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Newsletter

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JOURNEE INTERNATIONALE DE LA LANGUE

Thème : Cultures, Langues et Enseignement

Editorial

Culture, langue, et Education, trois notions qui sont intimement liées. La langue est l'un des supports essentiels de la culture, l'un de ses principaux canaux de transmission. L'éducation, qu'elle soit formelle ou non, est au cœur de ce processus de transmission. Aussi, l'une appelle l'autre. Compte tenu de l'espace restreint réservé à cet éditorial, nous allons nous limiter à la première qui est en quelque sorte le trait d'union des deux autres. La culture inclut la langue et a besoin de cette dernière pour être vivante, laquelle passe par l'apprentissage, but de toute éducation.

Si la notion de culture est si commune et significative, elle est pourtant difficile à cerner, délicat à définir. Nombre de disciplines, de la philosophie à l'anthropologie en passant par la sociologie, la psychologie et même la biologie et l'éthologie, ont tenté cette définition. Mais cette difficulté renvoie à la métaphore de la description d'un éléphant dans une pièce sombre par des aveugles. Quoique l'on fasse, la description sera toujours partielle, car chacun a accès à une partie du puzzle culturel.

Sommes-nous alors condamnés à nous satisfaire de la situation résumée dans la déclaration de cet ancien président de l'université de Harvard, A. L. Lowell (1905) qui affirmait « Il n'y a rien dans le monde de plus

insaisissable que la culture », que « on ne peut pas la définir ou la circonscrire », puisque « elle n'a pas de limites précises » ?

Sa compréhension est pourtant d'une importance cruciale dans un monde contemporain où semblent s'affirmer des forces contraires : une force qui pousse vers l'ouverture et la réduction des frontières et une autre qui tire vers le retour à la territorialité et à l'identité. Dans les deux cas, chacune des forces se réclame de la culture : une culture intégrative, holistique d'une part, et une culture-identité, une culture-terroir et histoire de l'autre. L'une se réclame de l'évolution naturelle, du progrès des idées et de l'accroissement des savoirs, l'autre de la fidélité au passé, de l'attachement aux racines et à la mémoire collective, garantes de la pérennité des sociétés et de la perpétuation de l'espèce. Deux visions de la culture qui peuvent coexister à l'intérieur d'une même civilisation. Peut-être de leur tension et de leur dialogue peut émerger la culture mondiale que beaucoup entrevoient, parfois appellent de leurs vœux. Pour l'heure, la définition de la culture qui reste la plus courante est celle donnée par E. B. Tylor (1871) traduite ainsi : « Ensemble complexe qui englobe les connaissances, les croyances, les arts, la morale, les lois, les coutumes et toute autre capacité et habitude acquise par l'Homme en tant que membre d'une société ». (suite p.3)

Focus : Interview du Ministre des Affaires Musulmanes, de la Culture et des Biens Waqfs



**SEM. Moumin
Hassan Barreh**

1) Pouvez-vous nous dire votre vision de la culture et l'importance qu'elle revêt pour vous et votre Ministère ?

Vision de la culture, vision du monde : façon de vivre et d'être. Quand on parle de culture, on parle de nos valeurs, nos croyances, nos coutumes, nos langues et nos traditions, notre histoire, notre patrimoine ... hier, aujourd'hui et demain. Son importance est d'être un indicateur de la qualité de vie et du dynamisme de la société.

Pour le Ministère, il s'agit de participer à la construction et à la consolidation de l'identité culturelle par le biais du développement d'infrastructures adéquates.

2) Quelles sont les activités que vous soutenez pour renforcer la Culture dans votre pays ?

Pour le Ministère, il s'agit de la « revalorisation du patrimoine culturel dans toutes ses composantes » en général. Et particulièrement de conduire la politique de sauvegarde, de protection et de mise en valeur du patrimoine culturel dans toutes ses composantes : développement du patrimoine culturel national, conservation de ses spécificités, encouragement de la création d'œuvres artistiques, développement des pratiques et des enseignements artistiques et culturels. Cette valorisation passe par l'amélioration de la gestion des droits d'auteur et des droits voisins. Le Ministère œuvre en partenariat avec d'autres départements ministériels tels que le Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle (enseignements artistiques & culturels, promotion et développement des langues maternelles...), le Secrétariat d'État aux Sports et à la Jeunesse (CDC pour la promotion de la lecture), le Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche (pour la recherche), le Ministère de l'Intérieur (pour les associations culturelles), etc.

3) Votre ministère s'appelle le Ministère des Affaires Musulmanes, de la Culture et des Biens Waqfs. Pourquoi avoir associé les affaires musulmanes et la culture ?

Le Ministère est appelé ainsi depuis fin mars 2013. Et la réponse à votre question est dans le décret (n°2013-058 du 14 avril 2013) fixant les attributions des ministères. A l'ar-

ticle 13, le ministère a pour mission de définir « les grandes orientations et les constantes de l'identité nationale en vue d'harmoniser l'action religieuse (pour notre cas, l'action islamique) selon les spécificités socioculturelles du pays. » En se reportant à la définition de la culture selon l'UNESCO, il y a une parfaite cohérence dans un pays comme le nôtre entre ces deux aspects, d'où le renouvellement de la mission dans le texte réglementaire de référence de juin 2016.

4) Beaucoup ont fait observer une sorte d'invasion de produits culturels (films, chansons, etc.) venant des pays du Nord qui traduisent un certain état culturel et dénotent une façon de vivre particulière à ces pays. Est-ce que vous partagez ce sentiment, et si oui comment concilier le besoin d'être en harmonie avec un environnement donné et l'influence massive de produits exogènes ?

