

8. A Critique on Sumner's notion of Oromo Wisdom Literature

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Abstract

This article is mainly a critique on Claude Sumner's notion of Oromo Wisdom Literature. The case which provokes me to make a critique on his topic is due to its unconvincing ideas. In this article, I employ a Critical Analysis method that enables me to argue alternatively by setting out his questionable views: though Sumner has been told proverbs, folktales and songs in the Afan Oromo language, it does not mean that such expressions belong only to its people. Philosophy is becoming an intercultural; and Sumner considers the Oromo Wisdom Literature as philosophy. So proverbs, folktales and songs themselves are becoming intercultural. Those, as he contends, have philosophical context. Yes may be. But, how do we know if those expressions belong only to its people/ Oromo? Therefore, it would be wrong to claim as such, and such expressions belong to the Oromo people. Since, regardless of culture, language and terms, etc. differences, most, such sorts of expressions are found almost in everywhere or else it is easily falsifiable, so they belong either to all of us or are found at least in some societies. Though Sumner produces an anthology on proverbs, folktales and songs, this article focused more on proverbs, for folktales are mostly joyful, but myth; and songs are universal artistic feeling expressing. Before I pass to a critique, first I elaborate Oromo proverbs as much as possible.

Key words: An Intercultural philosophy, Belongingness (Ownership), Proverb, Wisdom

1. Introduction

This article is mainly intended to critique on the notion of Oromo Wisdom Literature (which emphasizes to deal with Oromo proverbs, Oromo folktales and Oromo songs. First, it has been tried to present detail explanations of his basic issues, that is, what initiates him to produce an anthology on this as well as why proverbs, folktales and songs in general are studied in philosophy or part of philosophy. Recently, not only Africans but also non-African thinkers argue that philosophy is becoming a worldwide for it is embedded in every culture of every society. This assertion disclaims to the Eurocentric view. Further, Claude Sumner contends that

proverbs have philosophical contexts. And this make them either they are philosophy or at least part of philosophy, for they indeed deliver facts that is correlated with experiences. In other words, as wisdom is interconnected with philosophy, then to deal with wisdom is slightly to deal with philosophy. To talk about the interrelatedness of two terms does not mean to say that there is no distinction between them, so we have to consider that the relationship and distinction between wisdom and philosophy as so. Wisdom refers to practical knowledge. Based on this expression, Sumner's topic Oromo Proverbs that make-up Oromo Wisdom Literature entails that proverbs that manifest practical knowledge of that people though he is sure or not if such proverbs are used exclusively in that people. First, in this article, therefore, has been explained the interculturality of philosophy, and then proverbs. Due to my belief is, if the whole, that is, philosophy is, so does its part (proverbs). In the other way, philosophy may be produced in argumentation, dialogue, etc. in writing or in oral texts; for example, through proverbs. So Sumner is right, for he gives an emphasis and study proverbs to have philosophical context though he studies exclusive Oromo Wisdom Literature (on proverbs, on folktales and on songs) becomes unconvincing. Secondly, this article stresses more on proverbs than folktales and songs, for folktales are joyful, but myth; and songs are man's feeling expressing. So it has been attempted to point out arguably to the part of Sumner's Anthology: Oromo Proverbs, for most proverbs express man's practical life; and they belong either to all of us or are at least falsifiable for they belong to others too. Proverbs are more or less everywhere that embedded in each society's culture. Indeed, there are some differences from society to society; for instance, culture, language, etc. Accordingly, it would be wrong to assert of something its being common in a distinct group of people without checking whether it does apply or not in others'. It is meant that there are proverbs, folktales and songs that have/deliver identical messages in spite of language and perhaps terms differences. Though folktales and songs are almost everywhere, it is given more credit to focus on proverbs. Proverbs catch one's mind. What brings into oneness is, the message they (proverbs) deliver no matter being sapiential or philosophical. Therefore, in order to disclaim Sumner's notion of Oromo Wisdom Literature: Oromo Proverbs, I have used three languages (Amharic, English and Tigrigna) which I can speak and listen them well. Using these languages and other sources, some justifications have been presented why there are no Oromo proverbs that can be given exclusively to its people. Besides, as no society is not sing songs, it

would be futile to argue on this issue. Thirdly, having developed this issue, and in this article, I have set out arguments against Sumner's notion of Ethiopian Wisdom Literature: Oromo Proverbs as critiques; and at the end my conclusion would go after.

2. As the Whole is, why not its Part?

Philosophy is general, for it raises questions which are basic and fundamental. Also philosophy attempts to find facts based on justifications. Nowadays, there are some philosophers that argue that philosophy is not placed in a specific area with a distinct society; rather, they contend that as it becomes an inter-cultural. And it may be produced differently, that is, it can be either written or unwritten, but what matters is its idea. We have to mind that Socrates were not a philosopher, for he wrote nothing if philosophy must be in written form. So philosophy can be either in written, texts or oral literatures. As a result, what makes a literature literature is its content. And proverbs are mostly traditional and oral, but are believed to have philosophical contents. In short, proverbs are part of philosophy. Among others, Sumner has been told proverbs in the Afan Oromo language and collected them in his journal article and in his anthology as such, and such proverbs belong to its people. This entails that its speakers are the right owners, but not others.

Logically and legally speaking Oromo proverbs, songs, etc. implies such things belong only to the Oromo people. And everyone who is a non-Oromo has to quote as the Oromo people say, "...". But, now coming back to the earlier point, proverbs are philosophical in content, so are one part of philosophy. And philosophy, as some philosophers argue, it is becoming an intercultural one. Further, as some paremiologists claim that proverbs also are becoming universals, for most proverbs may be found within every society and there are no precise and brief justifications where they developed from. Bell argues that though there are cultural differences amongst communities, there is no unique or extremely variant foundation for philosophy that is given to a particular area of people. In the other way, philosophy is an 'Intercultural' or 'Cross-cultural'. Once, he has argued critically and positively as such philosophy is an intercultural-relating to, or between, or among different cultures. This tends to lead into the question how we can understand 'Others' and 'Ours'? So as I agree with what Bell has argued in regard to this-philosophy, it is an 'intercultural' one, then first, it has been attempted to elaborate my main ideas that concern to and related with this topic as far as

possible. Having done this one, in this article, I have set out my own comments as critiques against Sumner due to giving an ownership on proverbs that belong to every language or at least to some languages. The reason is obvious as philosophy is embedded within culture, and as philosophy has many branches. Hence, the discussion of philosophy that comes from culture is Aesthetics, Metaphysics, Epistemology, Moral philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, or etc. In other words, whatever if it is a discursive one, then has a sense of philosophical point of view- that existed in the language and culture of every society in its variety forms. This invites for a critical individual to understand what we have as well as what others have- this entails that what we are, who we are; and what they are and who they are.

