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The Potential Contribution of Love-Sex Songs to the Spread or Prevention of HIV/AIDS: The Case of the Oromo of Ethiopia¹

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Abstract

This article examines the potential contribution of Oromo love-sex songs to the spread or prevention of the HIV/AIDS. It also shows how Oromo love songs express Oromo beliefs, sexual values, customs, meanings and interpretations of masculinity. The Oromo recite various songs to praise love/sex and lovers; they express, in a manner as explicit as the so-called modern songs, the joy of loving, being loved and the natural energies of lovely sex. They transmit critical information about the Oromo world view by reflecting the beliefs and the values enshrined in Oromo social institutions. This study reveals that Oromo love-sex songs can encourage or discourage risky sexual behaviour. It explains how some Oromo love songs when misunderstood, can influence people to engage in unsafe sex which can potentially spread the HIV/AIDS. Although Oromo sexual ethics are being challenged by external forces, there are some love songs that can educate young people to practise safe sex. Love songs thus can help people to determine real love/lovely sex and negotiate their understanding of sex and HIV/AIDS. This article suggests that Oromo love-sex songs should be critically re-examined to determine to what degree they put lives at risk, and reflect values concerning sexuality, love and gender relations.

Keywords: Gadaa, Saffuu, HIV/AIDS, Love Songs, Oromo, Sexual Ethics

Résumé

Cet article examine la contribution potentielle des chansons d'amour/sexes Oromo à la propagation ou la prévention de l'épidémie du VIH/SIDA. Il aborde également la façon dont les chansons d'amour Oromo traduisent les croyances, les valeurs sexuelles, les coutumes, les sens et interprétations de la masculinité chez les Oromo. Les Oromo chantent plusieurs chansons pour magnifier l'amour/le sexe et les amoureux. Ils expriment, d'une manière aussi explicite les chansons dites

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modernes, la joie d'aimer, d'être aimé et l'énergie naturelle que procure une vie sexuelle joyeuse. Ils transmettent des informations importantes sur le monde tel qu'il est perçu par les Oromo en reflétant les croyances et les valeurs qui trouvent leur siège dans les institutions sociales Oromo. Cette étude révèle que les chansons d'amour-sexe Oromo peuvent encourager ou dissuader des comportements sexuels à risque. Elle explique les proportions dans lesquelles certaines chansons d'amour Oromo, lorsqu'elles sont mal interprétées, peuvent inciter certaines personnes à s'adonner à de rapports sexuels non protégés susceptibles de favoriser la propagation de l'épidémie du VIH/SIDA. En dépit de la remise en cause des normes d'éthique sexuelle des Oromo par des facteurs externes, il existe des chansons d'amour qui peuvent encourager les jeunes à adopter des pratiques sexuelles sans risque. Les chansons d'amour peuvent donc permettre à des personnes de faire la différence entre le vrai amour/l'amour du sexe et affiner leur compréhension du lien entre sexualité et VIH/SIDA. Cet article soutient que les chansons d'amour/sexe Oromo devraient faire l'objet d'un examen critique pour déterminer dans quelle mesure celles-ci ont mis des vies en danger, et évoqué des valeurs relatives à la sexualité, l'amour et les relations entre les sexes.

Mots-clés: Gadaa, Saffuu, VIH/SIDA, Chansons d'amour, Oromo, éthique sexuelle

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa has been hard hit by HIV/AIDS. So, in this era, AIDS has been one of the primary causes of death in the region. More than two-thirds of those with HIV/AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the United Nations Programme on HIV /AIDS 2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, as of the end of 2007, 33 million people in 147 countries are living with HIV/AIDS. In 2007, about 67 per cent of these people lived in sub-Saharan Africa, and 75 per cent of AIDS-related deaths occurred there too (UNAIDS 2008). It is thus important to try to understand the factors that can contribute to and block the expansion of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

In this article, I will examine the nature of Oromo love-sex songs and their potential contribution to the expansion or prevention of HIV/AIDS. The Oromo represent the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. Oromia is one of the nine administrative regions of Ethiopia. I will also show how Oromo love songs reflect Oromo beliefs, sexual values, customs, meanings and their interpretation of masculinity. Songs have the power to communicate ideas, activities and values, and can serve as a means to investigate shifts in values with the passage of time. Some love songs are segregated by gender, reinforcing gender roles in society. The message of various love-sex songs is explored in the social context of power relations and status considerations within the family and society.

Part one describes the methods used for this study. In part two, I will briefly review the works of numerous authorities on music in Ethiopian and

African cultures. In part three, I will examine how Oromo men, women and youth use love songs to seduce and establish relationships with their spouses, secret lovers and strangers. I will present love-sex songs under different themes although there is no absolute boundary between these themes. Part four deals with love songs by old men. Part five focuses on the educational role of love songs. The last part provides a general conclusion.

There are different types of songs in Oromia. In most cases, young men and women, and adults sing indigenous love songs in Oromia at different times in relation to different events. They sing individually or in groups depending on the situation. Particularly, herders sing love songs in the field without any restriction. Others sing at home, feasts, during religious ceremonies, national holidays, *gadaa* celebration (see below), engagement, marriage, social gatherings and private meetings. Some women sing different songs including love songs when they grind corn, spin cotton, and make butter and bread in rural Oromia.

Some love songs, for instance *gadaa* love songs, were not allowed in some parts of Oromia in the recent past because of government policy and the rise of foreign religions that despised Oromo social and religious values. Abyssinian rulers suspended *gadaa* as a political system in Oromo lands towards the end of the nineteenth century. There have only been *gadaa* rituals in some parts of Oromia. In such places, *gadaa* sex songs can only be sung once every eight years although youngsters may continue singing songs that have been composed by elderly people. Also, some religious people do not encourage the people to sing secular love songs. The proponents of some foreign religions even go to the extent of denying the existence of love songs. P. T. W. Baxter's observation in Kofele and Arsi, demonstrates this fact. 'Some elders, particularly pious Muslims, denied the existence of songs about love and women, but several young men, in private groups of two to four singers, were happy to sing them to me and I recorded between 150 and 160 short songs' (1974:809). Currently, *gadaa* love songs are being revived in most parts of Oromia because of government policy that allows each ethnic group in the country to promote its indigenous values. Although some modern Oromo musicians in one way or another have used some parts of traditional love-sex songs in their works, they have not yet systematically recorded explicit traditional love songs, and presented them for sale. Modern singers try to minimize explicit love songs that may be offensive to the general public. The only exception is that the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency has recorded some *gadaa* love songs, and sometimes transmits them to the public. On the other hand, modern Oromo singers have recorded their own individual songs and made them available to the public. In this article, I will examine Oromo traditional love-sex songs.

I hope my preliminary exposition will inspire others to carry it further than I have done as a researcher who is committed to such crucial problems to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS amongst the Oromo population without discrediting the value of Oromo's culture and tradition.

Methods

Both primary and secondary data were required for this study. I used both individual interviews and focus group discussions. While primary data were collected from people of all ages and both sexes in different parts of Oromia (in Ambo and Toke Kutaye districts, Western Oromia; North Western Shawa; Eastern Shawa, Kofale, Arsi, central Oromia, and Borana, southern Oromia) using participant observation, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews, secondary data were collected from published sources. I also interviewed knowledgeable elders and *gadaa* leaders from other parts of Oromia. The following criteria were used to select the study sites: familiarity with the study sites, HIV prevalence and the availability of authentic indigenous philosophy of sex and love. Most informants were selected in consultation with some experts in the Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, and government officials in the study sites. Interviews were conducted in Oromo language by the author, and three trained Oromo-speaking field assistants.

The main part of the research involved open-ended semi-structured in-depth interviews with various informants. At the end of the study 38 informants (31 males and 7 females) were interviewed. Three of the informants were Oromo *Qaalluu* religious leaders, and four of them were *gadaa* leaders. The study also involved focus group discussions in which three to eight participants discussed different aspects of Oromo sexuality, love songs and the *gadaa* system. Altogether five focus group discussion sessions (32 informants (22 males and 10 females)) were held in the study sites. Each focus group comprised between three and eight persons. Some informants were not interested in the subject of sex, and others did not want to discuss sexual matters with strangers. In particular, some women were reluctant to respond to my questions about love-sex songs. So, I was required to explain the purpose of my research to obtain the confidence of the informants.

My students in both the regular and extension programmes in 2006 have collected some songs in different parts of Oromia, for which I note my thanks. I am grateful as well to Tamene Bitima, Engineer Abera Bekele, Alemayehu Diro and Dereje Dugassa for sending me some love songs.

Anthropologists, sociologists, ethnologists, historians, musicologists and philosophers have studied love songs in different parts of the world, and their publications have proved valuable sources, complementary to my own findings.

In this article, the Oromo *Qube* script, adopted from the Latin alphabet, has been used to write Oromo words. But I have used the usual English spelling for the names of individuals and places. Most of the authors did not correctly write down Oromo words, but I corrected them for this purpose.

Literature on Songs in Africa

The brief review that follows highlights some of the key debates on different aspects of songs. There are different types of music in Africa. Cradle, love, historical, general, work, religious, and environmental songs are some of the common types of songs in Africa (Abrokwa 1999:200). According to Kofi Agawu three types of music can be identified in contemporary Africa: traditional, popular and art music (2004:405). African traditional institutions nurtured traditional music, one which includes the ceremonial and ritual music; this music is associated with funerals, dirges, laments, and various forms of sacred drumming. The root of such musical genres is in pre-colonial Africa.

By contrast, Africa's encounter with Europe since the end of the nineteenth century has given rise to popular music. 'The musical language of popular music typically fuses European with African elements, including diatonic or modal melody, hymn-like harmony, memorable rhythmic *topoi*, and verbal texts broaching topical matters and drawing on techniques of African oral poetry' (Agawu, 2004:405). Popular music is available on records, cassettes and CDs. Singers use instruments like guitars, violins, woodwinds, the pianos and organs, the accordion, saxophones, trumpets, drums and rattles. The mass media for transmission of popular music include radio, television and oral performance in dance halls, clubs, cafés, community centres and schools.

The third type of music, art music, 'the least prominent of the three genres of music, represents another response to colonialism' (Agawu 2004:406). Such music has a small audience, and they are interested in contemplating music rather than dancing or moving with it as usually happens at performances of traditional and popular music (Agawu 2004:406). Agawu's opinion is that the colonial experience in Africa gave rise to the popular and the art musical genres. Yet, it is possible that yesterday's popular music can be changed to today's traditional music; since the re-creation and transformation of music has always existed in African communities (Agawu 2004:406).

As Agawu notes, traditional music serves as the basis to inspire composers of popular and art music. In rural areas, traditional music is also common, although one can find popular music there because of the impact of radio and of educated children who have access to popular music in

urban areas. My young informants sang both classical and popular songs. So, it is difficult to sketch a clear border between the two. Traditional music is also found in urban areas because of migration and the influence of young children from rural areas who are stationed there to pursue their studies.

Traditional songs reflect people's culture and world view. So, to gain a deeper understanding of African songs, one should have an acquaintance with the basics of African civilization and traditions. In this connection, John Miller Chernoff writes: '[t]he reason why it is a mistake "to listen" to African music is that African music is not set apart from its social and cultural context' (1979, quoted in Agawu 2004:410).

In Africa, different ethnic groups have imparted history, cultural traditions and skills, the laws, customs, and political institutions to the young generation through music education (Abrokwa 1999:194 and 198; see also Kebede 1995:38-39). Addisu Tolesa (1990), for instance, explains how the Oromo *geerarsa* (song) serves as a repository of history, a medium of self-expression and national identity. Songs can also teach the younger generation the value of the natural environment, the responsibility of individuals to community and family, the principles of family living and adult obligations. They can inculcate respect and responsibility among the people (Abrokwa 1999:202). Some song texts can further tease, quarrel, or serve to criticise individuals who failed to perform their duty. A wife can use cradle songs to criticise an irresponsible husband and thereby remind him to be responsible and take care of his child. Consider the following cradle song of a certain wife:

'Stop my child
I am the only one here to help you
We are two but I am always one with two hands and two feet
The other hands and feet are always drinking because they don't care
Stop crying my child' (Abrokwa 1999:201).

Love songs can also contribute to the struggle against HIV/AIDS. Many modern African singers have tried to raise awareness about the danger of HIV/AIDS. A case in point is Luambo Makiadi, a Congolese musician and composer in the former Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo – DRC). He used his songs to erode the walls of silence surrounding AIDS. One of the songs he released in 1987 is entitled 'Attention *na SIDA*' [roughly, 'Beware of AIDS'] (Eaton 2004:280). According to David Eaton,

... the 16-minute piece became arguably the single greatest public contribution to AIDS awareness – as defined in secular Western and biomedically informed terms

– in francophone central Africa in the decade. The song’s lyrics broke public silences and spoke powerfully to the emerging crisis. Declaimed in French and Lingala [a language widely spoken upriver from Brazzaville and Kinshasa], they were heard throughout francophone Africa in the years that followed (2004:280).

Through his songs Luambo explained the suffering and abandonment of ill persons; the impact of AIDS on all nations, races and ages, means of protection; the responsibility of rich countries to offer poor countries help to fight AIDS rather than weapons that incite them to killing (Makiadi 1987, cited in Eaton 2004:280-281). The following songs are examples that reflect his message. Calling to researchers, Luambo invoked the spirits of Pasteur and Fleming, singing:

We await vaccines
 We await medicines
 Seven, eight, ten years
 Share your knowledge
 Don’t work in closed circles! ...
 It is now your turn
 Conquer this evil which terrorizes humanity
 (Makiadi 1987, cited in Eaton 2004:280).

The following song in Lingala stresses how AIDS has attacked humanity as a whole without any discrimination:

<i>Benda nzoto ngai nabendi nzoto mama</i>	Protect yourself as I protect myself
<i>Benda ya yo ngai nabendi na ngai.</i>	Save yourself as I save myself
<i>SIDA eponi ekolo te mama</i>	AIDS strikes all nations
<i>Sida eponi lopso te mama</i>	AIDS strikes all races
<i>SIDA eponi age te mama</i>	AIDS strikes all ages
<i>Bamama tokeba</i>	Mothers [women] let’s beware
<i>Batata tokeba</i>	Fathers [men] let’s beware

Luambo’s song in French appealed to the youth and governments of rich countries to protect themselves and to support ‘developing’ nations in the fight against HIV/AIDS respectively.

Youth
attention
AIDS attacks you
Especially you
Force of life in society
If you want to protect yourself ...
Avoid dangerous sex ...
Avoid many partners ...
Governments of the rich countries
offer them means to fight AIDS
Not weapons
Which incite them to killing
The real struggle
Is the fight against AIDS
Brothers and sisters ... (Makiadi 1987, cited in Eaton 2004:280-281).

Moreover, various musicians in Senegal, Mali, Kenya, and South Africa have played an important role in educating the people about the dangers of HIV/AIDS and safe sex (Steinriede 2007). Angeliqe Kidjo, of Benin, Baaba Maal, Senegal and Femi Kuti, Nigeria, serve as United Nations Goodwill Ambassadors and assist the HIV/AIDS education programmes (Steinriede 2007).

Love Songs in Ethiopia

Although different ethnic groups in Ethiopia have their own distinct love-songs, there has been little research on love-sex songs in the country. Michael Powne's observation in 1968 seems to be the case even in the twenty-first century. 'Ethiopia's music is perhaps the only large area of African music that has not yet received the single-minded attention of great scholars' (1968:127). In his recent work, Simneh Betreyohanes has also supported the view that music in Ethiopia has been among the least explored topics in Ethiopian studies (2008:12).

Research shows that some travellers had documented Ethiopian music before the twentieth century (for details see Shelemay and Jeffery 1997). Aleqa Taye Gebremarian for his part studied Ethiopian folk songs and Abyssinian children's songs and games in the first decade of the twentieth century (cited in Betreyohannes, 2008). Two scholars, C. Mondon-Vidailhet (1922 cited in Powne 1968:vii) and Sylvia Pankhurst (1955) wrote about

liturgical, *Azmari* (Ethiopian troubadour), and other genres of music. Two Hungarian folklorists gathered folk-dances and folk-music from different parts of the country in 1964 (Vadasy 1970). Michael Powne (1968) examined ecclesiastical and secular Ethiopian music. Powne's work is based on the works of Mondon-Vidailhet and Pankhurst. Tibor Vadasy studied Amhara dances in Gojam, Minjar and Gonder (1970), Tegré and Guragé dances (1971) and Wällo and Oromo dances (1973). Zenebe Bekele (1987), Ashenafi Kebede (1971 and 1995) and other Ethiopian and foreign writers studied different aspects of Ethiopian music. The majority of available studies on Ethiopian music have focused on the music of the Semitic people in Ethiopia.

