

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENRE HEELLO  
IN MODERN SOMALI POETRY

by John William Johnson



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## RESUME

Modern Somali poetry is manifested in the genre called heello. It is at once an expression and outgrowth of a new period of history, and a potentially strong influence on changing Somali society. This thesis is an attempt to describe the development of this poetry, its structure and imagery, and the social and historical setting from which it arose.

The characteristics of form and content of the heello are from four major sources. Firstly, it is within a traditional group of genres, here called the Family of Miniature Genres, that the history of the modern poem begins, especially with the last miniature poem to develop: the belwo.

Secondly, the modern poem has acquired characteristics from Somali classical poetry. Furthermore, it has borrowed some features from abroad. And lastly, it has acquired some of its structure from its own development through time. An historical approach, beginning with the belwo, is a fruitful manner in which to view the question.

The belwo, begun in 1943/45 in the British Somaliland Protectorate by a man called Cabdi 'Sinimo', was the immediate forerunner to the heello. It was the product of a period of heightened change brought about by World War II, and it offered a new medium of expression. An immediate success with Somali youth and progressive urban populations, as well as with the new elite of the country, it was opposed by more conservative religious leaders and elders.

The changes brought about by World War II helped to develop the belwo and change it into its next form, the heello Form A, actually a 'tacking together' of many belwo into one large poem. Hargeysa, emerging as an important administrative and cultural centre, became the focal area for this change.

Political and patriotic themes made their way into the text of the new poem and its form also altered drastically. The heello Form B, the next step of development, then became

major tool for the new elite, as cries for independence (usually hidden in the imagery of the new poem) could be heard regularly from the radio and from tape recorders in local tea shops. By the end of its first period of development in late 1954, the light belwo had been transformed into the very much longer heello and had adopted the traditional imagery of Somali classical oral literature, as well as the use of musical instruments imported from abroad.

In 1955, political events surrounding the transfer of part of the British Somaliland Protectorate to Ethiopia led to political protests from the Somalis and to the second period of the heello. With this period a new and concerted effort was made by the new elite to attain independence, and their new genre of poetry had almost replaced traditional poetry in urban society.

With the coming of independence in 1960 came the third period of the heello. This period was characterized by the addition of new, matured ideas as themes in modern poetry. Anti-government poems, as well as ones debating the role of women in the new society, could be heard. The use of the heello in the theatre and on the radio continued to drive it forward. Important, internal, political events found their expression in it, as well as the original and still dominant theme of love. The heello continues to develop in Somalia today.



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## PREFACE

The poetry of Somalia is of great importance to the daily lives of the people of that country; it is not peripheral as many societies. Modern poetry, like traditional poetry, commands a central role in the lives of all Somalis from clan elders to civil servants. Although mentioned in a few works<sup>1</sup> modern Somali poetry has not yet been described for western scholarship. Considering its central role, I feel that this absence marks a blank space in the study of Somali oral art, which this thesis, I hope, will reduce in some measure.

Research for the thesis was done while I was a volunteer in the United States Peace Corps in the Somali Republic (now called the Somali Democratic Republic) from June, 1966, until July, 1969. Much of the work was done, beginning in July, 1966 under the direction of B.W. Andrzejewski, Reader in Cushitic Languages at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He was in Somalia on a year's research leave and gave me valuable help in the study of the structure of the Somali language. Although I had studied Somali orally since March, 1966, his assistance was essential for the specialized skill of the translation of texts.

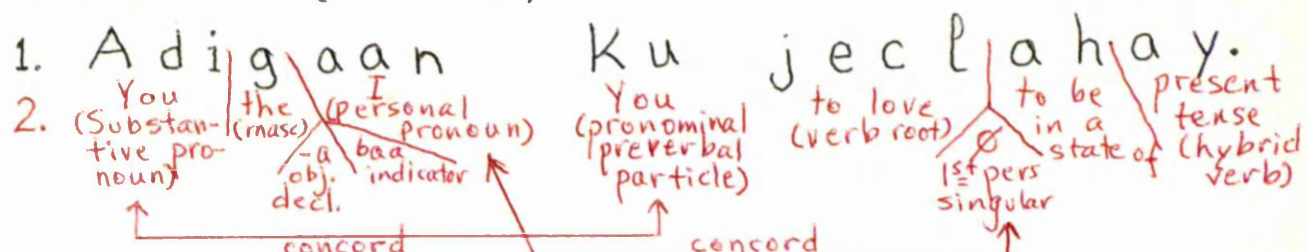
There are three sources of material from which this thesis is drawn: poetry, interviews and published works. Most of the poetry was collected and translated by me and my informants, although a few of the poems — and this is noted when it occurs — are from the unpublished collection of Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, translated by him and edited by me and another former Peace Corps volunteer, Michael Cushman Walsh. Observations on the development of modern poetry are made from the entire body of collected poems,<sup>2</sup> although only a carefully selected set of examples appear in the text. These poems were obtained from tapes made for use on the radio stations in Somalia, as well from individuals who either recorded them on tape for me, or dictated them to me as I transcribed. Some of the transcrip-

tion was done by Cumar Aw Nuuhh who also carefully checked the entire collection for its accuracy in transcription.

With the interviews and conversations I collected, Somalis were themselves asked to comment on the development of their poetry, for there is a large body of oral history of art concerning the development of modern poetry. Although the information obtained in this manner cannot be final, general ideas and opinions on the direction of development can be obtained. Some of the information was conclusive. All Somalis with whom I spoke, for example, agreed that modern poetry developed from a genre called the belwo. It must be born in mind, however, that memories sometimes fail on minute points and that opinions vary. Fortunately the memories of men from oral societies are used much more often than those of men who can make notes in writing. For this reason oral men's memories are exercised more often and may be more accurate than literate men's memories. Copies of these interviews, together with some newspaper articles and the transcription of a radio programme, have been deposited at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London where they can be consulted by arrangement with the Department of Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The published materials used in this thesis were written by Somalis as well as foreigners. References to these works may be found in the bibliography. A complete bibliography of Somali language and literature is also available (See Johnson 1969).

I have attempted to translate the poetry in the most complete manner possible. In so doing, each line of poetry was treated to four processes, thus:

1. Adigaan Ku jec lahay.
2. 
3. It is you whom I love.
4. 'Tis thee I love.

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Step one is to transcribe the text accurately so that each morpheme is accounted for properly. I have not used a phonetic or phonemic transcription, but rather an orthographic system which is used by most Somalis who employ the Latin script. This system is likely to be chosen officially by the Somali Government if they decide in favour of the Latin script in preference to Arabic or Somali scripts.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, this system is very practical for use with a typewriter. It was originally devised by Armstrong, 1934, and has been adjusted several minor ways by such people as Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, Shir Jaamac Ahhmed and B.W. Andrzejewski. An account of how these variations relate to one another can be found in Andrzejewski Strelcyn and Tubiana, 1966. The variation of the system used in this thesis is that outlined in Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, 1968.<sup>2</sup> One adjustment has been made by me. The symbol <'> has been replaced by <z>, representing the glottal stop /ʔ/, in order to avoid visual confusion with the ordinary comma.

It should be noted that although Somali has no official orthography, proper names and certain commonly used words are written in very rough, 'ad hoc' transcriptions, either following the English, French or Italian conventions, e.g. Jama, Djama, Giama, for Jaamac. In this thesis the orthographic system already mentioned is used throughout. Popular spellings of Somali can be found in the 'Glossary of Somali Proper Names' at the end of the thesis.

Care having been taken to spell correctly, a morpheme by morpheme translation then follows in step two. Step three is a literal translation of the line, while step four is a translation taking the whole of the poem into consideration and attempting to provide a literary version in English. Except for some of the short poems, I have not attempted to imitate the alliterative system employed in Somali poetry. I have also footnoted all references which would remain obscure to the non-Somali even when translated. In some cases, Somali words are employed in the text and then explained in footnotes.

In order to save space and to make the poetry less monotonous in translation, line repeats have been omitted from the text. They have been indicated, however, by placing brackets after repeated lines in which a number appears indicating the number of times the line is delivered in the original. All refrains at the ends of stanzas are indented and when a refrain is repeated after each stanza in a poem, it is given in full only the first time it appears. (See the poem on pp. 20-24 for clarification.)

The translations were done with two informants, Mahammed Jaamac Galaal and Ahhmed Cali Abokor. Mahammed, at present a student in the newly established National Teachers College in Somalia, was graduated from the National Teacher Education Center, one of the best secondary schools in the country. He had taught for a year in intermediate school before entering the college. Ahhmed is a research official in the cultural division (Department Five) of the Ministry of Education. Having graduated from Sheikh Secondary School, Ahhmed served for a while as a teacher in northern Somalia and as headmaster at Laas Caanood Intermediate School, before going to Muqdishu to enter the cultural division. Both informants have a good command of English and spent their early lives herding camels in the traditional manner of northern Somalis. Ahhmed especially has a good command of the specialized language used in traditional Somali poetry and has collected a considerable amount of traditional poetry himself. I am greatly indebted to both of these men for their help.

Although the limitations of this thesis are not so great as to prevent it from being written, they cannot be ignored. Cultural differences between Somali society and my own prevent the understanding of many subtle points. For example, it was not uncommon for me to praise the aesthetic aspects of a poem which appealed to me only to find that my informant was not particularly impressed.

Another obvious limitation in the recording of this study

is the scarcity of documents relevant to the subject. I should like to stress, however, that the lack of a script is in no way at all a limitation to the composition and development of poetry among the Somalis.

Another limitation is the lack of information on the influence that southern Somalia had on the development of modern poetry. Although the belwo is a northern genre, and although the greater part of the development of modern poetry was accomplished in the North, some influences — more correctly, some parallel development — from the South can be noted. The poetry performed by Ahhmed Naji, for example, is considered distinctly southern by my informants, but this emerged after the modern poem had evolved.

A serious difficulty also arises from the fact that no one has succeeded, as yet, in formulating the rules of Somali scansion. We do not even know what the units are of which the actual verse patterns are composed, but it seems almost certain that the Somali scansion differs radically from that used in Arabic or European languages. Several scholars have tried to establish the rules of Somali scansion (Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, Andrzejewski, Maino, and others) but have so far failed, in spite of the fact that Somalis readily recognize different metres, though they cannot state what these metres consist of. It has been suggested by A.M. Jones, an eminent specialist in African music, that the rules of Somali scansion, whatever they are, might be discovered through analyses of rhythm with the methods employed by specialists in non-European music.