Accordingly, as culture bounds philosophy and we have undoubtedly cultural differences, then before being a judgmental about what others are or have ‘understanding’ accurately or ‘as it is’ will be the first option. This also may take many times until someone has become acquainted with the strange language of others. The case is that, often, it is believed that words are symbols; and symbols are representations that have meanings. Hence, a culture may be expressed in different ways. Finding methods for mutual understanding will be the first option, or a half solution. Therefore, understanding both one’s own and others’ contexts to which they connote and denote the exact and precise meaning becomes an initial situation. Language, Wittgenstein argues, is game, for uttering the same terms/words may have different contexts (cited in Ara, 2006: 50). Therefore, in order to understand one’s other specific culture, it is a must to be considered only ‘as it is’. As, words or terms that constitute statements, and may vary from a given culture to another, hence to observe something without perverting, diverting or distorting would be the central task of philosophy. This helps us to avoid a misunderstanding. Of course, philosophy seeks knowledge as well as it addresses human life. So by far, to deny the “African philosophy” that develops from its culture implies that to deny philosophy’s etymological definition-“love of wisdom.” And human life involves culture and philosophy is flourished out of that society. In light of this, Ramose argues:

To deny the existence of African Philosophy is also to reject the very idea of philosophy. It is to foreclose in advance the doors of communication with what we do not know. Yet, if the philosopher is the lover of wisdom, surely it is common sense that one cannot acquire wisdom by

improving one's skills to avoid listening to others. Hearing others is one thing but listening to them is quite another matter (2002:7). It is possible for everyone to claim as such there is no society who does not have culture. If any explanation is provided that opposes to this, it will be false. A society and its culture are two inseparable entities just like the two faces of a coin. Frankly speaking, there is a society is to say there is a culture, and vice versa. But, how can others understand that society's culture? Bell and Cavell convinced by Wittgenstein's claim, that is, first, everyone has to understand his own culture 'as it is'. And this process serves as a pillar path that may help somebody before she or he tries to understand the culture of other's. To understand what you are and what you have without aggrandizements would be the crucial point. So this is to be considered as the first step that would offer other individual/s to understand the culture of others. Wittgenstein has identified "meaning something" as "like going up to someone." The ability to translate and understand the meaning of another culture and the whole 'spirit' is almost very likeness with 'going up to someone's in his or her own culture. In accordance with this, Bell has been convinced by Wittgenstein, and then he jots down, We can learn much by analogy about works of art and ceremonial practices in a radically different culture by how go up to works of art and respond to them in our own culture. Our separation along lines of language, ethnicity, gender, and religious preferences increases skepticism about the possibility of mutual understanding between peoples and culture (Bell, 2002:198).

Furthermore, Bell advocates no matter whether African philosophy is written or unwritten (oral) texts which is philosophized by Africans, because he thinks that the foundation of philosophy is human language-out of culture and overall with the universal 'spirit.' So though he seems to argue like an African philosopher, his target is nothing, but only to understand what is produced by Africans-the "African philosophy." In addition to this, he is pleased to agree with some African philosophers that who argue African philosophy should not be produced by others, but by African thinkers. This is, he thinks, to bring philosophy into its proper place. He wants to say that if philosophy is produced in this way, or like the Western philosophy which is produced by the Westerns, then the debate of those grappler philosophers will become plausible. Its message is clear though it is not cited explicitly here, but the target is to bring the monologue Western philosophy into a dialogue or polylogue. Philosophy becomes into discussions and reflections on

a table results a mutual understanding, therefore. This enables for the positive rational thinkers so that if philosophy is a cross- cultural or not (Bell, 2002:4).

Wittgenstein notes that it is impossible to understand at random what the strange person's view is. In the other way, it is difficult to understand within a moment if a strange person has a critical, discursive–philosophical point of view or not. However, this would be possible by spending enough time until one can grasp absolutely the view of somebody else, and this would not be by hearsay, but it demands and brings individuals those who have different understandings almost in to contact- at least to 'eye to eye' or 'face to face.' Wittgenstein's argument-language is game seems to be free from subjective judgments, because through experience especially through 'seeing' is acquired more practical knowledge than knowledge which is acquired through hearing. Therefore, it may take much time in order to understand one society's culture. Having done this, one could have helped to enter into agreement- differences with differences if there are, and similarities with similarities (Wittgenstein cited in Bell, 1997:198).

Though not sure whether African and European philosophers may agree or disagree, there is a similarity for example, between Plato's the "philosopher king" with the "Oromo Gadaa System" for both pass through many educational trainings and intellectual cultivations. Unlike Wittgenstein's belief, Frazer's belief seems to have giving priority by a hypothetical over what people were doing, are doing, and what can do, hence he presupposes that rationality and/or critical thinking belong to the Westerns. Nevertheless, Bell claims strongly where the defects lay. He argues, "[i]n our own arrogance or power we may overlook or be blind to what is human in others- a characteristic of all forms of imperialism and virtually built into forms of colonialism and neocolonialism"(Bell,2002:11).

To grasp the things what one has seen and written them in general is collectively known as "an aesthetic tone of" observation. Therefore, to understand the activities such as the rites, ceremonies, and riddles of one's a strange society is to understand the society or people itself, because these people could not be otherwise (Wittgenstein cited in Bell, 2002: 9).

