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BLESSED AND BANNED: SURVEILLANCE AND REFUSAL IN SOMALI DIASPORIC ART & LITERATURE

Abstract
This essay examines the work of twenty-first century Somali Anglophone writers and artists, analyzing how they confront the connected experiences of displacement, migration, and surveillance. The work of Warsan Shire, Diriye Osman, Ladan Osman, and Ifrah Mansour embodies place-based transnationalisms that resist stereotypical media and political representations of Somali refugees as invasive and dangerous, especially gendered clichés of Somali, Muslim men as inherently violent and Somali, Muslim women as universally oppressed. Through writing, art, and performance, these works reveal how the state prevents communities from caring for one another through state apparatuses and articulate instead a right to mutuality and caretaking.

INTRODUCTION

Decades of civil war, drought, famine, and international shadow wars have forced millions of Somalis from their homes. That instead of safe harbor, Somali refugees are received with hostility and suspicion is the subject of London-based, Somali poet Warsan Shire's most well-known works. Shire writes about exile in her poem, "Conversations About Home (at the Deportation Centre)," lines of which made their way into her poem, "Home." One image that repeats itself in both poems is the transformation of home into a perilous space: "No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark."[1] These words became popular for signs and readings at protests across the United States after Trump announced the Muslim Ban in 2017.[2] Shire also gained international attention when pop star Beyoncé used her poetry in her visual albums, *Lemonade* and *Black is King*.[3] These two examples of circulation—US protests against anti-Muslim racism and visual albums by a Black American artist celebrating Black families, women, and history—illustrate how Shire's poetry resonates transnationally in its resistance to anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-Black racism.

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In this essay, I examine the work of twenty-first century Somali Anglophone writers and artists, analyzing how they confront the connected experiences of displacement, migration, and surveillance. The advent of the twenty-first century has seen an outpouring of Somali Anglophone cultural production, emerging from Somalia's rich oral poetic traditions in concert with genres like the novel, short story, and visual arts.[4] The work of Warsan Shire, Diriye Osman, Ladan Osman, and Ifrah Mansour embody place-based transnationalism that resists stereotypical media and political representations of Somali refugees as invasive and dangerous, especially gendered clichés of Somali, Muslim men as inherently violent and Somali, Muslim women as universally oppressed. The border control and deportation centers that appear in poems like Shire's "Home" indicate larger structures of nation-building and surveillance. Through writing, art, and performance, these works reveal how the state prevents communities from caring for one another through state apparatuses and articulate instead a right to mutuality and caretaking.

This essay has three sections, the first describing the contexts that Shire is writing against: paranoiac political rhetoric and media stereotypes. Journalists, pundits, politicians, and even Hollywood filmmakers routinely describe Somalia in terms of clans and lineages, relying on anthropological models of segmentary lineage structures.[5] Somali kinship systems have been co-opted as technologies of colonial systems, both during colonialism and after independence, as reductive "ancestral clan" disputes are used to explain complex geopolitical events and rationalize interventionist policies. Catherine Bestemen shows how this model makes the "Somali structure appear fundamentally divisive and resistant to state-building efforts," and how in the media, Somalis become "cartoon-like images of primordial man: unable to break out of their destructive spiral of ancient clan rivalries, loyalties, and bloodshed."[6] These stereotypes show up in coverage of the civil war, piracy, and refugees. Touching on popular cinema, journalism, political tweets, and campaign rallies, I look at how media justifies surveillance and exclusion. Collective care and resistance, as practiced by the artists introduced in the sections that follow, counter the dehumanizing strategies of the Western media, while revealing the potentialities inherent in counter-archives and their transnational circulation.

The following section examines the poetry, visual art, and performance of Ladan Osman, Mansour, Diriye Osman, and Shire, all of which mediate on the experience of migration. The final section

concludes with a discussion of the 2019 Soomaal House of Art exhibition in St. Paul, Minnesota. I argue that Shire's poetry, along with the literature and art discussed, refuses assimilationist or multiculturalist paradigms. In her study on Somali communities in diaspora, Cawo Abdi writes,

> Migration is viewed as involving people moving across administrative or political borders for a period of time to improve their economic situations. In other words, they are seen as agents. Refugees, by contrast, are often viewed to be the victims of circumstances—civil war, political persecution, environmental catastrophe, and so on.[7]

I use migrant and refugee interchangeably in this essay to unsettle this hierarchy of need and agency and to be inclusive of the children of refugees. Shire describes her drive to write: "Character driven poetry is important for me—it's being able to tell the stories of those people, especially refugees and immigrants, that otherwise wouldn't be told, or they'll be told really inaccurately. And I don't want to write victims, or martyrs, or vacuous stereotypes."[8] I ascribe to Shire's refusal to humanize her already human subjects. In their encounters with US and UK hierarchies of gender, race, sexuality, and citizenship status, these artists do not promote discourses of inclusion or rights as resolutions to their experiences of exclusion.

My analysis is informed by Kia M. Q. Hall's Transnational Black Feminist framework which she utilizes as a theoretical counterpart to Black freedom movements and grassroots activism in Black communities.[9] Hall outlines four guiding principles, beginning with Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality and including scholar-activism, solidarity building, and attention to borders/boundaries. [10] First, Hall employs a multi-axis analysis of power to address oppression and injustice; this approach enables a reading of the works in this essay as conceptualizing intersectional and coalitional identities. The framework of intersectionality attends to what Donya Alinejad and Sandra Ponzanesi call the "transnational multi-sitedness" of Somali diaspora, meaning that these artists and their art inhabit multiple spaces that are inflected by gender, class, race and racialization, religion, generation, and relationship to homeland and nation.[11]

Second, attention to borders includes geographic borders crossed during migration, oceans, border checkpoints, and militarized

borderlands. It indicates the borders within the nation created along lines of class, race, and citizenship status, such as segregation, redlining, and counter-terrorism initiatives. As Melis Mevsimler argues in her research on second-generation Somali British women, "Although diasporic identities and cultures are often theorized as deterritorialized and spatially unbounded in the age of intense mediated communication and sociality, they are also localized phenomena."[12] Together, attention to intersectionality and physical borders enacts a transnational framework, articulating complex, heterogenous modes of belonging outside the limitations of nationality and citizenship. It emphasizes the crucial global structures that shape identity, while attending to the racialized, gendered, diasporic, and location-specific exigencies embodied by these texts.