Bien sûr qu'oui, il est inutile de nier l'hégémonie culturelle dans lequel notre monde baigne. Aussi bien au niveau international que national, les références culturelles hégémoniques, outrancièrement mondialisées, prennent de plus en plus le pas sur les valeurs et les textes normatifs inclusifs du point de vue culturel. Je fais référence, entre autres, aux textes comme les conventions de l'UNESCO relatives au patrimoine culturel immatériel (2003), à la diversité des expressions culturelles (2005) ratifiées par la République de Djibouti.

5) La RTD a fait une émission culturelle, intitulée "les jeunes talents", qui a eu beaucoup de succès au niveau national. Est-ce que vous pensez à des activités de ce genre pour stimuler la créativité de notre jeunesse, que ce soit dans le domaine du livre, du théâtre ou du cinéma ?

Vous n'êtes pas sans savoir que la RTD, organe public bénéficiant d'une autonomie, est à vocation culturelle. Et de part ses missions, elle a énormément contribué à la construction et au renforcement de l'identité culturelle nationale.

Lors du dernier atelier sur l'artiste tenu par notre ministère, en décembre 2016, un des panelistes avait exposé les activités des partenaires culturels, comme la RTD. **(Suite p. 4)**

« La promotion et le développement des langues maternelles ont leur place dans les politiques publiques. Beaucoup d'efforts sont consentis par les pouvoirs publics, la société civile, les médias et les chercheurs. »

Suite p.1 Edito

Cette conception de la culture a été critiquée dès le début du vingtième siècle par d'éminents anthropologues (cf. Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952). Pourtant même l'Unesco, en 2015, la considérait comme « la définition la plus commune » de la culture, et donc celle à propos de laquelle il y avait un minimum de consensus.

Mais cette définition comme les quelques trois cent définitions que donnent Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) semblent décrire les manifestations de la culture et non ce qu'est la culture en substance, dans son noyau. Si l'on s'interroge sur ce qu'est une « graine » et qu'on réponde c'est un arbre, des branches, des feuilles, des fruits, des fleurs, etc., on n'aura pas fini de la définir. On pourrait au loisir ajouter les racines, le tronc, la terre, la pluie, les saisons, etc. La graine c'est en effet tout cela, mais ce qui est propre à elle, c'est sa puissante finalité : produire des fruits et nourrir.

Avec le développement de la biologie moléculaire, surtout à partir du milieu du siècle dernier, la culture a été parfois décrite comme le résultat du processus global d'évolution de la vie. Cette vision de la culture a culminé avec l'apparition d'une nouvelle discipline, la sociobiologie (cf Wilson, 1975 ; Dawkins, 1976, 1989 ; Lumsden & Wilson, 1981 ; etc.) qui, en s'appuyant sur la théorie darwinienne de la sélection naturelle, s'applique à étudier « les bases biologiques de tous les comportements sociaux des êtres vivants, y compris l'homme. » La thèse la plus marquante de cette approche néo-darwinienne est développée par le biologiste-éthologiste R. Dawkins dans son ouvrage célèbre *Selfish gene* (Le gène égoïste) en 1976, qui invente le concept *même* (particule minimale d'un phénomène culturel, comparable au gène biologique dans sa reduplication et son fonctionnement). Selon cette approche, tous nos arts, nos croyances, nos coutumes, nos valeurs morales, etc., se ramèneraient à des choix qui s'opèrent selon le même mode que celui des gènes, à savoir la sélection naturelle des options les plus efficaces pour permettre la continuité de la vie.

La culture, comme la sélection naturelle des options les plus efficaces ou les plus adaptées dans un environnement, est sans doute une explication nouvelle qui ouvre une nouvelle perspective. Vient renforcer cette thèse le développement des connaissances en éthologie qui montre que beaucoup d'animaux partagent avec l'homme des traits culturels jadis considérés comme typiquement humains. D. Lestel, dans son ouvrage au titre évocateur *Les origines animales de la culture*, démontre avec force détails qu'il n'y aucune rupture entre l'animal et l'humain sur le plan du comportement. Même des traits que l'on considérait être propres aux humains, tels que la bipédie, l'empathie, la sympathie, l'estime et même l'amour, ne sont plus réservés à cette espèce, d'après les plus récentes études éthologiques. Chez l'animal, aussi il y a apprentissage, transmission et tous

les comportements permettant de couvrir les besoins physiologiques et les besoins psychologiques susmentionnés. Quand on considère que l'homme partage plus de 99% de son matériel génétique avec le chimpanzé, cela n'est pas si surprenant.

Mais alors, si nos outils d'analyse se sont brouillés au point qu'ils ne permettent plus de faire la distinction entre un singe et un homme, c'est qu'il y a lieu, non plus de les changer, mais de les affiner encore davantage pour arriver à percevoir ce qu'un enfant de deux ans perçoit intuitivement. L'approche néo-darwinienne de la culture pouvait contribuer à cela et apporter une nouvelle compréhension de l'évolution, qu'elle soit biologique, psychologique, ou sociétale. Mais elle souffre d'un défaut congénital ; celui du postulat darwinien et cosmologique de l'évolution qui considère que la conscience naît avec la complexification de la matière, commencée suite au Big Bang, en somme que la matière précède la conscience. Un postulat qui reste indémontrable pour l'heure et l'observation des extrêmes infinis de l'univers dont la formation et le fonctionnement selon un processus aléatoire est difficilement tenable autrement que comme posture méthodologique. Lire la culture dans la perspective du « dessein intelligent » est sans doute plus féconde et plus éclairante que celle d'une approche purement néo-darwinienne.

Fort heureusement des modèles plus ouverts et plus intégratifs (Ken Wilber 1997 ; Don Edward Beck et Christopher Cowan, 1996 ; C. Graves, 1950 ; Teilhard de Chardin, 1955 ; etc.) permettent de sortir la culture de la pure mécanique biologique pour la relier à une dynamique intelligente orientée vers la perfection de l'être, ce que C. Jung appelle l'individuation, et A. Maslow l'accomplissement ou la réalisation. La lecture de ce concept dans une telle perspective peut se révéler féconde aujourd'hui où, dans notre village planétaire, la confusion et l'uniformisation ont tendance à niveler la culture vers les besoins primaires, d'appartenance et de sécurité.

