

As can be seen, not only is the form the same, but there is even the use of the comparatively rare words "alluvion" and "soc" in both passages. To be sure, this is more than pure coincidence. It would be unnatural to think that these similarities are accidental, no matter how intriguing such a conclusion may turn out to be. Now, are we here dealing with deliberate pastiche, which is forgivable, or with plagiarism, which is not? Was Tirolien, according to Senghor's statement, "faisant gloire" of his Claudelian influence? The comparison of the poem "Redécouverte" with the passage from *L'Annonce faite à Marie*, unsettling as it may be, is not entirely conclusive, although the evidence does point heavily to outright plagiarism, since there is always the possibility that the Guadeloupean poet has explained everything there is to know elsewhere and that what seems now to be a discovery might not in fact be one at all. For example, did Tirolien's colleagues, including Senghor, with their confessed familiarity with Paul Claudel, realize that there were these similarities in the poems? And what of the remaining poems in *Ballet d'Op?* Are they, too, Tirolien's version of other Tirolien favorites? These are questions which will have to be answered for the benefit of those who desire to continue making valid critical appraisal of Tirolien's poems.

I still take Tirolien's other poems at face value, but there is always the inevitable nagging feeling that sooner or later terra firma may give way to something far less stable. Now that Professor Sellin and the TLS critic have come up with their findings on Yambo Ouologuem, it is increasingly possible that other cases might be revealed to those who study Black Literature in French. One can only hope that these are isolated cases and that they remain such. It would be horrible to witness the spectacle of black writing in French being put down for lack of originality at a time when most readers are turning to it for a welcome breath of novelty.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Léopold Senghor, *Poèmes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), p. 157. The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Sellin, "Ouologuem's Blueprint for *Le Devoir de violence*," *Research in African Literatures*, 2 (1971), 117-120, and "Something New out of Africa?" unsigned article in the *London Times Literary Supplement*, May 5, 1972, p. 525.

<sup>3</sup> Senghor, p. 157.

<sup>4</sup> Keith Q. Warner, ed., *Voix françaises du monde noir* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Claudel, *L'Annonce faite à Marie*. Act IV, Scene 4. I have followed the 1947

## Research Reports

### RESEARCH IN SOMALI FOLKLORE

John William Johnson

To my knowledge no one has ever published an article on the state of folklore research in the Democratic Republic of Somalia. Only two related articles, Andrelewski (1962)<sup>1</sup> and Lewis (1962),<sup>2</sup> contain any information on this subject. Considering the extensive research carried on in the field of Somali folklore both inside and outside the country, it was considered appropriate that some account of this be made. All the data contained in this study are based on my personal research in the country from 1960 to 1962, and at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (hereafter S.O.A.S.) from 1962 to 1971.

The Somalis, estimated to number about five million, live on the entire

ture, as most of the population do not read or write their language. Extensive training in reading and writing Arabic at the elementary level in the many Koranic schools of the country, and at the advanced level at local theological schools (some itinerate, some attached to a *madrasa* or mosque) does not appear to have had any major influence on their oral literature, although many Somalis do write poetry in the Arabic language.<sup>2</sup>

During recent years, beginning in the later days of British and Italian colonialism in Somalia, folklore research has been carried on both in the country itself and abroad. The present study will cover the research in Somalia and then deal with studies going on outside the country. There will also be a section on related studies at the end.

## STUDIES IN SOMALIA

*Somali Scholars* Perhaps the most important and well-known scholar of Somali folklore in the country is Muusa Hhaaji Ismaaciil Galaal. Muusa began his research while teaching in Sheekh Secondary School in the north of what was then the British Somaliland Protectorate. He spent approximately the first thirty years of his life as a camel-herder in the Somali interior, and his knowledge of the specialized language used in Somali folklore is firsthand. Moreover, he is well-known for his recitation of Somali poetry and is a poet himself.<sup>3</sup> His third skill is academic. Muusa's collections span a period of almost thirty-five years and his publications do not do justice to the vast amount of data he has accumulated, though they certainly do justice to the field. The fact that Somali is not yet a written language has been an inhibiting factor in Muusa's career, for if it were written, his publications would be much more extensive.<sup>4</sup>

Studies at S.O.A.S. in the early 1950s<sup>5</sup> gave Muusa the skill he needed to carry on his research and he has since that time made tours to France, China, the United States, Canada, Kenya and other countries in Europe and Africa. There is, moreover, a constant demand for him to speak at meetings in his own country.