On the one hand, a rationalist assumes that reason is the bases of all knowledge; on the other hand, an empiricist asserts that experience is the source of all knowledge. Likewise, while a

rationalist advocates and believes in the existence of God (let me introduce the French rationalist philosopher Rene Descartes and his instantaneous Zara Yacob, an Ethiopian philosopher, but there are also some rationalist philosophers who deny the existence of God); for example, Feuerbach. Then, every normal person agrees by reason as she or he possess it. Reason is one, but the way how to reason out individual persons may vary. The disposition of reason plays almost whatever someone wants to be or to have. Then, from this expression, we can understand that philosophy is becoming an intercultural-involving almost in every society. In light of this, Gutema argues that “[i]ntercultural philosophy is a new orientation in philosophy that attempts to broaden the horizon of this field by challenging the Eurocentric assumption that there is just one philosophy for the whole of humanity” (2015:140).

3. Oromo Proverbs, in Sumner’s Understanding

Sumner collects and prints an anthology that he has been told proverbs within the Afan Oromo language: he gathers more than 1050 proverbs, but he lists one-fifth of them. The case which he initiates him to do this research is, may be due to he believes that proverbs are “sapiential” which means wise statements as well as the Oromo people, as he argues, have not written literature. Therefore, he produces journal articles and an anthology that contain proverbs with their practical explanations. Though not all philosophers accept, it is possible to have and explain what is called a “traditional wisdom.” And this can be explained in different ways. In accord with this, Mosima notes, “African indigenous peoples express traditional wisdom in various ways. First, this can be done through proverbs, riddles, and oral genres” (2016:78). There may be a distinction between wisdom and philosophy, but it does not imply that both these terms are unrelated. While ‘wisdom’ is empirical, as Wanjohi understands, but ‘philosophy’ is an ideal (1997:40-44).

Despite the above Wanjohi’s explanation on both terms, as philosophy aims at to address human life and seeks knowledge, then it would be impossible to conclude that it is purely an ideal. In accord with this, “...interrelation between wisdom and philosophy suggests that philosophy is not just theory but also practice, or that phronesis is mere wisdom and not philosophy” (Mosima, 2010:80). Accordingly, philosophy and wisdom can overlap, at least to some extent. Based on this assumption Sumner’s endeavors and establishes Ethiopian Wisdom Literature: Oromo

Proverbs is through reason, that is, wisdoms and philosophies are related and distinguished slightly. The Oromo proverbs, as Sumner notes, express empirically its people- what the art of living is. This entails that proverbs, that is, Oromo proverbs deals with or express its people experiences, beliefs-towards God, morality, ethics, epistemology or metaphysics, and how effect and cause are inter related inductively, etc. In general, no matter the shortness of proverbs in their nature, they discourse almost all the issues that are raised in philosophy. And the Anthology of Oromo Proverbs, as he sets out, is so based on Principles of selection and classification. Terms that grouped in Principles of Classification are Depth of thoughts, Psychological insights, Literary beauty, Humour, The frequency of choice in collection of proverbs, Affective connotation, Simplicity and Multiple principles. Also, terms which are categorized in Principles of classification are Association, Deed, Religion, Foolishness, Death, Conformity, Danger, Discernment, Ignorance, Consequence, misfortune, quarrel (Sumner, 1996:13-31).

a)Depth of thoughts: ideas that have contemplative or philosophical power. Some exemplar proverbs that are mentioned here are, “Where the feet carry us, there the heart is already” (Sumner, 1996:13). Now the heart is not to mean the human physical body; but that is to mean the intellect-mind. And our actions are often performed through our will. And our will that is embodied in the intellect as a tendency is that out comes either moral, good actions, if not immoral or wrong, but not both. “The heart goes where legs go” (ibid). This implies that one optimistically on events/things which can be disposed rather than merely proposed.

b) Psychological insights: perspectives which refer/indicate personalities; two instances proverbs are, “What the person hides, the complexion reveals” (Sumner,1996: 13). There should be an agent/ factor which discloses our true personality. “The one who is in difficulty has no eyes”(ibid:14). The one with lots of problems could not be the one who makes choices/alternatives.

c) Literary beauty: is concerned about aesthetic values or norms. Some exemplar proverbs that are presented by Sumner are, "A person cannot see himself, as a stone cannot throw itself" (1991: 89). The message is that one cannot exactly know his/her weaknesses and braveness unlike others do his/her weaknesses and braveness. "One has recourse to teeth in order to untie what the hands have tied"(ibid). One can create a solution/ means for the respective problems

that she/he faces. "One's own cottage is better than somebody else's palace"(ibid). What is lovely to one's life is when life is practiced per his/her own capacity; other than taking others better life to him/her. "This year it does not expand said the servant who pinch by pinch ended by eating the whole boiled corn"(ibid). It refers to the situation where the criminal begins to confess before she/he is asked to do so. "Health is wealth"(ibid: 90). It is believed that health is the source of all profits and happiness.

d) Humour: A message whose verbal skill has the power to evoke laughter. Among the many proverbs that Sumner presents are, "The day the goat decides to die, it licks the nose of a leopard"(1996:16). It refers the situation where one is acting the source of his/her problem probably his/her own death. Besides, "Not aware of its own, the dog tells the goat to lower its tail"(ibid: 17). This is proverbs refers that the one who is putting him/herself in others feet; while his/her own case is not achieved.

d) The frequency of choice in collection of proverbs: in this Sumner refers as habits or traditions are not identified in a detail why things/ events are done or said. For example, "Goodday! Good evening! He knows how to say; but how he has passed the time, his father alone knows (Sumner, 1991: 17).

e) Affective connotation: is expression that has a power to trap an attention or to give an emphasis. Two instances proverbs are, "One does not cut the tusks of an elephant"(Sumner, 1991: 91). One could not take an action up on a certain problem as long as the solution for the proverb is more problematic. Further, "The beautiful weather in the morning made the shepherd forget his umbrella"(ibid). The one who could not think for the future has not the solution at hand for the problem that will face him/her.

f) Simplicity: is to refer an uncompounded or easily understandable. Two examples are, "If they speak, people call them a hurricane; if they keep quiet, people call them blockheads"(Sumner,1991:92). There is not a situation where people are free of blame. Further, "A sole javelin is a remedy for fifty glasses"(ibid). The idea is that if one has the appropriate means of escaping; it is easier to solve whatever the problem is overdosed.

g) Multiple principles: a proverb may serve/apply for sorts of cases. An instance proverb of this selection is, "A hated thing happens to the one who hates it"(Sumner, 1991: 93). The one will be/experience what she/he thinks to be/ to be experience.