Hall's emphasis on solidarities enables a reading of this literature and art together as imagining possible affinities, futures, and kinships. I use this framework within the context of Christina Sharpe's "the wake," which she uses "in all its meanings as a means of understanding how slavery's violences emerge within the contemporary conditions of spatial, legal, psychic, material and other dimensions of Black non/being as well as in Black modes of resistance."[13] Sharpe describes her project thus: "I want to think of 'the wake' as a problem of and for thought. I want to think 'care' as a program for thought. I want to think care in the wake as a problem for thinking of and for Black non/being in the world."[14] I scaffold my analysis with these principles—living in the wake of slavery and its afterlives, solidarity building, attention to borders, and intersectionality as critical inquiry and praxis—to explore how these artists locate their work in multiple histories of exile, colonialization, and racism; in various transnational spaces; and in private and public domains. I look at how they imagine living and caring in the wake Sharpe elaborates. The use of Shire's poetry on protest signs and in Beyoncé's visual albums epitomizes the transoceanic exchange these works make possible, as art and literature that traverses borders, refuses anti-Black, anti-Muslim racism, and emphasizes community, as part of the ever-widening field of transnational Somali art in diaspora.

"VACUOUS STEREOTYPES": POPULAR MEDIA AND POLITICAL RHETORIC

Somalia's decades-long civil war evinces the enduring consequences of colonialism through which imposed borders became fault lines for continuing conflict and civil war.[15] The history of colonialism in

Somalia is defined by the intersection of different colonial governments—namely, the British, the French, and the Italian. The variations in governance and divisions created by the European colonialists led directly to Somalia's specific history of conflict and migration. The partition of the region into British Somaliland and Italian Somalia created "linguistic, political, juridical, and economic variations" which then contributed "additional divisions and hierarchies to the dynamism of Somali society" that continue to reverberate post-independence and reunification.[16] Following independence were decades of neocolonial interference, including Italy's foreign policy, Soviet and US attempts to control the region during the Cold War, the diminishment of US aid under the Reagan administration, and the deployment of United Nations troops in Somalia in the early 1990s. Bestermen shows a link between colonial representations of Somalis as tribal bound and in need of civilization and contemporary explanations of the Somali civil war as "caused by primordial rivalries, feuds, and a peculiar propensity for violence."[17] The persistent othering of Somalis rests on one-dimensional understandings of clans that obscure colonial histories and complex dynamics of race and class.

Reporting on immigration often elides the history in which colonialism helped create conditions in the global South, and how contemporary globalization puts pressure on the global South. Somali immigration in the United Kingdom, for example, is historically linked to the British colony of Somaliland but increased during the 1980s; now the UK is home to the largest Somali community in Europe.[18] The combined effects of post-9/11 politics and the global war on terror contribute to the conditions that force migration while emphasizing the securitization of borders. Embedded within these nationalist narratives of Western civilization battling Islamic terrorism is growing hostility towards immigrants, specifically Arab and Muslim migrants, hostility that is exacerbated for Somali migrants in the US and UK by anti-Black racism. For example, Cawo Abdi writes of how Somali Americans encounter correlated prejudices as their Arab identity and Muslim faith "become bases for their otherness in the American context, an otherness further exacerbated by their racialization as black Africans."[19]

Popular media, however, does not reflect these realities, instead positing Somalia as a pathologically failed state in need of Western intervention. The two most famous cinematic portrayals of Somalis are the Hollywood blockbusters *Captain Phillips* and *Black Hawk Down*.

Both films are based on books, *Black Hawk Down* on journalist Mark Bowden's bestseller about the 1993 US military raid, and *Captain Phillips* on Richard Philip's memoir of the 2009 hijacking of the container ship *MV Maersk Alabama*. The Somalis of *Black Hawk Down* are feral, and as Ashley Dawson notes, these "denizens of urban slums embody a terrifying global Other, inhabitants of an anarchic and violent world that is treated as a product of its residents' inherently pathological behavior."[20] Other forms of media reinforce these discourses, from journalist James Fergusson's *The World's Most Dangerous Place: Inside the Outlaw State of Somalia*, which claims Somalia threatens the security of the *entire* globe, to the bestselling "insider" memoirs of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, in which Somali culture and Islam broadly are described as backwards and misogynist.[21]

The media blames the phenomenon of piracy off the coast of Somalia on the inherent ferocity of Somalis, without reference to the exploitation of maritime resources or outlying hegemonic power relations. Intersecting factors led to predatory *and* defensive piracy, including state decay and collapse, but also as a result of illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing, and toxic waste dumping by multiple external actors, exacerbated by predacious corporate practices and unequal relations between Somalia and states of the global North.[22] These factors don't make it onto the screen; instead, as Aman Sium writes, the rebel-pirate is used as a symbol of Somalia as a failed state. They are depicted as "antithetical to the modernizing project and represent the fears, apprehensions, and foremost contradiction to Western whiteness."[23] Accordingly, the pirates of *Captain Phillips* are ruthlessly violent, unprepared, unstable, anti-American, and without context—versus the impeccable goodness of Tom Hanks and the slick machinery of the US military operation that saves the day. In real life, crew members filed lawsuits against Maersk Lines Limited and Waterman Steamship Corporation for negligence.[24]

Media representations bolster US justifications for pursuing intervention and invasion while simultaneously safeguarding ethnic nationalism and punitive immigration policies. In 2015, Trump campaigned for a "complete and total shutdown of Muslims entering" the US, and specifically targeted Somali refugees during a Minneapolis campaign rally, telling Minnesotans they had "suffered enough" and referring to Somali immigration as "the disaster taking place in Minnesota."[25] He repeatedly railed against Minnesota Congresswomen Ilhan Omar, who was one of the four representatives Trump told to "go back" to the "totally broken and crime infested places from which they

came."[26] During a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, he claimed Congresswoman Omar wants to "make the government of our country just like the country from where she came—Somalia. No government, no safety, no police, no nothing, just anarchy."[27] All of these examples play on racist tropes that Somalis cannot authentically belong to the US and racialize Islam as nonwhite and decidedly un-American, vilifying Somalis to justify racist policies like cutting off US remittances to Somali and the Muslim Ban, which included Somalia in all its iterations.