In 1960, Muusa became the Secretary-General of the UNESCO educational program in Somalia. Retaining his position today, he has, nevertheless, not neglected his research. His collections encompass, quite literally, every aspect of Somali folklore including a large body of poetry by the Somali national hero, the Sayyid Mahammed Cabdilla Hhaasan.<sup>6</sup> His own work, however, has taken him into other fields including ethnology, his-

tory, political science, astrology, and local government and traditional law. Well versed in all these subjects, Muusa has trained many scholars, both indigenous and foreign, in the methods and techniques of the study of Somali folklore.

Another important scholar in Somalia, and the head of Department Five of the Ministry of Education is Dr. Yaasiin Ciismaan Keenaaadiid. It was Dr. Yaasiin's father who developed the Somali (or Cismaaniya) script for the Somali language. Unfortunately, I do not know much about Dr. Yaasiin's personal research, but one of his many activities merits mention here. Encompassing much more than Somali folklore, the main publication of Department Five is a journal entitled *Somaliya* edited by Dr. Yaasiin. Moreover, he has, for a number of years, collected an extensive amount of Somali oral poetry. Some of his research has been published by the Society for Somali Language and Literature in Mogadishu, the capital of the country.

Another important collection of folklore, this one recorded in a modification of the Arabic alphabet, has been made by Sheekh Jaamac Cumar Ciise, who is presently employed by Department Five. Sheekh Jaamac's work also includes a vast collection of the poetry of the Sayyid Mahammed Cabdilla Hhaasan, as well as other poets of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the golden age of Somali traditional poetry. Sheekh Jaamac published some of the Sayyid's poetry in his history book in 1965.

Still another important scholar, presently studying in the Soviet Union, is Shirre Jaamac Ahmed. Among Shirre's main publications are *Inturk: Opendur Light of Education* and *Gabayo, Mathemate iyo Soosaar* on *Yaqar*, which contain many proverbs, poems and folk narratives from his collection.

Mahammed Faarahn Cabdillaahi is not associated with Department Five to my knowledge, and I do not know where he is employed at the present time. He has, nevertheless, made extensive collections, particularly of folk narratives, and published some of his work alone and some in collaboration with Dr. B. W. Andrzejewski, with whom he studied in 1967-68.

A very large collection of oral poetry has been accumulated by Hhersi Magan Ciise. Hhersi received a degree in linguistics from Columbia University in 1966 and has published numerous pieces of Somali oral literature in a Mogadishu newspaper he edits called *Hirsiid*. This publication is printed in the Somali (or Cismaaniya) script and is sponsored by the Society for Somali Language and Literature mentioned above.

Finally, two other scholars in Department Five have done extensive

field work in their own country. Ahmed Cali Abokor's collection contains no less than 576 poems by 34 poets from the golden age of Somali traditional poetry. Cumar Aw Nuuh published some of his collection in 1970. Both of these scholars are well versed in Somali traditional poetic language and have been collecting for quite some time.

*Somali National Institutions* Department Five of the Ministry of Education is concerned with research into the culture of Somalia and not with direct classroom work. Somalia has never scorned research and interest in its own culture, and Department Five has been operative since before independence in 1960. The scholars associated with it collect and record oral literature and maintain the collections and library of the National Museum (formally called the Garissa Museum) in the nation's capital. There is little restricting supervision of their work, and scholars are permitted to carry on studies in their own interests.

The Museum itself is housed in the former residence of the representative of the Sultan of Zanzibar, who once held suzerainty over the Somali (Benaadir) Coast. His administrative headquarters is now the Municipio of the City of Mogadishu and was also used similarly by the Italians in Somalia. Both buildings are fine examples of the Yemini architecture of the nineteenth century. The Museum itself houses material culture from the entire country, although the South is perhaps better represented. Begun by the Italians in colonial times, the Museum now has a Somali director and curator.

There are three libraries in the country which contain books covering the entire field of Somali studies, including folklore. The National Library, housed in the National Museum, has a full-time librarian. The United Nations Library in the U.N. Compound also has a fine collection, including many reprints. One other large library in Somali is privately owned. Ariberto Forlani went to Somalia with the Duke of Abruzzi during colonial times and has been collecting materials ever since.

There are four important sources of tapes on Somali oral literature. Firstly, many private collections, such as that of Muusa Galaal, can be found. The two radio stations at Hargeysa and Mogadishu have perhaps the largest libraries, particularly of modern poetry. And finally, a collection has been made by the tape library at the University of Somalia (formerly the National Teacher Education Center) at Afgoi, north of Mogadishu.

Conferences on African folklore have been held in several places in Africa (Algiers, Addis Ababa, Dar es Salaam) and have been sponsored

by both UNESCO and the Organization of African Unity. In 1970, one such conference was held in Mogadishu, sponsored by the O.A.U. and resulting in a publication by the Somali Government. This pamphlet is important in that it may be the first to include information on Somali traditional dances.