Some scholars (for example., Enrico Cerulli 1922; P.T.W. Baxter 1974; Alessandro Triulzi and Tamene Bitima, 1996; Claude Sumner 1996; Tesema Ta'a 2004) have directly documented and investigated different types of Oromo songs. Moreover, the Oromo Bureau of Culture and Information (1993) documented wedding songs.

Like other African people the Oromo people have different types of songs in accordance with their world view. These songs are partly based on the *Oromo gadaa* system and religion. They have been developing and changing over centuries. In what follows, I will briefly review some works on the *Gadda* system and Oromo love songs.

The *Gadaa* System and Oromo Sexual Ethics

Although some Oromo monarchies began to challenge its political function, before the invasion of Oromo by the Abyssinian leaders at the end of the nineteenth century, the Oromo had their own indigenous *gadaa* system (see Legesse 1973 and 2000; Baissa 1994). The *gadaa* system is a democratic egalitarian system which has its own leaders who conduct government (political, economic, social, judicial, legislative, ritual and military affairs) of the Oromo for non-renewable eight-year terms. It is an emblem of Oromo identity. One generation-grade is said to rule for eight years before being replaced with another. In the *gadaa* system, the filial and paternal classes assume power at different times, and there is no way for both to control power for an indefinite period of time. No ruling group can hold office for more than eight years. All leaders are subject to criticism from their fellows. In addition, the *gadaa* law allows the people to remove unfit or corrupt officials even before their term has expired. Human beings are the real authors of laws and all men including *abbaa gadaa* (president of *gadaa* in power) are required to observe such laws, as laws stand above all human beings. Representation of different groups in the *gadaa* system is based on strict rules, which in turn maintain balanced opposition and distribution of power. This in turn promotes egalitarian norms over hierarchy.

The growing power of Oromo war leaders, landlords, kings, the relaxation of some of the rules of the *gadaa* system, particularly the age limits of child rearing, geographical distance, difficult terrains and the spread of Islam are some of the reasons that weakened the *gadaa* system. Finally, the Abyssinian rulers suspended and neglected the role of the *gadaa* system in most parts of Oromia towards the end of the nineteenth century. Some Oromo were killed for trying to promote the *gadaa* system. In spite of this, the Oromo *gadaa* system has been a living tradition among the Borana, Guji and Gabra Oromo in southern Ethiopia. There have been democratic values and practices without the functioning of the political aspects of *gadaa* in some parts of Oromo lands where the people practise Orthodox Christianity and/or the indigenous Oromo religion. The people have been free to sing erotic *gadaa* songs in most of these areas. However, Muslim and Protestant Oromo had abandoned the *gadaa* system and its values altogether. However, those who were not converted can participate in the *gadaa* ceremony. The point to be noted is that the new religions and the Oromo *gadaa* system favour different sexual mores. As I said earlier, after 1991, Muslim Oromo have been trying to reinstitute the *gadaa* system in their localities although it is not clear whether they have tolerated *gadaa* love songs. One of my informants was a Muslim *abbaa gadaa* from Western Hararge, Western Oromia.

The *gadaa* national assembly formulated and revised the laws including those which govern sexual relationships. Accordingly, the Oromo have a profound ethic of sexuality that regulates marriage, sexuality and other related activities. Partly, Oromo religious beliefs and customs are the bases of guidance. Beliefs about love, marriage, and parenthood are based on beliefs regarding sexuality which in turn are intermingled with laws on sex and values. Thus, there are different cultural and social controls that govern sexual activities.

According to the Oromo world view, *Waaqa* (God) is the creator of all things in the world. *Ayyaana* (spirit) is a manifestation of the unique *Waaqa*. The spirits act as the intermediary between human beings and *Waaqa*. All creatures are essentially affected by the harmonious relationship between *Waaqa* and the Earth. The relationship between *Waaqa* and other things is governed by *saffuu* or *ceeraa fokko*.

Saffuu is a moral concept that serves as the ethical basis for regulating practices in order to ensure a high standard conduct appropriate to different situations. *Saffuu* is a mediating element between different things. Thus, *saffuu* regulates human beings' activities (for details see Kelbessa 2002). As will be seen in the course of this article, Oromo love songs are expected to be compatible with accepted ethical principles.

Types of Oromo Songs

The themes of Oromo traditional songs include love songs, marriage songs, war songs, praise songs, hunting songs, ballads, drinking songs, insult songs, political songs, social songs, religious songs, birth songs, lullabies, funeral songs, cattle songs, pastoral songs, and so on. Claude Sumner (1997) classified Oromo songs according to literary genres: love songs, heroic, 'historical', pastoral, festive and religious, satirical, gnomic songs and songs belonging to multiple literary types. Sumner stresses the abundance of images in Oromo songs that are related with an all-round view of reality. Images in Oromo songs 'represent the totality of the physical world: man, animals, plants and trees, material inorganic things plus the world of artificial objects: artifacts, food and beverage, clothing' (Sumner 1997:332).

The word '*sirba*' or *weedduu* refers to the songs being sung and played by the people. It has different components sung by different group of people in relation to different issues. In Borana, for instance, the word 'song' has many equivalents such as *baleela*, *faaruu*, *geerarsa*, *gooba*, *iyangaloo*, *kaarilee*, *laalee*, *ruddii*, *mokkee*, *olka*, *rarree* (religious songs) and *weeduu*, (for more details see Leus with Salvadori 2006:591-592). *Wellu* is a song on love; to praise or do compliment. It is popular among the young boys in Arsi, central Oromia. It is used to refer to both an individual song and the genre (Baxter 1974:809).

Traditional Oromo songs have been changing over centuries. Some songs are newly created by the singers in response to new changes and influences. The Amhara, Somali, Gurage and other ethnic groups in Ethiopia and Kenya have influenced traditional Oromo songs. Other songs are similar at different places in Oromia. Modern Oromo singers sing both indigenous and popular love songs and at times there is no way to indicate that a particular song is traditional or popular. The instrumentation that accompanies modern singers represents a fusion of European and Oromo popular music, ranging from guitar, organ, and saxophone to traditional African instruments such as *masenqo* (one-stringed fiddle), drum, lyre, a bamboo flute and the like. Popular Oromo songs are being recorded on CDs, cassettes and shifted to electronically produced music.

Unlike some denominations of Christianity in Africa, the Oromo do not consider sex as a necessary evil. They use various songs, proverbs, riddles, games and parables to praise sex. According to Sumner, many Oromo love songs

'are simply variations on the theme: the joy of love. The metaphors and comparisons vary from song to song, but the basic thought is ever the same: the heart breaks, enflamed, intoxicated, runs away; thought of the girl makes the lover glow, and takes away his own judgement. The variety of experiences is only matched by their beauty' (1996:53).

However, Oromo love songs go further than the joy of love despite the fact that some love songs are cheerful celebrations of love. As I will show later, they represent an Oromo world view on art-music, deity, love and sexual ethics. Love songs come in a variety of forms. Some love songs reflect the beauty of love and the happiness it brings, the appraisal or appreciation of the person being loved and subjective feelings. Other love songs are concerned with the lover without directly addressing the mutuality between lover and beloved. They relate the lover's desire, suffering or impairment. Although there can be an interconnection between love and sex, love songs do not necessarily lead to sexual activity. Some love songs are designed for entertainment and do not necessarily lead to sexual intercourse despite the fact that they are sexually explicit poems. However, some individuals may use such songs to take advantage of members of the opposite sex. It is also important to indicate that some love songs refer to spiritual love or longing for God; parental love and love of children for parents; love of friendship, family, a country, principle, or goal; love of material objects, animals and activities promoted by individuals and so on. In other words, love can exist without any sexual expression.

As Tesema Ta'a (2004) notes, the existence of various Oromo love songs reflects how much the society has been open in expressing its feelings. In Oromo society, children are not totally prevented from having access to information about sex. Children are free to listen to the discussion of their parents and other adults about love and sex. Children are indirectly instructed with songs, riddles, games and parables of a more explicit character. The favourite music of both adults and children is the love songs. Children are not subject to punishment because of their songs. However, in the current context of the threats of HIV/AIDS, if there is no conversation between children and their parents about the risks involved in sexual activities the risk of unsafe sex amongst the children becomes higher.

Findings

Love songs can be categorized into different groups. Some of them are choral songs. It is true that men and women have their personal favourite love songs. The reader should note that Oromo singers use different clauses which are not directly related to the message of their songs, in order to form a rhyme or a kind of parallelism of sounds or images. Sometimes the singer introduces different things in order to compare them with love. Sometimes there is no connection between the first couplet and the second in content. Many expressions are repeated in Oromo songs. A repeated line – called 'hook' in modern music – is easy to be remembered and catches the listener's attention.

Group Songs

Group songs include *gadaa* songs, *dhichisa* (a kind of circle dance, a warlike dance performed by men only) during marriage and other collective works, *ragada*, usually performed by two lines of dancers facing each other at close distance, *hurmisoo* (a popular song by young boys who are interested in inviting girls to marriage), *hiiyyasee*, *shuubiisaa*, *soogidoo*, *gello*, *huurubsaa*, and so on. Both men and women sing *shuubiisaa* (in Jimma), *tirri* (in Arsi), *shaggoyyee*, a variation of the ‘*ragada*’ (in Hararge), *ragada*, (in Arsi, Bale, Guji, Karrayyuu, and in other parts of Oromia), *hiiyyasee* and *gello* (in Macha). Vadasy (1973) considers ‘*icisa*’ [*dhichisa*] and ‘*ragada*’ as the two typical forms of Oromo dance. As he notes, ‘[t]he basic form of the “Rägäda”, performed by both sexes, has of course a definite erotic character. If the dance is performed by members of the same sex only the characteristics of friendship and easy enjoyment dominate’ (Vadasy 1973:227). The character of dance is determined by different tribes and circumstances. Men sing love songs when they work together and during marriage ceremonies their bodies shake with the feeling of ecstasy. In most cases, group songs involve the soloist or lead singer and those who have joined in the chorus. I will briefly discuss some of these songs.

Group Songs by Men

Men sing various love songs originating in erotic fantasia. Some singers blow *ullulle* (a bamboo flute) which emits a beautiful sound to attract girls and women of their choice. Men try to attract girls and women by their words for their looks, dress, beauty, talents, charming personality and cooking. They want them to join them as their lovers. By using both plain and figurative languages, they express their feelings and desires. The variety of sound, the rhythmic pattern, and the syllable structure (stressed and unstressed) of the words have a tremendous impact on the allusions and messages of the singers.

Gadaa Songs

The Oromo men sing *gadaa* songs which are also known as *sirbaa buutta* and *foollee dhitu* before and during the *gadaa* ceremony once every eight years. These songs have different forms. The *gadaa* songs such as *foolliyyoo rooba* (the fooliyo in the rain) and *ofkali yaa lubakoo*² (my generation class let you succeed and be safe) do not focus on sex, because they express different features of each *gadaa* period. *Foollee rooba* is a song sung towards the end of the *gadaa* ceremony. For instance, in Macha Oromo, there are five *gadaa* periods, namely *Roobalee*, *Birmajii*, *Horata*, *Michillee* and *Duulo*. *Roobalee* is named after rain. The *gadaa* song which will be sung usually during *gadaa* period contains the following phrase: ‘Yaa Roobalee yaa

roobashii' – 'The Roobalee; it is bountiful rain'. During *Roobalee* the people plant many trees. *Roobalee* brings happiness and prosperity. *Birmajji* is believed to be the period of songs. This song is formulated as 'Yaa Birmajji, yaa sirbashi' – 'Oh Birmajji, the beauty of her songs'. *Horata* points out to the years of excellent cattle breeding. One of the *gadaa* songs involves the following: 'Yaa Horata maal godhataa' – 'Oh the wealthy, what does he do?' Michelle is characterised as a friend of war. One line of the song includes: 'Yaa Michile yaa miichu duula' – 'Oh Michille! a friend of war expedition'. During this *gadaa* period individuals fight and kill one another. The last *gadaa* grade, *Duuloo*, is filled up with war and famine. *Duuloo* has the nick-name 'bututtuu' – threadbare. Although each *gadaa* period has its own special feature, the year of *gadaa* itself is believed to be a year of prosperity. Men start their song with the following admission: 'Baraa gadaa, barakataa' – 'the year of *gadaa* is full of abundance'. Men in the evening sing and eat different types of food before and on the day of the ceremony, as the termination of each *gadaa* initiation period is followed by a great ritual feast.

The Oromo men who belong to the *gadaa* class in question will undergo circumcision in most cases when they are 40 or older. After the operation is successfully completed, the husband would stay in isolation for five days. He is expected to have sexual relationships with his wife on the fifth day. His health and power will be confirmed after sexual contact with his wife or lover. The circumcised sexual organ is expected to conquer a woman in a sexual combat. During the fifth day, his wife prepares porridge, *cukoo* (roasted barley the flour of which is mixed with butter and spices) and visits him to have sexual intercourse. If some one has no wife, he must have sex with his lover. This phenomenon gives a window into Oromo sexual ethics. In Oromo society a man can have a lover before marriage. In this connection, one may think that among the Oromo sex is meant for love, and sex in marriage is not necessarily so. If one does not have a wife and a lover, one has to pretend to have sex with a tender plant called *bosoqee* (plump – that is, fat in a pleasant looking way); sexual intercourse is compulsory after circumcision. According to respondents, among others, *gadaa* love songs are designed for the circumcised person and remind his wife about the necessity of sex (see below). *Gadaa* love songs have the aim of emphasising sexual pleasure and transmitting the nature and value of sex to the young generation. My informants in Ambo said that the *gadaa* celebration is incomplete, unless love songs are part of it.

For Oromo men, the *gadaa* circumcision rite does not admit their entry into the realm of adults, and the granting of sexual license, although most of the married adults have gone through various types of training and being tested. In other African societies, circumcision initiation elevates an individual

from childhood to adulthood. In Oromo society, fertility and the taking over of power follow circumcision (regarding circumcision and the *gadaa* system, see Legesse 1973 and 2000).

Unlike other common love songs, *gadaa* songs are seasonal; they are allowed only during the *gadaa* ceremony for a few specific days. What makes these songs different from other love songs is that all segments of the society are not formally allowed to sing them. Among the Macha, Tulamma and Arsi Oromo, when the rule is strictly observed, only the young adults in the *foollee grade* sing *gadaa* love songs; sometimes men in other *gadaa* grades and children may participate in these songs. One of the tasks of the *foollee* group is providing military service to the *gadaa* government in power. *Abbaa gadaa*, the presiding councillor of the national assembly, as the leader of the people, and the *qalluu* ritual leaders should not actively participate in *gadaa* love songs. *Abbaa gadaa* can start the song and give guidance to the *foollee* group. *Gadaa* love songs are not universally sung in all parts of Oromia. For instance, they are not common among the Guji Oromo, southern Oromia. Furthermore, *saffuu* is abandoned for few days, once every eight years when people freely sing erotic *gadaa* songs. It is said that God's creation has no inhibitions. While most ordinary love songs are idiomatically expressed, *gadaa* songs are used to allude explicitly to sexual organs and stimulate sexual activities. It seems that this brief period is clearly used to communicate sexual affairs to the future generation. The following songs capture the openness of *gadaa* songs: 'Agaadaan gaaniitti hirkatte, kan gadaa qanii fixate' – 'A cane leans on a clay pot. The *gadaa* song ignores decency or politeness'. 'Maalifuu yaa jaranaa?' – 'You people if you ask why it is so?', 'Bara gadaatu akkanaa' – 'It is because, the time of *gadaa* is like this'. As noted earlier, among others, *saffuu* is an ethical principle that regulates sexual relationships between the opposite sexes. Some *gadaa* songs seem to violate ethical principles. These songs are officially sung in the presence of husbands, wives, elders and children. The Oromo sexual ethic considers this act as normal at a particular period of time. This type of explicit sexual language usage is an offensive usage of language in other cultures.