Pour finir, une culture, sous le regard d'une science qui s'obstine à réduire l'homme au corps et à la psyché freudienne, aura le plus grand mal à aboutir à une compréhension satisfaisante de celle-ci. Si en revanche on intègre, en plus de ces deux parties, la dimension de l'esprit, comme autre partie constitutive de l'être humain, il sera possible de concevoir la culture comme la dynamique à parfaire ou à satisfaire les besoins de ces trois dimensions. La culture pourrait alors être comprise comme ce qui permet de vivre confortablement, au sens étymologique du terme ; à savoir, tout ce qui permet d'être dans un bien-être matériel et physique, dans un état mental paisible et un état d'esprit relié ; ce dernier terme renvoyant à la religion à son sens étymologique et à sa finalité première.

«...dans notre village planétaire, la confusion et l'uniformisation ont tendance à niveler la culture vers les besoins primaires, d'appartenance et de sécurité. »

« La culture pourrait alors être comprise comme ce qui permet de vivre confortablement, au sens étymologique du terme ; à savoir, tout ce qui permet d'être dans un bien-être matériel et physique, dans un état mental paisible et un état d'esprit relié... »

AMI

Suite p.2 interview du ministre des AMCBW

Il avait mentionné les émissions culturelles de la RTD couvrant presque toutes les filières culturelles : promotion et développement des langues maternelles, incitation à l'esprit créatif dans les domaines du livre, du théâtre, etc. D'ailleurs dans « Jeunes talents », première période, l'Institut Djiboutien des Arts, institution du Ministère de la culture dédiée aux formations artistiques et culturelles, qui emploie tous les anciens artistes de la scène comme conseillers artistiques, a été un partenaire.

De la même manière, et conformément aux missions assignées au Ministère de la Culture, celui-ci accompagne toute initiative allant dans le sens du renforcement de l'identité culturelle djiboutienne aussi bien dans la création, la production que dans la valorisation en passant par la diffusion.

6) Bientôt, nous serons le 21 février, journée mondiale de la langue maternelle. Les autorités publiques ont fait beaucoup dans le domaine de la publication en langue afar et en langue somalie. Quelle est l'étape suivante pour renforcer la maîtrise de ces langues parmi nos concitoyens ?

En effet, depuis les états généraux de l'éducation nationale et de la création du ministère de la culture, la préoccupation des langues maternelles est bien visible. La promotion et le développement des langues maternelles ont leur place dans les politiques publiques. Beaucoup d'efforts sont consentis par les pouvoirs publics, la société civile, les médias et les chercheurs. Mais, il est vrai qu'il reste encore tant à faire pour que toutes ces actions renforcent la pratique de nos langues sur le terrain de l'école, de la justice, et même dans la famille, etc., car nos jeunes ont tendance à s'exprimer dans une langue mixte faite de français et de langue locale.

Grâce au soutien du Chef de l'Etat SEM. **IS-MAÏL OMAR GUELLEH**, notre pays s'est engagé dans la voie de la revalorisation de nos langues maternelles témoignant ainsi de notre diversité linguistique et du multilinguisme national.

Cette volonté politique s'est traduite par la création de l'**Institut des langues de Djibouti**, l'implantation des centres **Somali Pen** et **Afar Pen** qui ont fait preuve de vitalité et d'initiatives, et dernièrement la mise en place de l'**Académie Régionale de la Langue Somalie**.

En effet, un retour en arrière sur le parcours de revalorisation de nos langues réalisé par les uns et les autres, se présente comme suit :

L'édition

1. des ouvrages des symposiums (somali en 2002 et afar en 2003)

2. l'édition du livre et des chansons de OMAR DAHER ABDI dit OMAR KUUL

3. L'édition du premier dictionnaire de 40.000 mots environ en somali (2004)

4. La ratification par notre pays des conventions de l'Unesco pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine culturel immatériel de 2003 sur le patrimoine culturel et naturel

5. la réalisation de la grande exposition de livres de 2006

6. Le symposium sur les langues somali et afar en 2006

7. L'édition de la collection d'ouvrages dans les langues nationales

8 . Dans le cadre du 30ème anniversaire, il a été publié toujours dans le même canal une douzaine d'ouvrages des Djiboutiens, dans les trois langues nationales (arabe, afar et somali)

9. la célébration du 40ème anniversaire de la transcription de la langue somalie en décembre 2012

10. La publication des magazines culturels en langues somalis et afar

11. la publication du 1er dictionnaire de 70 .000 entrées en somali .Un ouvrage unique en son genre. Unique parce qu'il est conçu par une équipe de chercheurs de toutes les régions somalophones (universitaires et hommes de cultures) et des universités occidentales .

12. La célébration du 40eme anniversaire de la langue afar (en 2014)

13. La publication de 6 nouveaux livres en langues somali afar et arabe en octobre 2016

Ainsi, un long chemin a été parcouru. Néanmoins, des étapes décisives reste à franchir, et particulièrement l'**alphabétisation et l'enseignement des langues maternelles Djiboutiennes**. La langue maternelle facilite aux enfants l'acquisition des connaissances au commencement de la scolarité.

SEM. Moumin Hassan Barreh
Ministre des Affaires Musulmanes, de la Culture et des Biens Waqfs

« Depuis les états généraux de l'éducation nationale et de la création du ministère de la culture, la préoccupation des langues maternelles est bien visible. »

Nécrologie : Dr Adam Hussein (1943-Tanzanie - 2017-USA)

En ce début d'année 2017, nous déplorons la disparition du Prof. Adam Hussein, fondateur de la SSIA (Somali Studies International Association) et professeur en sciences politiques au Collège de la Holy Cross Massachusetts-USA.