## FOREIGN STUDIES

*Foreign Scholars* Perhaps the most important scholar in Somali folklore studies outside the country is Dr. B. W. Andrzejewski of S.O.A.S. Dr. Andrzejewski took his B.A. and M.A. at Oxford. After World War II he began his studies of Somali linguistics and folklore (later expanding into the whole field of Cushitic languages) in Sheekh, a town in the former British Somaliland Protectorate, where he met and worked with Muusa Galaal. Dr. Andrzejewski has devoted much of his life to Somali studies. His Ph.D. was taken at S.O.A.S. in the Somali language, but he has published extensively in the subject of oral literature and has recently translated a Somali oral play, to be published soon!

Also in Britain, Dr. I. M. Lewis has collected a large amount of Somali poetry and prose, both oral and written in the Arabic language (see note 1). Dr. Lewis's work is mainly in anthropology and history, but his interesting collection (mainly hagiographies and hymns) requires that he be mentioned here.

Dr. Enrico Cerulli is the most distinguished Italian scholar of Somali (Ethiopic and Arabic) studies, and his publications reach far beyond folklore. He did most of his work during the colonial days but is still very active and is organizing an international conference on Ethiopian studies this year. He is the Vice-President of the renowned Italian scholarly organization, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei (Via della Lungara 10, Roma 00165). His collected works on Somalia have been published fairly recently in three volumes.

In the Soviet Union, Dr. A. K. Zholkovski has lately begun work on Somali folklore and linguistics. It is my understanding that Dr. Zholkovski is working on, among many other things, computer translation in which some Somali and Russian is employed. His work does not limit him to the Somali field, and he is involved with many subjects, including esthetic theory as applied to literature.

In Poland, Dr. Andrzej Zaborski has also become interested in Somali folklore and linguistics. Unfortunately, I do not know the extent of Dr.

Zaborski's work in Somali studies, apart from his publications, as I have only recently begun communication with him.

And finally, in the United States, my own work has taken me into the recent history of Somalia and, of necessity, into the linguistics of Somali. Both areas, together with ethnology, were necessary in order to write a balanced study of modern poetry, which I did at S.O.A.S. from 1969 to 1971. This work will be published soon by the Research Center for the Language Sciences at Indiana University.

There are several other people who have been interested in Somali folklore (see for example, Legum, 1963), but the scholars discussed here are, to my knowledge, the major personalities involved. I should like to apologize if anyone has been left out. There may indeed be other Somalis who study their own culture, but I know only those already mentioned.

*Foreign Institutions* The only University which offers graduate degrees in Somali oral literature *per se* is S.O.A.S. This school also has a fairly good coverage of Somali materials in its library, as does the British Museum. In the British Museum there is also a small display of Somali material culture.

Dr. B. W. Andrzejewski has a fine private library of Somali materials, and I have in my library several things, particularly runs of newspapers containing some data on folklore, not to be found elsewhere.

The British Broadcasting Corporation (B.B.C.) has a rather extensive tape library, as do Dr. Andrzejewski and myself. Several other radio stations, including those in Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Moscow, Djibouti, Cairo, and (I think) Peking also have tape libraries containing Somali poetry.

*Related Studies* In studying the folklore of an African country, I have found it absolutely necessary to supplement my own work with studies in such varied fields as linguistics, history, government, politics, religion, and ethnology. For this reason, an appendix has been included with this article giving a list of persons involved in these subjects. Information on where these people can be found is included if known.

One person directly involved in Somali folklore, but with a major interest in history, needs special mention here. Lee V. Cassanelli has only just recently returned from Somalia where he did research in the field of folklore and history (i.e., orally related history). Cassanelli has already discovered at least one important personality in Somali history about

whom no written material exists.<sup>7</sup> This work was done for his Ph.D. dissertation at Wisconsin, and we look impatiently for publications from him in the near future.

In closing, I should only like to say that folklore research in Somalia does not, perhaps, have the funding it deserves. The understandable costs of development have limited the amount of money that could be set aside for it. The work of such scholars as Muusa Galaal can only be praised, for he, along with many other scholars, are doing their best to record the traditional oral literature of their country at a time when many of the reciters of this literature are dying and many of the younger generation are turning to newer, albeit oral, forms. It must be stressed, however, that oral expression in Somalia is not about to die out, as new forms are being developed even at the writing of this article.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a complete bibliography of Somali oral literature and language to 1969, see Johnson, 1969 (see supplementary bibliography). A supplementary bibliography can be found at the end of this article. All bibliographical references in this article can be found in these two sources. An explanation of the subject matter code used is reprinted here for convenience, and all spelling of Somali names in the article and the bibliographies follows the transcription developed by Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and explained fully in Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, 1968d. The alphabetizing of Somali names follows the Somali system of person's name first, his father's name second, his grandfather's name third, etc.