Before starting to sing *gadaa* love songs, the members of the *foollee* group request the father of kraal (the person who was circumcised) to open the door for them.

<i>Yaa u'raa fi muraa karraa na bannii.</i>	The hole and circumcision open the entrance for me.
<i>Yaa bokkuu³ nanaa karraa naa bannii.</i>	You the sceptre open the entrance for me.
<i>Saddettaan gadaa karraa na bannii.</i>	The eight <i>gadaas</i> open the entrance for me.
<i>Abba qe'ee karraa naa bannii.</i>	The owner of the courtyard open it for me.

This introductory song is followed by *sayyoo*. *Gadaa* songs start with the expression 'yaa *sayyoo*'. Elders and the members of the *gadaa* class can sing *sayyoo*. After general *gadaa* songs, the members of the *foollee* grade sing *gadaa* love songs. Among others they used the expression '*foolliyyoo rooba*'. The word '*rooba*' means rain. At the end of the eight year cycle in the *gadaa* system, the atmosphere is believed to be pregnant with rain that enables different trees to blossom. It is a time for rain and dance. Thus, those who participate in the song praise the green environment and the role of the members of the *foollee gadaa* group. The following are examples of *gadaa* songs.

Soloist [S]: <i>Foolliyyoo roobaa birbirsi daraarre yaa foollee.</i>	The fooliyo in the rain, a millettia (Podocarpus falcatus) tree has flowered
Follower [F]: <i>Yaa foollee birbirsi daraaree yaa foollee</i>	Oh <i>foollee</i> , a millettia tree has given flower, oh <i>foollee</i> .
S: <i>Birbirsi sangotaa. Mirmirsi gadaake. Gadaa Aabbootaa</i>	The millettia tree of oxen. Shake your <i>gadaa</i> . The <i>gadaa</i> of fathers.
<i>Foolliyyoo roobaa birbirsi daraarre yaa foollee</i>	The foolyo during rain the millettia tree has given flower oh <i>foollee</i>
<i>Kunoo akkana wayyaa roobaa birbirsi daraarre yaa foollee.</i>	It is better thus when it rains, the millettia tree will give its flowers, oh <i>foollee</i> .
F: <i>Yaa foollee birbirsi daraaree yaa foollee, Birbirsi jabbootaa. Mirmirsi garaakee Digisi gadaakee. Gadaa aabbootaa. Kunoo akkana wayyaa roobaa. Birbirsi daraaree yaa foollee.</i>	Oh <i>foollee</i> , a millettia tree is flowering, oh <i>foollee</i> . The millettia tree of calves. Shake your heart. Prepare a feast for your <i>gadaa</i> . The <i>gadaa</i> of fathers. Here it is better when it rains, The millettia tree has given flowers, oh <i>foollee</i> .

If Mr Kajela was circumcised during the *gadaa* ceremony, the song would be the following. It has the message that sex has the power of healing a circumcised person.

<i>Oh ee raajii gadaa kee.</i>	Oh the wonder of your <i>gadaa</i> .
<i>Raajii jaarsaa guraachaa</i>	The wonder of a black old man.
<i>Raajii intala diimituu.</i>	The wonder of a brown girl.

<i>Qajeelaan maal godhi jettee?</i>	What did you say to Kajela?
<i>Rayiiti rayii ofkaalli jete?</i>	Did you say have sexual intercourse, and feel gratified?
<i>Maal qallee gallu laataa?</i>	What shall I slaughter and go home?
<i>Maal sallee gallu laataa?</i>	Whom shall I make love to and go home?
<i>Maalifuu yaa jaranaa</i>	You people if you ask why it is so?
<i>Bara gadaatu akkanaa.</i>	It is because, the time of <i>gadaa</i> is like this.
<i>Raadaa muxaa qali jettee?</i>	Did you say slaughter a heifer with a white spot?
<i>Haadha mucaa saalii jettee?</i>	Did you say make love to a mother of a baby?
<i>Raadaa muxaa hin qalu waawuu!</i>	No I don't want to slaughter a heifer with a white spot!
<i>Haadha mucaa hin saluu waawuu!</i>	No I don't want to make love to a mother of a baby.
<i>Arangamaan hin shokoksa.</i>	<i>Arangama (Pterrolobium stellatum)</i> tree rustles.
<i>Salimi hamaan hin bokoksa.</i>	Hard sex makes a woman bloated.
<i>Ya fasee qarqara udduu.</i>	The vagina on the edge of the anus.
<i>As gorii qallaba fuddhu.</i>	Come to me and take your ration.
<i>Wadalli qorqaa jiraa hoyyo leemmoo.</i>	A robust donkey is grazing.
<i>Sallaan ilma deette.</i>	I had sex with a woman and she gave birth to a child.
<i>Yaa zinnaara sabbataa.</i>	Leather bullet case belt that goes around the waist.
<i>Jaarsi jaartii raawu gabbataa.</i>	An old man having sex with an old woman gains weight.
<i>Foolummaan natti dhuftee.</i>	The scent comes to me.
<i>Bara ruxeen ijaa tufte.</i>	When a vagina spits an eye.
<i>Yaa abbaa Sharu Sharuu.</i>	[When woman has no shame asking for sex] The father of <i>Sharu, Sharu</i> .
<i>Duubaaan haa ta'u garuu.</i>	Let it be from behind [a doggy style].
<i>Yaa abbaa Sharakkatee.</i>	The father of <i>Sharakate</i> .
<i>Duubaaan itti rakkatee.</i>	It was entangled at the back.

	[took on the trouble of doing it from behind]
<i>Dubee yaa ilma Ruksii.</i>	<i>Dube</i> the son of <i>Ruksi</i> .
<i>Duuban naa futurukisi.</i>	Bend forward and let me get it from behind.
	Bend over and bring it (the vagina) forth for me]
<i>Dubee yaa ilma Jimaalee.</i>	<i>Dube</i> the son of <i>Jimale</i> .
<i>Duubaan natti miaa'yee.</i>	It is so sweet from behind.
<i>Foolliyyoo foolliyyoo</i>	The <i>foolyo</i> during rain, The <i>foolyo</i> during rain.
<i>Yaa yeroo ijoolluummaa</i>	The time of childhood.
<i>Foolleen keenyaa nugussaa.</i>	Our <i>foollee</i> is an emperor.
<i>Hodhaa sukkumaa jette buqushaa.</i>	Here take vagina and massage it, says the girl.
<i>Foolleen kenna nugussaa.</i>	Our <i>foollee</i> is an emperor.
<i>Hodhaa sukkumaa jette buqushaa.</i>	Here take vagina and massage it, says the girl.
<i>Qanxiin rarraasaa buutee,</i>	A hook drops from its hanging.
<i>Jaartii marga fudhannee.</i>	We hold grass in respect of an old woman.
<i>Jaarsaa marga fuudhane.</i>	We hold grass in respect of an old man.
<i>Jaartiin dharasaa duute.</i>	The old lady is dying for sex.
<i>Yaa qanxii ani sin qarruu.</i>	A hook, I will not sharpen you.
<i>Yaa jaartii ani sin saluu.</i>	An old woman, I don't want to have sex with you.
<i>Qanxii yoo qaran maali?</i>	What is wrong if one sharpens the hook?
<i>Jaartii yoo salan maalii?</i>	What is wrong if one has sexual intercourse with an old lady?
<i>Yaa harree guurraa baajii.</i>	A donkey with in-growing horned ears.
<i>Waan tolluf qaba faseen dur baa faaqii.</i>	There is good reason why the sexual organ of a tanner's daughter is good.

The following songs refer to the importance of sexual intercourse in bed. Generally, most men claim they do not like women who do not move during love making. Several respondents are of the opinion that without the active participation of a woman, sex amounts to copulating with a corpse.

<i>Ro'oonni Abbaa Boruu tuluutti gir jettee.</i>	The goats of <i>Boru's</i> father flocked to the hills.
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<i>Maa soch'uu diide.</i>	Why did you refuse to move while you were in bed?
Muluu xiliq jettee?	Were you filled with boiled grain?
<i>Yaa harree gurraa darsaa.</i>	A donkey with broad ears.
<i>Nitii hin soofanne cabootti dabarsaa.</i>	Transfer to <i>Chabo</i> a woman who lay still in bed.

Men in Ambo sang the last song, because the people in Chabo area undergo circumcision at an early age, and some of them do not follow the *gadaa* system.

After considering explicit sexual references in *gadaa* sex songs, one may assume that the Oromo people have no restrictions regarding sex. One way of replying to this position is to reiterate that *gadaa* songs are not common songs one may enjoy at any time. It would be unethical and a violation of the *gadaa* laws to sing *gadaa* sex songs outside the prescribed period of time. But this does not rule out the fact that herders can sing these songs in the grazing area. The point is that adults cannot do so. Thus, it would be wrong to think that the Oromo people have no inhibitions regarding sex.

However, one can reasonably argue that if the young people are not aware of the danger of unprotected sex, *gadaa* sex songs may have a negative impact on their behaviour. To put matters another way, although there has been no study regarding the impact of *gadaa* songs on the expansion of the epidemic HIV/AIDS among the Oromo people, it is very probable that these songs can motivate both men and women to have unprotected sex during the *gadaa* celebration, and may expose them to HIV/AIDS at the time.

One may question my position because of the fact that the *gadaa* ceremony takes place every eight years and it does not have a significant impact on the sexual behaviour of the youth. It can also be stated that *gadaa* is one of the oldest systems of the Oromo with various institutions, and the *gadaa* songs are more or less as old as the system itself. HIV is, however, a modern virus that has evolved in the last decades of the twentieth century. If so, in what ways does one relate both?

I certainly understand that one cannot establish a direct relationship between *gadaa* love songs and the spread of HIV. It is not necessarily the case that *gadaa* and other songs about love and sex among the Oromo lead to unsafe sex or HIV. What is expressed in a song may not be easily transformed into practice. It is not necessarily the case that men would go on the hunt just because they heard a song that arouses their sexual desires. What matters is the context of the song. It is not so much the song itself but whether there is also any formal and informal education about what causes

HIV. There has to be an enabling environment for love songs to influence sexual behaviour. It should also be stressed that HIV/AIDS is not simply a behavioural phenomenon. Other factors, such as economic, cultural, historical and political factors can shape the pattern of HIV spread. It is true that the *gadaa* system does not release sexual restrictions during *gadaa* celebration and allow every body to enjoy sex unlike some ethnic groups in Africa.

Although it is not easy to establish a causal relationship between *gadaa* love songs and the spread of HIV/AIDS, sexually explicit *gadaa* songs may influence both men and women particularly in rural areas where there is no regular awareness programme about the causes of HIV. When different groups of people freely sing *gadaa* love songs and move from village to village during *gadaa* celebration, some youngsters may engage in unprotected sex. Although there are various contradictory views about the origin of HIV, the HIV/AIDS crisis is a current phenomenon. HIV has been expanding its territory and attacking human beings all over the world. The growing threat posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic has added to the urgency of examining and controlling all possible routes of HIV transmission. According to some informants, the *gadaa* leaders have already noted this imminent danger in Ambo and Toke Kutaye districts, Western Oromia. They are of the opinion that *gadaa* sex songs may motivate some young men and women to engage in unprotected sex. Following the spread of HIV/AIDS, the *gadaa* assemblies in different parts of Oromia have stressed that it would be wrong to have illegal sexual relationship during the *gadaa* celebration. However, they did not suspend *gadaa* sex songs.

It can also be thought that if lovers are faithful to each other, they can avoid the danger of being infected with the virus. But even then, there is a word of caution. How can we be sure that immature children are restrained from having unprotected sexual intercourse with varying partners? There is no simple answer to this question. We can only suggest that parents should teach their children the danger of engaging in untimely and unsafe sex. In the long run, those who refused to listen to the advice of the physician, parents, and directors have to suffer in many ways for their wrong step.

I have no illusion that abandoning *gadaa* love songs can avoid the risk of being infected by HIV. What I have suggested is that the Oromo *gadaa* leaders, parents and their children should try to make sure that *gadaa* love songs are not the instruments of the deadly disease. There are other means of HIV transmission that also need to be controlled. Local, national and international interventions are required to reduce the chance of being infected by the virus. It is important to address political, economic, social and cultural problems of the society to respond to the growing threat of HIV/AIDS.

On the other hand, *gadaa* with its rules, regulations and principles based on the concept of *saffuu* can be an instrument to fight HIV/AIDS. As stated above, extramarital sex during the *gadaa* celebration is not encouraged and permitted. The *gadaa* leaders have been teaching the people to protect themselves from the deadly disease. Moreover, one remarkable aspect of the *gadaa* celebration is that the *foollee* group takes corrective measures against *sigabaa*, an illegal inheritor of a widow. *Sigabaa* is a person who illegally inherited a widow without meeting the required rules for widow inheritance. Some times he has sexual contact with more than one widow. He may not be a relative or brother of the deceased husband. In most parts of Oromia, the members of the *foollee* group despise *sigabaa* for inheriting the widow for the sake of exploiting her. They humiliate him by tearing down his clothes and physically punishing him. They chase all *sigabaas* away and force the widows who gave them shelter to submit them to the *foollee* group. They seduce them as if they were women. Such men and women are considered the same. Such men already know what will happen to them during the *gadaa* celebration. They sometimes approach the leaders of *foollee* and give them money so that they forgive them. Nobody would challenge the *foollee* group when they undertake this disciplinary measure against the *sigabaas*. Some of the songs of the *foollee* group include the following.

<i>Sigabaa ijoolleen darbattu kubootanii.</i>	Children chase <i>sigaba</i> away with the dry cow dung.
<i>Gaafa tokkotti ija baleessan gobanii,</i>	They will damage his eye one day.
<i>Weenniin birbirsaa kortee teechee,</i>	A colobus monkey climbs a millettia tree and sits on it.
<i>Michilleen foollome jennaan, sigabaan dheechitee dannii seentee.</i>	<i>Sigaba</i> runs away and enters a bush after hearing that <i>Michile</i> became <i>foollee</i> .

Thus, the *gadaa* system can be one of the instruments in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Interestingly enough, it challenges extramarital sex. One has to marry in order to have sex with a known woman. In Oromo tradition a man can have more than one wife if one meets the requirements of marriage. But a woman cannot have more than one husband.

Soogidoo Songs

Sirba soogidoo (*soogidoo* song) is popular in Borana. *Sogidaa* literally means salt. *Soogidoo* is a group of people who go to dig salt and bring it back. Men going to or coming from the salt craters sing *laalee* song about women, with sexual innuendos, insults. They sing *soogidoo* songs to stimulate sexual

desire. They explicitly mention the coital positions and sex in their songs. The Borana sexual ethics do not allow men to sing this song at home. It is sung while individuals are walking in group in the field. What makes this song different from *kaarilee* (see below) is that both married and unmarried men can sing it. However, both married and unmarried women cannot sing *soogidoo*. The following is one example of *soogidoo* song

<i>Rimeessi gaalaa sookkee yaa'ee!</i>	Pregnant camels are streaming slowly!
<i>Ammarree sookkee yaa'ee.</i>	Even now they moved and left slowly.
<i>Rimeettii Abbaan sookkee raa'ee.</i>	A husband makes sexual intercourse slowly with his pregnant woman.
<i>Aa, Ee sookkee raa'ee.</i>	Oh, yes, he had sex slowly.

The above song suggests that a husband shouldn't consider extramarital sex even when a wife is pregnant. Accordingly, *soogidoo* songs do not necessarily lead to promiscuity. However, *soogidoo* songs that are designed to stimulate unacceptable sexual relationship can aggravate the spread of HIV/AIDS as it can deceive individuals to engage in an unprotected sex particularly in rural areas. It may not necessarily contribute to the spread of HIV if the local people are aware of the nature of the virus.

Masqala (Meskel)⁴ Songs

The Oromo have long been celebrating the end of the three-month long rainy season and the return of the sunshine and light towards the end of August, and in September. After the Abyssinian conquest of the Oromo lands in the nineteenth century, this celebration coincided with the Christian Celebration of *Meskel* (festival commemorating the founding of the True Cross) festival on September 17, Ethiopian Calendar (September 27 Gregorian calendar). There are different accounts of how the True Cross was found, which I do not discuss here. The Oromo men sing different sex songs during *Meskel* festival or the transition period from the rainy season to sunshine and light. Oromo Muslims do not celebrate *Meskel* festival and their sex songs are not related to it. The following sex songs are collected from Toke Kutaye and Ambo districts, Western Oromia.