Adam Hussein (surnommé Tanzania, car né à Arusha en Tanzanie) était l'un des plus éminents académiciens spécialistes de la Corne de l'Afrique, de même qu'un acteur infatigable dans la sensibilisation à la problématique somalienne auprès des instances internationales.

Il a débuté sa carrière par la soutenance à Harvard d'un mémoire resté dans les annales et portant sur l'histoire de la transcription du somali et de la grande campagne d'alphabetisation qui l'a suivie et qui reste à ce jour l'une des plus belles réussites de la Somalie indépendante. Mais Retracer sa carrière nous conduit à retracer celle de la SSIA qu'il a lancée en 1978 aux Etats Unis d'Amérique à Worcester avec Ford rejoint plus tard par Gesteker, Cassanelli et bien d'autres.

C'est à Mogadiscio; en Juillet 1980, que la SSIA a signé son acte fondateur en organisant le premier congrès d'une longue série de rencontres qui durant près de 4 décennies se sont succédé tous les trois ans en réunissant des chercheurs de tous horizons, de même que des acteurs et responsables d'institutions universitaires américaines, européennes et africaines.

C'est dans ce contexte qu'en novembre 2007, Prof. Adam Hussein a posé, pour la première fois, les pieds à Djibouti en tant qu'invité d'honneur du 10ème congrès de la SSIA. Un événement initié par l'Université de Djibouti secondé par le CERD et l'association des Etudes djiboutiennes. Cette dynamique est toujours à l'œuvre aujourd'hui comme l'une des sources d'inspiration d'IRICA.

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Somali Studies International Association Congresses have often resulted in published proceedings. Sometimes it has not been possible to achieve publication quickly, but even those published much later constitute important documents, recording which issues have been covered and showing how political events shape where researchers are heading

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Dr Adam Hussein

Adam Houssein Meraneh
Sociologue, CERD

IS MOTHER TONGUE AN ELUSIVE INSTRUMENT IN KENYA ?



Alice W. Mwangi

Later in 1954, UNICEF supported these views when it made a declaration on the use of vernacular languages in education as the best language of instruction for the learner in the formative years. Unfortunately, for a long time the indigenous languages have been relegated to a secondary role in education.

Kenya has a rich diversity of indigenous languages. Mbaabu(1996) for instance indicates that Kenya has 42 languages. Mother tongue can be referred to as a person's first language usually from their parents. Educationists and linguists do concur that mother tongue languages play an important part in promoting culture and giving children a sense of belongingness and identity. In 1924, the Phelps Stokes Commission observed that all colonizing nations in Africa had forced their languages upon the people and discouraged the use of mother tongue (Adegbija 1994). Later in 1954, UNICEF supported these views when it made a declaration on the use of vernacular languages in education as the best language of instruction for the learner in the formative years. Unfortunately, for a long time the indigenous languages have been relegated to a secondary role in education.

The mother tongue policy in Kenya stipulates that the languages of instruction for the first three years of schooling shall be the language of the school's vicinity while Kiswahili should be used in urban school settings . Thereafter, English shall take over this role of medium of instruction. The reality, however, is that there has not been much interest in the teaching and learning of mother tongue languages in Kenya. Despite many studies that show that it makes good sense to begin a child's education in his or her own language, and that it is sound educational principle to proceed from familiar to new (Mwaniki M. multiling.Ed 2014), the age old tradition of teaching a child in a language other than the first language still persists. The language policy in Kenya seems to favour English and Swahili which undermines the role of mother tongue in the school system. The Asmara declaration (2000) advocated that "All African children have the unalienable right to attend school and learn in their mother tongues. And that every effort should be made to develop African languages at all levels of education."

But why is it a Herculean task for the government and other stakeholders to implement and support the mother tongue policy which is enshrined in the constitution?

The answer to the above question could be attributed to a number of factors. The major among them being the notion that mother tongue languages do not enhance the performance of pupils in the examinations and their success in education considering the fact that examinations are never set in mother tongues (Luoch & Ogutu 2002). Another reason is that not many books are written in mother tongues and vocabulary is said to be limited. Teachers also are not trained concerning indigenous languages and it's often incorrectly assumed that being a native speaker of a par-

ticular language is sufficient to teach a language. Indigenous languages also are not accorded any importance in formal domains where focus is in the official language. They are not also offered in the institutes of higher learning. Due to these factors, teachers, parents and learners have negative attitudes and perceived stereotypes towards their own mother tongues as languages of instructions.

To address the above challenges, a number of ideas may be suggested. First, the government and other stakeholders in line with the constitution should be on the front line to promote cultural activities at the grassroots levels as this offers children excellent exposure to their mother tongues and in return they learn to appreciate their own languages. The government should also assume its mandate to promote research on the indigenous languages in order to enhance their development.

Teachers of lower primary and pre-schools should be supplied with curriculum materials in their respective mother tongues. It should not be assumed that being a native speaker makes you competent to instruct a child in your native language. Publishing firms should also play a role in promoting the indigenous languages. They can do this by creating an enabling environment for mother tongue materials to be published. Unfortunately; it has been observed that these firms have not been so enthusiastic in doing so as they do not deem works written in mother tongues to be as competitive as works written in English or Kiswahili. It is therefore difficult for writers who use indigenous languages to get financing from these publishing firms.

Finally, in recent past a considerable number of local T.V and radio channels have emerged. These channels which air their content in mother tongue should aim at promoting the status of indigenous languages especially to the young generation who due to certain mindsets do not value their mother tongues.