<sup>2</sup> For some examples of Arabic poetry written by Somalis, see Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964.

<sup>3</sup> Folklore in Somalia does not belong to a specialized group of reciters, but is the possession of the population as a whole. Nevertheless, some men distinguish themselves as great poets, while others are known for their skill in the memorization of poetry. These two skills are often combined in one man, though it must be stressed that everyone in the culture participates in at least the recitation to some extent.

<sup>4</sup> Although many materials have been published privately in Somalia, the government has, in the past, prohibited the official publication of any Somali texts, because an official alphabet has not yet been decided upon.

<sup>5</sup> Muusa also studied at the University of California at Los Angeles during the Fall of 1969.

<sup>6</sup> For a good account of the Sayyid's career, see Robert L. Hess, 1968. Dr. Bradford Martin of Indiana University is presently working on a book which will include some original data on the influences that shaped the Sayyid's religious philosophy.

<sup>7</sup> Some of his work was reported in the Somali weekly newspaper *Duun*, 24 September 1971, p. 5.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY: Supplementary to Johnson (1969)

## SUBJECT MATTER CODE

Code	Description
bibl	Contains bibliography of linguistic and/or literary importance
dict	Dictionary
dict.w	Word list
ess	General essay on the language or culture
ess.l	Essay on a literary theory
ess.s	Essay on a linguistic theory
ess.w	Essay on a theory of writing Somali, or on the problem of writing Somali
gnr	Grammar
prd	Periodicals or newspapers published in the Somali language
prd.l	Periodicals or newspapers published in the Somali language using a Latin script
prd.s	Periodicals or newspapers published in the Somali language using the Somali writing system
rpt	Reports, e.g. societies' studies, progress reports, etc.
txt	Text
txt.a	Somali text in the Arabic language or alphabet
txt.s	Somali text in Somali only
txt.t	Somali text in translation only
txt.st	Somali text in both Somali and translation

(Note: In some cases, the subject matter code refers only to a section of a book in question, relevant to the scope of this bibliography, and not necessarily to the total content of the book.)

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Author	Country	Institution (if known)	Subject
Abdullahi Cali Abokor	Somalia	Ministry of Education	Folklore
Andrzejewski, B. W.	Great Britain	School of Oriental and African Studies	Folklore, Linguistics
Cassanelli, Lee V.	United States	University of Wisconsin	Folklore, History
Cassanelli, A. A.	United States	University of Boston	Government, Politics, Law
Cerulli, Enrico	Italy	Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei	Folklore, Ethnology, History, Linguistics, Government, Politics, Law
Contini, Dr.	United States		Government, Politics, Law
Contini, Jean	United States		Folklore
Conar Aw Nuuh	Somalia	Ministry of Education	Folklore
Drysdale, John	Great Britain	Africa Research, Ltd.	Government, Politics, History, Linguistics
Etzeron, Robert	United States	University of California at Santa Barbara	
Harari Magan Gise	Somalia	Society for Somali Language and Literature	Folklore, Linguistics
Jamaar Conar Gise, Sheikh	Somalia	Ministry of Education	Folklore, History, Linguistics
Johnson, John William	United States	Indiana University	Folklore, Linguistics, History
Kepil, Ravi	United States	University of Michigan (?)	Government, Politics
Lewis, I. M.	Great Britain	London School of Economics	Folklore, Ethnology, History, Government, Politics
Mahammed Faarrah Cabdullaahi	Somalia		Folklore
McDonough, Frank	United States	University of California at Berkeley (?)	Ethnology
Martin, B. G.	United States	Indiana University	History, Religion, Linguistics
Moreno, Martino M.	Italy	Ministry of Education	Folklore, Linguistics, Ethnology, History, Government, Politics, Law, Religion
Musa Hhaaji Ismaaciil Galaal	Somalia		
92. J. Joseph	United States	Syracuse University	Linguistics
Kaci, Ismaaciil	Italy	University of Naples and Rome	Folklore, Linguistics, History
Saare Jaamaar Ahmed	Somalia	(Presently studying in the Soviet Union)	Folklore, Linguistics
Yasmin Gismaan Keenadilil	Somalia	Ministry of Education	Folklore, Linguistics, Government, Politics, History
Zaborski, Andrzej	Poland	University of Krakow	Folklore, Linguistics
Zholkovski, A. K.	Soviet Union	Laboratory of Mechanical Translation (in Moscow)	Folklore, Linguistics