The US has a long history of military intervention in Somalia, including supporting dictator Siad Barre in the 1970s, the disastrous 1993 US military raid in Mogadishu, and military operations post 9/11. Stephanie Savell, co-director of Brown University's *Cost of War Project*, says of US military intervention: "This history has been characterized by blunders, errors, atrocities, impunity, collusion, corruption and a very high toll on Somali civilians."[28] The Obama administration's clandestine US war in Somalia included drone strikes and combat troops; subsequently, Trump "rolled back Obama-era rules on covert drone strikes" and his administration oversaw a "drastic increase in the number of strikes in Somalia, expanding the shadow wars that began under Obama."[29] The US counterterrorism strategies against terrorist organization al-Shabaab killed civilians and exacerbated conflict, creating conditions for increased migration: "Caught between the extortion of al-Shabaab and US bombs, Somalis are struggling to forge secure livelihoods and self-governance. Millions have fled their homes to take refuge both within Somalia's borders and beyond."[30] The response to increased Somali asylum-seekers in the US has been to create Counter Violence Extremism (CVE) programs that specifically target Somali communities.

Among the many meanings of Sharpe's wake are the "narratives of danger and disaster that attach to our always already weaponized Black bodies."[31] Coverage of the civil war, piracy, and even kinship systems participate in this weaponization: each is depicted as inevitable disaster born out of innate violence and instability. The US and UK response to refugees as assumed potential threats promotes this narrative within the nation. Sharpe writes of living in the wake on a global level, and for Somali refugees it includes "living in and with terror in that much of what passes for public discourse *about* terror we, Black people, become the *carriers* of terror, terror's embodiment, and not the primary objects of terror's multiple enactments; the ground of terror's possibility globally."[32] Somali

people are not subject to terror through colonialism and shadow wars, but rather enact terrorism on the seas and against one another, and spread terror like a virus through migration.

The Obama administration initiated CVE programs in 2011, and its White House CVE Summit's "Building Community Resilience" fact sheet singled out extremism in Minnesota Somali communities as a pressing issue.[33] The Minneapolis CVE program was one of several flagship programs that infiltrated social services, community groups, religious institutions, and public schools. Jeffrey Monaghan calls these kinds of projects security traps which "affirm the authority of security experts to define and manage the terrain of legitimate knowledge surrounding various sources of social threat(s), . . . resulting in narrowly constructed domain of freedoms."[34] Security traps rely on radicalization discourses that normalize the perception of Somali communities as inherently violent and are linked to pre-CVE policing practices in which social welfare systems are used to monitor poor and nonwhite populations.

CVE programs mimic previous state surveillance programs (including of Black civil rights activists) and are not unique to the US. The rise of right-wing ethnonationalism under Trump has UK corollaries in the era of Brexit, which include the normalization of surveillance mechanisms like the policing of familial life. Somali communities in the UK, for example, argue that they are being unfairly targeted by female genital mutilation (FGM) prevention programs, including having their children taken by social services without cause.[35] These kinds of programs are premised on gendered stereotypes: young, Somali men are predisposed to radicalization and terrorism, and must be thwarted by cultivating informants and racial profiling vis-à vis crime prevention; and Somali women must be protected from subjugation by Somali men. In their ethnography of Southern California's CVE programs, Azza Basarudin and Khanum Shaikh investigate how these initiatives invade the family and rely on gendered logics, specifically the affective labor of women as mothers. They describe how "in the United Kingdom, many state-led initiatives target Muslim women by way of 'empowering' them" and "conceptualize women as permeable entry points into spaces that harbor intimate knowledge."[36] These media depictions and political policies serve as the backdrop for the works analyzed in the following section. A recurring trope in the work of Diriye Osman, Ifrah Mansour, Warsan Shire, and Ladan Osman is the gendered domestic sphere as a paradoxical site of intimacy, safety, and danger.

GEOGRAPHIES OF KINSHIP

In Ladan Osman's poem, "NSFW" (Not Safe for Work), the speaker rehearses a list of Black American artists—Michael Jackson, Prince, Diana Ross—interspersed with histories of anti-Black violence and intimacies like braiding hair. The speaker says, "I want to give you my history of blood, of dirt, of police / of teachers, of social workers, then laugh / with all our teeth showing."[37] Sharpe writes of artists that represent "the paradoxes of blackness within and after the legacy of slavery's denial of Black humanity" and says that "to be in the wake is also to recognize the ways that we are constituted through and by continued vulnerability to overwhelming force though not *only* known to ourselves and to each other *by* that force."[38] "NSFW" marks that denial of humanity, naming the murder of Oscar Grant and the "names we forgot" the "ones that history took."[39] Yet the speaker also asks for secret touching under tables, making babies, and crawling together under blankets. Vulnerability to force coexists with other forms of knowing. In this poem, Osman maps forms of knowing, kinship, and intimacy that are embodied and inherited: touch, skin, breath, lineage, progeny.

Somali Anglophone writers are creating counternarratives by drawing on Somali culture and, often, Islamic scripture and practice, as one of their archives. As Osman's poem demonstrates, they also draw on counter-archives: namely Black American art of resistance. Asante, Sekimoto, and Brown demonstrate that for African migrants the relationship to Black American identity is complex:

> Being Black for those born in the United States is linked to a collective sense of shared consciousness embedded in memories of pain, dehumanization, and continuous battle against racism with which Black migrants might be unfamiliar (Madison, 2005; Pierre, 2013). The differences in collective memory, sense of belonging, and cultural locations can cause tensions in how the participants negotiated their subject position as Blacks in the United States as opposed to being black in their country of origin.[40]

Furthermore, they state, "being and becoming 'Black' in the United States is also about negotiating agency" and that the process of negotiating their Black identity is "contextually contingent, nuanced,

complex, and sometimes contradictory as individuals search for a sense of embodied agency and selfhood within spaces where Black self is entrenched in the collective experience."[41] Similarly, Mevsimler's research reveals how British Somalis must negotiate transnational contexts and intersectional identities. First, Muslim identity differentiates British Somalis relative to other East African immigrants, as some participants in Mevsimler's study believe that because of their Islamic faith they are perceived as Arab. Furthermore, these participants "perceive being identified as Arabs a racial and cultural identity imposed upon them by the Christian-majority Black African communities in London. In this context, they emphasize how important it is for British Somalis to express their unique identities as Black Muslim Africans."[42]

In addition to Ladan Osman's poetry, Diriye Osman is another example of an artist using his work to negotiate transnational cultural spaces and defy the binary logic of home/host nation. For example, he publishes his work in multiple venues, including *Queer African Reader*, *Decolonizing Sexualities*, and *Black and Gay in the UK*. By doing so, he locates his writing in various junctures of identity and genre, including sexuality, race, geography, colonial history, scholarship, and activism.[43] Similarly, Ladan Osman's book of poetry, *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony*, threads multiple associations throughout its poems, naming a lineage of Black American women writers, including Claudia Rankine and Toni Morrison, as well as delving deeply into US histories, referencing the murder of Trayvon Martin and the Charleston shooting. These texts revise hegemonic social narratives about what it means to be Somali, Muslim, Arab, Black, and a refugee, while acknowledging the contingent and nuanced connections describe above.