In conclusion, it is desirable that indigenous languages should be held in high esteem and the misconception that some languages like English or French are more superior to indigenous ones done away with. Educationists, scholars, researchers and other parties of good will should join hands to raise awareness of indigenous languages before some of them face the risk of disappearing.

**Alice W. Mwangi, Linguist.
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Paramountcy of Alliteration in Somali Literature

Alliteration, in Somali *xarafaac*, is a uniquely important feature in Somali literature. Scholars have observed and commented on the role of *xarafaac* as one of the two structural tools that regulate Somali poetry, the other one being *miisaan* (metre). However, what has not been noticed in the scholarship on Somali literature is the fact that *xarafaac* is used as a paramount stylistic device in virtually all forms of Somali literature, poetry and prose. Aside from poetry, alliteration is used in proverbs, oral narratives, traditional oratory and words of wisdom, including those that seem to be of remarkable antiquity. It is even used in modern prose fiction as well as playwrighting.

The type of Somali alliteration is that of initial sounds or the so-called head rhyme. Consonants alliterate with identical consonants while all vowels alliterate with each other. It is interesting that the use of alliteration makes Somali verse shares characteristic with old English poetry rather than with the poetry of the neighboring cultures of Swahili, Arabic, Oromo, Amharic, Harari and Saho; while the lines (or half-lines) in verses composed in all these languages are linked by an end rhyme, in Somali poetry lines are alliterated with each other by an initial sound which must begin with at least one word in each line in a short-lined verse or each half-line in the case of a long-lined one, as mentioned. However, unlike old English poetry, in Somali versification the same alliterative sound must be used throughout the whole poem. Alliterative words must be lexically substantial, i.e. they must be verbs, nouns, adjectives or adverbs.

In the case of the poetry departure from the rules of alliteration is called *deelqaaf*, meaning stray or wandering, which is immediately disdained by the Somali listener. The literal meaning of the word *Deelqaaf* is composing lines whose supposedly alliterative words begin with a mixture of *deel(d)* and *qaaf(q)*, instead of keeping on one; which means failure to meet the requirements of alliteration. *Deelqaafis* disdainfully rejected by the Somali poetry recipients, especially those whom Cabdullaahi Diiriye Guuled calls '*gabay-ruug*', lit. 'poetry-chewers', meaning poetry-minded. Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac 'Gaariye' too, in one of his poems, states that people intuitively recognize when a line is unmetrical: *Dhegtaa diidda meeshay xarfuhu dalab ku yeeshaane* (The ear rejects where letters twist).

To illustrate the extensive use of *xarafaac* in Somali traditional oral literature, even in children's literature, let us cite an example of a

googaale, a popular form of verbal game played by children in most Somali regions as a pastime activity and as an intelligence test among children. It is in question and answer format:

- Q. Wax dooxan
Oo dabran
Oo daaqa ?
A. Sikiinta.

It freely translates:

Question: *My stomach is taken out,
I am tied up,
Yet I can graze.
Who am I ?*

Answer : Razor

The combination of brevity and alliteration (in *d*) gives this piece an aesthetic beauty and makes it pleasant to the ear. Alliteration is also considered as a useful aid to oral memory.

Among modern literary forms other than the poetry, it is in the drama that alliteration features most prominently. *Xarafaac* is used in aspects such as poetic dialogue, the naming of characters and the titling of plays. I will discuss all these in detail in the next chapter on Xasan Sheikh Muumin's play, *Shabbeelnaagood*. Here, suffice it to cite some examples of plays with alliterative titles. These include, *Miyiyo Magaalo*, 'Country and town' (Cabdullaahi Yuusuf Farey, 1959); *Daadoyiyo dalnuurshe*, 'Daadoy and Dalnuurshe' (Aweys Geeddow, c.1967); *Sir Naageed lama Salgaaro*, 'Tricks of women cannot be reached' (Shiikh Mayow Halaag, 1976); *Qaraniyo Qabiil*, 'State and clan' (Cabdi Miigane, 1985).

Xarafaac is also used in modern prose fiction writing, albeit at a lesser degree. As part of my data collection, I have investigated a variety of novels and short stories in most of which alliteration is used to varying extents. When I looked at some of my own prose fiction works, among others, I was surprised to find an unexpectedly frequent use of *xarafaac* in my own novels *Maanafaay* and *Galtimacruuf*.

(Next p. 8)



Dr. Maxamed Daahir Afrax

"It is interesting that the use of alliteration makes Somali verse shares characteristic with old English poetry rather than with the poetry of the neighboring cultures of Swahili, Arabic, Oromo, Amharic, Harari and Saho..."

Suit p.7 Paramourncy of Alliteration in Somali Literature

Here is a sample extract from *Maana-faay*:

Muddo la sii mushaax. Mugdi la sii jibaax. Maana laga yaabi. Maaweelo lagu dey. Miro looga dhalin waa. Mar dambay bi-dhaani muuqatay.

They cruise a bit further. They indulge driving through the dark forest. *Maana-faay* gets more scared. They try to entertain her. It doesn't work. At last, a glimpse of light twinkles in the distance (Maxamed, 1997: 45).

The six short sentences in the passage above are held together by a pattern of alliteration; they all begin with **m** sound and this gives the ear a pleasant sense of patterning. As far as I can recall, I did not make any conscious effort to use alliteration in my fiction writing. Yet there is it; it may be the product of the inner workings of the sub-conscious mind which tends to take over in moments of emotional and dramatic intensity in the literary creation process.

