

Paper title: The Revolutionary Sense in Ahmed Gumma's Poetry

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Abstract

In December 2018 Sudan has witnessed the birth of a revolution against the former regime of President Omer Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir. The revolution led to the fall or collapse of that regime. For the cause of this revolutionary movement many Sudanese young men and ladies have offered their lives generously as a dowry to this change. Many academic works studying the new situation of Sudanese political atmosphere have been done as well. Ahmed Gumma, a famous Sudanese poet and academician, endowed his poetry for creating a spirit of resistance and fight against the regime of Al Bashir. The present paper expresses gratitude and honor to Gumma Siddeik. It aims to study the revolutionary sense in Siddiek's poetry. A qualitative mode of research has been applied to reveal to what

extent his revolutionary sense has affection on his writing. The current chapter sheds a light only on revolutionary poems of Siddiek: “A message to a sniper, A message to a Sudanese General, Step Down, For Freedom, Freedom is a State of Mind, From Prison to Persistency, Despite Despite, etc... ”. This chapter concludes that Siddiek’s poetry was greatly affected by the unrest in Sudan: the injustice, inequality and humiliating and underestimating the people in all aspects.

Key words: Revolution, Revolutionary, Freedom

Background

C. Eloghos (2015) examines the revolutionary poems of Tayo Olafioye in order to demonstrate how his radical thought is depicted in his poems. To achieve this purpose, a study of one of his collection of poems entitled ‘A Carnival of Looters’, has been undertaken. In this study, we discover that proverbs are the central technique used in depicting critical ideas in the poems. It concludes that proverbs are used for expressing reformative messages as means of mobilization and conscientisation of the masses in order to achieve a social change.

N. Diana (2019) held a study that highlights the interdependency between poetry and political activism. Reviewing resistance, the researcher develops her literary criticism of the two poems in the light of the views of Steven Buncombe, James Scott, Charles Tripp and David Jefferess. A study of cultural resistance maintains a perspective of Gramsci’s war of position/ war of maneuver and shows that opposition can be elaborated into political activism. Resistance as opposition attacks colonial capitalism and

economic fascism which foster a Manichean dualism of the social divisions between the bothered poor and the dominant rich. Examining undeclared resistance, there is a discrepancy between the hidden and the public records of the text, award of the techniques of infra political writing so as to understand the messages written between the lines. Being intertwined with revolutions, resistance art intensifies traumatic pain so as to lead to its redemption. Resistance as transformation advocates a change of the policies which do not maintain human equality such as colonialism and state capitalism, and thus defending human liberation. In the two poems, a poetic insurgency and transformative revolution emanated from an experience of suppression. The poet's rebellion against the colonial existence motivates a decolonization and transformation paradigm. Similarly, cultural hegemony and class stratification encourage a counter-hegemonic action against the institutionalized oppression of civil society.

B. Valdivia conducted a study on Latin America. It says protests are almost a way of life. Political conflicts, war, invasion, and submission, are the continuous experiences from past centuries to present. Some philosophers, as we established before, think Latin America as a world region having a serious search for identity, since each stage of its past seems to be a destruction of any possibility of feeling the life as a normal property of human beings; and seems, too, an expulsion from its proper self. Because of this historical feeling of

not belonging, Latin America has only one stage for self-recovery or redemption: the future.

D. Auerbach (2010) revealed that the British Empire set off an explosion of poetry, in English and native languages, particularly in India, Africa and the Middle East. This poetry – largely neglected the scholarship on nationalism – was often revolutionary both aesthetically and politically, expressing a spirit of cultural independence. Attacks on England and the Empire are common not only in native colonial poetry but also in poetry of the British Isles. This article discusses some of the most influential poets, including: Shawqi of Egypt, Tagore of India, Rusafi of Iraq, Yeats of Ireland, Iqbal of Pakistan, Greenberg of pre-State Israel, and Kipling, the ‘poet of empire’. In contrast with other empires, many poets were inspired by British culture to create revolutionary art and seek political independence. Most strikingly, British rule was instrumental in the revival of vernacular Hebrew poetry after 1917 as the centre of Hebrew literature shifted from Odessa to Tel Aviv.