II. Principles of classification, in this the following terms with instances proverbs are mentioned

a) Association: is to refer how solidarity is power. Some exemplar proverbs to this term are, "The flood looks into the one that goes before it"(Sumner, 1996: 21). One could not think circular if she/he is in mob. Also, "Seven ignorant persons are worth more than one wise man alone" (ibid). It is good to cooperate than taking things individual what seven or more you are inborn to the things. "He has stayed with the ass; he emits farts like the ass"(ibid: 21-22). You are a making of your experience/One is a product of his/her actions or practices. Further, "No one is afraid of touching fire with someone else's hand"(Sumner,1996: 22). One could not feel others problem if she/he is not able to put him/herself in others' feet. In addition, "He who does not help his own self does not help others"(ibid). The one who has not something surplus, could not have something left to them.

b) Deed: is an evaluation of human success or failure. Here are some proverbs that represent this term. "A drum sounds as loudly as it is beaten (Sumner, 1991: 95). The one gets as far as she/he endeavors/ One will be paid based on his/her efforts. This implies that the more you lose, the more you gain; and the less you lose, the less you gain. Further, "The pot bums for the food it does not eat"(ibid). The idea that to mean one thing is inborn to scarify itself for the benefit of the other/s.

c) Religion: a tradition to communicate belief in a divine power. Many of the examples that are stated here are more or less similar with the biblical proverbs though Sumner notes those Oromo proverbs. Among the many proverbs here are two proverbs. "God's gift is better than that of man"(1991:97). What is better to you is that your creator or fate gives than that you will get 13from people. Also "God's gift is not heard"(ibid). One could not sense/appreciate what is naturally given to him/her.

d) Foolishness: it may be opposite to wisdom or it is an immaturity in thinking. Two examples are, "The fool takes the grave for his home"(Sumner, 1991:97). The one who is not cunning may

be the source of his/her own failure probably death. Further, "The fool was thirsty in the midst of water" (ibid). The one who is not cunning could not get a solution for the problem; while, she/he is engulfed with possible solutions to the problem.

e) Death: an occasion when something ends. The some proverbs among the mentioned are, "While the old cow lives, the calf dies"(Sumner, 1991:98). We can experience things ironically/What is anticipated may not practically be happened. Besides, "Living with people, but later being alone"(ibid). It indicates to the last nature call so that one could not be alive whatever she/he has been with many individuals.

f) Conformity: shows to a harmony of opinions. And since Walda heywat has stated well, so it is not a new term. But, an example is, "It is not the lamp but manners that give light to a home"(Sumner, 1991: 99). It is not what you have which makes you happy; rather, it is the way to your haves.

g) Danger: a cause of tenderness, wound or loss. Two examples are, "The dog that barks during the day does not bite" (Sumner, 1996: 30). It delivers the idea that every action has its own respective time. Besides, "The hyena has already gone by; the dog barks"(ibid). It refers to regretting that could not earn something.

h) Discernment: is a cognitive condition of someone who understands things or situations. Sumner mentions for instance, "Yesterday cannot be today"(Sumner, 1996: 30). It refers for something that we could not get again it has already been passed. Further, "Light is light for the house, but it consumes itself "(ibid: 31). Its message is to say something that sacrifices itself for the betterment/sake of the other/s.

i) Ignorance: is lack of knowledge then it can be a source of wrongness. And an example proverb is, "Children take the moon's light for that of the sun"(Sumner, 1996: 31).

Childhood/Immaturity is a stage where could not exactly identify things, situations, etc.

j) Consequence, misfortune, quarrel: the terms that are listed are more or less related with induction, probability and predictions. Further, "What has been blown away is not found again"(Sumner, 1996: 32). Something that has been deliberately left aside could not be

restructured or regained. 38) “A man comes, a quarrel comes (ibid: 33). It refers that the one that is associated or symbolized with bad coincidence.

4. Some justifications why Proverbs belong either to all of us or are at least falsifiable.

The need to use proverbs where/when they fit is due to their economical attributive, but kick their target for they are ‘sense’ and ‘salt’ (Trench, 1853:16-17). In addition to this, proverbs are needed to recapitulate society’s inductions and facts into objective wisdom later which become unquestionable remarks either on private or public matters (Mieder, 2004:1).

The proverbs those Sumner has gathered from the Afan Oromo speakers does not mean that such proverbs exclusively belong to its people. Someone may speak in his/her mother tongue; for example, let for somebody the Afan Oromo language is his/her mother tongue. And if this individual may tell a proverb/s for someone else who is not acquainted with that language, that is, now the Afan Oromo language, does it mean both individuals (the teller and the listener) disagree? Unless the listener has not caught up what the teller has told through translation, indeed both of them are neither agreed nor disagreed. And when such happenings are situated, it can be dissolved through translation which may be either into one’s own language or into others’ and to give a focus is to a translator whether she/he is familiar to that language. It is believed that, proverbs identical to/similar to theme are in fact almost everywhere.

