hobee*' practically stay the same in the various versions mentioned above, and it fits in the metrical pattern of the genre, which I will discuss in the next section, I shall take the word '*hobeeyo*', with '*ee*' being the only long vowel in the middle, as the spelling of the indigenous name of the genre of lullaby in my dissertation.

The example above is interesting from a lyric perspective because it is an example of self-reference. This has been discussed by Orwin (2020, p.131) in relation to an example of a *maanso* poem. Orwin (2020, p.131) writes of referencing a poem within a poem: 'Referring to a poem from within itself is a common feature in Somali and may be achieved in a number of ways, one of which is reference to the alliterating sound of the poem.' In his article he is discussing *maanso* poetry and the self-reference is often towards the poet or the individual poem itself (this is discussed in the next chapter on the *arar* in Caasha Luul's poetry). The *hobeey* here though is an example of a *hees*-type poem. We don't know who the person was who originally made the poem but we still find self-reference. Here it is to the poem itself but not only that, it is self-reference to the type of poem, to the *hobeeyo* as a genre. The voice in the poem is a more general, generic voice, speaking about what the *hobeeyo* does. It is particularly interesting in saying '*Hobeeyadu hadalba maaha*' (The '*hobeey*s' are not meaningful words). This seems to highlight the idea of the *hobeeyo* being a verbal act which ties in

with the idea of lyric being more related to 'ritualistic' use of language rather than narrative. This general idea of the *hobeey* being a poetic act, a feature of lyric poetry, is one which is made clear in my analysis of the poems below and comes out also in the discussion below on address.

The Formal Characteristics and Classification of the *Hobeeyo*

As a distinct type of poetry, the *hobeeyo*, has its distinctive prosodic features. The metre of Somali poetry was discussed in Chapter 1 in outline. In this section I will set out the metrical pattern of the *hobeeyo* which has not been mentioned before in the literature on metre in Somali. All *hobeeyo* songs, like all Somali poetry, are metrical. The basic *hobeeyo* metrical pattern[16] can be presented in the following symbols in which ⏑ indicates a position that must be filled by a short vowel syllable, and the symbol ⏑̲⏑̲ indicates a position that must be filled by either a long vowel or two short vowel syllables. The pattern is then as follows.

⏑ ⏑̲⏑̲   ⏑̲⏑̲ ⏑̲⏑̲ ⏑ ⏑̲⏑̲ ⏑

Below I discuss a *hobeeyo* which is presented in Axmed (2014, p.29). The lines are given below with the metrical symbols that show how they fit the pattern.

Maxaa Fiidoy ku keenay

⏑ – – – ⏑ – ⏑

Fariid baa dhalan lahaaye

⏑ – – ⏑⏑ ⏑ – ⏑

Raggaa faalali lahaaye

[16] The metrical pattern has been analysed with the help of my supervisor, Martin Orwin, who has done a lot of research on metre in Somali poetry. The analysis is based in particular on examples in Maryan Anshur's collection of *Somali Lullabies* (2015). All the lullabies in this dissertation follow this metrical pattern except in the 'ardooya ardooy ardooya' one, there are lines in which the metre seems to be broken or to have a variation.

⏑ – – ⏔ ⏑ – ⏑

Wan baa foorari lahaaye

⏑ – – ⏔ ⏑ – ⏑

These lines show us that the patterns are very similar. The first three syllables and the last three syllables are the same in every line. This gives the lines a more regular rhythm. This could be related to the fact that they are rhythmic when sung and that as lullabies the rhythm is an important part of the way they function when sung to infants. The word '*foorari*' is given as '*fooraari*' in Axmed (2014). I assume that this is a typographical mistake. I cannot find the verb '*fooraar*' in any of the dictionaries and so assume that it is '*foorar*' which means 'to bend over' which makes sense in the context. Axmed Cartan Xaange translates this as 'feasted on' which relates to the action of bending over the meat since Somalis in the countryside eat sitting on the ground. The way in which the word '*fooraari*' does not fit the metre and the way '*foorari*' does fit the metre shows us that the metre can help when we are reading texts of poems in Somali.

We can see that, metrically, the patterning of *hobeeyo* requires that each line ends with a short vowel syllable. Yet in the performance of the songs, it is common for the final syllable in a line to be prolonged. In Maryan Anshur's transcription, the prolonged vowels are written with double letters. For instance, in the line ''*cambaro kaahooy korkaagaa*' (O Pearl, with your creamy smooth skin), the ending word is in fact '*korkaaga*' (your skin) with a short ending vowel. The word *korkaagaa* with the long ending vowel '*aa*', in some contexts, can be the two words '*korkaaga*' and the focus marker *baa* together in one word. However, this is not the case here in that the line is neither a main clause itself nor joining the subsequent line '*korkaaga cadee wanaagsan*' (your beautiful shiny skin) to form a main clause where a focus marker *baa* is needed. Instead, it is the word '*korkaaga*' with a short vowel ending which fits both the metre and the syntax in this line. The long vowel '*aa*' ending is rather a reflection of the prolongation in performance. Sometimes an extra vowel sound such as '*aa*', '*ee*' or '*oo*' is found added at the end of a semantically complete line, fitting in the metrical and melodic pattern. For example, in '*Ducada loo raatibyeeyaa*' (One made the supplication for), the final '*aa*' following the '*raatibyey*' is an extra sound in the

performance which is not grammatically part of the verb. In Somali, the third-person masculine general past tense is rendered by the '*-ey*' (or '*-ay*') ending added to the verb stem (*raatibay*), and the present progressive tense verb ending is '*ayaa*' (or '*eyaa*'). Although a present progressive tense in this context may still work, I suggest that it is supposed to be in the past tense rather than the present progressive because the '*aa*' in the present progressive is strictly a long vowel syllable which doesn't fit in the metre here.

There are also cases when a line ends with a conjunction *oo* or a diphthong in an open syllable such as '*-ay*' and '*-ow*' which are anceps and can be considered either short or long in open syllables (though diphthongs are always long in closed syllables). For example, in *Sidii Bilanow bil dhalatay* (Or the shining one, like the new moon), the final '*-ay*' syllable counts as a short vowel syllable to fit the metrical pattern. Whereas in '*Ducada loo raatibyeeyaa*' (One made the supplication for), the *'-yeeyaa*' is a long vowel syllable with an extra vowel emphasising the prolongation in performance. The form of the verb which we expect to hear here, as mentioned above is '*raatibay*' but Maryan Anshur has written '*raatibyeeyaa*' to reflect the performance.

While most lines end with a prolonged syllable in the performance even though the syllable is linguistically short, at certain times, the final syllable of a line is sung in a very short beat. This is often when a song is finished or a group of lines that form a complex sentence within a song is finished. In Maryan Anshur's transcription, she adds an apostrophe which is a consonant in Somali standing for the glottal stop after an open syllable to present the brevity of the final syllables in these lines. These syllables are also followed by a full stop punctuation mark showing the completion of a coherent part, and sometimes a blank row separating the line groups from the subsequent lines, while the other lines with a prolonged final syllable are also followed by a comma. These features in the performance of the oral poetry are hence reflected in the transcript in print.

The *hobeeyo* songs are mostly short in length. In performance, different short pieces of *hees* songs with different alliterative sounds are often concatenated with one another and form sequences, sometimes of considerable length. This leads to a single performance of a number of these *hees* songs in which the alliteration changes because

one individual *hees* is performed after another. Each one alliterates in its own sound which makes the performance sound as though the alliteration is changing. Change of alliterative sound is also a feature found in the *buraambur*, whereas all of the other *maanso* genres must alliterate with a single sound throughout the entire poem (Ahmed 1983, p.339). This is a feature specifically of the *buraambur* form, though it is not found in all *buraambur* poems. In performing the *hobeeyo*, both verbatim memorisation and personal composition are operative (Axmed 1993, p.71). Some lines of a song are constantly repeated because of their significance, while others are expanded and ornamented to meet new demands. What's more, some popular verses may appear in several performances in more than one region with small variations (Maryan 2015, p.5). For example, the following lines '*Haddaad gaadhoo gabowhoodoo, Haddii Guulle Alle yeeheeloo, Haddii guur kuu malooboo*' (If you grow up and reach an old age, If Allah makes it happen, If marriage comes into your mind)[17] are found in two different songs in Maryan Anshur's collection (2015, p.13, 29).

Having observed these characteristics of the *hobeeyo*, we may now reflect on the matter of classification. The Somali classify their poems into various distinct types, each of which has its own specific name. Each individual type of poem in Somali may be said to belong either to the category of *maanso* or that of *hees*. In the existing works focusing on Somali women's poetry, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the *hobeeyo* is, by and large, considered as a subcategory of the *buraambur* genre along with work songs and women's religious songs. This categorisation assumes that the *buraambur* is the broad category of all poetry made and performed by women and fails to take the distinctions between the *maanso* and *hees* and how different female genres fit in the two categories into thorough consideration.

The place of the *buraambur*, according to Andrzejewski and Lewis (1964, p.49), is 'somewhere between' the *gabay*, the *jiifto*, the *geeraar* and the lighter and less elaborate poems. The traditional evaluation of Somali poetry is based on a judgement of social status determined for the whole population by adult men, and the specific occasions and social situations that a poem is associated with. Poetry that is delivered at dance and work occasions, where the association with rhythmic and musical patterns

[17] Translation by Ruixuan Li.

gives the feeling that the focus of such poetry is on rhythm rather than the verbal message, is viewed as ‘trivial’ (Axmed 1993, p.22-23). As Orwin (2003, p.340) suggests, the performance of *maanso* traditionally involves nothing other than the reciter and the audience and it is the words which are of primary importance. The indeterminacy of the status of the *buraambur* genre probably lies in that on the one hand, it is often associated with music and dance, in an entertaining occasion such as at a wedding. It is also employed by women to deliver serious and political messages and has played and still plays an important role in the political and socio-economic development of the Somali people. For example, In the 1940s, a group of Somali women who were members of the Somali Youth League employed the *buraambur* to put across serious patriotic messages such as persuading other women to join the independence movement or appealing to the warring parties to stop fighting. These *buraambur* verses by the women poets Halimo Godane, Halimo Shiil, Barni Warsame and Timiro Ukash are collected and presented by Zainab Mohamed Jama (1991). I shall look at some of these poems in Chapter Four.

The poetry of women has long been excluded from the consideration of the seriousness until the middle of the 1900s, according to Axmed (1993, p.23-24), when a large number of contemporary Somali urban dwellers, especially the educated class, began to debate against the biased traditional evaluation of Somali poetry. They believe that poetry of women and young men has been undervalued and strongly hold that the criterion of the evaluation should be based on the merits of the poem rather than on the status of the individual or the group. It is such progressive ideas that propelled the recognition of the *buraambur* as serious poetry (Johnson 1974, p.13). In his extensive discussion of *maanso* and *hees*, Ahmed Adan Ahmed (1984) also includes *buraambur* in the *maanso* categorisation. In Kapteijns’ introduction to Somali women’s genres, she suggests that the women’s ‘serious’ genre, the *buraambur*, was ‘similar to the *gabay* in some aspects, but differed from it in terms of quantitative scansion, accompaniment (often drumming and dancing), subject matters, and, of course, the sex of author and audience’ (Kapteijns 1999, p.21). As for the genre of lullabies, she writes: ‘women also sang work songs (including songs for small babies) and had their own genre of religious song (called *sittaat*)’ (Ibid). Having the ‘including songs for small babies’ particularly in brackets shows that that the genre has not been commonly referred to as a sub-category of work songs in existing works on Somali poetry.

Kapteijns (1999, p.51) categorises Somali women's work into three parts: first, as a good (*gaari, adag, wanaagsan*) wife, a woman who kept her own person and appearance clean and served her husband, relatives, and guests. Second, as a good mother, she took care of her children, their food, clothing, health, and moral upbringing. Third, as a competent married woman, she did most of the work related to the processing, preparation, and distribution of the food of the household, manufactured, maintained, and repaired the collapsible house and woven household utensils, and took care of livestock other than camels.

In Somali society, work is often done to the rhythm of poetry. As mentioned earlier, work songs in Somali are called '*hees hawleed*', and form a major part of the *hees* category. The responsibility of taking care of children and the songs that are performed to this occasion seem to have been neglected by scholars such as Sheekh Jaamac when giving the definition of *hees hawleed* in an introductory section on the broad Somali poetry, relating work songs to 'livestock or handicraft' only (Sheekh Jaamac 1974, p.iv, cited and translated in Orwin 2003, p.338). However, in other works focusing on pastoral work songs, such as Axmed (1993), and works on Somali women's orature, lullabies are incorporated.

In Axmed (1993), the terms for each specific type of song he incorporates are given in Somali and in English. All the indigenous terms he uses start with *heesaha* which is the plural form of the word *hees* with a definite article. In the *heesaha carruurta* (lullabies) subsection, he also uses sub-categories *heesaha wiilasha* (lullabies for sons) and *heesaha gabdhaha* (lullabies for daughters). Some of the other types of *hees* songs may use other terminology, such as *hoyal* for mat-weaving songs (Amina 1981, p.117) which in Axmed (1993) are *heesaha kebedda iyo aloolka* and *heesaha harrarka*[18] and *salsal* for camel loading songs (Amina 1981, p.117) which in Axmed (1993) is *heesaha raridda awrta*. However, each of the *maanso* types of poetry has only one unique name which never involves the word *hees*.

This is the case with *buraambur*, it is the name of the type of poem and the dance and

[18] '*Kebed'*, '*alool'* and '*harrar'* are different types of mats used to cover the top and sides of the portable house. See Kapteijns (1999, p.62) and Axmed (1993, p.57-60).

performance that is sometimes associated with it. The dance is performed at weddings, but the form of the poem is not always associated with the dance itself. Based on this feature of the name and the other observations made above, I shall take *buraambur* as a subcategory of serious *maanso* poetry of which the subject matter is not associated with a type of work, and of which the authorship is known even though the poem might not go past a close circle of families and friends. I shall take the *hobeeyo* or *hees carruureed* genre that is sung by Somali mothers to their young children, as a sub-category of the *hees* poetry in which characteristics including the unknown authorship, the open-to-change feature, the brevity, the possible co nsiderable antiquity, the individual verses being joined together in a performance are found.[19]

The Poetic Contents and Lyric Address in the *Hobeeyo* Poems

In the previous sections, I have looked at some major extra-textual characteristics shown in the *hobeeyo* poems. In this section, I shall move on to the poetic texts. As we will see from the examples I analyse, the words of the *hobeeyo* are simple and lack the rich imagery found in *maanso* poems. A mother draws elements from the pastoral society and her daily life to entertain or soothe her baby but these are presented in a simple way. My assumption is that this is related to the context of the poem. The child which the mother is singing to cannot understand complex metaphors and so the addressee of the poem is not someone that the ‘poet’ or the ‘performer’ is trying to impress with complex language. We can assume that when the lullabies were first composed this was the case also. The woman who first composed the texts that I analyse here would have been composing for her child and so the language need not be made in the way that a poet makes an impressive *maanso* poem. Having said that, although the addressee is the child, there are other perspectives on the lyric voice in the lullabies which I discuss below. The vocative is important in this respect, and I turn to it next.

Each line of a *hobeeyo* verse consists of approximately three to four words and is constructed in a simple way. One distinct characteristic shown in the lines is the

[19] More accounts on the features of *hees* and *maanso*, see Orwin (2001, p.339), Orwin (2021), Mohamed (2013) and Andrzejewski and Lewis (1964, p.51).

frequent use of vocatives. In a lullaby that is sung to her child, a mother addresses her son or daughter constantly and in various ways. While addressing the baby and showing their care and love, Somali women also express their views on the prevalent gender values in the pastoral community. From a close reading of some of the *hobeeyo* texts, I intend to illustrate that the *hobeeyo* songs are framed artistically and have serious social significance.

Among the Somalis, the vocative suffix attached to a person's name is frequently used in their daily conversations. The vocative form in Somali is formed by the addition of '-*ay*' or the long form '-*yahay*' on female names and nouns and '-*ow*' or '-*yohow*' on male names and nouns. If the word ends in a vowel then, when the shorter vocative form is added, that vowel is deleted, and the vocative ending is added straight after the final consonant. While the address in ordinary speech is determined by its apparent communicative purpose, the address in poetics can be a special form of language which may or may not serve to communicate with the addressee directly.

The idea of address in these lullabies is particularly interesting and we can think of it in the lullabies in light of the idea of address in *hees hawleed* which is presented in Orwin (2021). In that work, Orwin makes the point that the address in some of the work songs for livestock is to the animals themselves. Sometimes the animals are addressed directly as in the examples below.

Adhigow yaryare
Waxaa kaa yaryari
Ma yamaarug baa
Ma yabaal baxaa
Taagane wanow
Tuurta u baxoo
Tuugga iska eeg

O small sheep and goats
What is smaller than you
Is it *yamaaug* plant?
Is it shoots that sprout?

O standing ram
Go up the hill
Look out for the thief [20]

The masculine vocative suffix is used and the words for the animals are used directly: '*adhigow*' (O sheep and goats) and '*wanow*' (O ram). In other such songs there is no direct address but the context of the performance is what makes it clear that the song is addressed to an animal. In other words, when a *hees* for watering camels is performed it is only performed in that specific work context and so, even if the camels are not directly addressed, they are understood as part of the context. Orwin points out that this is also the case with the 'lyric voice' in the poem. Because it is a *hees* type poem, there is mostly no known composer of the text. This means that the person performing the poem is not the person who composed the poem and so it is not for the specific time and place in which it is performed. It is the type of situation that the *hees* was composed for. For a camel-watering song, any situation in which camel-watering takes place is suitable and when the man sings such a *hees* he is doing so not from a personal perspective but from the general perspective of a camel herder who is watering his camels. This is different from the *maanso* type poems in which people know the person who composed the poem and which are mostly made for very specific situations in time and place. In the *maanso* poems the lyric voice is the personal voice of a particular individual unlike in the *hees* poems.

In the lullabies, the context is also very clear. I mentioned above that I consider the *hobeeyo* to be *hees* and so we don't know who the original composer of the poem was, nor do we know who the child was that the lullaby was first sung to. A mother sings a *hobeeyo* in a specific context of soothing her child or helping her child go to sleep. She can sing one same *hobeeyo* to her different children, in another scenario, she can sing *hobeeyo* to a relative or friend's child as well. The text that she is singing is not a message from herself personally, but rather a collective one that Somali mothers sing to their babies generation after generation. We will see below what the Somali mothers sing about in these *hobeeyo* songs, and particularly how the socially constructed gender norms are embedded in the *hobeeyo.* I shall discuss how this seemingly 'insignificant'

[20] Orwin (2021, p.66).

poetry by women can be influential.

Gender Preference in *Hobeeyo* Poems

Axmed (2014, p.29) divides the lullaby songs he collected into two categories: songs for baby-boys and songs for baby-girls. In the process of collecting, he finds that songs for boys are greater in number than those for girls and attributes that to Somali parents' preference for sons. Axmed (1993, p.74) also finds that the songs for sons seem to be more elaborate than those composed for daughters due to the gender prejudice where a woman is usually placed in a subordinate position. The following is a *hobeeyo* in which the preference for sons is straightforwardly expressed. The mother sings to her baby daughter called Fiido that she wishes it was Fariid*,* a baby boy that had been born to her (Axmed 2014, p.29):

1 Maxaa Fiidoy ku keenay
2 Fariid baa dhalan lahaaye
3 Raggaa faalali lahaaye
4 Wan baa foorari lahaaye[21]

1 O Fiido, what brought you?
2 Fariid is who should have been born
3 The men should have celebrated
4 A ram should have been feasted on

This short piece of lullaby alliterates in the '*f*' sound. In the first lines, the alliterative word is the daughter's name, Fiido, with the vocative suffix '*-oy*'. The mother addresses her daughter and asks her, 'O Fiido, what brought you?' Singing this line to the baby, the mother is not expecting an answer from her. Instead, the questioning is an illocutionary act that expresses the mother's emotions towards her new-born being a daughter rather than a son. In the next line, with a male name Fariid being the alliterative word, the mother bluntly sings, '*Fariid baa dhalan lahaaye*' (Fariid is who

[21] As mentioned above, the word '*fooraari*' in the original text is mispelled. It has been edited to *foorari* here.

should have been born). She is saying it is Fariid, the boy, rather than you, baby girl Fiido, who should have been born to me. Following the conditional structure, the next two lines give a listener a stronger impression of the preference for boys in the society. '*Raggaa faalali lahaaye*'[22] (the men should have celebrated), and '*wan baa foorari lahaaye*' (a ram should have been feasted on). In the pastoral society, although the birth of a baby is a delight in itself, a new-born boy is regarded to be more valuable than a girl. A son's birth was the occasion for the slaughtering of a ram and feasting, but a daughter was not celebrated in the same way (Kapteijns 1999, p.58). The lullaby echoes this aspect. The alliterative verbs '*faalali*' (celebrate) and '*foorari*' (lean over), in combination with the conditional mood auxiliary verb *lahaaye*, present a counterfactual joyful image of the festivities brought by the birth of a son. The happy image in the conditional tense implies that in reality, the men didn't celebrate, and neither were rams feasted on. Because Fariid, the boy wasn't born. She gave birth to Fiido, the girl. The parallelism achieved by the three lines in the conditional and the repetition of the final word '*lahaaye*' (should have), underlines the gender preference which is the social norm, and which is also imposed upon the mother. The parallelism includes focussing the male entities in each of the last three lines: *Fariid*, the male name, '*ragga*' (the men) and '*wan*' (a ram). The maleness seems to be emphasised in these syntactically parallel lines.

According to Kapteijns (1991, p.7), a Somali mother was to invest as much as possible in her sons since only the sons could be counted on to give her economic and emotional support in the future, either within or outside the framework of her marriage. Therefore, the birth of a boy gives a mother tremendous joy and security whereas the birth of a baby girl couldn't. Singing this *hobeeyo* song to her daughter, the mother is in fact addressing the societal preference for sons.

Marriage is also a main theme of the *hobeeyo* songs. The two songs in Maryan Anshur's collections, which are titled 'Tolyare' (Small Clan) and 'Goonbaar' (Nasty Woman)[23] are marriage advice given to baby boys and baby girls. In *Tolyare*, a mother suggests

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[22] '*Raggaa*' is made up of '*ragga*' (the men) and the focus marker '*baa*'.

[23] This translation is by Maryan Anshur as shown in the English version of the lullaby in the booklet. *Goonbaar* in the Somali context is a bad housekeeper who fails to accomplish the labours and obligations allocated to women, and fails to meet the traditional gender norms and expectations. The words 'slovenly woman' and 'slut' are also suggested as its English translations in Zorc and Madina's dictionary (1993, p.165).

to her daughter: *Haddaad gaadhoo gabowhoodoo, Haddii Guulle Alle yeeheeloo, Haddii guur kuu malooboo, Marnaba Tolyare ha guuhuursan* (If you grow up and reach an old age, If Allah makes it happen, If marriage comes into your mind, Never marry a small clan). The advice which is given to the daughter is thus about the clan that she is not to marry into. It relates to the status of the future husband in terms of his clan. She is implying that her daughter must marry a man who has the status of being in a large and therefore a more powerful clan. In 'Goonbaar', the counsel given to a boy is: '*Haddaad gaadhoo gabowhoodoo, Haddii Guulle Alle yeeheeloo, Haddii guur kuu malooboo, Haddaba goonbaar ha guuhuursan*'[24] (If you grow up and reach an old age, If Allah makes it happen, If marriage comes into your mind, And yet don't marry a nasty woman). In this *hobeeyo*, the words relate to a potential wife. The boy is told not to marry a woman who is '*goonbaar*' (a nasty woman). It is the personal qualities of the woman that are most important, her qualities as a good future wife. The way in which these two *hobeeyo* poems express the difference in addressing girls and boys is quite clearly given and hinges on one word only. For the daughter it is the positive status of the future husband, the status that relates to his clan, which is important. For the son, it is the personal status of the future wife which is expressed. This is done in way that states the negative aspects of the woman herself, not her clan.

Occasionally, Somali women also express their disagreement with the prevalent gender values. In the verse below, a mother shows a contrary attitude to that of the previous piece.

0 Hobeeya hobeey hobeeya [25]

1 Waxaa wiilloowda la hayo

2 Waxaa loo waalanaayo

3 (Hooyo) aduunbaa igala[26] wanaagsan

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[24] The original texts of the last line given in Maryan (2015, p.29) '*Haddabaa goonbaar ka guurhuursan*' seem to have two spelling mistakes. It should be '*ba*' with one '*a*' in the first word and '*ha*' instead of '*ka*', or else the line doesn't make sense. I have presented the edited version by myself.

[25] I mark this line as 0 for the reason that this line is a string of vocables which is sung in the performance of the poetry but does not have a meaning, as I explained previously. For the rest of the lullabies in this thesis that start with a line like this, I will also mark the first lines as 0.

[26] The '*hoyoo*' is an extra-metrical word added as an extra part of the performance which is outside of the metrecial line. However In this line the '*igala*' doesn't strictly follow the metre as presented above. The metre here seems broken.This may be due to it being misrepresented in the text.

0 Hobeeya hobeey hobeeya

1 (No matter) how one wants boys

2 (No matter) how one is enthusiastic of them

3 My child, it is only you that is better with me[27]

Lines 1-2, starting with *waxaa*, can be interpreted as two adverbial clauses of concession which describe how one (*la*) is crazy (*waalanaayo*) about having a son (*wiilloowda*). However, the main idea lies in the last line where the mother herself holds an opposite view. Addressing the child,[28] the mother sings: it is only ('*uun*') you ('*adiga*' in '*aduun*') that is better with me ('*i*' and '*la*' in '*igala*'). The subject pronoun you, and the object pronoun me highlight the intimate and strong connection between the daughter and the mother. The closeness between the 'I' and 'you' is also reinforced by the distance between the 'I' and the third person 'one' ('*la*') achieved by the concession. With '*aduun*' (only you) being focused by the focus marker '*baa*', the mother tells her baby girl that she chooses only the daughter over any other boys who might be wanted by others. As Kapteijns (1991, p.58) observes that women of a pastoral background today often state that they prefer daughters, who will help them with their work. The performance of the *hobeeyo* is most likely to occur inside a house, and when the baby is in the mother's arms or on her back. There may or may not be another person witnessing this event, compared to a *gabay* performance in pubic. However, there is the voice of the Somali women, disagreeing, even when there aren't other people listening, except the baby who can't understand her words.

Admirations and Blessings in *Hobeeyo*

Topics of *hobeeyo* poems concern the life of children and the exclusive and unbreakable bond between the mother and her daughters and sons. Somali women draw

[27] Amina 1981. Translation by Ruixuan Li.

[28] In Somali culture, the word for 'mother', *hooyo*, is used by both a mother and her child to address each other. That is to say, a Somali child calls his or her mother *hooyo*, and the mother would call him or her *hooyo* too. The same goes for the father (*aabbe* or *aabbo*), the paternal and maternal uncles (*adeer*, *abti*), the aunts (*eedo*, *habaryar* or *habo*) and the grandmother (*ayeeyo*) and grandfather (*awoowe*), etc. In the performance of a lullaby, the word *hooyo* is occasionally added at the beginning of a line. In such lines, the word *hooyo* are not considered part of the metrical pattern of the line.

the most valuable images to a pastoralist to express their admirations and blessings for their children. In the following verse that is sung to a son, the mother expresses what his birth means to her.

0 Hobeeyaa hobeeheey hobeeheyaa
1 Markaad dhalatee dhawaaqday,
2 Dhedow dhaxan bayga duushay
3 Dhulkaa ii wada iftiimay.

0 Hobeeyaa hobeeheey hobeeheyaa
1 When you were born and made a noise,
2 O dew, cold has flown away from me,
3 The whole world has come to light for me.[29]

This *hobeeyo*, alliterating in the '*dh*' sound, describes what the baby boy's first cry means to the mother. In line 1, two alliterative verbs '*dhalatee*' ('*dhalatay ee*': were born and) and '*dhawaaqday*' (made a noise) are next to each other. Two consecutive alliterating words are found again in the next line. In the next line, the mother addresses the boy using a symbolic object, the dew ('*dhedo*' with the vocative suffix '*-ow*'), and tells him that coldness has flown away from '*i*' (me) when '*aad*' (you) were born.[30] The whole world has come to light '*ii*' (for me) when '*aad*' (you) first cried. The images of coldness flying away and the whole world coming to light, with the use of hyperbole, symbolise the warmth, comfort and hope that the birth of the son brings to the mother. The pronouns and prepositions '*iga*' (from me) and '*ii*' (for me) make the intimacy between the son and the mother stand out. The mother also proclaims her position to the child in that nobody else would feel the same way.

The following is another example in which a mother expresses her desire to compliment the son. The lines brims with metaphors and the use of vocatives stand out:

1 Dhammow dhuux iyo lafoowaa,

[29] Maryan Anshur et al (2015, p.9). Translation by Ruixuan Li.
[30] The '*i*' (me) is in the cluster '*bayga*' which is made up of the focus marker '*baa*' the pronoun '*i*' (me) and the preposition '*ga'* (from). The '*aad*' is in the *markaad* which is the contraction of *markii aad* (when you) in the first line.

2 Dhammow dhuubane dhalyow waa,

3 Dhammow dhogor xaajiyow waa,

4 Dhammow kaan ku dhaartayow waa

5 Dhammow dheegga Hartiyowa'.[31]

1 Oh, perfect child, oh, marrow and bones,

2 Oh, perfect child, oh, offspring of a slim man,

3 Oh, perfect child, oh, skin of a pilgrim,

4 Oh, perfect child, oh, the one which I swore an oath on,

5 Oh, perfect child, oh, the high place of the Harti[32] clans.

The vocative '*Dhammow*' comes from the word '*dhan*' which means 'whole' or 'complete', hence can be further interpreted as 'to make something perfect'. In this short piece of lullaby, each line comprises two words that begin with the 'dh' sound, one of which is the vocative '*Dhammow*', the other being a noun directly following '*Dhammow*' as in the first three and the last line, or a verb as in the fourth line. In this *hobeeyo,* the vocative suffix '*-ow*' can also be found twice in each line: first attached to the word '*dhamme*' and then again at the end followed by a '*waa*' sound.The '*waa*' here is not the mood classifier in Somali grammar, but an extra sound made in the performance as mentioned earlier in this chapter, with the final letter in the previous syllable being reduplicate. The second '*-ow*' suffixes here in each line, are added on a phrase or clause which embodies the mother's praise and blessings. In the first line, it is the '*dhuux-iyo-lafo*' (marrow and bones). The marrow and bones, as a whole unit, is used figuratively to address the son. In the second, third and fifth line, the fine images are '*dhuubane dhali*' (offspring of a slim man), '*dhogor xaaji*' (skin of a pilgrim), and '*dheegga Harti*' (the high place of the Harti clan). The elements that are of great value in the pastoral Somali society, namely lineage, clan, and the piety for the religion, are referred to in this lullaby. In the fourth line, the '*-ow*' *s*uffix is used to address a relative clause made up of '*ka*' (the one), '*aan*' (I), and '*ku dhaartay*' (swore an oath on). It is also in this line that an '*-aan*' (I) appears and creates a strong sense of bond between the voice and the addressee, declaring her position as the mother.

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[31] Maryan et al 2015, p.9, Translation by Ruixuan Li.

[32] Harti: May refer to the Harti Daarood clan consisting of three sub-clans, the Warsangeli, the Marjeertaan, and the Dhulbahante.

The concentration of the alliterating sound in this *hobeeyo* is very striking. The importance of such use of sound parallelism is a feature that is recognised in lyric poetry and which helps to make such a poem one which can be very much considered to have lyric qualities. The density of the sound gives it an acoustic quality that highlights its being something that is made not to narrate something but to be a lyric act, a poetic act. We can say that this highlights its lyric ritualistic quality of being a piece of language that is an event rather than recounting something.

In the following *hobeeyo,* a mother sings to her daughter in a similar structure as the '*dhammow*' one mentioned above:

0 Ardooya ardooy ardooya
1 Ardooy indhahaygiyaya
2 Ardooy adhaxdaydiyaya
3 Ardooy[33] ardaa caano leh degtoya
4 Aroos khayr lehna geshoya
5 Ardooy inanteydiyeya
6 Ardooy ubad ababiyeya
7 Ugaasyo xambaaratoya
8 Ifkana lagaa naadiyeya [34]
9 Albaabka Jannada geshooya'

0 Ardooya ardooy Ardooya
1 O, Ardo, oh, my eyes
2 O, Ardo, oh, my spine
3 O, Ardo, oh, the one who settle where there is milk
4 O, the one who enters a good wedding
5 O, Ardo, oh, my daughter
6 O, Ardo, the one who will teach children
7 O, the one who will carry *ugaas*es on the back

[33] This is extra to the metre as I mentioned before.
[34] The '*lagaa*' strictly speaking, should be '*laga*' so that it fits in the metre. However, the meaning is correct in this line. There seems to be a variation in the metre.

8 O, the one about whom one announces in the world
9 O, the one who enters the doors of Paradise

Addressing her baby girl, Ardo, the mother thinks the whole life of her daughter ahead, from her wedding, her children, to her next life. In the opening line, '*Ardooya ardooy ardooya*', the vocative of the name Ardo is repeated in a way that is parallel to the '*hobeeya hobeey hobeeya*' vocables.[35] The long and short vowels are in the exact same positions as the '*hobeeya hobeey hobeeya*'. While the '*hobeeya*' vocables do not have a lexical meaning when they are used to call the baby's attention, by singing '*Ardooya ardooy ardooya*', the mother calls the girl's name. The final '*a*' syllable in the word '*ardooya*' should be seen as an extra sound which is added to fit in the metrical and musical patterns and which doesn't affect the meaning of the word. Some other names which consist of two short vowel syllables are also found in strings of vocatives. For example, '*Duco*' in '*ducaayo ducaay ducaaya*' is a girl's name that comes from the Arabic word '*du`ā*'' meaning 'supplication to God'. '*Same*' in '*samoowa samoow samoowa*' comes from the Somali word '*san*' which means 'goodness'. Hence, the name can be understood as 'the good one'.

In lines 1-2, the mother uses parts of the body to convey her love, '*Ardooy indhahaygiyaya*' (O Ardo, O my eyes), '*Ardooy adhaxdaydiyaya*' (O Ardo, O my spine). The possessive pronouns '*-aygii*' and '*-aydii*', being in the noun-phrase that is addressed, intensify the intimacy between the mother and the daughter. Another line in this *hobeeyo* that is constructed in the same way is the six line '*Ardooy inanteydiyeya*' (O Ardo, O my daughter). In these three lines, the three noun phrases '*indhahaygi*' (my eye), '*adhaxdaydi*' (my spine) and '*inanteydi*' (my daughter) are metrically and semantically in parallel with each other. Instead of putting them in complete declarative sentences (i.e. 'O Ardo, you are my eyes'), the mother addresses the noun phrases. Needless to tell the baby that 'you are my eyes' or 'you are my spine', the vocative suffix declares and intensifies the intimacy between the mother and the daughter.

The rest of the lines are constructed in a slightly different way. In the lines from the fourth to the tenth (except line 5 analysed above), the final vocative suffix is added on

[35] For this reason, I also marked this opening line as 0.

a clause that includes an object and a verb. To start with the simpler lines, for example, in '*Ardooy ubad ababiyey*', the clause that the vocative suffix is added onto is '*ubad ababi*' which we may translate as 'who teaches children'. In '*Ugaasyo xambaaratoya*', the clause is made up of the object '*Ugaasyo*' which means clan leaders, and the verb '*xambaaro*' (to carry on one's back or shoulder). The tense in these lines seems ambiguous because the ending is not clear given that the vocative deletes the ending when it is added. I assume that the tense is not particularly important here, it is the address and the ideas expressed in each line for the child that are paramount. A characteristic that is shared by these clauses that are in the vocative case is that they all depict the daughter's future, entering a good wedding, bearing sons who are clan leaders, and entering the doors of the Paradise etc. The special usage of vocative in the *hobeeyo* presents us with a special language of poetry that is not commonly found in ordinary speech. Instead of using any full sentences like 'you are the offspring of a slim man' or 'you will enter a good wedding', the succession of addresses expresses her best wishes for the daughter. Alternatively, we may translate these lines in the vocative case using the 'May you …' expression in English. O Ardo, may you settle in a courtyard with milk. O Ardo, may you enter the doors of Paradise.

In light of analysing these *hobeeyo* poems I now return to the idea of address which I discussed above. In his study of lyric poetry in western European languages, Culler argues that address to someone gives a poem a character of event, hence a poetic discourse is an attempt to be an event (Culler 2014, p.164; Culler 2015, p.188). He emphasises the indirection in the 'triangulated address', where an audience is addressed through the act of address to an imagined addressee, a *you* which is indeterminate (Culler 2014, p.164). The *maanso* type of poetry, by and large, reflects such characteristics. However, the *hobeeyo*, as a speech act concerning a specific occasion, is already an event itself, in which the addressee is one specific real audience. The parallelism achieved by the replication of the vocatives add to the ritualistic element of the *hobeeyo*. Despite the real addressee not being able to make sense of the words, the mother stresses the bond between the lyric 'you' and 'I' in what she says when she addresses her child. I suggest that the *hobeeyo* expresses and makes sense for the mother herself. In other words, the *hobeeyo* is not just for the babies, but for the mothers too. In the section below, we shall see some more serious messages covered in a *hobeeyo* song that present the Somali mothers' life and struggles.

Womanhood in the *Hobeeyo* for Daughters

A Somali lullaby can be more than blessings and wishes. Sometimes the message in a *hobeeyo* is more serious, especially when it is sung to a girl. The following *hobeeyo* is a discussion on gender sung to a girl named Gudo: [36]

Gudooy weynoo gefeene
Ardaa aan gabadhi joogin
Gudooy geel laguma maalo
Gammaan faras laguma raaco

O Gudo, they have done wrong to us
A dwelling where a girl is not there
O Gudo, one doesn't milk camels in it
One doesn't ride horses in it

To her infant audience, the mother sings: '*Gudooy weynoo gefeene*' (O Gudo, they have done wrong to us). The address here, again, is an operation not determined by its communicative purpose. Telling the young daughter about an adult problem, the mother is not seeking a real conversation with the baby. However, she is seeing the child as a fellow woman in the future and voicing the injustice they face together. The 'us' can be solely the mother and the daughter, it can also be women in general. With the word '*gabadhi*' (girl) standing out as the alliterative word in the next line, the gender representation in this lullaby becomes more evident.

In a Somali family, a great deal of work is done by women. This *hobeeyo* expresses such awareness of the importance of women's work. Without nomadic women dismantling and building the dwellings, making the household utensils and taking care of the children, one can't milk camels, one can't ride horses. Camels are the most important livestock in Somali society and milking camels is an exclusively male domain of work. Therefore, the impersonal pronoun '*la*' in the penultimate line,

[36] Amina (1981, p.116), translation by Ruixuan Li.

especially, can be interpreted as a male 'one', a man, a husband. In a house without women, men won't milk camels.

Yet the messages in this song extend beyond this. What is the 'wrong' that the mother sings in the first line? In her paper, Amina Adan (1981, p.117) suggests it may be that women are still under the authority of men and not fully incorporated by her husband's kin group despite the hard work she does for the family, and that women are not considered as members who contribute to the wealth of their birth family even though horses and camels paid as bride-price to the family are veritable property owing to these female members. In a later work, Dahabo, Amina and Amina (1995, p.177) maintain that the mother is not only addressing her child, but also fellow women who are faced with the same situation.

People turn to poetry when faced with difficulties. Although the baby who's being addressed can't help with those difficulties, they can be the mothers' emotional sustenance. Addressing Gudo, the mother may in fact be singing as much to herself as to the daughter. At one level, the mother tells her infant daughter about the importance of women's work and also the issue of inequality, at another, '*Gudo*' can be a holder of an indeterminate addressee that she speaks out her pride as a woman to and complains about the established fact to. The fellow women she's addressing could also include herself.

The following piece also addresses the problems the daughter would have to face when she grows up:

1 Dhibaay gabadh dhalatayee
2 Dhibaad soo doonisteeda
3 Ninkii baa i dhibayadeeda
4 Dhibaato u joogisteeda
5 Anaan dhalin baa iigu roone

1 O trouble, a girl who has been born
2 Her wanting the *dhibaad* payments
3 Her [repeating] 'the man has caused me troubles'

4 Her being for a problem

5 It is better for me that it is not me who gave birth to her [37]

This *hobeeyo* starts with an alliterative word '*dhibaay*', which consists of a noun, '*dhib*' (trouble, hardship), and the vocative suffix '*ay*'. The mother is calling her daughter 'trouble' and lamenting about the problems that the daughter might bother her about one day, including the '*dhibaad*' gift[38] that the daughter would occasionally ask from the maiden family and the problems between the daughter and her husband. And instead of using second person pronouns, she uses 'her'. In line 3, 'the man has caused me troubles', the word '*dhib*' comes up again, as the denominal verb in the sentence '*ninkii baa i dhibay*' (the man caused me trouble). The sentence, which sounds very much like a quoted speech, is then made into a noun phrase. It is possible that this is in the plural form achieved by the suffix '*o*' (which has changed into '*-a*') before the possessive suffix '*teeda*'.[39] The nominalisation in this line gives the listener an imaginable impression of a married woman complaining about her husband to her mother. We don't know what troubles they exactly are. Some Somali women I interviewed consider them to be small quarrels between a woman and her husband. Others suggest that it may be the issue of domestic violence as shown in Amina H. Adan's (1981) translation of this poem in which she interprets the direct speech as 'the-husband-has-beaten-me complaints'. She also suggests that it is the mother who finds the wife beating and complaining the most loathsome, 'perhaps because she herself went through it only a generation before' (Amina 1981, p.118).