Lastly, the most serious difficulty I had in the thesis was nomenclature. Trying to find the appropriate term in English for a Somali word or for some problem not named at all in Somali was very tiresome. The most important specific difficulty here was the problem of whether to call the genres of Somali verbal art under discussion poetry or song.<sup>1</sup> Although it is often recited, all Somali poetry can be sung and many genres have their own characteristic melodies. This verbal art



is, nonetheless, what we as Westerners would readily recognize as poetry. Moreover, all these genres have been referred to as poems by scholars in the past. When one comes to modern poetry the problem is most acute, and Somalis themselves have difficulty. Sometimes the modern poem is referred to as the heello (a poetic term) and at other times it is referred to as a hees ('song'). Furthermore, in my search through musical terminology in English, I could find no useful term that would describe the heello without also introducing ambiguous connotations. Although I do not consider the problem solved, it is obvious that a decision had to be made. Since this thesis deals mostly with the poetic aspects of the heello and very little with the musical side, I have chosen to call it poetry and not song. Although necessary references to some musical features are made in the nomenclature surrounding the heello in this thesis, therefore, is drawn from literary criticism and not from ethnomusicology.

Although it would be impossible to mention everyone, I should like to acknowledge several people for their help in the preparation of this thesis. Appreciation is due to my informants in the translation of the poetry, Mahammed Jaamac Galaal and Ahhmed Cali Abokor, and in the checking of the spelling, Cumar Aw Nuuhh. I would also like to thank all the informants of the interviews, especially Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and Hhasan Sheekh Muumin. For direction and advice on the preparation of the manuscript and for assistance in learning the grammatical structure of Somali, as well as for continual encouragement, I should like to express especial gratitude to B.W. Andrzejewski. For his encouragement, I should also like to express appreciation to Felix K. Knauth. Finally I should like to thank Elizabeth Land Johnson for her encouragement and useful comments in the writing of the manuscript.

## Chapter I: Introduction

### THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Within Somali society poetry has many uses. Among other functions, it is employed as a running commentary on the latest news, a lobbying pressure device for social and political debates, a record of historical events, a revered form of aesthetic enjoyment, and an expression of deep feelings about love. The poet is a prominent public figure who commands a following and a measure of prestige corresponding to his poetic abilities. He has enjoyed this high status for as long as Somalis can remember, and in spite of all that is new in Somalia today, he is in no danger of losing this status. In fact, his poetry has adjusted itself to modern influences and is enjoying a renaissance. Having thus evolved, the main genre of modern poetry, called the heello, now commands the attention formerly reserved for the traditional genres alone, at least among the urban and elite segments of the society.

#### The Somali Way of Life

The modern poetry of Somalia is a product of the new elite of that country; that is to say, it has arisen and developed inside the part of the Somali social system which was heavily influenced by the colonial administration and has come to be the ruling segment of the modern Somali nation state. The roots of this development, however, are well within the traditional way of life.

#### Traditional Ways of Life

There are four main economic systems on the Horn of Africa, each of which has a differing influence upon the social structure of the Somalis involved in them. These are: the pastoral nomad, the agriculturalist, the town dweller, and the coastal merchant.<sup>1</sup> It must be emphasized from the beginning that all these people consider themselves Somalis and all share a basically similar culture. They all speak the same language, though like all

languages, divided into dialects. Study so far has determined three main dialect types.<sup>1</sup> All of these peoples share a common religion, that of Islam. Furthermore, the geography of their land is fairly uniform. Muusa Galaal has said: 'The Somalis go as far as their camels go',<sup>2</sup> stopping at the highlands of Ethiopia and Kenya. In fact, the geography does vary to some extent, but not appreciably. Moreover, all these peoples relate to each other through a patrilineal, agnatic genealogy system.<sup>3</sup> This system enables every Somali to relate to every other Somali, defining his responsibilities and liberties within traditional society.

The four economic systems mentioned above are the main traditional ones, and they cover the greatest part of the Somali population. It must be noted in passing, however, that there are several other groups that differ from the four, but their contribution to modern poetry is minimal and they need not be mentioned here. In fact, of the four main economic systems — and the societies which surround them — it was from the traditional poetry of the pastoral nomad that modern poetry developed. Not only has the nomad contributed most of the imagery, but the very genres from which the heello developed came from the pastoral society. Moreover, the nomad's dialect is employed in most, but not all, of the modern poetry used today.

Although the nomad contributed most to modern poetry, it is at first glance somewhat paradoxical that the immediate predecessor of the heello, a genre called belwo, first emerged inside the society of the town dweller in northern Somalia. This development will be covered in detail in Chapter III, but suffice it to say here that the heello itself is a development from traditional pastoral poetry that has lived all of its life inside the new elite segment of Somalia. In short, by the time it had become a secure genre in Somalia as a whole, poets from all four main groups — and some of the minor ones as well — were contributing to its composition and development.

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Detailed works on the history and social structure of the four main economic systems have already been written.<sup>1</sup> Lewis, 1965, has, moreover, covered the history of the new elite through 1963, but since it is this segment of society from which the heello emerged, more consideration must be given to it.

The New  
Elite

It must be made clear from the beginning that all of the traditional economic systems mentioned above still exist today. There is, however, a present-day social group whose members come from all segments of Somali society but whose lives are no longer totally bound up with the traditional segment from which they came. This group we have already called the new elite, for its members are increasingly involved in the control of the political and, to some extent, economic future of their country.<sup>2</sup>

The new elite is a segment of society, not based on an economic structure and not having a long cultural background as such. Its heritage is drawn from the traditional economic segments, and this heritage is often used as propaganda. As we have pointed out, the art form of the elite, the heello,<sup>3</sup> is rooted in the tradition of the pastoralist, but it has other characteristics, such as its use of musical instruments, which have been imported from other cultures.

The new elite, many of whom have formal education to some degree, is made up of such sub-segments of the population as politicians, members of the army and police who now control the politics of the country, the educated government civil servants and quite a substantial number of people with higher education gained from abroad, many of whom are idle because of the lack of employment to fit their fields.<sup>4</sup> There is also the new elite segment of professional poets, reciters and musicians.

Although the economic and social backgrounds of the four traditional groups differ from the backgrounds of the new elite — and often their formal educational background differs — the

social contacts between them are not as greatly removed as one might think. One need only look at the participation of Somalis in general elections. Great numbers of traditional Somalis participated alongside the new elite in all of the elections that have been held in that country. As we shall demonstrate below, the themes in modern poetry are also a reflection of the ties, as well as the differences, between the elite and traditional segments.

There are, of course, attitudes which differ between the traditional and elite segments. In present-day Somalia the ancient system of tribalism, which represents older beliefs about personal and clan relationships, is combated vigorously by the nationalists of the elite. Mention of clan names was common in some genres of traditional poetry but is almost completely absent in the heello. Other differences in attitudes could be mentioned, but since poetry is our main concern let us compare a traditional gabay with a modern heello. The points of view concerning the role of women in society can be clearly seen in the following poems.

Comparison of Traditional and  
Elite Societies through Poetry

Saahid Qamaan, the composer  
of the following gabay  
(Example 1), a genre of

Somali classical poetry,<sup>1</sup> used a tone of instruction to the woman he wanted for his wife.<sup>2</sup> He begins his poem by giving an extensive list of clans (a practice definitely absent in anti-tribalist modern poetry) through which he has searched for a good wife. Having found the right one, he concludes the first stanza by lecturing her as a student. What follows is an instruction in the proper role of a married woman from the traditional point of view.

Example 1:

- II. 13. Ma udgoona naag inan-gumeed, uudna shidanayne,  
14. Mar haddii ubad yeelatona, Lagaba aayuusye,

15. Arwaahhaaga oogada biyaa, ubad ha moogaynin,
16. Uskag naag leh waa necebnehee, yuusan Kugu oollin
17. Nin udgoonka jecel baan ehee, uunsiga ha deynin,
18. Kolla haddaanad iga maarmihayn, idan ha moogaanin
- III. 19. Haddii inan La guursadoo tolkay, waw abtiriyaane,
20. Adyadiyo wahhay Kuula iman, agabbar naagoode,
21. Afka iyo ilkaa rumayga mari, oo indhaha kuulo,
22. Adigaan ilwaad quruhhsanayn, yaan LaGuu imanin,
- IV. 23. Aqalkiyo ardaagiyo qoryaa, ilinta aad joogto,
24. Aqlibiyo awaare isku kacay, sidatan geel ooddii,
25. Yuu Kaa ahaanine kurtiis, ha isku awdnaado,
26. Isku idibiloo wada adkee, ilahhidhkaan jiifo,
27. Hana igu itaaline ka yeel, meel ergada deeqda,
- V. 28. Ilma-adeerraday iyo kuwaan, oday wadaagayney,
29. Niman urursanoo ila fadhiya, haw irdho lazaanin,
30. Uurkaygu suu damacsanyay, aniga oon sheegin,
31. Aqligaa wahh Laga fiiriyaa, garo ihhtaadkayga,
- VI. 32. Ammin gaabtay aaskoo dam yidhi, niman aguugaaya,
33. Meeshay adduunyadu martiyo, adhiga foolkiisa,
34. Irridday fadhiistaan galbeed, kama ajoodaane,
35. Arwaahhooda waa uga tudhaan, Reer Ugaas-Magane,
36. Dadka uma ekee yaan La odhan, Lama oqoonayne,
37. Anshahhooda baro haatanaa, LaGu ogaysiine,
38. Afarta hilqadoodiyo qardhaas, aqalka Kuu taalla,
39. Alaabtaada oo idil adoo, urursadoo qaatay,
40. U tagoo ogow inay yihiin, awrta Bah-Hhawaadle,
- VII. 41. Anoo maqan Islaan idin martiyyay, niman iigaanaystay
42. Aad ha odhan Allaa igu ogoo, aayahood ma hayo,
43. Arli durugsan yay iigu iman, inaad asbaahhowday,
44. Anoo aan ogayn dhuuni yay, igaga eed sheegan,
45. Naagaa ugaaslee dadkiyo, ururi waayeelka,
- VIII. 46. Ayaan noolba tii qaylisa, waa ibliis darane,
47. Irdho qaado aashaana soco, aayar hadalkaaga,
48. Is ogow afkaagana yasiro, edebtu waa doore,
- IX. 49. Usha aniga oo Kugu dhufaad, meelo ka ilduuftay,

50. Inaad oydid inaad aammustaad, Kuu arrindhaantaaye  
 51. Ayaaniyo ayaan naag hhun baan, umalka daynayne,  
 52. Adoo uubatayn reero kale, yayan Ku ogaanin,  
 X. 53. Intaasaan afeef Kuu dhigoo, waano Kuu idhiye,  
 54. Hadduu Eebbeheen Kugu anfici, waa kitaab idile,  
 55. Haddii aanad aqbalin hhaajadaa, LaGu ogaysiiyey,  
 56. Nin kaloo Ilaah Kuu bahhshoba, kala awaaraynay.