<i>Yaa sangoota Bookaa Baldaa,</i>	The oxen of Mr. Boka Balda.
<i>Yoomittuu koophii qoffortee?⁵</i>	When did you dig the mound?
<i>Ani nan totolfadhan jedhaa,</i>	I was trying to position myself for sex.
<i>Yoomittuu soofii xonoqxee.</i>	Suddenly, she started moving her body.
<i>Raaffu fixee kiskisi narraa dhoowwadhu.</i>	Drive away the goat it is eating the cabbage.

<i>Yookin dhirsakeet galaa, yookin sanyookeet dhuffa, wixisii nat sofadhuu.</i>	Either your husband comes home, or your lover visits you when he comes home. Please shake it well when you make love to me.
<i>Kurbirrii malkaa Dhagaa, qullubbii wal liqeeffattee; Keessa keenyaan ciniimatee, kessaa funaan amuummatee. Fuchini maal mi'eefatee?</i>	The <i>Kurbiri</i> of <i>Malka Dhaga</i> locality. borrowed onions from each other. When I inserted it, it gripped it. When I withdrew, it yawned. What kind of taste has the vagina developed?

There is no inhibition during this period of the year. Adults freely sing about love and sex. They move from place to place and collect money. They bless those who give them money. For adults this season is one of the happiest seasons of the year, the season with the most sunshine.

Group Songs by Women

Oromo females sing love songs to express their love. Women's love songs include *kaarilee*, *helee* and *hamaamotee* motivated by various circumstances.

Kaarilee

Kaarilee is the folksong of married women in Borana. Women sing *kaarilee* songs to praise or insult men at any time out of the village, when they collect firewood and fetch water. Unmarried girls are not allowed to sing this song, for it partly expresses the sexual desire of women who can be lovers. According to Oromo sexual ethics, girls should remain a virgin before marriage. If unmarried girls sing this song, they will be considered as *cabanas* (sexual outcasts) who should be denied all social, legal and economic rights.

Kaarilee has two different forms. Married women sing the first form of *kaarilee* during naming ceremonies, construction of houses and other social activities. They sing this song while working and collecting construction materials. They praise men in general by appreciating their achievements and physical appearance. Men can also participate in this song. Thus, this form of *kaarilee* is morally permissible in Borana. Sometimes women use *kaarilee* to influence politicians. The *gadaa* system allows women to express their grievances using songs although they are not part of the *gadaa* assemblies, and they don't have an age-based social organization. According to Asmarom Legesse:

[w]herever the meetings are held, women can always make their feelings known about the subject of the deliberations indirectly. They sing work songs (*kaarilee*) that are intended to lighten the burden of their chores. These work songs often

contain some pointed commentary on some infelicitous expression heard in the men's meetings or a direct criticism of some unjust or unwise decision the men are contemplating (1973:20-21).

Accordingly, although women are systematically excluded from Oromo political institutions and the judicial activities of the people, they can informally participate in political life through the medium of *kaarilee* songs by praising and parodying the character of political and military leaders. Accordingly:

[w]omen that compose such songs often influence the course of elections and the prospects of a lineage winning or holding political office. They celebrate great men and criticize the weak and incompetent political figures or lawmakers. The songs are remembered for generations and have an important role in shaping public opinion about leaders and thus directing political discourse. That is one kind of role that women play in the political life of their people (Legesse 2000:255).

So, women use *kaarilee* songs to challenge the values of men that tend to perpetuate patriarchy, and exclude women from decision making processes because of their sex. They indirectly influence political and social decisions in their society. Traditionally it is believed that the role of women is restricted to childbearing and domestic work. The Oromo social structure constructed women as subordinate subjects to men. Oromo men use myths and other strategies to justify the position of women in Oromo society. A story about Mr Kiya Wamo's⁶ reaction to the gender equality policy of the Military government in 1979 is worth noting. He says: '[o] whatever you say, it shall fail at night' (quoted in Wako 2010:210). Wamo tries to explain the similarity between the position of man-on-top during sexual intercourse and men's positions in social relations. So, for Wamo any gender project cannot change the 'natural' position of women. Some men still think that it is somehow unmanly for the woman to be on top during love making. Here, it is also worth noting that Christian missionaries in Africa taught that a person who used any position other than man-on-top to make love would go to hell although some Africans had a different attitude towards it before the arrival of these missionaries.

The second form of *kaarilee* song is about love. Women recite what they did and what they want to do with their secret lovers by emphasizing their strength, knowledge and their role in the society. They can also criticise men. Women sing *kaarilee* when men are not around, because men don't allow them to do so. If men see women singing *kaarilee* they will beat and chase them away. Although there are some indications that this type of *kaarilee* is permissible in Oromo sexual ethics, some of my informants are of the opinion that this type of *kaarilee* is immoral. They said that this is why men do not allow women to sing this version of *kaarilee* in their presence.

One piece of evidence indicates that this version of *kaarile* was acceptable in Borana. Before the Borana Oromo revised marriage and other laws during the leadership of Dawe Gobo who was *abba gadaa* in 1697-1705, marriage within Gona (moiety)⁷ was illegal whereas a *garayyu* (lover-mistress) relationship was permissible. Although Dawe proposed the prohibition of the keeping of lovers within the same moiety, the general assembly refused to endorse his proposal. In particular, the councillor named Dube criticised his proposal and defended the previous practice. Following this deliberation, a certain woman who was happy about the decision, sang the following *kaarile* song:

<i>Ka Dubbee dubbuma.</i>	<i>Dube's</i> is eloquence,
<i>Ka Dawwee darsuma.</i>	<i>Dawe's</i> is foolishness,
<i>Dudubbachuu fedha</i>	I want to relish again and again
<i>Dubbii Dubbee tana.</i>	This talk of <i>Dube</i> (Legesse 2000:210).

The singer stressed that Dawe was too foolish to try to avoid the love-mistress relationship in the Gona moiety. Before the expansion of HIV/AIDS, sex among the Oromo wasn't limited to marriage. It was discreet but went on within the tradition of lover, mistress, widow inheritance, etc. A woman could have a lover besides a husband who could also have a lover of his own. Here is an example of where an assembly refuses to legislate proscription. This kind of entanglement can be cited as evidence of promiscuous sex that could be a vehicle for transmission of sexually transmitted diseases. In the age of HIV/AIDS, this type of relationship is no longer popular in Oromo society.

Women sing *kaarilee* song when they collect firewood, fetch water and participate in other activities in order to seduce men. Consider the following song:

<i>Gadamsi lafa teenyaa</i>	The kudu of our locality
<i>Jirmee boorataa.</i>	fondles/strokes the land.
<i>Jirma ofii nu keessa kaa'eelllee</i>	He puts his log (sexual organ) in us and,
<i>Waan fedhe soorata.</i>	feeds on whatever he wants.

Literally this means that he is making love to women. The first line of the song is introduced to make tonal sound parallelism. This song can easily arouse the sexual desire of men. This implies that men cannot resist the invitation of women away from home. This type of explicit naming of sexual organs is known as *lallee* in Borana. Women cannot use this expression in front of men and elders.

Hellee, Hamaamotee, and Hiiroo

Heellee song is popular in Borana and Ituu Oromo. In Macha and Tulamaa Oromo it is known as *seeyyee*. Oromo virgin girls perform *hellee* songs at different times. In particular, they sing *seeyyee* or *hellee* after the end of the rainy season in September that marks the beginning of the New Year. Among others, young girls sing *heellee* to express their identity and achievements and praise their lineage and family. Oromo young boys are free to watch their songs and identify their future mates or wives. Songs provide an opportunity for girls and boys to meet in an inhibited fashion. A young boy who likes a particular girl and her family background can put *keelloo* (*Bidens ghedoensis*), bright yellow daisies, and *coqoorsa* (*Eleusine jaegeri*) or *sardoo* (*Carissa edulis*) grasses on her. *Coqoorsa* and *sardoo* grasses have religious significance in Oromo culture. *Coqoorsa* is a strong creeper grass, which can stay green during the dry seasons. *Sardoo* symbolizes peace, fertility and life (for details see Kelbessa, 2001). The use of these grasses is the first step for the future relationship between the girl and the boy. After the approval of his family the boy can marry within up to three years.

Also, a bride and her friends in Oromo society sing a special pre-wedding song known as *hamaamotee* (*amaamotaa arabssu*) (insulting the wedding group of the bridegroom) before her wedding and on the wedding day. They express witty but derogatory remarks against the members of the groom's family.

Hamaamotaa refers to invited friends who accompany a groom/bride. *Hamaamotee* songs lament the bride's departure from her family and friends. *Hamaamotee* is also known as *kille*. *Hamaamotee* can last for one month or less.

The *gadaa* law does not recognise *hamaamotee* song. It is the song of young girls in honour of the bride. Because of the fact that the friends cannot force her to stay with them, they insult the groom, his relatives and friends. They pretend that the bridegroom and his friends are not good people. They express the negative features of the bridegroom, his parents and his friends. If the girls say whatever they want to, their words are not taken seriously. The belief of such girls is that her parents forced their daughter to get married. The bride complains to her parents that they do not like her. That is why they gave her to an outsider although she loves them, and has no desire to leave them for another chance. Some young girls have no desire to be married, because they have never met their husbands in the past. They often weep on their wedding days.

In Arsi, central Oromia, girls sing *hamaamotee* in praise of a bride to get money from the groom. If the groom does not give them money, they will insult him. Nowadays, when marriage is on the basis of the consent of the bride, her friends do not insult the groom.

In the past people tolerated such songs and there was no serious conflict. However, currently *hamaamotee* songs have become controversial and some people get annoyed. They think that it is not necessary to insult any one during marriage. So, they are discouraged by the government. Although some informants regard *hamaamotee* songs as outdated songs, others are of the opinion that if there are no *hamaamotee* songs, the day does not sound like a wedding day. The origin, the significance and philosophical foundation of *hamaamotee* songs require further research.

The bride also sings about her previous activities before leaving the house of her parents (see Gumii Qormaata Afaan Oromoo (GQAO) 1993). This song is known as *hiiroo*. She uses this song to convey her message to her parents and friends right before the wedding day. She warns her friends that divulging her secrets will hurt their future relationship. *Hiiroo* is also a kind of advice a mother gives to the bride. Among others, her mother would sing the following:

<i>Hiiroo yaa Hiiroo, Hiiroo</i>	<i>Hiro, Hiro.</i> Call <i>Hiro</i> for me.
<i>na waama ittan dhaamaa.</i>	I will tell her a message.
<i>Waantin sitti dhaamuu.</i>	What I tell you is:
<i>Ibiddikee hin dhaamiin.</i>	Do not let your fire get extinguished.
<i>Gandaa sin waamiin.</i>	Do not be summoned from the neighbour's house.

The girl is encouraged to leave behind her carefree childhood ways and adopt the stature of a woman full of dignity and grace. She should not go out of the house to gossip. She should try to be a good wife and excellent mother.

Private Songs

Songs That Encourage Infidelity and Multiple Partners

Songs by Men

Individual Oromo men also use the following and other similar love songs to seduce married women and to develop clandestine relationships. These songs reflect men's desire for sexual pleasure beyond the confines of a monogamous heterosexual relationship. Contemporary popular love songs have also encouraged infidelity.

<i>Utuman sangaa ta'ee</i>	If I could be an ox,
<i>Sangaasa didda ta'ee</i>	An ox, a beautiful ox,
<i>didaasa biffaa ta'ee</i>	Beautiful but stubborn,
<i>naagadeen na bitatti</i>	The merchant would buy me,

<i>bitatte na qalatti</i>	Would buy and slaughter me,
<i>gogaakooti dhiifatti</i>	Would spread my skin,
<i>gabaatti na baafatti</i>	Would bring me to the market.
<i>boosettii na doofsis</i>	The coarse woman would bargain for me;
<i>kaamettii na bitatti</i>	The beautiful girl would buy me,
<i>teekko natti daakkatti</i>	She would crush perfumes for me,
<i>waarii itti-marmaaran bula</i>	I would spend the night rolled up around her;
<i>waaree itti-marmaaraan oola</i>	I would spend the afternoon rolled up around her.
<i>namni du'aadha jedha</i>	Her husband would say: 'It is a dead skin!'
<i>animmoo jaalala fixeera.</i>	But I would have my love!

The desire of the singer is to become a cloak of skin to be worn by his sweetheart (Enrico Cerulli 2003). This song has a symbolic message. The lover compared himself with an ox. He pretends that his lover's husband cannot identify his true identity if she is willing to embrace him.

<i>Xayyaarri awwaara kaasee</i>	An airplane causes dust to rise
<i>Bu'e magaalaa Adoolaa⁸</i>	landing in the town of Adola.
<i>Jaalanneen nadheen shamaanee</i>	Real love is the one with the weaver's wife.
<i>Dhirsii boolla keessaa oolaa.</i>	Whose husband stays in a hole, the whole day.

The singer wants to have an affair with the wife of a weaver using his absence as an opportunity.

<i>Koottuu koottu nan jettaa.</i>	You said, come to me.
<i>Karaa kamin dhufaa?</i>	Which way shall I come?
<i>Jaarsii keehoo loon tiksaa.</i>	Your husband is herding animals around.
<i>Dhaabbateet na eggataa.</i>	He is observing my movements.
<i>Abbichuun harroota ooffaa,</i>	<i>Abichu</i> is herding donkeys.
<i>Dhirsaa kee gurraacha doofaa.</i>	Your uneducated black husband.
<i>Dhirsaa kee gurraacha raatuu</i>	Your stupid black husband.
<i>Gurgurii qodaa isa wajjin laffaattuu.</i>	Sell away the organ you are using with him.
<i>Gurgurteetoo daara hin baatuu?</i>	Why don't you sell it and instead buy clothes?

In the above songs, the singer seems to encourage the wife of someone to give him sexual favors. That is he wants to be the 'cloth' on her.

Jaldesi minnaini chekata obaasi.

Sii jaalada jetu, diirsa ke kolaasi.

Issale kolaafu ka daluutu haffa.

Wolfaan' dabaasi si (hamade) raffa.

If you say, 'I love you': Castrate your husband!

I will also castrate he who succeeds him.

They will pass by together and I will sleep cuddled to your breast (Baxter, 1974:819).

In Oromo culture, in the recent past, a younger brother could take a deceased brother's wife in levirate. The singer was aware that the castration of the husband did not clear the way for him to have the former's wife, as she could be inherited by his younger brother. So, he wanted to get rid of both men before having her and cuddling up to her like a baby.

Oh, the wife of Waqe Gadaa

Who doesn't go out without the golden-light shoes!

It is not that I have a headache:

I have called for you ... this way! (MOR, 1935, quoted in Sumner, 1997:76-77).

The singer called for his girlfriend pretending that he was sick. He later revealed his trick to her.

The following Oromo songs show that some men have multiple partners. This sexual behaviour is one of the factors that have aggravated the spread of HIV in Oromia.

Shaggar gubbaa kaa'eetan
Kutaa foosisaa,

I will stand up in *Shager*⁹ and order
women to weave me cotton clothes.

Kaa'eetaan kutta foosisaa.

I order women to weave me cotton clothes.

Shaggee shaggee jaaladheetan
fungee bochisaa,
fungee boochisaa

I will love beautiful women
and make the ugly ones cry;
make the ugly women cry.

Yaa Mareetoo, sin
dhiisukaa jalqabetoo.

My honey, I won't leave you
once I have started.

Sin dhiisukaa jalqabetoo.

I won't leave you once I started.

<i>Yaa Mareetoo Muka bareeddi qawweenii,</i>	My honey, the beauty of a gun is its wooden part.
<i>Si maale hin qabbuu jenaan,</i>	When I said I only have you,
<i>Dhugumma setti dawweeni.</i>	The fool thinks that it is true.
<i>Dabalee Dabal Birraatuu,</i>	<i>Dabale</i> , the son of <i>Biratu</i> .
<i>Kan ati off jajje ya raatuu,</i>	You are so stupid for boasting in vain.
<i>kan atti off jajje yaa raatu.</i>	You are so stupid for boasting in vain.
<i>Argadhe gaarii sirraatu.</i>	I have found a girl much better than you.