Nonetheless, I do not mean to say that such proverbs are necessarily common word by word in every culture. What matters to understand a proverb, therefore, is its theme message or content which it delivers. Though I could neither speak nor listen other languages except Amharic, English and Tigrigna, I have used these three languages just to disprove Sumner’s exclusive claim to the Oromo proverbs. I think that everyone will agree on the mere claim or notion of what “Oromo proverbs”, speaks out-it declares that they can never belong to other societies of the world; for the claim (notion) implies that the proverbs are originated from the Oromo people. In other words, if there were Oromo proverbs, therefore, the Oromo people have the right to ownership, but not yet others. Someone does not worry if something is tangible or intangible, but let ‘X’ is theirs= it belongs to none but to them= so ‘X’ is only theirs. So Oromo Wisdom Literature: proverbs, folktales and songs= belongs to none but to Oromo people= so proverbs,

folktales and songs is only theirs. So this assertion definitely indicates about ownership. However, proverbs spoken in a specific language does not entail that they belong to that language; for instance, the English proverb that says “Cut your coat according to your shirt”; is common in the Amharic language, for its speakers dictate it like “አፍዩ ሚጎርሰው፥ እጅ ይመጥነዋል።”. Also, this proverb is common in the Tigrigna language- that is “ሳእንኻ ማዕረ እግረኻ.” The content of this proverb in all the three languages that we have seen now is the same. Therefore, I hope so such and such proverbs find almost in every society regardless of language differences, for that reason I would like to leave it open for readers. In accord with this, “the origin of most proverbs is unknown” argues Marvin (1922:4).

To make it plausible, in this article, twenty additional proverbs that are spoken within the Afan Oromo language are presented, that is, taking from Tollossa’s book that he compiles in his works (2016: 21-23), because I can neither speak nor listen that language. Shortly, the following proverbs which are commonly used in the Afan Oromo language are also commonly used for sure in the Amharic and Tigrigna languages, for their speakers use them in order to summarize expressions of things /situations, etc. And I guess highly proverbs are found almost everywhere nonetheless culture, language and terms differences. And let us see the following each proverb which is written is used and dictated in the three languages (in Afan Oromo, Amharic and Tigrigna respectively) that reflect the same content, if not similar.

- a) “Dubertin keessumma hinqabdu”; is analogue with የ ሴት[ና የ በ ሬ] እንግዳ የለውም”; also “ናይ ሰበይት[ን ቀሽን] ጋሻ የለን :: b) “Turna keessat kilen millaan adeemti” ; is similar with “ቀስ በቀስ እንቁላል በእ ግሩ ይሄዳል”; also is the very same with “ቀስ ብቅስ ፣ እንቋቋሶ ብእግሩ ይኸይድ።”
- c) “Simbirron laga laga afaan afaan dubati”; is dictated “ወፍ እንደወንዙ(አገሩ) ይዘምራል”; and this is “ጭሩስያ፣ ዘዓቕማ ትሕጎም።” d) “Bakkaacetettidaaki, daakunnaagali”; is dictated “የትም ፍጭዉ፣ ዱቄቱን አምጭዉ”; and this fits in “አብ ዘጠሐንኪ አጥሒንኪ፣ ሕሩጭ አምፅኢ።” e) “Hangan qaniin nabaahu, garbitcha abbaa kootitin heruma jette intalli”; fits in “ቀን እስኪያልፍ ያበቴ ባሪያ ያግባ ኝ” አለች ልጇቱ። And this fits in “ምእንቲ ታመገገ ፣ ትሕለፍ ታንጭዋ ” በ ለት ሰበይቲ።” f) “Harren funyo kutte jennan, ofiti gabaabsite jehde”; this concords with “አሀያ (በቅሎ)

ገመድዋን በጠሰች ቢሉት፤ ለራስዋ አሳ ጠረች”;

also fits in “አድጊ መቐየዲአ በጠሰት፤ ንባዓላ አሕፀረት። ” g) “Muka jigetti qottotu baay□yata”; this agrees with “የወደቀ ግንድ፣ ምስጥና ምሣረ ይበዛበታል”;

is dictated “ ዝወደቆያ ጉንዲስ ፣ ፍልሖን ምሳ ረን ይበዝሉ።” h) “Abju soda irriba hindhabani”; goes well with ሕልም (ቅዥት) ፈረተው ሳይተኙ አያድሩም”;

also this goes well “ሕልሚ ፈሪ ሕኻ፣ እንተይደቀስካ አይሕደርን።” i) “Qaallun ka isi himbeektum kan namaa fogdi”; fits in “ጠንቋይ የራሱን አያውቅም፣ የሰውይጠነቁላል” is analogously dictated “ጠንቋሊስያ ናይ ባዓሉ ከይፈለጠ፣ ናይ ካልኣት ይጥንቁል። ” j) “Soddata ulen saa kudhan” is alike with /identical to “የፈሪ በትር አስረ ነው።” And is fitted in “ፈራሕስያ ዓሰርተ በትሩ።” k) “Nama gadi jedhe nyaatu tchiisani kajeelu” is identical/similar with “አቀርቅሮ የሚበላን ፣ ተኝተው ይቀላውጡታል (ይከጅሉታል)”;

and this accords with “አካይድኡያ ረአምስ ፣ ስንቁ ይሕድግዎ።” l) “Harren yo sirerra kaayan, daarrarra gangalatti”; is dictated “አህያ ከአልጋ ሲሉት ከ አመድ”;

also is dictated “ሰብ ናብ ሰቡ፣ ዝብኢ ናብ ገረቡ።” m) “Na argaa, na argaa kan jettu, na dhossaa na dhossaa jetti”; fits in “እዩኝ ያለች፣ ደብቄኝ ደብቄኝ ትላለች። ” And this is dictated “ክረአያስ ፣ ይእረያ።” n) “Harren gaafan du-e, morgi hinbiqilin jettee”; its analogue is “አህያ ፣ እኔ ከሞትኩ ሠርዶ አይብቀል አ ለ።” And this is “ብድሕረይ ደንዴር አይብቆል” በላ አድጊ። o) “Quufan male hinutaalan, utalani male hintchabani”; “ካልጠገ ቡ አይዘሉ፣ ካልዘለሉ”;

fits in “ ተዘይ ፀጊቦም አይዘ ሉን ፣ ተዘይዘሊሎም አይስበሩን።” p) “Raadi harre wajiin oltu, deu dhuufu barti” ; is dictated “ከአህያ የዋለች ጊደር ፣ ፈስ ተምራ ትገባለች”;

and its analogue with “ደድሕሪ አድጊያ ዝኸደስ ፣ ጥራጥ ለመድ። ” q) “Haarren wal khittu, ilkaan wal-irra hinfithu” ; is fitted in “አህያ ለአ ህያ ቢራገጥ፣ ጥርስ አይሳበርም”;