+++++

- II. 13. The wife of a man of low birth never smells well,  
 because she does not burn incense for herself;<sup>1</sup>  
 14. After she has given birth, [her husband] abandons  
 her.  
 15. [So] don't forget [to wash] your body regularly  
 with water.  
 16. [My clan] hates dirty women; [so] do not allow it  
 of yourself.  
 17. I am a man who likes sweet smells; do not stop  
 [using] incense.  
 18. As long as you are in need of me, do not forget  
 the incense burner.
- III. 19. If a girl is married [into] my clan, my relatives  
 [always] check her ancestry;  
 20. They come to you with prying [questions] and  
 ridicule [used with] women.<sup>2</sup>  
 21. Clean your mouth and teeth [with] a tooth brush,<sup>3</sup>  
 and use eyeshadow [on your] eyes.<sup>4</sup>  
 22. One should never come upon you [when your]  
 appearance is not beautiful.
- IV. 23. [It is shameful] for the ante-chamber,<sup>5</sup> and the  
 area around your house where you stay  
 24. To be untidy and dirty like a camel corral,  
 25. [So take care that] it is not like this; let it  
 kept neat.  
 26. Keep tidy and strong the bed-chamber<sup>6</sup> where I  
 sleep,

- 19-
27. But do not overdo it for me; let there be ample room for guests.
- V. 29. Do not ignore the men who gather around and sit with me,
28. My cousins on my father's side and those with whom I share an ancestor.
30. [Let it be unnecessary] for me to tell you the wishes of my emotions;<sup>1</sup>
31. [You must] be sensitive; know my needs.
- VI. 32. [Honourable] men will travel [to you] at sunset -
- 33-34. They appreciate sitting west of the gate [of the corral] where the animals, sheep and goats, pass.<sup>2</sup>
35. Be lenient with their persons: the Reer Ugaas-Magan.<sup>3</sup>
36. They do not resemble [other] people; one [should] never say that they are not known [throughout the land].
37. You are informed [thus]: learn their behaviour from this time forth.
39. [When] you have collected and put on all your [fine] clothes, and
38. The amulet and the four earrings which are in your dwelling,
40. Go [to them] and be aware that they are the noble men<sup>4</sup> of the Bah-Hhawaadle.<sup>5</sup>
- \* VII. 41. When I am away, [if] Moslems come to you as guest [in order] to visit me,
42. Do not say: 'God knows that I have no sustenance [for you].'
43. [News] should not come to me in a distant place, that you have been disgraced.
44. While I am unaware [of their visit, I should] not be reproached about [the lack] of food.
45. Women have nobility; [therefore, you must] care



for [my] people and the elders.

- VIII. 46. The [wife] who nags every day is [like] the evil Satan.  
 47. Be careful, walk prudently, speak slowly;  
 48. Know yourself; speak gently, [for] politeness is noble.
- IX. 49. If I hit you with a stick when you transgress,  
 50. It is better [for] you to keep silent, than to weep.  
 51. A bad wife never ceases her anger, day after day.  
 52. Other people [should] not know when you cry.
- X. 53. This I have told you as a warning and as advice.  
 54. If God make you understand, [what I have given you] is a complete book.  
 55. If you do not accept these arguments, which have been told to you,  
 56. [Then] whomever God [may] give you [as a husband] we [must] separate [from each other].

The following modern poem is on a topic which would be quite rare, if not unheard of, for a classical poem. The exchange between a man and a woman on the topic debating the role of woman in modern Somali society must not mislead the reader. Although both sides of the question are given in the recitation, the poem was composed by only one poet.

#### Example 2:

- |                                     |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| I. male: 1. Dumar wahha u fiicnayd, | } (2) |
| 2. Tii doorkii Nebigii,             |       |
| 3. Reer Laga dillaashee,            |       |
| 4. Duufsaday iblayskuye,            |       |
| 5. Biyaha uu dul-joojee,            |       |
| 6. Hadhkeedii dad mooddee,          |       |

- 13. Aadan oon dembi lahayn, ]
- 14. Daaqsiisay geedkee, ] (2)
- 15. Diinteen sheegtee, ]
- 19. Inta Loogu daw-gelay, ]
- 20. Jannadooy dabbaashaan, ] (2)
- 21. Dibadda Looga saaree, ]
- 25. Waa iga dardaarane, ]
- 26. Wahhaan Kaaga digayaa, ] (2)
- 27. Dabka hura dhehhdeenee, ]

- female:
- 31. Waan idin dar-yeelloo, ]
  - 32. Idin daadahaynoo, ]
  - 33. Dusha idin ku qaadnee, ] (2)
  - 34. Ruuhh idin ku daaloo, ]
  - 35. Dambarkiisa nuugteen, ]
  - 36. Haw deeqin caydee, ]
  - 43. Carrabkiinoo daaha gala, ]
  - 44. Lama-dublaysaan, ] (2)
  - 45. Sida aar dad-qaadee, ]
  - 49. Idinkaa daliishaday, ]
  - 50. Dadka kala sarreeyoo, ] (2)
  - 51. Ummadda kala dambaysee, ]
  - 55. Dan bay innaga dhahhaysee, ]
  - 56. Daacad aan ahaanno, ] (2)
  - 57. Aynnu wada dadaallee, ]

- II. male:
- 61. Dadkii raacay Nebigii, ]
  - 62. Kuwii diiday Shaafici, ]
  - 63. Maalintay is dilayeen, ] (2)
  - 64. Doqorkii uu Sayid Cali, ]
  - 65. Intuu daray kufaartii, ]
  - 66. Daafacaayay Abu Jahal, ]
  - 73. Ee dhiiggu daatee, ]
  - 74. Sida daad qulqulayee, ] (2)
  - 75. Maydku daadsanaa degel, ]

- 79. Dabcigiinu waa kii,
- 80. Hadba qolada debecdo,
- 81. Aad ku digan jirteenee,
- 85. Waa iga dardaarane, etc.

- female:
- 91. Dayahh dhaca habeen dam ah,
  - 92. Iyagoon dembi lahayn,
  - 93. Idinkaa dalaagee,
  - 94. Reer ay daruureen,
  - 95. Idinkaa ka dira oon,
  - 96. Dawgooda marininee,
  - 103. Dibnahoo qaniiniyo,
  - 104. Dabkay taasuu leedahay,
  - 105. Ayaa idin ka daahane,
  - 109. Hhaqayaga aad daboosheen,
  - 110. Damac yaad ku qaaddeen,
  - 111. Ayaa idin ku deyne,
  - 115. Dan bay innaga dhahhaysee, etc.

+++++

- I. male:
- 1. Of [all] women, the one who was best
  - 2. Was the one [who lived during] the era of the Prophet [Aadan].<sup>1</sup>
  - 3. Her dwelling place<sup>2</sup> was destroyed;
  - 4. She was led astray by Satan.
  - 5. He placed her by the stream,
  - 6. [Where] she thought her shadow was someone else.<sup>3</sup>
  - 13. Adam, who had never committed sin —
  - 14. She caused him to eat of the Tree [of Life].
  - 15. So teaches our religion.
  - 19. [This] is the reason [that they], while
  - 20. Swimming [peacefully] in Paradise,
  - 21. Were expelled to the outside.
  - 25. These are my last words [of warning]:
  - 26. What I shall warn you about is
  - 27. The fire<sup>4</sup> which burns between us.

- female: 31. We gave you assistance;  
32. We taught you to walk;  
33. We carried you on our backs [while you  
were yet too young to walk];  
36. Refrain from giving insults to  
34. The ones who became fatigued for your sakes,  
35. And from whom you suckled the first milk  
[of your lives]. (2)  
43. The tongue which you possess  
44. Speaks two [opposite] things [at the same  
time] (2)  
45. [And is] like the male lion which catches  
people.  
49. You have demonstrated that  
50. [Some] people are better than [others]; (2)  
51. And that some are not as good as [others].  
55. There is a necessity which brings us  
together: (2)  
56. Let us be honest;  
57. Let us work hard together.
- II. male: 61. The people who followed the Prophet  
[Mahammed]  
62. And those who rejected the Shaafici:<sup>1</sup>  
63. Fought with each other one day. (2)  
64-65. While Sayid Cali<sup>2</sup> slew the infidels  
with his weapon,  
66. And defended [his people against] Abu Jahal,<sup>3</sup>  
73. And blood which was spilt [was] (2)  
74. Like a rushing flood,<sup>4</sup>  
75. Dead bodies covered the ground.  
79. Your character is like this:  
80-81. You are always pleased to see a group (2)  
of people become weak [and defeated].  
85. These are my last words, etc.

- female: 92-93. You divorce them when they have committed  
no sin,
91. On a dim night when the moon has set.
95. You expel them from
94. The houses which they [themselves]  
constructed.
96. You do not allow them to have their rights.
105. You are not aware of
103. The lips which are bitten [in anger],
104. And the fire that [this ill treatment]  
causes.
111. You are in debt [to us for]
109. Our rights which you hid;
110. You have taken them with greed.
115. There is a necessity, etc.
- (2)
- (2)
- (2)

In closing it should be stressed again that the modern poem is the product of the new elite of Somalia. The original poem from which the modern poem developed was from traditional society, as we shall see, and went through changes which were to make it the modern poem. These changes were accomplished in the hands of the new elite and with influence from contact with foreign cultures. But before these changes can be described, we must first consider the general characteristics of Somali poetry as a whole.

#### THE NATURE OF TRADITIONAL PASTORALIST POETRY

As mentioned above, it is the traditional poetry of the pastoral nomad which contributed most to the structure of modern Somali poetry. For this reason, we shall confine our statements to this type of traditional Somali poetry. Although less is known about the structure of poetry among the other main groups in Somalia,<sup>1</sup> three important characteristics link the modern poem to the northerner's poetry: its form, its dialect of Somali and its historical origin.

The form of the modern poem, for the most part, has been inherited from the traditional poetry of the pastoralist and the dialect of Somali is from the same source. Furthermore, the modern poem has developed only since about 1948, and its origin in northern Somalia can easily be traced. The main feature which separates it from traditional pastoralist poetry its musical setting, is borrowed not from any of the other traditional segments of Somali society, but from abroad. Its remaining characteristics are, as we shall see, results of its own development in time.

We have considered the social setting from which the modern poem arose, and we shall later view its historical background in each of its periods of development. But if an adequate examination of the modern poem is to be made, its structural heritage must also be described, and it is in an examination of the pastoralist, traditional poetry that this structural heritage can be found.