When a woman fails to feed her lover, or move well in bed, and incense her body (in the past), her lover insults her and looks for another girl who can satisfy him in all respects. Consider the following song:

<i>Weenniin muka koree gadi</i>	A colobus monkey climbs a tree and
<i>ilaale Roggee,</i>	looks down at <i>Roge</i> .
<i>Tiyya haajaa bayee itii faali dhoqqee.</i>	I am already satisfied; rub your sexual organ with cow dung.

In short, the above songs indicate that extramarital sex was permissible in the recent past in Oromo society. As I have shown elsewhere, men and women can have lovers outside marriage. 'In Oromo society, having a mistress is morally acceptable. Having an affair with a married woman is not socially unacceptable. To fall in love with someone other than one's spouse is not considered an instance of betrayal' (Kelbessa 2008:381). 'Likewise, it is believed that a woman who has no relationship with another man is an unfortunate, undesirable, and odourless woman. Thus, being a mistress in Oromo society has value particularly for women' (Kelbessa 2008:381). Currently, the Oromo people have discouraged extramarital affairs because of the danger of HIV/AIDS.

Metaphors and Love-Sex Songs that have an Explicit Sexual Content

Married men and unmarried young men sing erotic songs to have the attention of young unmarried girls. They often use metaphorical expressions that describe sexual world views and other sex-related phenomena (for instance, the act of sex itself, male and female genitalia, multiple sexual partnerships, rationale for choice of sex partners). As George Lakoff (1987) notes, metaphors are central to human thinking, political behaviour and society. Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) suggest that metaphors not only make our thoughts more vivid and creative, but at the same time they naturalise our perception and understanding.

Lakoff defines metaphor as a mapping of conceptual structures from one domain onto another. Metaphors are used to transform more abstract domains into concepts that can be easily understood. According to Lakoff, '[p]ropositional and image-schematic models characterize the structure; metaphoric and metonymic models characterize mappings that make use of structural models' (1987:154). Metaphor involves a mapping between two different domains: a source domain and a target domain. The target domain is interpreted or understood in terms of the source domain (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Similarly, in the field of sexuality, the taboo domain is interpreted and described in terms of a non-taboo domain. Most Oromo traditional singers use this mechanism to refer to sexuality and refrain from naming sexual organs and sexual activities, although some singers do so. They often rely on the visible common properties of the taboo target domain and a non-taboo source domain. Sense experience plays an important role in their perception and understanding. The target domain looks, smells, tastes, sounds, feels like the source domain. For instance, the Oromo singers used the following metaphors to refer to female genitalia: *boddosaa*, *daaboo furda* (fat bread), *baqaqsaa* (slit), *haroo* (pond), *qabee* (gourd/container), *fasee*, *ruxxee*, *dammaa* (honey), *soogidda* (salt)¹⁰ and so on. The person who analogized the female genitalia as fat bread considers the female genitalia as an edible object. For the Oromo coffee beans and *cacoo* (necklace of beads) resemble a female sexual organ. Other words reportedly used to describe the vagina are *fuchii*, *buqushaa*, *luuchee*, *muxuruu*, *koshoo*, *umburruu*, and *dhagna dubartii/nadheenii* (woman's body).

Oromo metaphors used for the penis include the following: *eejersa* (*Olea Africana*) tree, *bokkuu* (the sceptre of authority), *kallacaa* (phallic ornament), *eboo* (a spear), *h(o)rooroo* stick (ritual and marriage stick), *waddeessa* (*Cordia abyssinica*) tree, *jirma* (trunk of tree), and marriage stick. The penis has a similar structural shape as the above mentioned objects. The words *namicaa* (the man), *dhagna/qaama/ nafa dhiraa* (man's body), *meeshaa dhiraa* (man's instrument) are also used to refer to the penis. Other words reportedly used to describe the penis are *qunxurroo*, *jamalii*, *bixxoo*, *seeruu*, and *qasaraa*. When one says a child has *bilbila* (the little metal bell worn by animals and children), it is a metonymy. It refers to the testicles of a male child. As Lakoff and Mark Turner (1989:90) have observed, it is especially the structural attribute of the one domain that is projected onto the other domain.

There are also other metaphors that are used to indicate similarities between two domains. For instance, in Borana, southern Oromia 'tamboo naaf hidhi' – 'tie tobacco for me' and 'tamboo sii irraa nyaadhaa' – 'I will

eat tobacco from you’, means I need sexual intercourse. Tobacco is used to seduce women. It is not clear why tobacco and sex are connected. In almost all parts of Oromia, ‘*itille naafi hafi* – ‘prepare a tanned hide used as a sleeping mat or any other sleeping material for me’, or ‘*haffa naafi hafi*’ – ‘prepare the grass used for making a bed’, means I need sex. Some men also say *na kenni/na laadhu* (give me). It is always the woman who ‘gives’ and the real man who ‘takes’. The man says *nan godhee* to mean I had sex. This is an interesting concept that the woman is the one who controls access although access to resources and power affects sexual relationship in other contexts. If she doesn’t give, no sex. These metaphors reflect the desire to penetrate the female body; and sometimes the metaphors represent the female’s desire to have sex with a male. Likewise, in today’s music jargon, ‘do me’ is another term for sex.

The following love songs contain similarity-creating metaphors about the female genitalia.

<i>Abaan kee hin adeemuu cafee keesa ciisaa.</i>	Your father does not go away; he sleeps in the marsh.
<i>Ani waan kee hin kajelluu.</i>	I do not yearn for your sexual organ.
<i>Laphee keerran ciisaa.</i>	I would rather lie on your heart/chest.
<i>Lapheerra ciisanii waan sana hin dhiisanii</i>	But lying on the heart/chest, one cannot avoid touching the thing.
<i>Obbo Joteen foon hira, dukanaaf jia gidduu.</i>	Mr. Jote is distributing meat in between darkness and the moon.
<i>Boddosaan kee akkam jiraa inni lukakee gidduu?</i>	How is that organ of yours doing that is between your thighs?
<i>Gabaa Tasammaa ilaalluu.</i>	To see the market of <i>Tesema</i> .
<i>Kootichi baarii as duulee.</i>	People from <i>Koticha Bari</i> ¹¹ have made expeditions.
<i>Waan akka dammaa mi’aawuu.</i>	Something which is as sweet as honey.
<i>Soogidda maalii sittuume?</i>	What kind of salt has he created in you? (Taa 2004:20).
<i>Dabalaan gabaa galla bukee dalgaa lossanii.</i>	Mr. Dabala comes home from the market. They place something beside him.
<i>Baqaqsaa garraa jaalaa wannoo damaa gottanii.</i>	The slit below the abdomen. You have something tasting like the honey.
<i>Alaa dukkanaayee.</i>	It is getting dark outside.
<i>Manaas dukkanaayee.</i>	Also getting dark inside.

How can I unleash a mule?

<i>Shamakee jala qubbanaaye?</i>	If I crouch down under your dress,
<i>Natti dubbattaare?</i>	Would your sexual organ talk to me?
<i>Hiiki hiiki jettaa.</i>	You say: 'unleash, unleash'.
<i>Maal godheen hikka gaango gaango?</i>	How can I unleash a mule?
<i>Dhiisi, dhiisi jettaa.</i>	You say: 'leave it alone, leave it alone'.
<i>Maal godheen dhissa waankoo, waankoo?</i>	How can I leave my thing, my thing?
<i>Hiiki hiiki jettaa, Hiiki hiiki jettaa.</i>	You say: 'unfasten, unfasten'
<i>Gaango guddicha kana.</i>	this big mule.
<i>Dhiisi dhiisi jettaa dhiisi dhiisi jettaa.</i>	You say: 'leave it, leave it, and leave it'.
<i>Maal godheen dhiisa</i>	How can I leave,
<i>Daaboo furdicha kana?</i>	this 'fat bread' of yours?
<i>O birroole yaa Shoolewoo.</i>	Oh, my dear, my beauty.
<i>Irraangadee mana Daargee.</i>	Down the house of <i>Darge</i> .
<i>Hoolaan calaqeerra ciiftii</i>	The sheep is lying down on a wet place.
<i>Irraanfaddheen qabe waankee.</i>	I forgot and touched your organ.
<i>Qoosaa dallantee ya giiftii?</i>	Do you get angry with a joke? (Taa2004: 20).

A certain man and woman sang the following song:

The man says:

<i>Minee minaaruu.</i>	Why do you roll it and sit on it
<i>Maalumaaf martee irra teessa.</i>	something so sweet as a bread?
<i>isa akka daabboo mi'ahu.</i>	

The woman responds:

<i>Biyyee irraa ta'ii!</i>	Sit on soil!
<i>Atisoo martee irra teessaa.</i>	You also roll it and sit on it.
<i>Isa akka soomaa waddeessaa.</i>	Something as steady as a stick of a tree (<i>waddeessaa (Cordia Africana)</i>).

The man responds:

<i>Soomaan koo waddeessaa</i>	My stick is a <i>waddeessaa</i> tree.
<i>Sitti sagaleessaa.</i>	It is screaming for you.

The woman responds:

<i>Somaa kee mudaan mudaa.</i>	Your stick is under pressure.
<i>Dhuftee qabee koo naa guutta.</i>	You come and fill in my gourd/container.

The man says:

<i>Qabee keetii irreefadhee.</i>	Bogged down on your gourd.
<i>Laphee kee argadhee.</i>	I will find my place in your heart.

The woman responds:

<i>Foosaa fudhuutii.</i>	Take a towel and hurry up!
<i>Dafi waan lubbutti.</i>	It is a matter of life and death.
<i>Laga abbaa bulguttii.</i>	See you at <i>Abbaa Bulgu's</i> river.

The above love songs explicitly refer to the sexual organ of a woman. They are the most striking examples of erotica. They refer to the health and pleasures of women's sexual organs. They express the joys of love and sex in a manner as frank as any contemporary sex songs. This explicit admiration of body parts would get many slapped with a sexual harassment lawsuit in many Western countries. In fact, this depends on the context and the pre-existing relationship (if any) between the man and the woman.¹²

Songs That Express Masculinity

Some songs celebrate masculinity, male sexual virility, male self-esteem and sense of identity, genital activity and the penis. The following songs symbolise male's sexual prowess. As stated earlier, *eejersa*, a beautiful hard tree, symbolises man's sexual organ. In Oromo society, sticks, clubs, and trees are phallic symbols hinting at male potency, and power. Erection is the symbol of procreation.

<i>Eejersi jabaate.</i>	<i>Eejerssa (Olea Africana)</i> is becoming powerful.
<i>Cirriquu qajelchee.</i>	It releases saliva.
<i>Haroo caaffesse.</i>	It makes the pond wet.
<i>Caakkaa gamaatti ennaan si eguu,</i>	While I was waiting for you in the bush at the other side of the river,
<i>Ati teesseetuma marqaa hunkurtaa</i>	you were preparing porridge.
<i>Namichoo dhabateet asii na unkuraa.</i>	The guy becomes erect and disturbs me here.

<i>Yoom na bira geessaa?</i>	When will you get to me?
<i>Yoom walitti qajeellaa?</i>	When shall we join?
<i>Marcumaan na dhayii.</i>	Hit me with a chair.
<i>Caccabee ciisinaa.</i>	Let me be broken and lie down.
<i>Achumaan na gayii.</i>	Allow me to reach there.
<i>Dadahabee dhiisinaa.</i>	I will leave it if I am weak (Taa 2004:17).
<i>Shaggar dhaapphen gadi ilaalaa.</i>	I stand at <i>Shager</i> and look downwards.
<i>Awaash jidduu maaltu ciisaa?</i>	What is sleeping in the middle of <i>Awaash</i> river?
<i>Mee qammasii na ilaalii.</i>	Please taste and see me for yourself.
<i>Dammaaf kichuu maaltu dhiisaa.</i>	Who dares to ignore honey and a sweet young man?

Thus, some love-sex songs reflect meanings and interpretations of masculinity. The maturation of men requires them to engage in sexual activity. Thus, we can say that some love songs reflect the ideology and values of men that are different from those of women. The Oromo culture, however, does not allow unmarried girls to engage in sexual activity as evidence of maturation. It requires them to respect traditional values of chastity and abstinence. All girls are required to remain clean, pure, and virgin until marriage.

Love Songs that Express Appreciation of Physical Features

The lyrics of the following Oromo love/sex songs express physical desire and emotional yearning with an openness and immediacy. Men place a greater premium on qualities linked with fertility, such as a woman's youth, health, and physical appearance such as clear, smooth skin; energetic face; sparkling, straight, bright and sharp eyes; smooth harmonized neck, particularly when ornamented with a necklace; shining teeth gaps; firm breast; full hips; symmetrical features; the slim waist; balanced and elegant structure. The cheeks, the nose, the mouth, the lips, the teeth, the fingers, the leg, the heels, the ankle, the thigh and such things attract the attention of lovers. Saliva is also viewed as a sign of love. The Oromo also consider saliva as the object of blessing. Men are fascinated by women's physical features, odor and feel, and desire to set sex in motion to express love. The expected message of the following songs is: I want to make love to you.

Songs by Men

O stumbling, O great stumbling!
 O stumbling <as if> the pavement were pitch!
 Why do you refuse to come, to come?
 Have you made yourself equal to Jiffar?
 Have you become like Dula?
 They're two kings;
 We're two <bits of> salt!
 Ingenious like a calf,
 Murmuring like a spirit!
 Her eyes are like the white sorghum of the plateau;
 Her eyebrows are like <dimma> not yet ripe;
 Her cheeks are like pieces of pierced flesh;
 Her neck is a support to pass the night.
 Sons of nobles go mad for her (Sumner, 1997:87-88).

<i>Abbaa Gulummaa yaa Rooroo</i>	The father of <i>Guluma Roro</i> .
<i>Dhiqatee hin nyaatu jaldeessi.</i>	A baboon does not wash hands before eating.
<i>Shaggee shurubbaan jorooroo.</i>	Sweetheart gorgeous lady with long braids.
<i>Ija kee hin baatu dabeessi.</i>	Even a coward cannot resist your eyes.
<i>Awwaara gabaa Gindoo</i> ¹³ .	The dust of <i>Gindo</i> market.
<i>Sareen gingilchaa kuttee.</i>	A dog spoiled a sieve.
<i>Magaala sarbaa xiyyoo</i>	Chocolate coloured woman with beautiful thighs
<i>Daabe btimsaa dhuftee.</i>	came dispersing her hair (Bitima, (n.d.), the English translation is mine).
<i>Yaa sangoota Bayyanaa.</i>	The oxen of [Mr.] Beyene.
<i>Maaltoo gaddachaasaree?</i>	Who is driving them down?
<i>Yaa bargoo ija barbadaa.</i>	A youth whose eye is bright like [a] fire [glow].
<i>Maaltoo si fakkaataree?</i>	Is there any one who resembles you? (Taa 2004:24).

<i>Baaredduu mormaa Qinxaa.</i>	A beautiful lady with an attractive neck.
<i>Guchuummaan na unsiisii.</i>	Allow me to dip in the container.
<i>Guntuutaan na duchisii.</i>	Allow me to bark at your tits.
<i>Ani Sidaama¹⁴ hin jaaladhu warra biroo malee</i>	I don't like the Amhara girls, but other girls.
<i>Lafas na hinkaayinii,</i>	Don't put me on the ground
<i>olis na hin baatini,</i>	and don't raise me way up either.
<i>Harmma jidduu malee.</i>	Just keep me between your breasts.
<i>Nitti magaalaa mormaa.</i>	A woman with chocolate coloured neck.
<i>Farda magaalaa kormaa.</i>	A strong light brown horse.
<i>Kan abbaa qabutu qabaa.</i>	A person who has a father can have them.
<i>Niitii magaalaa mormaa.</i>	A beautiful woman of chocolate colour,
<i>Kan bifa qabutu qabaa</i>	a handsome man can have her.
<i>Goromsakee yaa Olaanii.</i>	Your heifer [Mr.] Olani.
<i>Micciirrataa gaafa hoolaa.</i>	The twisted horn of a sheep.
<i>Gororakee na obaasii.</i>	Let me drink your saliva.
<i>Ittiin gaaf lama oolaa.</i>	To live on it for two days (Taa 2004:21).
<i>Yaa Geexe yaa Geexe.</i>	Gete, Gete.
<i>Geexeen kan Kabbaddati.</i>	Gete is a friend of Mr. Kebede.
<i>Mormaan na jala seeni.</i>	Please sneak under me with your neck.
<i>Mudhiin kan sabbataatt.</i>	The waist is meant for a girdle.
<i>Otoon Maaruu keessa duulee.</i>	If I went to campaign from Maru ¹⁵ ,
<i>Maaruu fardeen odolotaa.</i>	Maru the country of dark grey horses.
<i>Otoon kaarruu keessa xuuxee.</i>	If I were lucky to suck from a gap-toothed,
<i>Kaarruu nadheen wambaroota.</i>	The gap-toothed wives of the judges (Bitima nd).