S. Hassanin (2020), in her study "Nationalism in Bader Skaker" concluded that Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab’s use of mythical and symbolic figures shows the impact of foreign and Arabic poetry on the history of humanity. It Appears that Al-Sayyab restored the ancient mythologies of his nation and exchanged them with Anglo-American culture to handle the praxis of life and reflect the verifiable circumstances of the Middle East, particularly that of his nation, Iraq. This paper re-evaluates Al-Sayyab’s poetry from a different

perspective which reflects the socio-political unsettling within the Middle East. Al-Sayyab does not essentially duplicate Eliot's methods, symbolism and themes. Rather, he mixes them with his legendary vision to form wealthy and widespread national poetry without neglecting or sacrificing the national orientations of his poems. The relationship between Al-Sayyab and other poets is one of subversion and alterations; not essentially one of simple ongoing impacts. Al-Sayyab progressed the myths utilized by Eliot and other poets and changed them to modernize his poetry. Critically, he utilizes myth in an organized and systematic way to compare the current subjects of his lyrics against inaccessible and legendary ones.

Relevantly **H. Ali (2021)** in his study "The role of Arka Sabir's songs in the Sudanese Revolution" states that Despite the simplistic language that the legend Arka Saber used in his poems, finding equal words for the revolutionary expressions was one of the challenges faced by this paper. As many Bejawiet speakers preferred to call Arka the ' Beja Revolution Poet', others loved to call or nickname him the 'Professor' because of the rhetorical devices he used in his songs to enhance the Beja Congress Principles. In one of the interviews with the journalist, Othman Aadab, the poet Arka said, 'The Beja locals who were fully involved with authority and high political positions in the established government stigmatized us with disbelieving at sometimes and lack of objectivity at others; therefore, there had to be another way of addressing the issue by looking out of the box, in order to convince these leaders as well as the public people'. Arka Saber

used a huge number of Arabic origin words in his poems to easily convey the message to the established government, from one side, and also to allow the accessibility to the meaning of his words to the other partners in the Sudanese revolution, especially those who do not speak Bejaweit. In this sense, he used deep and well-structured expressions that can accept more than one possible meaning. Thus, whoever listens to his songs was proud of him as he was calling for nationalism and Sudanese unity as well as the regional soul in his poems.

Statement of the problem

Students have positive attitudes towards reading poetry so this study is an attempt to encourage them to develop the taste and sense of patriotism through reading as well as analyzing epic poems.

Questions of the study

1-To what extent do the revolutionists have the sense to taste the epic poetry?

Objectives of the study

To identify the readers with how epic poetry can address some life issues of Sudanese and African community in general.

Analysis of Siddiek's Revolutionary Poems

Dr. Ahmed Gumma is a famous Sudanese poet. He wrote more than ten Poems in English. In his poems he usually addresses different issues like war, injustices, and oppression. Dr. Gumma is a graduate of a prominent educational institute (University of Khartoum). He is serving as associate professor of English language at the faculty of Education, English Dept. Alzaeem Alazhari University. He wrote his

famous poem ‘Prison to Presidency’ in 2018. The first stanza of the poem points out the toughest conditions faced by the former president of South Africa and how he lived in reclusiveness and loneliness. Furthermore, he describes how Madeba cell was surrounded by water and horizons that signify the freedom.

Siddiek, in his poem ‘Step down’, is honestly and frankly requesting the country leadership to give a way these promising youth to advance towards the stability and prosperity of this land, mentioning that the freedom is originated in their good and defensive souls. Moreover, he gives many examples to highlight that the tyrannical regime is the main cause behind the poverty and the destitute of this nation as they are not allowed to pursue or do anything or activities for the sake of this great and fertile land. He urges the President to step down because his regime is behind the indignation as well as the collapse of this nation. He depicts this situation in the tears of youth and adults. This despotic regime is continuously creating discontent and annoyance among the nations and it usually acts impulsively and without any consideration or forethought plan. The unjustified and awkward policies can lead to frustration and anger among the nation. That is why the poet insistently imploring the despotic regime to step down. These increasing calls for the president to quit and hand over the power to a civil led government, to be elected consequently. A legitimate and authoritative body of civil representatives can be made to run the government temporarily. He warns Mr. President (head of transitional

government) that he would face a bad destiny predicting that the events will not happen as they have been planned and things can turn out differently than the expectations.

Step Down

Dr. Ahmed, in the poem ‘Step Down’, asks Mr. President (head of the army led transitional government) to relinquish and give up power to the civil-led government. The army- led government betrays or dishonors the latest agreement signed by the two parties, He noticed that the Army led government is not willing to hand over power to the other party. So he is urging them to stop killing the civilians and committing atrocities against the Sudanese innocent young people. Despite all these invaluable pieces of advice, they insist on torturing, killing, displacing, and starving their own industrious and miserable people. Through his poem, he expresses that the army led government is increasing the mistrust among the people. This mistrust is caused by dishonoring the aforementioned agreement at Khartoum which was attended and honored by the international community representatives. With reference to poem lines, it could be observed that the army led government is behind all the brutal acts committed in different parts of the country. Therefore, Gumma in his poem, implores or begs them to step down and allow the revolutionist youth to participate in the formation of the new democratic civil led-government.