Characteristics  
of Structure

The alliteration of traditional Somali poetry,<sup>1</sup> its poetic diction,<sup>2</sup> and its linguistic background<sup>3</sup> have all been adequately covered by Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964. Duplication of these topics is not necessary here. Most of the genres are also well described, except for one group which shall be referred to in this thesis as the Family of Miniature Genres.<sup>4</sup> This group, which includes the genres of wiglo, dhaanto, hirwo and belwo, is covered in detail in Chapters II and III.

The Place of Poetry  
in Somali Society

Somalis make a definite and sharp distinction between poetry and prose. Differentiated from prose by its alliteration — among other distinctions — poetry is by far the more important form of literature to the Somali, and scholars, both foreign and indigenous, have concentrated most

of their work on the poetry. Investigations into the social functions of the folktale remain to the scholar of some future date.<sup>1</sup> Although we are unable to assess the importance of prose in Somali literature, it remains quite evident that poetry is the most important medium of artistic expression. Even one type of proverb (maahmaah),<sup>2</sup> which also plays an important role in Somali society,<sup>3</sup> is structured in verse.

As pointed out earlier, poetry is not peripheral in the daily life of the Somali; it is central. Many social activities require poetry. At festivals and weddings, for example, one will hear a cantor and chorus chanting a special genre called hees-cayaareed, 'dance-song', to which a crowd of youths will dance. Work is often done to the rhythm of poetry and, as with the pounding of grain by women or the watering of camels and livestock by men, labour is lightened by the chanting of verse.

In more serious situations, such as the relating of history by a clan elder, one also finds poetry playing an important role. As the elder gives the history in prose, he intersperses his narrative with classical poems, or more frequently quotations from poems, relevant to the plot. These poems will have been composed by the men involved in the period of history being related, and are used as a proof or illustration of the reciter's version of the story. Likewise, historical recitation is sometimes used only to give background to the chanting of a specific poem.

Traditional poems have played an important role in the actual unfolding of history on the Horn of Africa. Uprisings as well as peace<sup>4</sup> have been pleaded for in verse. Aside from his genius as a warrior and as a sheikh of Islam, the Sayid Mahammed Cabdille Hhasan (the so-called 'Mad Mullah of Somali land') was also a great poet.<sup>5</sup> At least one historian<sup>6</sup> has recognized the value that his poetic talent had for his movement.

One of the Sayid's assistants (and the man who succeeded

him as leader of the Dervishes for a short time after Mahammed's death) was entrusted with the duty of memorizing Mahammed Cabdille's poetry during his lifetime. Hhuseyn Diigle could be called upon for the appropriate poem whenever a political situation arose that required verse. Hhuseyn in fact embodies the important Somali distinction between poet and reciter which we shall cover later, but why was such a memorizer necessary when so many Somalis, the Sayid included, had a good command of Arabic script and could have devised a writing system for transcribing Somali poetry?<sup>1</sup> The answer to this question lies in the oral nature of Somali poetry.

### The Oral Nature of Somali Poetry

Although Somalis have been exposed to writing through their religion since around the thirteenth century when historians believe Islam came to the Horn,<sup>2</sup> they have as yet not adopted writing for their own language. Everyone attending Koranic school learns at least some Arabic script, but for reasons unknown to me, this exposure to writing has never exerted any successful pressure upon the Somalis to reduce their language to script. Such pressure has been reserved for the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> The art of Somali poetry has, therefore, remained an oral art. Only as an image in a few poems can one discover that Somalis even think about writing. (See above, p. 20, line 54 and the two poems on pp. 77-78.) The composition, transmission and performance (and thus preservation) of poetry have all been accomplished orally and without the resulting influence of pen and ink or printing press. Let us consider these topics in detail.

### Composition

In many oral cultures, composition and performance are accomplished simultaneously. Using an elaborate set of formulae and with a number of years of study and practice behind him, the poet is able to compose his poem as he performs it.<sup>4</sup> This is not the case in Somalia.



Somali poets rarely perform their work until composition is completely finished in private.<sup>1</sup> Few poets indeed — and the Sayid Mahammed Cabdille was one of these exceptions — were able to compose while performing. This is owing to the high degree of public criticism, probably caused by two factors. Firstly, there are so many poets in Somalia;<sup>2</sup> and secondly, almost every adult male is to some degree acquainted with the art of poetry.

### Transmission

One may consider the transmission of oral poetry on two different levels: how poems are dispersed in space, and how they are dispersed in time. The spatial dispersion of oral poetry among the pastoralist must be considered within the context of a nomadic society. Pastoralist camps moving from place to place, travellers, men searching for new grazing areas, the gathering of clans on festive occasions: all these things lead to the dispersion of poetry from mouth to ear. In modern times, the radio and lorry have added to the more traditional methods of dispersion.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the tape recorder is also used in the transmission of poetry, but, with the radio, this machine is more important for the modern poem, as we shall later see.

The transmission of oral poetry in time is accomplished as in any tradition: from the old to the young, from generation to generation. Poems of great popularity may last for several generations, while others will die with those in whose memories they are stored. The preservation of any one specific poem depends upon its being continuously performed, but this is to jump too far ahead. First we must clarify one further point concerning transmission and then look to how the traditional poem is performed.

Because of the nature of composition in the Somali oral tradition (i.e. completion of composition before performance), and because of the prestige value of composing poems, Somalis are able to attribute any given poem to a specific poet. Thus

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the differentiation between poet and reciter is clearer than in some oral societies. Both positions are held separately in Somali society, and both carry their own prestige, though the poet is perhaps considered the more able. Some men have the ability to memorize vast amounts of poetry, as did Hhuseyn Diiqle mentioned earlier. Certainly the alliteration rule greatly aids the reciter's memory.

### Performance

There are several characteristics of the performance of traditional, pastoralist poetry which are basic to understanding the modern poem, as we shall later see. The classical genres, that is to say those poems traditional Somalis consider highest in the rank of serious poetry and noble enough with which to discuss politics and important social considerations, are performed by and for men only. No musical instrument accompanies the recitation of these genres which can all be chanted. Indeed only the women ever consistently used a musical instrument (a drum) to any important extent for traditional poetry in northern Somalia. The serious poem of the women (buraambuurr) is likewise performed by and for their sex only, but it should be pointed out that both sexes are acquainted with each other's poetry and often listen to it when chance permits.

Like the classical poetry, work songs tend to be segregated, for the work of the sexes keeps them separated most of the time. Here a cantor and chorus are often heard, chanting to the rhythm of the particular work being performed.

Other forms of verse are less segregated. Dance songs, though most often composed by men, are performed for the benefit of both sexes. Standing in a circle, the crowd takes the lines of the chorus, while one person chants in the role of the cantor. Two or three dancers (sometimes one is a woman) perform in the centre.

Verse is also found in children's games.

## Preservation

Like the topic of transmission, preservation can be understood on several levels. Will a particular poem survive? Will it survive in its original form? And more broadly, will traditional poetry itself survive?

Heretofore, if a poem in the oral tradition was to survive it had to be continuously performed. Even if it were merely being taught by one person to another, it had to be performed verbally, as the language is not written. In this sense, its performance was its preservation and vice versa, thus being transmitted to others, as we have seen. The tape recorder, of course, changed all this, but its impact on traditional poetry has been minimal compared to its impact on the modern poem. In the traditional setting in which the tape recorder plays no role, preservation and performance are one and the same.

On another level, one might ask if traditional poems survive in their original forms. Again we are limited in our conclusions because of the lack of research into variation in traditional Somali poetry. The entire question of variation in oral poetry, the study of which contributes to the uncovering of structural points, has been reopened in recent years by such people as A.B. Lord and Ruth Finnegan,<sup>1</sup> and can no longer be ignored by scholars. Certainly Somalis will argue heatedly over the 'purity' of the version of a poem,<sup>2</sup> but this may be a naïve approach. To be sure, specific poems are attributed by reciters to specific poets whether or not they are preserved in an actual morpheme by morpheme version. Nothing can be conclusively said until the question of variation in Somali traditional poetry is given formal research.

On the broader level of the survival of traditional poetry as a whole, even less can be said conclusively. Some Somali scholars express the fear that it is dying. This fear can also be found among many members of the new elite. Several Somalis are at present engaged in a frantic scramble to record as much of traditional poetry as they can before it 'dies'. Here again, this may be a misunderstanding into the nature of Somali

oral poetry. The so-called 'death' may be a characteristic of the oral process itself. Something had to proceed the gabay, from which the gabay could develop. Culture and its characteristic attributes are dynamic and in a constant state of change. If traditional poetry is dying (and certainly one cannot condemn anyone for recording as much of it as possible before it disappears), one thing remains absolutely certain: the art of composing oral poetry in Somalia is not about to die. If a specific poem, or even a genre, does die, the art of oral poetry goes on and indeed enjoys a renaissance today with the arrival and development of the modern oral poem.

#### THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ORAL POETRY

With the social context of Somali society and the nature of traditional pastoralist poetry described as background, it remains to give the history of the evolution of modern poetry in Somalia. The discussion which follows is general; the topics of each sub-section become the subjects of the chapters to follow, where the growth of modern poetry is described in greater detail.

##### The Family of Miniature Genres

The evolution of modern poetry in Somalia begins in the Family of Miniature Genres. It is here, then, that the history of modern poetry must begin. The members of this family, the wiglo, dhaanto, hirwo, and belwo, are light poems, mostly (but not always) concerned with the topic of love. Considered frivolous and the domain of youths, poems from this family were almost never employed for such 'noble' topics as politics and social debates.

Aside from the belwo, the origins of these poems are not known. The latest revival of the wiglo and dhaanto occurred during the Dervish war of the Sayid Mahammed Cabdille Hhasan, but none of the Somalis I interviewed believe that these genres were conceived during this period (1900-1920). The hirwo is

believed by some Somalis to have arisen during the Ethio-Italian War of 1935, but other Somalis say it is older than this. The origin of the belwo, on the other hand, is known, and because of its special connection with the modern poem, it must be given special attention.

The Belwo  
(1943/45-48)

The belwo, the last poem to develop in the Family of Miniature Genres, differed from the other members of this family in several ways. Beginning in the society of the town dweller but sharing most of the characteristics of its sister genres, the belwo was considered soon after its invention to be a member of the Family of Miniature Genres by Somalis themselves, as will be explained on pp. 37 ff.

The hallmark of the belwo was that, unlike its sister miniature poems, it did not remain static in structure. As a genre, the belwo remains alive to some extent today, but during the late 1940's it began to develop in a way that had not happened with the miniature genres before it. At first the belwo became a longer poem, and, although it was not yet in the structural state of the modern poem, it had acquired the name heello. With this state of artistic 'metamorphosis', the first period of the heello began.