Her ankle looks a cleaned root,
 Her leg is white as an egg,
 Her waist is slim like a whip knot,
 Her breasts are sharp as a spear edge,
 Her fingers are as soft as whip leather,
 Her waist is as soft as the master's bed,

Her teeth are as white as cow milk,
 Her lips are as thin as a cup's edge.
 Her nose resembles the bamboo flute.
 Her eyes aren't different from the morning sun.
 The hair on her head is as long as her veil,
 What a beautiful girl she is!
 By what magical spell does she rob me from my sense? (KB n.d. 3, quoted in Sumner 1997:84).

<i>Jallalle feette murtaa guutuu</i>	Do you want love and to finish
<i>Mana eejersa?</i>	the top of eejersa house?
<i>Yaa mucaa Meexxii qarree.</i>	The daughter who lives nearby. Meti ¹⁶ river.
<i>Sagalee beektee dhuftaa?</i>	Can you recognise my voice and come to me?
<i>Sagalee beektee dhuftaa?</i>	Can you recognise my voice and come to me?
<i>Yuusuu akka waraabesaa?</i>	Shall I scream like a hyena?
<i>Nagaadeen buttaa hin qaltuu,</i>	A merchant does not slaughter an animal
	meant for the <i>gadaa</i> ceremony.
<i>Nuugii keessan aramaa.</i>	I weed in the field of niger seed.
<i>Yaa mucaa Meexxii qarree.</i>	The daughter who lives nearby Meti river;
<i>Achatee qullaa hin raftuu.</i>	Undress yourself and sleep naked!
<i>Mundhiikeettan maramaa</i>	I will hug you tight around your waist.
<i>Ani sin jaladhaa, ati na jallattuu.</i>	I love you. If you love me too,
<i>Qamisa kee baaftee narra gangalattuu.</i>	take off your clothes and roll all over my
	body.

Songs by Women

Women also praise a man's physical appearance: his handsomeness, his height, his eyes especially if they are decorated or have a red iris, his long neck, his broad shoulders, his straight nose, his personality, his intellect, and the like. Women also like brave men and strong political leaders.

Dado, Abba Seko's son,
 A python is lying under the cattle!
 O elegant one whose neck is like that of
 a <siddisa> [three-leaved clover]!
 It is for you that my heart beats.

Let me bite you once and leave you.
 Like holding birds' wings,
 The heart beats when the soul is caught
 (PAU, 1893, quoted in Sumner 1997:90-91).

O red-eyed Jofon
 Tender like the leaves of the <*dobore*> tree,
 You <are the one> God has thrown on my path,
 <*Ogio*> which grows on the highlands.
 The leaves of the tea plant rot.
 Jofon, who are like the sons of the Jilla lineage,
 It's you whom my thoughts clasp,
 O handsome young man!
 God didn't separate me from you.
 Our myrtles are only leaves,
 But our promise is everlasting (Sumner 1997:32).

<i>Seeyyee seeyyee, seeyyee</i>	Seye ¹⁷ seye, seye,
<i>Seeyyee baallee sarariitii</i>	Seye, the leaves of Sarariitii (Asparagus Africanus),
<i>Baallee sarariitii, baallee sarariitii.</i>	The leaves of <i>sarariitii</i> , the leaves of <i>sarariitii</i> .
<i>Naa ergi dammeekoo foolii mormakeetii</i>	Please my honey, send me the scent of your neck
<i>Baalan maritii naallee bariitii.</i>	enclosing it in the leaves so that I spend the night with pleasure.

This song was sung by a woman who sat by her fire, and was waiting for her lover. He told me that he heard this beautiful song when he just arrived without her notice. After he joined her, she sang the following song:

<i>Seeyyee seeyyee, seeyyee seeyyee</i>	Seye, Seye, seye, seye.
<i>Tikfataan godaanee</i>	A cowman has migrated
<i>Diggoo gayee Diggo gayee.</i>	and reached Digo.
<i>Duratto sin eega</i>	Previously I was waiting for you.
<i>Amma maalan eegaa?</i>	What am I waiting for now?
<i>Dammeekoo iddoo gayee.</i>	My honey, now my dream has become true.

<i>Qamadii tuulla randaa</i>	The pile of wheat on the hill.
<i>Xaafii tuullaa Shaggari.</i>	The pile of <i>tafi</i> ¹⁸ in Shager
<i>Yaa sanyii cuunfaa dammaa</i>	You, the race of processed honey,
<i>Sanyii cuufaan arganii.</i>	the one found after processing,
<i>Abbaboolee boolewoo</i>	My sweet,
<i>Adamookeen oollewoo!</i>	I spent the day hunting for you!

Tilo is a hero,

So don't beat him out;

Your saliva is honey,

So don't spit and spoil it (PAU(TU), 1893, quoted in Sumner 1997:95).

Sometimes, women sing songs to seduce political leaders. Songs praising political leaders are common in Africa. Consider the following song.

<i>Sanbaleexa hin haamtuu laga keessaa?</i>	Don't you mow green grass in a river?
<i>Yaa bareeda ayyaantuu yaa Wayyeessa.</i>	A lucky handsome guy Wayessa. ¹⁹
<i>Ol ilaallan fuullee manakeetii,</i>	When I saw up it is the front of your house.
<i>Gadi ilaallan fuullee manakeetii.</i>	When I saw down it is the front of your house.
<i>Natti urgooftee foolin mormakeetii.</i>	I feel the smell of your neck.

Songs that Appreciate Sexual Performance and Value of Kissing

Some men have fallen in love with women because of their sexual power and the gentle movement in the bed. Consider the following songs:

<i>Abbaan Bayyuu naa wasiilaa.</i>	The father of Bayu ²⁰ is my uncle.
<i>Caboon hattuu qabe reebbee.</i>	A person from Chabo caught a thief and has beaten him.
<i>Yaa sawwartuu akka makiinaa.</i>	A gently rocking girl like a car.
<i>Anoo homaattun baru beekkee.</i>	I cannot adapt and live with any other women (Bitima n.d.).

The singer refers to the movement of his beloved during love-making, which makes him fall in love with her. He analogized her movement during sexual excitement to the rocking of a car. He said that he could not find such manner of doing sex in other women.

<i>Shoolewoo hunda makiinaa</i>	She acts like a vehicle.
<i>Sofaatuu taftii gabinaa.</i>	A sexy mover whose rump is the front seat of a lorry.
<i>Ilaalaat baatee hati Sharu.</i>	The mother of Sharu went out.
<i>laalaat base ha sisallu.</i>	Let him take you out and have sex with you in public.
<i>Kan kennitu hin tolte.</i>	The one who gives has become kind.
<i>Kan soofattee hin horte.</i>	The one who moves her body during sex has become fertile.

Kissing is another means of expressing love. Some singers underline the value of passionate kissing. It is believed that kissing can change the feelings of a girl who appears to be unruly and wild as far as love is concerned.

<i>Abbaan abbaakee bitaachaa.</i>	The father of your father is left-handed.
<i>Mannaaggashaa duulli yaa'ee.</i>	The army comes out of Menagesha locality.
<i>Ammaan arraabee si naalchaa.</i>	I will make you comfortable by licking on you.
<i>Akka dhadhaa hantuunni nyaatee.</i>	Like butter consumed by a rat (Bitima n.d.).
<i>Bishaan laga Shaggarii.</i>	The waters of Shager ²¹ .
<i>Ol-xuruuran moo gaxxuruuranii</i>	Do they flow upstream or down?
<i>Mariiti na suuqqaddhu</i>	Roll me up and tuck me under your arm-pit.
<i>Xuxxuuxii na dhugaddhu.</i>	Suck on me and kiss me [deep].
<i>Durattuu maqaa nurra tuulanii!</i>	People already talk about our love (Bitima n.d.).
<i>Guddattuun lagarra teessii.</i>	A girl called Gudatu sits nearby a river.
<i>Yaadateetu nattodeessee.</i>	A girl called Yadate told me so.
<i>Dhungaddhuu na qabbaneessee.</i>	Cool me off with your passionate kisses.
<i>Yaadakeetu na bobeessee</i>	Longing for you has burnt me up (Bitima n.d.).

Songs that Express the Appreciation and Pains of Love

Some songs can express both the joy and pain of love. 'One finds anger and satisfaction in love, desire and fear of kissing. One wishes to be close to a girl friend and yet far from her' (Sumner 1997:35). Some lovers would say that they cannot live with their partners and they cannot live without them. Lovers may not meet each other because of various factors and experience both pleasure and pain. Thus, love can be the cause of joy and pain.

Songs by Men

The following songs show how deep love can make the lovers unconscious. They underlie how the lover was blinded by an uncontrollable love that cannot be helped and cannot be chosen. Some singers relate that love is an incurable sickness, an unmitigated agony. Love burns all over and makes one mad, and reduces a lover to thinness. It is comparable to wood burning in fire, the pangs of childbirth and the death of the heart. The heart of love has a stick, which secretly punishes human beings.

<i>Lalisee koo naaf gamee.</i>	My beloved Lalise I am longing for you.
<i>Waraabessi duubanaa</i>	The hyena nearby
<i>Guraachaa duwwaa dhalaa.</i>	gives birth to black ones only.
<i>Yaa maraachituu hintalaa.</i>	The girl whose beauty makes [drives every one] mad.
<i>Ka'een si duukaa galaa.</i>	Let me go home with you (Taa 2004:15).
<i>Anoo rakkadhe haadhoo koo;</i>	I am in trouble, my sister.
<i>garaan koo na foolataa.</i>	My heart is labouring.
<i>Kara Jibaatiin bayii.</i>	Pass through Jibat
<i>kara bishaani bayii.</i>	and across the river,
<i>koottu, koottu, koottu.</i>	and come, come, come [to me].
<i>Yaa qamalee yaa gugee</i>	Oh ape, oh dove.
<i>Ceetee caffeeffin galtu.</i>	Cross over and settle in the meadow.
<i>Na waxalee na gubee.</i>	I am [charred and] and burned all over.
<i>Kaatee lapphee nan qabduu?</i>	Why don't you touch my heart? (Taa 2004:22).
<i>Ullullee afaantu afuufaa.</i>	The mouth blows a flute made of bamboo.
<i>Maal sanyiin dhalcha keetii?</i>	What is the origin of your ancestors?
<i>Uurgufheet manaa na fuudha.</i>	It shakes me out of the house.
<i>Maal sanyiin jaalala keetii.</i>	What sort of love is yours [that I have fallen for]?
<i>Yoo xaafii haammatanii</i>	If they reap the Tafi,
<i>Garagalchaa nyaatanii</i>	they will eat [a] pudding.
<i>Yoo gaari jaalatanii</i>	If they love a beautiful girl,
<i>Garaa cabsaa yaadanii</i>	they expect to ruin themselves.

<i>Harka hafarsaa kaatanii</i>	They will move their hands like a pitchfork;
<i>Akka leencaa aadani</i>	they will roar like lions! (Cerulli 2003).
<i>Heexoo baddaa yaa albasaa.</i>	The Heto of the highland that causes one to have diarrhoea.
Mureen dallaa jala dhaabaa.	I cut it down and plant it under the fence.
<i>Jaalalii oollaa nama raasaa,</i>	The love of a neighbour shakes up the lovers.
<i>Buteet manaa nama baasa.</i>	It forces one suddenly out of the house.
<i>Fullee manaa nama dhaaba.</i>	It forces one to stand up in front of the house
<i>Olaan addaan nama baasa.</i>	It separates one from his/her neighbours.
<i>Sokoksina gedheen</i>	‘Let us move!’ I said.
<i>Sokoksu daddhabe</i>	I cannot move.
<i>Akka baala agamsa</i>	Like the leaves of the carissa edulis
<i>Si obsina jedheen</i>	‘Let us spare you!’ I said.
<i>Si obsuu daddhabee</i>	I cannot spare you
<i>Akka garaa dhalaa.</i>	Like the belly of a woman at childbirth (Cerulli 2003).

This song compares childbirth with love. The lover expresses that he cannot forget his sweetheart, and he will always keep her memory.

<i>Yaa qaalluu ati rafii ani siifan dalagaa.</i>	Oh the <i>Qaalluu</i> , you sleep, I will sing <i>dalagaa</i> for you.
<i>Yaa intaloo ati rafi ani siifan wajagaa.</i>	Oh girl, you sleep, I will long for you.
<i>Yaa mana sooressaa</i>	O house of [a] rich man,
<i>Mataa adurree qabaa</i>	you have the head of a wild cat,
<i>Golgeen maragaadha</i>	the pavement is polished.
<i>Yaa garaa jaalalaa</i>	O heart enamored,
<i>Harkaa ulee qabaa</i>	you have a stick in your hand
<i>Dhoksee nama dhaana</i>	which secretly strikes men! (Cerulli 2003).
<i>Irraangadee mana keenyaa</i>	Down the slope by our house,
<i>xaayarri marsee bu’uufii.</i>	a plane is about to land.
<i>Qoricha natti hin barbaadduu.</i>	‘Why don’t you look for medicine for me?’
<i>Si jaala du’uufii.</i>	I am about to die of your love.

<i>Ka'eetan baddaa baya;</i>	I will go to the highland,
<i>Baddaa biyyaa Gojjamii.</i>	to the highland of Gojam.
<i>Eegan si eegee dhabee.</i>	If I miss you after waiting for so long,
<i>Ka'eetan of ajjeesa</i>	I will have to commit suicide
<i>laga bishaanii gayee.</i>	right by the river side.
<i>Leenca, yaa leenca</i>	Lion, oh lion All come
<i>Koottu sin geessaa.</i>	I'll take you home.
<i>Yaadha shaashii.</i>	The owner of shaashii [multicoloured head scarf]
<i>Adaraa kootta asaani.</i>	please, come closer to me.
<i>Yaa shubbeekoo.</i>	Oh my beautiful one
<i>Adaraa koottuu bukkeekoo.</i>	please, come beside me.
<i>Yaadha shuukkaa</i>	Oh the owner of shuukkaa [fork: hairpin]
<i>Adaraa koottuu na-duukaa.</i>	please, follow me.
<i>Jimmaa galeen kolaasa.</i>	I came home from Jimma where
<i>Abiraangoo</i>	I cut abiraangoo [kind of cabbage].
<i>Sumaa jedheen lolaasa</i>	It is because of you
<i>Imimmaankoo!</i>	that I shed tears! (Triulzi with Bitima 1996:248).

A person who has fallen in love can take his beloved and leave his village for good. Such a person can also do everything that will be nice to his beloved, even if his character makes others conscious about their relationship. The following songs illustrate this:

<i>Mummuuxeen qabee hodha.</i>	I will sew a gourd with different colours.
<i>Gabaan sanbataa boruu.</i>	The Sunday market is tomorrow.
<i>Si fudheen kae'ee sokkaa</i>	Let me take you and go away.
<i>Maqaan nama omaa hin tolluu.</i>	People no longer appreciate even our name.
<i>Dheedanis haa dheedanii,</i>	If they wish to graze, let them to graze.
<i>randattin baasa burreee.</i>	I will take my coloured oxen to the hill.
<i>Beekanis haa beekanii,</i>	If they came to know, let them know.
<i>daraan si baasa surree.</i>	I will buy you trousers.
<i>Yaa Abbabee koo yaa Abbabee.</i>	For you are my flower baby.

Songs by Women

Women also express the pains of love. Like men, women get their hearts broken; they doubt the feeling of their lovers, spend sleepless night, and want to spend more time with their lovers. Consider the following songs:

<i>Motobiliu nugussa</i>	An automobile of the emperor,
<i>lafa jalaan tabbisaa.</i>	moves under ground.
<i>Yaa imimmaan jaalalaa</i>	The tears of love
<i>morma jalaan yaa'eti</i>	flow under the neck and
<i>guntutanrraan dhim'isaa.</i>	drip down over the breasts.
<i>Maaloo maaloo, maaloo maaloo.</i>	Please, please, please, please.
<i>Narra yaa'a imimmaanoo .</i>	The tears are flowing over me.