In this passage we are in a moment of dramatic build-up in the development of the plot

where *Maana-faay*, the female chief protagonist, undergoes a new, exiting but frightening experience. She is a totally inexperienced school girl from very traditional family. She is in an evening ride to the unknown with two stranger playboys and a female friend of hers whom the boys used to trap *Maana-faay* by deceitful tactics; they needed a second girl to have a group of two couples to indulge in a night of pleasure-seeking extravaganza in a romantic suburban compound outside the city of Mogadishu. *Maana-faay's* fears accelerate when she realises that the car is getting out of town into a suburban forest, through increasingly scaring landscapes, a world she had never imagined to venture getting into. This is the moment of intensified excitement being captured in the passage. The fast pace of the writing style and its alliterative patterning can be seen as corresponding to the increasing tension and the imagined fast heartbeat of the innocent school girl suddenly caught in this kind of situation.

Dr. Maxamed Daahir Afrax
President of the Intergovernmental
Academy of Somali Language

“As far as I can recall, I did not make any conscious effort to use alliteration in my fiction writing. Yet there is it...”



Dr Jama Musse Jama

“Connectivity is the key to our connectedness, it allows us to share our literature, our culture, our ideas and values with each other and find a common ground. With enough care, creative confidence and a willingness to change things, together, we can all benefit from the increased connectivity.”

“Connectivity” as a major feature of modern African

Major Horn of Africa Literary Festival focuses on “Connectivity”. For the 10th anniversary of Hargeysa International Book Fair (HIBF), we will be focusing on our chosen theme of *Connectivity*. So far the themes explored have included Freedom, Censorship, Citizenship, Collective memory, Visualization the future, Journey, Imagination, Spaces and Leadership & Creativity. The Festival celebrates each year an African Guest Country such as Djibouti, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Ghana and South Africa.

As we accelerate into a future increasingly shaped and dominated by technology, movement of people and increase global closeness, connectivity seems to be our destiny! Connectivity is impacting the world in ways we could never have imagined, through roads, railways, airlines and most importantly Internet cables. Through connectivity we are reshaping the world map and as a result we become stronger and better community.

In the Africa continent, connectivity in all forms is taking root- but some forms are growing at much faster rate than others. Connectivity through infrastructural activities such as transportation, energy and communications is revolutionary development backed by many of our government to pull our society, economy and country forward. On the other hand the Internet has grown in our continent unprompted and increasingly the world online is borderless experiences shared in real time. As result we were able to live stream the entire HIBF2016 online for free to a wide audience across different time zones. As a result of greater connectivity we were able to project our ideas, our values and principles to a much greater audience, and because of greater connectivity- each year we have been able to invite guests from all over the world to travel here- to Somaliland to participate in Hargeysa International Book Fair. **(next p.9)**

Connectivity is the key to our connectedness, it allows us to share our literature, our culture, our ideas and values with each other and find a common ground. With enough care, creative confidence and a willingness to change things, together, we can all benefit from the increased connectivity.

At our 10th anniversary we want to celebrate our collective achievement, as a society, as a country, as an organization, as esteemed guests and all our guest countries. We want to celebrate all that connects us; all that keeps us connected and find ways for greater connectedness and cooperation. 10thHIBF will take place from 22 to 27 July 2017.

See for further details :
www.hargeysabookfair.com
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Dr Jama Musse Jama,
Computer Science
Director of Hargeysa International Book Fair

Necrology : Dr Adam Hussein (1943-Tanzanie - 2017-USA)

At the beginning of 2017, we lost Prof. Adam Hussein, a great scholar and founder of the Somali Studies International Association (SSIA), and a professor of political science at the Holly Cross Massachusetts College -USA.

Adam Hussein (nicknamed as Tanzania, being named under the country where he was born) was one of the prominent scholars of the Horn, who is renowned for his commendable job in raising awareness about the Somali issue in numerous international forums.

He began his career with the defense of a memoir to HARVARD which will remain in the annals concerning the history of the transcription of Somali language and the great literacy campaign which remains to this day one of the most beautiful achievements of the Independent Somalia. Such an act of retracing his career leads us to infer to SSIA, an institution that he launched in 1978 in USA , Worcester, with Ford , and later on, accompanied by Gesteker, Cassanelli, among many others.

It was in Mogadishu in July, 1980 that the SSIA signed its founding act by organizing the first congress. This event inaugurated a long series of meetings which for nearly 4 decades succeeded in bringing together re-

searchers of all nationalities, emissaries and heads of American, European and African academic institutions once in every three years.

It is in this context that Dr Adam Hussein set his feet down in Djibouti for the first time as the guest of honor at the 10th congress, held on November 2007 in Djibouti city. This event was initiated by the University of Djibouti and supported by the Institute des Langues de Djibouti (Cerd) and the Association des Etudes Djiboutiennes. This dynamic is still at work today as one of the sources for the inspiration of IRICA.

Some of Adam's Publications: see, p.5.



Dr Adam Hussein

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Edito

Culture, Language, and Education are three concepts that are intimately linked. Language is one of the essential supports of culture, one of its main channels of transmission. Education, whether formal or not, is at the heart of this process of transmission. Also, one appeals the other. Given the restricted space reserved for this editorial, we will limit ourselves to the first one, which is, in a way, the hyphen for the two others. Culture includes the language and needs the latter to be alive, which goes through learning, purpose of all education.

Even though the notion of culture is so common and significant, it is nevertheless difficult to delimit, and define. Number of disciplines, from philosophy to anthropology through sociology, psychology and even biology and ethology have attempted this definition. But this difficulty refers to the metaphor of the description of an elephant in a dark room by blind people. Whatever one makes the description will always be partial, because everyone has access to a part of the cultural puzzle.

Are we then condemned to satisfy ourselves with the situation summarized in the statement of the former president of the University of Harvard, AL Lowell (1905) who affirmed "There is nothing in the world more elusive than culture [that] one cannot define it or circumscribed it, [since] it has no precise limits?"