The Heello: Period  
One (circa 1948-55)

The hallmark of the first period of the heello was rapid structural change. Before the modern poem emerged around 1948, a period of artistic 'metamorphosis' took place with the belwo. Although the result of this change was not, strictly speaking, the modern poem, it had acquired the name of the new genre, the heello. For this reason, the interim form, which was to continue alongside the modern poem for a few years before it disappeared, belongs to the first period of the heello.

Taking its name from the introductory formula to the

miniature poem (see below, pp. 44-45), this medial form which shall be referred to as the heello, Form A, was characterized by the 'tacking on' of many belwo into one long poem. The formula was often chanted between each belwo, now the stanzas of the poem, to make it even longer. The new 'mega-miniature poem' (see below, pp. 87-89) — if so paradoxical a neologism may be employed — would sometimes include as many as fifteen or twenty belwo.<sup>1</sup>

Eventually the formula was eliminated from between the stanzas and individual melody was added to each poem of the genre as the restrictive genre-melody (see below, pp. 39-40) of the belwo was abandoned. Possibly a result of the addition of more and more musical instruments (tambourine, flute, lute, and violin) individual (albeit Somali) melody may also have come directly from another form of the heello which emerged at this time, and which shall be referred to as the heello, Form B. The heello A and B were to continue side by side for a while, but the B form eventually eclipsed the A, which later disappeared entirely.

To Somalis, the two forms of the heello were members of the same genre, for they each bore the same name. The heello B (also called hees, 'song'),<sup>2</sup> however, differed in several ways from the heello A, and to determine a model for it is not easy.

Unlike the A form, the heello B was composed by a single poet (or group of poets at the same time). Being a long poem, it was now possible to develop the theme to a greater extent than in the miniature and mega-miniature poems. By now, a musical setting and an individual melody had become regular features, as had the device of line repeating. A refrain was also coming to be characteristic of the heello B, sometimes sung by a chorus, sometimes by the soloist alone. Moreover, alliteration gradually became unified for the entire poem, though unity of each stanza was only required at first.

Along with the new characteristics of structure, a

definite change in theme occurred with the heello B. Politics was becoming a topic of frequent occurrence alongside love. As we shall see below, some of the features of the heello were inherited from the belwo and some from outside Somali society altogether. But it was from the classical pastoralist poetry that the theme of politics came, and women were being allowed to chant and sing poems in which politics were discussed, a privilege unheard of in the traditional setting of Somali poetry.

With the addition of politics as a theme for the new genre, and with the use of it on the newly established radio stations in both North and South, the heello became firmly established as an art form. The new elite began to employ the heello in the drive for independence, which was in an embryonic state at this time. Matters continued thus until early 1955 when a political event of major importance occurred, one which was to ensure the future of the heello. With this event, the second period of the heello began.

The Heello: Period Two  
(Jan., 1955-July, 1960)

In November, 1954, the British Government agreed to turn over a section of the British Somaliland

Protectorate for the second time in history to Ethiopia. We shall cover this political situation in detail in Chapter V, but suffice it to say here that this agreement between Britain and Ethiopia led to a political crisis on the Horn. Riots and protests resulted, and an even more intensive drive toward independence began. As a reaction to the boundary shift, three Somalis from Boorame, a town in north-western Somalia, composed a poem which was to herald the beginning of the second period of development for the heello. With the coming of this poem, 'Jowhara Luula' (see pp. 105-08), many Somalis recognize the beginning of a new period of the heello. Although they do not agree on why this otherwise ordinary and typical heello was different — indeed other Somalis recognize nothing new with it

at all — two of my informants and several other Somalis with whom I spoke do agree that 'Jowhara Luula' was the beginning of a new period of the modern poem.

What was so important for the artistic development of the modern poem was that the heello, and no longer just the classical poems, was being used in a political situation. The modern poem, having begun mildly with the (so-considered) frivolous theme of love, was now being used in the serious arena of the drive toward independence. From 1955, scores of heello were composed, and more and more poets were being attracted to the new genre.

The Heello: Period Three  
(July, 1960-Present)

The third period of the heello, which began with the independence of the modern Somali state, is marked by the latest structural innovations and the addition of new topics which had now matured. Although some poetry attacking the semi-autonomous Somali administration in the South had been composed before independence, such political themes now became much more common in the fully independent state. Domestic politics concerning acts by the new government and political developments under it also became new themes in the heello of this period.

Together with political themes came one which had now ripened in the social scene. Poems on the role of women in the newly independent country appeared. Moreover, the scope of themes from which the heello could draw its text now seemed limitless. Football (soccer) could be found alongside local politics and the still popular theme of love. The problem of choosing an orthography for writing down the Somali language provided the text of several poems, as well as topics on international political developments, such as the death of Lumumba and the wall dividing the city of Berlin.

This period also marks the definite eclipse of traditional poetry by the modern poem. Although traditional poetry



continues today among traditional Somalis — and the gabay does not appear to have lost any prestige — the heello seems to be more popular among the new elite of the nation state as well as among its town dwellers. By the time of independence, one could find young elite Somalis who could no longer remember any gabay they had heard, but they could recite many heello. The heello of this period had acquired a more elaborate style, but this refinement occurred gradually, throughout the whole of the developmental periods. Several features had developed gradually and are best treated separately.

Characteristics of the  
Heello:: All Periods

The historical approach to the development of modern poetry in Somalia does not cover all of its characteristics. Some themes from the early days are to be found throughout all periods, and certain aspects of structure also cover the entire period of development. Moreover, the impact of media such as the radio and tape recorder, also covers the whole of these periods.

## Chapter II: The Family of Miniature Genres

### THE NATURE OF THE FAMILY OF MINIATURE GENRES

As we stated earlier, the historical beginnings of the modern poem in Somalia are inside the Family of Miniature Genres. The heello inherited characteristics from Somali classical poetry and acquired some from foreign sources; it evolved some features from its own development in time. But the actual historical origin of modern poetry is with this family, most particularly with its last development, the belwo. Because of its importance, the belwo will receive detailed description in the chapter to follow. Here we shall attempt to give the artistic background to the arrival of the belwo specifically and the heello in general. Moreover, the present chapter deals with some genres not covered in Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, and will hopefully fill a gap in the study of Somali poetry as a whole.

#### Genres and Classification

There are four genres in the Family of Miniature Genres: the wiglo, the dhaanto, the hirwo and the belwo.<sup>1</sup> The names of these genres and the classifications of specific poems into these genres are Somali. The grouping of the four into one 'family', however, is my own invention. Three characteristics lend credence to this grouping.<sup>2</sup>

First of all, Somalis themselves claim that each miniature poem gave rise to the next one historically. Secondly, the structure of the poems of these genres not only serves to differentiate each genre from the next and from other types of Somali poetry, but it also serves to group the four together. And thirdly, the similar use of these genres in Somali society gives further evidence that together they constitute a larger division of Somali poetry. Let us consider these three points in more detail.

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Historical Evidence and  
Origins of the Genres

There are of course no documents of indigenous origin to aid the scholar in uncovering the origins of these genres. Moreover, little reference is made to them in works by foreign scholars who have concentrated most of their labours on genres with more prestige in Somali society. Our conclusions here are based, therefore, on the oral history of poetic art believed to be true in Somali culture.

The origin of the belwo is the only one that Somalis both know about and agree on; we shall cover this in the following chapter. Of the remaining three genres, only the origin of the hirwo can be accounted for, and not all Somalis agree on this. Some believe the hirwo to have arisen during the Ethio-Italian War of 1935/36, while others believe it to be much older. In the midst of this confusion, claim and counter claim, one thing is agreed upon: the wiglo is the oldest and the belwo the most recent.

An important historical characteristic of these genres and one which cannot be omitted from this thesis, is their use during periods of social stress. Although its origin is unknown, the most recent revival of the wiglo, for instance, was during the early years of the Dervish War of the Sayid Mahammed Cabdilla Hhasan. The dhaanto, with its origin like the wiglo in an unknown past, was revived during the last years of the Dervish Movement. And the hirwo, if it did not actually arise during the Italian conquest of Ethiopia in which some Somali groups participated, it was at least revived during this period. The belwo, arising and spreading in the social upheaval after World War II, also represents a period of storm and stress.

Structure of the  
Miniature Poem

In the next section of this chapter we shall deal with the structure of the miniature poem critically and give examples illustrating its characteristics. What is called for

here is a resumé of these characteristics to illustrate the grouping of the several genres into one 'family' of Somali poetry.

As the name of the family implies, the miniature poem is short. The usual length is from two to four lines, though single line poems have been composed as well as ones with six, eight, or even more lines. The dhaanto is sometimes found to be very long indeed when it is employed for religious purposes.<sup>1</sup> Usually, however, it is short as are its sister genres.

The length of the miniature poem also exerts an influence upon the type of poetic language possible in its verse. As we shall see, a complete poetic statement must be made in the most concise manner possible, a task which not only demands special skill, but also limits the poet in the development of a theme.

Length also exerts an influence on the imagery of the poem, most of which is taken from pastoralism. This does not, however, eliminate images taken from modern phenomena.

Another important characteristic drawing these genres together is the themes employed in their texts. By far the most common theme is private, individual love. Panegyric naming (see pp. 55-57) is employed to a high degree of development by all these genres.

The name of the genre, the heello, later to develop from the belwo, also comes from this family. The introductory formula (see below, pp. 44-45) is used with all four genres, although the wiglo and belwo may use their own formulae.

Finally we come to the key characteristic which both joins the four genres into one group and differentiates each specific genre from the next: the melodies to which they are sung. There are two points to be clarified here.

Firstly there are a limited number of melodies to which a poem in any given genre can be recited. Any wiglo, for example, can be recited to any of the melodies set aside for its genre, but not to any of the other melodies used for the dhaanto,

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hirwo or belwo. This leads us to the second point. It is the melody to which a poem is sung which denotes the genre. It appears to be a characteristic melody, then, and not any linguistic or prosodic rule which differentiates the genres within the family.<sup>1</sup>

This being the hypothesis, it should then hold that any one poem — despite its original melody (i.e. genre classification) — could be sung to the melodies of the other three genres. This is precisely the experiment I carried out successfully. One informant was able to take a miniature poem and demonstrate with it the characteristic melodies of all four genres.<sup>2</sup>

History and structure, then, contribute to the grouping of these four genres into one 'family', but how does their similar use in Somali society contribute to this grouping?

Place of the Miniature  
Poem in Somali Society

The miniature poem does not share the exalted status of classical poetry, or even of the modern poem.

It is employed most often by youth in circumstances where youth are to be found. The themes, however, are not always frivolous; nor is the miniature poem always composed by youths. There are many situations where the recitation of such poetry is considered appropriate, but our interest remains with the modern poem. The following compilation of the uses of miniature poetry is, then, by no means definitive, but is only presented to give a general picture of where and when the miniature poem is used.