In line 4, the alliterative noun '*dhibaato*' (a problem) once again highlights the key word '*dhib*' in this lullaby. The word '*joogis*' (presence) comes from the verb '*joog*' (be present) and the possessive suffix '*teeda*' is once again added. The voice deems the presence of a girl to be 'for a problem'. If we compare this line with the preceding two, we can notice that they are not only made parallel by the repetition of '*dhib*' in the

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[37] Amina (1981, p.118), translation by Ruixuan Li.

[38] Amina (1981, p.118) suggests that the noun '*dhibaad*' originally comes from the noun '*dhib*' *(trouble)*. According to a Somali mother named Mako Mohamoud, who I spoke with, the *dhibaad* is normally a traditional Somali dish consisting of preserved meat called *muqumad* and other gifts to the husband of a married woman. For a less wealthy family or a family with more than one daughter, such *dhibaad* gifts can be burdensome.

[39] One sound change particular to nouns in Somali is if the noun ends in '*o*' and the possessive suffix is added, not only does the '*t*' change to '*d*' but the '*o*' also changes to '*a*'. See Martin Orwin, *Colloquial Somali* (1995) p.44, 134.

alliterative words and the possessive suffix '*teeda*' at the end of each line. There's also a perceptible progression. '*Dhibaad soo doonisteeda*' specifically points to the burden of the *dhibaad* payments for a family. The voice is not only a mother who worries about the future *dhibaad* payments for her infant daughter, but also a woman who has brought such trouble to her maiden family. While material possession of the family bothers a mother, what's worse, it is the whimpering and whining of her daughter about '*ninkii baa i dhibay*' that breaks a mother's heart. Having her baby in her arms, in the last line, the mother sings that she wishes she never gave birth to her.

Cross-culturally, a cradle song can convey serious and even dark messages. In my interviews in Hargeysa, I kept asking the Somali women, why a mother would sing about a co-wife, about the wrongs men do, and a man hitting a wife, to an infant who cannot understand. They told me: 'The lyrics are not so important to calm the baby', 'they are not about the child; they are about the mother'.

Themes and lyrics that appear to be inappropriate for children, including wars, violence and death, are found in cradle songs across the world. A mother shares the happenings that make her happy or sad with the baby, despite that the young listener is incapable of understanding, and the infants fall asleep. While the tension between the lexical content and the functional motive of the lullaby attracts folklorists' and anthropologists' attention, the separation of the meaning of the poem and the power of the vocables may also be commented on as poetry, specifically as lyric poetry. In principle, the sound patterning, the beauty of forms, is separate from any particular semantic content. Culler writes (2015, p.136) that 'the sense of rhythm in the broad sense as something independent of writer or reader may be very strong in lyric … that sense of independence is especially marked in stanzas with short rhyming lines or in minor forms of lyric – jingles, limericks, nursery rhymes, … where sound and rhythm rather than meaning are the source of attraction.'

Mutlu Blasing maintains that a lyric is a text where sound and sense, form and meaning, are two systems and we witness the '*distinct* operation' of them (cited in Culler 2015, p.168). In the case of the *hobeeyo*, the form and sound patterning operate independently and are largely responsible for exuding calm and inciting sleep. The verbalisation of

the issues that a child is incapable of understanding, can be considered as 'autonomous units' which is meant for the mother herself. There are, after all, two people present and in the 'audience' when a lullaby is sung: the infant and the mother. The mother may in fact be singing as much to herself and for herself. To a baby boy she sings of her ambitions for the son: that he would grow up, that he would be proud and worthy of his kin, rich in camels; that he would marry a beautiful wife, that he would take care of his mother in her old age. To a baby daughter, she may sing 'I'd rather have a boy' or 'no matter how they love boys, it is only you that is better with me'. Girls are told of marriage, womanhood and the injustice in the society towards their gender even as tiny babies carried on their mothers' backs.

According to Bascom (1954), a lullaby allows an individual to escape from repressions imposed by the society. Baruch finds that lullabies are chanted during difficult times and give voice to the troubles as well as the hopes of the mother. One possible explanation of a mother's singing elements of distress to a baby who is not able to understand her problems may be that the lullabies serve to calm the mother as well (Bascom 1954, p.2).

The *Hobeeyo* and the Modern Somali Mothers

During my fieldwork in Hargeysa in 2019, I met a number of young women and young mothers and had the chance to ask and observe how they interact with babies and young children. These young women I met were by and large in their 20s or early 30s. Some of them have their own children, some have the experience of looking after children of family members or friends. Most of these young women had embraced an urban lifestyle while their families may have a pastoral background. The significance of pastoral poetry is to a large extent decreased in an urban social setting, since the specific occasions and social functions that the verbal act is associated with are not part of the young urban Somalis' life. Instead of herding livestock and manufacturing woven household utensils, they go to university or work. Housework, preparation of food and raising children are still the woman's domain. There may be other female members of the family in the house to help the young mothers with these responsibilities.

Nowadays, the old and middle-aged generation and young women living in the rural

areas may still maintain the usage of *hobeeyo* they inherited from older generations, however, the younger generation living in the urban areas have generally lost touch with these songs. They might be familiar with the melody and rhythm and recall a few lines of a *hobeeyo*, but the function of the genre has been largely replaced by modern popular songs. They may prefer a song for a reason, such as being related to the baby's name, or sing any songs that come to their mind to soothe or entertain the infants. Some young women I interviewed are interested in learning and inheriting the *hobeeyo* songs. However, they are also concerned with the gender values expressed in the lines. They told me that they would learn 'only the good ones' to sing to their children. 'The good ones' may refer to the songs that express wishes and compliments. Those which express gender preference for boys or gender inequality are considered as 'bad songs' that young Somali women wish not to learn.

The young Somali women are aware that marriage is a core theme among the *hobeeyo* songs, and that the prevalent gender norms are often stressed. Some of the women agree with the importance that is attached to marriage by saying that for Somali women, 'life is to marry or to die' and that 'university is something new to us'. In reality, there are female university students in Hargeysa choosing to quit university and get married. However, there are also young women disagreeing with this kind of decision. They agree with the importance of marriage but claim that 'we can be more than a wife'. When thinking ahead about their children's future, they consider both their marriage and education.

The media also plays an important role in preserving the genre. There are also young mothers using YouTube videos of Somali lullabies to play for their children. On a YouTube Channel called 'Somali Kids', *hobeeyo* songs are recorded in a modern music melody. Instead of a type of *luuq*, new music written by Ukrainian musician Nick Usaty and animation videos which show a Somali mother lulling her baby as well as other elements such as camels that echo with the lyrics are appreciated by the young Somali mothers. 'Somali kids' also gives the full *hobeeyo* lines in the captions under the videos. There's also a Somali version of the popular English lullaby 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' on the channel in which the original English lullaby is translated and sung in the Somali language. These aspects are interesting as they show how traditions are constantly developing and how people adapt modern tools to meet their present-day

needs and preserve the old verbal art at the same time. That being said, it will still be the young mothers' call to choose between an innovative video of a Somali lullaby, or, the global sensation, Baby Shark.

There are other *hees hawleed* (work songs) which are performed by women when they are doing work which is done only by women, such as the *kebed*-mat weaving songs (*heesaha kebedda*), songs which are sung when women are preparing food, the milk churning songs (*heesaha lulidda*) and mortar pounding songs (*heesaha mooyaha*), and the sheep and goat herding songs (*heesaha adhiga*). As women's work songs, these poems are also considered 'trivial' or 'insignificant', using Axmed's (1993) terms. However, Somali women make their voices heard by singing these work songs while doing their task at hand. On the one hand, they are sung for entertainment, on the other, the cultural practice of singing work songs serves as a platform of voicing and protesting for the female population that is accepted by the male-dominated society. Somali women express their opinions on multiple issues related to their social roles, in particular to the notion of marriage and womanhood. When a woman complains about her husband, or a relative in the family, or male gender privilege in general in her singing, her messages behind the songs will be received by the listener. Amina (1981, p.117) gives an example of a wife singing a complaint against polygamy while loading camels with her husband. She sings: '*Nabad gale nin laba dumar le / Nabad uma soo gelin*' (For the polygamous my lovely camel / Worry and nagging are his companion)[40]. Although she is addressing the camel she is loading, when the husband receives the message, there is no way he can stop the woman because she is simply singing a traditional work song which has been sung generation after generation (Ibid).

Another true scenario raised by John Johnson (1995, p.115) is that a husband has chosen a suitable young man for the youngest daughter in the family, but the wife doesn't approve. Not having the right to speak out in this matter, the wife sings a herding song, to the sheep and goats, about a ram choosing the wrong mate for his youngest daughter. She will make sure the husband hears her singing, and, as Amina says, there is no way he can stop the woman singing a traditional work song. We thus hear women's agency expressed through the *hees* poems within the limited space they

[40] This translation is not a literal one, but Amina has translated the interpretation of those words.

have in both the literary canon and the social world defined by men. In the next chapter, I will explore how Somali women go beyond these restrictions amd make themselves heard through the *maanso* type of poetry and especially in the *gabay* genre.

Chapter 3

Poetry by Somali women about relations between men and women

In this chapter, I will move my focus from *hees* to *maanso* and look at those made by women on the theme of relations between men and women. This is a theme that is commonly found in various genres of literature from different countries and cultures. However, Somali oral literature, as observed by Mohamed Farah Abdillahi and B. W. Andrzejewski in their article on the life of Cilmi Boodhari (1967, p.191), is mostly concerned with 'wars, peacemaking, alliances, politics, comments on public affairs, religion, the prestige of one's clan or one's friends, attacks on one's enemies, or public justification of one's actions'. The subject of love, on the other hand, was only touched upon in serious poetry 'incidentally, when it had some bearing on a topic of general public interest', and 'was left to the simple ditties or dance songs of young camel herders or girls' (Ibid). This was before Cilmi Boodhari, the poet who is famous for his love poems and who is said to have died of love, according to the authors.

The name Cilmi Boodhari and his tragic love story are widely known among the Somalis. Cilmi Boodhari, who was working at a bakery shop in Berbera in the 1930s, fell in love at first sight with a young girl who entered the bakery named Hodan. He never saw Hodan again but became terribly lovesick. Suffering from this love for Hodan, he started making poems to express his sorrow. He wanted to marry her, however, his clan refused to provide him with the requisite bridewealth. In the end, Hodan married another, and it is said that Cilmi Boodhari died from the resulting heartbreak. Mohamed and Andrzejewsi remark that in addition to the quality of his poems, Cilmi Boodhari owes his fame to the fact that he became 'the spokesman of social reform' by defying the established, traditional view of love and marriage in the poetic form (Ibid, p.205). However, there is one important question that has been neglected by many: What did Hodan say about this? At least in Hadraawi's famous romantic poem, 'Beledweyn', the girl that Hadraawi met had said 'be here tomorrow' to him before they parted, though they never saw each other again.[41] In Cilmi Boodhari's case, there was no sign in all the sources that Mohamed and Andrzejewsi

[41] This is in the line '*[sow] berri joog imay odhan*' ('Be here tomorrow!', didn't she say to me?) in 'Beledweyn' in Andzejewski with Andzejewski (1963).

have gathered suggesting Hodan had shown any interest in Cilmi Boodhari. However, the two male authors write: 'one might suppose that she had some affection for him' and 'she could not bring herself to oppose her family when they rejected 'Ilmi[42]'. Back in the 1930s when Cilmi Boodhari made those love poems, even men would be considered unmanly and shameful if they openly expressed their affection towards a woman, according to Somali poet Axmed Aw Geedi (cited in Thompkins 2009). This taboo is only stricter for women. According to Axmed (1993. p.14) Somali women were not socially permitted to talk about anything concerning the relations between men and women. This is also noted by Mohamed and Andrzejewsi that Hodan didn't make a comment on Cilmi's love for her because she was not allowed to. Hodan must have had something to say, but it was not allowed to be heard by the public, hence not to be found in existing literature. Hodan's voice was suppressed and made invisible.

However, Hodan had a voice. Somali women had a voice and they did address the matter of love and their relations with men. We have seen in the work songs in the previous chapter how Somali women convey a message concerning their relations with their husbands or relations between men and women in general, and this form of verbal expression is accepted in the culture. Apart from the work songs, Somali women also made themselves heard in the serious genres, despite the suppression of them and discrimination against them. In this chapter, I will examine the *maanso* type of poetry, and in particular, the most prestigious *gabay* genre, which is still largely dominated by men, but here made by Somali women.

I will look at poems by two women poets, Caasha Luul Maxamuud Yuusuf and Xaawa Jibriil. I chose these two women poets because they are both powerful women poets who have made poetry in the male genres, especially the *gabay*, and whose poems have been widely known in the Somali society. The two poets have very different backgrounds and their poetry shows distinct styles of language. Xaawa Jibriil was born in 1920 and actively participated in the Somali independence struggle and made poetry to mobilise the public during the 1940s and 1950s. Many Somali men and women remember with high regard her patriotic poems (Faduma 2008, p.91). Xaawa started expressing herself through the vehicle of poetry from a very young age and made

[42] This article was written before the introduction of the official writing system of the Somali language. The name Cilmi Boodhari was written as 'Ilmi Bowndheri.

poems throughout her life. Many of her poems that are remembered by Somalis were made during and after the independence movements, which I will discuss in Chapter Four. In this chapter, I will look at poems she made at different stages in her life through which we see her growth as a woman.

Caasha Luul Maxamuud Yuusuf is a contemporary Somali poet who has lived in exile in Britain since 1990. She grew up in the north of the Horn of Africa and also started to compose poetry at a young age. Her work began to be published on Somali websites in 2008 and has gradually gained popularity in the diaspora community for her rich imagery, compelling arguments, and her ability to put them in lines that perfectly fit the metrical pattern and are regarded as very finely crafted. She constructs her *gabay* poems in a very 'classical' fashion but engages with contemporary themes. I will look at two poems of hers that touch on relations between men and women and the theme of love in this chapter, and a poem on the themes of war and displacement in the next chapter.

'Dookh' (Taste) and 'Calaf' (Fortune) by Caasha Luul

I will take 'Dookh' (Taste) and 'Calaf' (Fortune) by Caasha Luul as examples to present close readings of Somali poems and how I engage lyric ideas with Somali poems. 'Dookh' and 'Calaf' are both *gabay* poems. 'Dookh' was written in London in 2011 and 'Calaf' was written in 2016. They are included in her dual-language Somali-English collection entitled *Tahriib* (The Sea-Migrations) published in Asha (2017), with English translations provided by the English poet Clare Pollard, in collaboration with Said Jama Hussein and Maxamed Xasan 'Alto'. Both poems are about men, but from different perspectives. 'Dookh' presents a woman's perspective when she doesn't have feelings for a man even though he may show very many excellent characteristics. 'Calaf', on the other hand, recounts mostly bad characteristics that men might have and which the voice in the poem does not want to be her 'due'.

The *arar* is the introductory section of a poem in Somali. It is a section in which the poem is introduced itself, but in many poems, especially ones which are more 'traditional' or are made to be like poems from earlier times, the *arar* can refer to the

poet and the making of the poem in question. Sometimes there is a reference to the poet's skills in the *arar*, and we see an example of this below. Following the *arar*, the main part of the poem is called the *dhexdhexaad* (middle section). This is the main part of the poem in which the poet sets out what they wish to say in the poem. It is the longest part of the poem and is often divided into different sections. The examples below by Caasha Luul demonstrate this clearly. The final section is called the *gebaggebo* (concluding section). This section is mostly short and may sum up the message of the poem in a concise way. This structure for poetry seems to be most clear in *gabay* poems although it is also found in other genres of poetry. It also seems to be prominent in more serious poems. In the *gabay* poems of Caasha Luul that I will discuss in this section the structure is very clear and I will analyse the poems following each part. I will start with the *arar* of the poem 'Dookh' (Taste).

On Arar Dookh

The first six lines of 'Dookh' by Caasha Luul are given below. They are the *arar* of the poem and are a particularly fine example of an *arar* which refers to the poem itself and to the poet.

1 Haddaanad gabayga deelqaafka iyo, dari ka saaraynnin
2 Dalabtiyo haddaan laga midh tirin, diniqa aan muuqan
3 Meeshii dahsoonayd haddaan, lagu daqiiqeeynnin
4 Doogtiyo haddaan lagu lafgurin, dakharradii raagay
5 Darar lagama maaloo tixuhu, dufan ma yeeshaane,[43]
6 Aan dareersho caawoo kalaan, daribta saafaaye.

I have mentioned the Somali terms *hojis* and *hooris* as introduced in Ahmed Adan Axmed (1983) in Chapter One. In Somali, the first hemistich of a *gabay* line is called *hojis* and the second is called *hooris*. I will use these terms in my analysis of Somali poems. In a *gabay*, the *hojis* of each line is longer and the *hooris* is shorter. According

[43] In Asha (2017) the word '*tixuhu*' is spelt '*tixuu*'. I have edited this to '*tixuhu*' which is the correct spelling. The noun is the subject of the verb '*yeeshaan*' which is in the plural and so shows us clearly that the subject is plural. The pronunciation of '*tixuhu*' might be heard as '*tixuu*' sometimes, but it does not reflect the grammar.

to Ahmed (Ibid, p.344), the *hojis* can be considered as the supporting part and the *hooris* is the principal part. For every *gabay*, he says, and we saw above in the section on metre, the *hooris* will always have six syllables in which there are always two long vowels. However, the number and syllabic positioning of long vowels in the *hojis* are more flexible. One of the ways in which Ahmed analyses lines is in terms of the proportion of long vowels and syllables which follows the work on metre by Cabdullaahi Diiriye Guuleed. The structure of the *gabay* which was given in the section on metre also leads to these proportions. If we take the *arar* in *Dookh* as an example, and apply the same analysis as Ahmed (1983), we can see that in the first line, there is a total of eleven syllables in the *hojis* in which three are long vowels. We shall mark it as a '11/3 ratio'. In the second *hojis*, the total number of syllables is again 11, but there is only one long vowel, hence a '11/1 ratio'. In the third *hojis*, the total number of syllables becomes only seven, in which five can be considered as long vowels, which makes the ratio '7/5'.

Let's then have a check of the *hooris* in these lines. It's not hard to find that the total number and the number of long vowels is in a fixed '6/2 ratio'. That is to say, when a person listens to a *gabay tix*, the whole line of a *gabay*, the *hal-beeg* (balance) in the first long part of a line is always changing, but after the caesura, the listener can always expect two long vowels in six syllables. As the '6/2 ratio' repeats again and again, it imposes upon a Somali audience a sound *adkeeyn* (emphasis). The effect of a sound *adkeeyn* then drives a poet to put a meaning *adkeeyn* in the position of the sound *adkeeyn.*

At the same time, such words are often stressed in the performance. In Caasha Luul's performance of 'Dookh', when she performs the first two lines in the *arar* for example, she reads the lines in a relatively fast speed except that at the '*saaraynnin*' and '*aan*' in the *hooris,* she slows down her reading and gives extra force to the '*aa*' syllables. To what extent does this aspect in performance echo with the emphasis in the semantic content? How much of a strong statement can we find in the *hojis* that might not be stressed in the performance? Being the 'supporting part', is the statement in the *hojis* less important than that in the *hooris*? With these questions in mind, I shall now have a close analysis of the semantic and structural characters in each *hooris* and *hojis* in the *arar* of 'Dookh' (Taste).

This *arar* consists of six lines: the first four each are protasis clauses in a conditional to which the apodosis is given in line 5. In these lines the poet expresses the importance of crafting a *gabay* well. I shall look at the *arar* line by line.

1 Haddaanad gabayga deelqaafka iyo, dari ka saaraynnin
(If you did not remove the incoherency and defect from the *gabay* poem)

In the first line, the *hojis* consists of '*haddaanad*' (if you not), two nouns, '*gabay*' and the alliterating word '*deelqaafka'* (incoherent imagery or language) and the conjunction '*iyo*' (and), while the *hooris* is made up of another alliterating word '*dari'* (defect) and the verb of the negative conditional clause '*saaraynnin*' (not removed) with the preposition '*ka*' (from). The first word '*haddaanad*' is made up of three parts, '*haddii'* (if), '*aan*' (not), and '*aad*' (you), with the second person pronoun making it clear that the voice of the poem is addressing a 'you'. The subject pronoun '*aad*' is shortened to '*ad*' which is a grammatical change that is regular when these parts are put together in a single word. Then, the second word '*gabayga*' reveals that the voice is making a point on the *gabay* poetry to the 'you'.

The word '*deelqaafka*' (incoherent imagery or language), as mentioned earlier in Ahmed's terminology chart, is the antonym of *humaag* (imagery). Explaining the terminologies, Ahmed (1983, p.340) suggests that 'the use of *humaag* (imagery) in *maanso* is of paramount importance to a Somali audience's appreciation for and understanding of a *meeris* (poem). A poet is expected to be highly creative and coherent in carrying out image relationships.' He also gives examples to further explain the consistency that the imagery and language used in a poem are expected to meet. He writes that if a poet decides to use archaic language, then slang shouldn't appear in the same *meeris*. Also, if a poet uses pastoral imagery, then 'his *meeris* is judged by the Somali audience according to the frequency of, and interconnecting relationships he is able to invoke through, his use of pastoral imagery'. Bearing this concept in mind, we shall then look at the images Caasha Luul uses in this *arar*. The alliterating word '*dari*' in the following *hooris* is an image that figuratively echoes with the alliterating word '*deelqaafka*' in the *hojis*. '*Dari*' literally means a defect in a spine, here it implies flaws in a poem. And the last two words '*ka saaraynnin*' is the negative form of the verb 'to

remove from' in the past tense. Thus, in the first line of this poem, the voice of the poem says, 'if you did not remove the bad alliteration and defects from the *gabay*', then something would happen. The sound *adkeeyn* (emphasis), using Ahmed's (1983) term, as mentioned earlier, is on the verb '*saaraynnin*' (not removed).

2 Dalabtiyo haddaan laga midh tirin, diniqa aan muuqan
(If one did not get rid of the disharmony and invisible wound from it)

The second line expresses a similar idea with the word order slightly changed. Instead of the second person pronoun, the impersonal pronoun '*la*' (which is equivalent to 'one' in English) is used and the verb phrase in negative form '*midh tirin*' (not get rid of) together with the preposition '*ka*' (from) in the cluster '*laga*' are put in the *hojis*. We find the word '*haddaan*' (if not) again, following the alliterating word '*dalabtiyo*' which is made up of an image '*dalabta*' (disharmony) and a conjunction '*iyo*' joining the alliterating word '*diniqa*' (wound) in the *hooris*. In Somali, '*dalabta*' originally is a medical term that describes the condition of knock-knee, the inward curvature of legs. Interestingly, the alliterating noun in the *hooris* is '*diniqa*' (wound) followed by a relative clause '*aan muuqan*' (that is not visible). If we compare '*dalabta*' (disharmony), '*diniqa aan muuqan*' (invisible wound) and '*dari*' (defect) in the first line together, we can see what the poet is trying to say. A knock-knee might not be an illness as severe and apparent as a fracture or a visible cut, but it is a defect in the legs that needs to be corrected. An invisible wound might be anywhere in a body that one can't find the exact position, but it causes pain, just like a defect in a spine. These metaphors all point to the feeling that '*deelqaafka*' (incoherent imagery or language) causes if it's not gotten rid of. Listening to a verse with inconsistent language or imagery gives an audience the pain of a defect in a spine, a knock-knee and an invisible wound. The pain can be felt, but the exact place can't be specified. When the Somalis hear a badly composed poem, they might not comment on any words in the lines in detail, instead, they might just say: '*Waa jabanyahay*' (It is broken).

3 Meeshii dahsoonayd haddaan, lagu daqiiqeeynnin
(If one did not shed light on the obscure place)

The next metaphor used in the third line is '*meeshii dahsoonayd*' where '*meeshii*' is the noun meaning place, and the alliterating word '*dahsoonayd*' is an adjective meaning 'hidden, obscure'. Again, the image echoes with the feeling of something invisible described in the first two lines. However, the structure of this line is different. The position of the word '*haddaan*' is moved to the middle of the line, just before the caesura, and the subject '*la*' (one) is in the *hooris* rather than the *hojis*. In the two previous lines, we can find one verb matching with two object nouns. However, in this line, the verb '*daqiiqeeynnin*' (not shed light on) in the *hooris* goes with only one object, which is the '*meeshii dahsoonayd*' (the hidden place) in the *hojis*. In Caasha's performance, there is an apparent sound *adkeeyn* (emphasis) on the '*ii*' vowel in the final word '*daqiiqeeynnin*'.

4 Doogtiyo haddaan lagu lafgurin, dakharradii raagay
(If one did not have an operation on the wound and the head wounds that lasted)

The structure of line 4 changes back to the one of line 2, with the verb phrase '*ku lafgurin*' (not operate on) in the *hojis* collocating two alliterating nouns, '*doogtii*' (pain from an old wound) in the *hojis*, and '*dakharradii*' (the wounds) in the *hooris*, which both again symbolise flaws in a poem. The images of '*doogtii*' (pain from an old wound) and '*dakharradii raagay*' (wound that delayed) stress the idea of 'old' and 'delayed' of a wound which adds to the severity of the pain. If we compare line 2 and line 4, we may sense a climax from a mild knock-knee to a visible, lasting wound that needs to be operated on. Using four conditional clauses, the poet guides her audience to imagine all kinds of pain that a defect in a spine, an invisible wound, or a long-lasting wound may cause to give a vivid description of the frustrations that an imperfect poem may bring about. Then in the penultimate line she uses two metaphors that are deeply rooted in the nomadic Somali culture and says:

5 Darar lagama maaloo tixuhu, dufan ma yeeshaane,
(One doesn't draw milk[44] from [it]. The lines don't make grease.)

[44]The word '*darar*' in this like means renewed milk production after drought.

'*Darar*' is the renewed milk-production after drought. It goes with the verb '*maal*' (to milk). The alliterating word in the *hooris*, '*dufan*' is a positive image which could refer both to the nutrition from fat in the diet but also to its use on dry skin as a salve. The noun goes with the verb '*yeeshaan*' (make). The meaning might be given also as 'One does not draw milk from full udders when there is plenty of grazing and the verse doesn't make precious grease.' This is the consequence of four 'if-nots', the four negative relative clauses in the previous lines. In this apodosis line, there are two complete negative sentences, marked by the negative particle '*ma*', joined by the conjunction '*oo*' (and). The subject of the first sentence is the impersonal pronoun '*la*' (one), and the subject of the second sentence is the plural word '*tixuhu*' (the verses) in the *hojis.*

One interesting feature shown in this line is that the two metaphorical expressions 'one doesn't draw milk from [it]' and 'the lines don't make grease' bear connotations that are more or less the same. There is no third person object pronoun in Somali, however, from the context, we learn that the thing that 'one doesn't draw milk from' is the poem, or '*tixuhu*' (the verse, the lines), as in the subject in the *hojis* that joins the sentence in the *hooris*. We may also translate this sentence as 'milk is not drawn from the lines', or 'the lines don't make milk'. Then we see that this sentence is semantically parallel to the next sentence, 'the lines don't make grease'. Both of the milk productions are metaphors used to emphasise the significance of good poetic texts, and are used in two similar expressions. This kind of language use is also seen in other *gabay* poems or other genres where the lines are relatively long. I suggest that we should not see the two parts separately, instead, we should read the two parts as a whole. That is to say, the poet is saying 'the lines don't make milk or grease'.

By now, the poet has finished her conditional clauses that talk about crafting a *gabay* and she goes on to line 6.

6 Aan dareersho caawoo kalaan, daribta saafaaye.
(Let me spill it out. On a night like tonight, I slice thinly the fat.)

In the final line of the *arar*, the poet changes the sentence form. Line 6 consists of two complete sentences, '*aan dareersho*' and '*caawoo kalaan daribta saafaaye*'. Having

reflected on poetry in general through the conditional clauses in the previous lines, she says '*aan dareersho*', let me spill it out. As the audience may wonder what the spilling out figuratively means, she continues, '*caawoo kale baan daribta saafaaye*' (on a night like tonight, I slice thinly the fat). We can connect the alliterating verb in the *hojis* '*dareersho*' (spill out) which is an action that is quick and smooth with the action of slicing camel fat in the *hooris*. Only a skilful cook can thinly slice the fat. In this line, the poet compares herself making poetry to finely cutting the camel fat and announces that she is going to present a piece of poetry that is as good as finely cut fat.

Having closely read each line of this *arar*, we shall now examine how it is aesthetically and skillfully crafted by the poet. The *arar* stands out in many ways, of which I'd like to first discuss the pronouns and the notion of address in this section. When we consider the pronouns in the *arar*, we see three different ones are used, the '*aad*' (you) in the first line, the '*la*' (one) in the middle lines, and the '*aan*' (I) which expresses with the optative verb 'let me' in the final line. The use of these is interesting when we consider the order of use, the lines in which they are used and how they might be seen to express the notion of address. Somali poetry, especially the *maanso* type, exists to be presented to real audience that it hopes to resonate with. The *arar,* as a piece of poetic speech, refers to itself through reflecting on poetry in general. The poet creates a discourse in which a created lyric voice gives her opinion on '*gabayga*' (the *gabay* poetry), '*deelqaafka*' (the) and '*tixuhu*' (the verses).

By using '*-aad*' (you) in the first line**,** the voice of the poem is addressing a second person. This may be considered in two ways, firstly as an imagined second person addressee, an impersonal addressee, and secondly as addressing the audience, the listener of the poem. In Culler's study of lyric theory, he stresses the structure of indirection resulting from what he calls 'triangulated address', where a poet addresses an audience 'through the act of address (implicit or explicit) to an imagined addressee' (2014, p.164). He suggests that 'there is always an indirect 'you' in the lyric, as lyrics strive to be an event in the special temporality of the lyric present'. The 'you', the addressee in this poem, although not personal in that it is not a specific person, is expressed directly nevertheless.

In the following lines, the subjects of the clauses change from the second person to the impersonal '*la*'. In other words, the impersonal pronoun '*la*' tells us that the '*aad*' (you) is also a 'blurred' '*la*' (one)[45]. In these lines, the deixis gestures towards the real listeners, but doesn't apply to a specific person or group. The voice here is addressing an imagined someone, a pure place holder, with the pronouns '*aad*' and '*la*', in order to deliver a message to the real audience. The voice, therefore, speaks indirectly to the audience, about poetry. Being second person singular, there is a sense in which the listener might perceive a direct address to him- or herself which also implies the first person of the lyric voice, the 'I' of the poem addressing the listener. As this pronoun is present in the first word of the poem it might be seen as quite direct. In light of what is to follow in the *arar* there is also a sense in which the address is to the poet's voice herself. One thing that is clear is the voice, in its second person address, is talking about the *gabay*, saying 'if you didn't remove the defects and inconsistent images from a *gabay*'. This is the first line of the set of protasis clauses in the following lines, however, she switches the pronoun from 'you' to the impersonal '*la*'. In these, which continue to be conditionals, the poem continues to talk about making defective poems. For example, she says, 'if one didn't get rid of the wounds' and develops the idea with different metaphors in two more lines. From the point of view of address, what is interesting here is that the pronoun is no longer '-*aad*' (you) as in the first line, but the impersonal '*la*' (one).

The shift from a personal pronoun to an impersonal pronoun is interesting. In using the personal pronoun in the first line, the poet makes a more direct address. Shifting then to the impersonal pronoun there seems less emphasis on the person of the poet making a bad poem. The impersonal tends to put more emphasis on the poem being made, by whoever, in a bad way. It coincides with the indeterminate potential of the lyric *you* that Culler conceptualises. In this discourse, with the shift from the second person pronoun to the impersonal pronoun, a lyric voice addresses a lyric blurred addressee. The poet then offers this discourse to the real audience and performers who wish to read or recite this poem. The performers, including the poet herself, will take the position of the voice and speak to the '*aad*' and '*la*' in the 'special temporality of the lyric present', whenever and wherever the poetry reading takes place. Listeners are free

[45] Culler talks of 'blurred' you in his *Theory of the Lyric* (2015, p.194).

to feel addressed by taking the position of the blurred '*aad*' and '*la*', or they can remain observers of the discourse without being directly preached to.

In addition, the emphasis on making defective poems in this *arar* is all done using imagery which itself is consistent. At first, it is the '*dari*' (defect in a spine) metaphor in the same line with the poetic terminology '*deelqaafka*' (inconsistent imagery or language). Then in the second line, more imagery that is related to the human body is used. The '*dalabta*' (knock-knee) metaphor, being a type of defect that might not be obviously found, echoes with the '*diniqa aan muuqan*' (wound that is not visible) in the *hooris*. The imagery in the third line is '*meeshii dahsoonayd*' (the obscure place) which though is not literally related to the human body, keeps up with the idea of line 2. Next in line 4, the wound imagery is used again in '*doogta*' (pain from an old wound) and '*dakharradii raagay*' (wounds that lasted), and up to this line, the severity has increased from '*diniqa aan muuqan*' (wound that is not visible) to '*dakharradii raagay*' (wounds that delayed). We also notice that in all of these nouns or noun phrases, there's the alliterating '*d*' sound. While semantically talking about *deelqaaf* (inconsistent imagery or language) in the craft of *gabay*, the poet is actually showing a series of consistent imagery in words that alliterate in a line group where we can also find parallelism.[46]

I have mentioned the importance that Somalis attach to the use of consistent imagery. The imagery in the apodosis line then moves away from the imagery relating to the body. It uses imagery for nourishment of the body with reference to milk and fat. Then in the last line, the poet uses the pastoral imagery again in '*daribta saafaaye*' (slice thinly the fat). The change of imagery is done together with the change of sentence structure and meaning of the lines. When she portrays the pain that a badly made poem may cause, she chooses words that are related to the human body. By saying 'if these wounds and pains weren't removed, one doesn't draw milk and the verse doesn't make fat', the negative being used in both the protasis clauses and the apodosis clause in fact serves to emphasise the opposite, affirmative idea that 'only if the wounds and pains were removed, can one draw milk and can the verse make fat'. Fat and milk production are of great value in pastoral society. The satisfaction that 'making milk production'

[46] As mentioned earlier, line 2 and line 4 are parallel.

gives in real life is here compared to the importance of a well-made poem. And in the last line, following an optative sentence, '*aan dareersho*' (let me spill it out), the poet compares her poetry writing skill to the skill of finely cutting the fat as a cook in a main clause. The image of the milk in line 5 also relates to the action of spilling out. The image of milk can be related to the poem itself: her poem is fresh milk '*darar*' which is a very positive image indeed and is nourishing. This is then followed by the image of slicing the fat, preparing something else that is very nourishing. '*Caawoo kalaan daribta saafaaye*' (on an evening like this I slice the camel fat finely). Here there is a direct reference to the process that the poet is undertaking in uttering the poem. This might also be understood not just as the performance of the poem but also as the making of the poem. To express it in terms which reflect the *dufan* of the previous line is a link showing that what the poem is doing is an example in which the *dufan* has been made. An audience would immediately realise that she means to recite a poem that is finely made by the poet just like those pieces of fat thinly cut by a good chef.

As the audience listen to the voice making her arguments on poems in general, the sound, the language and the consistent imagery of this *arar* together draw their attention. They will notice that this '*gabayga*' is free from '*deelqaafka*' or '*dari*', and the '*tixuhu*' can 'make milk and grease' through the plentiful, consistent images and the other compositional techniques that the poet uses. Therefore, as the poet reflects on poetry in general through her skills, she is indirectly referring to this poem to prove her competence. Self-reference is a common feature found among the *arar* of *gabay* poems. The *arar* in *gabay* poetry is a fine example of the way in which the language of the poem is reflective on itself. The reflexivity makes the discourse a speech act through which the poet delivers a message to her audience.

One of the most interesting features of this *arar* is the fact that, if we hear it on its own, we do not have any sense of what the poem is about. I shall discuss the rest of the poem below but in order to emphasise this aspect I shall look next at the *arar* of 'Calaf' also by Caasha Luul. When we read or hear this *arar* we do not know what the poem is about. The only sense an audience might have is if they have already heard the poem, or heard about it, or if the poet or reciter introduces the topic of the poem. I talk further about this aspect after my analysis of the *arar* of 'Calaf' below.

On Arar 'Calaf'

The word '*calaf*' in Somali has a range of meanings. Its basic sense, as far as I understand it, is sustenance, that is what a person has in their life to sustain them in living which implies the basic things such as enough to eat, shelter, clothing, as well as the support of family and others. However, as mentioned above, we do not get any sense of this idea from the *arar* of the poem.

1 Cilmi gabayba waayadan ma furin, cutubyadiisiiye
2 Caynaddii murtida waanigaan, dhigin culuumteede
3 Caarad-dhuubtii maansada beryahan, kuma cillaalayne
4 Aan caddeeyo caawoo kalaan, caadka rogayaaye.

The *arar* of 'Caraf' is shorter than that of 'Dookh'. In this *arar*, we also find words that refer to poetry such as '*gabay*' in the first line and '*maanso*' in the third line. In a similar vein, the poet expresses her thoughts on making poetry before getting to the theme.

1 Cilmi gabayba waayadan ma furin, cutubyadiisiiye
1 Lately I haven't opened the units of the knowledge of *gabay*

The first word in the first line is an alliterating word. '*Cilmi*' means science or knowledge and it is followed by an attributive '*gabay*' (poetry). '*Waayadan*' is a noun and a demonstrative suffix (literally meaning 'these times') which is being used as an adverb of time which we may translate as 'lately'. Following the adverb, the verb of the sentence is at the end of the *hojis*. The poet uses a negative '*ma furin*' (didn't open) in the past tense. The object affected by the verb is separated by the metrical constraints. The '*cutubyadiisiiye*' (its units) in the *hooris* is the other part of the object in which the masculine possessive suffix '*-diisii*' (its, his) points to the '*gabay*' in the *hojis*. In prose, sentences are built according to the rules and constraints imposed by the grammar. However, in poetry, the language must satisfy further constraints which add structure to the speech.

In ordinary discourses, Somali sentences follow a basic word order of subject-object-verb (SOV). In prose language, '*cilmi gabayba*' and '*cutubyadiisii*' would be put before the verb '*ma furin*'. Yet in this *gabay* structure, the poet separates the object into two parts each of which contains an alliterating word to fit into the metrical pattern. The two alliterating words modified by the '*gabay*' are both abstract nouns. But the verb in this line is a practical one, 'to open'. 'Open' is a verb that can be used both literally and figuratively. By saying 'to open the knowledge of *gabay* and its units', the poet might mean 'to open a published collection of poems', which is a physical object. Or we could interpret the verb in a more figurative manner. 'To open the knowledge of *gabay* and its units' can mean the idea of reciting, listening to, studying, making or any action in which the knowledge of poetry is involved. The negative word '*ma*' in this line is without a subject verbal pronoun, which means that grammatically the subject is not stated explicitly. Often in speech people don't use subject verbal pronouns with the negative particle *ma*. We do see a clear use of the subject pronoun '*aan*' in line 4 though which is necessary for the optative construction. However, the notion of expectation that the poetic voice through the poem is talking about herself implies that the line is in the first person. By saying '[I] did not open the knowledge and the small units of *gabay* poetry', the voice is suggesting that she hasn't been engaged with any verses for a while. This acknowledging in the *arar* that the poet has not been involved in making poems for a while is something we find in other poems both contemporary ones and ones from the past.

2 Caynaddii murtida waanigaan, dhigin culuumteede
2 I did not set out the type of wisdom [of poetry] nor its fields of knowledge

The second line has a very similar structure to line 1. The noun phrase '*caynadii murtida*', which consists of '*caynaddii*' (the type) and '*murtida*' (the essence or wisdom of literature), and which have the alliterating sould 'c' as the first syllable, is semantically parallel to '*cilmi gabayga*' (knowledge of *gabay*) in the first line. What's more, the '*aan dhigin*'[47] (not set out, put, teach) in the middle of the line, is also parallel to the negative and figurative '*ma furin*' (not open) in the previous line. The object of this verb is composed of four words. They are the alliterating noun '*caynaddii*' (the

[47] The word '*waanigaan*' in this line is made up of a noun '*waano*' (advice) and a negative focus marker '*aan*'.

type), '*murtida*' (the essence or wisdom of literature), '*waano*' (advice), and the alliterating word in the *hooris*, '*culuumteede*' (its subjects, its topics, its fields of knowledge)[48], which is parallel to the word '*cutubyadiisii*' (its units) in line 1, both having a possessive suffix following a noun. These abstract nouns in the same line as the verb '*dhig*' (put, set out) implies the contemplative nature of *gabay* poems. There's the sort of reflection of the meaning of the word 'teach' that we can see here. A poet is expected to teach '*murti*' (wisdom, essence) and '*culuumta*' (subjects, sciences, knowledge) in a *gabay* poem. While in line 1 the lyric voice says that she hasn't been engaged with poetry in general, line 2 specifically tells us that she hasn't been making poems.