Ladan Osman meditates upon borders in her writing, noting in an interview how her poetry addresses restrictions on space and "limitations of what we do or what we are made to do. And what is to be avoided, especially when ways of being or telling signal too much freedom."[44] Osman was born in Somalia and grew up in Columbus, Ohio, a US city with a large Somali immigrant population. In her prose poem "Section 8" she writes of housing from a child's perspective, beginning, "The afternoon me and Cuckoo find out it's not the name of our neighborhood, we laugh until we're drooling and choking on our spit."[45] Imagining they live in a neighborhood called Section 8, they learn perhaps about the assistance they receive, but also how Section 8 bounds and marks the spaces in which they can live and move. The

poem clocks the daily humiliations of poverty: bulk food boxes, donated toys—and some travails are specifically for refugees: "I have to write my parents are 'separated' on the free lunch forms."[46] Because single mothers are more likely to receive benefits, the erasure of fathers and familial units begins in the instance of seeking asylum and continues during resettlement. Yet, her poem ends with what might read as merely childhood sharing but reflects a larger sense of mutual allocation and rapport:

> Then we are back to double-rides and going halfsies on freezies from the corner store, and it doesn't matter that our parking lot is full of cars all day and night, and that everyone writes their parents are 'separated' on the school papers when everyone's father is upstairs or outside doing God knows what.[47]

These final lines indicate shared experiences of underemployment (those cars parked all day) and state restrictions on family-making (separated), but also the sharing of rides and food and summertime fun.

Many of the poems of Osman's first book, *The Kitchen-Dweller's Testimony*, evoke domestic spaces, revealing domestic labor as a site of sometimes nurturing and sometimes trauma, and even, at times, liberation. The poems in this volume are strewn with hot ovens, spices, and teapots. In "Women Brewing," rage is personified as too hot tea but also as a balm that prompts confidences. Tea and trauma are often expressed in one breath, thus a speaker of "Words We Lost in the Water" declares: "If Somali *hail* fell from the sky, it would be cardamom. / The sidewalks would release its scent under our heels, we would fill / burlap bags with it, odd grains of rice mingling in the tea," and ends "*Chest* and *bullet* are twins / separated by a handsome jaw, a beauty mark. / There my brother is *Victorious* / and not the odd grain in the sieve of my father's heart."[48] The mother figure appears again and again as a symbol of caretaking. "Verse of Hairs" begins, "First, a chapter on the hammock a mother's skirt makes / for her daughters' head on Sundays," moving on to describe the intimacy (and sometimes pain) of doing her daughters' hair.[49] But mother and wife and daughter are also figures under pressure; they are the Kitchen-Dweller who presents her evidence and testifies on her own behalf.

These poems of domesticity and family life are juxtaposed with the trauma of conflict and exile on one hand—the chest and bullet as

twins—as well as meeting the nexus of US racism. In the introductory poem of the volume, "Silhouette: at a Claudia Rankine reading, University of Chicago, 2011," Osman implicitly includes herself in a lineage of Black women poets, while framing the poem through unbelonging to this elite world of the university. The speaker says, "The colonizers couldn't have dreamed it, / the preoccupation with the heights of my soul, / my intangible qualities."[50] Osman's second collection, *Exiles of Eden*, likewise draws together intersecting images and identities; it too dares the radical act of care. The title suggests the Qur'anic story of exile from paradise, standing in for exile from homeland. It also points to exile from self and other, as many of the poems narrate the dissolution of a marriage. The title overlays an image of a young Black person in a red hoodie with only their hands visible. The hoodie signifies Trayvon Martin's hoodie, whose name Osman invokes in the poem, "After the Photograph of Emmett Till's Open Casket, 1955." "NSFW" cites the dying words of Eric Gardner in its conclusion, "I can't breathe / I can't breathe / I can't breathe."[51] *Exiles of Eden* ranges through this multiplicity of spaces and times, anchoring the poem in US histories of violence, but mediates these spectacles (and the exploitative fetishization of violence against Black bodies) through its speakers, who are often reflecting on their own encounters with these images.

Minneapolis-based multimedia and performance artist Ifrah Mansour also deliberates on the private, familial sphere and exclusions from public belonging in her work. She was featured in the Twin Cities PBS series *Minnesota Original*, and her visual poem, "I am a Refugee" is part of PBS's online 2018 film festival. Her installation, *My Aqal, Banned and Blessed*, premiered at the Queens Museum in New York in the 2018 exhibition, *Executive (Dis)Order: Art, Displacement, & the Ban*. Made up of eight traditional Somali nomadic homes (*aqal*) draped with alindi fabric (a Somali textile), the installation represents the eight countries affected by the ban. The homes traditionally represent domestic privacy, nomadic mobility, and refuge from the elements; yet here they stand empty, immobile, and on display. They symbolize the translocation of culture and tradition from one homeland to another, a continuation of practice and homemaking in the US prevented by the ban. They stand together, signifying solidarity amongst these different nations. Mansour also contemplates public and private spheres in her installation, *Can I Touch It*, featured in the 2018 Minnesota Institution of Art's exhibition *I am Somali*. A human figure kneels, arrayed in alindi fabric which evokes a hijab as it encircles the figure's head. The fabric

pools in front of the figure, surrounding a television screen showing Mansour wrapping her head in cloth. The fabric crawls across the floor and climbs the wall, upon which is projected a watching eye. Mansour describes the piece as about "the story of privacy."[52] Can I touch it? could be an intrusive question asked of a Black woman about her hair or of a hijabi about her head covering; it could be the request asked of the refugee to recount trauma and let us feel it. It is, as the vigilant eye attests, about the invasion of privacy: the eye watches the intimacy of Mansour's actions onscreen, as though watching a show, yet the figure and its fabric envelop the private scene, perhaps in a gesture of shielding.