From Prison to the Presidency

Nelson Mandela was born on 18th of July 1918 in South Africa and died on 5th of December 2013, in Johannesburg. Mandela was the first black to rule the country and end the country's apartheid system of racial segregation and ushered in a peaceful transition to majority rule.

In the first stanza of the poem "From Prison to Presidency", the poet mentioned the miseries and toughness that the prisoners had to bear by describing the environment of the place where they resided in. They were surrounded with water from elsewhere (natural factors). Among angry sea giving it some human qualities (imagery) that sea can take revenge. It refers to the solitary confinement and how difficult it was. The first stanza points out the mercilessness of tyrannical regime of that time and how unfairly they treat their own people. In the second stanza, he describes that how Mandela and his companions were chained and sent to a remote small cell for no logical and convincing reasons; they only refused the segregation made by this tyrannical and colonial regime. These strivers publicly decide to live with dignity or to die. There is no other option. In the third stanza, it is observed that Mandela and his all fellow men were sent to their new homes; the oppressors sent them to the confinement. They were big in numbers. Although they experienced a very miserable situation, yet they were very optimistic that one day they would win their case. The element hope kept them very cheerful. The fourth stanza of this poem depicts that Nelson Mandela and his

companions are heading towards the dark cell with the heavy iron fetters. He promises his fellow men that the dawn will appear any way; they were not desperate despite all the adversities they encountered during this painful and unforgettable journey.

The fifth stanza points out the state of these young men, although they were feted and sent to jail but they did not lose hope that one day they would be unleashed and there would be no more sorrow.

The six stanza refers to the moments when Mandela and his fellow men face their destiny fearlessly; without any sort of cowardliness or sadness. Finally, their dreams come true... From Prison to Presidency... By Dr. Ahmed Gumma.

In the first stanza of the poem '**Despite Despite**', the poet portrays the resistance made against the dictators of Sudanese governors. Despite the modern weapons and terrible tools like 'Antonov' and 'Klashinkof'---- the poet still resists and holds fast to his stand and fights against the tyrannical power. In the second stanza, Siddiek explains the way how these dictators disperse and crash the citizens. The poet is committed to remain steadfast supporter of people's right of having their own civil government no matter how brutally he is treated.

The third stanza continues explaining the usage of these "killing weapons" against the innocent and barehanded people. The poet expresses that despite the sounds of oozing planes, missiles,

losing of souls, everywhere tearing bitterly and heavy arsenals of army; struggle of the people will never come to an end.

In the fourth stanza, Siddiek speaks to the army as they oppress and kill the people for the sake of power satisfaction. Moreover, rapping the young girls speaks volumes about the rapists and their heinous crimes such as the humiliation of people, injuring people's fertility. Despite all these atrocities against the civilian population, resistance will continue and people will give birth to more children. The poet also sheds a light on the bad deeds of these dictators; long captivity, false pride, arrogance, vanity and rips. These people with drought lips and fighting peacefully will not stop and will remain struggling.

Then Siddiek praises the girls despite the burden and sense of responsibility towards their country, the rapes that they suffered from will remain pure and virgin to bring many children for the country.

In stanza 8, the poet discusses the effects of war; the oppression, terrifying people and forbidding them from living a normal and a peaceful life and having a civil government. Also, it forbids the children from having the normal rights like milk, toys, and playing games instead filling them with fear and sever horror. Above all this, still there will be long tough cold nights, hearing rains, hunger, diseases and sever unbearable pains.

Siddiek in his poem "**a message to a sniper**" speaks to the sniper who obeys the orders of army and also tries to send this message to all snipers who kill the people on the basis of these cruel

orders. In this poem Siddeik explains the way how a sniper wears his disgraceful mask, the mask of hatefulness to do all this dirty job for the sake of pleasing his arrogant "military governors".

Siddiek asks this sniper to come down on the ground in the muddy streets of town, tries to convince the sniper to give up doing dirty deeds against the innocent armless people especially the young ones. With more sorrow Siddiek also speaks to the sniper to shoot him straight to the right place, a dead point in the body like head or chest, then send a report to his chief, take some rest and then get ready to kill others.