This song eloquently extols a lover's joy and pain. It is a touching heartfelt lyric about expressing one's true feelings in a relationship.

<i>Yaa qoraan cabsituu</i>	A man who collects firewood;
<i>Dhagaraan ashamii.</i>	How is your axe?
<i>Koo garaan gadicitee</i>	My heart is broken.
<i>Kee garaan akkamii?</i>	How about yours?
<i>Amma dhagaan keenya daakuu</i>	If as our grinding stone grinds,
<i>Otto dhagaan keessan daakee,</i>	your grinding stone would also grind,
<i>Yoona midhaanuu dhumeeraa.</i>	the grain would be finished by now.
<i>Amma garaankoo si yaaduu</i>	If as my heart thinks of you,
<i>Otoo garaankee na yaadee</i>	Your heart would also think of me,
<i>Yoona hidhaanuu dhufeera.</i>	The bond would be touched by now.
<i>Kaleessa naan beelayee,</i>	I was hungry yesterday.
<i>Edaa agabuukoon bulee.</i>	I did not eat last night.
<i>Edaa agabuukoon bulee.</i>	I did not eat last night.
<i>Warrakeet si dhoowwemoo,</i>	Was it your parents who held you back
<i>yaa dammakoo,</i>	from coming
<i>sumatu ganuukoo muree?</i>	my honey?
	Or did you decide to betray me?
<i>Haaduu kee qaruu akaa lafee</i>	Shall I sharpen your knife to cut a bone?
<i>murru?</i>	
<i>Deebii kee naa kenni akkan</i>	Give me your response, so that I can
<i>rafee bulu.</i>	have a good night's sleep.

<i>Ana nan agartuu korma wareegii,</i>	You can not see me any more unless you promise to pay a bull.
<i>Yoo sii dhibe caakkaa gamaatti na eegii.</i>	If you are in trouble, wait for me in the bush at the other side of the river.

In the above songs the singers tried to tell the other persons that they are attracted to the beloved and that they are open to possibilities which involve the person concerned. These are great songs for the lovers who want to rekindle the relationship or keep it fresh.

<i>Yaa dhaamocha yaa dhaamocha barii.</i>	Oh the cold weather of early morning,
<i>Yaa diilalla barii.</i>	the chilly air of the morning.
<i>Maaltu na fidaree</i>	Who will bring me, then
<i>Kumala loosaa durii,</i>	the good old day thick cloth,
<i>Kumala loosaa durii.</i>	the good old day thick cloth?

In this song thick cloth is analogized to the old day lover who used to warm up his mistress. It conveys desolation when one's lover is gone.

In spite of cultural restrictions, some women and girls try to seduce men to satisfy their sexual and marital desire.

<i>Naggaadeen nagadumaa.</i>	O merchant of the merchandise.
<i>Kan tulluu Buree jirtuu</i>	Who is at the mount Buree!
<i>Ijattoo qottoo dhabee</i>	The eyes have no axe;
<i>Garaatoo murtoo dhabee</i>	The mind [heart] has no sickle
<i>Kan tulluu muree jigsu.</i>	to cut and throw down mountains! (Cerulli 2003).

This song reflects that a merchant who is at Mount Buree is certainly a merchant. The eyes lack an axe and the mind lacks a sickle to cut and throw down mountains. The song is the lament of a woman separated from her lover because of distance. The distance prevents her from meeting her lover. Bure is a locality found in the present day Illuababorra zone of Oromia region.

A girl can also express her desire to be married. This may not be a violation of sexual ethics when she is mature enough to get married. The proper age for marriage differs from region to region. Most of the time such songs are directed to mothers who always want their daughters to stay with them. Some girls also seduce unmarried men to marry them and get rid of living alone. The following songs illustrate this.

<i>Abbaabbitoon immaammitoo jala lixee.</i>	My father sneaks under my mother.
<i>Anaa taafkiin golatti na fixee.</i>	I am being pestered by fleas in a separate room of the house.
<i>Naati hin jabaattanoo wari firaa.</i>	My relatives please help me.
<i>Ana garaan qondaalaa bira najiraa.</i>	My heart is with a man.
<i>Oddoon isa bira gaye.</i>	I would like to meet him.
<i>Yaa keelloo rasa rasaa.</i>	Kelo ²² soft wild plant.
<i>Biqila gogaatti hafuu.</i>	The seed is spread to dry on leather.
<i>Yaa qeerroo mana haadhasaa Kitila kopha rafuu.</i>	A bachelor in his mother's house is the one who sleeps alone.

When a man is shy, a woman sings in front of him and encourages him to be her lover.

<i>Yaa eejersa Ejeree Beerren qoraafattu.</i>	The eejersa (<i>Olea Africanum</i>) tree of Ejere, used by women to incense a gourd.
<i>Anoo xinnayyoo ka naa, Mormakeen martee nan boraafattuu?</i>	I am just a small girl, Why don't you roll me up with your neck and use me as a pillow?

This song shows how a young teenager seduces men despite her age and small size.

The following songs are the songs of both women and men.

<i>Hiddinee foona malee.</i>	We will make threads.
<i>Maal jirbii goona garuu.</i>	What else do we do with cotton?
<i>Iyyinee boonya malee.</i>	We cry and weep.
<i>Maal walii goona garuu.</i>	What else do we do for each other? (Taa 2004:14).
<i>Yaa mana abbaan keessa deemuu.</i>	The house that the owner moves in.
<i>Daamuun dabale kanniisa.</i>	Bees increase honey.
<i>Yaa damma affan keessa ayeetuu.</i>	My honey, with tasty mouth like milk.
<i>Raatuu qammasee waaldhiisa.</i>	Only the fools will leave each other after that kind of taste.

<i>Qiritii tumtuun tumtuu jete ijoleen Gadissa.</i>	Gadisa's children said the blacksmith cut the metal.
<i>Siqiqiin lubbuu hin dhumttu, Taakaa teenya gadisaa.</i>	Worrying about life has no end. So, let us take time and relax sitting under the shade of the tree.

These love songs celebrate the start of the day and the beginning and continuity of love. They revealed sublime happiness, the great joy of the lovers union, and the depth of their love for each other. In the last song, the lover asks her beloved to spend a quiet time together, because life is always taking them away from each other.

Songs that Indicate Shifts in Values with the Passage of Time

The following three songs show how modern day girls violate Oromo sexual ethics and practise premarital sex. In the first two songs, the singer asks his beloved to deceive her parents and visit him. This is common in both rural and urban areas where some young girls often miss their classes and engage in unsafe sex with some men.

<i>Shaggar duubattin argee korma kuruphee.</i>	I saw a male gazelle nearby Shager; a male gazelle.
<i>Barumsan dhaqa jedhii dabtara qabaddhuu koottu yaa shurrubbee,</i>	Carry your books with you as if you're going to school, and come to me for a visit, sweetheart with braids.
<i>Dabtara qabaddhuu koottu yaa shurruubbee.</i>	come to me for a visit, sweetheart with braids.
<i>Shaggar duubattin argee ciisaa kuruphee, ciisaa kuruphee Qoraanan dhaqa jedhi teepha maradhuu</i>	I saw the sleeping place of a gazelle nearby Shager. The sleeping place of a gazelle. Come to me taking the leather stop pretending that you are going to collect firewood.
<i>koottu yaa shurrubbee. Tepha maradhu koottu yaa shurrubbee.</i>	Come my sweetheart with braids. Come my sweetheart with braids, taking the leather strap.

<i>Ennaan shaggarii galu</i>	While I was coming from Shager
<i>Maammiteen ashaaroo gingilchiti,</i>	Mrs. Mamite was sorting out roasted barley.
<i>Maammiteen ashaaroo . gingilchiti</i>	Mrs. Mamite was sorting out roasted barley.
<i>Abeet dubara ammaa,</i>	Oh, girls of the present time.
<i>Eelerratti daabboo liqimistii.</i>	They swallow bread right off the oven.
<i>Eelerratti daabboo liqimistii.</i>	They swallow bread right off the oven.
<i>Kan daabboo nan dinqinee,</i>	I am not surprised about the bread.
<i>Dargaggeessa duubaa imimmsitii</i>	But their giggles for a young man.
<i>Dargaggeessa duubaa imimmsitii.</i>	But their giggles for a young man.

These songs reflect the current increasing trends and earlier levels of non-marital intercourse among the young people. In the past, girls in rural areas were expected to be virgin before marriage. There was very little chance for them to meet boys for sex. Now thanks to modern education and other external forces unmarried young men and women live together, and it is normal. Globalization and other associated values have encouraged the youth to ignore normative principles and the value of virginity that in turn facilitate the spread of HIV among the youth. Among others, globalization involves the integration of international markets, different socio-economic activities, the diffusion of technology, international communications and world-wide cultural integration, population movements and the like. Western communication technology has enabled the youth to have free access to explicit pornographic sites, Internet dating services, and other illegal and harmful contents on global networks. This can lead to risky sexual behaviour and unwanted sexual solicitation, and thereby aggravate the spread of the HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Achille Mbembe has summarized the current situation in Africa as follows:

The last twenty years have witnessed, in fact, a generalized loss of control over sexuality by families, churches, and the state. A new moral economy of individual pleasures has developed in the shadow of economic decadence. Everywhere, the age of marriage has, for the most part, fallen. A general crisis of masculinity is occurring, while the number of female heads of families steadily increases. So-called illegitimate births have definitely ceased to be regarded as a serious problem. Precocious and frequent sexual relations have become commonplace. In spite of the resilience of traditional family models, many prohibitions have been lifted (2001:34-35).

However, in the past, parents had full control over the movement of their girls. For example, the following songs reflect how parents can restrict the movement of their daughters.

<i>Bakkanniisa reebanii.</i>	They have hit <i>bakkanniisa</i> [<i>Croton marcrostachys</i>] tree.
<i>Danqaraan ulaa cabee.</i>	The big stick (to close the gate) is broken.
<i>Marsanii na eeganii.</i>	They have surrounded watching me.
<i>Na karaa dhufaa dhabee.</i>	I did not have the way to come (Taa 2004:19).
<i>Mutuluu karaa raarree.</i>	Muttulu has a muddy road.
<i>Jimma yaa dhedheertuukoo</i>	Jima my long one.
<i>Nu duruu addaan baane.</i>	We were separated a long time ago.
<i>Jirtaa yaa sesseeqxuu koo.</i>	Are you alive my cheerful friend?

On the other hand, strict control against the activities of the girls can be incompatible with the current situation. The following song reflects how 'old women' resist change and development.

O river of Gera!
 Naso flows uphill.
 O daughters of old women,
 I'm shocked by your situation (Sumner 1997:128-129).

The singer laments that the situation of the daughters of old mothers is not compatible with new development and values, because they insist that their daughters should keep the values respected in their own days.

Love Songs by Old Men

Old men want to attract, date, and seduce beautiful girls. They prefer young and good-looking women in part because they tend to be sexier and healthier than older women from their perspective. Some old men also believe that young girls are free from HIV virus. Others are encouraged to have an affair with young girls for they believe that it would prevent the early onset of impotence that is believed to be inevitable for those who have sexual relationships with only one woman (Repeke and Ayensu 2001:92). In some societies it is believed that a sexual encounter with a young woman can strengthen men's virility. Old men use the following songs to appreciate the value of mating with younger girls:

<i>Gaachanni gaachanan caaluu.</i>	A shield isn't better than another shield.
<i>Caalekaa gaachanni booyyee.</i>	But a shield made of a pig's hide is superior.

<i>Jaalalli jaalalan caaluu.</i>	Love is love, none is better than the other
<i>Caalekaa jaalalli ijoollee.</i>	The love of youth is superior.
<i>Ashawwaalakoo yaa</i> <i>ashawwaalee Galaanii.</i>	My sweetheart the daughter of Galan. ²³
<i>Guraamaleeko simalee jedhe</i> <i>garaani.</i>	My heart says I can't live without you.
<i>Ashawwaalakoo namni</i> <i>qilxu yaabbataaree</i>	My sweetheart, a person who climbs up a sycamore tree
<i>Rigaa muratee bua'aree.</i>	would cut a toothbrush and comes down.
<i>Ashawwaalakoo namni</i> <i>kitchuu jaalataaree</i>	My sweetheart, a person who loves a young girl
<i>Jiraa gubatee du'aaree.</i>	would burn alive to death.

The above two songs show how old men and young men want to have sexual intercourse with young girls. Here the emphasis is on age. Old men want young girls who have a full body, blood and soft skin. This reminds us of the problem of 'sugar daddies' who use their money to contact young girls and spread HIV. Relatively wealthy old men and the middle classes use their money and power to exploit sexually young girls who have no resources to survive and pay school fees. Thus, the so-called 'sugar daddy' relationship, in which older men seek out younger sexual partners (often mere children) is a serious problem in many sub-Saharan African countries (Uganda, Malawi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Tanzania (Fuglesang 1997, cited in Janssen 2002), South Africa and the Caribbean (Jamaica).

In fact, financial benefit is not the only reason for the young girls to meet older men. Sometimes, financially well off girls have sexual contact with both rich and poor men for various reasons. Some girls want a relationship with older men, because older men are believed to be experienced, stable, mature, secure, trustworthy, and wiser than younger men although age does not necessarily mean wisdom. It is possible that older men can still be alcoholic and run after sex. Some older men take better care of their partners mentally and emotionally although not everyone is the same. Still others prefer mature men because of their previous experience with immature young boys, and because they have more in common. Some girls are attracted to older men for very personal reasons. They can be attracted to the knowledge and/or physical features of older men. Girls who have loving fathers may also be attracted to older men.

The dependence of young women on 'sugar daddies' is common all over the world. A case in point is the commodification of sex in the US, as an article in the US beauty magazine, *Allure* suggests. The title of the article was 'Tricks for Treats'. It describes how young women can use sex to secure expensive gifts from wealthy men (Bachrach 2002, cited in Stillwaggon 2003:823). There are also various sex sites on the World Wide Web where all groups of people publicize their sexual interests and possibly have partners. Wealthy men can also use this forum to contact young girls.

Raising Awareness of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic through Love Songs

Love singers can use love songs to bring awareness of the negative consequences of unprotected sex, extramarital sex, multiple sexual partners and other forms of sexual relationship that can be the means of HIV transmission. Songs can set the mood, maintain humor and provide support for work. They can internalize messages and thereby influence behavior. They can further remind the people that HIV/AIDS is a real problem that needs to be tackled to prevent the death of many people.

Songs That Have a Teaching Role

The following traditional Oromo love songs have an important message for both men and women.

<i>Karkarroon laga horaa.</i>	The boar breeds in the bush.
<i>Maa qilxuu yaabbatinii?</i>	Why do you climb a sycamore tree?
<i>Qancarroo nama daraa yaa dammeekoo</i>	An old man deceives, my honey.
<i>Maa kichuu jaalatinii?</i>	Why did you not love a young man?

This song stresses that a young girl should love a person who is young rather than an old man who can deceive her and spoil her life. This is a song that questions the tradition of sugar daddies.

<i>Yaa qotiyyoo qoti tabba baataa mitii.</i>	Oh ox work on the farm, you don't climb the hill.
<i>Tokkichuma jaaladdhu lama taataa mitii</i>	Love only one person, you can't be two persons.
<i>Ashawwaalakoo ijaarrataa mana Qaalluu</i>	My dear, the builder of a Qaalluu house.
<i>Ashawwaalakoo manni aggafaarii jigeeraa.</i>	My dear, the house of a soldier has collapsed.

<i>Ashawwaalakoo ilaalitii nama jaaladhu.</i>	My dear, watch out when you love someone.
<i>Ashawwaalakoo namni akka afaanii ta'uu dideeraa.</i>	My dear, people have stopped keeping their promises.
<i>Bishaan shaggar kun ol bubbisaa</i>	Part of Shager River flows upstream,
<i>Kunimmoo gad bubbisa,</i>	part of it flows downstream.
<i>Sin ganuu na hin ganiinii.</i>	I don't betray you, don't betray me.
<i>Waaqni jaalalaa nama cuubbisaa.</i>	If not, the God of love makes one a sinner.

