

EDITOR'S NOTE

I begin this briefest of notes to express my profoundest apology to all subscribers and the larger readers of *Bildhaan*. As many of you already know or will see now, this volume is for 2013. The reasons for the delay are a few but two stand out. The first concerns my own availability as the editor-in-chief. Some of you will remember that I have been on sabbatical leave for two years, until the autumn of 2013. During that period, I was fully engaged in either the political campaign for running for the presidency of Somalia or pre-occupied with the aftermath—the latter including my resignation of my parliamentary seat, the preparations to find a replacement, and my journeys to Somaliland. The second reason was due to the late arrival of some submissions and the extraordinary time it took to review and then communicate with the authors. Here, I want to send particular gratitude to the authors whose work now appears in the pages of the volume. Their patience has been exceptional.

Bildhaan is now thirteen years old. This survival is encouraging. In that regard, the greatest appreciation goes to my college, Macalester and its leadership, headed by Dr. Brian Rosenberg, the current president. With more than a decade behind us, it might be an appropriate moment to give some serious thought to the future. I am confident that Macalester's hosting and allocation of generous subventions will continue. We are grateful for this generosity. Yet, this gesture from Macalester does not absolve our readers from making donations to the sustainability of the journal. It is my hope, therefore, that many of you will be moved to send financial contribution, no matter how small, as well as urge scholars (including good undergraduate students) and creative artists to submit their work to the journal.

In the coming years, we are anticipating the possibility of setting up a number of special volumes that will address one theme at a time. The first, to be guest-edited by Prof. Nasir Warfa of Queen Elizabeth University (London), will address mental health and associated factors. If you have theme you would like to coordinate, please let us know.

Finally, recently two major figures in modern Somali history had passed away: Prime Minister Abdirazak H. Hussein (1964–1967) and *funnaan* Mohamed Suleiman Tubecc. The first we had told part of his distinguished life story in volume 2, 2002. Other works are in-progress. We regret that the opportunity never presented itself to us to engage the life and work of Mohamed Suleiman. The most preeminent

male singer (around one hundred songs) in all Somali literary tradition, Mohamed Suleiman Tubecc passed away in Germany, after a number of surgeries. His body was taken and buried in Mogadishu, though he was born near Berbera and did request his immediate family that he should be buried there. There is no dispute, whatsoever, that Mohamed Suleiman was at once the most durable *funnaan* (over 58 years) and with the most exquisite voice among all the giants. It is because of this uncommon talent that he was long ago dubbed, across the Somali speaking world, the “king of voice.” In my case, I am privileged to have a formidable collection of his numerous hits. Every time I play one of them, his glorious voice and the accompanying oud remind me of the *necessity of Funn* to the enrichment of the human spirit in the face of weighty and relentless challenges of existence. Friedrich Nietzsche must have felt the same when he wrote:

The greatness and the indispensability of art lies precisely in its being able to produce the appearance of a simpler world, a shorter solution for the riddle of life. No one who suffers from life can do without this appearance, just as no one can do without sleep... . Art exists so that the bow shall not break.

Mohamed Suleiman’s body is no more, but his incomparable artistic gifts to Somali culture will live through the ages and will lighten the load of painful times. May he rest in peace.