3 Caarad-dhuubtii maansada beryahan, kuma cillaalayne
3 Recently I did not pay attention to the 'pointed tip' of poetry

The idea in line 1 and line 2 then continues in the next line. Slightly differently, line 3 consists of only one noun phrase object '*caarad-dhuubtii maansada*' (the sharp point of the poem) and an adverbial of time '*beryahan*' (recently) in the *hojis*, and the negative verb phrase '*kuma cillaalayne*' (didn't pay attention to) in the *hooris*, which refers to crafting the poem. The alliterating word '*caarad-dhuubtii*' originally means an item with a long-pointed tip. Modified by the attribute '*maansada*' (poetry), it figuratively refers to the sharp focus of poetry, which echoes with the abstract nouns '*cilmi gabayba*' (the knowledge of *gabay*), '*cutubyadi*' (the units), '*caynaddi murtida*' (the types of wisdom) and '*culuumtii*' (the sciences) in the previous lines. While using abstract nouns that refer to the content and essence of poetry, emphasising its significance, the poet tells her audience in three negative sentences that she hasn't been engaged in any of these lately.

What is interesting here, when we compare this with the 'Dookh' *arar*, is that in both *arar*s, the lines and the imagery talk about poetry and the making of poetry, and in both *arar*s, the consistency in the use of the language is outstanding. A distinct difference between the two is the use of metaphor. Whereas in 'Dookh' there are a lot of nouns that are originally related to physical defect or injury to the human body being used to

[48] This is not the literal meaning of *culuumteeda* which actually means 'its sciences, its subjects'. The word comes from Arabic and means the areas of knowledge and of learning.

imply the frustration caused by a badly made poem, in 'Calaf', the poet uses abstract nouns such as '*cilmi*' (science, knowledge, learning) and '*murti*' (the wisdom or essential point of the knowledge of literature) which have the connotation of the depth in content, themes, and educational value of poetry. It is only in line 3 that we can find a noun metaphorically used, which is the '*caarad-dhuubtii*' (sharp pointed tip). Yet the metaphrand[49] in this metaphor is the abstract idea of poetry's essence and subtleties. When we compare these with 'Dookh', it seems less focused on the craft of the poem and more focused on the ideas presented.

Another interesting aspect is that both *arar*s are made with a group of negative sentences. Yet in 'Dookh', the poet uses five conditional clauses to finish a complete full sentence. In 'Calaf', each line is a main clause in its own right. The use of the negative is interesting in that in both *arar*s, the key point is not about the negating. Instead, the negating is in fact a method that the poet uses to express and emphasise affirmative ideas. In 'Calaf', the lyric 'I' says that she hasn't been engaged with poetry for a while, when she, either as the poet composing this verse or as the voice performing this verse, is actually engaging with poetry in the lyric present. In other words, expressing the 'not been doing lately' is intended to bring out the contrast that emphasises the 'I am doing' in the lyric 'now', which is confirmed by the optative line, 'Let me spill it out'. In 'Dookh', as the lyric 'I' talks about pain caused by a badly made, inconsistent poem in general in the negative protasis clauses, the poet is actually crafting a very well-made poem with consistent imagery, and the voice in the discourse is offering consistent language to the addressee. The point of talking about *deelqaaf* is not the *deelqaaf* itself. However, it is part of the technique that using the negative in both parts of a conditional sentence achieves the effect of emphasising the affirmative opposite to the negative meanings.

In both *arar* sections, the lines reflect on the making of poetry in general through different focuses. The *arar* of 'Dookh' stresses the importance of consistency in the language while the *arar* of 'Calaf' stresses the wisdom and knowledge of the verbal art. Both aspects are essential to the appreciation of Somali poetic culture. It is through the

[49] I use the terms 'metaphrand', coined by Psychologist Julian Jaynes to refer to the subject part to which attributes are ascribed in a metaphor. The term for the object part whose attributes are borrowed is 'metaphier'.

language in these lines that the audience resonate with the ideas of 'a poem must be consistent' and 'I am engaging with the wisdom of poetry now'. It is also through the language in these lines that the poem attracts the audience's attention.

In line 4, the final line of the *arar* of 'Calaf', we see a line which is syntactically parallel to line 6 in 'Dookh' (*Aan dareersho caawoo kalaan, daribta saafaaye*). It seems to play the same role in the poem 'Calaf' as line 6 does in 'Dookh'. It goes:

4 Aan caddeeyo caawoo kalaan, caadka rogayaaye.
4 Let me make it clear. On a night like tonight, I clear away the cloud.

In the last line, she uses the optative again and says '*aan caddeeyo*' (let me make it clear). '*Caawoo kalaan*' (on a night like tonight), '*caadka rogayaaye*' (I clear away the cloud). In 'Dookh', the only different word in the *hojis* is the alliterating word '*dareersho*' (spill it out), and the metaphor used in the *hooris* is '*daribta saafaaye*' (slice thinly the fat). In another poem of Caasha Luul's, '*Gunaad*' (The Scab), we can again find the final line of its *arar* in the same structure. It reads '*Aan godaalsho caawoo kalaan, gorofka buuxshaaye*' (Let me stimulate and move the domestic animals to be milked and fill the milking vessel). In this line, the poet also uses the pastoral images to convey the idea of 'let me present you my poem'. In using the optative in the first person with the subject pronoun '*aan*' in these final lines of the *arar*s in different poems, the voice's willing herself is in fact an illocutionary act. While addressing herself and willing herself in the optative 'to spill it out' or 'to make it clear' in this utterance, the lyric voice is performing the actions of spilling it out and making it clear which refer to presenting this poem to the audience. The optative also aims at affecting the listener. Following a series of negative sentences, the abrupt change of sentence structure tells the audience that the *arar* part has come to an end. Before the optative line, the poet has been talking about *gabay* poetry in general whereas the topic '*calaf*' is not mentioned. Yet through the optative line, the voice invites her listeners to get ready for what comes next in the poem. In the video recordings of Caasha Luul reading these two poems, after reading the last line of the arar, she pauses, and the audience applaud.

In this section I have looked at the *arar*s of the two poems by Caasha Luul that I am analysing. We have seen that both are very well crafted examples of *arar* and display some of the main features which Ahmed (1983) states are appreciated in Somali poetry. There is a consistency in imagery in each one and a shaping of that imagery to make the point really well. There is also a consistency in the use of grammar which builds a shape in each *arar*. Because both are very finely made, the poet is reflecting on the skill that she herself has both in the words she uses but also in the way the words are put together.

Having looked at the *arar* of the two poems. I shall move on to the main body, i.e. the *dhexdhexaad* part of the verses. I shall have a close reading of them separately first and then bring in the comparison.

On the *Dhexdhexaad* and *Gebaggebo* of 'Dookh'

Following the *arar*, the poet starts her words on the theme '*dookh*'. The *dhexdhexaad* (middle section) consists of six line groups. The number of lines varies from line group to line group*:* line group 2, line group 4 and line group 7 have six lines, the shorter line group 3 has five lines, and the longer line group 5 and line group 6 have seven and ten lines respectively. A distinct feature that marks the segmentation is that each line group ends with the same line: '*Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane*' ([If he] is not to your taste, it is a blocked path) which contains the title word '*dookh*' (taste) with the second person possessive suffix '*kaaga*'(your). When the poet reads the poem in an event, she pauses for a few seconds allowing the audience to respond to the content in the line group with applause and cheers.[50] We shall come back to the matter of the repeated line in a later section.

Another feature in the text that marks the change of line group is that the poet starts her arguments with the word '*inkasta*-' (though) or '*hadda*-' (if) in each line group of the *dhexdhexaad*. We also find another conjunction word '*hadda*-' (if) somewhere in the

[50] A video recording of Caasha Luul reading 'Dookh' at London Somali Week Festival 2015 is available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twczcfNP25k&t=25s. In the video, we can clearly see how the audience responds to the poem throughout the performance.

middle of each line group. The two conjunction words not only join the clauses in the two lines where they are positioned, but in fact join all the lines in the line group before the final line.

In the concessive or conditional clauses, a third person pronoun '*uu*' (he) appears and the lyric voice addresses a lyric '*ku*' (you) who is an imagined female listener through lines that describe how '*uu*' (he) tries to impress '*ku*' (you). Starting from material wealth, moving to his virtues, educational background, religiosity, and the more specific things 'he' does for 'you', the lines brim with pleasant images that a woman may be expected to find appealing. However, just as a favourable impression of this 'he' grows in a listener's mind, at the end of each line group, the repeated line '*Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane*' (If he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path) breaks the seeming plot. Despite the desirable characters and the pleasing acts of the man, '*dookh*' (taste) is something else. We shall now have a close reading of each line group and see how the poet expresses her ideas on '*dookh*' (taste).

Line Group 2
7 Inkastuu darmaan quruxsan iyo, daaddax ugu yeedho
8 Ama uu ammaan deexdo oo, 'dawlo!' ku yidhaahdo
9 Hadal dhegaha deeqaaya oo, dabacsan oo fiican
10 Dun xariir ah iyo shaal hadduu, dahab ku saarsaaro
11 Daraandaryo araggaaga hooy, damacu waa yaabe,
12 Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane.

7 Though he calls out 'a beautiful mare' and 'cutie'
8 Or he gives a lot of praise and calls you: '*dawlo*!'
9 [If he] gives generously soft and nice speech to the ears
10 If he puts silk thread and shawl and gold on top of you
11 Wonderful, beautiful things; the sight of you! Desire is a surprise.
12 If he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path.

Line 7 starts with the conjunction word with the third person suffix '*inkastuu*' (though he), indicating the concessive. The two alliterating nouns in the *hojis* and *hooris* respectively, are '*darmaan*' and '*daaddax*'. The word '*darmaan*' (mare) is modified

by the following adjective ‘*quruxsan*’ (beautiful) and together they form a noun phrase ‘beautiful mare’ that is used to compliment a woman’s appearance. The other alliterating word ‘*daaddax*’ is a noun that is equivalent to the English adjectives ‘cute’, ‘nice’ or ‘clean’[51]. The two nouns, joined together by the ‘*iyo*’ (and), constitute the object of the verb ‘*ugu yeedho*’ (calls) in the *hooris*. This line depicts an ingratiating man using pleasant words to address a woman. The indirect object is not explicitly given in this line. However, we find the pronoun ‘*ku*’ (you) as the indirect object in the next line which carries a similar idea.

Line 8 starts with a conjunction ‘*ama*’ (or) and the subject pronoun ‘*uu*’ (he). There are two verbs in this line, ‘*deexdo*’ (talks a lot) and ‘*yidhaahdo*’ (says), of which the direct objects are ‘*ammaan*’ (praise) and ‘*dawlo!*’ respectively. The word ‘*dawlo*’ comes from the noun ‘*dawlad*’ which is often used as ‘government’ or ‘state’ when people talk about politics. ‘*Dawlad*’ originally comes from Arabic and it has the implication of something that is established. The ‘*-o*’ ending here makes the noun a woman’s name. Using the notion of an established state to refer to a woman figuratively shows that the man puts the woman on a pedestal-when praising her. We find the consistency in her language in these two lines. The three verbs, ‘*yeedho*’ (calls), ‘*deexdo*’ (talks a lot) and ‘*yidhaahdo*’ (says) are all related to the act of speaking. And the objects of these verbs, ‘*darmaan quruxsan*’, ‘*daaddax*’, ‘*ammaan*’ and ‘*dawlo*’ are all expressions for giving a compliment to a woman as given in line 8, is the ‘*ku*’ (you).

This idea of verbal praise is continued in line 9. In this line, the verb is an alliterating word ‘*deeqaaya*’, which means to give generously, and of which the indirect object is ‘*dhegaha*’ (the ears). The direct object of this clause is made up of a noun ‘*hadal*’ (speech, words) and two adjectives modifying it joined by ‘*oo*’, which are ‘*dabacsan*’ (soft) and ‘*fiican*’ (nice). The subject of this clause, though not given in this line, is the ‘he’ ‘*uu*’ (he) in the ‘*inkastuu*’ (though he) and ‘*hadduu*’ (if he). Up to this line, the poet has used three lines to describe how a ‘*he*’ ingratiates himself to ‘*you*’ by saying sweet words.

[51] Personal communication with Nasra Daahir, 1 July, 2019.

In the next two lines, she moves from the hearing to seeing. '*Dun xariir ah*' (silk thread) and '*shaal*' (shawl) in the *hojis* and '*dahab*' (gold) in the *hooris* constitute the object that '*uu*' (he) '*ku saarsaaro*' (puts on you). Seeing the materials given by the man, 'your' reaction is given in line 11. '*Daraandaryo*' means very beautiful, exceptional and unbelievable things. Then the voice says, '*hooy*' (hey you), addressing the lyric 'you' directly, '*damacu waa yaabe*' (the desire is a surprise).

Line Group 3

13 Hadduu daaro waaweyn dhisoo, dabaqyo kuu jeexo
14 Dal dhan oo muraayad ah dhammaan, adiga kuu deyro
15 Sancadaw dambeeysiyo hadduu, dalabka kuu keeno
16 Naftu waxay yara doonayso uu, deregga soo saaro,
17 Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane.

13 If he builds big houses and divides floors for you
14 A whole land which is entirely glass, [he] fences for you
15 If he brings you the latest fashion and the request
16 Whatever little things the soul wants, he places at the threshold
17 If he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path.

In this line group, the 'he' continues to shine up to 'you' with material possessions. In lines 13, 14 and 15, the poet uses particular images to portray the wealthy and lavish 'he'. In line 13, it is the big houses (*daaro waaweyn*) divided into multiple floors (*dabaqyo*). Both alliterating words are in the plural form, which may be considered as a means of exaggeration. In line 14, the exaggeration is more evident from the adjective '*dhan*' and the related noun '*dhammaan*'. These are related and they alliterate, not in the '*d*' sound, but in the '*dh*' sound in the *hojis*. This is an instance of secondary alliteration which is found quite often in Somali poetry. Both words incorporate the meaning of 'whole' or 'entirety'. '*Dal dhan*', a whole land which is '*muraayad ah dhammaan*', an entire glass [building], 'he' builds for 'you'. While the repetition of the '*dh*' sound and the meaning of 'whole' in the *hojis* emphasises the luxury of the property, in the *hooris*, we find the independent pronoun '*adiga*' (you) used in addition to the object pronoun '*ku*' (you). That is to say, the word 'you' is said twice in this line for emphasis, which echoes with the emphatic '*dhan*' and '*dhammaan*' in the *hojis*. It

is such a design that presents the line as an aesthetically crafted piece of language. Such structures are found in good *gabay* poems since it is in the *gabay* genre that there is more room in the line for poets to bring into play their skills in this way to provide their audience a lyric artefact which uses the possibilities that the long line of the *gabay* brings.

The images of multistoried big houses and a whole land of glass buildings symbolise the wealth of the lyric 'he' and his willingness to please the lyric 'you' with his material wealth. Interestingly, in the traditional Somali pastoral society, the nomadic houses are precisely designed so that families can dismantle the structure, pack it onto the backs of their camels, and rebuild it in a new place when a decision of nomadic migration is made. In pastoral communities, it is nomadic women who manufacture the family's dwelling, while in town, house builders are mainly male. Amina (1981, p.122) says of the women in the rural areas 'the woman is the sole architect of the family's dwelling' and then she writes 'however, when the nomadic women, who played such an important role in rural life found themselves in towns cut off from the animals, excluded from building houses because in town, builders are mainly male…' (Ibid, p. 130). The idea of a man building large houses to please the addressee also reflects the modernity of the poem.

The image in line 15, '*sancadaw dambeeys*' which translates into latest fashion, echoes with the images of silk, shawl and gold in the previous line group. This 'he' is willing to bring 'you' the latest trendy clothes upon your 'request' (*dalabka*). The definite article suffix '*ka*' here is also an example where the relationship of possession is implied without the possessive form being used. Following the three lines with concrete things that 'he' offers 'you', line 16 summarises the idea in a more general way: 'Whatever little things the soul wants, he places at the threshold'.

When looking at the *hooris* from line 13 to line 16 together, we find consecutive parallelism. The four *hooris* are all made up of three words, in the exact same pattern: three short vowel syllables, a long vowel syllable, and a long vowel and a short. The four *hooris* are not only in parallel metrically, their meaning is also very similar. The cluster '*kuu*' which is made up of pronoun '*ku*' (you) and the preverbal preposition '*u*' (you) is repeatedly used from line 13 to line 15, followed by verbs '*jeexo*' (divide),

'*deyro*' (fence), '*keeno*' (bring). The lyric 'he', divides the floors in line 13, fences the land in line 14 and brings the fabrications in line 15. These actions are all efforts 'he' makes 'for you'. Intriguingly, the sound *adkeyn* in performance falls right on the position of 'for you' ('*kuu*'). From the video recording of Caasha Luul reading this poem, a listener can hear a clear rising intonation on the long vowel '*kuu*' in line 13-15 and also on the '*soo*' in line 16. While the '*kuu*' sound is emphasised by the intonation in performance, the idea of the lyric 'he' providing all the things 'for you' is also stressed as a meaning *adkeyn*. Therefore, in these four parallel *hooris* hemistiches, we find the concurrence of the sound *adkeyn* and the meaning *adkeyn* which is skillfully crafted by the poet.

After showing her audience a wealthy man trying to win the affection of a woman by offering 'whatever the soul wants', the poet again repeats the refrain 'if he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path.'

Line Group 4

18 Inkastoo adduun door ah iyo, duunyo lagu sheego
19 Inkastuu dulqaad badan yahoo, deeqsi lagu sheego
20 Duub iyo malaaq uu yahoo, dooje lagu sheego
21 Digriigiyo mastariga[52] iyo, derejo weyn haysto
22 Digrigiyo[53] Quraankiyo hadduu, diinta yahay xaafid,
23 Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane.

18 Although one says [that he has] worldly wealth and livestock
19 Though one says that he is very patient and generous
20 One says that he is a leader, a chief, someone who brings good to the community
21 Having a degree, a Master's, and a high level (in education)
22 If he is religious and memorises the Qu'ran
23 If he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path.

[52] This word is spelt *maastariga* in Asha (2017) but that then breaks the metre. It is an obvious loan word from English 'master', referring to a master's degree.
[53] The original text in the published book writes '*digriigyo*', however according to the *gabay* metre and the poet's reading in the video recording, this is a typographical error. In my dissertation, I use the correct spelling '*digriga iyo*'= *digrigiyo*. The reference is to the performance of poems by the Sufis. It comes from the Arabic word *dhikr* which means 'remembrance [of God]' and refers to the performance of poems in praise of God, the Prophet Mohamed and, for the Sufis, also saints.

Compared to line group 2 and line group 3, line group 4 shows us a man who is more than a honeyed mouth and his material wealth. Besides being rich with material property and especially '*duunyo*' (livestock) as described in line 18, the lyric 'he' is told to be a decent man in many other aspects. From line 19 to line 22, the poet talks about his character, title, educational background and religiosity respectively. In line 18, 19 and 20, we find parallelism again in the *hooris* and the repetition of the same words '*lagu sheego*' (one says). The repetition here is different from the repetition of '*kuu*' in the previous line group in that in line group 3 '*kuu*' (for you) is repeated while followed by different verbs, which stresses the indirect object of these different actions. However, here in line group 4 the lexical verb '*sheego*' (says) is also repeated when in a *gabay* Somali poets strive to show their large vocabulary and avoid using the same words unless the same words are repeated for a reason. In the *hojis* of line 19 and 20, we also find the repetition of the pronoun '*uu*' (he) and verb '*yahoo*' (*yahay* 'is' with the conjunction *oo*). If we look at the two repetitions together, we see that the idea that is being repeated is 'one says that he is'. Interestingly, the object pronoun '*ku*' (you) that shows up frequently in other line groups, is not mentioned at all in line group 4. Instead, there is the impersonal subject '*la*' (one). In this line group, the woman doesn't interact with the man. She learns about him and learns about his wealth, his character, his titles, his degrees and his knowledge of Qur'an all from '*lagu sheego*' (one says).

My understanding of this is that the poet is stressing the idea of something from the external. All the information about his character and his background is told by someone else. The impersonal '*la*' (one) could imply people in general, which portrays the 'he' as a well-known man, or it could be a friend, a family or even a matchmaker who introduces the 'he' to 'you'. The woman didn't get to know the man herself, rather she learned about him from other people. Furthermore, all these aspects of the 'he', though appearing to be appealing, can be understood as something external and superficial. However one can't win the affections of a woman only with his external features.

The imagery used in this line group consists of both pastoral images and elements that show contemporality. While words like '*duunyo*' (livestock) and '*duub*' (turban, figuratively used to indicate a crown, a leader or someone who is particularly religious) present the 'classic' aspect of the *gabay* poem, the images of '*digriiga*' (degree) and

‘*mastariga*’ (master’s) which are loan words from English embody the novelty of the poem. This feature is also shown in line group 6 where the poet uses pastoral images including animals, camel-milk and landscapes throughout the lines, and also mentions the notion of getting on a plane and travelling around the world.

The nouns in a *gabay* line, or sometimes, in several successive lines, often correlated to each other, pointing to one point that the poet is making. For example, in line 19, the two nouns are alliterating words ‘*dulqaad*’ (patience) and ‘*deeqsi*’ (generosity) which describe the man’s good character. In line 20, there are three nouns used to describe his reputation, which are ‘*duub*’ (turban, figuratively meaning crown) and ‘*malaaq*’ (chief) joined by ‘*iyo*’ (and) in the *hojis*, and ‘*dooje*’ (someone who bring good to the community) in the *hooris*. In line 21, there is ‘*digriiga*’ (degree), and ‘*mastariga*’ (Master’s degree) in the *hojis*, and ‘*derejo weyn*’ (high rank) in the *hooris*, joined by two instances of ‘*iyo*’ (and) in the *hojis* and followed by the verb ‘*haysto*’ (has). When translated into English in the literal way it is, ‘(one says that he) has the degree and the Master’s degree and a high degree’, the repetition of the same idea may seem clumsy to an English ear. Similarly, in line 22, referring to ‘his’ religiosity, the poet uses ‘*digrigiyo Quraankiyo*’ (chanting of the Qur’an) in the *hojis* and ‘*diinta*’ (religion) and ‘*xaafid*’ (someone who memorises the Qur’an) in the *hooris* to attract a Somali ear. These nouns joined by the ‘*iyo*’, in fact are the opposite of clumsy. They embody an element and technique through which Somali poets prove their competence and which the Somali audience appreciate in a *gabay*. It is the creative repetition of the ideas and concepts in an artistic way that makes a *gabay* convincing and rhetorical as the poet delivers her one specific message to her audience using different words put together and also fitting in the metre. In ‘Dookh’, we see Caasha Luul’s skill through these nouns joined by ‘*iyo*’(and).

Line Group *5*

24 Inkastuu dillaacshoo qalbiga, daabac ku xardhaayo
25 Xididdada dil-dilayee wadnuhu, dirayo dhiiggooda
26 Dahriga iyo laabtaba ku dhigo, Deeqa magacaaga
27 Diiwaankii Cilmoo kale galoo, deli ka laallaado
28 Suugaanta duugga ah murtida, damashi kuu qaado

29 Daaweeynta heesaha intaa, daram garaacaayo[54],

30 Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane.

24 Though he pulls out the heart and decorates embroidery on it

25 And the blood vessels beat, through which the heart sends the blood

26 [Though] he puts your name, Deeqa on his body and torso

27 And goes into the poems by Cilmi and others, dangling from a cliff edge

28 Sings for you old poetry rich in wisdom

29 And the songs' healing which the drums beat

30 If he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path.

Line group 5 can be divided into two parts. From line 24 to line 26, the poet uses images of the human body to figuratively portray 'his' love for the 'you'. From line 27 to 29, the imagery changes to literature and songs. In each of the two parts, the poet uses three lines to talk about one essential thing using similar or repeated images. Compared with the imagery in line group 2 to line group 4, we notice a progression from what we may say is the 'outside' of this 'he', such as the soothing words he says, the material things he gives, the good character features and background he is said to have, to the more 'inside' aspects. Images like '*qalbiga*' (the heart), '*xididdada*' (the blood vessels), '*wadnuhu*' (the heart), '*dhiiggooda*' (their blood, 'their' referring to the blood vessels), '*dahriga iyo laabtaba*' (body and torso) are used with the definite article suffix, referring to the body parts of the 'he'.

Previously in the *arar*, the poet has used images that are related to physical defects or injuries to express the frustration caused by a terribly made poem. Images like '*dari*' (defect in a spine) and '*diniqa'* (wound) lead a listener to imagine the physical pain and compare that to how people feel about the disharmony in poetry. In this line group, the poet uses images of parts of 'his' body to express 'his' intense feelings for 'you'. In line 24, the '*qalbiga*' (heart) is pulled out and decorated with embroidery. In line 25, the poet depicts the beating vessels and running blood. In line 26, he puts '*Deeqa magacaaga*' (your name 'Deeqa') on his chest. Obviously, these images are imaginary and described with exaggeration and hyperbole. One can't decorate his heart with

[54] The spelling here has been edited from'*garaacayo*' to '*garaacaayo*' as it should be a long vowel according to the metre.

embroidery in reality. The voice is figuratively giving the 'you' addressee an impression of a pursuer who loves her so genuinely and wholeheartedly that 'he' would pull out his heart to prove his love.

At this point, the audience's impression of the 'he' grows from a superficial man who only tries to win a girl's affections with his soothing words and material wealth to a man who is passionate and romantic. Then the 'he' becomes even deeper when the poet brings up poetry in the following lines. He 'sings for you' ('*kuu qaado*') Cilmi Boodhari's poems, old poetry with rich wisdom, and healing songs which drums beat. The images of poetry and the images of parts of the body in this line group serve to shape the 'he' into a more appealing man than in earlier verses. In line group 2, 'he' calls 'you' fair names, yet he's not to your taste. In line group 3, 'he' places 'you' in a skyscraper, yet he's not to your taste. In line group 4, 'he' is known for his good characters and has a Master's degree, still he's not to your taste. Up to this line group, 'he' shows you his heart and his veins and writes you love poems like Cilmi from the edge. Even so, then comes the refrain again, '*oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane*' (if he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path). This is the fourth time the audience have heard this refrain. By this point, they expect the refrain to be reiterated and it seems that they also may expect a more forceful 'he' than the last in the next line group. Therefore, we find from the progressive development of the 'he' that the content of each line group is artistically crafted in a sequence that cannot be messed up. If line group 5 was moved to the beginning of the *dhexdhexaad*, followed by the lines that describe the man's wealth, the climax would be disrupted. Following the body part and poetry images in line group 5, we are presented the longest line group in the *dhexdhexaad* section of 'Dookh' with abundant pastoral images.

Line Group 6
31 Haddii uu dalxiis kuugu diro, dunida guudkeeda
32 Diyaarado hawada sarena aad, kula damaanshaaddo
33 Durdur iyo hadduu kugu dul furo, ilo dareeraaya
34 Deeradiyo cawshiyo ugaadh, quruxda daa'uuska
35 Doog iyo cagaar soo ifbaxay, darinta kuu daadsho
36 Ama Daallo oo roobku heley, Dalawa kuu maalo
37 Oo doobi kuu buuxiyoo, kuna daryeelaayo

38 Dayrtiyo Gugaba kuu da'oo, adiga kuu deexdo

39 Daruur hoortay uu kuu noqdiyo, malabka Doocaanka,

40 Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane.

31 If he sends you over the whole world as a tourist

32 and celebrates with you on the plane in the upper air

33 if he makes streams and springs flow for you

34 the gazelle, the antelope, the prey, the beauty of a peacock

35 spreading out for you the mat of green and grass which spring up

36 Or the *Daallo* mountain which the rain found, [where he] milks *Dalawa* the camel for you

37 And fills the milk vessel for you, and cares for you

38 through the *Dayr* and *Gu'* season, [he] falls as rain for you, and talks a lot to you

39 He becomes clouds that rained and the *Doocaan* honey for you

40 If he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path.

While line group 5 could be divided into two parts which focus on different subjects, the poet uses nine lines in line group 6 to portray one single picture, in which 'he' and 'you' engage with the pastoral nature. Many elements that are considered as of great value in the pastoral society are referred to in this line group. For example, in line 33, '*durdur iyo hadduu kugu dul furo, ilo dareeraaya*', he opens on you a stream and flowing springs. The images of water are then followed by the beautiful animals listed in line 34, the gazelle, the antelope, the prey animals, and the peacock. Then in line 35, the poet draws us a picture of green which 'he' spreads out for 'you'. In line 36, the alliterating words are two names, *Daallo* the mountain and *Dalawa* the camel. There's another name in line 39, *Doocaan* the honey which is also in the alliterating sound. From these names with the 'd' sound consistently used to represent precious things in the society, we see the virtuosity of the poet's technique.

In line group 6, the poet draws on the riches of the Somali poetic practice and uses beautiful images such as '*ilo dareeraaya*', flowing springs, '*Daallo oo roobku heley*', the Daallo mountain just after rain (literally 'Daallo which the rain found', rain as the subject of the verb seems particularly beautiful in the image here), '*daruur hoortay*', rain clouds, one after another to present her audience these beautiful sceneries. What's

more, the precious images are joined with the lots of '*kuu*' (for you) in the lines. '*Dalawa kuu maalo*', the *Dalawa* camel is milked for you. '*Doobi kuu buuxiyoo*', the milk vessel is filled for you. He even becomes '*daruur hoortay*' (cloud that rained) for you. Yet still, '*oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane'* (if he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path).

Line Group 7

41 Inkastuu Darwiish adag yahiyo, geesi diriraayo
42 Dirica iyo wiil hoog yahoo, degello naafeeyo
43 Dumukha iyo qorigaba ridoo, diiradda u saaro
44 Halka lagu dagaalamo hadduu, doorar ka ciyaaro
45 Ama uu daqiiqaayo oo, duubiyada gooyo[55]
46 Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane.

41 Though he is a hard Dervish and a hero who fights
42 and is a determined person, a fearless young man who destroys communities (of the enemies)
43 firing the gun and rifles, hitting the targets
44 If he plays roles in the places where one fights in war
45 or he crushes and cuts off the bodies (of the enemies)
46 yet if he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path.

In the final line group of the *dhexdhexaad* section, the poet mainly portrays a heroic fighter. She uses five lines with consistent images to describe how 'he' fights in wars. Interestingly, in this line group, the pronoun '*ku*' (you) isn't involved. We could possibly learn from the order of the line groups that a courageous fighter is more respected and appreciated than all the other aspects in earlier line groups. The fact that '*ku*' (you) is not involved in this line is also interesting. War and conflict are regarded as the domain of men and traditionally women do not take an active part in such conflicts as fighters. We don't hear in this line grouping that the 'he' is defending the 'you' specifically. It is as if Caasha is distancing the woman, the 'you' from the idea of conflict in this line group.

[55] The original text shown in Asha (2017) '*Ama u daqiiqaaya oo uu, duubiyada gooyo*' has a few typos in the first half-line. I have edited it from '*u daqiiqaaya oo uu*' to '*uu daqiiqaayo oo*'.

Throughout the *dhexdhexaad* section, the voice of the poem, the lyric 'I' describes a series of scenes in which a man courts a woman. This is done with the use of the third-person subject pronoun '*uu*' (he) and the second-person object pronoun '*ku*' (you). There is a difference between the '*aad*' (you) regarded as representing the addressee in the *arar* and the '*ku*' (you) addressee in the *dhexdhexhaad*. In the *arar*, the imagined second-person addressee is the subject of the conditional sentence 'if you didn't remove the defects from the *gabay*'. The 'you' is an imagined person who makes poetry and who can be either a man or a woman. The '*ku*' (you) in the *dhexdhexaad* lines, however, is the indirect object in the sentences where '*uu*' (he) is the subject. From the relation between the '*uu*' (he) and the '*ku*' (you) implied in the lines, we may consider the 'you' in the *dhexdhexaad* is an imagined female person who is having a conversation with the lyric voice of the poem about the 'he'.

Although this poem is filled with 'he' and 'you', I suggest that neither this imagined man nor this imagined woman that the voice is referring to is at the centre of this poem. The vivid descriptions of the man's acts may lead a listener to expect what comes next between the man and the woman, that is to say, in a poem in which the man is presented as having so much to offer, the expectation might generally be that the woman would wish to get to know the man and possibly start a romantic journey with him. However, at the end of each line group, the refrain disrupts the imagined event and brings it back to a present of discourse. In a poetry reading event that I attended, the audience naturally recite the repeated line together with Caasha Luul '*Oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane*' (yet if he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path). Their reaction is expected by the poet as she looks up and waits for their reaction.

In this poem, the voice can be but doesn't have to be the poet herself. Whoever reads the lines can take the position of the lyric 'I'. What is more, the 'he' in each line is less one person than an aspect of men, less an actual person or a fictional persona than a poetic device that serves the purpose of addressing a 'you', which Johnson (1983, p.4) suggests being a 'metaphor' for the audience, a 'symbolic mediator', and a 'conductor' between the poet and each of the readers and listeners. Hearing the performance of a voice addressing a lyric you, the audience has considerable scope in choosing whether to treat the discourse as the thought of the poet or as general wisdom that he or she can

make observations on. They are also free to feel addressed by taking the position as the 'you' in the poem or stay as an observer of the performance. To a woman who may have met such a 'he' before, she might be able to consider herself a close friend of the poet and resonate with her insights. To a girl who has not yet realised the taste of love, it can be considered to be advice from an anonymous experienced woman: one cannot go through a blocked path.

Following the six line groups of the *dhexdhexaad*, the poet sums up her *gabay* in a *gebaggebo*.

Line Group 8, *Gebaggebo* (concluding line group)
47 Xeedhyo duuban oo duqus leh oo, geedo lagu daadshay
48 Hilbo duban kuwii diirranaa, qaar dux lagu shiilay
49 Daboolkiyo lingaxa lagu xidhood, uumi lagu daaro
50 Ubbadii dahaadhnayd haddii, diiqo lagu siiyo
51 Haddaan milix yar lagu daadinayn, kaama daadego'e,
52 Dookhana sidaasoo kalaan, loo dirqiyahayne
53 Damiirkaagu meeshaanu rabin, dooni kari maysid.

47 (If) one spilled spices in a big bowl of spiced food
48 Cooked meats, those warm ones, and some which one fried with fat
49 One tightly covered with a lid and fastened with strings to keep them in perfect steam
50 If one gives it as a gift in a ghee pot in its traditional decorated case
51 If one didn't spill a little bit of salt in it, it doesn't appeal to you
52 And the taste is not forced in a similar way to that
53 The place which your feelings don't want, you can't want it

This line group can be divided into two parts. From line 47 to line 51, the poet uses five lines to describe an image of a bowl of cooked dish. From the images of 'spiced food', 'cooked meat', 'meat fried with fat', to 'a dish in perfect steam' and 'a gift in a decorated ghee pot', the lines remind a listener of the images of the 'he' in the *dhexdhexaad*. The appealing food images are used metaphorically to refer to the appealing aspects of the imagined man written about in the *dhexdhexaad*. Interestingly,

the image of fat was an element used in the *arar,* the beginning line group of the poem, to figuratively refer to the poet's compositional skill in the line '*aan dareersho caawoo kalaan, daribta saafaaye*' (let me spill it out and slice thinly the fat). Here we find an echo between the beginning line group and the ending line group as the image of fat is mentioned again in the *gebaggebo*. While in the *arar,* the image of fat indicates the competence of the poet, in the *gebaggebo,* the fat in the dish refers to the wealth, the good qualities, the man's passion for 'you' etc., which are fine aspects but 'not to your taste'.

Throughout the *gabay*, the voice keeps stressing aspects of the 'he' that is 'not to your taste' but never mentions what is 'to your taste' except in line 51 she uses the image of salt image to figuratively give an answer. '*Haddaan milix yar lagu daadinayn*' (if one didn't spill a little bit of salt in it), the meat grilled with fat and cooked with spices and herbs won't be tasty for 'you'. In the last two lines, the poet sets out the whole point of the language in a less metaphorical way to sum up the whole *gabay* and explain the reason represented by the metaphors throughout the poem. She says: '*Dookhana sidaasoo kalaan, loo dirqiyahayne*' (and taste is not forced in a similar way), '*Damiirkaagu meeshaanu rabin, dooni kari maysid*' (The place which your feelings don't want, you can't want it). The poet tells her audience that in a romantic relationship, you cannot go against your own heart. Caasha Luul doesn't tell the audience what it is exactly the aspect in a man that is to her taste in 'Dookh' (Taste), however, we can find some clues in the other poem 'Calaf' which we shall discuss below.

On the *Dhexdhexaad* and *Gebaggebo* of 'Calaf'

'Dookh' and 'Calaf' are *gabay* poems composed in a similar style. As discussed earlier, the poet uses the traditional way of starting a *gabay* poem with an *arar* in which she uses the first person singular pronoun 'I' and talks about making poetry before going on to the theme. In line 6 in the *arar* of 'Dookh', there is '*Aan dareersho caawoo kalaan, daribta saafaaye*' (Let me spill it out. On a night like tonight, I slice the fat thinly.); in line 4 in the *arar* in 'Calaf' on the other hand, there is '*Aan caddeeyo caawoo kalaan, caadka rogayaaye*' (Let me make it clear. On a night like tonight, I clear away the cloud). As mentioned above, we see both lines start with the first person singular

optative usage (let me), and are structured in a parallel way, with the words '*caawoo kalaan*' (a night like tonight) in the *hojis*, and a metaphor used in the *hooris*. However, in 'Calaf', we find a difference to 'Dookh', that is there are two lines which follow line 4, the line with '*aan caddeeyo*' in the *arar* and precede the *dhexdhexaad*. These lines act like a transition between the *arar* proper and the *dhexdhexaad* of the poem. In the two lines, the poet still speaks as a poet, mentioning the alliteration, but also points to the theme and to what she is going to talk about in the next section. The two lines are:

5 Cadad toban ah tiradaan cabbiraye, Caynka ka higgaadshay
6 Sagaal baan ka caagee Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin

5 I argued ten points and alliterated with the 'C' letter
6 I stay away from nine, O Lord, don't give me such due

In the first line, the poet not only spells out the alliterating sound of this poem, which is a convention that Somali poets commonly follow, but also tells her audience that in this poem she is going to argue ten points. Then in the next line, she adds more information on the '*cadad toban ah*' (ten points) and says that in the ten points, '*sagaal baan ka caagee*' (I stay away from nine). The audience doesn't know what the nine points out of ten will be about until the poet finishes this line with her first supplication: '*Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin*' (O God, don't give me such due). I have mentioned the meaning of calaf in the section on *arar*. I use the word 'due', as in 'due in life given by Allah' as the translation of '*calaf*' in my writing. The religious sense embedded in the word '*calaf*' is also highlighted by the direct address to God with the word '*Rabbi*' followed by the vocative suffix '*-ow*'. In this supplication, she asks God not to let 'the nine out of ten' be her due in life.

In 'Calaf', the poet uses the technique of repetition in a way that is similar to but also different from that in 'Dookh'. In 'Dookh', it is the line '*oo aanu dookhaaga noqon, waa dariiq xidhane*' (if he's not to your taste, it is a blocked path) that is repeated as a refrain at the end of each line group. In 'Calaf', there is also a repeated pattern that sets off the line groups, which is the supplication she makes in a half-line, as in the transition line '*sagaal baan ka caagee Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin*' (I stay away from nine. O God, don't give me such due). The difference between the refrain of 'Dookh' and that

of ‘Calaf’ is that, the repeated line in ‘Dookh’ is a full line, and the words remain the same each time when repeated. Whereas in ‘Calaf’, it is not the whole line which is repeated, but only half of it. This half is not determined by the caesura, but the meaning of the line. Take ‘*sagaal baan ka caagee Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin*’ for example, the first half is ‘*sagaal baan ka caagee*’ and it is a continuation of what is said in the previous line, ‘*Cadad toban ah tiradaan cabbiraye, Caynka ka higgaadshay’* (I argued ten points and alliterated with the ‘C’ letter). The second half begins with the word ‘*Rabboow*’ which is in the *hojis* and is a separate new sentence. It is the supplication part in the line that is used as the refrain in the remaining line groups in the *dhexdhexaad* section.