Mansour's one-person, multimedia play, *How to Have Fun in a Civil War*, also delves into invasions of domestic spheres, again using alindi to denote Somali heritage and a safe haven. Performed by her at the Minnesota Children's Theater and the Guthrie Theater, among other venues, *How to Have Fun in a Civil War* evokes trauma without reenacting violent acts. It does so through the inner and sometimes outer monologue of a seven-year-old girl as she experiences the beginning of the Somali civil war, meaning that the audience neither sees nor hears violence, but must imagine and intuit what is happening around the girl.[53] She interacts with an enormous puppet draped in alindi fabric, which is her mother, and inside of which she sometimes hides and peeps out through burned holes in the fabric. The mother figure is a metaphor for care and safety; it is a figure that is at once safe harbor and, when her brother dies and she describes her mother's mourning, a source of anxiety as she struggles to understand the adult experience of conflict and loss. Mansour's play does not narrate an official history or timeline of war, and it does not designate clans or sides, a deliberate choice to embrace all Somali and Somali American audience members and involve them in its telling. The play, in scenes in which strangers share food and milk around a fire, and stop to offer rides and solace, emphasizes communal responses to conflict and shows violence itself as violation of not just bodily sovereignty and safety, but also as the desecration of caretaking rights.

The play includes voice interviews of a specific generation talking about their childhood memories of war, as well as about their elders' reluctance or refusal to speak of it. These interviews are overlaid with video images of hands preparing, pouring, and fussing over *shaah adays* (Somali tea), invoking, again much like in Osman's work, communal enjoyment of drink and the mobility of cultural practices. The hands are shot from directly above, the camera centralizes the tea

and frames the hands without revealing faces, and there is no indication that the hands match the voices we hear. The videos reveal connections between tea rituals and storytelling, as the movement of hands seems to conjure stories from the very preparation and pouring of tea. The background videos center the table as cultural space that moves with diaspora and provides, with its immovable frame, security. In contrast, the stage stands in for hundreds of miles of movement, fleeing from home on foot, in the back of a truck, alone as a family and congregating with others. The stage becomes the passage site, with Mansour's constantly moving body signifying the excesses of childhood energy along with the terror, confusion, and trauma of war. She becomes still upon the death of her brother, narrating her mother's grief immobilizes her. The space of the stage, indeed the space inside the mother puppet's body, reads at different points in the play as immense and claustrophobic, moving at once across enormous distance and encircled by violence.

Somali British writer, Diriye Osman, likewise writes about the complexities of filial relationships, whether in Somalia or in diaspora. He questions the idea that culture is intractable, understanding it instead as kaleidoscopic and negotiable, evidenced by his admixing of language, image, and text. He writes, "I come from a community that has been emotionally and psychologically traumatized by decades of civil war, mass migration, and dislocation; a community that has through sheer collective willpower and survivalist instinct managed to rally together to form the tightest, most close-knit networks, with family life as the nucleus."[54] He writes of experiencing homophobia and rejection from his community and family, but instead of rejecting his own Somali heritage in turn, he taps the Somali tradition of storytelling to write characters that "hold onto their sense of humanity and optimism without the need for apology and victimhood."[55] These stories make up his collection, *Fairytales for Lost Children*, which explores queer experiences in Somalia and diaspora.

Except for the first story which is told from the perspective of a mother, the stories coalesce into a coming-of-age story as the protagonists age through the collection from childhood to early adulthood. The inside pages include Osman's black ink drawings and Arabic calligraphy, and the characters speak English, Kiswahili, Somali, Jamaican patois, and Italian. On the cover, Osman stands in an Elizabethan dress with one hand pressed to his chest. The image bends every category to its will with Osman dressed in richly decorative folds of silk, adorned with jewels, his face made-up over the stiff collar. It

troubles gender binaries of feminine/masculine surely, but also defies the presumed whiteness of the Elizabethan period, amending aristocratic and English history to include himself. He wears, triumphantly, the dress of the colonizer, without adapting himself to its ostensible heteronormative, racialized, and classed norms.

Fairytales for Lost Children chronicles inventories of exile as the settings track physical movement; it begins in Somalia, moves through Kenya, and ends in England. Physical exile from Somalia and queer exile from kinship and belonging are mapped onto one another, displacement playing out on the body itself. The first story, "Watering the Imagination," is told from the point of view of a mother in Somalia whose daughter is in love with another woman. The narrator begins by asserting her rootedness in Somali soil; yet her daughter comes home at night "smelling of sea and salt and perfume."[56] The mother's lines, "We take our voices and our stories to the sea" has multiple meanings: mother and daughter physically walk the shore to give their secrets to the water; her daughter takes herself to her lover; Somali people take to boats to cross the sea.[57] The mother speaks of creating their own mythologies and her devotion to following her daughter into the future, a form of acceptance that most of the other characters long for and do not find.

Bernie Lombardi reads "Watering the Imagination" as highlighting the "possibility of filial recognition for queer freedom in Africa," noting that recognition is important for considering "Somali/Africa as both a geographical place—a site of physical attachment—and ontological state—the nature of being and belonging as prescribed by ideology."[58] In practice, this means the conflation of Somalia as physical place *and* as transferable from parent to child through culture can mean punishing exile from both place and family. And yet, if displacement marks the body, so does sensuality and self-possession. Characters luxuriate in the pleasure they give one another and themselves. One character describes shifting stratums of home: it is her Eden and her Janna, her family, her lover, Somalia, Kenya, England, and, finally, "Home is in my hair, my lips, my thighs, my feet and hands."[59] Indeed, in their close attention to the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality, the expressed desire for prayer in the face of religious denunciation, the stories attend to and dissolve boundaries. In the final story, "My Roots are Your Roots," a Jamaican man says of his Somali lover, "There are no limits, no borderlines. The secret garden leads to the marigolds of Mogadishu and the magnolias of Kingston and when the heat turns us sticky and sweet and unwilling to be

claimed by defeat we own the night. We own our bodies. We own our lives."[60] The stories, when read from beginning to end with this arch towards possibility in mind, bring to fruition the futurity the mother imagines through the final lovers' dual mingling and autonomy.