also is fitted in “ክልተ ሓራምዝያ እንትብኣሱ ፣ ሳዕሪ የብርሱ።” r) “ Bishan dhagaa dubbisaa” ; its dictated analogue/ identical is “ውሃን የሚያናግረው ድንጋይ ነው። ” And is “ንማይ ዘዛርቦ እምኒ እዩ።” s) “Mana oromaa bareedaorra, godo ofi wayya” ; it is identical to/ similar to “ከሰው አዳራሽ የራስ ጎጆ ይሻላል” ; further, it goes well with “ዘይናትካ፣ አይንታይካ። ” t) “Nammi gabaaban utu ulfina hinqabattin dua”; is identically/similarly dictated “አጭር ሰው፣ አንቱ ሳይባል ይሞታል (ያረጃል)። Also is dictated “ሓዲርያ አድጊስ ፣ ወትሩ ዒሉ” in the Tigrigna language. All the above proverbs which have been presented may help us to show why proverbs cannot belong to a particular ethnic, or tribe group of people; rather, these proverbs

justify either they belong to None or to All. Further, Mieder notes that as the emergence of proverbs is specifically unremarkable, so it would be impossible to claim that proverbs have been found in a particular verbal communication (2004:10).

Despite the fact that Sumner notes that there are exclusive Oromo folktales and songs that assess almost all perspectives of its people, Thompson notes that “[n]o one will doubt that we are dealing everywhere with essentially the same human activity, and that the interest in a story is practically universal. Moreover the actual subject matter of folktales shows many striking resemblances from age to age and from land to land” (1946:367). Further, “[m]usic is apparently universal, being found in every known human culture, past and present. It is incorporated into a vast array of cultural events, including weddings and funerals, religious services, dances, and sporting events, as well as solitary listening sessions. It can make people feel happy or sad...” (Hauser and Mcdermott, 2005:29). The word music may be a developed term than song, for it may be helped through organized instruments. To sum up, it is a highlight that clarifies for there are no unique folktales and songs in a specific culture of a particular place.

5. Critiques

I. Sumner translates the proverbs that are told to him with the Afan Oromo language into the English proverb they fit. Therefore, first Sumner is backfired. Moreover, his work regarding this is mistaken, for he does not prove whether such proverbs are dictated or not in other cultures and languages. And here are below some proverbs which are written in the English proverbs they fit Sumner notes them as Oromo proverbs, but not in reality. Above all, the Oromo proverbs are written through translation into the English proverbs they fit; second, the three languages (Amharic, English and Tigrigna) that were acquainted with can be a good evidences to disclaim Sumner’s notion of Oromo proverbs, for these proverbs have identical/similar proverb in all the three languages; that is why, they had/have become children of experiences. Accordingly, the following proverbs that are presented in Sumner’s Anthology have identical/similar proverbs and message for sure in Amharic and Tigrigna. Because, there is no difference in message/content of proverbs, except in languages and terms or words. Therefore, in this article, I have left out purposely without expressing the message of proverbs that can have in their cultures. But one can see the following proverbs which are presented by Sumner. Hence, they are presented to see

them in analogously in Amharic and Tigrigna languages respectively just to disclaim the notion of Oromo proverbs, for most proverbs are found almost everywhere and this implies that proverbs in general belong either to All or to None. And the following proverbs that are presented by Sumner as the Oromo proverbs are also for sure dictated in Amharic and Tigrigna languages. I wish I knew other than these languages in order to provide identical or at least similar proverbs to which Sumner has translated the proverbs that are told to him in the Afan Oromo language into the English proverbs. Any way let us see the identicalness or at least the resemblance of the following proverbs that were presented in both languages; purposely this may help me to disclaim the notion of Oromo proverbs as they cannot belong to a specific language.

- 1) "Where the feet carry us, there the heart is already." This is identical to/ similar to “የአሁን እንትን ከሆዱ ነው።”; and likewise, “ዳይና ዝፈርዶ አይፍለጥን።” 2) “The heart goes where the legs go.” Is identical to/ similar to “የሰራ የእጁ የተቀመጠ የቂጡ ያገኛል።”; and also “ኢድ ሸናሒት፣ ፀናሒት።” 3) “What the person hides, the complexion reveals” This is identical to/similar to “ሆድ ያበዉን ፣ ብቅል ያወጣዋል።”; and this is the very same/similar to “ሰኪሩንያ ዝለመነካ ዳልካስ፣ አይትኸለአዮ።” 4) “The one who is in difficulty has no eyes.” Is similar to “የጨነቀው፣ እርጉዝ ያገባል።” and this is the very same/similar to “ዝጨነቐስያ ፡ ጥንስቲ ‘ዳማቱ የእቱ።” 5) “A person cannot see himself, as a stone cannot throw itself.” Is similar to “ጆሮ ለባለ ቤቱ፣ ባዳ ነው። ” Further, this is the very same/similar to “ቐቢሩንያ ዝምለስስ ፣ ዝሞት አይመስሎን።” 6) “One has recourse to teeth in order to untie what the hands have tied.” Is similar to “በእጁ ሰጥቶ፣ በእግሩ ለመነ ።” and this is similar to “አዶስያ ሂባ ትልምን።” 7) “One's own cottage is better than somebody else's palace.” similar to “ከሰው አዳራሽ፣ የራስ ጎጆ ይሻላል።” And this is the very same/similar to “ዘይናትካ አይንታይካ።” 8) “This year it does not expand said the servant who pinch by pinch ended by eating the whole boiled corn.” And this is the very same/similar to “ሆድ ሲያውቅ፣ ደሮ ማታ።” And this similar to “ኪድንያ አይትበሎ፣ ከም ዝኸይድ ግበሮ።” 9) “Health is wealth.” Is similar to “ጤና ሃብት ነው።” And this is the very same/similar to “ጥዕና ሃፍቲ እዩ ።” 10) “The day the goat decides to die, it licks the nose of a leopard.” similar to “አይጥ ለሞቷ፣ የድመት አፍንጫ ታሸታለች።”; and this is similar to “ሞታያ ዝአዘዘለ አንጭዋስ ፣ አፍንጫ ድሙ ትልሕስ።” 11)