In correspondence to the general outline presented in the transition lines, the *dhexdhexaad* can be divided into two parts. The first comprises nine line groups where she addresses the ‘nine out of ten points’ and describes the type of man she doesn’t want. The second comprises five line groups in which she addresses the tenth point and portrays the man she wants. In the final lines of the nine line groups in the first part, she repeats ‘*calafba hay siinnin*’ (don’t give me such due). In those of the line groups in the second part, on the other hand, she repeats ‘*calaf wadaagnaa dheh*’ (say to him that we share a due). In the ten times that ‘*calafba hay siinnin*’ (don’t give me such due) is repeated, including its first appearance in the transition before the *dhexdhexaad*, nine of the lines are made up of two semantic parts as mentioned earlier, a first part following what is being said in the previous lines, and a second part which is the supplication. For example, it is ‘*candaddawl caqligu naaqus yahay, calafba hay siinnin*’ (one that is block-headed and lack of intelligence, don’t give me such due) in line group II, and ‘*Kii dumarka ciil bada Rabboow calafba hay siinnin*’ (the one that makes women deserve grief, don't give me such due) in line group VII. In the first part of these lines, the poet is still describing the image of the man, until she spells out the supplication, sometimes with the direct address to God, ‘*Rabboow*’, sometimes without it. The only exception is in the first line group of the *dhexdhexaad*, it is one complete supplication taking up the whole line, which is ‘*Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa, calafba hay siinnin*’ (O Almighty, O Allah, that one, don’t give me such due). In this supplication, God is addressed with two different names. Interestingly, this ‘*Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa*’ pattern, is not repeated in the ‘*calafba hay siinnin*’ refrains, but it is repeated four times in the ‘*calaf wadaagnaa dheh*’ refrains in part two.

In a similar vein to 'Dookh', each line group of *dhexdhexaad* in 'Calaf' also tells the audience about a type of man. The lines are joined by the word '*mid*' (one), which is the head-noun of the relative clauses and which we may translate as 'one that' or 'he who'. In the published version in the collection Asha (2017), roman numbers I to X were added by the editors[56] in the *dhexdhexaad*, indicating the 'nine points' and the 'tenth point' addressed by the poet in the beginning. I shall also use the roman numbers in my writing when referring to the line groups. From line group I to line group IX, the poet portrays a selfish, irresponsible and unwise man and asks Allah not to give her this man as her due. In line group I, 'he' is a man who can't act wisely and end war, and metaphorically, who can't recognise worthless meat. In line group II, 'he' is a 'moron who moans' but never takes action and 'whose morality declines'. In line group III, 'he' is disobedient and disengaged from Allah. In line group IV, 'he' is a womaniser. In line group V, 'he' is jealous and insults his wife. In line group VI, 'he' is a stingy man who doesn't trust his wife with money and calculates each mouthful. In line group VII, 'he' is a shameless man who chases after modest, single girls and even married women. In line group VIII, 'he' is a perverse mind who never lends a helping hand. In line group IX, 'he' is a pathetic lonely patriarch who is twisted by negativity, thinking he's still young.

Before she moves on to her tenth line group, the poet uses an extra line grouping to tell her audience that she now wishes to list the virtues of a man she seeks, marking another transition. The supplication in the last line hence is changed from '*calafba hay siinnin*' (don't give me such due) to '*calaf wadaagnaa dheh*' (say to him that we share a due). Part X consists of four line groups, each presenting various positive aspects of a man ideal for her and the interaction between the two of them. While 'Dookh' doesn't directly answer what kind of man is't a blocked path, 'Calaf' gives us a clue. 'He' is someone whom 'I' play the *caddallool* stick game with in the evening. 'He' defends justice and seeks no malediction. 'He' attends the mosque to pray and teaches 'me' lessons of the Qur'an. 'He' desires no other woman except Caasha Luul. We can see from the poet's using her own name as the alliterating word in this line that while 'Dookh' is advice to her fellow women from the poet, in which a voice speaks to 'you'

[56] As told to me by Caasha Luul in an interview on 5 May 2019.

about a ‘he’, ‘Calaf’ is more personal. This poem is a note to the poet herself about a man that she seeks to be her due in life from God. It is personal, but not private. By making it a *gabay* poem, the poet wishes her words and her supplications to be heard. She welcomes both male and female listeners to feel the *calaf* she prays not to have and the *calaf* she prays to be together with. The use of her name in the poem is quite striking in that personal names of poets who have made a poem are not often used in the poems themselves. Personal names of other people are quite common on the other hand. The fact that Caasha is a woman poet making this personal statement is also significant. She has already declared herself to be a fine poet in the *arar* of the poem and now brings the poem very definitely to her own personal self. The idea of this being a supplication enhances this personal statement.

Before discussing the *dhexdhexaad* of ‘Calaf’ line groups in detail. I’d like to bring up the matter of pronouns and lyric voice in ‘Calaf’ compared to ‘Dookh’. Both poems talk about relationships and men. In the *dhexdhexaad* in both poems, the poet presents her audience a series of images of men. In ‘Dookh’, the first person singular pronoun ‘I’ is only used once and that is in the *arar* in which the voice is the poet. In the rest of the poem, it is the pronouns ‘*uu*’ (he) and ‘*ku*’ you used in lines where the voice is there speaking to this imagined ‘you’ but doesn’t talk about herself. The pronoun ‘I’ is not involved. However, in ‘Calaf’, from the first line in the *arar* to the last line of the *gebaggebo*, we find the first person pronouns. In the *arar*, the lyric ‘I’ or the lyric voice talks about herself making poetry as a poet. In the transition between the *arar* and *dhexdhexaad*, she mentions the alliterative sound and addresses the *calaf* theme as well as the structure of the poem as the poet who makes this poem and makes the supplication.

I

7 Gar cargaagtay taladoo cakiran, cudud la baanaayo
8 Colkoo weerar laba-qaadayoo, curado loo ooyay
9 Caaqil kaan noqonaynnin ee, damin colaad baasta
10 Cadkiyo jiidhka kala saafin een, ciriqa saaraynnin
11 Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa, calafba hay siinnin.

7 Having an animated discussion of a case that ended up in a stalemate and praising physical force
8 Fighting that is waged by two warring factions, one cried for the (loss of their) first-born children
9 The one who can't become a wise person and end the cursed war
10 And who can't strip lean meat from bones and take out worthless meat
11 O Almighty, O Allah! That one, don't give me such due.

This is the first line group of the *dhexdhexaad*. The poet starts her 'nine out of ten points' with the type of men who can't negotiate with others and resort to fighting. The '*gar*' (case) she refers to in line 7 is not simply a domestic dispute but goes beyond it. From line 8 and line 9 we see that the poet is actually pointing at the matter of war which brings about a political connotation based on the social background of the Horn of Africa. In line 10, she uses the metaphors of lean meat and worthless meat to refer to the right and wrong in her value system, which includes waging war and ending it as mentioned in the previous line. Following the metaphor, she makes her supplication: 'O God, don't give me such due.'

We shall bear in mind that the ability to mediate in conflicts is very much prized among the Somalis and the *gabay* poetry serves as an important vehicle for this purpose. I have mentioned earlier that the *maanso* poems are traditionally concerned with wars, peace making, politics and public affairs and that male Somali poets used to only touch upon the subjects of love and relations between men and women 'incidentally, when it had some bearing on a topic of general public interest' in a serious poem (Mohamed and Andrzejewski 1967, p.191). However, here we see a woman poet doing the exact opposite, i.e. purposely using the matter of war and peacemaking to deliver her points on the subjects of love and romantic relationship in a *gabay* poem. By using this reference in the first line group of her 'nine points', the poet is demonstrating that her poem is based on the Somali poetic tradition, but at the same time, she is challenging that tradition by giving the world a fresh new perspective. The subjects of war and peace are still important to the Somali poet's heart, but this is not shown in a poem on those subjects, but on the matter of love. She uses such a cherished reference to support her attitude towards a type of men. In this way, she shows her audience that the matter of relations between men and women doesn't have to be something only mentioned in

a political poem when it has some bearing on a topic of general public interest, instead, relations between men and women *is* a topic of general public interest. Not only is she not ashamed of it, but she's also announcing it unapologetically and skillfully in the most prestigious *gabay* genre.

II

12 Codka mid aan ahayn oo intaa, calallaqlaynaaya
13 Caarriyo midkii fulay ahee, caalle lagu sheego
14 Caanyay aan ka diirayn dhibkii, uu ka cabanaayay
15 Caaryaystay doqonniimo oo, ciiro qarinayso
16 Candaddawl caqligu naaqus yahay, calafba hay siinnin

12 One who's not an orator but talks a lot of nonsense
13 One who is a coward and who is said to be a fool
14 A dolt who doesn't act in response to the trouble he complained about
15 One whose foolishness decayed and perplexity hides
16 One who's blockheaded and is short of intelligence. Don't give me such due.

In line group II, the poet portrays a type of man whose words and deeds are described, in alliterating words, as '*calallaqlaynaaya*' (talking nonsense) in line 12, '*caar*' (coward, deserter) and '*caalle*' (fool) in line 13,' *caanyay*' (dolt) in line 14, '*caaryaystay doqonniimo*' (foolishness decayed) and '*ciiro qariinayso*' (mist hides) in line 15, '*candaddawl* (block-headed) and '*caqligu naaqus yahay*' (in short of intelligence). If we look at the position of each alliterating word, we find that each *hojis* starts with the '*c*' consonant, and four of five *hooris* also start with the '*c*' sound. What's more, nine out of eleven vowels following the '*c*' is '*a*' or '*aa*'. The sound and meaning in these lines achieve a level of consistency that is not mandatorily required by the formal rules of the *gabay* genre but may be considered to be part of the sound patterning as rendered by the poet. In the beginning of each line, she hits the listeners ears with a word or phrase that alliterates in '*c*' with a following '*-a*' vowel (except in line 12 where it is '*co*') and criticises this type of men in an offensive way. From line 12's '*codka* (orator) *mid aan ahayn* (one who's not)', line 13's '*caarriyo midkii fulay ahee*' (a deserter who is a coward), to line 14's '*caanyay*' (a dolt), line 15's '*caaryaystay* (decayed) *doqonniimo* (foolishness)' and especially line 16's

‘*canadaddawl* (a blockheaded) *caqligu* (intelligence) *naaqus yahay* (is in shortage)’ where there are two words alliterating in ‘*ca*’, the negativity and aggression in the meaning of these words, and their appearing in the same position in each line, alliterating, together form the *adkeyn* (emphasis).[57] This technique is actually used almost throughout the whole poem. Whereas in ‘Dookh’, the alliterating words are at any position in a hemistich, in ‘Calaf’, it is mostly the alliterating words with the ‘*c*’ sound starting a line.

III
17 Caasiga Illahay ka go’ay, aan cidnaba xeerin
18 Cirfiid iyo iblays ay wataan, cubullo Shayddaan ah
19 Caaddilkay wixii u xarrimay, cabaya ee daaqa
20 Caqiibaba mid aan lagu ogayn, oo cahdiga gooya
21 Caynka iyo bayddaba jaroo, cidhibta ruugaaya
22 Cuqla waalid kii qaba Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin

17 One who is a rebel and is cut off from Allah, and forgives no one
18 Who drives along with a group of people who are demon and Satan
19 Who is drinking and eating what my God has made forbidden
20 One who one isn’t aware of a good future and breaks God’s solemn promise
21 Cutting the cord and robes [with God], chewing the destiny
22 One who has the karma from disobeying the parents. O God, don’t give me such due.

This is the third line group of the *dhexdhexaad* out of ten that the poet wants to make. Here she addresses the type of men’s disconnection with God. Interestingly, in ‘Dookh’, it is also in the third line group of the *dhexdhexaad* that she talks about the matter of religiosity. We find from this coincidence that religion is an important aspect when a Somali woman thinks about a relationship and it might also be considered prior to other aspects. This is probably why the matter of faith is referred to in a prior line group more than other aspects. We can see from the beginning word of each line that the poet sticks with putting the alliterating words in the beginning position, and even in the *hooris*

[57] The use of the same vowel along with the alliteration can also be called initial rhyme.

lines, it is mostly the alliterating words starting the hemistich, except in line 17 and line 20, they are after the negative particle '*aan*' (not) and the conjunction '*oo*' but not a word of semantic content.

IV

23 Godadlaha cartamayiyo midkii, meherka caadaystay
24 Casho noolba tii uu calmado, 'Cayni' ugu yeedha
25 Cuddoontuu qabiyo kii dayacay, ubad carruurtiisa
26 Caarcaariyoo aan haween, garan culayskooda
27 Caruus been ah kii raba Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin.

23 One who is the womaniser and got used to quick marriage contracts
24 Crying out 'oh, my eyes!' to women he likes all day
25 One who neglects his upright wife and his children
26 One that never settled down and doesn't understand the importance of women
27 He who wants a sham marriage, O God! Don't give me such a due.

Line group IV gives the audience an impression of a man who is superficial and constantly flirts with girls and a married man who is irresponsible to his family and doesn't understand the value of marriage and women and family. The poet portrays a suspicious and stingy husband whose walk doesn't match his talk, and who does not show a feeling of responsibility. The 'he' in these stanzas represents a type of man. 'He' is not one person who does all the things in every line, but many people who act that way. We see from these lines that when describing the negative images of the character of the man she doesn't want, the poet never uses the pronoun 'I'. For example, in line 25, it is '*caruurtiisa*' (his children) that is abandoned, and in line 26, it is '*culayskooda*' (their heaviness, their importance) that 'he' doesn't understand. She chooses not to use words like 'our children' or 'my importance'. As she says in the beginning of the poem, she stays away from it. Whereas later in the line groups where she makes the supplication for the type of man she wants, she uses a lot of first-person deictic words such as '*aan*' (I), '*i*' (me), and '*ay*' (my). The word '*wada*' (together) is also used several times as we will see later.

V

28 Canwaj ooriduu qabay intaa, cay la daba jooga
29 Caado iyo dhaqan beeley oo, cunaha buuraaya
30 Cabbudhsane hinaasuhu intaa, cunaya dhiiggiisa
31 Caydhkiyo dabayllaha ka dida, oo cidlada maaga
32 Cawdiyo salliga 'yaa fadhiyey?', Canab ku hiifaaya
33 Jin intuu cumaamado u xidhay, caydhsan waxan joogin
34 Caroog baas mid loo tumay Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin

28 One who is an aggressive man, the wife he married is followed with insult
29 Who has lost custom and tradition, enlarging the gullet[58]
30 The stuffy one that jealousy is sucking his blood
31 The one who is scared by heavy rains with gusty winds, and provokes where there are no people
32 Saying 'who sat on it?' by the prayer mat made of palm leaves, accusing Canab
33 He who jinn has wrapped him with a turban, and who runs after things that don't exist
34 One for whom an evil conch shell horn is played for, O god, don't give me such due.

Line group V shows us some vivid images of a terrible husband who is aggressive, jealous and suspicious. In line 29, she says he has lost custom and tradition, and in the *hooris*, '*cunaha buuraaya*'. '*Cunaha*' is the gullet that connects the mouth and the stomach and '*buuraaya*' is the present progressive of the verb '*buur*' which means 'to enlarge'. Therefore, when put together, the verb phrase literally means 'enlarging the gullet'. It might be helpful if we look at the *hojis* together. '*Caado iyo dhaqan beeley*' (lost custom and tradition) is the phrase in the *hojis* that joins the '*cunaha buuraaya*' in the *hooris* with a conjunction '*oo*'. The verb '*beeley*' (lost) in the first phrase is in the past tense. The tense in the two phrases implies that 'losing custom and tradition' is a thing that has happened in the past but 'enlarging the gullet' is still ongoing. Clearly, the connotation of this image goes beyond eating. We must understand the 'gullet' metaphor in the context. I suggest that there may be a causality between the *hojis* and *hooris*. That he is still continuously enlarging the gullet is caused by or influenced by the 'having lost of custom and tradition'. But why does his gullet become bigger

[58] See discussion below.

because of that? It might be helpful if we skip this line for now and look at the rest of this line group which might give us some clue.

In line 30, we find another noun that is related to the human body which is '*dhiiggiisa*' (his blood). Even the word before it, '*cunaya*' (eating) shares the same stem '*cun*' (to eat) with the '*cunaha*' (gullet) in line 29, and it is also in the present progressive tense. In this line, it is the '*hinaasuhu'* (the jealousy) that is eating '*dhiiggiisa*' (his blood). Is this somehow related to the enlarging of his gullet then? In line 31, the poet first shows us his cowardice with the image '*Caydhkiyo dabaylaha ka dida*' (scared by heavy rains with gusty winds), and then says, '*oo cidlada maaga*' (and provokes where there are no people). The verb '*maaga*' (provoke) in the *hooris* is clearly in contrast with the '*dida*' (be scared and run away) in the *hojis*. Yet ironically, what 'he' is scared of, is 'rain and wind', but what he is not scared of and 'provokes' is the 'empty area'. Then in line 32, he gets suspicious and accuses Canab who sat on the prayer mat. In line 33, the poet uses the character of a jinn and says, 'jinn has wrapped him with a turban' and that's why he keeps 'running after things that don't exist'. Having read through these lines, we shall now get back to the gullet metaphor in line 29. If we put these images all together, we shall see a stuffy man with an expanding gullet and whose blood is eaten by jealousy. His gullet becomes bigger when he gets scared by the wind and bigger when he provokes empty areas and yells at the air. His gullet becomes even bigger, when he goes to the prayer mat made of palm leaves and says: '*Yaa fadhiyey?*' (Who sat on it?) and accuses Canab who is not even there. The jinn has possessed him and made him chase things that don't exist. What makes him enlarge his gullet then? Is it jealousy or is it suspicion? Is it his nerve when he gets scared by the wind or is it his anger when he provokes an empty place? Whatever it is, we know that as soon as he acts against the custom and tradition that he has lost, his gullet becomes bigger.

VI

35 Mid cuntada ilaashoo ka naxa, ceesh la karinaayo
36 Cashiiradiyo ehelkaba jaroo, aan casaba dhawrin
37 Caanaha midkii aan gadayn, cunnugga loo siiyo
38 Caantaynka aan quudhinoo, caanad kala jeex ah
39 Cajiinkiyo daqiiqdii madhuun, ku citikaafaaya
40 Cantafuude 'reerka ha cawarin!', carrabka loo saaray

41 Qorqodaha cantuugada tirshana, calafba hay siinnin.

35 He who guards the food and panics when food is prepared
36 He who abandons his relatives and kinfolks and doesn't look after his family
37 He who doesn't buy milk to give for the children
38 He who isn't generous to give 10 or 20 cents
39 He who feels blameless when the dough and flour is empty
40 He who keeps saying 'don't hurt the family' but hoards and hides his things
41 The suspicious husband who counts the mouthfuls, don't give me such due.

In line group VI, the poet repeatedly adopts the negative form to portray an irresponsible man. In line 36, 'he' doesn't take care of relatives ('*aan casaba dhawrin*'). In line 37, 'he' doesn't buy milk for the children ('*caanaha aan gadayn*'). Then, 'he' doesn't show generosity ('*aan quudhin*'). In these lines, the negative '*aan*' (not) is repeated. Even in the sentence '*reerka ha cawarin*!' (Don't hurt the family) that the 'he' of the poem says, the poet uses the negative imperative, which adds to the irony of the line. As the successive negative sentences vividly characterise this man, the poet's disapproval of this *calaf* is manifested. Interestingly, in one of my interviews with Somali women in Hargeysa discussing this poem, one participant said to me that this food-guarding is the one aspect that she 'hates the most' among all that is mentioned in the poem[59]. I suggest this is associated with the gendered labour division. Preparing food is considered specifically a woman's role in the patriarchal society even today when women in urban cities like Hargeysa have a job. On the one hand, we must acknowledge the gender inequality and the consequent harm it does to Somali women. On the other, we can see that within the patriarchal framework where gender expectations are imposed on women, the kitchen, being a woman's domain to some extent, gives women some sort of autonomy when the women feel they are solely in charge of it and their identity as separate and significant is emphasised. However, in line 35, this space that Somali women have, which is already unequally little and limited, is further invaded by a man who is stingy and suspicious. This is what angers the female poet and when she talks about it in verses, the Somali women immediately feel what she is expressing.

[59] Interview with Somali women in Hargeisa, July 2019.

VII

42 Cocobbada midkaa taagan een, ceeb ka korahaynnin

43 Ceelkuu istaagaba midkii, gabadh cayaarsiiya

44 Caloolyowna kugu beera iyo, ciillo kugu raagta

45 Cadraddii xishootiyo marwaba, daba carraabaaya

46 Casarka iyo duhurkii intaa, cago budhlaynaaya

47 Kii dumarka ciil bada Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin.

42 The one who stands shamefaced in secluded areas and never behaves in a more mature way

43 The one who causes girls to play at the well where he stands

44 Planting anxiety in you and resentments that linger in you

45 Chasing after modest unmarried girls and even honourable married women

46 From mid-day all afternoon, the feet running after women, so fast that dust comes visibly after his feet

47 The one who made women deserve grief, don't give me such due.

In line group VII, the poet continues to describe a type of man that is flirty, shameless and causes women trouble. In line 42, the poet uses the word '*cocobbada*' which translates as 'the secluded areas' as the alliterating word. Together with the verb in the *hojis,* 'standing at secluded areas' here has a negative connotation that matches the alliterating word '*ceeb*' (shame) in the *hooris*. In the next line 43, '*ceel*' (well) in the first alliterating word is also a word that describes a place. The two words 'secluded places' and 'well' themselves don't have a negative meaning. However, from the context, we realise that it is what the man does and how he acts at these places that gives the audience a negative image. In line 43, he 'causes girls to play'. In line 45, he 'chases after' not only 'modest unmarried girl' but also 'married woman'. It is these behaviours that 'plant anxiety in you' and 'make resentments linger in you', as line 44 reads. The type of man who behaves like this is the one the poet asks God not to give her as her due.

VIII

48 Mid caqligu naxaasoobayoo, cudur ka guuxaayo

49 Cuyub iyo magaal liito oon, xoogga kugu caawin
50 Canaadnimo mid ah haysoo, laabtay cududdiisa
51 Ciirsili'i mid ay dhaanto meel, ciyow ka yeedhaayo
52 Cumuq-cumuq midkii lagu salliday, cayn la garan waayo
53 'Cakudaa!' intaa kugu hayoo, cunaya jiidhkaaga
54 Cuqdad kii la yuurura Rabboow, calafba hay siinnin.

48 One whose intelligence is corroded, groaning from disease
49 The one who is cynical and a weak town person, and doesn't offer help to you with strength
50 The one that stubbornness has gotten hold of, who folded his upper arms
51 The one where helplessness grows, the bustards calling out warnings
52 The one who is compelled in an abyss that nobody can understand
53 The one who says 'ugh!' to you and yet eats your flesh
54 The one who crouches with psychological problems, O god, don't give me such due.

In this line group, the audience will hear a succession of alliterating words that describe negative qualities of a man. In line 48, it is '*caqligu naxaasoobayoo*' (the intelligence corroded) in the *hojis*, followed by '*cudur*' (disease) in the hooris that he 'groans about'. In line 49, he is '*cuyub*' (cynical) and never lends a helping hand. The word '*magaal*' (town) here also has a negative connotation that we shall comprehend in the Somali context. The notion of a townsperson here is used in contrast to a nomadic pastoralist. In Somali society, townspeople's commercial capitalist way of life is often criticised by the nomads and the disagreement is also expressed in proverbs and poetry.[60] In the next two lines, the poet uses '*canaadnimo*' (stubbornness) and '*ciirsili'i*' (helpless) respectively. Then in line 52, she repeats the word '*cumuq*' which means an abyss to emphasise the negative feeling one gets from this man. In line 53, the metaphor of meat appears for the second time. In line group I, the poet uses '*cadkiyo jiidhka kala saafin een, ciriqa saaraynnin*' (One who can't strip lean meat from bones and take out worthless meat) to figuratively describe a man who can't make a distinction between right and wrong. '*Jiidhka*' (the lean meat) was used to imply important matters and right things in contrast to the unimportant things that '*ciriqa*'(worthless meat) implies.

[60] For further accounts on this, see Kapteijns and Spaulding (1989, p.19, 38).

Here, the metaphor of '*jiidh*' (lean meat) is used again, with the '*kaaga*' (your) suffix. This time, the man is 'eating your meat' by saying 'ugh!' to express his dislike. The '*jiidh*' in this line, is again a figurative expression that describes how the man's manners and words hurt 'you'.

IX

55 Cooflaa risiqii soo madhsaday, caalamka u yaallay
56 Canka dhigey shinkiisii haddana, calowsi doonaaya
57 Carjajoof gaboobiyo camoodh, soo ciddiyo goostay
58 Duq cardaaduqooboo intaa, keli is coofadhshay
59 Cajuus guriga ii yuururiyo, coomir igu yuusa,
60 Cimri kuma canbaareeynayoo, waa cawo Ilaahaaye, [61]
61 Mid cibaaraduu beri yiqiin, wali la ciiraaya
62 Oo cawaaqib-xumo hayso oo, cunug is-moodaaya
63 Cirro baaqday kii lagu yidhaa, calafba hay siinnin.

55 That old man who squandered the wealth that was there for him in the world
56 He who has had stuff to eat all the time, and now wanting soft food for babies
57 He who is an old man ageing, who separated himself from family
58 An old man who failed and acted like a monkey patriarch on his own
59 An old man who crouches at home and nags to me,
60 Age is good fortune from Allah, don't let him get blamed
61 One who is still staggering with the novelty he knew in the past
62 And who has bad behaviours, thinking himself as still a child
63 The one who is said to be 'an old man who has been left behind', don't give me such due.

Line group IX portrays an old man that the poet despises, not because of his age, but his mind and behaviours. The alliterating words constantly refer to this notion of 'old' in this line group. First, '*cooflaa*' in line 55 is made up of the word *cooflaha*, which literally means 'shaggy coat' and the focus marker *baa*. The image of 'shaggy coat' here refers to an old man. Then in line 57, the *hojis* '*carjajoof gaboobiyo camoodh*'

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[61] The word '*Ilaahaaye*' is written as '*Ilaahe*' in Faduma (2008), I edited it so that it fits in the metre.

consists of three words that have the idea of 'old', '*carjajoof*' that means an old man, '*gaboob*' meaning getting old, and '*camoodh*' which means an old man who has a lot of wrinkles. Following the compact repetition, the *hooris* '*soo ciddiyo goostay*' (separating himself from the family) then gives the audience an impression of the old man being apart from his family and alone. The next line is in a similar vein. In line 58, the *hojis* reads '*Duq cardaaduqooboo intaa*', in which '*duq*' means an old man and '*cardaaduqooboo*' has the literal meaning of 'who became destroyed', giving the audience an image of a pathetic old man, whose life has been a failure. However, in the *hooris*, '*keli is coofaadhshay*', even as a failure already, he 'makes only himself that head monkey'. Line 59 is even more outstanding as we witness the poet's skill of double alliteration. In '*cajuus guriga ii yuururiyo, coomir igu yuusa*', not only the '*c*' sound is uttered at the beginning of each hemistich, there is also the alliteration of '*y*' sound which is considered as the most difficult alliterating sound in composition because of the limited vocabulary that starts with '*y*'. In addition to the sound, we also find a matching of sense in the two hemistichs. While '*cajuus*' and '*coomir*' both have the connotation of an old man, the two verbs that alliterate in '*y*' show the audience a vivid image of his action. In the *hojis* '*guriga ii yuururiyo*', he crouches at home, and in the *hooris* '*igu yuusa*', he raises his voice and nags. In line 60, the poet explains her attitude towards the matter of age, and says '*cimri kuma canbaareeynayoo, waa cawo Ilaahe*' (age is good fortune from Allah, don't let him get blamed), in which '*cimri*' (age) and '*waa cawo Ilaahe*' (is Allah's good fortune) form a sentence, and in '*kuma canbaareeynayoo*' (may he not get blamed), the 'he' in the optative sentence refers to the '*Ilaahe*' in '*waa cawo Ilaahe*'. In this line, we hear three alliterating words '*cimri*' (age), '*canbaareeynayoo*' (may he not be blamed), and '*cawo*' (good fortune) and they also connect with each other semantically.

64 Cayn-cayn raggaa wada ahee, dunida ceegaaga
65 Caleemaha midkaan saarayee, cugatay laabtaydu
66 Calaamadaha aan soo wadana, caan ku noqon doona
67 Caaddilow aduun baa hayoon, kaa codsanayaaye,
68 Carrabbaabay oo waad ogtahay, caynka uu yahaye
69 Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa, calaf wadaagnaa dheh.

64 There are many types of men that the world is filled up with

65 The one that I crown with leaves and which my chest has chosen
66 Who will become famous through the following signs that I go with
67 O God, only you have him, I am requesting him from you
68 I've mentioned it and you know the type he is.
69 O Almighty, O Allah! Tell him that we share a due.

After the nine supplications asking God '*calafba hay siinin*' (don't give me such due), the poet uses another transitional line group to get her audience prepared for the contrast type of man she would like to ask God to give her as her *calaf*. From this line group onwards, we see first-person deictic words that refer to the poet herself are constantly used. For example, in line 65, '*caleemaha midkaan saarayee, cugatay laabtaydu*' (The one that I crown with leaves and whom my body has chosen), we see '*aan*' (I) is used in '*midkaan*' (the one that I), and '*-aydu*' (my) is found in '*laabtaydu*' (literally 'my chest, my body' figuratively 'my inner thought'). In line 66, '*aan*' (I) is again used in the *hojis* '*calaamadaha aan soo wadana*' (the signs that I go with). From line 67 to line 69, the poet takes three lines to directly speak to God, addressing God with the vocative, '*Caaddilow*' (O God) in line 67 and '*Casiisoow Allahayoow*' in line 69. Following the direct address, she says, '*aduun baa hayoon*' (only you have him), '*kaa codsanayaaye*' (I'm requesting him from you). In line 68, '*carrabbaabay oo waad ogtahay*' (I've mentioned it and you know it). The usage of the second person is also notable in these two lines. As the poet says the 'you' and 'I' in the supplication, as listeners, we are overhearing a personal message that is directly from the 'I' to the 'you', which is God. In the final line, she uses the imperative '*calaf wadaagnaa dheh*' (tell him we share a due).

X

70 Cirka oo da'aayoo dhulkoo, dooggu carafaystay
71 Naqa oo cagaar wada noqdoo, curubta saydhaaya
72 Cuudka iyo maalkoo dhaloo, ciirtu qubanayso
73 Carradoo barwaaqo ah arladoo, nabaddu caan gaadhay
74 Caddalloolka fiidkii mid aan, wada caweeynaynno
75 Cawo iyo wanaag ii horkaca, calaf wadaagnaa dheh.

70 The sky pours with rain and green grass makes the land fragrant

71 The fresh grown all becomes green and shoots sprout
72 The domestic animals have given birth, the butter milk is spilling
73 The territory and settlements are in prosperity, and peace has become popular
74 The one whom I play the *caddallool* game and spend time together with in the evening
75 Good fortune and good outcomes which rise up for me, tell him that we share a due.

Under the roman number X, the poet composes four line groups in total that end with the supplication '*calaf wadaagnaa dheh*' (tell him we share a due). She starts her first line group with a series of images depicting a scene in the countryside. From '*cirka oo da'aayoo*' (raining sky), '*dhulkoo*' (land) and '*dooggu*' (grass) in line 70, to '*naqa oo cagaar*' (fresh growth after rain and green) and '*curubta saydhaaya*' (splashing little twists) in line 71. The poet first uses two lines to portray a vibrant image of rain, land and green which are greatly valued in the pastoral society where drought is one of the most severe issues, leaving people at risk of starvation. The image of 'rain' is by and large used in Somali poetry as a symbol of preciousness and pleasantness. Following the images of the land and green that implies the notion of 'growth', the poet talks about the domestic animals' production and people's prosperity in line 72 and line 73. The coherent images together show the listeners a beautiful vision that embodies a cheerful emotion. Then in line 74, the poet gives us the first image of the man she wants: '*Caddalloolka fiidkii mid aan, wada caweeynaynno*' (The one whom I play the *caddallool* game and spend time together with in the evening). It is not any kind of personality or characteristics that she wants to address first. The first image of an ideal man, following the pictures of sky, rain, grass and spilling milk, is one that she plays the evening throwing sticks game *caddallool* with. How romantic! She makes a supplication and says to God that '*calaf wadaagnaa dheh*' (tell him we share a due).

76 Mid cirshiga Ilaah laga raboo, Caaddil garanaaya
77 Caddaaladda midkii falaya een, cuqubo doonaynnin
78 Oo cammira masaajiidda oo, caalin iyo shiikh ah
79 Casharkiyo Quraanka i bariyo, camalka kii suubban
80 Midkii diinta caawinaya ee, cadow u diidaaya
81 Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa, calaf wadaagnaa dheh.

76 One that is wanted at the throne of God and understands God
77 The one who acts justly and seeks no malediction
78 And who regularly attends the mosques, who is a scholar and a sheikh
79 Who teaches me the lessons of the Qur'an and the good manners
80 The one who is helping the religion and defending it from the enemy
81 O Almighty, O Allah! Tell him that we share a due.

82 Cid kaleba mid aan eegin oo, calanka lay saaray
83 Oo aan Caasha-Luul mooyiye, dumar canaynaynnin
84 Cirdiga iyo sharaftayda kaan, ceel ku ridi doonnin
85 Farxad aan ku wada ciidaynnoo, cagaha ii maydha
86 Cayn ay u tahay kii adduun, igu casuumaaya
87 Curdin baxay sidiisii mid aan, ugu carfoonaado
88 Gob caqiibo dheer lagu ogyahay, ciriq wanaaggiisa
89 Ciddayda iyo ciddiisaba midkii, wada cisaynaaya,
90 Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa, calaf wadaagnaa dheh.

82 He who doesn't look at another woman but raises the flag of love over me
83 And desired no other woman except Caasha Luul

84 He who doesn't dishonour my prestige, dropping it in a well
85 He whom we celebrate the holy day together in joy, and washes my feet
86 He who invites me to whatever wealth he deservedly gains
87 He who prefers me like the best scent of a young sapling tree
88 He who is known for high moral principles and his good nerves
89 He who respect both my family and his family
90 O Almighty, O God, say to him that we share a due.

91Mid caqligu illayn waa hibee, Caaddil ugu deeqay
92 Calaacalaana igu qaadda oon, ciidda igu tuurin
93 Calcalyada xareeddiyo biyaa, wada cabboonaynno
94 Cishqi iyo wanaag aan dhammaan, Caaddil nagu beero
95 Aniguna cindiga iyo wadnaha, caashaq ugu beero
96 Oo cunaha ii dhaafo oon, dhigo calooshayda

97 Mid qalbiga intoo aan u culo, cuudka ugu daaro
98 Canbar iyo mid aan udug u ahay, cadar sidiisiiya
99 Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa, calaf wadaagnaa dheh.

91 He whose intelligence is a gift that God gave generously
92 He who doesn't throw me in the mud but takes me in his hands
93 He who we drink fresh rainwater together
94 He whom with him God bestows everlasting love and goodness on us
95 And for whom I plant love in the mind and heart
96 And let love pass down my throat and I put it in my stomach
97 He for whom I purify and perfume the heart with incense
98 He for whom I would be like amber perfumes
99 O Almighty, O God, say to him that we share a due.

In these line groups that follow the scenery description, the poet mentions the qualities and behaviours that she looks for in a man. Here, the 'he' is no longer a representation of a number of men, but one person. In almost each line, a first-person pronoun can be found. For example, in the first lines of the first stanza (lines 82 and 83), 'he' raised (*saaray*) the flag (*calanka*) for 'me' (*ii* in '*lay*'). In the second line, the poet directly uses her name Caasha Luul as the alliterative word. In the penultimate line of the first stanza, 'he' respects (*cisaynaaya*) both my family (*ciddayda*) and his family (*ciddiisa*). Besides the description of the man, the poet also talks about what 'I' would do for 'him': In '*Oo cunaha ii dhaafo oon, dhigo calooshayda*' (And let love pass down the throat and I put it in my stomach), The first-person possessive suffix '*-ayda*', is attached to the noun '*calool*' (stomach), an organ in the body, which adds to the intimacy between 'he' and 'I', hence emphasises the poet's desire of this due in life. In the previous line groups, she prays: '*Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa, calafba hay siinnin*' (O Almighty, O Allah, don't give me that one as my due). In contrast, in the prayer requesting a man she desires, here she says: '*Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa, calaf wadaagnaa dheh*' (O Almighty, O Allah, say to him that we share a due). In the second half line, '*calaf wadaagnaa*' (we share a due) is the message that the voice asks God to send to 'him'. Using the inflectional ending '*-naa*' (we in the present tense) on the verb '*wadaag*' (share) giving the form *wadaagnaa*, the poet shows us a close relation that the voice hopes for.

Gebaggebo (Concluding line group)

100 Waxba yaanan Caynkiyo murtida, soo celcelin uune;
101 Cirka tiirka aan lagu arkayn, ciidda gogoshaas ah
102 Cadceeddiyo dayaxa aan midina, midna cidhiidhaynnin
103 Caska waaga cawlaanka fiid, caddiyo nuurkeeda
104 Gudcurkoo cawaag soo rogtoo, culay madowgaas ah
105 Buurahaa cuslaadiyo baddaa, cidhifka soo jooga
106 Allihii cibrada nooga dhigey, dunidan ceegaagta,
107 Cabdi iyo addoon baan u ahay, Caaddilka Ilaahe
108 Cawaaloow Alloow ii ajiib, ducadan aan cuurtay.

100 Let me not repeat the wisdom behind the '*c*' alliteration only for the sake of repeating
101 One doesn't see any pillar for the sky and the earth is like a spreading out mat
102 Neither does the sun nor the moon squeeze the other into a restricted space
103 The red dawn and tan evening, the clarity and its light
104 The darkness and dark nights making a distinctive mark, like black, burnt wood
105 The heavy mountains and the seas standing on the edges
106 The Allah that made it novel and made this world full for us
107 I am a worshipper and a servant of Allah, the Just One
108 O Allah, O God, accept for me this prayer that I took attention over.

In the *gebaggebo*, we can see that the poet is addressing the alliteration again by mentioning '*cayn*' ('C' letter) in line 100, echoing with the '*Caynka ka higgaadshay*' (I argued ten points and alliterated with the 'C' letter) in the beginning of this poem in line 5. This self-reference here makes it clear to the listeners that she is ending her poem. What's more, the word '*murtida*' (the wisdom, the essential point) in this line is also used in the *arar*, in line 2, '*Caynaddi murtida waanigaan, dhigin culuumteede*' (I did not set out the types and subjects of wisdom [of poetry] and advice). We also find the word '*cayn*' in this line, but here, its meaning is 'type', rather than the 'C' letter and it's in the plural form. The word '*cayn*' shows up several times in this poem and this is quite striking because Somali poets normally avoid using the same word in order to demonstrate their large vocabulary unless a word is repeated purposefully. '*Cayn*'

as a word with multiple meanings, is used at different places in this poem purposefully. In line 2 as shown above and line 64 '*Cayn-cayn raggaa wada ahee, dunida ceegaaga*' (There are many types of men that the world is filled up with), and line 68 '*Carrabbaabay oo waad ogtahay, caynka uu yahaye*' (I've mentioned it and you know the type he is), it bears the 'type' meaning. The '*cayn-cayn*' in line 64 is especially striking when the sound is reduplicated to express the idea of 'many types' in Somali. It is also the 'type' meaning that appears the most in the poem. This is not surprising as the theme of this poem is about types of *calaf* and type of men in the poet's supplication. Apart from that, in line 21 '*Caynka iyo bayddaba jaroo, cidhibta ruugaaya*' (Cutting the cord and robes [with God], chewing the destiny), the meaning of '*cayn*' is 'cord'. And then in the beginning and ending parts of this poem, when the poet refers to making poetry and the alliteration, as mentioned above, its meaning is the 'C letter'.

In lines 101-105, we see that the poet fills her verse with natural elements again, and they lead the listeners to line 106 when she mentions that it is Allah who made this world and the beautiful natural scenery and objects. When the poem reaches its very end, the poet stresses the religious aspect of her composition. This poem is made because '*Cabdi iyo addoon baan u ahay*' (I am a worshipper and a servant of Allah) and because she has a supplication to make. Muslims conventionally ask Allah to give them something or keep away from something, and in this poem, Caasha Luul is doing the exact same thing. There is nothing wrong with a person praying for love and an ideal partner to God. Both 'Dookh' and 'Calaf' are poems by which the female poet resists the prohibitions that prevent Somali women from making *gabay* poems and talking about love and their relations with men. 'Calaf' is even more radical compared to 'Dookh' as the poet is actually criticising the nine types of men in her 'Don't give me such due' line groups. We therefore see some in-betweeness in this poem. On the one hand, the poet is speaking about subjects that are not considered suitable for women to speak of in the patriarchal society. She has also used some strong language in some of the lines when targeting a certain type of man. These are the rebelling aspects of this poem. On the other hand, she incorporates these messages in a supplication to God in a finely crafted *gabay* poem. Even though the messages themselves contest some traits she finds in men, the way she chooses to deliver these messages are established and

cherished in the society, hence no one can stop her from making this poem and arguing her points.

Both ‘Calaf’ and ‘Dookh’ talk about men with the pronoun ‘he’ being repeatedly used. One may be dazzled by his perfection in ‘Dookh’ or look down upon the man in ‘Calaf’, listening to the poems, but the audience also knows that it isn’t a real person who actually is or does all the things in those lines. In the interview with the poet Caasha Luul, I specifically asked her if there was some man she knew in real life in her mind when she made these poems. The answer was no. The poet also mentioned that there were women who cried when listening to ‘Calaf’ and came to her and said: ‘You were talking about us. How did you know?’ The poet has never seen these women before, neither can she know their stories, but her poem resonates with them. How is this achieved?