Even as it imagines transformative kinships, *Fairytales for Lost Children* grounds its characters in the psychic hardships of exclusion. Displacement, too, is incarnate in Warsan Shire's poetry, often on the bodies of women and girls. In "Ugly, "a daughter carries whole cities in her belly," her "face is a small riot, / her hands are a civil war, / a refugee camp behind each ear."[61] The brutality of migration is spelled out in injury, as in "Conversations About Home (at the Deportation Centre)" in which the speaker tears up and eats their own passport and is "bloated with language I cannot forget"; borders are described as "foaming at the mouth with bodies broken and desperate"; and "it feels as like someone else is wearing my body."[62] The passport, "lines, the forms, the people at the desks, the calling cards, the immigration offer" are the monitory bureaucracies designed to discipline the migrant and enforce the imaginary borders on the sea. Yet these boundaries drawn on maps are brutally real, as the Gulf of Aden is bloated with bodies "because all of my children are in the water."[63] Here Shire references the notoriously perilous passage across the open seas in which thousands of migrants have died; and yet home is an oceanic creature, the "mouth of a shark." [64]

The speaker of "Conversations About Home" describes a home disappearing and a home unwelcoming, "I watch the news and my mouth becomes a sink full of blood" while "I hear them say *go home*, I hear them say *fucking immigrants, fucking refugees.*"[65] Shire's poem embodies the vulnerability and proximity to death, the "archives of the everyday of Black immanent and imminent death" that Sharpe describes.[66] The poem also attends to the "largeness that is Black life, Black life insisted from death," which is wake work: the work of recognizing, memorializing, imagining, and resisting in the wake of slavery and its afterlives.[67] This wake work is embedded in how the speaker refuses to be either an object of rescue or carrier of terror: "All I can say is, I was once like you, the apathy, the pity, the ungrateful placement and now my home is the mouth of a shark, now my home is the barrel of a gun. I'll see you on the other side."[68]

Jennifer Leetsch reads the sea in Shire's poetry as a space of violent rupture, but also argues that her poetry "imbues what has always been seen as a space of death and termination with alternative meaning, invested with possibilities and potential, if fraught,

futures."[69] These fraught futures manifest in popular culture in the utilization of Shire's work to create nexuses between histories and to assemble present-day solidarities: to live and care in the wake. For example, Shire's voice was amplified internationally when her work was used by Beyoncé in her visual albums *Lemonade* and *Black is King* (the visual companion to Beyoncé's album *The Lion King: The Gift*). Critics have panned Beyoncé's packaging of feminist celebrity, most notably scholar-activist bell hooks who critiques her brand of neoliberal corporatism, and one might ask whether Shire's work avoids being co-opted by the institutions (HBO, Parkwood Entertainment, Disney) that play host to her work.[70] Nevertheless, the inclusion of Shire locates the transoceanic mapping already at work in her poetry—from Somalia into exile—alongside the Transatlantic history of slavery and its afterlives that *Lemonade* visualizes in its settings: the Louisiana sugar plantations that border the Mississippi River.

CONCLUSION: ANOMALOUS EXPANSION

In 2016, the Soomaal House of Art collective staged an exhibit at the Darul Uloom Islamic Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. The exhibit's title, *Anomalous Expansion,* refers to the "strange chemistry of water: rather than lose volume when its temperature drops between 4 and 0 degrees Celsius, right before freezing, it expands."[71] In an interview, co-curator Mohamud Mumin (who curated the exhibit along with Kaamil Haider and Zahra Muse) describes the title as a metaphor:

> The properties of water allow for the top to freeze when it gets below zero, while it also supports life underneath that ice. We also utilized the etymology of the word "anomalous," which means deviating from the norm, doing something unusual. We are deviating from the norm of us only working alone and now coming together. . . . Now we control the narrative, produce the work and the theme. . . . We came here and see that under that layer of ice is life, we are able to survive and be supported.[72]

Anomalous Expansion featured the work of six Somali American visual and performance artists, including Mohamud Mumin, Kaamil Haider, Abdi Roble, Aziz Osman, Mohamed Hersi, and Ifrah Mansour. The center was formally the Catholic Church of St. John, and the artists

were invited to install their works in the former Catholic school adjoining the mosque.

The Soomaal House of Art exhibit strikingly expresses how Somali American cultural and social life, through solidarity and mutuality, is flourishing under Minnesota's legendary ice. Several of the artists used found materials in the school space, which had been vandalized, including broken glass. For example, Mumin's piece, *Al Futuhat al-St. Paul*, projected a prayer rug onto overturned pianos, making explicit the collective's use of broken spaces, in addition to what Mumin calls "spatial succession," which he understands as resistance to entropy and the transformation of sacred space into another sacred form.[73] Mumin describes how two young women volunteers had of their own initiative placed a Qur'an next to the exhibit catalogues, demonstrating how "ownership is assumed and exercised by everyone in the community," which could never happen in an art institution "where everything is controlled and nothing from the outside comes in."[74] The Qur'an and use of found materials are only a few examples of how the artists, visitors, and volunteers inhabit space, transmuting its materials and possibilities through their art and community practice.

Whereas the refugee is usually called upon to account for their traumatic experiences of war to justify asylum and elicit empathy, the works in this essay refuse the martyrdom and spectacle that Shire describes in the quote at the beginning of this essay. They are not silent victims without agency, nor are they menacing threats. For instance, Mansour's piece for the Soomaal House of Art exhibit, *Isug* (Wait) projects two videos, one on a wall, in which a woman in alindi kneels, and one on the floor in front of her, in which objects pass through hands, including a teapot, spoon, and basket. The dual screens and the woman—a kneeling figure in dialogue with an image at her feet—is reminiscent of *Can I Touch It.* Here, the video on the floor shifts to a river and a raft being pulled across water, evoking transoceanic passage. The kitchen objects that pass through the hands, one might imagine, traverse the ocean.

When read with Hall's guiding principles in mind, one can read these artists together, linking their visual and literary iterations of intersectionality, solidarity building, and attention to borders. In their writing on the global and the intimate, Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner remind us that "we tend to associate care with proximity, and we have few conceptual tools for imagining geographies of care beyond the familial or national community."[75] I argue that moments

like the shared Qur'an in the entrance to an exhibition space and the kitchen objects in Mansour's piece are conceptual tools for imagining these geographies of care. They generate solidarities with visitors while emphasizing very specifics forms of cultural transmission. There are resonances of the exhibit's resistance to entropy in Diriye Osman's alternative possibilities for kinship. The claiming of one's own space and collective exercise of agency reverberate in Mansour's *Can I Touch It* and *My Aqal, Banned and Blessed.* We can see in the steadfastness and portability of Mansour's eight blessed and banned *aqals* geographies of care across national boundaries: here are the eight banned countries, and here too is an insistence on the inviolability of domestic, familial space. Sharpe concludes the introduction to her book with the hope that wake work will travel, an apt image for the boats and oceans that Shire, Diriye Osman, Ladan Osman, and Mansour use in their work, the wake they encounter, and which trails behind:

> For, if we are lucky, we live in the knowledge that the wake has positioned us as no-citizen. If we are lucky, the knowledge of this positioning avails us particular ways of re/seeing, re/inhabiting, and re/imagining the world. And we might use these ways of being in the wake in our responses to terror and the varied and various ways that our Black lives are lived under occupation.[76]

Those responses to terror are visible in the affinities that Diriye Osman fashions through his stories and the fraught futures crafted by Shire's poetry. All these artists encapsulate refusal of political endeavors to securitize and surveille, and when read and viewed together, are emblematic of an emerging twenty-first century Somali Anglophone counter-archive that reimagines the world.