Its understanding is, however, of crucial importance in a contemporary world where opposing forces seem to assert themselves: a force which pushes towards the opening and the reduction of borders, and another which draws towards the return to territoriality and identity. In both cases, each of the forces claims to be from the culture: an integrative culture, holistic on the one hand, and a culture-identity, a culture-region and history on the other. One claim to be of natural evolution, of progress of ideas and of increase of knowledge, the other of fidelity to the past, of attachment to roots and of collective memory, guarantors of the sustainability of societies and the perpetuation of the species. Two visions of culture that can coexist inside the same civilisation. From their tension and from their dialogue could emerge the global culture that many people foresee, appeal sometimes from their

wishes. For the time being, the definition of culture that remains the most common is that given by EB Tylor (1871), which is translated as follows: "A complex whole that encompasses knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other ability and habit acquired by man as a member of a society." This conception of culture was criticised from the beginning of the twentieth century by eminent anthropologists (see Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952). However, even the UNESCO, in 2015, considered it to be the "most common definition" of culture, and therefore the one about which there was a minimum of consensus.

But this definition, like some of the three hundred definitions given by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), seem to describe the manifestations of culture and not what culture is in substance, in its core. If one questions on what is a "seed" and is answered, it is a tree, branches, leaves, fruits, flowers, etc., one will not have finished defining it. One could add with pleasure roots, trunk, earth, rain, seasons, etc. The seed is indeed all that, but what is proper to it, is its powerful finality: to produce fruits and nourish.

With the development of molecular biology, especially at the middle of the last century, culture has sometimes been described as the result of the overall process of life evolution. This vision to culture culminated with the appearance of a new discipline, sociobiology (see Wilson, 1975; Dawkins, 1976, 1989; Lumsden & Wilson, 1981; etc.), which, by leaning on Darwinian theory on natural selection, applies to study "the biological bases of all social behaviors of living beings, including man. The most striking thesis of this neo-Darwinian approach is developed by the Biologist-Ethologist R. Dawkins in his famous book *Selfish gene* in 1976, who invents the concept of Meme (the minimum particle of a cultural phenomenon, comparable to the biological gene in its reduplication and its functioning). According to this approach, all our arts, beliefs, customs, moral values, etc., would be reduced to choices that follow the same pattern as genes, namely the most efficient options of the natural selection to allow the continuity of life.

(next p.12)

Reading culture in the perspective of "intelligent design" is undoubtedly more fertile and more enlightening than that of a purely neo-Darwinian approach.

Edito

Culture, like the options of natural selection of the most effective or most adapted in an environment, is without a doubt a new explanation that opens up a new perspective. Come to reinforce this thesis the development of knowledge in ethology which shows that many animals share with man cultural patterns once considered as typically humans. D. Lestel, in his work entitled *Animal Origins of Culture*, demonstrates with great details that there is no break between animals and humans in terms of behavior. Even patterns that once considered to be proper to human beings, such as bipedalism, empathy, sympathy, esteem, and even love, are no longer reserved for this species, according to the most recent Ethological studies. In animals, also there is learning, transmission and all the behaviors allowing to cover the above mentioned physiological and psychological needs. When we consider that man shares more than 99% of his genetic material with the chimpanzee, this is not so surprising.

“The culture could then be understood as that which allows us to live comfortably, in the etymological sense of the term.”

But then, if our analysis tools have been blurred to this point that they no longer permit to do a distinction between a monkey and a man, it is that there is a matter, no longer to change them, but to refine them even more in order to perceive what a two-year-old child intuitively perceives. The neo-Darwinian approach to culture could contribute to this and bring a new understanding of evolution, whether it is biological, psychological, or societal. But it suffers of a congenital defect; that of the Darwinian postulate and evolution cosmological which considers that consciousness is born with the complexification of matter, begun following the Big Bang. In sum that the matter precedes consciousness. A postulate which remains indemonstrable for now and the observation of the infinite extremes of the universe in which the formation and functioning according to a random process is sustainably difficult otherwise than as

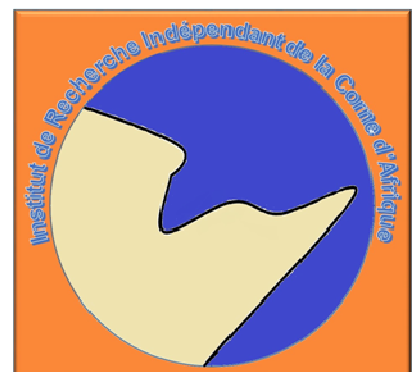
a methodological posture. Reading culture in the perspective of "intelligent design" is undoubtedly more fertile and more enlightening than that of a purely neo-Darwinian approach.

Very fortunately, more open and integrative models (Ken Wilber 1997, Don Edward Beck and Christopher Cowan, 1996, C. Graves, 1950, Teilhard de Chardin, 1955, etc.) allow to get out of the culture of pure Biological mechanic, to reconnect it to an intelligent dynamic oriented towards the perfection of the being, it is what C. Jung calls *individuation*, and A. Maslow *accomplishment* or *realisation*. The reading of this concept in such a perspective can reveal itself fertile today where, in our global village, confusion and uniformisation have tendency to level culture towards primary needs, of belonging and security.

Finally, a culture, under the regard of a science that persists to reduce man to the Freudian body and psyche, will have the greatest difficulty to lead to a satisfactory understanding of this one. If, one integrate, in addition to these two parts, the dimension of the mind, as another constituent part of the human being, it will be possible to conceive culture as the dynamic to perfect or at least to satisfy the needs of these three dimensions. The culture could then be understood as that which allows us to live comfortably, in the etymological sense of the term; namely, everything that allows to be in a material and physical well-being, in a peaceful mental state and a state of connected mind; the latter term referring to religion in its etymological sense and its primary purpose. **AMI**

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Interview of the Minister of Muslim Affairs, Culture and Waqfs of Djibouti

1) Can you tell us your vision of culture and its importance for you and your department?