In ‘Dookh’, there is an imagined addressee ‘*ku*’ (you) who appears to be a fellow woman that the lyric voice would like to relate to or give advice to. By addressing this imagined individual, the poet indirectly addresses her real audience who can be men or women. When uttering the lines together with the reciter, he or she is responding to the emotions expressed in the lines as an audience and at the same time, sharing these emotions by taking the position of the voice. However, in ‘Calaf’, there isn’t a blurred lyric ‘you’. Instead, the addressee is a very specific one, God. As mentioned earlier, the supplication in a poem is distinct from the daily prayers. The voice is not speaking to God privately, on contrary, she expects an audience. By calling upon God, the voice establishes its identity as a poetical voice. As Culler suggests, ‘voice calls in order to be calling, and seeks to manifest its calling’ (2015, p.216). The supplication is in fact an indirect address to her audience. The poet invites her audience to this event where she makes her personal supplication and the audience listen, relate, and take the position of the poet’s voice. As a lyric event the women listening to the poem, in taking the position of the lyric voice become involved to the extent that was related to me by Caasha in the interview mentioned above.

W. R. Johnson observes that ‘the most usual mode in Greek lyric (probably) and in Latin lyric (certainly) was to address the poem (in Greek, the song) to another person or to other persons. What this typical lyric form points to is the conditions and the

purposes of song: the presence of the singer before his audience; his re-creation of universal emotions in a specific context, a compressed, stylized story…; and, finally, the sharing, the interchange of these emotions by singer and audience' (Johnson 1983, p.4; quoted in Waters 2003, p.18) In the case of Somali poetry, especially the *maanso* type, the verses are made to be heard by other people. The poet Caasha Luul herself says: 'My poems are for other people. Even when my name 'Caasha Luul' is there in those lines, other people can use it and let it be her.'

Frye takes up Mill's definition of lyric as an utterance that is 'overheard', and defines it by its 'radical of presentation', where the poet 'turns his back on his listeners, though he may speak for them, and though they may repeat some of his words after him' (Frye 1957, p. 250). Culler notes that 'triangulated address' – address to the reader by means of address to something or someone else – is the root-form of presentation for lyric. However, instead of the figure of the audience 'overhearing' a poem addressed to another, Culler inclines to that of the voice 'winking' at the audience (2015, p. 206). 'This is a phenomenon with which we are all familiar', he writes, 'when we speak ostensibly to one person but with an eye to how our discourse will be received by others who will hear it and so insert some elements specifically chosen for them' (Ibid).

As Caasha Luul says, her poems are for other people. The supplications she makes in 'Calaf' are as much for her audience as they are for her. So are her techniques, such as the metre and rhythm, the alliterative words and pronouns, the way she structures a poem, and very importantly, the address to God. In the several instances of '*Rabboow*' and '*Casiisoow Allahayoow*', the poet invokes God in a literary way, for not only herself, but also her audience. What does addressing God accomplish? First, it gives us a ritualistic event in the lyric present. The vocatives *Rabboow, Casiisoow, Allahayoow* and the following imperative sentences '*calafba hay siinnin*' (don't give me such due) and '*calaf wadaagnaa dheh*' (say to him that we share a due), give the poem a ritualistic air, after having portrayed a fictional 'he' in the previous lines. The fictional representation of the 'he' serves to bring out the final supplication.

By describing the due she wants and doesn't want in the supplication, the poet incorporates fictional elements into the ritualistic event. Address to God permits a stronger and more vivid expression of feeling, highlighting the criticism or enhancing

the desire. Apostrophe is not mundane communication. It makes its point by troping 'not on the meaning of a word but on the circuit of communication itself, foregrounding the fact that this is utterance of a special kind' (Culler 2015, p.213). In the moment of articulation, the vocative posits a relationship between the voice and God. Just as Martin Heidegger says: 'Calling brings closer what it calls'. To the poet, God is a responsive force to which she has a relation. In the last line of 'Calaf', she writes: '*Cawaaloow Alloow ii ajiib, ducadan aan cuurtay*' (O God, O Allah, accept for me, the prayer I took attention over).

Caasha Luul made 'Dookh' and 'Calaf' in the 2010s in London. Her poems show a degree of modernity as well as her background of living in exile in the West. In the next section, I shall turn my focus to poems that were made in the Horn of Africa several decades before Caasha Luul's poems. We will see how women poets at that time address relations between men and women in ways different from Caasha's. They may be shorter in length, but by no means quieter or less radical.

Poems by Xaawa Jibriil

In this section, I shall look at poems made by Xaawa Jibriil. Xaawa Jibriil's poems were collected and translated into English by her daughter Faduma in Faduma (2008), with an elaborate introduction about Xaawa's life presented both in Somali and English.

Born in 1920, Xaawa Jibriil has used poetry to comment on the world around her since the age of twelve. She made poetry in not only the *buraambur* genre but also the male-dominated *gabay* and *geeraar* to persuade others of her points of view. Some of her poems are personal. For example, her first poem was a short *gabay* in which she complained about her younger brother begrudging her share of food. She also used *gabay* to justify herself after a rebuke by her father for neglecting the camels for which she was responsible at the age of 13, something unusual for a girl of this age. Ten years later, suffering from an unhappy marriage, she asserted that she is not a 'bridled camel' and told her husband to either 'take my life and pay the price' or 'set me free' in two *gabay* poems.

In many of her poems, she commented on men or directly addressed them. These men can be specific individuals, such as her brother, her father, her husband, when she made poetry about her personal life, or the military dictator, Siyaad Barre, or the delegates of the Djibouti Peace meeting, when she comments on politics. The men she talked about can also be a collective group, such as those who incited clan wars or the pro-Italian men who she called '*odeyaasha ina aakhiray*'[62] (the old men who hold us back). We also see in different periods of her life, the poet spoke out about different issues at that time which she found so important that they needed to be addressed through the means of poetry. It is also interesting to see that the poet has chosen the *buraambur* genre which is exclusive to women and which because of that, ranks lowest amongst all major genres of Somali poetry according to Sh. Jama Omar Esse, the author of Jaamac (1974), to express her political opinions despite her competence in making poems in the more prominent *gabay* genre.

In this chapter, I shall look at what Xaawa talked about in her poems made in different periods of her life and compare how she spoke out about them. My focus will be on the poems in which she addressed or talked about men. In these poems, her identity as a Somali woman is foregrounded. In her early poems, she spoke out as a female family member, such as a sister, a daughter, or a wife. The sister-brother relationship, father-daughter relationship, as well as the intimate relationship that a Somali woman may experience in her life are epitomised in the poems. In her later years during the independence movements, she also took on the men who criticised women's participation in the nationalist activities and made a rather feminist poem which I shall also look at. Ever since the independence struggle, Xaawa's poems became mostly political as she continuously used poetry as a weapon to fight for not only the rights of Somali people, but also Somali women's rights in particular. We will look at her political poems in more detail in Chapter Four.

'Waa ii Gunuunucahayaa?' (Why Is He Crouchy?)

I shall start with Xaawa's first poem 'Waa ii Gunuunucahayaa?'(Why Is He Crouchy?). It is a short *gabay* poem in which the poet, at the age of twelve, complains about her

[62] In the book this last word is written as '*akhiray*' which is a misspelling. I have corrected the spelling here.

little brother. The text is taken from Faduma (2008, p.124). The translation is not the one found in the book, rather I have made my own translation. As mentioned previously, this is in order to make the Somali text more clear and accessible to the reader and for me to make my points in a more transparent way.

Waa guridambayskii waxaas, ii gabyahayaaye
Waa ii gunuunucahayaa, godobna ii qaadye
Sidii niman ganbiya yuu cawada, guure ii yahaye
Oo waa i gawrici lahaa, taydi baan geline
Geestiisa weel uu ku jirey, oo ganfaha haysto
Muxuu iigu goodinahayaa, gurey docdiisiiye?

He is the youngest of the house, that thing who is making *gabay*s to me
He is grumbling at me and brought a grudge against me
Like men who are fighting in the night, he is one who comes upon me
And he would have slaughtered me, (but) my [time] did not enter
At his side a vessel he was in and of which he holds the edge of the mouth
Why is he threatening me, he has collected his share

This is a very short piece of *gabay* which doesn't quite meet the general expectation of long verse paragraphs usually consisting of between 30 and 150 lines as observed by Andrzejewski and Lewis (1964, p.47). In fact, all the *gabay* poems Xaawa made throughout her life are rather short, consisting of about 6 to 20 lines, while interestingly, her *buraambur* poems can be longer. Granting the fact that the skill of sustaining longer poems is admired by the Somalis and the most widely-known *gabay* poems tend to be long, we must not forget that there are short *gabay* poems and they are also part of oral poetry.

Xaawa's daughter gives us some background to this poem in the introduction. She mentions that 'on occasions when the family slaughtered an animal for food, the tradition was that the boys got the ribs, the thighs, and the shoulders, which were considered the noble parts, while the girls were given the remaining, and less noble, cuts of meat' (Faduma 2008, p.73). However, Xaawa's father loved her dearly and hence made her eat with her brothers, sharing a big common wooden bowl. *Waa ii*

gunuunucahayaa was made in response to the squabbles over a piece of meat between her and her youngest brother Xasan. *Gabay* is a form which at that time was very much used for serious poems in the context of kin groups, and in conflict resolution between lineages. We see here that the young poet has chosen to use this form rather than other options such as the *buraambuur* or indeed one of the forms used more by younger people like work-song types such as *heesta maqasha*, the song of the young sheep and goats. In this poem, there is a dispute but, of course, it's one which is just within the family, not between clans. Why did she choose the *gabay* form rather than a *buraambur* or another form? Clues can be found in the text itself. In this next section, I shall describe the language in the poem and try to answer this question.

In the first line, she says: '*Waa guridambayskii waxaas, ii gabyahayaaye*' (He is the youngest of the house, that thing who is making *gabay* to me). It is a straightforward opening line telling us the poem is about her youngest brother. If we look carefully at the language, we find that the subject of this line is '*waxaas*' (that thing), which is quite striking as it is a dismissive term and in using such a term at the beginning of the poem, she is setting a certain tone. She did not choose to use her brother's name, nor did she use the word 'brother'. Yet she is referring to her brother as 'that thing', followed by another description, '*guridambayskii*' (youngest of the house). This word also helps to set the tone in some way because the poet is emphasising her brother's young age. We might see this as a way in which she is emphasising the male sense of entitlement with respect to the girls in the family. Then in the *hooris*, we find the indirect object pronoun '*i*' *(*me) in the '*ii*' (to me) cluster. The poet then continues her *gabay* with three more lines describing the action of the youngest brother. In each of these three lines, we can find at least one first person object pronoun, '*i*' (me). The verb '*gabyahayaaye*' (making *gabay*) here, as an alliterating word, may refer to the brother making his comments in a real *gabay,* or a metaphoric description of the young boy's speaking rather than its actual meaning. In using this metaphor, we might say that she is almost presenting the interaction as an exchange of *gabay* poems in the way that they are used in conflict resolution between clans at the time. Her response in a *gabay* poem itself then speaks for itself as a response in such a situation.

In the second line, she says '*waa ii gunuunucahayaa, godobna ii qaadye*' (He is grumbling at me and brought a grudge against me). The verb in the *hojis,*

'*gunuunucahayaa*' (grumbling), again in the present progressive tense, explains what she means by '*gabayahayaaye*' (making *gabay*) previously. In these two half lines, she uses two dynamic verbs in the present progressive tense to describe what she actually saw and heard when she had the fight with her brother. Then in the *hooris,* the tense changes. The verb '*qaadye*' (took, brought), is in the past tense. She explains those actions of her little brother as '*godobna*' (a grudge) that he '*qaadye*' (took, brought) against her. Instead of an actual action, this *hooris* shows how the poet understands the state of mind of the brother. The tension between the sister and the brother thus appears. The term *godob* is one which is used in the context of conflict resolution in Somali society (see Rashiid 2009 for some discussion of this concept and for a collection of poems on conflict and peace in Somali society). The use of this term therefore continues to build on the sense of conflict which has been set in the first words of the poem.

After retelling what actually happened, in the next two lines, the poet presents us an imagined image of her brother. '*Sidii niman ganbiya yuu cawada, guure ii yahaye*' (like men who are fighting in the night, he is one who comes upon me). She compares her brother to fighters, and the enemy 'he' ('*uu*' with a focus marker) fights against is 'me' ('*i*').[63] We see in this image, the continuation of the use of terms which relate to conflict in a wider setting. The reference to men is also very direct with her using the word '*niman*' (men) and this prefigures some of the attitudes and comments which she makes in later poems from when she was an adult. Then in the fourth line, she says: '*Oo waa i gawrici lahaa, taydi baan geline*' (and he would have slaughtered me, but my [time] did not enter). The modal verb '*lahaa*' (would have) joining the verb '*gawrici*' (slaughter) pushes the depiction of the tension between the 'he' and 'me' to a climax. The use of the term '*gawrici*' (the infinitive form of *gawrac*) is striking, as the term means 'to slaughter' as of animals to eat. It is used here as a term for killing and is very strong given that the poem was made in the context of squabbles between siblings. From 'making *gabay* to me', to 'brought a grudge against me', and then 'a night-time traveller who comes upon me', finally to 'he would have slaughtered me', line by line, the poet portrays what 'he' does to 'me' from which the sense that the brother is a threat to her gets clearer and stronger.

[63] The focus marker here is a shortened version of *ayaa* with the subject verbal pronoun *uu*: *yuu* instead of *ayuu* which would break the metrical pattern if it was used.

The next line pulls us from the use of imagery to language which reflects the reality of the situation directly. The poet clearly describes the situation that had led to the poem. This is the first time we hear in the poem itself about the situation that caused her to make it. '*Geestiisa weel uu ku jirey, oo ganfaha haysto*' (at his side a vessel he was in, and of which he holds the edge of the mouth). This echoes what Faduma says in the introduction, that the poem was made because of a fight over food. Interestingly, this line is not a complete sentence, but rather a relative clause, leading to an enjambment that draws the listener's attention to the following line, which in this short *gabay* poem, is the final line. Having imagined the harm her brother would do to her, the young poet finally asks: '*Muxuu iigu goodinahayaa, gurey docdiisiiye*?'(Why is he threatening me, he has collected his share). In this final line, there is a third person subject pronoun '*uu*' (he) in the word '*muxuu*' (why), the first person object pronoun '*i*' (me) in the cluster '*iigu*', and a third person possessive pronoun suffix '*iis*' (his) in '*docdiisiiye*' (his side, his share). Having understood that the final two lines present a unit as one complete sentence while the first four lines are all independent main clauses, we shall see that in each sentence, there is a first person object pronoun '*i*', often joined with the preposition '*u*' in the '*ii*' cluster, which in the English translation, it could be 'to me', 'against me', 'at me' or 'upon me'.

Having looked at the poem, I shall turn specifically to the use of pronouns. We see in the poem the use of the verbal subject pronoun *uu* which refers to her brother. All first person references to her as the poet are as an object pronoun. Throughout these lines, the poet describes what she sees, hears and feels that her brother does or would do to her. Putting the brother in the subject position, the poet, who is making poetry about her own experience, appears only as the object pronoun *'i'* (me). The poet says that the brother '*godobna ii qaadye'* (brought a grudge against me), yet we don't know how she feels directly. She says '*waa i gawrici lahaa*' (he would have slaughtered me), yet '*taydi baan geline*' (my time for death didn't enter) is barely a response to such a powerful verb as 'slaughter'. Even if this was a response that is equal to the powerful verb, the '*taydi*' (my time) is not decided by the poet herself but rather God. In other words, her agency here is still not present. The subjects and agents in these sentences are all others: her brother and God. There isn't one sentence in which the subject is the poet herself who expresses her feelings directly. She keeps talking about what 'he' does to 'me', but never says how she feels, what she does, or what she wants to do in

response. We know it is her voice in the poem, but her voice is not presented as the subject. Her voice is passive in the poem, not in a grammatical sense (there is no passive verb in Somali), but the lyric voice is the person to whom others in the poem do things. We might even say she is made the object of her brother's actions in the poem.

We must remember that this is a poem that was made as an oral poem and was not written down at the time and all who heard it being recited for the first time will have heard it directly from the poet herself. How many other people recited it after that we do not know. Unlike some of the famous poems by men of the past which may be recited many times over by other people, it is unlikely a poem like this would have been recited. It would almost certainly not have been recited by men for reasons which I have written about in this dissertation. Also, it is a personal poem by a young woman. While it is possible that it was recited by another young woman in Xaawa's circle of family and acquaintances it nevertheless still stands out as a more personal poem and thus has less of the 'transcendental' quality which Said Samatar (1982, p.58) mentions. This is the quality of *maanso* poetry to be recited in different contexts and to be appreciated still. In this sense, we can say that it is the voice of Xaawa that was heard more directly when she recited this poem rather than a more abstract lyric voice; she is the agent of the poem, the initiating voice both as composer and as initial reciter. However her voice is not the active agent of the actions in the poem, her brother is the active subject. She herself therefore is making a poem in which she is expressing a certain passivity.

The poem was made after the squabbles between her and her brother. Yet it is not a counterattack, and barely a complaint. It is actually presented as a question '*Muxuu iigu goodinahayaa*?' This may be seen to reflect her passivity. Her feelings, which may be fear, anger or grievance, conveyed in the lines describing what 'he' does to 'me', are not directly expressed. I suggest that the passivity of the voice may be a reflection of the passivity of the poet herself in the family. As Faduma writes in the introduction, in the patriarchal society, the gender inequality is so prominent that only male family members get to eat the good meat while female members eat the remainder. Even when she tells us that Xaawa actually ate together with her brothers, the decision was made by Xaawa's father. The young poet grew up in a passive position in the family as well as the society where male subjectivity is deeply rooted.

All this explains why she used a *gabay* rather than a *buraambur* or another form. To the girl, the argument with her little brother was as important as a conflict between clans. The scene of the happening that was described in the poems is very limited. But if we think about the wider background, it is a conflict between a female member in the family and a privileged youngest male member in the family. In this altercation and in the way she expresses herself, we see an awareness not just of the situation in which she finds herself with her brother, but also of the situation in which women and girls find themselves more generally in relation to men and boys.

'Awr Qabbiran Maahi' (I Am Not a Bridled Camel)

In 1943, Xaawa, at the age of twenty-three, made this next poem called 'Awr Qabbiran Maahi' (I Am Not a Bridled Camel). By that time, Xaawa had experienced a lot in her life. The poem is a response to her second husband who abused her harshly and tried to frustrate her efforts to get a divorce by threatening to get himself another wife, thus declaring her a *naakiro*, which is a term in Somali describing a woman who rejects her husband sexually, but who is neither divorced nor free to marry someone else (see Kapteijns 1999, p.42). Humiliated by the man and determined to leave him, she composed the following *gabay* (Faduma 2008, p.130):

1 Inkastoo albaabbada qafilan, laygu soo qariyo
2 Oo qolalka gaalshire wax badan, gaalo igu quuddo
3 Naag kale haddaad qaadatoo, qaalliga aad geyso
4 I qabi maysid oo maanta waa, kaa quluub go'ay e[64]
5 Adigaa isqaafinahayee, waa ku qaadacay e
6 Awr kuu qabbiran maahiyoo, reeryo qaayibay e
7 Qushigayga weeyoo wallaan, qabanayaa meele
8 Abadkayba uma qaawanaan, maro aan qaataaye

[64] The original punctuation mark in this line in Faduma (2008) was between '*maanta*' and '*waa*', however, it is not where the caesura lies. I have changed it to keep with the actual caesura according to the metrical pattern.

9 Qalabkaan sameeyaa ka badan, qadiyo dheeraad e

10 Qalbi gaabanaayey muxuu, aniga ii quuray![65]

1 Even though I am hidden by the locked doors

2 And infidels feed me in the rooms of a colonial jail for a long time

3 But if you take another woman and take her to the *qadi* (Islamic legal expert who will transact the marriage)

4 You will not have me (as your wife) and today there is a broken heart

5 It is you who has put on airs, I have cut you off

6 I am not a burden camel tethered for you and which families have taken for granted

7 It is my resentment and I will go wherever I please

8 Never have I been naked and needed to be clothed by others

9 The utensils I make are more than my daily meal

10 O the heartless man, why did he disrespect me?

Men's authority over women and women's obedience and forbearance are commonly presented in, and enforced by Somali oral literature, mostly composed by men (see Kapteijns 1999). Verbal and physical abuse are also very commonly practised by men to ensure their power and their wives' obedience. Women's attitude towards these is recorded in the orature composed by themselves. In her study of Somali women's work songs, Lidwien Kapteijns finds that in the female genre *buraambur* and many categories of women's work songs, Somali women often explicitly challenge men's authority and reject such obedience. In this poem, we see Xaawa Jibriil resisting in the form of *gabay*.

The first thing we notice in the difference between this gabay and the previous piece may be the time that they were made. This poem was made in 1943, when Somalis were under colonial rule and were organising nationalsit movements to fight for independence. Xaawa uses the image of colonialism to relate to her oppression by the men she is addressing. We can also see a prominent difference in the way she expresses her thoughts and feelings. In this poem, the poet used a direct address to send a message to her husband. While in the first poem, she made her voice the passive object, here 'I',

[65] I have moved the punctuation mark from before '*muxuu*' to after it to keep with the actual caesura in this line.

the lyric voice which is one with the poet's voice, has become the subject. It is most salient in lines 5-7. Line 5 starts with an independent pronoun '*adiga*' (you) emphasising the subject, followed by a statement '*baa isqaafinahayee*',[66] which means 'acted importantly' or 'put on airs'. That being the reason, the poet says, '*waa ku qaadacaye*' (I am cutting you off). Grammatically, the poet didn't use a first person verbal subject pronoun to combine with the mood classifier '*waa*', but from the context, it is clear that the subject is the voice of the poet herself. This is the same as the lyric voice in the poem itself. The object, however, is expressed by an explicit pronoun. The '*ku*' is the second person object pronoun which here refers to the husband. She has decided to cut the husband off and she is telling the husband that in the form of a *gabay*. Then she asserts the line which is used as the title of the poem: 'I am not a burden camel'. The Somalis attach great importance to camels and burden camels are prized when they are patient and do their duties for the household in a calm and patient way. Therefore, it is a very crucial image she has chosen to use here. The alliterating word in this half-line is the adjective '*qabbiran*', which means 'tied up (of a camel)'. Together with the '*awr*' (burden camel) and '*kuu*' (for you), she is saying 'I am not a burden camel tethered for you'.

Often being tied up and loaded with heavy household equipment, the burden camel here symbolises the obedience, the forbearance and the hard work of a married woman. What adds to the poet's burden is her husband's humiliation and abuse. By saying 'I am not a burden camel', she is asserting her rejection. Then in line 7, she boldly declares her autonomy and her will to leave. She is not passive in this poem. She is determined to make her own decision. While men were told by the oral literature tradition that one way of keeping women obedient is to make sure that they had no wealth of their own (Kapteijns 1999, p.40), Xaawa asserts her ability to produce. She talks of her competence in making household utensils, implying that she can live a life independently not only through making these but implying also that she could also sell them to others to help her sustain her life. This notion of self-sufficiency is the poet's value against those of the male-dominated world.

[66] The focus marker '*baa*' is contracted and becomes part of the word it is focusing. The word '*adigaa*' in this line is actually made up of the pronoun '*adiga*' and the focus marker '*baa*'.

Kapteijns (1999, p.75) finds 'speech drawing on the power of women's overwhelming private passion and pain' to be a form of women's literary self-expression which is powerful. In a world where their thoughts and speech are trivialised, Somali women have always been composing poetry about their experience of love and jealousy, anger and sorrow, in their relationships with men. Axmed (1993, p.2) believes that *buraambur* poems that deal with relations between women and men were 'conventionally considered personal secrets that cannot be exposed to a third party' and could therefore not be recorded by him for the purposes of his publications on Somali poetry. Hence when a woman articulates about her intimate gender relations and her gender-related feelings in a *buraambur* poem, it is confined to the private sphere of husband and wife or intimate women friends (Kapteijns 1999, p.75). Yet here, we have a valuable testimony of a *gabay* poem in which a woman bravely and firmly confronts her husband and goes against the ways in which oral texts stereotyped the female gender. As mentioned earlier, the *gabay* genre deals with serious matters and has been the form most often used in conflict resolution. By using the *gabay* genre, she has chosen the most powerful verbal weapon to speak up and send that firm message to her husband, 'I am leaving you, because I am an independent woman, not a burden camel.' Unlike what Axmed and Kapteijns say, mentioned just above, in this poem Xaawa is making a public statement in the most prominent and prestigious form possible, a *gabay*. We hear also in this poem a much stronger and confident voice than the one in the previous poem we looked at in response to her brother. The use of pronouns shows this directly. We hear her agency very prominently expressed in the second poem which was not the case in the first one.

'Waa noo Xarrago' (For the Sake of Elegance)

The next poem I shall look at in this chapter is one that Xaawa made in 1952, at the age of thirty-two. By that time, she had dedicated herself to the political struggle for national independence led by the Somali Youth League (SYL). She has made several poems promoting nationalism and calling on clans to stop fighting during this time, which we shall look at in detail in the next chapter. While many Somali women in the urban capital city were enthusiastically joining the nationalist movements led by SYL, many men within the SYL were not happy. They were concerned about the confidence

that women were showing, their omnipresence at all the meetings, and above all, their new fashionable dresses, which clearly showed that they were wearing bras underneath (Faduma 2008, p.90). The *gabay* by Xaawa which follows is a response to an anonymous male critic who made a *gabay* to mock the activist women for wearing bras to keep up what he called 'sagging breasts' (Ibid).

1 Waa noo xarrago naasahaan, kor u xiraynaaye
2 Xornimada hablihii haystay baa, xeerkan soo rogay e
3 Markuu xabadka joogiyo hadduu, nabasta xaabaayo
4 Xubbi ninkii yaqaan naaska waa, lagu xanteeyaaye
5 Oday xiisoloowaa[67] arkee, lama xusuusteene
6 Xifaalada aad sheegteen afkaan, kala xishoonnaaye
7 Idinba xubinta waad leedihiin, xagal ka daacaaye
8 Xaq miyaad ku hadasheen ragyohow, waad na xamateene.

1 For the sake of elegance, we lift up our breasts
2 Young women who have freedom took on this way [of dressing].
3 Whether they are up on the chest or sweeping lower down
4 For a man who knows about love, one touches him through the breast
5 If an old man didn't show his interest (in a poem), no one would have been remarked upon (us wearing the bras)
6 We as women are embarrassed to reply from the mouths
7 But you also have an organ that loses its vigour
8 O you men, did you speak truthfully? No, you slandered us. [68]

Traditionally, in a Somali poetic combat, a poet would use the same alliteration that the first person employed to counterattack. Xaawa did so here as the rule demands. A distinct feature of this poem is that she is not speaking up for only herself, but for all women who were offended. This is presented by her use of the first person plural pronoun. The word '*noo*' in the first line is a cluster made up of an exclusive '*na*' (us), because she is emphasising the female identity and not including the men, and a

[67] The word '*xiisoloowaa*' is written '*xiisolowaa*' in the original. I have changed it here as it should be a long vowel according to the metre.
[68] Faduma (2008, p.137), translation by myself.

preposition '*u*' (for). She also makes it clear in line 6 that '*Xifaalada aad sheegteen afkaan, kala xishoonnaaye*' (we as women are embarrassed to reply from the mouth). She is telling the man that there are many women who are offended by his comments, but not saying anything only because they feel embarrassed to address such an issue directly. However, Xaawa is acting like the spokesperson here, just like the male poets making *gabay* poems to declare war for their clans. She is making a powerful counterattack, directly addressing not only the one man, but men in plural, as shown in the vocative '*ragyohow*' (O you men) in the last line, which following two lines in which the second person singular has been used '*aad sheegteen*', '*Idinba*'.

This is a *gabay* poem made by a woman in response to a *gabay* poem made by a man. Yet we could consider the two poets as spokespersons of the male and female community at that time, and they are debating over the matter of women wearing bras, which is, no doubt, political. Body shaming, especially shaming of breasts, is a behaviour that women in any patriarchal society have to confront. Breasts are a symbol of femininity, power and sexuality of a woman which is threatening and grotesque for patriarchy. In order to be a part of the male dominant society, women have been burdened with norms forcing them to repress their femininity. In a world where women are oppressed in many aspects, Xaawa stood up to fight for her fellow women who were shy about responding directly in speech themselves. Not only did she dare to speak about the matter directly and explicitly, saying that it is women's 'freedom' to wear bras, but she also mocked back, targeting men's genital organs in line 7, in a genre that is said to be a men's domain, the *gabay*.

This poem is very empowering as Xaawa is asserting that wearing or not wearing a bra is a woman's own choice. It is a matter of bodily autonomy and not a social norm decided by men. These lines represent Somali women's own interpretation and consciousness of their identity as well as their sexuality, which unsurprisingly challenge the gender expectations normalised by men. This poem stands out particularly for the direct way in which it presents its message and the way it speaks about body parts which are not normally discussed between men and women. She also recognises that not all men are like the man who made the comment in the first place. She does this in line 4 where she speaks about a man who 'knows about love'. In this

line though the agent of expressing the love is the impersonal subject pronoun '*la*' which refers to the women.

'Jawaab Talo Guur' (A Marriage Proposal)

The final poem by Xaawa Jibriil that I will look at is 'Jawaab Talo Guur' which was composed in 1970 and is a response to a proposal of marriage when she would have been about 50 years old. In the poem she again presents a personal message but the tone of this one is different to the other ones above.

1 Dhafoorrada cirraa iiga taal, oo dheehme timihiiye[69]
2 Dhaqan hadday addunyadu lahayd, cunay dhankaygiiye
3 Dhaqmaaddii haweenkiyo ma helo, dhiigga caadada e
4 Waxaan dheelliyaa waa kuwaan, dhalay dhashoodiiye[70]
5 Dhaqdhaqaaqa ii haray ma rabo, dhib iyo jiidjiide
6 Dhawaaaqaaga iga daa talaan, dhoobtay waa hore e.

1 Grey hair is at the temples for me and the hair is thinning
2 If the world had a culture, I have eaten my share
3 I don't find the woman of child-bearing age and the regular blood [i.e. menstruation]
4 The ones I play with are those I gave birth to, their offspring
5 [In] the movement that is left to me, I don't want difficulty and pulling
6 Leave your asking away from me, the responses I piled up are the same as before

In this poem, she is refusing the offer of marriage but does it in a way which is not against the man. In other poems she has criticised men (or her young brother) directly but in this poem there is no direct criticism. In lines 1-4 she is describing herself and

[69] The position of the comma was between '*taal*' and '*oo*' in Faduma (2008). The metre in this line does not follow the *gabay* template. I have not been able to find a recorded version in order to determine the precise line intended. However, the problem lies with the word '*oo*' and as far as I can understand it, this does not impact significantly of the meaning of this line. I have changed it to after '*oo*' to keep in line with the actual caesura in the metrical pattern.

[70] In the original text this line ends in '*-ee*' but that is not correct and not metrical, so I have edited it. The final *-e* which is at the end of many lines of *gabay* poems is a short syllable which has no meaning but is needed to make the line metrical. I have also changed the position of the comma from between '*waa*' and '*kuwaan*' to after '*kuwaan*' so that it is in keeping with the caesura.

her situation. She describes qualities and characteristics of a woman who is older in her life and concentrates on the qualities which are more physical in their nature. The last two lines in the poem are the only ones where we can hear the way she feels about the man. In line 5 she says that she does not want 'difficulty and pulling' which implies that if she married the man there would be these things. She had already had difficulties with previous marriages, and she doesn't want to go through these things again. This line does not mention or address the man directly, she is still speaking about her own feelings in the first person and so this line seems to be a kind of link between the lines which come before it and the last line.

The last line of the poem begins with an imperative clause '*Dhawaaqaaga iga daa*' (Leave your announcement/asking away from me). The verb *daa* (leave something alone) used with *ka* is one which is used when people want someone to stop doing something and is quite direct in its tone which sounds irritated here. In the rest of the last line she says '*talaan dhoobtay waa hore e*'. The verb *dhoobo* which means 'to pile up, to make many' which tells us that she had already answered the man many times and that now she is irritated with his asking still. This also suggests irritation using the imperative of '*ka daa*' (leave it alone) which is used when someone wants someone else to stop doing something.

If we trace back Xaawa's poems in this chapter, we see from a complaint about her brother, a serious message to her husband, to a counterattack to a male poet's assault on women's body, and finally in this poem, Xaawa is acknowledging her growth, not just in age, but also in life experience and wisdom. In this poem Xaawa talks about her identity as an elder woman. Kapteijns (1999, p.69) notes that 'Old women (*habro*) do not figure prominently in the oral literature surveyed here. When they are portrayed, it is not in a positive light.' Old women are not only presented as sick or useless who can no longer take responsibilities but are also stigmatised as being angry, bitter, envious in literature by men. For example, in a camel watering song mentioned by Kapteijns (Ibid), 'the herder sings that an old woman who makes little of the work of camel husbandry has no right to speak, as she has never been involved in milking or watering them'. We hence see a contrast between literature by men and by women themselves. In women's poems presented in this chapter, there isn't a negative stereotype about ageing or targeting old men because of their age. In Caasha Luul's 'Calaf' that we have

looked at earlier, while criticising a type of man, the poet also says: *Cimri kuma canbaareeynayoo, waa cawo Ilaahe*, ‘age is God-given and I don’t want to censure him for it’.

In this chapter we had a scan of several moments in Xaawa’s life through the lens of her poetry. We see that, as a woman poet, Xaawa has used the men’s genre to not only express her private experience and emotions in her relationships with men, but also assert women’s collective and own views and values against those of the patriarchal world. Although the gender-based realities of Somali women’s life have been and are still harsh, one thing we shall learn from Xaawa’s experience and poems is that, however the male-dominated world tries to mute them, women won’t stop fighting. In the next chapter, I shall look at some poems by Xaawa as well as other women poets that were made on the theme of politics. We will see the female’s genre, the *buraambur*, being used in poems that address serious political issues.

Chapter 4
Poetry by Somali Women about Politics and Social Issues

In the previous chapter, we looked at women's poems about their relations with men. Most of these poems were made on an individual level. They are the public expression of the personal experiences and private thoughts of the poets. Some were very exactly crafted about an occasion, sometimes a conflict within a household, in which the poet directly or indirectly speaks to or speaks about a man or men in the plural. Some communicated a specific aspect of their personal philosophy of love and romantic relationships which creates a relevance for the audience and resonates with them. In this chapter, I will look into poems that address political and social issues. These poems share a feature distinct from the ones shown in the previous chapter. That is, these political poems are made to persuade large masses of people with messages that are not only based on the poet's personal experience and values but also collective beliefs and wishes of a group of people to push for a political goal.

Somali poetry has been more than a cherished form of artistic expression and popular entertainment ever since Somali poetry was first made. The renowned Somali scholar Said S. Samatar (1982) writes that Somali poetry is the language and the vehicle of politics and an important source of Somali history, 'just as the printed and televised word performs a similar function in the West'. According to historian Lee Cassanelli (2011, p.10), while colonial and foreign scholars and Western-educated Somalis write about Somalis in different European languages and western academic traditions, Somali poetry also serves to be a major stream of intellectual discourse in which the Somalis record and comment on their history and society. In Cassanelli's words, 'poetry was a discourse that took place among Somalis, and as such, it gives us unique access to popular opinions about small and great events that mattered at the community level' (Ibid, p.12). Historians have observed that in times of unrest or dramatic societal change, poetic production proved to have risen greatly when people had much to debate. For example, during the Dervish wars and their aftermath (1900-1930), as Maxamad Cabdille Xasan used poetry as a weapon to rally Somalis against colonial invasion, there was an 'explosion in poetic production' (Ibid, p.10).

For as long as Somali poetry has been made, there have been women making poems

concerning social or political matters. Apart from using the cherished traditional form of art to bring entertainment to their everyday life and to speak the unspeakable in a male dominated household, Somali women also recorded the historical events in times of dramatic societal change from the perspective of women. Ingiriis (2015, p.376) notes that Somali women 'had absorbed local politics earlier than many of their peers around the globe'. Tracing the role of Somali women in the decolonisation and post-colonial movements in the history of modern Somalia, he found that Somali women were involved in many grassroots-level associations and social movements, including gender movements, since the 1940s (Ibid). While women were joining the political movements with the same enthusiasm as their male colleagues, poetry constituted an important part of their activities. Using the *buraambur* genre that they are most confident with or other male genres such as *gabay* or *geeraar,* and new genres that emerged as the society developed, Somali women activists expressed their political beliefs not only to their small circles of female family members and friends, but to male or mixed audience on the occasion of public gatherings and rallies during the political struggle. Their poems present women's own descriptions of the conflicts and changes in Somali history and historical consciousness and their responses to it. Although their voices have largely been absent from accounts in state and nation building, their contributions manifest that Somali women's poems were not 'trivial' or 'less important' as regarded by many conservative, patriarchal men.

In this chapter, I will examine a few poems made in different times following a chronological order, starting with those made during the independence movement (1940-1960), to the ones made after independence till the end of Siyaad Barre's regime (1960-1991), and last but not least, those made after 1991 following the collapse of the state and consequent Somali diaspora. The political upheavals produced social transformation that laid the foundations for contestation of gender norms and women's participation in the political arena. In the 1940s and 1950s, Somali women activists used poetry to recount their experiences in the fight against colonialism as patriotic Somalis rather than nomadic wives. Their voices were not limited to mobilising the masses to join the nationalist campaign, but they also actively spoke up for peace in response to clan cleavages during the independence struggle. After independence, Somali women did not receive the recognition for their efforts they deserved after participating in all the struggles. The Siyaad Barre regime promised equal opportunities

for women when it took power, but failed to keep the promise. Many women poets boldly criticised men's political greed and lack of accountability, even taking on the military dictator directly, and called on women to keep struggling for equal political participation and women's rights. In 1991, the Somali Civil War divided the country. Witnessing the collapse of the state and the displacement of the people, women poets while continuing to lament and criticise the violence and call for peace, also addressed the failure of Somali society and the matter of the Somali diaspora. Not only have the poets in the Somali territories expressed their deeply concerning and concerned sentiments, but also those in the displaced communities have also and they have all done this through poetry. A growing number of young women poets who were brought up in western countries also addressed these issues in poems in other languages.

Somali women's poetry on politics and social issues shows that Somali women's identity was not limited to commitment to marriage, motherhood and home, they denied to conform only to the stereotype based on their sex, but spoke up as members of the nation who cared about the country and its people, who fought against colonialism alongside men, and who spoke for both men and women. *Soomaalinimo* (Somaliness), the shared sense of being Somali, shown in Somali women's poetry was as clear and strong as that shown in poems made by men. What makes Somali women's political poems distinct from men's work is that on top of the national feeling, Somali women's poetry displays a sense of female bonding. We have seen this in work songs in the previous chapters when women work together to weave a *kebed* mat or when a mother sings her worries to her daughter. In the political arena, the Somali Women's Association, a women's section within the SYL was formed in 1951. It created a space of belonging and mediating gatherings exclusively for women activists. Both the association and its female members were referred to as 'Sisters', emphasising their identity as women. Some of the Sisters used poetry to give their voices in the nationalist movements. In their poems, women poets look at conflicts and struggles through the eye of women and this sense of bonding also comes through in the lines as well. They talk about how women were and are affected by the political upheavals. In the colonial period, Somali women poets called on women specifically to join the independence movements. Zainab (1991) and Ingiriis (2015, p.379), note that these female activists used poetry to unite women from both urban and rural areas. After independence, women also used poetry as a weapon to speak up for women's rights in the government

apparatus. For example, in 'Gabdhihii Isku Duubnaa' (Sisters), the poet addresses '*gabdhahay*' (my girls) to express that women joined the independence fight but were 'forgotten' after independence (Faduma 2008, p.154).

This is distinct to poems made by men where there are references to men collectively sometimes but they don't refer to themselves as a collective group just based on their sex or gender identity, which is politically active in the same way as we see in the women's poems. This female bonding brings about collaboration among females. What's more, in these poems, women were not presented as representing their family positions, such as wife, daughter and mother, instead, they were socially categorised in a bigger female group where women's collective political rights and goals were foregrounded. This is also distinct to the poems we've seen in previous chapters. In times of dramatic societal changes, when the gendered division of labour and norms in society are challenged by the urgent social and political crisis, we see a collective consciousness of female empowerment as a unifying force expressed in women's poems. Along with the solidarity attitudes, many of the poems express a critique of men which reflects a certain level of feminist consciousness against the patriarchy. They point out men's faults such as waging clan wars, objection to the nationalist agenda, chewing *qaad* etc. Gender is specifically represented in the poems. For example, In 'Xaawaleeyeey' (O Daughters of Eve), the poet calls on fellow women using the word 'daughters of Eve' to 'end this conflict they [men] have raised' (Faduma 2008, p.188). Following the combat tradition of Somali poetry, men also made poetry to express their disagreement to the social transformation and women's activist perceptions. Ingiriis (2015, p.382) points out that when male poets composed songs denouncing the so-called 'modernisation process', questioning women's attempts to 'act like men' to resist positive transformation of women's place in society, women activists fought back by making counter-argument discourses. However, we should also acknowledge that these pioneer women activists whose voices were heard were only a very small number of progressives in the urban centres and could not represent the whole female group. Women in rural areas were still largely at the level of struggling to survive in the harsh rural environment. Their daily lives were taken up with looking after the children and grandchildren, the household generally, the sheep and goats, cooking etc. In looking at the progressive poems of the women whose poems I present here I do not mean to romanticise women's social status. As Ingiriis (2015,

p.390) says, even if they played a crucial role in the years of active nationalist politics and the constituting of the Somali post-colonial government in the 1960s, 'they lost whatever gains they had achieved in those days'. However, we see from these poems that women did express themselves and had continued to express themselves in a variety of ways and voices. Even though they did not fundamentally challenge the patriarchal hegemonic nature of Somali social relations, gender norms were negotiated, contested and resisted as women talked of politics and shaped their social environment.