NOTES

[1] Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth* (London: Mouthmark, 2011), 24.

[2] Lily Kuo, "This Poem Is Now the Rallying Cry for Refugees: 'No One Leaves Home Unless Home Is the Mouth of a Shark,'" *African Quartz*, 30 January 2017, https://qz.com/africa/897871/warsan-shires-poem-captures-the-reality-of-life-for-refugees-no-one-leaves-home-unless-home-is-the-mouth-of-a-shark/.

[3] *Beyoncé: Lemonade*, directed by Beyoncé Knowles, Kahlil Joseph, Melina Matsoukas, Todd Tourso, Dikayl Rimmasch, Jonas Åkerlund, and Mark Romanek (Parkwood Entertainment and Good Company, 2016) visual album (HBO, 2016); *Black is King*, directed by Beyoncé, Blitz the Ambassador, Jake Nava, Dikayl Rimmasch, Emmanuel Adjei, Jenn Nkiru, Ibra Ake, Julian Klincewicz, Joshua Kissi, and Pierre Debusschere (Parkwood Entertainment and Walt Disney Pictures, 2020) visual album (Disney+, 2020).

[4] The most well-known Somali Anglophone writer is Nurradin Farah who published his first novel, *From a Crooked Rib*, in 1970 and is most famous for his *Blood in the Sun* trilogy of novels about the 1977 Ogaden conflict. His most recent work, *North of Dawn* (2018), is about Somali Norwegian immigrants, religious extremism, and diasporic formations. Another notable Somali Anglophone writer is novelist Nadifa Mohamed, whose first novel, *Black Mama Boy* (2009), takes place under Italian colonialism and the beginnings of World War II. She shifts her focus to the beginnings of the civil war in *The Orchard of Lost Souls* (2013) and then to the 1950s in *The Fortune Men* (2021), which chronicles of the wrongful murder accusation and execution of Mahmmood Mattan in Wales in the 1950s.

[5] Writing against this model, Lidwien Kapteijns argues that clanship is not a "basic and stable organizational and behavioral principle of Somali society but a basic principle of a particular and extremely influential *way of thinking about* Somali society" with a specific history and a "nefarious influence on the present." Kapteijns demonstrates that clan identities "take shape as they are performed, that is to say, as people enact and assert them in concrete circumstances and drawing on complex historical understandings." Lidwien Kapteijns, "I.M. Lewis and Somali Clanship: A Critique," *Northeast African Studies* 11, no. 1 (2004–2010): 3.

[6] Catherine Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia: Race, Class, and the Legacy of Slavery,* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 4.

[7] Cawo Abdi, *Elusive Jannah: The Somali Diaspora and a Borderless Muslim Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 5.

[8] Katie Read, "Q&A: Poet, Writer and Educator Warsan Shire," *Africa Writes*, 21 June 2013,

https://africainwords.com/2013/06/21/qa-poet-writer-and-educator-warsan-shire/.

[9] Kia M. Q. Hall, "A Transnational Black Feminist Framework: Rooting in Feminist Scholarship, Framing Contemporary Black Activism," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 15, no. 1 (2016): 97.

[10] Although I do not address scholar-activism in this essay, it is an important component of Hall's work. Hall writes specifically about grassroots organizing and Black Lives Matter (BLM) and offers a theoretical framing "rooted in Black feminist and transnational feminist traditions, that provides a coherent feminist framing for this activist work." Ibid., 89. She answers her

own question about the role of the scholar-theorist in activism by citing a long lineage of BIPOC, trans, and queer scholar-activists.

[11] Donya Alinejad and Sandra Ponzanesi, "The Multi-Sitedness of Somali Diasporic Belonging: Comparative Notes on Somali Migrant Women's Digital Practices," *Journal of Global Diaspora & Media* 2, no.1 (2021): 23.

[12] Melis Mevsimle, "Second-Generation British Somali Women: The Translocal Nexus of London and Global Diaspora," *Journal of Global Diaspora & Media* 2, no. 1 (2021): 59.

[13] Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 14.

[14] Ibid., 5.

[15] Ismail I. Ahmed and Reginald Herbold Green, "The Heritage of War and State Collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: Local-Level Effects, External Interventions and Reconstruction," *Third World Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1999): 113–27.

[16] Catherine Besteman, "Representing Violence and 'Othering' Somalia," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (February 1996): 126.

[17] Ibid., 130.

[18] Gil Valentine, Deborah Sporton, and Katrine Bang Nielsen divide Somali migration to the UK into different phases: "Around the turn of the 20th century Somali seamen came to work in the British merchant navy, when this was run down in the 1950s, Somalis moved to work in the industrial cities of Birmingham, Sheffield, and Manchester (Kleist, 2003). At this point, many of the seamen were joined by their families. From the late 1980s onwards, significant numbers of Somalis arrived in the UK seeking asylum because of the civil war. The last phase of migration began around 2000 when Somalis who had obtained refugee status and later citizenship in other European countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark began secondary migrations to the UK. The Somali community in the UK is thus characterised by different arrival scenarios." See Valentine, Sporton, and Nielsen, "Identities and Belonging: A Study of Somali Refugee and Asylum Seekers Living in the UK and Denmark," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27 (2009): 235.

[19] Abdi, *Elusive Jannah*, 200.

[20] Ashley Dawson, "New World Disorder: *Black Hawk Down* and the Eclipse of US Military Humanitarianism in Africa," *African Studies Review* 54, no. 2 (2011): 191.

[21] See James Fergunson, *The World's Most Dangerous Place* (Boston: De Capo Press, 2013); Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Nomad: From Islam to America: A Personal Journey Through the Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Atria Paperback, 2011); and Hirsi Ali, *Infidel* (New York: Atria Paperback, 2010).

[22] See Awet Tewelde Weldemichale, *Piracy in Somalia: Violence and Development in the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[23] Aman Sium, "From Starving Child to Rebel-Pirate: The West's New Imagery of a 'Failed' Somalia," *borderlands* 11, no. 3 (2012): 21.

[24] Darren Friedman, "Liability Lessons from the Maersk Alabama," *Martine Executive*, 18 June 2009, https://www.maritime-executive.com/article/2009-06-18-liability-lessons-maersk-alabama.