A vision of culture, a vision of the world, a way of life and being. When we talk about culture, we talk about our values, our beliefs, our customs, our languages and our traditions, our history, our heritage ... yesterday, today and tomorrow. Its importance is to be an indicator of the quality of life and the dynamism of the society.

For the Ministry, it is a question of participating in the construction and consolidation of cultural identity through the development of adequate infrastructures.

2) What activities do you support to strengthen culture in your country?

For the Ministry, this is the "upgrading of the cultural heritage in all its components" in general. In particular, the policy of safeguarding, protecting and enhancing cultural heritage should be pursued in all its components: development of the national cultural heritage, conservation of its specific characteristics, encouragement of the creation of artistic works, development of practices and lessons on artistic and cultural activities. This enhancement involves improving the management of copyright and related rights. The Ministry works in partnership with other ministerial departments such as the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training on artistic and cultural teaching, promotion and development of mother tongues, etc., the State Secretariat for Sport and Youth, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Internal Affairs (regarding cultural associations).

3) Your ministry is called the Ministry of Muslim Affairs, Culture and Waqfs. Why did you associate Muslim affairs and culture?

The ministry has been called as such since the end of March 2013. And the answer to your question is in the decree (n°2013-058 of 14 April 2013) fixing the responsibilities

of the ministries. In article 13, the mission of the Ministry is to define "the main orientations and constants tenets of national identity in order to harmonize religious action (in our case, Islamic action) according to socio-cultural specificities of the country." If you referring to UNESCO's definition of culture, there is a perfect understanding for placing a country like ours, hence the renewal of the mission in the reference regulation of June 2016.

4) Many have felt a kind of 'invasion of products' (films, songs, etc.) coming from the countries of the North which reflect a certain cultural state and denote a particular way of life for these countries. Do you share this feeling, and if so how can wereconcile the need to be in harmony with a given environment and the massive influence of exogenous products?

Of course, yes, it is useless to deny the cultural hegemony in which our world is bathed. Both internationally and nationally, hegemonic cultural references, which are increasingly globalized, are increasingly taking their place in cultural values and normative texts that are culturally inclusive. I refer to texts such as the UNESCO convention on intangible cultural heritage (2003), the diversity of cultural expressions (2005), which have been rapidly ratified by the Republic of Djibouti.

5) RTD made a cultural show called "Talented Youth", which was very successful at the national level. Are you thinking of such activities to stimulate the creativity of our youth, whether in the field of books, theater or cinema?

As you know, RTD, a public body with autonomy, has a cultural mandate. And thanks to its missions, it has contributed enormously to the construction and strengthening of the national cultural identity.

(Next see p. 14)



**SEM. Moumin
Hassan Barreh**

"...the mission of the Ministry is to define the main orientations and constants of national identity in order to harmonize religious action (in our case, Islamic action) according to socio-cultural specificities from the country."

Rest of the Interview

“The policy of safeguarding, protecting and enhancing cultural heritage should be pursued in all its components.”

“...since the Estates General of Education and the creation of the Ministry of Culture, the preoccupation of mother tongue languages is clearly visible. The promotion and development of mother tongue usage has a place in public policy.”

At the last artistic workshop held by our ministry, in December 2016, one of the panelists outlined the activities of cultural partners, such as RTD. He mentioned some of the RTD cultural programs covering almost all cultural sectors: promotion and development of mother tongue languages, encouragement of creative spirit in the fields of books, theater, etc. Moreover, in "Talented Youth", the first part of the show, The Djibouti Institute of Arts, an institution of the Ministry of Culture dedicated to artistic and cultural training, which employs all former performers as artistic advisers, has been a partner. In the same manner, and in accordance with the missions assigned to the Ministry of Culture, we check-up on any initiative that goes toward strengthening the Djiboutian cultural identity, not only in the creation and production but also in the valorization by way of diffusion.

6) Soon we will be on the 21st of February, World Mother Language Day. Public authorities have done much in the field of publishing in the Afar and Somali languages. What is the next step in strengthening the mastery of these languages among our fellow citizens?

Thanks to the support of the Head of State SEM. ISMAÏL OMAR GUELLEH, our country is committed to the upgrading of our mother tongues, reflecting our linguistic diversity and national multilingualism.

This political will resulted in the creation of the Djibouti Language Institute, the establishment of the Somali Pen and Afar Pen Centers, both of which have shown vitality and initiative, and recently the establishment of the Regional Somalia Language Academy.

Indeed, a flashback to the events that have reinvigorated the sense of value for our languages is as follows:

1. The works of the symposiums (Somali in 2002 and Afar in 2003).
2. The edition of the book and songs of OMAR DAHER ABDI by OMAR KUUL
3. The first edition of the Somali dictionary of around 40,000 words (2004).
4. The ratification by our country of the

UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003 on the cultural and natural heritage.

5. The realization of a great book exhibition in 2006.

6. Symposium on Somali and Afar Languages in 2006

7. The publication of collection of works in the national language

8. As part of the 30th anniversary, a dozen Djibouti books have been published on the same channel, in the three national languages (Arabic, Afar and Somali).

9. The celebration of the 40th anniversary of the transcription of the Somali language in December 2012.

10. The publication of cultural magazines in the Somali and Afar languages.

11. The publication of the first dictionary of 70,000 entries in Somali. A unique work of its kind. Unique because it is designed by a team of researchers from all the Somalophone regions (academics and cultures) and composed of different parts that give it an encyclopedic character never realized in the Somali language.

12. The celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Afar language (in 2014).

13. The publication of 6 new books in Somali Afar and Arabic languages in October 2016.

Thus, a long road has been traveled! Nevertheless, decisive stages still need to be crossed, especially teaching and literacy in Djiboutian mother tongues. These native languages are a key facilitator of early childhood education.

**His Excellency Moumin Hassan Barreh
Minister of Muslim Affairs, Culture and Waqfs**



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