One important use of miniature poetry is with the dance.<sup>3</sup> Groups of youths standing in a circle will all join in with hand clapping while one man chants the poem and (usually) two people dance. Sometimes women are included in this activity.

Somalis enjoy challenging each other to poetic duels,<sup>4</sup> and the miniature poem, like many genres of Somali poetry, is used in this verbal game. The poet of the hirwo below gives his

challenge as a riddle:<sup>1</sup>

Wahhaan hadhin hawlana Kuu qabanoo,  
Hortiinana jooga, soo heda eey.<sup>2</sup>

That which will not leave you, [nor] do [anything]  
useful for you,  
And which remains [always] before you: find out  
[what it is].

and was answered by another hirwo with the same alliteration:

War wahhaan hadhin hawlana Kuu qabanoo,  
Hortaadana joogaa, waa hooseey.

Oh man, that which will not leave you, [nor] do  
[anything] useful for you,  
And which remains [always] before you, is [your]  
shadow.

The Sayid Mahammed Cabdilla Hhasan employed the miniature poem to attract recruits to his Dervish Movement. One of his compositions, a wiglo, was used as a sort of recruiting poem for attracting followers:

Ninkii diinta Eebbahay dhigan e,  
Dadaal ku dhintaa ye waa daw,  
Ninkii dabka qaatee duulee,  
Dagaal ku dhintaa ye waa daw,  
Anigu dadka wahhaan la yaabaa,  
Oo haddana doqonnimo ku saaraa,  
Ninkii duunyo kaleeto foofsadayee,  
Ku daaqsada doobka caanaha eey.

The man who learns the religion of God

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And dies with hard work, is honourable.  
The man who takes up weapons<sup>1</sup> for fighting  
And dies in battle, is honourable.  
But [of all] people, the one who surprises me  
And whom I accuse of foolishness  
Is the man who cares for another's animals, and  
Receives a vessel full of milk [as his reward].<sup>2</sup>

The practice of looking after another man's livestock was done by the poor in the Sayid's day, and it was these people he was appealing to in the poem. The implication here is that it is foolish to have servile employment when one could become rich by looting the camels of the enemies of the Dervishes.

As we mentioned earlier, the wiglo and the dhaanto had been revived during the Dervish movement in Somalia. Like the geeraar, it is said that the dhaanto was sometimes sung on horseback,<sup>3</sup> and some, no doubt, were, like the following pair, used to raise the esprit de corps of warriors:

Hooy Jidlaanu nahoo ma joogi karree, } (2)  
Allow jidka roobka noo mariyeey, } (2)

Hey you, we are the Jidle<sup>4</sup> who cannot wait [for  
battle]; } (2)  
Oh Allah, let it rain for us on the way.<sup>5</sup> } (2)

And:

Naa haddii raggu duulo, raar ma galoo,  
Hooy, dagaal-ramataanu leennahayey!

Hey you, when men go [to battle], they do not  
enter the recesses [of a house];<sup>6</sup>  
Hey you, we are fond of battle!

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Somali men of religion often object to the use of the miniature poem, and we shall cover this in more detail later.<sup>1</sup> This religious objection to the miniature poem led one Islamic leader, Sheekh Caaqib Cabdullaahi Jaamac of Jigjiga<sup>2</sup> to employ the dhaanto as a means of attracting the youthful ear. By speaking in their own language, as it were, he was able to deliver his serious message in the midst of a dance, and to retain the attention of most of those present. Ironically, the text of his dhaanto-sermon called for youths to abandon the dhaanto and turn their activities toward God. Sheekh Caaqib has used the dhaanto for other religious poetry including a prayer for rain (roobdoon).<sup>3</sup>

The miniature poem has also been used in recent times by lorry drivers and passengers on lorries to lighten the tedium of tiresome journeys.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, this practice was important in the spatial dispersion of the miniature poem, especially the belwo.

Finally, at religious festivals and national holiday gatherings, one could hear genres from this family. But at such social meetings, then as now, many other genres could be heard.

History, structure, and usage, then, serve to unite these four genres (including the belwo which is covered in the next chapter) into one larger group, distinct from the rest of Somali poetry. As we shall see in Chapter IV, the modern poem could be said to have begun historically as the fifth miniature poem, for in its early stages, it too shared the above characteristics.

#### THE POETRY OF THE MINIATURE FAMILY

As we attempted to show in the last section, the four genres classed as the Family of Miniature Genres belong together in a single unit. One argument used to determine this was to compare their structures. But another reason exists for



examining these structures, one perhaps more important for us, because the modern poem is our chief concern. The heello might be said to have begun as the fifth miniature poem — or megaminature poem, as we have called it. The following discussion deals with the structure of the miniature poem, both from the point of view of form and of content. The dialect in which such poetry is composed, as well as the device of alliterating the entire poem with only one sound, are the same as with other traditional pastoralist poetry. The remaining characteristics of the miniature poem have been broken down and discussed in more detail. Let us begin our discussion where the poem begins, with the introductory formula.

The Introductory  
Formula

Several genres in Somali poetry are introduced by a series of syllables, usually without any remembered meaning, which serve as an introduction to the poem which follows. The miniature poem is introduced by the following formula:

Heellooy, heelleellooy,  
Heellooy, heelleellooy,

or by its longer version:

Heellooy, heelleellooy,  
Heellooy, heelleellooy,  
Heelleelli kalaynu leenahayeey.

Oh heello, oh heelleello,  
Oh heello, oh heelleello,  
[And] we sing<sup>1</sup> [yet] another heelleello.

This formula, the short version of which is more common with the miniature poem, serves at least three functions. Firstly, it summons the attention of an audience to the poet

who then goes on to sing his poem. Secondly, it serves to focus the listeners' attention on the poet's verse so that the first line of the poem itself is not missed. Otherwise, the point may be lost, for in some cases the first line represents 50 per cent of the entire poem. The third purpose might be described as a sort of signature tune. It must be pointed out that the use of this formula extends to other genres, notably the hees-cayaareed, 'dance-song'. Furthermore, the wiglo and belwo have their own introductory formulae which they may employ even though they often use the 'heellooy' formula. If this formula does not announce the specific genre to come, as does the one used with the gabay, it at least announces the general type of poem to follow. 'Heellooy, heelleellooy' heralds a light poem, often to be used with the dance, more often still with a theme centered around love.

Like many features of Somali poetry, the origin of this formula is lost in the haze of the past. Its meaning is also gone, so no etymology for it can be determined as can be with the early introductory formula of the belwo (see below, p. 73). The oldest mention of the term known to my informant is found in a poem composed by a man called Yoonis Tuug (Yoonis, the Thief),<sup>1</sup> whose great-grandchildren are alive today. This would make the formula at least four generations old, but it is probably older than this.

Diction of the  
Miniature Poem

Poetic devices used in the miniature poem do not differ drastically from several other genres of Somali poetry. The method of alliteration (see p. 25, note 1, on p. 212), for instance, is the same as with most traditional poetry. Furthermore, the imagery of the miniature poem, like most genres, is closely tied to the pastoralist way of life. A few modern images inevitably creep into the more recent poems. This is not difficult to understand; what is unusual about the modern poem, as we shall later see, is that modern images are not more

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common with it. The proportion is about the same as with the miniature poem.

Another device of poetic diction common to most genres is the hidden message.<sup>1</sup> Lovers send word to each other of secret rendezvous in poetic codes. Thieves tell each other what to steal through concealed messages in poems. The colonial administration as well as the Somali government are criticized in the verse of the modern poem, as we shall later see. One form of this concealed diction we have already seen in the last section with the poetic challenge in the form of a riddle.

Two devices, however, are unique to the miniature poem: concise language and panegyric naming. The size of the miniature poem understandably influences its language, making necessary the most concise method of expressing a complete thought. The panegyric naming of women, although it occurs in a few other genres, is most fully developed in the miniature family.

Alliteration needs no further elucidation, but the other devices outlined above demand clear examples for understanding.

#### Imagery in the Miniature Poem

The images illustrated in the poems below are of common occurrence in the poems I collected. Understandably not as many wiglo, dhaanto and hirwo are remembered as belwo. For this reason, I was able to collect many more belwo than poems of the other three genres.

During the long dry season in Somalia water is so scarce that domesticated animals often die. Indeed men have been known to die of thirst during this harsh time of year. The earth becomes so dry that in places it resembles a vast ocean of potato crisps. Only a few trees offer solace and shade from the scorching, glaring sun, and the northern plain visibly supports only the yellow grass of jiilaal, the dry season.

When rain finally arrives, it is not just a necessary substance for the renewal of life on the desert. It becomes a

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symbol for that life. Indeed it becomes the mother of all positive symbols in Somali poetry as metaphoric extension expands its semantic sphere. It becomes 'the source of all virtue',<sup>1</sup> victory in strife, happiness, and many other things as well.

Without rain there is no milk, for the camels literally dry up. Milk, along with rain, is a symbol for life,<sup>2</sup> for it satisfies hunger<sup>3</sup> as well as thirst. When the poet of the following wiglo sings of milk, he is talking about much more than its physical substance:

Hadday Dhudi caano ii dhibtooy,  
Intaan dhamo sow ma dhaafeen?

If Dhudi<sup>4</sup> gives me milk, and  
I drink [thereof], how can I leave her?

She has given him much more than milk; she has given him life itself.

When poets sing of their love, unlike the poem above, they more commonly equate it with illness. Love is a sickness, a malady not as serious as death, but still an affliction. This poet speaks of illness in his wiglo, but the Somali audience knows he speaks of love:

Markaan bukay way bariidin jirtee,  
Badbaado u geeya, Beer-Nugul.

When I was ill, she used to wish me well;  
[Now] take [my] blessing<sup>5</sup> on to her, [to] Gentle-  
Heart.<sup>6</sup>

The poet is saying that his lover always returned his love, even before she fell in love with him. He loved her (was ill) for a while before she learned to love him (fell ill and came

in need of his blessing).

The tree is one of several images in Somali poetry which has more than one possible interpretation. Sometimes it is a metaphor for a woman's beauty, for it is tall and straight, as are young Somali women. At other times, it is a symbol for Somali customary law (hheer), for it is in the shade of a tree that elders meet to hold court. At still other times, the tree is used in an individualistic manner and must be interpreted in the context of the poem, as in the following wiglo:

Adduunyadu waa ul geed sudhane,  
Abaal ma u dhigatay aakhiro eey.

The world is a dead branch<sup>1</sup> hanging on a tree:  
Have you put anything for yourself in the next world?

In this poem, the tree is a precarious foundation for the world. At any moment the wind or some other disaster will topple the world into oblivion. The poet asks the listener if he is prepared for death.