These songs praise the importance of fidelity and the negative consequences of extramarital sex. In particular, these songs capture the misunderstanding of real healthy love-sex and the danger of unhealthy sexual experimentation that may dominate the lives of teenagers.

The following songs indicate that although love can bring one suffering, patience is important to avoid unnecessary consequences.

<i>Waaqni jawwee uumte</i>	God [who] has created the python;
<i>Baga qunece uumte</i>	justly he has (also) created the bark of a tree.
<i>Kan jaalala uumtee</i>	He has created love;
<i>Baga obsa uumte</i>	justly he has (also) created patience (Cerulli 2003).

The Oromo use the bark of certain trees as medicine against serpents. So the singer said God who created the python, also created the bark of a tree. God who created love also created patience. Patience and the bark of certain trees have similar role: they serve as a medicine for love and snake bites respectively. The singer stresses also the importance of self-control and soberness.

<i>Yoo garaacha naa murtee,</i>	If you cut the tripe of a ruminant for me to eat,
<i>Anin nyaaddhu nan gogsaa.</i>	I won't eat it. I will dry it up.
<i>Yoo garaa natti murtee</i>	If your heart does no more have place for me,
<i>An-sin yaadu nan obsaa!</i>	I will try to endure patiently the pain of longing for you! (Bitima n.d.).
<i>Sherreereen Harbuutti ceetee.</i>	A girl called Sherere crossed to Harbu.
<i>Boofti Wallaggaa dhalaadhaa.</i>	Snakes in Walaga are all female.

<i>Si se'een abjuutti seeqee.</i>	I thought I met you and smiled in my dream.
<i>Obsi walargaan ganaadhaa!</i>	Be patient just a bit more, it is too soon to bid each other farewell (Bitima n.d.).
<i>Yaa simbirroo laganaa.</i>	A bird in this local river.
<i>Shumburaa naa carcarii.</i>	prepare fresh chickpeas for me to eat.
<i>Yaa garaakoo baranaa.</i>	Oh my heart these days,
<i>Hundumaa naa dandayii!</i>	Please bear up for me the misfortunes that come my way (Bitima n.d.).
<i>Otoo irra rafanii</i>	If slept on, the leaves of pea are comfortable
<i>Nama hin quuqu yaa baala ataraa.</i>	Even pea husks aren't uncomfortable.
<i>Nama hin quuqu yaa baala ataraa.</i>	Even pea husks aren't uncomfortable.
<i>Sabatiin yoo sidadhabee</i>	If the girdle cannot accommodate you,
<i>sansalatan sii bita yaa garaa.</i>	I will buy you a chain oh my heart.
<i>sansalatan si bita yaa garaa</i>	I will buy you a chain oh my heart.
<i>Sin jibbu harmikee madaa</i>	I don't hate you. Your breast is
<i>kiyya hin qoorsa.</i>	medicine for my wound.
<i>Jaaladhe obsaa hin jiru.</i>	I endure it unwillingly.
<i>Raakaadhee dirqamaan</i>	I was forced and became patient.
<i>obsaa jira.</i>	

It is interesting to note that like ancient Egyptians, the Oromo people believe that the heart and the mind are the centres of thinking and emotion.²⁴ The singer appealed to his heart to be patient. The above songs imply that if one is patient regarding sex, one can protect himself/herself from HIV/AIDS. Haste can force one to have affairs with HIV-positive partners. Thus, patience should be one of the virtues that should help us to protect ourselves from the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This does not mean that patience equals restraint or abstinence. The point is that patience is only one part of safe sex.

The following Oromo proverb also shows the importance of careful action. '*Yoo suuta deeman, qorreen suuta nama waraanti*' – 'A thorn will prick gently if people walk slowly'. A slower approach enables us to deal with the problem of HIV/AIDS and other complex problems better. The English proverb 'slow and steady wins the race' has also an important message for the people to be serious about their sexual affairs. Unreflective speed is likely to produce negative consequences.

The following songs are specifically about HIV/AIDS.²⁵ They all warn the people to avoid unsafe sex. The last one indicates how people have started to be conscious about safe sex. Many people are scared to visit sex workers. For that reason, prostitution is no longer an attractive and profitable job.

<i>Suuta, suuta, suutaa.</i>	Be slow; be slow in your dealings with the opposite sex,
<i>HIV baraara buuta.</i>	If not, you may encounter HIV the virus of the time.
<i>AIDSii yaa AIDSii maal dhibeen akkaanaa.</i>	AIDS, AIDS. What kind of disease are you?
<i>Sababa kee fuutee hin adeemtuu biyyanaa?</i>	Why don't you go out of this country taking away your dangers?
<i>Foolliyyoo roobaa wayyaa fooleen roobaa.</i>	The fooliyo in the rain. The fooliyo in the rain.
<i>Eenyu jabbii tiksaa qarqara caakkaa.</i>	Who tends calves on the edge of the forest?
<i>Seeruu gatiin dhibbaa galata Waaqaa.</i>	The price of vagina has become 100 Birr, thanks be to God.
<i>Guggubaan urgaayee. Buqushaan bushaayee. Yaa Waqa galatakee Wayyaa foolleen roobaa.</i>	The burning thing smells. A vagina has become cheap. Thank You God. The fooliyo in the rain.

Likewise, some singers sang the following song when syphilis started devastating both men and women in the past.

<i>Ijaarrataa maana qaalluu. dawoon qarabaa tureeraa. Ilaallataa nama jaaldhuu fanxoon Arabaa dhufeeraa.</i>	The builder of the Qalluu house, There was the shelter of a penknife. Be a bit discreet about your love affairs, there is syphilis that came from Arabia.
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A woman who did not like the gradual move of a person sang the following. She advised him that the attempt to have an affair with her will have negative consequences for his name.

<i>Sissiqxee na jalaa buutee Siqi narraa salphina fuute.</i>	You moved slowly and came close to me. Move away from me, you will be humiliated.
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Like traditional singers, modern singers have the responsibility and the role of alerting the people about the danger of HIV/AIDS. They sing songs that have the power to convey joy, happiness and the negative consequences of unsafe sex. After interviewing some informants and searching for some singers who sang about HIV/AIDS in Oromo Music shops in Addis Ababa, I noted that very few modern Oromo singers have paid attention to HIV/AIDS. Nuho Gobana, a well known Oromo singer based in Canada, included one song entitled *eesii* (AIDS) on his album *Obsii* (be patient) in 2005. He advised both men and women who have multiple partners to refrain from having sexual contact with many people. He advised married men and women, and doctors to try to control the spread of the virus. The last part of this song has the following message in English: please don't do it! please don't do it! Thus, both traditional and modern songs can play a positive role in the global fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa. Governments and civil society organisations should encourage musicians to participate actively in this struggle in the years to come.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted that Oromo love-sex songs express the joys of loving, being loved and having sex in a manner as frank as the so-called modern songs. They have lyrics attesting to what love is, how it feels to be in love with somebody, and how one can be hurt by love. For indigenous Oromo the way they were sung and the voice used by various singers give additional satisfaction. Unfortunately, all translated songs lack the rhyme and rhythm of the original. When one listens to the lyrics of various songs, one doesn't stop asking oneself whether they are factually true or not, one simply feels the emotions that the songs convey without questioning them. As noted earlier, young men and women can easily be tempted by the emotional power of songs and engage in unprotected sex as they are more prone to making impetuous decisions. Particularly love songs can provoke them to take the initiative to fulfill their physical urges. Families have no longer the power to control the sexuality of their children. Thus, if these groups are not cautious and do not think about these beautiful songs, it can tempt them to get infected with HIV.

Another important conclusion of this article is that Oromo love-sex songs are based on Oromo traditions, being negative or positive. They are not just about sex. They reflect the beliefs and values enshrined in Oromo social institutions (religious, political, legal and the like). They convey the different ways in which the Oromo perceive love/sex in their wider world view. Oromo sex songs are related to love within and outside marriage. Among others, various songs praise the following moral qualities: ingenuousness, innocence,

compassion, benignity, loyalty, courage, and patience. The Oromo believe that *Waaqa* is the creator of all things including sex and all the passions that come along with it. Most sexually explicit love songs express that sexual organs, the feelings of sexual longings, pleasure during sex and patience were created by God. The singers point out that God has the power of making sexual organs very sweet. Although some love songs by men objectify women and girls, the latter also use songs to express their sexuality. Both men and women seem equally comfortable talking and singing about sex. At times, the songs present the man begging for sex. The woman is presented as the party with some power to 'give' sex or 'not to give.' Accordingly, the Oromo world view recognizes the importance of sex, erotic dances, and phallic symbols. It does not propagate the importance of celibacy and monastic life. Instead, it recognizes the power of sex, marriage and family life.²⁶

It should be noted that there is no necessary causal connection between love-sex songs and actual sexual behaviour. Singing and listening to sexually explicit songs do not necessarily influence sexual behaviour. As discussed earlier, the context under which the songs are sung may make a difference. The fact that sexual contact is carried on with secrecy and discretion also makes it difficult to determine a measurable relationship between love-sex songs and HIV/AIDS.

Besides religious laws, the Oromo formulated secular laws that govern sexual relationships. Some love songs including *gadaa* songs are permissible. Other love songs are not allowed because of their negative impacts on the people. The Oromo have revised and introduced new sexual mores overtime in response to new challenges and developments. They suspended those laws that are incompatible with twenty-first century sexuality.

However, the Oromo sexual ethic is being eroded because of modern education, external forces and internal dynamics. Some of the love songs discussed above are not compatible with indigenous sexual ethics. For instance, the Oromo sexual ethics demand virginity before sex. The case of the *cabana* in Borana is a good example. If a man has sexual relations with a virgin girl he would be considered *cabana* and must be cut off from his family. A virgin girl who lost her virginity before marriage will be treated in the same way. Citizens who have undergone 'modern' education are challenging this tradition.

In fact, not all love songs arouse sexual desire. There are some love songs that have had the teaching role against unsafe sexual activities and show how the young people rush to sex without understanding the consequences. Love songs thus can help the Oromo people and other people in the 'developing' world as well as all around the world in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Attempts should be made to promote these types of

songs. While appreciating the world view of the Oromo as regards sexuality, I would like to suggest that Oromo love-sex songs should be critically reexamined to determine to what degree they put lives at risk, in light of the changing world in which young Oromo live and challenge the traditional Oromo sexual ethics of self-control. The young generation should be taught the implications of these songs for their future and society. It would be unwise to suspend all forms of love songs as they carry people's values. It would be equally wrong to suggest that people should avoid sex and love songs completely, because this would lead to the extinction of the people. Sex should be openly discussed in each and every family so that the young people would choose sexual activities that will have lasting effects on their life. Sex education should also be introduced in schools so that it will kindle awareness in young people of the dangers of HIV, unsafe sex and of unwanted pregnancy. Sex educators can use love songs to examine and understand people's sexuality.

This study also suggests that both traditional and modern Ethiopian and African musicians should play their part in the fight against HIV/AIDS by creating culturally sensitive, educative and entertaining songs. They have to oppose unsafe sex, and serve as examples of good citizens who care for their future. As Kent Steinriede (2007) notes, many musicians across Africa have died of HIV/AIDS in the last two decades; so, this picture needs to be changed. First and foremost, African musicians should pay attention to their own health and set an example for ordinary citizens through their sexual practice and songs.

The potential contribution of traditional and modern love songs to the expansion or prevention of HIV/AIDS requires a lengthier and more in-depth discussion and evaluation than this article allows. African and non-African ethnomusicologists, artists, historians and philosophers should study this subject in their respective countries to both understand the nature of African love songs and their implications for the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

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Notes

1. This article is part of a larger project on 'The African and the Problem of Sex: African Philosophy of Sex, Globalization and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic'.
2. The word *luba* means generation class, class in the *gadaa* system (see Ton Leus, with Cynthia Salvadori 2006:426-427).
3. Bokkuu is a stick with a knobbed head. In the *gadaa* system; it is carried by the *hayyuu* as the sign of their authority.
4. *Masqala*: celebration at the end of the rainy season in September. 'Meskel' is the Amharic word for the cross.
5. The word *qoffortee* is borrowed from Amharic word *meqofer*.
6. Kiya Wamo lived in Irdar locality in Southern Ethiopia.
7. The Borana Oromo are divided into two exogamous halves or moieties, Gona and Sabo. Gona is the senior moiety, and consists of fourteen clans.
8. Adola is the centre where the miners collect gold.
9. Shager is another name for Addis Ababa. Finfinne is the indigenous name of Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Shager became the capital city of Ethiopia after the Abyssinian rulers conquered the Oromo people towards the end of the nineteenth century.
10. The women's sexual organ is analogized as sweet salt.
11. In this song *kooticha* means black soil; good, fat soil; Koticha Bari is the name of a place.
12. However, this does not mean that sex has never been open in the West; the above type of sexually explicit imagery has long been common in popular Western music including contemporary genres like country, rap, and rock. Some Westernised societies like the Japanese enjoyed erotic poems and songs. According to Robin Frederick, the ancient Romans were frank about sexuality. 'Sex in ancient Rome was something you just didn't hide under a barrel. Consequently most Roman love songs are of the "love-the-one-you're with variety"' (Frederick 2004:3). Michel Foucault also argues that Western societies have become increasingly obsessed with sex; inciting discussion of it, even if veiling it with secrecy at the last moment. He thinks that the sexual obsession was created by repression (see Foucault 1976). Sexual issues were increasingly discussed in relation to diverse aspects of social life in nineteenth century Europe (Weeks 2003). However, as Jeffrey Weeks notes, the Victorian period was not peculiarly liberal. For example, until 1861 England employed the death penalty against sodomy. The law also restricted female sexual autonomy. According to Weeks, '[a]lthough the present may not have produced a perfect resolution of all conflict, for many of us it is infinitely preferable to what existed little more than a hundred years ago' (Weeks 2003:34).
13. Gabaa Gindoo is a weekly market in Gindo town located in Amaya west of Waliso town, central Oromia.

14. The Oromo use the word Sidaama to refer to the Amhara ethnic group. This word is also the name of one ethnic group in southern Ethiopia.
15. Maru is a locality east of Waliso town, central Oromia, and is well known for horse-breeding as well as horse racing. It is believed that a gap-toothed person is sexy.
16. Meti is a small river found in the vicinity of Meti town, north of Ambo.
17. In this song the word *seye* refers to a melancholy feeling.
18. Tafi is a crop from which staple food is prepared in Ethiopia.
19. Mr. Wayessa was a well-known local leader in Korke area, eastern Ambo.
20. The father of Bayyuu is one of the well-known men in Chabo Oromo, west Shawa.
21. The waters of Shager include Akaki, Kolfe, Kebana and Bulbula rivers.
22. *Kelo* stands for yellow daisies.
23. It is interesting to note that various singers in Ambo, Addis Ababa, Salale, northwestern Oromia and even in Amhara region in Debreberhan refer to Galan girls. In Oromo history Galan is the first son of Tuulamaa. It appears that the descendants of Galan live in different parts of central Ethiopia.
24. In the Egyptian language, the heart is also considered as the seat of thoughts and emotions. 'The word for heart also meant "mind", "understanding", and "intelligence"' (Obenga 2004:35). Reason, emotion, spirit, mind, and body are believed to be complementary. Philosophers can rely on all the resources of their being to achieve fulfilment.
25. C Otutubikey Izugbara shows that some erotic songs and chants by the Ngwa adolescents in Nigeria reflect the potential risks of sexual encounters including 'sexually transmitted diseases (such as HIV/AIDS and gonorrhoea), death, teenage pregnancy, illegitimate children, poverty, ill luck, shame, and embarrassment' (2005:68). The following song is one example:
The penis, the penis, You are looking for
The vagina? Hope you have enough money
to cure gonorrhoea, and to attend to the
needs of a wife and child. There is disease
everywhere, including the cureless AIDS.
Multiple sexual encounters destroy
the future, young males.
The penis, the penis (Izugbara 2005:69).
26. Like the Oromo, Christians believe that sex, sexual desire and pleasure were created by God and marriage was created to fulfill that pleasure. One example is the 'Song of Songs' (also known as the Song of Solomon or Canticles) in the Hebrew *Bible*. The Song of Songs celebrates the joy and beauty of sexual love within marriage. God's intention of sex in marriage is clearly intended to be pleasurable.

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