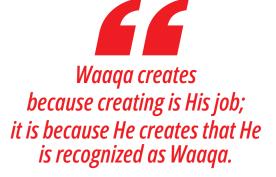
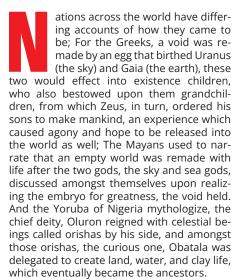
A GENESIS OF CREATION

Dhabasa Guyo as quoted by Gammachu Magarsa (Ph.D.) in the Journal of Oromo Studies issue of 2005





The above myths and most of their other counterparts share in original a state of nothingness that would become something, with divine intercession. People look to the past for meaning and in search of that 'first past', invoke sagas essentially attempting to answer one of the most, if not the most pressing question(s) of life, 'where did we come from?'. Such mythoi implant an (alleged) comprehension of national genesis for purposes of belongingness and cohesion. For without a beginning, man can not think of a continuance and ultimately an end. In association with such patterns of human understanding,

the Oromo of Ethiopia are also storytellers of their genesis. While much research remains to be done in unraveling Oromo creation mythology and cosmology we can still follow the threads of the story of the Oromo from selected studies conducted to date.

The Oromo were largely believers of the Waaggeffana faith before the mass conversations to Christianity and Islam. Despite being dwarfed by the modern Abrahamic religions in terms of number of believers, Waageffannaa still holds much significance in the way of language, norms, and ethos. And it is within Waaqqeffana that the Oromo genesis is brought to center-stage. Waaqqeffana essentialized the relationship between Waaqa (Supreme deity) and Waaqeffata (believer) in conceptualizing creation, life, and death. Yoseph Mulugeta Baba (Ph.D.), published philosopher and historiographer on Oromo studies, theorizes three notions of Uumaa (the universe), Waaga (the undifferentiated being), and Safuu (privileges and responsibilities of beings) in deciphering what he calls, the 'Dhugaa Ganama' approximated as the primordial truth in English. He recounts that, within Uumma, the totality of the animate, inanimate, and spirits exist. And all such entities were created by Waaqa, also referred to as Waaqa Gurrachaa, approximated as the Mysterious (Black) Creator, denoting the unknown and mysticality, which he distinguishes from waaga, as the small case denotes the skies. Waaga is said to be with neither a beginning nor an end and continues in perpetu-



A group of Borana Oromo men walk towards a Baallii celebration in which power is passed on to the next leaders in the Gadaa system

Soko et

al quiddity. The important link connecting all creations with Waaqa is the 'Ayyaanaa', a defining, spiritual quintessence of all creations, that determines who one is and how lives are lived. As such, it is Safuu that dictates the relationship between Waaqa's creations on earth, a norm of existing without detriment to the other's existence.

These building blocks are major tenets of Oromo theological rationale and worldview, fundamentally so for creational comprehension, Waaga is causation for all life. Dereje Hinew of Wallagaa University elucidates on how Waqaa affected the origin of life as per the Oromo worldview view:



Water holds an essential place in the oral tradition of Oromo origination, water is said to be the source from which all life came out. The name, 'Walaabuu' infers the primordial water of which Waaga created all forms of life, including human beings. Dereje Hinew incites a local saying amidst the Oromo that goes, 'Umeen Walaabuu Baate' meaning life came from Walaabuu. And as such, it is from Walaabuu that

Wagaa created the first Oromo, 'Horro'. Horro is the primeval ancestor of all Oromos, his priorship in terms of creation also names him 'Gurraacha Yaayyaa', connoting mysterious purity. Horro was upon neither male nor female until Wagaa's gaze made him into two: Horro becomes the first male and Hawwaan the first female. And so stipulates, the creation myth of the Oromo.



From such a mythical interpretation, Oromos define most things in the world. Walaabuu seems to bestow divine and universal explication, in contrast to the oft-done practice of affiliating it to a specific locality within Oromia. Walaabuu is an abstract of significance for the Oromo worldview. Creation is accorded in such a manner and life continues accordingly. The Oromo is a product of Waqaa's work and possesses Ayyaanaa, a manifestation of Wagaa in all creatures, and must abide by Safuu as long as he or she lives. The Oromo supplicates to Waqaa in time of needs with the opening 'Yaa Waqaa Gurrachaa...' and Wagaa does for thee, as he is giving. And finally, death calls upon the living, it serves as a passage to where it is called, 'Iddo Dhugaa' or place of truth to rejoin all those who departed before.

Concluded is the story of life, or as the Oromo would say, Kanuma.

Soko et

E GREAT RIFT VALLEY LAKES ISSUE | 62