Along with specific objects, Somalis use situations as images, and they often choose a situation from the nomadic way of life, as in the following hirwo:

Sidii reer degoon,  
Dab Loo shidin,  
Hhalaan dilaalyoodayeey.

I — [who am] like the family which has just encamped  
And for whom a fire has not [yet] been lit —  
Felt the cold of last night.

When a family group (reer) finishes the move of the camp from one site to another (geeddi), everyone is hungry, cold and exhausted. This poet compares himself to a camp (or family

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head of that camp) at the end on a move. To be without his lover is to be cold and at the end of his nerves.

In many poems, domesticated animals are used as images. But wild animals are also popular, especially the lion. In the following dhaanto, the roar of the lion is used to symbolize the grief of longing for one's beloved:

Naa, libaahh laba jeenni dhiig darayoo,  
Hooy, bad-weyn ka jibaadayaan ahayee.

Oh woman, I am the lion who puts his front paws into  
blood,  
And roars [as loudly as] the ocean [in storm].<sup>1</sup>

The lion (poet) roars like the ocean, for he is in a state of grief over the absence of his lover.

The ocean is an area some Somalis know quite well, for many have been sailors in the world's merchant marines. Somalis have sailed the seas for longer than anyone can remember.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly the ship is also used as an image in poetry as in this wiglo:

Sidii markab maanyo soo marayeey,  
Wahh baa iiga muuqday meel-dheerey.

Like a ship passing over the sea,  
Someone appeared to me in a far distant place.

The sailor-poet who was visiting a distant land, caught a passing vision of his love, like a ship passing from afar.

There are other non-nomadic images in Somali poems, some quite new to the Somali scene. Three have been chosen here to illustrate how imported or foreign machines have made their way into the imagery of the miniature poem.

Light is an image for truth, wisdom and, more recently,

education, in Somali poetry. In the following hirwo, light from automobile lamps is used to symbolize the wisdom of a woman who lights up the path in the midst of darkness:

Fatoorad La fuulay fiidkiiyoo,  
Faynuus fanka Loo sudhaad tahay.

A car being driven in the early evening  
With a lamp hanging from its front, are you.

Unlike the lorry which was almost immediately useful to Somalis, the first contact with an airplane they had was during a bombing raid. The Sayid Mahammed Cabdilla Hhasan was finally driven away from his fort at Taleehh in northern Somalia when airplanes were called in by the British from Aden to bomb it. One can understand the concern expressed in the following dhaanto:

Dayuurad duushaa La sheegaayee,  
Allow, dalka roobka noo mariyeey!

It is said that airplanes [actually] fly;  
Oh God, send rain for us [in our] land!

The poet cries for rain, here a symbol of deliverance from the drought or horror of flying machines.

Finally, the motor cycle, perhaps the last of the three machines to reach Somalia, has also become an image in the miniature poem as in this dhaanto:

Sidii dhugdhugley, dhul dheer mari baa,  
Dhawaagayga Loo dhegaystaa.

Like a motor cycle, travelling far away,  
My clamour can be heard.

In the Somali bush, far from the large cities of the world where many sounds mingle, one can hear for miles around. The coming of a motor cycle or a lorry can be heard far in advance of its arrival. The poet compares the sound of a motor cycle to his cries of grief. They can be heard for many miles.

Imagery in the miniature poem is usually universally understood in Somalia (like rain and milk) or can be determined from context (like the tree in the poem on p. 48 above). Sometimes, however, an image can carry a double or hidden meaning. This device is common enough in Somali poetry to be treated separately.

The Hidden  
Message

The hidden message as a device in Somali oral literature is not unique to the miniature family.

Indeed it is not unique to the poetry, for it can be found in folktales as well. As the name of this device implies, what is involved is the passing of a message from one person (or group) to another in such a way that a third party cannot understand or does not suspect. To accomplish this the poet must employ images which seem to imply one point to the third party but which pass the oral message on to the person for whom it was intended. This is no easy task and the less universal the metaphors or the less unified they are in the poem, the more suspect is the poet.

The hidden message is used in a variety of situations and for a number of reasons. Lovers 'speak' to each other using this device. Sometimes the third party is a husband, as we shall see in the example below; sometimes he is the girl's father. But often it is merely the community in general from whose gossip the lovers wish to conceal their feelings. With the modern poem the hidden message has been employed to conceal political messages. Poets often address the entire Somali nation. The third party was sometimes the colonial administration and sometimes the independent Somali government in Muqdishu. It is obviously more difficult to compose hidden



messages against the Somali government, for the third party, like the second, is Somali and is inside the system from which the imagery is taken.

But there is yet another function of the hidden message which might be described as the aesthetic enjoyment of the Somali audience. Poems with hidden messages are often recited inside folktales. Whether or not such tales are true or apocryphal is really irrelevant, for their purpose is to entertain. We shall illustrate such a tale below.<sup>1</sup>

It is said that a man once loved a woman who was already married. One night he arranged for a rendezvous with her. Waiting for a long time at the appointed place, the man became restless when she failed to appear. So he went to a place nearby her compound and chanted this wiglo to her:

Caweeya, Cawooy, Caweeya, Bullooy,  
Ciddiinu cawaysiin dheeraayey.

Oh Caweeya, [my] Cawo, oh Caweeya, [my] Bullo,<sup>2</sup>  
Oh how long is the rest period<sup>3</sup> of your people!

Hearing her beloved chant this message, she chanted another wiglo to him, pretending to sing to her cow — a very clever act to the Somali audience, for it is with poems addressed to domesticated animals that panegyric naming also occurs. — The woman was actually addressing herself.

Dabeeti libaahhle Dhiin-Gorayow,  
Ninkii dhaqay dhayda Loo badiyay.

Oh Dhiin-Gorayo<sup>4</sup> which has the tail of a lion,  
[Your] plentiful fresh milk is for the man who  
raised [you].

The man who raised the cow, the woman's husband, had returned unexpectedly to the compound and now overheard both wiglo. Suspecting the truth, the husband countered with yet a third wiglo:

War belaayo rag baan u baalidayoo,  
Birtay nimay gaadhdhay baan ma lahee!

Oh man, I am experienced in the conflicts of noble men;  
There is no treatment for the man whom my steel reaches!

The woman's lover then departed from her compound and perhaps from her life.

The following wiglo was used to arrange a rendezvous:

Naa haddaan docda soo harraatiyo,  
'Doddoo' dhehoo dabar la soo bood.

Oh woman, [tonight] when I kick the side [of your hut],  
You [must] say 'doddoo' and jump up with a dabar.

The woman sleeps in an area near the front of the aqal, or portable nomadic hut. It is here where the fire is kept and where the poet plans to kick. Camels often kick the aqal at night, for it is located inside the camel corral. The animals are brought inside to protect them during the night from wild beasts. Doddoo (or dudduz) is a nonsense word used to make a camel be still. A dabar is a rope or leather strap used to bind together the front legs of a domesticated animal to prevent his running away. The poet plans to act like a camel, kicking the front of the aqal. When the woman hears this, she

is to slip out of the agal on a domestic chore, hopefully unsuspected by her husband who will go back to sleep.

The hidden message delivers the maximum amount of information with the minimum number of morphemes, since those involved can fill in between the lines and make inferences as to the true meaning of the verse. This use of concise language is, in a broader sense, common to all miniature poems and is a general characteristic of their diction.

Concise  
Language

In longer poems poets are capable of developing a theme to a much greater extent than in a miniature poem. The diction of the genres in the miniature family is influenced by the size of the poem, for a complete thought must be expressed in only a few words. What B. W. Andrzejewski says of the belwo<sup>1</sup> seems to me to apply to all the genres in this family:

...in two lines, or even one, the poet had to work out a complete and rounded utterance which would please a discriminating public used to the appreciation of poetry and delighting in the deciphering of the poet's message.

In some cases the poet is able to 'lengthen' his poem by what is implied rather than by what is said in the text. In the following hirwo this can be clearly observed:

Hadduu cirku cuurcuuraayoo,  
Caashaay ma calaama roob baa ye?

When the sky is overcast:  
Oh Caasha, is [this] a sign of rain?

Clouds sometimes bring rain and sometimes blot out the sun. The poet here employs both meanings and implies: 1) Oh Caasha, does this mean that you love me? (rain) or 2) Oh Caasha, are

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you (the sun) cut off from me? Sometimes the connection between the lines of a miniature poem is not clearly observable upon first hearing them. One is forced to connect them by thinking beyond the words of the verse, thus lengthening the poem in a sense. The above poem, as are the ones on pp. 48 (top) and 50 (middle), is of this sort.

The use of concise language is perhaps most dramatically demonstrated with the poetic challenge including the form in which a riddle is presented. We saw a poem of this type (and its answer) on p. 41, and shall consider more of them in Chapter III (see pp. 70-71). In the case of the challenge or the riddle, the vague language must be understood and answered in yet another poem. The best answer to a challenge is, moreover, delivered with the same alliteration.

Another device which shares at least one point with concise language is that of panegyric naming. In this case the praising of women with an elaborate name expands the implications of the poem beyond the mere words of the text. But there are many other aspects of this device.

<u>Panegyric</u> <u>Naming</u>	Panegyric naming (praise names) is used in miniature poetry to praise women. Although it occurs in other genres of traditional poetry, <sup>1</sup> this device is most fully developed for the praise of women in the miniature family.
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Panegyric naming is used for other purposes than the praise of women. Camels and other domesticated animals are given elaborate names in other genres. Infants are also endowed with praise names by mothers who prefer to keep these special names for their children secret in some cases.

Still another genre in which panegyric names occur is the modern poem, and here as with the miniature poem, they are used to praise women. This device in the modern poem was clearly inherited from the Family of Miniature Genres.

There are two main functions of praise names for women.

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Firstly, they praise some attribute the poet wishes to bestow upon his love. Secondly, they conceal the identity of the poet's lover, so that angry kinsmen are not given cause for persuing the poet. In reality the poet does not always have a specific woman in mind every time he composes a poem. Some panegyric names are merely chosen for their alliterative sounds; but others, as the one in the following dhaanto, are chosen because they bear a relationship to the imagery of the poem:

Intaan Dahabooy, Ku daawan lahaa,  
Miyuu dayihhii daruur galay?

Oh Dahabo, [once] when I would have enjoyed the sight  
of you,  
Did the moon [not] go behind<sup>1</sup> a cloud?