"Not aware of its own, the dog tells the goat to lower its tail." Is similar to “ዝንጅሮ የራስዋን ገጠባ ሳታይ፣ በሰው ገጠባ ትስቃለች።”; and this is similar to “ናይ ባዓለንያ ዘይራኣያስ ፣ ናይ ‘ዳማተን።” 12) “Good day! Good evening! He knows how to say; but how he has passed the time, his father alone knows.” Is identical to/ similar to “ለተቀማጭ ፣ ሰማይ ቅርቡ ነው።” Is similar to “ንተቐማጢያ ፣ ሰማይ ቐረብኡ።” 13) "One does not cut the tusks of an elephant." Is similar to “ሁለት እግር አለኝ ተብሎ ፣ ሁለት ዛፍ አይወጣም።”; and this is the very same/similar to “ዕሽኽ አተዎ ኢልካ ፣ ዓይኒ አይንቀስን።” 14) "The beautiful weather in the morning made the shepherd forget his umbrella." Is similar to “አይነጋ መስሏት፣ ከቋት አራች።” Also this is similar to “ዘይወግሕያ መሲልዋስ ፣ አብ ቡኹራ ትሓርእ።” 15) "If they speak, people call them a hurricane; if they keep quiet, people call them block-heads." Is similar to “ብትናገር አፈኛ ይሉሀል፣ ዝም ብትል ሞኝ ይሉሀል።” And this is the very same/similar to “ተተዛረብካ ዕቡድ፣ ሱቕ እንተበልካ ዓሻ ይብሉካ።” 16) “A sole javelin is a remedy for fifty glasses.” Is similar to “ሺ ፍልጥ፣ በአንድ ልጥ።”; and this is the very same/similar to “ሽሕ ፈልዪ፣ መእሰሪኡ ልሕዪ።” 17) "A hated thing happens to the one who hates it." Is similar to “የጠሉት ይወርሳል፣ የፈሩት ይደርሳል።” Further, this is the very same/similar to “ትፅየፍኦ ፣ ሞ ትንፀፍኦ።” 18) "The flood looks into the one that goes before it." Is similar to “ዱባ መሪውን ይመስላል።”; and this is the very same/similar to “ሓምሓም ከም ፍሪኦ።” 19) "Seven ignorant persons are worth more than one wise man alone." Is similar to “ከአንድ ብርቱ፣ ሁለት መድሐኒቱ።”; and this is the very same/similar to “ከብያ ቃንጃ ብዕ ራይስ ፣ ፅምዲ አዝራብዎት።” 20) "He has stayed with the ass; he emits farts like the ass." Is similar to “ከአህያ የዋለች ጊደር ፣ ፈስ ተምራ ትገባለች።”; and this is similar to “ደድሕሪ አድጊያ ዝኸደስ ፣ ጥራጥ ለመድ።” 21) "No one is afraid of touching fire with someone else's hand." Is similar to “በሰው ቁስል፣ እንጨት ስደድበት።” and this is the very same/similar to “ዘይኩርምትኸስያ ፣ ሑፃ እን ተትቐርጥመሉ።” 22) "He who does not help his own self does not help others." Is similar to “ለራሱያ ልሆነ ፣ ለሰው አይተርፍም”; and this is similar to “ዘየብላያ እኖኸስ ፣ ካብ እምኒ ትፀንዕ።” 23) "A drum sounds as loudly as it is beaten." Is similar to “ሰው የዘራውን ያጭዳል።” Is similar to “ዝዘራኣኸዮ ‘ዩ ዝዕፀድ።” 24) "The pot bums for the food it does not eat." Is similar to “አህያ የተጫነችውን አትበላም።” and this is similar

to “ብዕራይ ዝሓረሰ ኣይበልዕን።” 25) "The fool takes the grave for his home." Is similar to “ሞኝ መቃብር ፣ ቤቱ ይመስለዋል።” and this is the very same/similar to “ዓሻስያ መቃብር ገዝኡ ይመስሎ።” 26) "The fool was thirsty in the midst of water." Is similar to “የአባይ ልጅ ውሃ ጠማው።”; and this is the very same/similar to “ወዲ ሰራሒማዕያ ፣ ዝብኢ በልዖ።” 27) "While the old cow lives, the calf dies." Is similar to “እግረ ደረቅ ይሞታል ሲሉት፣ እግረ ወፍራም ይሞታል።” and this is the very same/similar to “ታሓጓ ማይያ እንተሎስ ፣ ታሓዛይ ጠረጠ።” 28) "Living with people, but later being alone." Is similar to “ሲኖር በጋራ፣ ሲሞት በነጠላ።”; and is similar to “ሓቢርካ ትበልዕ እምበር ፣ ሓቢርካ ኣይትቐበርን።” 29) "It is not the lamp but manners that give light to a home." Is similar to “የሰው አገሩ ምግባሩ።” Also this is identical to/similar to “ንሰብ ሃገሩ፣ ፅቡቕ ምግባሩ።” 30) "The dog that barks during the day does not bite.” Is similar to “የሚጮህ ውሻ፣ ኣይናከስም።”; also this is similar to “ዝነ ብሕያ ከልቢስ ፣ ኣይናኸስን።” 31) "The hyena has already gone by; the dog barks." Is similar to “ጅብ ከሄደ፣ ውሻ ይጮሀል።”; and this is identical to/similar to “ድሕሪ ማይ ናብ ባዓቲ።” 32) "Yesterday cannot be today."; this is similar to “ላለፈው ክረምት፣ ቤት ኣይሰራም።”; also similar to “ኣብ ጥፋእ ፣ ኣይትዛረብ ክፋእ።” 33) "Light is light for the house, but it consumes itself." This is similar to “ሻማ ራሱ እየቀለጠ፣ ራሱ ይነዳል።”; also this is similar to “ጋዓትስያ ፣ ኣሎኹ ኢላ ተተንፍስ።” 34) "Children take the moon's light for that of the sun”; is similar to “የአህያ ጉያ ፣ በአምሳያ።” And this is analogue with “ምስሊስያ ፣ ኣብ ዕዳጋ ይርከብ።” 35) "What has been blown away is not found again." Is similar to “ብርሌ ከነቃ፣ ኣይሆንም ዕቃ።”; and is similar to “ተሰይሩ ዝፀገነ ፣ ከም ናይ ቀደሙ ነይኮነ።” 36) "A man comes, a quarrel comes." And this identical to/similar to “ሰው መጣ፣ ነገር መጣ።”; this also dictates ”ሰብ መፀ ፣ ነገር መፀ።”