Poems I will look at in this chapter consist of *buraambur* poems and *gabay* poems. *Buraambur*, according to Zainab (1994, p.200) 'played a crucial, if not fundamental, role in determining Somali society's educating society, conveying messages in political and social affairs and raising consciousness among the public'. During women's struggle for Somali independence and after independence, it is 'generally used to exhort the public to carry out or give up something of importance, to create common consciousness (either for the 'national project' or for clan solidarity depending upon a particular context), to extol one's clan lineage during wedding ceremonies and to eulogise when a person one respects dies', as noted by Ingiriis (2015, p.379). In this chapter, we will look at poems made by Somali women in both genres. The ways and occasions these poems were made and presented vary from one to another. Some may be an immediate response to a friend's concern, some may be a popular chant in a demonstration on the street remembered by many. Some may be shorter in length, some may be a longer one that was made with the help of writing. Both genres were used to persuade, to appeal, to inspire and to make social changes. Zainab (1991 p.50) also notes that while the SYL members were in prison there were men composing in the *buraambur* form and memorising women's *buraambur* poems but only agreeing to recite them when there were no men present to listen. I shall analyse the features and the relationships between the elements in the language and the subject shown in these two genres of poems from a few cases in this chapter.

Poems in the Struggle for Independence

In the 1940s and 1950s, Somalis actively fought against colonial domination. The first modern political party in Somali history, the Somali Youth League (SYL), initially

known as the Somali Youth Club was founded in Mogadishu in 1943 and played a crucial role in the nation's path to independence. Although there were no comprehensive documented histories of Somali women, it has been well established that women were a pivotal part in the nationalist movement from early on. They not only became members *en masse* and held office but also recruited new members, sacrificed their scant personal financial resources such as jewellery, organised fund-raising activities, made sweaters and traditional Somali hats for men, and utensils for the campaign. They also fed and housed young nationalists, reflecting what their traditional roles in the countryside were. These were often young men who were denied jobs because of their affiliations. Women also helped to organise and to find resources for major congresses and demonstrations. They composed poetry to raise awareness and to keep up spirits at rallies and demonstrations, they translated the lofty words of party programs into action and, at times, even paid for their convictions with prison terms and death (Kapteijns 2009, Zainab 1991).

In 1952, two female members of the SYL, Raha Ayaanle Guled and Halima Godane, formed the first women's organisation, the Somali Women's Association (SWA). This organisation was also called 'Sisters' and according to Ingiriis (2015, p.381) was 'to create a space of belonging and mediating gathering exclusively for women activists'. A few years later in 1959 the first female member of the SYL central committee was accepted (Ibid). This was Raha Ayaanle Guled. Ingiriis writes that Somali women's movements during this period of time 'were the drivers of once overlooked social transformation that almost revolutionised society to develop common national feeling and unity' (Ibid, p.378).

Traditionally, women only performed poetry at weddings where both men and women participated. It was these women activists who broke the restriction and participated in political events. These women, according to Faduma (2008, p.88), 'formed the backbone of the League', however, they were severely criticised by family, friends and the general public because of their public performances of poetry (Zainab 1991, p.52). As in the male-dominated world, these political involvements crossed the prescribed line of the 'good conduct' expected of women. Breaking this cultural taboo resulted in great sacrifices in their personal lives. Some of the married women who joined the political movement were divorced. Those who were unmarried at the time were

stigmatised as ‘loose women’, and some were disowned by their families, some never got married in their lives (Ibid).

One of the most symbolic and heroic figures in the struggle was a woman. This was Xaawo Cusmaan Taako who was a member of the Somali Youth League and one of many women who took part with men in a rally in January 1948 in Mogadishu. The rally was in opposition to the return of Italian rule after the Second World War when a United Nations fact-finding mission was visiting Mogadishu to help determine how the territory would be governed. According to Ingiriis (2015, p.380) ‘Women composed the vast majority of people who came out in support of the SYL’s message of self-determination.’ Xaawo Taako was one of these. The rally turned violent between those people taking part in the rally and the authorities who had some Somalis supporting them. During the fighting Xaawo was killed and although people were killed on both sides, she quickly became a symbolic figure in the struggle for Somali independence. As Ingiriis says ‘Action-driven incidents like that of Taako changed local perceptions of women as a weak force, but did not build up chances to gain access to decision-making spheres.’ (Ibid, p.381). In 1972, twenty-four years after Xaawa's death, the Supreme Revolutionary Council of General Maxamed Siyaad Barre passed a resolution to build several monuments throughout Mogadishu ‘in honour of symbolic nationalist figures and events in Somali history’ (Ali 1997, p.4). At an intersection and in the heart of the capital city, Xaawa Osman Taako’s concrete figure, sword and stone in hand, is permanently inscribed in the collective historical consciousness of Somali people.

In a society of male patriarchy, it was generally only adult men who could really exercise social, political and religious authority, while women were viewed as nomadic or urban housewives and excluded from positions of leadership. However, women’s active participation in the nationalist movements contested the stereotype that women could only prove themselves by doing household tasks. They could also take part in the political activities, and they wanted to take part in. Composing poems which addressed the political issues was one way which they could directly take part and could make their voices heard more widely.

The accelerated social change in the Horn of Africa at this time also led to the emergence of new literary genres. The new middle class, representing a new, modern

way of life associated with the colonial economy, had developed a new genre called *belwo* which originated in the society of town dwellers. It derived from traditional poetry but was characterised by short lines and melody and musical instruments accompaniment (Zainab 1991, p.45). It was begun by a young man called Cabdi Deeqsi 'Sinimo' (his nickname means 'cinema' which he apparently gained because he was very good at telling stories which people enjoyed and so which made him like a cinema). He worked as a lorry-driver, which was a new and modern occupation at the time. One day his lorry broke down and he recited the words '*Belwoy, belwooy hooy belwooy maxaa i beleeyay mooyaane*' (O calamity, hey O calamity, what has caused me this calamity? I don't know). He was apparently somewhere between Boorame and Djibouti in the north-west region of the Somali territories, in what was then British Somaliland and there were no established roads (still today there is no tarmacked road) and so it was a calamity for him to break down. Eventually he was rescued and, when he returned to the town of Boorame, he sang the song which people liked. He and others then made other short poems of the same type and sang them together. In this way the *belwo* genre was created.

At about the same time, instrumental music was introduced to that part of the Somali territories. Cabdullaahi Qarshe is generally thought to be the person to do this by being the first Somali to play the oud, the Middle-Eastern lute, in a style which he developed and which became a distinctively Somali style. People would then sing *belwo* to music. This was very much an urban phenomenon which was another dynamic in the cultural developments.

The *belwo* soon became popular throughout the territories in the north western regions and this was aided by the emergence of radio broadcasting at the same time. Radio in that part of the Somali territories had been set up by the British in 1943, thus was contemporary with the development of the *belwo*. In a country where a system of writing has not been introduced, the radio broadcast is a strategic instrument to spread ideas. There was therefore this congruence of different developments: a new form of poetry which quickly became popular and the associated use of music, the use of radio, the urban environment in which the new poetry and music flourished and the developing political sentiments and ideas. Developments at the same time in Mogadishu and elsewhere quickly led to greater awareness of all these new ideas and

ways of expressing them.

In the early 1950s, Radio Muqdishu and Radio Hargeysa broadcast Somali women's voices for the first time (Johnson 1974, p.71). A pioneer figure in this was Khadiija Cabdullaahi Dalays who ‘weathered the widespread criticism of women in modern poetry’ and sang first for political rallies in 1951 and joined Radio Muqdisho in 1952. Women had the opportunity to participate in the performance and at times even the composition of the *belwo* poems (Kapteijns 1999, p.104). *Belwo* at first was used to compose poetry of love, recited by both sexes. John Johnson comments that ‘it thus represented the beginning of a new relationship between men and women’, and ‘a move toward social equality’.

An important collection of poems by these women who were an important part of the independence struggle was made by Zainab Mohamed Jama who collected, translated and discussed poetry by a group of SYL female activists during the 1940s and 1950s (Zainab, 1991, p. 43). The SYL women poets include Halimo Godane, Halimo Shiil, Barni Warsame and Timiro Ukash. Poems by Fadumo Hersi Abbane who was not a member of the SYL in Mogadishu but was involved in the independence struggle in the North was also looked at. Another important poet is Xaawa Jibriil whose poems were collected in Faduma (2008) and some of which we have looked at in the previous chapter. I will look at some of these poems below and analyse the way these women present their messages.

I begin with looking at a short *buraambur* poem made by Halimo Shiil and presented in Zainab (1991, p.46). The translation is a modified one which I wrote myself with the help of my supervisor Dr Martin Orwin. The translation is not a literary translation but aims to show more clearly what is in the Somali original text. I have based it on Zainab’s translation and there are some similarities and the meaning is generally the same. I have followed more closely the literal meaning of the poems in Somali so that it helps the analysis. I will not present Zainab’s translations here also or show the differences. In her article Zainab does not give the sort of analysis which I have done here with the poem. She presents the poems in a way which sees them in the historical context. She lets the poems speak for themselves and does not make any comments on them as poems which have artistic and lyric qualities. So, for example, after the poem

given below, Zainab says the following: ‘In this short poem, as the occasion demanded a prompt answer, Halimo wanted to say quickly in verse to her friend what her feelings were about the struggle, and how important it was to her, so much so that she did not care if she died for the cause.’ (Ibid, p.46). As with my analyses in previous chapters, I will look much more closely at the language and how it is used and consider the poems as much as works of literature which display lyric qualities.

1 Aniga geeri iyo nololi way ii gudboonyihiin.
2 Go'aan baan gaadhnay isticmaarka inaan gubnaa,
3 Sharduu naga guuro gaashaanka waa la hayn.
4 Guhaad iyo ciil nin qaba yaa wax gaysan jiray,
5 Sharduu naga guuro gaashaanka waa la hayn.

1 For me death and life are equal.
2 We reached a decision that we burn the colonialism,
3 Until it (colonialism) leaves us, one has the shield.
4 A man who holds anger and resentment used to bring something about [for himself]
5 Until it (colonialism) leaves us, one has the shield.

The first line starts with the independent first person pronoun, ‘*aniga*’ (I). In Somali language, the independent pronoun is not often used in a sentence and when it is used, it adds emphasis to the statement and having it at the beginning of the line gives it further emphasis. Following the independent pronoun, the statement goes: ‘*geeri iyo nololi*’ (death and life) ‘*way ii gudboonyihiin*’ (are equal for me). From the background given by Zainab (1991, p.46), we learn that this poem was made as an immediate response to a friend who saw her involvement in the independence struggle as dangerous and said: ‘Be careful; if you were to die now, remember you wouldn’t leave any children behind’. This information is important as her friend was trying to persuade her by bringing up the idea of having children which follows the gender norms in the patriarchal society that being a mother and having children fulfils a woman in life and a life without having given birth and having offspring is seen as a pity. However, Halimo’s response can be seen as not complying with this expectation. Her poem shows that her friend’s words did not make her waver. Rather than being held back by the idea of ‘not leaving any children behind’, she argued about what she felt about the struggle

and her determination to be in it. The political goal of taking colonialism down and gaining independence weighed more than her life to her. The purpose of this poem was a very definite one - to tell the listener about her position and to give the reason, in the hope of conscientising and persuading her friend. This first line gives a direct answer to her friend's warning of the danger of joining the movement that she is fully aware of the danger but she is not afraid. Even the risk of losing her life won't stop her because it makes no difference to her to live or to die. There isn't an explanation of this statement. It might be a philosophy affected by Islam in which death is seen not as the termination of life, rather the continuation of life in another form. Or, we could link this to the background of the poem and the '*isticmaarka*' (the colonialism) in the next line and interpret this as 'I would rather die fighting against colonialism rather than live under it'.

Zainab mentions that the poem was a response to a friend, as I mentioned above. However, there is no reference to the friend, the address is not to the friend specifically. We see in other poems we look at in this dissertation that there is often a person who is addressed in a poem. This can be someone specific or an unknown person or a generic person. The reason why we don't see this in this poem might be for two reasons. One is that when the poem was recited to the friend, she would know that it was a response to her comments to the poet. Another feature of this is that the poem becomes more general as far as the addressee is concerned. Because there is no direct addressee, in fact there is no specific addressee at all, we can hear the poem as addressing people generally. This would also include men.

The second line '*Go'aan baan gaadhnay isticmaarka inaan gubnaa*' is a complex sentence. '*Go'aan baan gaadhnay*' is the main clause that means 'we reached a decision' and the rest of the line is the subordinate clause, 'that we burn colonialism'. From the tense endings -*nay* and -*naa* in the verbs '*gaadhnay*' (reached) and '*gubnaa*' (burn), we see the subject in both clauses is the first person plural, 'we'. In the second line, this changes from a singular 'I' to a plural 'we'. There is also an interesting grammatical feature here. The ending on '*gubnaa*' would normally be *gubno* but it needs to be a long vowel because of the metre and so is '-*aa*' rather than '-*o*'. This feature here, this verb ending, is present in clauses which mean 'must, have to' in Somali (for example, *Waa inaan tago* means 'I have to go' and this can also be said

Waa inaan tagaa with '-*aa*' rather than '-*o*'). It is possible that there is a meaning of obligation in this line in the poem because of this. Here, the poet is not only talking about her own belief, but a collective one. As a member of the League, she shares the values and the goals which include importantly the decision of the nationalist group, 'to burn colonialism'. This is a change in voice which we can hear between the two lines. It also emphasises the addressee being a more general audience and not just the friend she was responding to. Another lyric feature which we can see in this line is that there is extra alliteration as well. The first word '*go'aan*' and the third word '*gaadhnay*' are both alliterative. There only needs to be one but this sound feature seems to bring an emphasis to this line.

Along with the change in voice, there is also a distinct sound pattern in this line. There are quite a few instances of '*i*' and '*ii*' and the other vowels are for the most part not '*a*' or '*aa*' whereas in the second line there are quite a few instances of '*aa*' and '*a*'. This contrasts the lines acoustically which we might say expresses a contrast which is not presented directly in the language itself. That is to say 'It is equal to me whether I live or die *but* we made a decision to burn colonialism'. We can call this contrastive use of assonance. Assonance is using the same or similar vowel sounds but here we see the use of different ones which brings about the contrast. I have mentioned Mutlu Blasing's idea of separation of sound and sense in lyric poetry in Chapter Two. The sound pattern in these two lines proves to be another example of that the sound is in some way echoing and reasoning the sense, independently. While phonic patterning by itself is a linguistic code that has a collective and social aspect, I suggest, it is the contrast, intentionally created by the poet that adds individuality to the socially-constructed sound system, and displays the poet's personal emotion, which is also expressed through the meaning of the lines.

To express her determination, in the next line, the poet uses a conditional sentence and says '*Sharduu naga guuro*' (On condition that it [colonialism] leaves us), '*gaashaanka waa la hayn*' (one has the shield). The word '*sharduu*' is one which is not used regularly at all as a conditional, however, the Somali word '*shardi*' is a loan word from Arabic and means 'condition, stipulation, agreement'. Here in this line, it seems to be used in a similar way to *haddii* which we have seen in poems discussed previously and which is used regularly for the conditional. This seems to imply something like 'the

stipulation that colonialism leaves us' or 'the condition that colonialism leaves us' is that we hold the shield. In other words, it is only through our own efforts that colonialism will end. This third line gives a conclusion to the first two lines. As we can see, it is also repeated in the fifth line as a conclusion to the poem as a whole and a final answer to her friend. I wish to bring in a new idea here, that of the *topic line* of a poem. I use the words 'topic line' to express the idea of a line which presents the poet's core idea or topic within a poem, and in this poem's case as also shown in other poems, being a repeated line also confirms its quality of carrying a significant meaning that the poet wants to emphasise. I have the idea of expressing it like this from the use of the term 'topic sentence' as used in prose writing to express the concept of the main idea of a paragraph. There are a number of reasons why I consider this line to be the topic.

The first reason is a semantic reason. In this line she states the goal and the action: to fight for independence 'until colonialism leaves'. This points directly to the occasion when this poem was made which was the response to her friends. The line is like a slogan in that it expresses directly the poet's position with regard to her friends' warning. This direct message in the line nevertheless includes a metaphor, the shield '*gaashaanka*'. The word '*gaashaanka*' (the shield) in the repeated line is the only metaphorical image in the whole of the poem. The image expresses the idea of defending the nation against colonialism. Even though it is a metaphor it is still a very clear one and says something which the masses can understand easily. The language in this poem is generally plain with no elaborate use of metaphor which makes its use in this line stand out, hence my considering it a topic line. Another reason I consider it to be such a line is the way the poet uses sound technique to add emphasis to this line. While '*g*' is the alliterative sound which is expected in each half-line, here the poet uses the '*g*' sound more times and successively in *'naga guuro gaashaanka'*. What's more, we can also hear the '*sh*' sound being an extra repeated sound before and after the compacted '*g*' sounds, forming an A-B-B-A configuration, or a chiastic pattern. There is also the presence of the alliterating sound in the first half-line in the word '*naga*' (from us). This is quite a canonical line metrically and with the alliteration behaving like that it makes it stand out acoustically. So the line has quite a prominent sound quality with respect to the metre and the alliteration and with it being repeated this makes it like a slogan. The phrase '*waa la hayn*' is also simple, but in a powerful way which makes it something that can be repeated and which is directly to the point,

but presented still in this poetic way. There is no metaphor, no complexity that we might expect to find in a poem. It is a straightforward message which uses poetic language within a poem that has the characteristics of a lyric poem. This shows us that the use of the lyric characteristics is found in political poems as well.

I shall now move to the fourth line and I discuss this line in particular because it seems to be almost like a proverb. Kapchits (2005, p.83-85) shows how proverbs can have both alliteration and some metre. They can be like lines of poems. In fact, sometimes a proverb can be an aphoristic line from a poem. The fact that the fourth line sounds almost like a proverb makes it more memorable. This line makes a cultural reference to an aspect of the Somali pastoral society which many proverbs do, here it is about when there's a conflict between two parties, and the attacked party would find ways to seek revenge. Such a feature is represented in oral literature as well. The most common causes of conflicts among Somali nomadic clans which we come upon in poetry, as noted by Rashiid (2009, p.111) are: blood (that is conflict in which people are injured or killed), camel raiding, pasture and wells, and women.

Somali poets can use rhetorical verses to ignite revenge clan killings in a direct manner, strengthening the culture of war. This aspect is also reflected in the poems made in the anti-colonial period. For example, Sayid Maxamed Cabdille Xasan who was the leader of the Dervish movement and also a famous poet composed a *gabay* poem named '*Cabdullaahi Waxa Loo Qudh-Jaray*' (Why Cabdullaahi Has Been Killed) (Rashiid 2009, p.139-140) when he was at war with the British. A man named Cabdullaahi had been killed by a man from a different lineage. The Sayid mentions in one line that Cabdullaahi had been killed because he 'lacked a clan'; the line is '*Cabdullaahi waxa loo qudh jaray waa qabiil li'iye*' (Cabdullaahi was killed because he lacked a clan). There is also the line 'a coward would turn away; and that man's lack of a clan', in Somali: '*Fulay baa qamaadee ninkii qolo la'aantiisa*'. These lines are, I suggest, made to reprove and condemn the killed man's clan for not taking revenge. In the translation, the translator Martin Orwin leaves a note in brackets: 'i.e. his clan was of low standing' (Rashiid 2009, p.139). On top of that, I would suggest that the reference to the 'lack of a clan' also denigrates and insults Cabdullahi's clan and acts almost like a curse on it, on the clan. By using the word '*fuley*' (coward) he is expressing his anger and resentment as well as his disappointment towards Cabdullaahi's clan and he wishes to

use the emotion he has in the line to push the clan to feel his anger and to take revenge.

Halimo Shiil's line is in a similar vein to this. By saying 'a man who holds anger and resentment used to bring something about', she is condemning the behaviour of having resentment but not taking vengeful actions. The implication here is that if one does not fight against something that one needs to fight against or avenge, then the person deserves to have something brought on himself. This could be being scolded or insulted by his people through lines of poetry, or it could be regarded as bringing bad fate. There is a word *nabsi* in Somali which refers to the consequences which can be brought on a person due to their actions, whether they are good or bad (somewhat like the idea expressed with the word 'karma' in English). Using a cultural reference in this line and in this to talk to her friend she shows the need to fight against what is wrong. In comparing the poem of Sayid Maxamed Cabdille Xasan with Halimo's poem, we can see that the way she has done this reflects earlier powerful poetry made in the context of conflict in Somali society. If Caasha Luul's *gabay* poems have shown a traditional quality in the form, then this *buraambur* by Halimo Shiil shows a reflection of traditional quality, but in a different way. In this particular line she is trying to prove the rightfulness of fighting, of the culture of conflict, of taking revenge and doing it in a way that seems also in some ways to be similar to the Sayid in his poem.

This short poem was made on an occasion that demanded a prompt answer. We can also see from the language that the poem shows an improvisation feature which differs from texts in poems we have seen in Chapter Three, such as 'Dookh' and 'Calaf', which Caasha Luul made in this century with the help of writing. In this short poem, the poet didn't use any other figure of speech except repeating a line once. The language in this poem is plain, with '*gaashaanka*' (the shield) in the repeated line being the only metaphorical image that suggests the idea of defending the nation against colonialism. However, improvisation and plain language didn't make this poem weak, nor did it make it less good than other poems. It is not a feature that makes it an inferior poem to others. The language is direct and plain because it needs to be.

Although this is a short poem, nevertheless, it shows a clear structure, with the repeated line breaking the five-line verse into two parts. The first part consists of the first three lines and the second part consists of the last two lines. In the first part, she states clearly

her position that she is not afraid of death as an individual in the first line, and she is determined to dedicate herself to the struggle and the collective goal of independence as a member of the League in the second line. Then in the repeated line she concludes with a definite goal and an action. The action is ‘one has the shield’, which has a connotation that is easy to understand and is ‘to defend the nation’ and ‘to fight against colonialism’. The goal is that ‘it (colonialism) leaves’. Then in the second part, she uses a cultural reference to the tradition of revenge in a proverb-like line to support her and the League’s decision to fight for independence. Lastly in the final line, she repeats the topic line in which she states the goal and the action. We may say that the poem is about action.

If we look at the deixis in each line, we notice that the person deixis changes in each line. I have discussed that in the first two lines the voice switched from a singular first person ‘I’ to a plural ‘we’ along with the acoustic contrast which emphasises the change. In the third and fourth line, the deixis changes again. The poet uses the masculine third person ‘*uu*’ (it) to refer to colonialism, forming an oppositional relationship with the inclusive first person object pronoun ‘*na*’ (us). The poet uses the impersonal ‘*la*’ (one) in the second half-line, ‘*waa la hayn*’. The impersonal pronoun in the Somali language is often used to speak for oneself (like the first person). For example, I am fine in Somali is ‘*Waan fiicanahay*’, an alternative way that people often express this, however, is ‘*Waa la fiicanyahay*’, with the impersonal ‘*la*’ (one). We can see the impersonal ‘*la*’ (one) in this half-line as an alternative way to express the idea of a first person ‘I’. Therefore, the contradiction between colonialism and the voice is created by the change in deixis and intensified by the sound. In the fourth line, the subject changes again. The poet uses another third person deixis, ‘*nin*’ (a man) to make the cultural reference that I discussed above. This indefinite ‘*nin*’ is also mentioned by the lyric voice to raise an opposite position that it doesn’t agree with. By saying ‘a man who has anger and resentment [but who does not take revenge] used to bring something [about for himself]’, the poet is implying that she won’t repeat that man’s mistake and that it is necessary to take action instead of only holding the anger and resentment to oneself. The action is then stated again in the repeated line. By bringing in the third persons, the contrast creates a focus on the first persons, and through the voice of the first persons, the poet’s position against colonialism and determination to fight against it is emphasised.

The second poem I shall look at is 'Soomaaliyeey is daa!' (O Somalis stop!) by Xaawa. We have seen some of her poems in Chapter Three addressing her personal matters in relation to men. Now, we shall take a look at her political poems. Xaawa moved to Mogadishu in 1945, and was soon swept up in the activities of the nationalist movement and the SYL. Her poems from then on became political. According to Faduma, 'Soomaaliyeey is daa!' was made in 1953, when the Somali people felt great apprehension over the Italian administration's intention to ask the UN to postpone independence beyond the stipulated ten-year period, by claiming that 'Somalis were not yet ready to govern themselves' (Faduma 2008, p.91). This fear was escalated by the persecution of SYL supporters, shortly after the Italian administration resumed control of the country. While the Italian administration found excuses to keep colonial control over Somali people, what concerned Xaawa, as well as many other nationalists, was the clan wars, which were considered to be a negative example of what the colonisers said. Xaawa made this poem as a rhetorical response to the news that ninety men were killed in Hobyo in a clan conflict.

The text of the poem is in Faduma (2008, p.138-139). As above with the poems which were published in Zainab (1991) I have used my own translations. Dr. Martin Orwin helped me understand a few parts which were more difficult or obscure. My aim in the translations here is as it was above, that is to try to present an English rendition of the Somali original text. I try to do this so that the reader can follow the arguments that go along with the Somali language as it is used in the poems. The translations that I have written for the poems by Xaawa Jibriil sometimes seem to be further from the translations written by Faduma Ahmed Alim in the book (Faduma 2008). This is because the translations which Faduma wrote are freer. She seems to have tried to write translations which are more literary translations than the ones that I am writing here. The poem consists of twenty lines in total with a repeated line dividing the whole poem into five line groups. In Faduma (2008, p.138-139), the text is also shown with blank lines marking the five line groups. I shall present and discuss the whole poem by line groups.

1 Dariiqa Hobyood warkay, nooga soo direen
2 Sidaan u danqaday calooshaydii, weli ma demin

3 Raggii na daafici lahaa, bay haddeer dileen
4 Dambi la'aan bay ku laayeen, sagaashan diric
5 Yaan naloo darine Soomaaliyeey is daa! [71]

1 They sent us news from the road of Hobyo
2 [It is like] the way that I was hurting [an already wounded spot] my stomach still has not extinguished.
3 They have killed now the men who would have defended us
4 Without [them having committed] a crime they killed them, ninety noble, determined men
5 Let one not make it worse for us. O Somalis stop!

The first line in this poem is like a narrative. As the opening line of a poem, Xaawa directly addresses the incident that made her make this poem by retelling what happened in reality. When we compare this way of starting a poem with others we see that it is very direct. It is especially direct when we compare it with the first line of *gabay* poems by Caasha Luul who uses the traditional *arar* technique in her poems. From the second line we can tell that the voice of the poem is the poet herself. She is recounting her emotions after hearing about the sad news. She says she is still hurting metaphorically from the 'wound' of the fighting. She was not literally wounded, but it hurts her that they, the Somalis, are still fighting among themselves.

It is interesting that the first two lines in this poem have different persons like the first two lines of the poem by Halimo Shiil, which I just discussed above. Halimo, in her poem, started with a more personal line in the first person singular and then used the first person plural in the second line. This made the line more general and her message became more collective among the women and the society as a whole. In this poem by Xaawa Jibriil, the more general perspective is in the first line. She is narrating what she has heard. The news is given in this line and then in the second line the response is her

[71] The punctuation marks in lines 2-4 as presented in Faduma (2008) are not in keeping with the actual caesura and in line 5, the author didn't use a comma. In line 2, the caesura lies between '*caloo*' and '*shaydii*', as mentioned in Chapter 1. In line 3, I have changed the position of the comma to indicate the correct position of the caesura. In line 4, the caesura lies between '*laa*' and '*yeen*' and in line 5, the caesura lies between '*Soo*' and '*maaliyeey*'. I have not made changes to these two lines so that the words '*laayeen*' and '*Soomaaliyeey*' are not split in two.

personal reaction to the news. She expresses this in the first person singular. She goes from a less personal first line to a more personal second line.

In the third line, there is a clear *they* and *us*, forming another oppositional relationship in the same way we have seen in the previous poem. The 'they' here stands for the warring clans and 'us' is all Somali people under colonial rule with no differentiation of clans. While colonialism and Somali people / 'us' have already formed an opposition to each other, that is that the Somali people oppose and are fighting colonialism, here, in this poem, the opposition is between clan conflicts and Somali people. This is an interesting opposition. She is not talking about the fighting of the opposing clans but about the opposition between the clan fighting itself and the Somali people themselves and their hopes and by implication their struggle against colonialism. Line 4 is another line which presents the news of what has happened and which is like a narrative or a part of the narrative that has made Xaawa compose her poem. In the line she is stressing that these lives are innocent and they shouldn't have died. Turning to line 5, I bring in again the idea of topic line which I discussed above. I suggest this line 5 is the topic line in this poem by Xaawa Jibriil. I suggest this because it is repeated at the end of each section of the poem, '*Yaan naloo darine Soomaaliyeey is daa!*' (Let one not make it worse for us. O Somalis stop!).

Addressing the Somalis with a vocative, the poet is making an appeal. As in Halimo Shiil's poem, we can see there is an acoustic link between this line and the previous line. The alliteration is in '*d*' but when we look at lines 4 and 5 together we see there is a secondary alliteration between the word '*sagaashan*' in line 4 and '*Soomaaliyeey*' in line 5. Having the inclusive 'us' and 'O Somalis' in this line gives this poem a sense of solidarity. Also it gives wise advice that stopping the clan wars is for the good of all 'us Somalis'.

6 Dooxada iyo hawdka iyo, meesha daranta badan
7 Daaqi kari waayey, geelii dareeri jiray
8 Nabaddu waa doore, Soomaaliyeey is daa!

6 The dry river beds, the *hawd* grazing area and the place with lots of *daran* plants [salty plant that the camels like to eat]

7 They could not graze, the camels that used to spread about there
8. Peace is preferable, O Somalis stop!

In line 6, the poet uses a series of pastoral images including the dry river beds, the *hawd* grazing area, and the *daran* plants that the camels like to eat to show detrimental consequences for the future of her country if its people don't stop fighting against each other. She is describing things that are strong images in Somali poetry generally in this line. The river beds, the *hawd* and the *daran* plant are all things which bring a positive image to the line. However, when we read the next line we understand the way in which she is showing the image. The contrast between the positive pastoral images in line 6 and the negative consequences of them revealed in line 7 also creates a focus on the negative impact of conflicts and wars.

In this next line the poet brings in the image of the camels. She says they used to spread out in the grazing areas which are described in the line just above. But now they cannot graze there any longer. In political poems the milk camel is often used as a symbol for the Somali nation. As Ali Mumin Ahad states: 'the oral poetry of the pastoral nomad represents the idea of nation through the cultural signifiers of pastoralists: that is, the representation of the nation-state coincides with the emblems of pastoralist property, the camel in particular.' (Ali 2015, p.24) The poet Xaawa here in her poem is referring to camels generally and there is the possibility that she is talking literally about the camels with also the possibility of the metaphor use, or both.

The idea of camels not grazing may literally mean that when the adult men who were supposed to take them to graze could no longer take care of them because of the war. It can also figuratively imply the society not functioning, and the nation-state failing when there is an on-going war. This idea is also mentioned by other poets whose poems we shall see in the next section. In either way, the camel image is an element to emphasise the poet's emotion. The attachment towards camels that is embedded in every Somali nomad resides in the image. It produces a personal connection between the poet and the text, then the listener and the text, and consequently, between the listener and the poet. This connection hence creates an emotional bond and the poem acts as an emotional bridge. We have seen in Xaawa's 'Awr Qabbiran Maahi' 'I Am Not a Bridled Camel' how '*awr*' (burden camel) is employed as a metaphor by the poet

to express the oppression on her and her determination to be free from it. In political poems, it can also have positive or negative connotations depending on the context and the emotions being expressed by the poet.

The negativity shown in line 6 and line 7 then serves to bring out the concluding line in this line group, '*Nabaddu waa doore, Soomaaliyeey is daa!*' (Peace is preferable, O Somalis stop!). This line is very direct in contrast with the previous two lines. It is made up of a main clause '*Nabaddu waa doore*' (Peace is preferable) and an imperative clause that is repeated. Up to this line, there isn't a clear representation of the female gender. When the poet says 'they sent us news from the road of Hobyo', this 'us' includes women and men. When the poet says 'O Somalis stop', there is also not a particular sign that tells that the poem was made by a woman. However, the next two lines are slightly different.

9 Asay bay dumarku[72] qaadaan, diraac walbaba
10 Doorarkii qabayna[73] haad baa, daleel ku cunay
11 Yaan naloo darine, Soomaaliyeey is daa!

9 The women wear mourning dress each *diraac*[74] season
10 And the choice ones who were their husbands, vultures ate them in a barren land
11 So that it is not worse for us, O Somalis stop!

In line 9, women are being particularly mentioned in a *buraambur* made by a woman. The reference to the mourning clothes implies the death of men when war was waged by them although the war itself is not as clearly stated by the poet as in other poems. The death implies the presence of the conflict between the men through the way the women are portrayed as grieving. The woman's perspective in this line is then made more specific in the following line in which the poet talks about 'the choice ones', their husbands.

The word for husband is not given in this line directly. The husbands are referred to as

[72] The original text '*dumaarku*' has a spelling mistake. I changed it to '*dumarku*'.
[73] The original text '*qabyna*' has a spelling mistake. I changed it to '*qabayna*'.
[74] This is the harsh dry Somali season from December to mid-March, also spelt as '*Jiilaal*'.

‘the choice ones [who] married [them]’. The ‘them’ here, is the women mentioned in the previous line. Note that in Somali there is no word for ‘them’. Third person object pronouns like these are implied by transitive verbs such as here. We know that the subject of the verb *qabay* is *doorarkii* because it is in the reduced paradigm form and there is no subject pronoun in the relative clause. This line is linked to the previous line with the conjunction ‘-*na*’. The image of the vultures who ate them ‘in a barren land’ is very strong and keeps the imagery in the countryside. Soldiers are not just soldiers, they are women’s husbands. By mentioning their identity as husbands, it makes the reference to those who have died more personal. Whether a woman’s husband has been killed or not, when she hears these powerful lines, it brings the idea closer to her own experience.

The repetition of line 11 following the powerful references to the killing of people in the previous lines highlights the previous lines. I mentioned above the idea of a line being like a slogan. In this poem the repetition of this particular line is also like a slogan. This is emphasised by the repetition of the last three words in line 8 also. Repetition is a feature of much poetry and is a feature that has been discussed in lyric theory. Here the repetition of the imperative is powerful, the repetition also means that the listeners are more likely to memorise it and repeat it themselves.

12 Dawladaha UNO ka yimid, wayna dayahayaan
13 Waxay damcahayaan xornimadeenna, inayn durin
14 Sagaashanka dawladood xaalkuu, kula dacwiyay
15 Xaqii Cabdullaahi noo doonay, waa diyaar
16 Yaan naloo darine, Soomaaliyeey is daa!

12 The governments which came from the United Nations Organisation are looking at us
13 They intend that our freedom not be jeopardised
14 He argued with (in a legal sense) the ninety governments about the situation
15 The truth which Cabdullaahi sought for us is ready
16 So that it is not worse for us, O Somalis stop!

Here we have the beginning of another section of the poem. This points to reality again

and to the way that the United Nations Organisation is looking carefully at the Somalis. The implication of the words here refers to the way that the way Somalia was going to be governed was in the hands of the UNO. If the UNO sees that the Somalis are fighting among themselves, then they might not agree to pass on the power to the Somalis soon. The translation in Faduma (2008, p.139) for lines 12-13 together reads 'Now that the UN mission is here with us / Let them not find fault and impede our freedom'. What Xaawa is saying to the listener in these lines is that they must realise that the UNO and the Italian authorities who were administering Somalia on behalf of the UNO were looking and did not want freedom to be jeopardised. The fighting between Somalis was putting it in jeopardy.

Line 14 and 15 read together and refer to the discussions between the United Nations Organisation and the Somali Youth League. Cabdullaahi, who is mentioned in the poem, is Cabdullaahi Ciise who represented the SYL at the United Nations Trusteeship Council. The poet simply but powerfully says that everything is ready for independence after the discussions. Line 15 says that everything is ready. She expresses this as the *xaqii Cabdullaahi noo doonay*. Here the word '*xaq*' has a wider sense than just 'the truth' in the translation. It is an Arabic word which does mean 'truth' but has the further meaning of something being 'just' or 'fair' or 'proper'. In other words what Cabdullaahi sought for the Somalis is right and proper. This more straightforward line is then followed by the repeated line in 16 which ends this section.

17 Duumo iyo cudurba awal baan, la daadsanayn
18 Gaalku waa ina dulleeyaa, dan nooma galo
19 Lagama daaweeyo ruuxeennii, dakhar ku dhaco
20 Yaan naloo darine, Soomaaliyeey is daa!

17 We were already scattered with malaria and each disease
18 'The infidel oppresses us, does not enter for our interest
19 Our people in whom a wound happens are not treated for it
20 So that it is not worse for us, O Somalis stop!

The next section of the poem begins with a line that refers to the past. The poet refers metaphorically to the way the Somalis were in the past and the way they were scattered

with disease. The idea of the disease is a metaphor for the situation they were in during the time of colonialism. There was, and there still is, disease in the Somali Horn of Africa, as elsewhere in the world but I read this here as metaphorical. The way people were 'scattered' could be a reference also to the splitting up of the Somali people between the colonial powers, Britain, Italy, France and Ethiopia, who all ruled the Somali territories.

Having mentioned these things in line 17, Xaawa then mentions the *gaal* directly. The word '*gaal*' is a term that refers to people who are not Muslim. This then implies the colonialists and the people who are not Somali who are part of the ruling classes in the different parts of the Somali territories. There is no metaphor in this line; it is a direct statement of how she sees the situation that the 'infidel' does not have the Somali interest at heart. In the same half-line, there is also an inclusive pronoun '*ina*' (us). This inclusivity implies that the person she is referring to as 'us' is the person of the people she is addressing also, which is the Somalis as we know clearly from the vocative 'O Somalis'.

The word '*gaal*' and the inclusive pronoun '*ina*' (us) also creates an opposition between the non-Muslim colonialists and the Somalis themselves, which shows the solidarity that the poet is calling on. The poet also uses the inclusive possessive '*-een*' (our) in the next line, on the noun *ruuxeennii* meaning literally 'our person' but as inclusive. The word used is a singular noun '*ruux*' but refers to the Somali people as a whole. This line is the last line before the final instance of the repeated line, and it refers directly to the people. By saying 'our people who were wounded are not treated', the opposition I mentioned that showed in the previous line is continued. On the one hand, she is saying that 'our people are wounded', which echoes with the ninety dead men at the beginning of the poem and the negative impacts that war has had on the land and the people throughout the poem. On the other hand, she is emphasising that those infidels won't cure 'our' problem. It is 'ourselves', only if 'we' unite, who can save 'our people'. If we look back at the poem, we see that in the title and the repeated line, *Soomaali*, is a people and it is the people that the poet is calling on. In the first line group, the ninety men that were killed were people. In the third line group, the women and their husbands are people. In the fourth line group, Cabdullaahi Ciise is one person representing the people. The poem revolves around 'people' and their fate for one

purpose. That is, to evoke sympathy for ‘our people’, for ‘us’, from the audience.

The language in this poem is simple. It is less opaque and more public in line with the language of mass communication to some extent. The way she starts the poem is more like a narrative, as I mentioned above. This does actually make it sound a little more like the news which would have been heard on the radio. The first line can be read almost like the opening of a news story about the fighting that took place. One needs language that is familiar, not unfamiliar, that can be employed and understood by large masses of people and that can be repeated and passed on when making poems that are meant for a wide audience and that make a direct political statement in contexts like this. It might also be said that this is a feature which is particular to this new political context in which discourse is on a more national level, different to poetry from before the Second World War when clan issues were more at the centre of much political poetry. Repeating memorable words and phrases are vital to this political situation also. We see the use of repetition in the poems we have discussed so far. This repetition can happen in a performance of poetry as well as in a more personal way. The poem ‘Dookh’ by Caasha Luul which I discussed in Chapter Three also has a repeated line and after the first few times the repeated line is heard, some people in the audience would often join in reciting it with the poet. Sometimes, she would even not finish the line and allow people in the audience to finish it. I do not have a recording of a performance of this poem we are looking at now, but I think it is possible that the audience might also have done this at performances of this poem.