The poet asks the sniper to come down to have a good chance than killing from a distance or from the top of a building or from elsewhere. It would be a treasured opportunity to set his gun towards him and raise his voice empowered with his gun. Furthermore, the poet still speaks to the sniper that he can meet face to face at the moment when the sniper can shoot him into the eye, to the right eye and make me die, but on the street, the muddy ones of the country. Also you can aim at my head. So much the better you should come down to the ground and shoot me and stand on my feet with your army boot.

The poem shows that the brave heart and courage never escape rather kiss it. And we can play the game of cat and rat "a sniper" but won't run to show his back to the sniper or to leave his track. All this give the sniper a good chance to kill with cold blood on the street, on the muddy streets of town. **Siddeik** also shows the fondness of how

the sniper is skillful in the way he shoots and kills aiming at people's heads at a distance but ironically, he is aiming at their chests. The poet asks the sniper about guys he sets his gun to shoot in their eyes, and also asks about their names. Do you know the victims? Or it is just a random guess and then pull the trigger of the gun to kill them. After killing them, send the report to the military chief that "mission is done"!

What is more the poet wonders is about the skills of the snipers and how good are they ironically? Also their taste of selection of doctors and teachers to customizing them to sniper's shoot. Asking the sniper about the assassinated people "Are they humans?" Or they are mere-creatures to waste their lives for five-pound bullet. Teachers who teach the children and enlighten their future, the doctors who take care of ailing people and provide medicines to the patients; "Are their lives so easy to waste?"

"Eagle on Top" in this poem, the writer represents himself in the form of a free eagle, and in spite of all the enemy's unlimited power and strength he continues to fight though he had to go through a lot of pain. He suffered from a long prison and the restrictions surrounding him. He remained and acted like an eagle in the wide sky, flying over the valley, free in the vast plains.

In **"For Freedom"** the writer believes that we should not wait for freedom as it never comes by waiting, rather we must bring it with our own hands; for it is a goal and a destiny; it can only be obtained by seeking it diligently and not giving it up; and it is so far away like

the stars for those who wait for it without trying to reach it and just watch them.

In “**Forty One Kandaka**”, the writer salutes the forty one women describing them as very brave and strong women who faced criminals with unarmed hands and describes them as Kandakas. The Kandakas went to defy the murderers of their countrymen and to take their rebel with bare hands, free of weapons and without fear and with all courage they expressed their anger in order to frighten their enemy and they went to the square without fear of retribution. They defied general’s warning and his orders and went to the prison proudly and bravely. They believe in what they came out for and are well-determined to achieve it. So, they raised their voice for their rights and justice for victims. Raising the flag of their own country high, as well as celebrating victory with bare hands and hoping that there would be no guns in the hands of snipers in the future.

They came from different regions and from multiple environments. Husbands, workers, students, teachers and sons, all fall with the same goal; united by disobeying orders and defying soldiers. They came from all parts of the country to get freedom and to have better life. With hearts full of hope and courage, they came from all sides and united to change their country; to change Sudan; to bring about this change with their bare hands free of weapons. Annoying what it should be and trying to achieve it with all courage. Therefore the poet raised his voice in the favor of forty one women and expressed the Kandakas in all aspects of the country.

“Freedom is a state of mind” Here the poet describes himself as a bird in a cage, and that his house is the prison in which he is living his full life, and this situation is very strange from his place. He can see the blue sky but it is very high above his head. The roof of cage is closed and whenever he tried to fly to see what was in the sky, a thin wire pulled him down and brought him back to the cage and drowned in anger but he still feels free and happy and can sing, also. He sings the melody of freedom for his beautiful country and he doesn't care about being locked in a cage, rather he lives in another era that does not look at his condition; and never looks back. So, he is always happy and free despite everything he is going through. Freedom in his opinion is a state of mind.

Summary

Siddiek's poems center on the brutal acts of the colonial and despotic regimes of this era, who legalize and endorse the policies of injustice, torture, oppression and killing of innocent young and promising people. He explains the constraints as well as the strict measures that servicemen do when they face any peaceful protest or turmoil in the region. Moreover these poems are epic in which the poet encourages the demonstrators to carry on and not to give up the fight against the tyrannical power. His poems give many examples about the struggle of the iconic South African leader, Nelson Mandela and how he fought for both the white and black domination and his long journey strife from prison to presidency. He portrays Mandela' becomes globally the father of modern democracy and justice.

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