[25] Jessica Taylor, "Trump Calls for 'Total and Complete Shutdown of Muslims Entering' U.S.," *NPR*, 7 December 2015, https://www.npr.org/2015/12/07/458836388/trump-calls-for-total-and-complete-shutdown-of-muslims-entering-u-s; Ben Jacobs and Alan Yuhas, "Somali Migrants Are 'Disaster' for Minnesota, Says Donald Trump," *The Guardian,* 7 November 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/06/donald-trump-minnesota-somali-migrants-isis.

[26] Donald Trump (@RealDonaldTrump). 2019. "....and viciously telling the people of the United States, the greatest and most powerful Nation on earth, how our government is to be run. Why don't they go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came. Then come back and show us how...." Twitter, July 14, 2019, 5:27 A.M. https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1150381394234941448.

[27] "Viewpoint: What Donald Trump Gets Wrong about Somalia," *BBC News*, 6 July 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-53268582.

[28] Stephanie Savell, "When Is America Going to End Its Shadow War in Somalia?" *The Guardian,* 5 September 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/sep/05/ilhan-omar-send-her-back-somalia-us-foreign-policy.

[29] John Haltwinger, "New Report Claims Us Could Be Guilty of War Crimes in Somalia for Killing Civilians under 'Shroud of Secrecy,'" *Task & Purpose*, 20 March 2019, https://taskandpurpose.com/us-war-crime-somalia-report.

[30] Savell, "When Is America Going to End Its Shadow War in Somalia."

[31] Sharpe, *In the Wake*.

[32] Ibid.

[33] See "Building Community Resilience Minneapolis-St. Paul Pilot Program: A Community-Led Local Framework," The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota, February 2015, https://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/file/642121/download; "Building Community Resilience," The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Minnesota, 25 April 2017, https://www.justice.gov/usao-mn/building-community-resilience; and "White House Summit on Combating Terrorism, International and Law Enforcement Leaders," *CSPAN,* 18 February 2015, https://www.c-

span.org/video/?324398-2/white-house-summit-combating-terrorism-international-law-enforcement-leaders.

[34] Jeffrey Monaghan, "Security Traps and Discourses of Radicalization: Examining Surveillance Practices Targeting Muslims in Canada," *Surveillance & Society* 12, no. 4 (2014): 486.

[35] Rachel Stonehouse, "UK Somalis 'Racially Profiled' over FGB," *BBC News*, 13 January 2020, https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-51064309.

[36] Azza Basarudin and Khanum Shaikh, "The Contours of Speaking Out: Gender, State Security, and Muslim Women's Empowerment," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 19, no. 1 (April 2020): 120.

[37] Ladan Osman, *Exiles of Eden* (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2019), 39.

[38] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 5, 16.

[39] Osman, *Exiles of Eden,* 39.

[40] Godfried Asante, Sachi Sekimoto, and Christopher Brown, "Becoming 'Black': Exploring the Racialized Experiences of African Immigrants in the United States," *Howard Journal of Communications* 27, no. 4 (2016): 367–84, https://doi.org/10.1080/10646175.2016.1206047.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Mevsimle, "Second-Generation British Somali Women," 62.

[43] See Diriye Osman, *Black and Gay in the UK* (London: Team Angelica Publishing, 2014); Diriye Osman, *Decolonizing Sexualities: Transnational Perspectives, Critical Interventions* (Oxford: Counterpress, 2016); Diriye Osman, *Queer African Reader* (Nairobi: Pambazuka Press, 2013).

[44] Alex Dueben, "Good Literary Citizens: An Interview with Ladan Osman," *The Paris Review,* 13 July 2015, https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/07/13/good-literary-citizens-an-interview-with-ladan-osman/.

[45] Ladan Osman, *The Kitchen Dweller's Testimony* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2015), 12.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 8.

[49] Ibid., 17.

[50] Ibid., 1.

[51] Osman, *Exiles of Eden*, 41.

[52] Alicia Eler, "First Somali-American Art Show at Minneapolis Institute of Art Spans Three Generations," *Minneapolis Star Tribune,* 24 August 2017, https://hiiraan.com/news4/2017/Aug/143833/first_somali_american_art_show_at_minneapolis_institute_of_art_spans_three_generations.aspx.

[53] *How to Have Fun in a Civil War,* created and performed by Ifrah Mansour, dir. Lindsey C. Samples, Solo Emerging Artist Celebration, Guthrie Theater, Minneapolis, MN, 13 March 2018.

[54] Diriye Osman, "To Be Young, Gay, and African," in *Decolonizing Sexualities: Transnational Perspectives, Critical Inventions,* ed. Sandeep Bakshi, Suhraiya Jivraj, and Siliva Posocco (Oxford: Counterpress, 2016), 100.

[55] Ibid., 101.

[56] Diriye Osman, *Fairytales for Lost Children* (London: Team Angelica Publishing, 2013), 4.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Bernie Lombardi, "Watering the Imagination: Childhood and the Spaces of African Queerness," *College Literature* 45, no. 5 (Fall 2018): 692.

[59] Diriye Osman, *Fairytales for Lost Children*, 74.

[60] Ibid., 156.

[61] Warsan Shire, *Our Men Do Not Belong to Us* (Chicago: The Poetry Foundation, 2014), 11.

[62] Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*, 24–25.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid., 26–27.

[66] Sharpe, *In the Wake*.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Shire, *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*, 27.

[69] Jennifer Leetsch, "Ocean Imaginaries in Warsan Shire's Afro-Diasporic Poetry," *Journal of the African Literature Association* 13, no. 1(2019): 80–95, https://doi.org/10.1080/21674736.2019.1594910.

[70] See bell hooks, "Moving Beyond Pain," 9 May 2016, accessed 10 April 2021, http://www.bellhooksinstitute.com/blog/2016/5/9/moving-beyond-pain.

[71] Christina Schmid, "Numinous Anomalies: Somali Visual Art in Minnesota," *MN Artists,* 30 September 2016, http://www.mnartists.org/article/numinous-anomalies-somali-visual-art-minnesota.

[72] Sheila Dickinson, "Somali American Artists Create a Space All Their Own," *Hyperallergic*, 5 October 2016, https://hyperallergic.com/327998/somali-american-artists-create-space/.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Geraldine Pratt and Victoria Rosner, "Introduction: The Global and the Intimate," in *The Global and the Intimate: Feminism in Our Time,* ed. Pratt and Rosner (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 12.

[76] Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 22.