As we see from the two poems above, the 1940s and the 1950s was a critical time when the gender expectations formed in pre-colonial times were contested. Women were not expected to participate in the political arena, nor were their poems expected to discuss serious political matters. However, the need for a nation-state and the emergence of nationalism presented a social reality where women could have the same roles as men, as activists, as patriots, even though they faced harsh criticism for participating in the nationalist activities. Apart from the fact that most of their poems were in the female *buraambur* genre, sometimes there was not a clear sign showing in the text that the poems were made by women. It was their identity as Somalis but not particularly women that was emphasised. We will see in the next section that, in Somali women’s poems made in the post-colonial movements, their identity as Somalis and more

importantly, their identity as women are both emphasised.

Poems on Women's Rights in the Post-colonial Movements

In this section, I shall look at poems that were made in the 1960s to 1970s in which the women poets explicitly made their voices heard on women's rights, and in particular, their rights to take part in government. Despite women's significant role in the many grassroots-level associations and social movements, Somali women were not provided with space for political power and leadership. Ingiriis (2015, p.379) notes that women were seen by the SYL leaders as 'supporters', rather than partners. As Somali women's experience of the independence movement grew, they began to feel more and more conscious of their subordinate position in the society and demanded women's rights in the political arena. According to Faduma (2008, p.91), the SYL leaders were reluctant to share the decision-making process with women and excluded women as delegates in the SYL Congress held in 1958. It was after some determined women 'presented their grievances to the Congress' that two female delegates Ardo Dirir and Xaawa Jibriil were allowed to attend. It was also Xaawa Jibriil who bravely contested the decision of the Central Committee of the SYL having no women candidates, and the statement by a leading male member of the League that 'women were not yet prepared for such an important and difficult task', and as a result, the congress agreed that women would be elected to all party committees. In 1959, the first female member of the Central Committee of the SYL, Raha Ayaanle Guled set the score in becoming the first female in Somali history to obtain official access in decision-making circles predominated by men (Ingiriis 2015, p.381).

Somalia gained independence in July 1960, with the formerly Italian Somaliland in the south and the formerly British Somaliland in the north merging into one Somali Republic. The freedom for women to express their feelings and to become artists and sing in theatres were granted by the post-colonial government, partly involuntarily, while the authorities recognised people's rights to mobilise themselves through movements, associations, organisations, petitions and political parties on the one hand, but faced conservative critics who defended social patriarchy composing poetry denouncing the so called 'modernisation process' (Ibid, p.382). In spite of their

reluctance to positive transformation of women's status in society, the most popular female singers at that time emerged, including Asha Abdow Suleyman 'Malaika', Faduma Abdullahi Kaahin 'Maandeeq', Faduma Abdullahi Ali 'Dalays', Faduma Qassim Hilowle, Habbon Abdullahi, Maryan Mursal Iise Bootaan, Sahra Ahmed Jama, Seynab Ige Mohamed, Halima Khalif Omar 'Magool', Seynab Haji Ali Siigaale 'Bahsan' (Ibid, p.383). Maandeeq, for example, chanted a song demanding equity and justice for women upon the formation of the Somali Republic.

Gardner and El Bushra (2004, p.176) give a chronology of the pre-1991 women's movement in Somalia. The two important social organisations established before Siyaad Barre's rule, the Somali Women's Association ('Sisters'), established in 1959, and the Somali Women's Movement (SWM), established in 1960, were dismantled when Siyaad Barre took power in 1969, banning all political parties and social organisations. According to Zainab (1994, p.188) during the first eight years of the Siyaad Barre regime, 'women participated in government rallies, gave speeches at orientation centres, and composed poetry in support of the regime'. Gardner and El Bushra's chronology (2004, p.176) also lists 'founding of a Women's Section under the Political Office in the Presidency of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC)' in 1970 and Somali Women's Democratic Organisation (SWDO) founded by the government in 1977. In terms of pro-women's right national legislation, the 1975 Family Law amendments gave equal rights to women and men in matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance (though not prohibiting polygamy), the Labour Code of 1972 promoted equality of women in the workplace, Law No.173 of 1975 made all land state property whereby women could obtain land leases or inherit leaseholds, and Constitution of 1978 established equal rights and duties for women and men alike (Ibid, p.176-177).

Although Siyaad Barre has said '*Haweenku waa garab, aan maangaabku garanahayn*' (The women are a shoulder which the short-sighted cannot understand) in a speech, his promotion of gender equality and women's rights, integral to his socialist vision for Somalia, was argued by scholars to be one of his strategies to legitimise a regime that came to power through a non-democratic avenue. Ingiriis (2015, p.387) gives threefold reasons of Siyaad Barre's using women as an instrument to keep on power: first, he saw women as an attractive source of enhancing his global reputation under the

banner of gender equity; second, he wanted to mobilise the public for support and long-term legitimacy of his regime; third, his aim was to 'accelerate the replacement of customary and religious law[s] with secular legal practices' (Bryden and Steiner 1998, p.31, cited in Ingiriis 2015, p.387). Even though during the mid-1970s to 1980s, the proportion of women in government posts did increase sharply, with an average annual increase of 40.6 percent, throughout the era of Siyaad Barre's rule, the number of women in parliament did not rise above 10 percent of the 176-member total, with only one female member in the Central Committee and two out of 51 holding a ministerial position (Gardner and El Bushra 2004, p.177). It is also worth noting that even though the SWDO raised the discourse on women's rights and proved a useful vehicle for policy change when issues concerning women converged with government policy, such as participation in public office and the campaign to abolish female genital mutilation (FGM), it was fundamentally flawed by being part of the authoritarian mechanism of Siyaad Barre's regime. Moreover, the principal beneficiaries of Siyaad Barre's gender equality agenda were middle-class urban-based women; for the majority of rural women little changed (Ibid, p.178).

While Somalia's post-colonial government from 1960 to 1969 was seen by many as a progressive period in terms of freedom of speech and individual liberty, and people enjoyed a vibrant democracy and freedom of speech that allowed them to voice their concerns regarding to matters of modern government politics, this was ended by Siyaad Barre's dictatorship and the censorship imposed on poetry composition and broadcasting, a means that was also employed by the regime to promote Siyaad Barre's rhetoric. Criticism against the government or its policies was not only banned but even criminalised by the regime, noted by Zainab (1994, p.187), leaving poetry broadcast to contain references to gender equality, the benefits of socialism and praise for the dictator Siyaad Barre. In 1978, when an unsuccessful coup endangered the military regime, it was women, along with his military police, who stood up in defence of the regime and mobilised the public through Radio Mogadishu and their poetry broadcasted by the radio (Ingiriis 1995, p.388). This, for instance, is recorded in a *buraambur* poem by Halimo Shiil made in the 1970s: '*Siyaad hoggaaminayoo ciidankeenna haybadda leh / haweenku hanbalyiyo salaan hooyo nimay baxsheen*', which translates 'which Siyaad [Barre] led our prestigious forces / the women sent motherly congratulations and greetings' (Zainab 1994, p.189). However, according to

Ingiriis (2015, p.389), there is also an impression that some of the women groups applauded the military regime 'because of fear of either having their close kinsman lose a post or categorising the concerned females as reactionaries - a term that could have severe consequences for anyone to whom it was attributed'.

There are many poems commenting on matters of modern government politics made by women that are worth discussing, however, due to the limited space, I will focus on the aspect of female representation in government mentioned in the poems. I shall take a close look at two poems in this section, one *gabay* poem made before Siyaad Barre's rule by Xaawa Jibriil in 1966, titled 'Gabdhihii Isku Duubnaa' (Sisters) and one untitled *buraambur* poem made by Halimo Ali Kurtin in the 1970s.

Gabdhihii Isku Duubnaa (Sisters)
1 Calankaa dusheennaa markii, loo dagaallamayay
2 Labadooda daan iyo gabdhahay, dashay gacantoodu
3 Dirisyoonka Leegada gabdhihi, geeyey dahabkooda
4 Gabdhihii isku duubnaa raggaa, qaar la duufsadaye
5 Daruur midabkii leeyeey gabdhihii, Xaawa laga dooxay
6 Markii dawladnimadii la helay, dibedda loo tuurey [75]
7 Diretoore kay tahay xornimo, lama dacaamsiine
8 Digriigii ay qaadanahayeen-na, dacaska weeyaane

1 When that flag above us that one was fighting for
2 Their two cheeks and, O women!, their hands got sore
3 The women passed on their gold to the directorate of the League
4 The women who were bound together, the men some of them were led astray
5 O ones who have the colour of the clouds, Xaawa who was stabbed
6 When statehood was gained, [they] were thrown outside
7 [the woman who would be] director, was not made to eat [the fruits] of freedom
8 And the degree(s) they took are flip-flops

A prominent feature that one finds immediately when hearing this poem is the

[75] The spelling here has been edited from *tuurye* to *tuurey* which, as the past tense form, makes better sense and also reflects other line endings in the poem.

repetition of the word '*gabdhihii*' *(*the girls, the women) which also renders a secondary alliteration in the '*g*' sound in some of the lines. When making Somali poetry, good poets tend to avoid using the same word to present their good knowledge of Somali vocabulary and their ability to find the best words for the line while fitting in the metrical pattern. When a word is repeated, it becomes a technical trait. Here, the female poet is repeating the word '*gabdhihii*' (the girls, the women) on purpose. Interestingly, while emphasising the women's identity through these words, as a female activist who fought along in the struggles, the poet is not using the first person to voice her concern for women's rights. Instead of 'our cheeks', 'our hands' and 'our gold', she uses the third person '*gacantoodu*' (their hands) and '*dahabkooda*' (their gold). This gives an impression that the voice is not speaking on behalf of the members of the League, but as a person who is not one of the female members and who benefited from the contributions and sacrifices of the female members. Therefore, she uses an inclusive 'us' in the first line in the cluster '*dusheennaa*' (which was above us) and by that she is including herself, as well as her listeners, male and female, in this 'us', which represent all the Somali people who were enjoying '*calankaa*' (that flag), which stands for the independence of the nation and which '*loo dagaallamayay*' (one was fighting for). The poet uses an impersonal '*la*' here, which I interpret that it could be all the brave nationalists who fought in the struggle regardless of their sex, or it could be the female activists only. The poet didn't emphasise the gender here in this half-line, but either way, it doesn't affect how we read the rest of the poem.

In a different way from the plain slogan-like poems I presented in the previous section, in this poem, we see a consecutive use of imagery. Following the image of the flag that stands for freedom and sovereignty in the first line, in the second line, the poet uses '*labadooda iyo gacantoodu*' (their two cheeks and their hands), '*dan dashay*' (scraped the flesh) to express the jubilation of the women when the independence struggle ended in victory in an exaggerated way. By using the alliterating words '*dan*' and '*dashay*' in each half-line to form the phrase 'scraped the flesh', she is not saying the flesh of their cheeks and hands were literally scraped from the laughing, cheering and clapping, but using the hyperbole to emphasise women's joy, which also foreshadows the contrast which she will bring out in the coming lines. Interestingly, she uses a vocative '*gabdhahay*' (O women) in the middle of this line. However, it is not exactly a direct address of women as to how vocatives are used in the poems we have seen before. She

is still speaking to the masses who benefited from the devotion of these women. The vocative is more an expression of a complex emotion including nostalgia, admiration, and pity she felt when she thought of the scene when women were cheering for the new Republic and looking forward to a future where they would benefit from the fruits of independence. This sentiment is continued in the next line where she uses the image of gold in '*dahabkooda*' (their gold) to express women's approval of the directorate of the League.

Then in the fourth line, the poet brings in a very direct comparison between women and men during the struggle. She says: '*Gabdhihii isku duubnaa raggaa, qaar la duufsadaye*' (The women who were bound together, the men some of them were led astray). She means that while women united to fight for a collective goal during the independence movements, some men were off the right path. This could refer to the pro-Italian, clannish men who she has criticised in two of her *buraambur* poems 'Odeyaasha Ina Aakhiray' (The Old Men Who Hold us Back) and 'Dulan Nin Wada' (The Wicked Men) in 1962. By bringing in a comparison between women and men and showing that women did better than men when in reality the two sex groups are in a reversed social status, the poet is showing her attitude without making a comment directly. Although not stated clearly, we see there is a transition in the emotion as this poem reaches its fourth line, which is half of the total eight lines. From a relaxed, cheerful mood in the beginning, the poem is getting more serious and preparing its listener for a turning point. And that turning point, I suggest, is the image of Xaawa Osman Taako in the fifth line.

I have mentioned the death of Xaawa Osman Taako in the beginning of this chapter. Xaawa Taako was and is still regarded as the first female freedom fighter in the modern history of Somali society (Ingiriis 2015, p.380). In the *hojis* first half-line, Xaawa Jibriil uses a metaphor, 'ones who have the colour of the clouds', followed by a vocative suffix '*-ay*', '*daruur midabkii leeyeey*', comparing the innocence and sublimity of the nationalist symbol to the white colour of the cloud which is another image that is often seen as the symbol of purity, innocence and goodness in Somali as well as many other cultures. Again, in this line, the poet doesn't make a comment on Xaawa Taako's death or the society after Xaawa Taako's death, she is only mentioned her name, Xaawa, followed by a relative clause '*laga dooxay*' (who one stabbed, i.e. who was stabbed).

There are, of course, a lot of sentiments of the poet that this half-line bears and that is even beyond my ability to imagine and spell out. It is the same case with any listener that the poet is trying to appeal to. Instead of 'preaching' to the public, she leaves a space for the listeners to think about it on their own.

Next in the sixth line, she sort of calls back to the first line but this time, completes the sentence. In the first line, she says, '*Calankaa dusheennaa markii, loo dagaallamayay*' (when that flag above us was fought for) and in this line, it goes '*Markii dawladnimadii la helay, dibedda loo tuurey*' (when the statehood was gained, [they] were thrown outside). She makes this *hooris* second half-line in a traditional way, with the verb '*tuur*' (to throw) standing on its own with no focus or person marker. However, from the context we know that it should be 'they, the women' that were 'thrown outside', i.e. neglected and excluded by the male authorities from the government apparatus. Following this line, line 7 further elaborates on this idea. The alliterating word in the hojis '*diretoore*' is from the Italian word '*direttore*' which means director, as a position in the government. Following '*diretoore*', the *kay* is made up of a *kii* 'the one' and '-*ay*' which together with the next word '*tahay*' forms 'she is'. Here the poet implies that 'the one' who is qualified to be a director or 'the one' who would or should be a director, was not appointed as a director she deserved. In the *hooris* she uses '*dacaamsii*' which is from the Arabic word for 'food' and by adding the strong causative ending -*sii*, the meaning becomes 'to make someone have food, feed' which figuratively means, 'to benefit'. So in this line, she is reasserting that women did not benefit from the fruits of independence, in consistent with the meaning of the previous line.

Finally in the last line, she uses another loan word to start the line: '*digriigii*', which means degree. As a matter of fact, the poet's daughter, Faduma was the first Somali woman to complete a university degree in Italy in 1962 (Ingiriis 2015, p.384). And according to Safia (2010, p.117), many of the women who followed in her footsteps and pursued a diploma were unable to 'enter the civil service in spite of a policy of automatic 'grade A' government positions for anyone who had diplomas'. This background is reflected in this line. The poet uses a quite strong metaphor in the *hooris*, as the second alliterating word. In the translation by Faduma, she uses 'rubbish' for '*dacaska*', which actually means 'flip-flops', the casual sandals worn by people of many cultures throughout the world, including the Somalis. And the flip-flops, with

their cheap and casual impression then carry the message of something that is not valued, something that can be easily thrown away, as in the '*dibedda loo tuurey*' ([they] were thrown outside) in line 6, and something similar to the word used by Faduma, rubbish. If we compare the alliterating words in the last two lines, we find another very interesting use of language. The words are '*diretoore*' (director) and '*dacaamsiine*' (following a negative *lama* 'one not') 'tasted' in line 7 and '*digriigii*' (degrees) and '*dacaska*' (flip-flops). The poet skilfully made two contrasts in the alliterating words. While the first words in the two lines, '*diretoore*' (director) and '*digriigii*' (degrees) are supposed to be something valuable that either the women deserved or granted women what they deserved, they resulted in '*lama dacaamsiine*' (not tasted) and '*dacaska*' (flip-flops).

According to Ingiriis (2015, p.384), this poem 'appeared to have been heard in the inner circles' as Xaawa's daughter Faduma was immediately appointed as the Director of Women's section at the Ministry of Education, in addition to becoming a School Inspector. After Siyaad Barre gained power, in 1972, Xaawa made a poem about female representation again, this time addressing the dictator Siyaad Barre directly. She started her poem with a quote from Siyaad Barre's speech promising women's rights would not be neglected by his government, and said: '*Misana Goleheenna iyo, Gobolkeenna waxa ku jira*' (And yet in our Committee and in our Region there are) / '*Laba gabdhood weeyee, gar Ilaah miyaa?*' (Two women, is it a law of God?) / '*Ma hawshii bay gabeenoo, waxbayan garan*' (Did they fall short in the effort? Did they understand nothing?). Her rhetorical questions only got an answer in 1978, a critical time for Siyaad Barre's military regime when it was threatened by an unsuccessful coup d'état. As I mentioned earlier, women showed great support for the regime. Following that, Siyaad Barre promised to reward women for their loyalty. He appointed Faduma as vice minister. It is also important to notice that Faduma was affiliated with the military regime by way of marriage. Her husband, Ahmed Mohamud Farrah, was Vice President under the military regime. And her mother, the poet Xaawa Jibriil who addressed the dictator in her poem, according to Ingiriis (2015, p.388), was in fact a distant cousin of Siyaad Barre.

Another short excerpt I shall briefly look at is the following *buraambur* verse made by Halimo Ali Kurtin during Siyaad Barre's rule. The poem was collected by Zainab

Mohamed Jama and presented in Zainab (1994, p.188). Women's identity and women's experience both in the past and in the 'now' were directly addressed through the lines.

1 Haddii haweenku nafsadoodii oo dhan aanay hurin,
2 Hiil iyo hoo waxay lahaayeenba aanay hibayn
3 Hodanow calankeena waligeen ma aan heleen
4 Hashii markay noo dhashoo caano laga habcay,
5 Haweenku se wali hamuuntoodii ay qabeen

1 If the women did not set alight all their lives
2 [If] they did not give support and offerings of what they had
3 O rich person! We [incl.] would never have attained our [incl.] flag
4 When the she-camel gave birth and enough milk was taken from her to satisfy
5 The women, however, still had their hunger.

The Somali word for 'women' used here is '*haween*'. We can see the word *haweenku*, with the subject definite article suffix '-*ku*' following the noun *haween,* is mentioned twice in this short verse, similar to how Xaawa Jibriil repeated the word '*gabdhihii*' (the girls, the women) in her lines. In a poem that focuses on the matter of women, as shown in the text, this poet alliterates in the 'h' sound, reflecting the word *haween*. There is also a salient pattern of the alliterating sound. Each line starts with the 'h' sound, and four of the five lines also end with an alliterating word. These sound features also offer the poem memorising tools that one could use to help recite and circulate the poem.

The first two lines talk about women's sacrifice in the history of Somali independence movements. We see that in the conditional clauses, the poet also uses the third person to refer to those women, which is the same as the deixis in Xaawa Jibriil's poem we saw earlier. In the first line, it is '*nafsadoodii*' (their life) instead of 'our life', and in the second line, it is '*waxay*' (they) rather than 'we', when the other pronouns will also fit in the metre. And then in the next line, she uses an inclusive 'we' and 'our flag', while addressing '*hodanow*' (rich people). The switch in pronoun embodies the exclusion of women who are the 'they' in the first two lines, when she addresses the '*hodanow*' (O rich one) and talks to the inclusive 'we'. This exclusion of women from

the rich people also echoes with what she says in the last line, that women were still left in 'their hunger'. The poet is implying the people who are benefiting from the independence that women sacrificed themselves for, are not starving and are letting the heroines starve and that this is wrong.

In this poem, the history and role of women in Somali society is mentioned to empathise with the way women were ignored by the elected government that took power after independence. The poet uses the image of a she-camel, in Somali, '*hal*'. According to Ali (2015, p.175) Somali poets have introduced into their imagery the metaphorical she-camel since the 1940s. They use the image of the camel to symbolise the nation and the image of the herder to represent its people (Ibid). The 'she-camel gave birth and gave so much milk' in the penultimate line stands for independence and the development of the new nation following independence. However, the joyful image of a she-camel that produces enough milk is employed to bring out a contrast in the next line, that is, the interests of women who sacrificed for the country have yet to be protected. The gender of the she-camel, and especially the connotation embedded in the birth-giving and milk-producing echoes with the gender of women in the last two lines. This is important as even though the she-camel is used by male poets many times to represent the national identity and *soomaalinimo*, it is the women poets who made the connection between the she-camel to the 'she-Somalis' who fought for the she-camel. The contrast between the she-camel producing milk in line 4 and women's being left in hunger is also striking. It calls back the sacrifices and contributions that women had made that are mentioned in the first three lines and reiterates the message.

The short *buraambur* is a very coherent poem that states a clear idea through simple language. It was made to be heard via Radio Mogadishu during the Siyaad Barre regime. In the same poem, the poet Halima Aki Kurtin also talks about why women offered their support to the regime and says: '*Siyaad hoggaaminayoo ciidankeenna haybadda leh/ Haweenku hanbalyiyo salaan hooyo nimay baxsheen*' (Which Siyaad led our prestigious forces, the women sent motherly congratulations and greetings). I have mentioned earlier that Siyaad Barre's agenda on promoting women's rights was merely a strategy for him to keep a hold on power. Zainab (1994, p.189-190) mentions that most of the women who supported the regime in its early years changed their attitude after realising the government's call for equality was only what she calls, 'lip service'.

Some scholars, for example, Gardner and El Bushra (2004), see this period during the rule of Siyaad Barre as the golden era of women in Somalia. However, as Ingiriis (2015, p.377) notes, 'these narratives tend to overlook the condition of women in terms of freedom of speech and freedom to form independent associations, a right they enjoyed under the successive post-colonial government prior to the military rule.' In the conclusion of Ingiriis (Ibid, p.290), he writes: Somali women 'seem as though they became forward-thinking when compared with many other women in post-colonial settings. They nonetheless shared certain characteristics with others, such as the perpetuation of marginalisation in politics.' Even if they had played a crucial role during the independence movements and the constituting of Somali post-colonial government, 'they lost whatever gains they had achieved in those days' and even more sadly, their initial support for the Siyaad Barre regime only 'made their status worsen instead of developing into that for which they had struggled' (Ibid).

The struggle for social status of Somali women and Somali women's rights has been an obstacle-ridden challenge and the on-going civil war following the collapse of the Siyaad Barre regime only worsened the situation. Zainab (1994, p.199) notes that following the collapse and the declared independent Republic of Somaliland, there is not a single woman in the new government and there are even more restrictions imposed on women by the Islamic fundamentalists who gained power during the years of the Civil War. As noted by Gardner and El Bushra (2004, p.150), during the 1993 Boorame Grand Conference on National Reconciliation, hundreds of clan elders exercised the traditional voting rights of men and selected a president. Ten representatives from two women's organisations were permitted to attend the conference. However, they could speak and lobby, but were not given the right to vote. Despite the harsh reality, women poets have still been making their voices heard. In the next section, we will look at what they express in poems made after the Civil War and the subsequent historical changes.

Poems Made After 1991

The political turbulence following the Civil War in 1991 and the displacement of the

people has left a scar in every Somali's heart. A lot of changes have taken place and these changes are reflected in the poetry. There are too many good poems by both male and female poets that deserve a close read. After careful selection, I decided to present two of my favourite poems in this dissertation. They are 'Waad Garan Lahaydeene' (You Understand)[76] by Saado Cabdi Amarre, and 'Tahriib' (The Sea-Migrations) by Caasha Luul Maxmuud Yuusuf.

'Waad Garan Lahaydeene' (You Understand) by Saado Cabdi Amarre

Saado Cabdi Amarre is one of the many individual women who have been eagerly mobilising for peace during two decades following the Somali Civil War. Her emotional poems lament the senselessness of the wars that have affected the Somali people in the aftermath. 'Waad Garan Lahaydeene' (You Understand) was made in 2005 as shown on the Poetry Translation Centre website[77]. There is also a note under the text that reads: '*Mowduuca: Wayeellada hubka halista ah - fudud & culus - uu leeyahay*' which translates 'the topic: Possession of dangerous weapons - light & heavy'. This poem also features in the *So At One With You: An Anthology of Modern Poetry* in Somali published in 2018 (Herbert and Said 2018). It is the text from this book that I have used in this discussion.

The first thing that stands out from the title is that the poet is addressing a plural 'you'. The verb form '*lahaydeene*' translates the English modal verbs 'would have' or 'should have' in second person plural, following the verb stem '*garan*' (understand). There isn't a distinction for tense in this mood in Somali, but similar to English, the mood suggests that something was possible in the past, but that it didn't happen. In this title's case, by saying 'you would have understood', the poet is implying that there are things that 'you' (pl.) didn't understand and 'you' (pl.) should understand. Then in the poem, she elaborates on what the things that 'you (pl.)' 'would have' or 'should have understood' are. While she says it to the plural 'you', there is also a sense that she understands it while the 'you' don't and that she wants people to understand after listening to this poem. Therefore, it gives the poem a didactic feeling, especially when

[76] For the title of this poem, I keep the original English translation by Maxamed Xasan 'Alto' with Sarah Maguire.
[77] https://www.poetrytranslation.org/poems/you-understand/original (Accessed: 09 September 2022).

‘*aad garan lahaydeene*’ (you would have understood) is stressed and repeated over and over throughout the poem. The poet lists out the danger and harm that war and weapons bring as well as what peace brings through her lines, earnestly hoping that the audience will understand these messages and more importantly, take action to make change. We shall now take a close look at the text. As with the other poems which are analysed here the translation is made by myself.

0 Hooyaallayey hooyaallayey, hoyaallayey hooye; [78]
1 Warshadaha madfaca gaw leh iyo, gumuca beeraaya
2 Hubkan dunida kala gooshayee, gees walba u raacay
3 Ee aan xuduud lagu gartiyo, gogol-dhig loo yeelin
4 Aakeyga kii geela jirey, saaran garabkiisa
5 Intuu halista gaadhsiiyay baad, garan lahaydeene.

0 Hooyaallayey hooyaallayey, hoyaallayey hooye;
1 The factories which manufacture the artillery and the bullets
2 These weapons which cut the world apart and which went everywhere
3 To which borders which are understood and an introduction were not agreed
4 The AK, that is on the shoulder of the one who was with the camels
5 You (pl.) would have understood the amount of danger which it has brought

We can also see that this *gabay* doesn’t have an *arar* opening, instead, the poet sings the traditional opening string of vocables and starts her argument right away. She goes straight to the subject of the arms industry. In the first line, there is a head noun ‘*warshadaha*’ (the factories) followed by a relative clause ‘*madfaca gaw leh iyo, gumuca beeraaya*’, in which the verb ‘*beeraaya’* literally means ‘to farm’, and the objects are ‘*madfaca gaw leh*’ (artillery that makes the ‘*gaw*’ sound) and ‘*gumuca*’ (the bullets). In the next line, she continues with the same structure. The head noun becomes ‘*hubkan*’ (these weapons), and in the following two relative clauses joined by the ‘*ee*’, she gives a description about the weapons which ‘*dunida kala gooshay*’ (which cut the world apart), and ‘*gees walba u raacay*’ (lit. which accompanied every side, i.e. which went everywhere). Up to here, the language in the lines is relatively plain and

[78] I marked the first line as line 0 for the reason that the line is a string of vocables that are traditionally used at the beginning of a *gabay* to attract the audience’s attention and do not have any meaning.

the message is straightforward. Yet the sentence is not over. The audience would immediately realise that there is an enjambment when they hear '*ee*' (and) in the next line which joins another relative clause to the previous line. Following the conjunction word, the poet uses an '*aan*' (not) which goes with the negative verb *yeelin* at the end of the line.

In this line, we can see a change from the previous plain language to a more abstract level. The nouns in this line, '*xuduud*' (border) and '*gogol-dhig*' (introduction) are not material objects, but rather abstract concepts with slightly obscure connotations. It is the same with the verbs, '*garan*' (to understand) and '*u yeel*' (to agree with, to consent to) are both relative to the process of thinking. The meaning of this line is that the people did not agree to borders that were understood to be for the weapons, i.e. they could go anywhere and the people did not agree to the 'introduction', that is to what people said the weapons would be used for. I interpret the 'border' in two ways. It could be the border that weapons cross when they are fired or when they are exported. In other words, it is either the countries that weapons are sold to, or the target countries that will be attacked by these weapons. She is saying that no consent was given by the people to where these weapons would be sent to or shot at. The exportation of the arms was conducted without asking for permission from the people who are the taxpayers funding the government. When a war is waged, nobody asks the civilian's opinion and this civilian is those in both countries. The poet did not articulate what the harm that these weapons actually do are in this line, but by saying 'there was no consent', people start to think about it.

In the next line, following what she has said about the weapons and border, the poet presents us with a vivid picture. She uses a specific Somali reference, mentioning the Russian-invented AK-47 rifle carried by a young camel herder who used to live a pastoral life to imply the fact that having a gun has become a common thing among the young Somali men.

As an aside, I'd like to bring in an excerpt from 'Home', an English poem made by

young Somali poet Warsan Shire[79], in which we find the same reference being used. The British-Somali poet write in English:

'the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay'

Here the poet brings a contrast by giving us a peaceful and romantic picture of young love and kissing followed by a cruel reality with a ruthless weapon. As a young poet growing up in a different background, Warsan Shire presents a verse that shows a combination of *soomaalinimo* and 'westernness'. While the 'kiss you dizzy' in the second line stands out as a romantic and intimate description which shows a quality that may be a common feature of English and other western poems, the poem is essentially about home, as she expresses in the title. Warsan also uses a second person 'you' in this poem which is an intermediate position that can be taken by any Somali audience. 'Kissing behind the old tin factory' is like an imagined scene but 'holding a big gun' is the reality.

This contrast in both poems creates a focus for the listener. And that focus is on the impact of these weapons. They were made by the factories, sold to armys, places and countries that are not known, but what is known is that they have reached a young man's shoulder who was supposed to be herding camels. Again, in this line, the poet did not specify the word 'harm' or 'danger' or her opinion on the weapons, but she is leading the listeners in. She is inviting the audience to think about this issue as she spells out the lines.

And finally in line 5, she makes it clear: 'you would have understood the danger that the weapons and the military industry have brought', with the titular phrase '*aad garan*

[79] Warsan Shire is a Somali British poet born in Nairobi in 1988 and raised in London. She writes poetry in English and has received various awards for her poetry. Her words 'No one leaves home unless/ Home is the mouth of a shark' from the poem 'Home' is widely known in the diaspora Somali communities.

lahaydeene' (you would have understood). This line not only concludes and explains the phrases and images in the previous lines, but also serves to be an opening line that introduces the rest of the poem. The second pronoun is in plural and the plural is used throughout the whole poem, making it clear that the poet is addressing a collective population. Saado didn't use an *arar* in the same way as Caasha Luul started her gabay poems, but these first five lines serve in a similar way as an opening and give the audience an introduction of the theme.

Following this opening, the poem has a clear structure marked by the repetition of the following four lines, which we may call a refrain:

6 Inta gibil madow, inta gibil cad, gaaliyo Islaamba
7 Rag adduunyada gubayoo wa[a] la Garanayaaye[80]
8 Iyagaa gantaallada rakibay, mana gar-qaataane,
9 Waa kuwaa haweenkii guddiyay, geedkii nabadeede.

6 The ones with black skin, the ones with white skin, non-believers and Muslims
7 It is only men who have burned the world, it is known
8 It is they who assembled the missiles and do not accept legal arguments
9 There they are, the women who met in council at the tree of peace

Line 6, *Inta gibil madow, inta gibil cad, gaaliyo Islaamba* as the first line in the refrain, is interesting especially if we compare this poem with the poems that we have previously looked at. In the poems written in the colonial period, 'infidels' is a word that was used to refer to the colonisers. But here in this poem, a poet who had been through colonisation is calling people all around the world, despite their race and religion, to unite and stand against these weapons. In precolonial times, poems were particularly a weapon for the spokesperson of a clan to attack another clan. During the independence movements, poems were used to mobilise the public to fight against colonialism, condemning the 'infidels'. But here we see, this poem which was made a decade after the Somali Civil War, is calling on 'black people, white people, non-believers' and Muslims to unite and see the problem with possession of dangerous

[80] The original text shown in Herbert and Said (2018) does not fit the metre for this line. In a recording available on SoundCloud Saado performs this line as written here.

weapons. The theme not only goes beyond the household and national border but reaches a global governance level, and it is pointed out by a Somali woman. Although the background was Civil War and war between Somali clans, this poem is not about any particular war in the Somali territories, but war, weapons, decision making at a global level. And this resonates with the '*gogol-dhig loo yeelin*' in the beginning of the poem.

What's more, the poet brings up a very explicit gender issue in these lines, a topic which is even often debated today. While men, which includes both those at the household level, and those at wider clan and government levels, tend to use a misogynist discourse that women are 'too subjective' to make important decisions, and find them an efficient excuse to exclude women from politics and decision making positions, it is men who make terrible and disaster ideas. *Guddi* means 'council', and as a verb it means 'to come together in a council'. This refers to the tree of peace where traditionally adult men of families discussed important matters with the elders. But the poet is saying that while men made decisions to wage wars, women are coming together under the trees, taking their positions. I understand this as just the women meeting at the council while I am aware that traditionally the council is led by elder men. My interpretation of this line is that 'meeting at the council' is more of a symbolic image rather than its literal meaning. The poet is expressing that it is men who wage wars whereas it is women who pray for peace, which echoes with herself as a woman making a poem calling for peace, in a man's genre, the *gabay*.

Following the refrain above, we will see the phrase '*aad garan lahaydeene*' (you would have understood) becomes intensively repeated until the end of the poem.

10 Geeliyo lo'dii buu jariyo, gaabanow adhiye
11 Geyi aan ugaadhiyo ku hadhin, diin gangaamaniye
12 Intuu gegida meyd jiifiyaad, garan lahaydeene,
13 Shimbirihii geyiga joogay ayaa, guuray oo qaxaye
14 In Hiroshiima gaadhsiisanyaad, garan lahaydeene,
15 Dhibtuu dunida gaadhsiiyay baad, garan lahaydeene.

10 He has cut down the camels and the cattle and the short sheep and goats

11 A land in which wild animals and shielded tortoise(s) do not remain
12 You would have understood how many he made to lay dead in the open space
13 The birds which were in the land have moved and fled
14 You would understand that it [would] reach Hiroshima
15 The difficulty which he brought to the world, you would have understood

In lines 10-13, Saado addresses the animals affected by the conflicts and wars, starting with the most precious '*geel*' (camels). A lyric aspect I want to point out is the use of the singular third person '-*uu*' (he) in line 10 and line 12 while referring to men, a collective subject that in the refrain the poet uses the independent pronoun '*iyaga*' (they) to emphasise. Why does she change the pronoun from plural to singular? From the meaning of line 10, for example, we see that the result of cutting down the camels and the other livestock is one that is still rendered by men collectively, instead of one particular person. In line 12, similarly, it would hardly be the poet talking about the many animals that are killed by one single man in the war, instead, the singular 'he' can be understood as the collective men as well. I suggest that this singular 'he' can be seen as what Culler called 'blurred' address when discussing address in lyric, whereas in this poem, we see a blurred 'he' as well.

If we look back at the refrain, and compare it with the line group following it, we will find a consistency in the deixis. It is almost only in the refrain that the poet does not repeat the words '*aad garan lahaydeene*' (you would have understood) but only says '*waa la garanayaaye*' which translates the passive 'it is known'. In the refrain, the person deixis are 'black skin', 'white skin', 'infidels', 'Muslims', 'women' and 'men', with each being an explicit social group. The plural '*iyaga*' (they) pronoun refers to the 'rag' 'men', hence is not a blurred position. We may say that in this refrain, there is no need for an intermediate position to be taken. While the addressee in the titular '*aad garan lahaydeene*' is a blurred second person, the second person is not in the refrain. Instead, the addressees that the poet expresses loudly and clearly in the first line of the refrain are '*gibil madow*' '*gibil cad*' '*gaaliyo Islaamba*'. This unique way of address hence differentiates the refrain from the other parts of the poem. Then in the parts with '*aad garan lahaydeene*', the poet uses a different system in which there is a blurred addressee 'you' and a blurred imagined man '*uu*' (he). When the poet ends an '*aad garan lahaydeene*' line group and starts repeating the refrain, the jump from one deixis

system to another will also be a sign that marks the change.

I have discussed the use of pastoral images in the previous sections, so I will not elaborate on each of the images mentioned in this poem. I shall only point out some of the aspects shown in the images which may have a reference that is worth mentioning. For example, in line 13, the poet uses another animal reference, the birds. But here the verbs '*guur*' (to move, as in what the nomads do) and '*qax*' (to flee as a refugee) show that the birds can be taken to be a metaphor and that the poet is talking as much about people and people's displacement. In line 14, she brings up Hiroshima which is an extreme tragedy that war had led to. Reference to the situation of a foreign country is a feature that is shown in other poems as well. For example, In Caasha Luul's 'Tahriib' (The Sea-Migrations), she also refers to Palestine in one line that translates 'In the book, what is written for us is the role of Palestine' when talking about the national traumas of the Somalis, which we shall see in the next section.

After the line group 10-15, the poet repeats the refrain. I shall not insert it as it is the same as line group 6-9. Then she starts another line group (lines 20-27) listing the harm of weapons and conflicts, with each line ending in '*aad garan lahaydeene*'. As shown below, this line group is made up of mainly direct and realistic references in plain language. The structure of each line is also simple and consistent, with the *hojis* being an *in-* clause, which we may translate with a 'that' in English, followed by an '*[b]aad*' (you) which grammatically joins the *hooris*.

20 Colaad iyo waxay geysataad, garan lahaydeene
21 Inay gacalka naafeeysataad, garan lahaydeene
22 Gurbood inay agoomaysataad, garan lahaydeene
23 Odayada inay gawracdaad, garan lahaydeene
24 Inay dunida gaas-maas sudhaad, garan lahaydeene
25 Godob iyo wax baas inay tahaad, garan lahaydeene
26 Guryo negi inay ololisaad, garan lahaydeene
27 Intay halis gaadhsiisay baad, garan lahaydeene

20 Conflict and what it brings about, you would have understood
21 That it disables the dear ones you would have understood

22 That it orphans the children you would have understood

23 That it slaughters the elders you would have understood

24 That it hangs a gas-mask on the world you would have understood

25 That it is a resentment and a difficulty, you would have understood

26 That it sets alight permanent houses, you would have understood

27 The amount of danger which it has brought, you would have understood

We see that in lines 21-23, the poet talks about the people hurt in wars and conflicts in plain language, using phrases such as 'it orphans the children' and 'it slaughters the elders'. Then in lines 24-26, she uses a series of metaphors, including '*gaas-maas*' (gas mask), '*godob*' (resentment which has not yet been dealt with legally or through conflict), and '*guryo negi*' (permanent houses) 'being set alight' ('*ololis*'), to figuratively describe the damage and danger. Then line 27 concludes this line group in a straightforward manner: '*Intay halis gaadhsiisay baad, garan lahaydeene*' (The amount of danger which it has brought, you would have understood).

Saado Cabdi repeats the refrain again in line group 28-31, following which, the poet turns to the subject of peace and talks about how it benefits people in 12 lines.

32 Inay nabadi tahay geed hadhlaad, garan lahaydeene

33 Inay gacal xannaanaysataad, garan lahaydeene

34 Geel dhalay inay daaran tahaad, garan lahaydeene

35 Inay gaawe xoor badan tahaad, garan lahaydeene

36 Geyaan iyo jacayl inay tahaad, garan lahaydeene

37 Gelbis iyo aroos inay tahaad, garan lahaydeene

38 Inay goob farxadi taal tahaad, garan lahaydeene

39 Inay horumar gaadhsiisan tahaad, garan lahaydeene

40 Inay tahay guryo deyrka laad, garan lahaydeene

41 Inay tahay xariir lagu goglaad, garan lahaydeene

42 Gobaad inay ku iidaaman tahaad, garan lahaydeene

43 Inay tahay aqoon loo gudbaad, garan lahaydeene.

32 That peace is a tree with shade, you would have understood

33 That it cares for the dear ones, you would have understood

34 That it is about camels that have given birth to, you would have understood
35 That it is a [full] milk vessel with lots of froth, you would have understood
36 That it is a couple ready to marry and love, you would have understood
37 That it is escorting the bride and a wedding, you would have understood
38 That it is a place in which happiness is, you would have understood
39 That it brings development, you would have understood
40 That it is houses with the fenced yard, you would have understood
41 That it is silk which has been set down through, you would have understood
42 That the she-camel [i.e. the nation] is seasoned by it, you would have understood
43 That it is knowledge which is passed on, you would have understood

In the first line of this line group, '*Inay nabadi tahay geed hadhlaad, garan lahaydeene*' (That peace is a tree with shade, you would have understood), the poet changes the subject to '*nabadi*' (peace), with the '*-i*' suffix marking the subject, and it remains the subject in the following lines. The image '*geed hadhleh*' (tree with shade) in this line resonates with the '*geedkii nabadeed*' (the tree of peace) that she repeats in the last line in the refrain. We then find more examples of resonance in the following lines where the images used here echo the ones she has mentioned in the previous lines when she talks about danger and harm. The '*gacal*' (dear ones) in line 33, for instance, resonates with line 21, in which the same word is used and in fact, the two lines are parallel to each other and emphasise the contrast between the disabling and the caring. In line 21, she says: '*Inay gacalka naafeeysataad, garan lahaydeene*' (That it disables the dear ones you would have understood), while in line 33, the line goes: '*Inay gacal xannaanaysataad, garan lahaydeene*' (That it cares for the dear ones, you would have understood). In lines 36-37, another two lines showing parallelism, the images of 'couple', 'bride' and 'wedding' also resonate with the 'orphans' and 'elders' mentioned in lines 22-23.