Therefore, all the above 36 proverbs that are listed in the first critique are identical/ at least similar in context of message in all the languages that were presented. And any mature and normal individual can understand other’s proverb if she/ he is told either in his mother tongue or any else language, but if she/he is acquainted with. In accord with this, Mollanazar notes on proverbs that “a unit of meaning in a specific context through which the speaker and hearer arrives at the same meaning”(2001:53).

II. In fact, proverbs for example in the above that are mentioned and others may be found in the Afan Oromo language, for its people use/dictate them. Nevertheless, does it mean such proverbs belong to its people? Oromo proverbs imply that proverbs which are originated in the Oromo people. In the other way, other people shall have to recognize and quote them. it does not mean that to say the Oromo people do not use/dictate proverbs, but in this article, I would like to say that there is no shred of evidence that justify if such and such proverbs belong to the Oromo people. In this regard, as his works falls either to biasness or lack of expertise, so his commits the fallacy of unqualified authority.

III. Some paremiologists (for instance, Mieder in 2014:33) argue that most proverbs are distributed throughout the world from Europe mainly from Greece and Rome through translations. In other words, all non- Greeks and non- Romans who speak/use proverbs in their speech have copied from the Greeks and Romans. But, this assertion is implausible. Proverbs are the expression of human beings experiences/art of human lives. And man experiences and observes. The message of this statement is not only the Greeks and Romans can the coiners of proverbs, but also all the others. Even it is possible to check if proverbs are translated from the Greeks and Romans: 1) the terms must be copied and translated directly word by word, but not necessarily is found. 2) there are many old individual persons in every society who are illiterate, but they use proverbs when events/situations compel them to use. They can neither write the letters of their mother language nor listen others' languages. So we have not documented evidences whether such proverbs are disseminated from Europe or part of Europe. Perhaps some proverbs may be disseminated from the bible throughout the world through the adherents of Christianity; and, this may be unrecognized whether such proverbs are biblical.

Conclusion

There are debates whether philosophy can be produced through oral literatures or not. Nonetheless, to produce philosophy, writing is not a necessary condition; rather, what it matters whether it is an argumentative, a discursive or not. Oruka asserts that "... philosophy is and can be only be a 'written' enterprise; a tradition without writing is incapable of philosophy. Therefore, any claim that there is philosophy (even when termed sagacity) in illiterate Africa is a non-scientific, mythological claim. This claim too is false" (1991:1). If it is possible to produce

philosophy or a philosophical content through oral literature, so among others proverbs can help us to do so. Now, proverbs can be considered as means to produce philosophy or are themselves philosophy, for they enable us to discuss on issues that are pensive assertions. In other words, proverbs are part of philosophy. This implies that as philosophy has been becoming an inter~ cultural, so it would be impossible for proverbs to be not an inter-cultural. Philosophy is philosophy that is the love of wisdom; and wisdom is related to experience or practical. We can conclude that philosophy investigates facts of things, or philosophy is not only concerned with theory. Likewise, proverbs are changed statements, because they contain facts and ‘wisdom’ (Mieder cited in Dabaghi, et al. ,2010: 812).

Sumner produces at least an article; and then an anthology that he has been told the proverbs in the Afan Oromo language. Due to not written the literatures of Oromo people, he collects proverbs which are told to him within the language of those people. Producing an anthology is right, for it is everybody’s right. However, to claim especially as what Sumner does with regard to Oromo Proverbs without knowing what others’ cultures/ languages have is unconvincing. Because *Ethiopian Wisdom Literature: Oromo Proverbs* implies that proverbs that emanate from the Oromo people, but never from otherwise. In the whole part of philosophy, as Bell, Ramose, Wittgenstein, and so on claim, understanding and listening the cultures of others in their language as exactly what they are/have is a one thing that enables to make an assertion either in similarity or in difference from that of others. And proverbs may have contemplative arguments. So proverbs are part of philosophy or are themselves philosophy though they may be traditional. Accordingly, proverbs that may be found within one culture and/or language have to be checked whether they dictate or not in any other culture or language, as our emphasis must not on words or on terms; rather, what proverbs deliver, that is, the theme message is sufficient. The notion of *Ethiopian Wisdom Literature: Oromo Proverbs* that is produced by Sumner implicitly dictates that proverbs which originated by its people, but in this article, I believe that the topic itself, which Sumner coins is unlikely, as there are proverbs in every society which are dictated/used and expressed identically or at least similarly regardless of language differences. Consequently, I set out some critiques argument against this topic by developing related titles that have double~ barrelled: which means, on the one hand, it help me as a means to refute Sumner’s exclusive notion of Oromo Proverbs; on the other hand, it help me logically to lead

into the view of an inclusive right or to None. Ethiopian Wisdom Literature: Oromo Proverbs, as Sumner argues, are either sapiential or go along side with philosophical statements. Yes may be! However, there is no shred of evidence if proverbs are evolved from a unique society; rather, they are found almost everywhere or at least such kind of expression is falsifiable enough. So it is logically impossible to assert that there are proverbs of that society. That is why Mieder notes that “[e]ven though for most proverbs their creators will never be known...” (2014:32). Further, it has been shown that as songs are worldwide, and folktales have semblances globally; it follows that Sumner is mistaken for he argues exclusive Oromo Wisdom Literature that is why it has been reasoned out as proverbs, folktales and songs(music) belong either to None or to All, but not to otherwise.

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