In a similar way, we see in lines 34 and 35, the images of camels and the production of milk are brought up and they echo with the images of camels and other livestock mentioned in lines 10-13. In line 40, again, the image of houses with fenced yards resonates with the image of houses set alight in line 26. We also find that the image of the she-camel which was used in poems in the last section is mentioned here in line 42. '*Gobaad*' is the name of a she-camel that produces milk, and here is used to stand for

the nation, as I mentioned before. The idea of a she-camel being 'seasoned' by peace therefore means that peace brings all the good influences to the nation.

In addition to the resonance with the previously mentioned images, there is also a combination of metaphorical images and plain language. While the poet fills her lines with vivid images such as tree, camel, milk, fenced houses and silk, representing different aspects of benefits that peace will bring, there are also lines 38 and 39, in which she says directly that peace is 'a place where happiness is' and 'it brings development'. This is also consistent with the style of language in line group 20-27.

Following the line group in which she talks about peace, Saado repeats the refrain for the last time to stress her point and finish her poem.

44 Inta gibil madow, inta gibil cad, gaaliyo Islaamba
45 Rag adduunyada gubayoo wa[a] la garanayaaye
46 Iyagaa gantaallada rakibay, mana gar-qaataane,
47 Waa kuwaa haweenkii guddiyay, geedkii nabadeede.

44 The ones with black skin, the ones with white skin, non-believers and Muslims
45 It is only men who have burned the world, it is known
46 It is they who assembled the missiles and do not accept legal arguments
47 There they are, the women who met in council at the tree of peace

'Waad Garan Lahaydeene' is a *gabay* in which the language style is very different to that of Caasha Luul's *gabay* poems. We have seen how Caasha Luul uses the technique of repetition of a line or a half-line and also how she structures her poems. Saado Cabdi uses the technique more intensely, having both a four-lined refrain and the same *hooris* repeated in the audience's ears. As she repeats the lines, her peace-making message is delivered.

Gardner and El Bushra (2004, p.140) note that women in Somali pastoral society have traditionally played an 'indirect but important part' in conflict resolution. They can act as peace envoys for their clans in the early stages of a conflict, exerting influence in private over their husbands, sons, brothers and uncles, and help seal a peace agreement

by being exchanged as brides to their clan's former enemy (Ibid, p.147). This traditional practice is an embodiment of the deep-rooted kinship system and patriarchal society in which women were not formally autonomous and were objectified as belonging to a household or clan headed by male members. However, Somali women have shown their will and ability to exert collective instead of personal influence at the community and wider level. Women's contributions to ending violence and promoting peace have included formal presentations to warring parties, demonstrations, direct action, petitioning of politicians and elders, and provision of logistical and financial support to peace processes (Ibid, p.140). Additionally, as shown in this chapter, at many of the peace-making events, women have made themselves heard through the most important form of expression in the culture, poetry. We see that while the male leaders of warring parties may expect women to belong to a household or clan led by men, and be their useful tool to seal a peace agreement through establishing kinship bonds, women have shown their autonomy in peace-making. What's more, in 'Waad Garan Lahaydeene', Saado Cabdi's appeals are not limited to the Somali territories, but she is talking to 'the ones with black skin, the ones with white skin, non-believers and Muslims', and remarkably stresses the identity of women and their influence in peace-making through her repeated lines. Although not showing disagreement with the patriarchal traditions and gender expectations explicitly, we hear a strong and clear voice from a woman poet who by no means sounds servile to what is said by men.

'Tahriib' (The Sea-Migrations) by Caasha Luul Maxmuud Yuusuf

Finally, I shall look at a powerful poem by Caasha Luul Maxmuud Yuusuf. We have looked at two of her poems about relations with men and saw her style, spirit, and competence in making *gabay* poems as a woman poet. She did not only gain a reputation amongst the global Somali diaspora for her brilliant skills, but also for her engagement with the plight of her people in the traditional way. The poem I will look at next is titled 'Tahriib' (The Sea-Migrations). It is also the title of her award winning collection (Asha 2017). The word '*tahriib*' originates from the Arabic word for 'fleeing', and is defined as 'the mass migration of Somalis to North Africa with the desperate hopes of crossing the Mediterranean and eventually reaching Europe' (Mehri 2018, p.48). In this *gabay* poem, Caasha laments the countless Somali lives lost in the

tahriib and coruscatingly debates on the failure of Somali society that causes the people to leave their homeland.

What makes the poem more astonishing is that she says in this *gabay* that she sees it as a contribution to the *Deelley* poetic 'chain' that dates back to the late 1970s and early 1980s during Maxamed Siyaad Barre's military regime. A poetry chain is called '*silsilad*' in Somali. It is a group of poems that in succession refer to one another. Ali Moussa Iye remarks that 'in order to influence the Somali socio-political debates, and to create a space for a free exchange of ideas and for popular transmission of political thoughts, Somali poets inaugurated the use of poetic chains (Iye 2007, p.87, cited in Ali 2015, p.63). These chains of poems hence become an important intellectual heritage that Cassanelli (2009 p.11) mentions as capturing the historical events and consciousness. The *Deelley* chain was initiated by two poets, Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac 'Gaarriye', a prominent poet and literary scholar who first articulated the metrical patterns of Somali poetry, and Maxamed Ibraahim Warsame 'Hadraawi', who was regarded as one of the greatest Somali poets of all time. Their poems laid the discourse of the debate and were joined by poems from more than fifty poets in the same alliterating sound, '*d*'. Touching on the very core of the Somali political crisis, clannism, and criticising the regime in figures of speech, the two poets started the most important and controversial poetic debate in modern Somali history. Some participants of the chain contributed to support their arguments while others used their skills to launch counterattacks.

In Ali's discourse analysis of the *Deelley* chain poem, the author finds that the role of the youth and of women was left out, even when some of the poets were young and one of the poets was female. The woman poet was Saado Cali Warsame, who contributed two poems to the chain and said '*Haddii aad rumaysnaysaan iyo haddii kaleba, warmihii ku soo dhacaysaa waxaa ganay gabar*' (Whether you believe it or not, the spears that are hitting you have been thrown by a woman) as a response to the accusation of having someone else write for her by some other poet[81]. This attitude seems to have changed in these days of new media, and Caasha as a female poet has gained more respect and recognition, something that women poets had always deserved.

[81] Twitter thread by Ibrahim Hirsi, https://twitter.com/TheNabaddoon/status/1277338770736627717 accessed on Sept 9 2022.

Not only are her works transmitted via YouTube, WhatsApp chain messages and satellite television, but she has been invited to festivals and events in the Horn of Africa and several western countries to read her poems. She was also chosen to be a member of the judging panel of a major poetry competition, The Somali Poetry Awards (Tartanka Gabayada Soomaalida), organised by the United Nations Development Programme in 2021.

One interesting thing is that in the *Deelley* chain all the poems made in the last century were in the short *jiifto* form, making it easy for listeners to understand and for poets to join the chain. However, evoking the poetic debate in the past to invoke the experience of Somalis nowadays, Caasha chose to employ the *gabay*. This is probably because the modernity of adding to a chain that *de facto* ended in the early 80s gives Caasha the space to choose between the *jiifto* form and other forms that she wished to make her poem. While poems made in the late 70s and early 80s were mostly composed and transmitted without the aid of writing, Caasha has the tool of writing and the internet as a platform, both of which make it a better environment to make long *gabay* poems.[82]

The poem 'Tahriib' (The Sea-Migrations) has nine line groups. It has a traditional *arar* (opening line group) and a *gebaggebo* (concluding line group) as we have seen in her poems in Chapter Three. There is also a structure shown in the poems, not only made evident by the content of each line group, but the language use, especially the voice in them. I will discuss this particular aspect in detail in the following section. I shall now start with the *arar*.

1 Da'da gabayga dabuubtiyo murtida, doodda hadalkayga;
2 Waxaan uga danleeyahay inaan, danaha sheegaaye
3 Dadweynow waxaan doonayaa, inan dadaalaaye
4 Dulmigaan dhacaayaan rabaa, inaan dillaacshaaye[83]
5 Tahriibtaa dadkeennii rogtaan, deyr ku xidhayaaye.

1 The '*d*' of the *gabay*, the argument and the wisdom, the discussion of my words

[82] The most important medium for poetry in the 1970s and 1980s was cassettes on which poems were recorded and then copied many times over.
[83] The word '*dulmigaan*' replaces '*dulmigan*' in the original text. This makes no difference to the meaning or my discussion of the poem.

2 What I mean by that is that I tell [the things that are in the people's] interests
3 O population I want to try hard
4 This injustice which has happened, I want to crack it apart
5 That *tahriib* which has turned our (incl.) people upside down, I am enclosing it with a fence

As we have seen in 'Dookh' and 'Calaf', in the first line, Caasha makes a reference to the poem itself again and she is claiming both the *gabay* being the genre and the '*d*' the alliterating sound. She does it so skillfully that there are seven '*d*' sounds in just one line that consists of a string of noun phrases only. They are '*da'da gabayga*' (the '*d*' [alliterating sound] of the *gabay*), '*dabuubtiyo murtida*' (the argument and the wisdom), and '*doodda hadalkayga*' (the discussion of my words). The *Deelley* chain got its name from the '*d*' alliterating sound and it is with these '*d-*' words that carry important political meanings, found throughout the chain poem, such as '*dawlad*' (state, government), '*dal*' (country), '*dad*' (people), and brilliant metaphors such as the '*daray*-tree' and '*damal*-tree' representing tribalism and the power that provide shade only for itself and those who are its 'underwood', respectively (Ali 2015, p.104). We see here, in Caasha's poem, that she is also stressing the *d-* words which are coherent in their meanings. The '*da'da*' ('*d*' sound) as the symbol of alliteration, carries the essential points that one looks for in alliterating words in a Somali poem. This also resonates with both '*dabuubtiyo murtida*' (the argument and the wisdom) and '*doodda hadalkayga*' (the discussion of my words). There is also a secondary rhyming in '*gabayga*' (the *gabay*) in the *hojis* and '*hadalkayga*' (my speech) besides the recurrent alliterating '*d*' sounds. I say these two words rhyme due to the fact that the '*ayga*' sound in '*gabayga*' (the *gabay*) is not the same possessive suffix '*-ayga*' (my) as in '*hadalkayga*' (my speech), yet the meaning of these two rhyming words echoes with each other; that the *gabay* is her speech, also marks that the poet is confidently using the sound techniques to show her competence and attract the listeners' attention.

Then in the second line, she switches immediately from the noun phrases to a complete sentence which is almost like one in prose. She uses '*waxaan*' to start the sentence, '*Waxaan uga danleeyahay inaan, danaha sheegaaye*' (what I mean by [that] is I tell interests [of the people]), introducing a first person pronoun as the lyric voice to address the first word in the next line, '*dadweyn*' (population). With the vocative suffix *-ow*,

she is not addressing a 'blurred you', nor a specific person or group in the community, but she is addressing the whole Somali public. In the analysis of *arar* sections in 'Dookh' and 'Calaf', I have mentioned that lines in those two *arar* sections don't bring up the theme of the poem. For example, the *arar* of Calaf starts with '*Cilmi gabayba waayadan ma furin, cutubyadiisiiye*' (Lately I haven't opened the units of the knowledge of *gabay* poetry) and ends with '*Aan caddeeyo caawoo kalaan, caadka rogayaaye*' (Let me make it clear. On a night like tonight, I clear away the cloud[s]), but does not mention the theme of this poem. However, Caasha does it differently in 'Tahriib'. Here, the *arar* is not only making a reference to the poem itself, but she also points straight to the theme of the poem in the last two lines: '*Dulmigaan dhacaayaan rabaa, inaan dillaacshaaye*' (This injustice which has happened, I want to crack it apart) / '*Tahriibtaa dadkeennii rogtaan, deyr ku xidhayaaye*' (That *tahriib* which has turned our people upside down, I am enclosing it with a fence). By saying she is 'enclosing the *tahriib* with a fence', metaphorically, she also makes it clear that the purpose of this poem is to stop the *tahriib*.

Following the *arar*, there is again a brief bridge-like line group that resembles the two lines following the *arar* in 'Calaf'.

6 U dulqaadan kari waayay oo, waan damqanayaaye
7 Jidhkaa iga dubaaxiya markaan, dib u jalleecaayo
8 Inta aan ilmada daadiyaan, dibinta ruugaaye.

6 I could not bear it and I am feeling the pain
7 The body twitches against me when I turn around to look
8 As I spill the tears I chew the lip

We see in the three lines, the subjectivity of the lyric voice is intensified as the lyric 'I' describes the personal emotions and feelings of pain. Via this lyric voice, the poet expresses her own pains seeing the illness in the society and states the reason why she made this poem. The word that is used to make reference to the twitching of the body, '*dubaaxi*', is one that is used when an animal is slaughtered and it twitches after it has been killed. Here, the poet is still using a pastoral reference, but metaphorically to describe her own pain. It is these pains that she 'could not bear' that urged her to speak

up to stop the *tahriib*. These three lines connect the *arar* and the *dhexdhexaad*, preparing the listeners for the upcoming arguments. The lyric 'I' is in accordance with the *arar*, with the '-*aan*' pronoun being repeated in each of these lines. However, as the *dhexdhexaad* begins, we will notice a distinct change. We shall now move to line 9-17, the first line group of the *dhexdhexaad* section.

9 Afrikaa dhib deris looga dhigay, daayin abidkoode
10 Soomaaliduna ka daran oo way, ugu dambeeysaaye
11 Qalbigaa intuu daxal ka galay, daamur wada yeeshey
12 Dareenkii waddanigaa lumoo, waa dad baabba'aye
13 Damiirkii waxaa garanayaan, digigixoonayne
14 Dabin laysu dhigay weeye oo, duul kalaa xidhaye
15 Diiwaanka waxaa noogu qoran, doorkii Falastiine
16 Ma daneeye aan diirran baa, dooxay shacabkiiye
17 Dillaal iyo mallaal baa midiba, dacalka haystaaye.

9 Africa has made trouble a neighbour for their everlasting [time] that lasts
10 And the Somalis are worse and they come last
11 The heart, as rust entered it, it was all made into tarmac
12 The national feeling has got lost, they are a people which has become destroyed
13 The conscience of understanding the feelings of sorrow for their compatriot's misfortune is missing
14 It is a trap laid for each other and another group of people has set it
15 In the book, what is written for us is the role of Palestine
16 One who doesn't care who is not stirred has stabbed the people
17 A broker and a middleman each one holds the hem

We see the poet points straight to the dilemmas of Africa and the situation of the Somalis in lines 9 and 10 respectively. However, as an African and a Somali in exile herself, she didn't choose to use the first person, instead, she uses the third person plural 'their' and 'they' in the words '*abidkoode*' (their everlasting, i.e. for always) and '*way ugu dambeeysaaye*' (they are the last) to describe her motherland. We hence notice a switch from the subjectivity to a more objective description of the reality that, in the poet's mind, Somalis are facing. The next three lines, lines 11-13, can be read as a unit

in which the three lines revolve around one key message. The metaphor of a ‘rusted heart’, which she uses in line 11, resonates with the ‘national feeling has got lost’ in line 12, and the following missing conscience and sympathy she talks about in line 13. ‘Heart’, national feeling and conscience point to the morality of people, which can imply issues like irresponsibility, malfeasance, hypocrisy, corruption, etc. This is one of the topics mentioned in the *Deelley* poems. In addition to criticising how clannism was manipulated to support the regime, the *Deelley* poems also spoke out against a series of moral wrongdoings. While the *Deelley* exemplifies a search for a common moral ground to resist oppression, Caasha’s ‘Tahriib’ reiterates its importance in rebuilding a shattered society.

Following the line group we just looked at, the next three line groups, lines 18-23, lines 24-29, and lines 30-34, form the next section in which the poet describes the severe issues in Somali society. I shall look at these line groups together and point out some language uses that stand out.

18 Haddii laga dareeroo dalkii, doonni laga raacay
19 Deebaaq qadhaadh iyo hadduu, dacar inoo yeeshey
20 Dullin iyo abaar iyo hadduu, diirato horseedey[84]
21 Daad laga ordaayiyo hadduu, degel madow yeeshey
22 Duufaan kacaysiyo haddii, duumo laga qaaday
23 Duqaydiyo carruurtii hadday, dibed u soo yaacday.

24 Dalka yaa u hadhi tolow markaa, waa dareen yimiye?
25 Waa xaajo duudduuban iyo, sheeko duluc dheere
26 Da’yartaa dhammaatiyo waxa, dumar idlaanaaya
27 Diricyada tahriibaaya ee, dabargo’aa taagan
28 Diihaalka gaajada kuwaa, dibed wareegaaya
29 Badahay dul-heehaabayaan, damalladeenniiye.

30 Diibkiyo yaxaaskaa cunoo, daaqay lafahooda
31 Dugaaggiyo waraabaa daldala, darib sideediiye

[84] There is a spelling mistake in ‘*horseeddey*’ as shown in the original text. There should be only one ‘*d*’.

32 Duleedkaa la soo wada wadhiyo, dacalka xeebaaye
33 Iyagoo dubkiyo diirku baxay, baa la daawadaye
34 Waa kuwaa darxumo le'day een, duugan kari waynnay.

18 If one poured out of it and went away from the country in a boat
19 If it makes a bitter thing, bitterness and aloe for us
20 If he who lacks dignity and drought and *diirato* [one who peels, strips things away] has led
21 If he has made a flood from which one runs and a black long-term encampment
22 If [they] are taken from a typhoon which rose and from plague
23 If the old people and the children spread out abroad

24 Who will remain for the country, O people, then, it is a thought that has come
25 It is a question that is twisted in itself and a story
26 The young have perished and women are coming to an end
27 The noble people who are going on *tahriib* and facing destruction
28 The destitution of hunger those who wander around abroad
29 They float on top of the seas, our (incl.) *damal* trees

30 The sharks and crocodiles ate them and grazed on their bones
31 The wild animals and the hyenas eat them like camel fat
32 They were put out to dry at the back and at the side of the coast
33 While the skin and hide left them, one watched them
34 There are the ones which misery owns and which we could not bury

She starts the section in a style that we have seen in 'Dookh', with lines joined consecutively by '*haddii-*' (if), which also renders a secondary alliteration in lines 18-29. Except line 18 starts with '*haddii*' (if) and has the alliterating word '*dalkii*' (the country) in the middle of the line, the rest of the lines in this line group all start with a '*d-*' word in both hemistiches and have '*haddii*' (if), in a cluster with '*uu*' (he) in lines 19-21, and '*ay*' (they) in line 23, in the middle of the line. The fact that these words are at 'fixed' positions consecutively in these lines makes this line group instantly appealing. The pattern can be said to lead to an expectation in the listener about the next line to follow. As the listeners follow along in this way, they will also take the

lyric voice's position and ask these 'if' questions. In this lyric event that the poet invites them into through the sound technique, the audience not only observes the poet's emotions that are embedded in the lines, but their own emotions which may stir up as they take the lyric voice's position. And the emotions will build up as the sounds repeats, and as more images are added until '*duqaydiyo carruurtii*' (old people and the children), who physically are not as able as young adults to endure the hardship of *tahriib*, are mentioned in the last line of the line group. Then in the next line group, following the conditional questions, she starts it with the word '*dadka*' (people) and asks a question with '*yaa*' (who?) and addresses the people in a vocative, '*Dalka yaa u hadhi tolow*' (Who will remain for the country, O people).

In lines 26-27, following the images of '*duqaydiyo carruurtii*' (old people and the children) in the previous line group, she brings up '*da'yarta*' (the young people), '*dumar*' (women) and '*diricyada*' (the noble people), three alliterating words that represent different groups of people in the society, together meaning everyone that goes on *tahriib* and tragically loses their lives. Here, women and women's fate in the *tahriib* are specifically mentioned in the line, however, unlike the other poems we previously looked at in this chapter, the poet is not emphasising the identity of women in particular. It is the Somali identity and the collective wounds of forced displacement that is reflected in the image of women, as well as the images of young and noble people. There is another image that also stands for the young people in this line group. That is the *damal*-trees in line 29. She says, '*Badahay dul-heehaabayaan, damalladeenniiye*', (They float on top of the seas, our [incl.] *damal* trees.)

The *damal* tree is a metaphor that was first introduced into the *Deelley* by Hadraawi, according to Ali (2015, p.140-141), and used by many other poets in their poems. Although Hadraawi didn't use this term as a metaphor, but simply used it to indicate the location where Somali men gather and discuss serious matters, it was later used by Idaajaa to refer to 'the tribal system' and the connotation of 'power' was added by Yuusuf Aadan Xuseen. However, Caasha didn't use the image of *damal*-trees to imply the issue of clannism here, but used it to refer to the young people, followed by an inclusive '*eennii*' (our). The '*damalladeennii*' (our *damal*-trees) is striking because it marks an explicit change from a third person perspective that the poet has used from the start of the *dhexdhexaad* section that I mentioned, to a inclusive first person

possessive, 'our *damal*-trees', 'our young people'. This is also the case with the '*inoo*' (for us) in line 19, '*Deebaaq qadhaadh iyo hadduu, dacar inoo yeeshey*' (If it makes a bitter thing, bitterness and aloe for us). Whereas in other lines in the *dhexdhexaad*, such as line 10 and line 12, the poet refers to Somalis as 'they', and in line 28, she says '*kuwaa*' (those who).

We see that when depicting the horrors of the *tahriib* journey, the lyric voice uses a consistent third person point of view which makes it a seemingly 'narrator'. This gives the listeners an impression that the voice is telling what is actually happening objectively, rather than expressing something personal and emotional. However, the consistency is broken by the first persons that suddenly occurred in lines 19 and 29, as I mentioned. The first person, then, breaks the distance between the lyric voice, as a 'narrator', and the objects it is talking about, which in these line groups' case, are the 'Somalis', the 'one who went away from the country in a boat', the 'young', the 'women', the 'noble people', who, are the listeners themselves and their people. When a first person is uttered by the lyric voice, the Somalis and the Somalis' experience are not 'they' and 'their' anymore, but 'we' and 'our'. It is made even more explicit by the contrast of pronouns in one line as shown in line 29, '*Badahay dul-heehaabayaan, damalladeenniiye*' (They float on top of the seas, our [incl.] *damal* trees.)

This gabay is a poem about *tahriib*, and essentially the people who are forced to suffer from it. As Caasha states in the last line in the *arar*, '*Tahriibtaa dadkeennii rogtaan, deyr ku xidhayaaye*', (That *tahriib* which has turned our people upside down, I am enclosing it with a fence). Therefore, the poet is speaking to the people, addressing them, and talking about the people. She didn't choose to address the audience or a second person 'you' repeatedly, nor did she keep a first person perspective as she did in the *arar*. However, it is through the sudden switch from the third person to the first person, I suggest, that an intensified emotion is expressed and then lingers in the listeners' heart.

Following the switch in pronoun, in lines 30-34, the voice returns to the use of third persons as the poet continues to pay tribute to the lost lives. The pastoral images of '*darib*' (camel fat) in line 31, '*Dugaaggiyo waraabaa daldala, darib sideediiye*' (The wild animals and the hyenas eat them like camel fat), is another striking use of metaphor.

A metaphor like camel fat often has a good connotation embedded in it (for example in the last line of the *arar* in 'Dookh' discussed in Chapter Three). However, here, contrary to the preciousness of this image in the common sense, the poet is saying the people whose lives were taken by *tahriib* are eaten by the wild animals and the hyenas. The '*dugaag*' (wild animals) and '*waraabe*' (hyena) images, and '*diib*' (shark) and '*yaxaas*' (crocodile) in line 30, metaphorically refer to the danger in the *tahriib* journey, the human trafficking and even possible enslavement in transit countries like Libya, as noted by Momtaza Mehri (2018, p.49).

In the next line group, the poet switches the pronouns to first person again and speaks about the problems she finds in the Somali society that forced the people to go on *tahriiib*:

35 Damac baa dadkaygii galoo, waa dawamayaane
36 Dayow waynnu wada noqonnayoo ways, dib maraynaaye
37 Dib-u-socod ayaan wada nihiyo, dawlad jaahil ahe
38 Dawarsiga ku naaxdaan nihiyo, doonis ruux kale
39 Diif aan dhammaanaynnin baa, loogu dawggalaye.

35 Greed has entered my people, they get-rich-or-die-trying[85]
36 We all became bewildered [people] and are back-biting each other
37 We are all backward moving and a polity which is ignorant
38 [Ones that] grow in begging we are and looking from other people
39 One has entered on the path of weakness which does not end

In each line of this ling group, Caasha Luul directly or indirectly points out an issue that she finds in the society. In line 35, she addresses the desire for wealth and material possessions, implying a lack of ethics and morals in the people. In line 36, she addresses the issue of clannism, echoing the debates in the *Deelley* poems. In lines 37-39, she talks about the lack of a good education, dependence on international aid, and weak state capacity. When listing these problems that the society and the Somali people face, the poet uses the first person. It brings a contrast with the third person point of view in

[85] The word '*dawamayaan*' seems to be a word that is not included in the dictionaries. I used the translation by Clare Pollard in Asha (2017) for this hemistich.

previous lines. As if the lyric voice is telling that 'the young, the women, the noble people' in the previous lines, 'they', 'were put out to dry at the back and at the side of the coast', because 'greed has entered my people', 'we all became bewildered' and 'we are all backward moving'. There is also a sense of 'they have suffered from the *tahriib*', but still, 'we are all backward moving', and 'we are looking from other people'. Having the sense of *soomaalinimo*, the poet is using this separation from 'they' to 'we', that is from the third person to the first person, to appeal to the responsibility, integrity and sympathy, and to call on the people to make change. 'They' wouldn't have to go on *tahriib*, if 'we' take actions and do better. The use of the third person plural pronoun 'they' indicates a more 'narrative' mode. However, in changing to the first person she is moving to a more lyric mode and thus the poem engages with the listeners in a more direct lyric manner. While the pronouns 'they' or 'their' in the lines stand for the blurred lost ones, the 'we' pulls the audience back from the pictures of the imagined 'shores', to the lyric 'now' where the poet presents her poem to send her message and the experience of the poem by the listeners becomes more a first-person experience and more direct. This is a feature of the lyric mode rather than a more 'narrative' mode.

I shall now move to the next line group, which consists of lines 40-47, and is also the final line group of the *dhexdhexaad* section.

40 Afartaa intaan dabar ka furay, diirad ma ku eegey
41 Darajada Ilaah baa baxshee, mawga furay daaha,
42 Doorkaa abwaannadu horey, uga daliilsheene
43 Deelleeyda maansada horey, uga daqiiqsheene,
44 Aniguna ka dabaggeeyey oo, waan ku darayaaye
45 Waanadu kuway deeqdo ee, raacda danahooda
46 Iyo kuwa dariiqii wacnaa, diinta ku ekaada,
47 Daayinow Ilaahow ka yeel, dabargo' weeyaane!

40 Those four as I have untied a hobble have I looked with a compass
41 God brings [a person] to the position and have I opened the curtain from it for him
42 That role the poets brought as proof before for it (the argument)
43 They ground it for that in the *Deelley*
44 And I have brought (my poem) to (the *Deelley*) and I am adding to it

45 The ones that advice is generous to and which serves in their interests
46 And the ones who are limited to the good path in the religion
47 O Everlasting One, O God, make them so; [otherwise] it is destruction.

When looking at the *dhexdhexaad* as a whole, we may say that there is an opening-main body-concluding structure within the *dhexdhexaad* section. I have mentioned that lines 6-8 following the *arar*, serve as a bridge that leads the listener from the end of the *arar* to the beginning of the *dhexdhexaad*, here, line group 40-47, at the penultimate position of the whole poem, shows a similar feature. It has a concluding function similar to the *gebagebbo*, and leads the listeners from what she said in the *dhexdhexaad* to the main conclusion of the poem. There are two features that make this line group distinct from the previous lines in the *dhexdhexaad* and show a sense of concluding. First, it is the reference to the *Deelley*. The first word '*Afartaa*' in line 40, was used by Gaarriye, Hadraawi and others in the *Deelley* and other poems to refer to previous lines in the poem. I have mentioned that the alliterating metaphor '*damal*-trees' was also a reference to the *Deelley*, but while the *damal*-trees metaphor carries a meaning different to those in the *Deelley* poems in the 70s-80s, here she is using the word '*afartaa*' in the exact same way. There are hints of the *Deelley* throughout the poem, from the 'd' alliterating sound emphasised in the *arar* to the ills in the society, however, the poet didn't make a clear reference to the *Deelley* until lines 42-44, in which she says she is making a contribution to the chain. The other feature that stands out is the supplication. We have seen how she used the address to God in 'Calaf', saying '*Casiisoow Allahayoow midkaa calafba hay siinnin*' (O Almighty, O Allah, that one, don't give me such due) at the final line of a line group. In 'Tahriib', she didn't mention God up to this point and has kept her lines secular in a consistent manner until this penultimate line group. As I mentioned before, the supplication is in fact an indirect address to the audience. It adds a ritual sense to the poem which establishes a lyric event. The poet invites her audience to this event where she makes the supplication and the audience listen, relate, and reflect on the poem as they take the position of the poet's voice. By this means, the poet gets her audience ready for the final concluding line group, the *gebagebbo*.

48 Waxba gabaygu yuu ila durkine, waan dabrahayaaye;
49 Haddii dalagga aan beerannoo, doogga la abqaalo

50 Nimcadaa inoo dararaysan iyo, badaha duudduban
51 Buurahan Ilaah noo dejee, godol la soo daatay
52 Baadroolka diliq laynayee, dixaya hoostooda
53 Macdantaa dingiigtiyo haddaan, dahab ka soo saarno
54 Duunyada haddaan dhaqannoo, doobi laga buuxsho
55 Duruustiyo cilmiga lays baroo, diinta la adkeeyo
56 Dalku wayna wada deeqi laa, aynnu dib u joogno
57 Daaquudka[86] aan naarno iyo, ducufka shayddaanka
58 Khayraadku waa dihinyahee, aan dibnaha saarno.

48 May the *gabay* not move along [too far] with me; I am hobbling it
49 If the crops which we cultivate and the pasture one replants
50 The natural abundant resources which have are made a lot for us and the seas wrapped (around)
51 These mountains which God set down for us and which flowed with lots of milk ready to be milked
52 The petroleum which flows in channels and which flows beneath them
53 Those minerals which lie comfortably and if the gold we produce;
54 If we raise the livestock and fill the *doobi* from them [their milk]
55 [If] one teaches oneself the lessons and the knowledge and strengthens the religion
56 The country would have been generous to us all let us stay again
57 Let us send to Hell the evil-doer and the weak deeds of Satan
58 The good resources are untouched; let us put the lips on them

In the classic style that she proves to be good at, Caasha ends this *gabay* poem in a *gebaggebo* (concluding line group). We see that the first line in this *gebaggebo*, '*Waxba gabaygu yuu ila durkine, waan dabrahayaaye*' (May the *gabay* not move along [too far] with me; I am hobbling it) echoes with her very first line in the *arar*, '*Da'da gabayga dabuubtiyo murtida, doodda hadalkayga*' (The '*d*' of the *gabay* the argument and the wisdom, the discussion of my words). She stresses again that she is making a *gabay* poem which is considered as the genre that addresses political and serious matters, and, from a gender perspective, a genre that used to be a predominantly male

[86] '*Daaquud*' is from a reference in the Qur'an (2:256) that means 'false gods, false objects of worship'.

domain. As a woman poet, she gives her advice to the solution of the social problem of *tahriib* she has raised in the previous lines. In this line group, we also see how pastoral references are not used as images and metaphors, but are actually mentioned in the realistic sense that the poet talks about what resources are there in the country and how people should make good use of them. Finally in the last line, she uses an '*aan*' (let us) optative sentence, and delivers her appeals again to her listeners: '*aan dibnaha saarno*' (let's put the lips on them), in other words, let's do it now.

If we compare this poem by Caasha Luul with the poems made in the 1940s to 1970s. We see a gradual development in the empowerment shown in the women's poems. The poets in the 1940s were calling on fellow women to join the men and fight alongside the men for the cause of independence. Moving to the 1970s, with their political consciousness awakened, women poets then spoke up on women's rights and participation in the government, something that had to be granted by the male authorities. Now we see Caasha Luul, as a poet in exile, is not asking for any authority's permission to join any decision making circles. This poem is not about women political elites recognised by men and nor is she a politician. However, she is following the tradition in the culture that is accepted in any Somali heart, that a poet bears a responsibility and acts like a spokesperson. And she challenges the sexist restriction to women in the patriarchal society by making her voice heard through this *gabay*, and through adding to the *Deelley* chain. She shows that women have the autonomy to give their voices in the realm of politics and proves her competence through not only the theme but also the form, the language, the whole composition.

Conclusion

Dabaho *et al* note on Somali poetry in Dabaho et al (1995): '... you will never hear of a great woman poet in Somali history, while there have been a great many celebrated male poets, whose poems have been documented and memorised by a large number of people. … This, of course, does not mean there were no women poets; but the reality is that nobody, neither foreigners nor the Somalis themselves, bothered to view women's literature and the themes they talk about as important enough to be recorded. Even the women themselves did not see their importance because they had internalised the idea that their culture was of less significance than men's'.

That was written in 1995. Before that time, the only female researchers, as far as I am aware of, were Amina (1981) and Zainab (1991) and (1994) focusing on Somali women's poetry and making the earliest first-hand account of women's experiences through women's own voices. Kapteijns (1991) is another early work exploring women's voices and gender representation in the texts. The poems that were collected, translated and analysed by these pioneering female researchers form an important part of the collection of Somali women's poetry in the field of Somali Studies while male scholars like B. W. Andrzejewski found it difficult to collect women's poetry hence could not incorporate any of women's work in his anthology of Somali poetry (Andrzejewski with Andrzejewski 1993, p.1).

However, Somali women have been making poetry, for as long as poetry has been made by men. The circulation of their poetry used to be limited within a circle of female family relatives and friends, however, this has been contested by the social changes which have happened in the Horn of Africa and is even more so by the use of modern media. We see that the things that Dabaho *et al* talked about have been gradually changing in the past two decades. Not only have collections of Somali women's poetry, such as Xaawa Jibriil's poems in Faduma (2008) and Caasha Luul's poems in Asha (2017) been published in bilingual versions[87], but contemporary Somali women poets like Caasha Luul and Saado Cabdi have gained a reputation for their poetry and have

[87] There are, of course, more collections of Somali women's poems in Somali or with translation in other language that I did not include in this thesis.

attracted not only Somali listeners but also foreign researchers like myself to investigate their poems more closely.

Having only studied Somali language for a year when I first started my research, I wondered how I could appreciate the beauty of Somali oral art if I do not have a Somali ear to 'take the pleasure in harmonious sounds and poetical expressions', as Sir Richard Burton remarked in his *First Footstep in East Africa* (Burton 2019). My approach to the poems was, naturally first through the English translation available in the published works. I then quickly started looking for the repeated lines, the structure of the poems, the alliterating metaphors and asked what the poet is actually saying and why she says it in this particular way, naturally, from my experience in learning poetry in Chinese and making poetry in that language as a poet myself. That was when I realised, I wanted to explore how the detailed use of language, the pronouns, the tenses, the sound, the figures of speech, the imagery, the hyperbole, the poetic order, etc. make the poems persuative and rhetorical, as Somali poetry is expected to be. As I have written my analysis in English, these terms in English that have been conceptualised by Culler (2015) and other writers on lyrics, became tools that I have borrowed to help me make sense of the devices that are also inherent in the Somali texts. A close reading on Somali women's poem with a view to describing and accounting for the use of certain aspects of language and style with the tools of lyric theory has not been done by any other researchers. I suggest, it is the characteristics of the materiality of language that is crucial to understand the artefacts and that allow us to speak of these Somali poems as lyric poetry. I hope this thesis has shown the possibility and feasibility of approaching to Somali poetry in such a way.

During the study of Somali poetry, I constantly ask these questions: What makes a good poem? What defines a good poem? And equally importantly, who defines a good poem? To put it in another way, who decides that a poem is 'trivial' or 'unsophisticated', using Axmed's words (1993, p.22). Inspired by Kapteijn's (1999) examination of Somali women's voices from a gender prespective, I hope to have given my own answers to these questions. That is, women's poems are by no means 'trivial' or 'unsophisticated', and should not be regarded as so. Women's genres were judged as of a lower status because those who make and perform poems in those genres were judged as of a lower status. This is by no means a fair judgement, since it was not even a judgement made

through an examination of the text. In order to answer the question of whether women's poems are good, I looked into what they express in their poems, and how they express what they express.

I started my investigation with *hobeeyo*, the Somali lullabies. In Chapter 2, we have seen how a woman's life is sung about in a *hobeeyo* song, from birth to marriage, to afterlife, in short lines, and to someone who does not understand anything in the text, namely her child. It could be expressed as the mother's wishes or advice for the child, or the mother's concerns about her own life. We see Somali lullabies can embody profound messages that are deeply rooted in the pastoral and patriarchal society. This is evident in the messages like preferring a baby boy or wishing a daughter to marry into a big clan. There can also be messages that challenge the gender norms. For example, when a mother sings that she prefers a baby girl. Both kinds of messages, although opposed to each other, reflect collective wisdom of women within the patriarchal society.

This is also shown in the voice and address in the poetic language. Expressing themselves through the lines that they learned from their mothers and other women, the voice in the *hobeeyo* and other *hees* is not of the performer, but one that any woman can take. The *hees*, hence to a large extent, represent the socially constructed collective wisdom of Somali women, rather than an individual. For example, when addressing an infant daughter and expressing her 'men have done wrong to us' sentiments, the mother's voice is a collective one and it is lamenting the subordinated position of women. But it is not a message that seeks direct communication, and can only reach a 'complaint' level, behind closed doors, far from a challenge to the Somali power structure.

Occasionally, in a *hees*, we do find some space for individualism, as shown in the scenario described by John Johnson, where a wife slides a message to her husband when singing a work song and addressing the camel to avoid directly confronting the authority of the husband. Here we see, even though women do have agency in this scenario, it is still limited. They can use the *hees* as a culturally accepted vehicle to negotiate, but it is very hard to reach the level of resistance, or to break any norms.

Maanso, however, opens up a bigger space for language, and also, for individuality. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, we have seen how women poets use *gabay* and *buraambur* to describe their personal experience and opinions. Both the *buraambur* and the *gabay* have longer lines, with two alliterating words in each line. We have seen how Caasha Luul and Saado Cabdi creatively and skilfully structure their poems, 'play' with the sounds, and emphasise their ideas and emotions through pastoral and other images and alliterating words. While there is not much room for a woman to do so in a *hees*, they have more room in *maanso* to use the poetic techniques and language tools to persuade a certain target audience. The individuality is also reflected in the different identities expressed and emphasised in the different poems they make. Compared to a *hobeeyo* in which women's life as expected in the social norm is portrayed, we see Xaawa Jibriil, as a great example, recorded her whole life in her *maanso* poems. She has the autonomy to express her identities as not only a nomadic daughter or sister or wife, but also a patriot, a female activist, a woman who is not abiding by the gender norms but challenging them through poetry. The voice in her poems can be the poet herself or it can speak for a group of people. Through this voice, a women poet may bring up a matter that is not only to her own concern, but also of significance to the female group and the consciousness of the whole community.

The women poets also have the autonomy in choosing the form in which the message is delivered. The *gabay* may be chosen for its traditional function as a tool to solve conflicts or to start a poetic combat, or for its gendered prestige to declaim important political arguments that women used to be excluded from making. The fact that women poets have employed the female genre, the *buraambur*, to deliver political messages can also be seen as a form of contestation. There are, of course, many other genres that I haven't dug into in this dissertation, such as the women's religious songs called *sitaad* and the other dance and work songs that women sing. Somali women's voices, wisdom and power are embodied in these verses and I hope that future studies will look into them.

The *hees* and the *maanso* poetry by Somali women are two types of oral art where we find epitomes of Somali women's life. In both genres, we find languages that show clearly a perspective of women, their feelings and comments, more importantly, in both types of poetry, they express what they are otherwise not allowed to say. As American

poet Craig Morgan Teicher says, a poem is something that can't otherwise be said addressed to someone who can't otherwise hear it. Rather than being 'trivial' or 'unsophisticated', Somali women's poetry is an important part of the corpus of Somali literature that presents sophisticated discourses that are by women and about women. Experiencing the big and small changes in their own life and witnessing the historical events happening among their people, Somali women express their feelings and thoughts, reinforce and undermine the gender expectations and shape their social environment through the cherished form of oral poetry.

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