Dahabo is a panegyric name which means 'the Golden One', a colour often assumed by the moon, especially when near the horizon. The poet implies by the second line: 'Are you (Dahabo) taken from my sight (perhaps by your family)?' Dahabo, like many panegyric names, is also a girl's name in society. It, like many regular Somali names, functions as a panegyric name as well, but many praise names are found only in verse. The following is a list of examples taken from the wiglo, dhaanto and hirwo in my collection:

1. Beer-Nugul. 'The Tender/Sensitive One.' (i.e. She-Whose-Bosom-Is-Tender/Sensitive.)
2. Caweeya. 'She-Who-Was-Born-In-The-Calm-Of-The-Rest-Period.' This is the part of the late evening before the animals are milked and everyone goes to bed.
3. Cawo. 'The Lucky One.'
4. Bullo. 'She-Who-Is-Of-The-Colour-Of-The-Best-Of-

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Horses.' Horses are the most prized of all animals among the traditional Somalis. Indeed the Sayid Mahammed Cabdilla Hhasan even entombed one of his favourite horses at Taleehh when it died. They are prized even above the camel, which is considered the wealth of the nomad while sheep and goats are considered subsistence. The colour referred to is chocolate (or red, as Somalis see it), the skin colour most praised in Somali aesthetics.

5. Dhudi. 'The-Tall-And-Slender-Tree.' This is a metaphor for beauty, for tallness and straightness of body is considered very beautiful.
6. Indha-Yar. 'Little-Eyes.'
7. Rubbo. 'The Coin!' From the Indian coin (rupee), the first currency used by the British in the Somaliland Protectorate.
8. Geelo. 'The Wealthy One.' From the Somali word geel, 'camel'. Camels are considered wealth by the nomads.
9. Hani. 'The-One-Who-Deserves-Praise.'
10. Macaan. 'The Sweet One.'
11. Qaahha-Yar. 'The-One-With-The-Small-Neck.'
12. Qoor-Dheer. 'The-One-With-The-Long-Neck.'
13. Liqanyo (or Laqanyo). 'The-One-Who-Saturates-Those-About-Her.'
14. Asli. 'The Original One,' or 'The-One-Of-Ancient-Descent.' (From Arabic asl, 'origin/root/source/cause/lineage.')
15. Maandeeq. 'The-One-Who-Satisfies-The-Mind.'

The list goes on, and we shall encounter many more panegyric names with the belwo and heello.

Themes in  
Miniature Poetry

As we mentioned earlier, the context of the miniature poem would be discussed as well as its form. Although there is no radical difference between the themes of the belwo and those of her sister genres, the present discussion is confined to the first three genres, as the belwo is treated separately in the next chapter. All but one of the themes in the poems I was able to collect have been given as examples of the characteristics of structure in our discussion so far. Rather than repeat these examples, we have placed their page numbers in brackets after the themes as they are presented. The following survey covers my entire collection, but the page references refer only to the poems used as examples in the thesis.

Of the 50 poems I was able to collect in the genres of wiglo, dhaanto and hirwo, 29 of them (over half) are on the topic of love (p. 47 [two poems], p. 49 [two poems], p. 50 [top], p. 53 [bottom], p. 56), including laments of love-sick poets (p. 48 [bottom], p. 50 [bottom], p. 52 [top]). The use of love as the most common theme in the genre was to be inherited by the modern poem, and it is necessary to point out that the rest of the themes in my collection do not necessarily illustrate a balanced survey of the miniature family. We are fairly safe, however, in declaring that love is the most common theme.

Of the remaining poems, six are on the theme of the dance and five deal with military themes in one way or another (pp. 41-42, p. 42 [two poems]). Three are reproofs (p. 53 [top]) and three are philosophical (p. 48 [top]). Four themes have one example each: a plea to God (p. 50 [middle]), a poetic challenge (p. 41 [top]) and its answer (p. 41 [middle]), and a poem in praise of two villages.

In 1943 ('44 or '45) when the belwo first appeared in the society of the town dweller in northern Somalia, it was this background from the pastoralist, then, that it inherited, these

artistic characteristics that it received with which to operate. But what we have presented as background here only helps to answer questions concerning the structure which the belwo was to acquire. Why did the belwo appear when it did and what exactly were the characteristics of its structure that differed from the usual features of the miniature poem? Before these questions can be approached, we must first examine the historical background including the changes in the social and political scene in the British Somaliland Protectorate in the early 1940's.



### Chapter III: The Emergence of the Belwo (circa 1943/45-48)

#### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As a distinct and separate genre the belwo first appeared in Somali society in the town of Boorame between the years of 1943 and 1945. It spread rapidly and by 1954 it had completely permeated the British Somaliland Protectorate. Margaret Laurence remarks in her book, A Tree for Poverty, 1954, that the 'belwo and gabei appear to be the most popular types at the present time.'<sup>1</sup>

Unlike its sister genres, the belwo first appeared in the society of the town dweller, though the form and content of the new genre remained almost identical to the other miniature poems. The belwo in fact could be considered as a cultural link between the pastoralist and the town dweller, and it was inside urban life that the new elite of Somalia arose and developed. Also unlike its sister genres, the belwo did not remain frozen in its structure but began to change soon after its emergence.

But why did the belwo change when other genres in the Family of Miniature Genres remained stable? Before this question can be answered, the social and political setting of the Protectorate during these periods must be considered. The period discussed below, 1943-1955, parallels both the period of the belwo and the first period of the heello.

#### Restraint in British Involvement

Before 1941 the British had done little to develop their Somaliland Protectorate. In this year they regained control of the area by defeating the Italians who had conquered it in August of the year before. British administration in the past had been carried out from Berbera, and Somalis had little contact with their colonial rulers. Their daily lives were much the same as they had been for centuries. There were reasons for this in both the British and Somali camps.

Firstly, British interest in Somaliland had been minimal. Worried about foreign powers which might endanger British interests in East Africa and India, they wanted Somalia for its strategic position. They were especially worried about the French. Also Somali livestock was needed to feed Britain's important refuelling station in Aden.<sup>1</sup> The Somali livestock industry which was more than sufficient to feed Aden, needed no development. Furthermore, the British were unwilling to put more money into the Protectorate after the long war with the Dervishes of the so-called 'Mad Mullah', in which they had 'spent so much on military operations so completely out of proportion to their interests in Somaliland.'<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the Somali population itself was unwilling to accept British interference in its traditional way of life and was extremely suspicious of any colonial activity during the uneasy peace just after the Dervish war. Twice the administration attempted to establish education and twice it was rebuffed with riots, both times in the town of Burco. The first riot occurred in the early 1920's when, having been refused funds from the government in London, the administration attempted to collect a tax in order to finance its education plans. This resulted in the death of the British District Commissioner in Burco. Again in the mid 1930's riots over education claimed the lives of three Somalis.<sup>3</sup> Having been exposed to foreign educators before by the priests of the Catholic mission in Berbera (closed by the administration in 1910), the Moslem Somalis were extremely suspicious of any attempts at reintroducing education into their country. No further efforts were made until after the British Military Administration was established in 1941.

#### The Big Change

In 1940 the state of northern Somalia, indeed of all Somalia, began to change rapidly and this change was not to be quelled by traditional society as it had been in the 20's and 30's. Beginning in such areas

as colonial administration and education, the big change in Somalia was to spread rapidly through the urban societies of the North. It was in this new atmosphere of change that the belwo began its period of change, culminating, as we shall later see, in the first period of the heello.

In August the Italians drove the British off the Horn and occupied the Protectorate. Seven months later the reverse occurred and with British reoccupation, 'the old care and maintenance policy of the past [was] abandoned in favour of more progressive policies.'<sup>1</sup> To begin this new era the administrative capital was moved from Berbera to Hargeysa. No longer were the colonial rulers to be spectators in Somaliland; now they were to take an active role in Somali internal affairs, and for the first time were to establish the agencies which were to carry the Protectorate to independence in 1960.

#### Agents of Change

Experiments with radio broadcasting began shortly after reoccupation in 1941 and Radio Kudu was established in 1943 with a 100 watt transmitter.<sup>2</sup>

In the following year a mobile cinema, operated by the Department of Education headed by C.R.V. Bell, was carrying films to the towns of the North, and the radio transmitter was strengthened to 600 watts. Receiving centres equipped with loudspeakers were established in several places which were to become popular gathering sites. The evening would find crowds of Somalis assembled at these centres, listening to the news broadcast in Somali (edited from B.B.C. releases), spreading the local news of the day, and enjoying the facilities for games and pastimes especially provided for them. Somalis began to hear their colonial overlords speak of 'freedom and the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they were to live.'<sup>3</sup> The 'peoples', of course, were those in Hitler-dominated Europe. They also began to hear new forms of art, particularly songs which were to have a heavy influence on the musical setting of the heello. Moreover, the

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radio, at this time new to Somalia, was to become one of the major devices for the spatial dispersion of modern poetry. Later the combination of radio, modern poetry, and the feeling of freedom to choose one's own form of government were to combine in the drive toward independence.

The radio station, renamed Radio Hargeysa in 1944, gradually increased its transmission power, one kilowatt in 1945 and five in 1957; in 1955 it installed receiving equipment for foreign (B.B.C.) broadcasts which were relayed by the station. With the invention of the transistor, radios spread to Somali-owned tea shops and private individuals. The radio was used by the administration to spread propaganda for its activities.

Among these activities was the renewed attempt to establish education. The work of C.R.V. Bell in this field had not been in vain, for World War II had its effect on the Somalis and 'there was now appreciably less hostility to secular progress and social change.'<sup>1</sup> In 1945 seven elementary schools were operating. By 1950 two intermediate schools had been established, and in 1952 a nurses' school for girls in Hargeysa as well as a vocational training centre in Boorame, were founded. In the following year a girls' school in Burco and a secondary school in Sheekh were set up. This was followed in 1954 by the establishment of a standing committee on education and the appointment of a Somali education officer.<sup>2</sup> Progress had not been completely smooth. Somali as well as expatriate teachers had been stoned in public,<sup>3</sup> but the progress was not to be halted again as it had been in the 20's and 30's.

Other activities which brought the Somalis and the British into closer contact occurred in the field of agriculture. Development here was greatly needed, for the war had made the import of foodstuffs difficult. By 1950 experiments in new crops and fertilizers had been carried out, and a number of small state plantations were operating. Grazing control schemes, to be of great use to future Somalia, had been put into effect.<sup>4</sup> Programmes of this nature violate traditional

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Somali nomadic beliefs and attempts to carry out such schemes in later years after independence were met with opposition.

The Political  
Scene

As one might imagine, increased political activity also resulted from the war. Political clubs had been in the Protectorate since 1935,<sup>1</sup> and by 1946 many of them had joined with the Somali National society, an organization founded by Somalis to encourage modern education and progress. The resulting organization, called the Somali National League, was the first real political party in the Protectorate.

Like other changes of this period political activity did not progress without incident. Despite riots in Hargeysa in 1947<sup>2</sup> the administration did not oppose political development. Indeed it had encouraged such development in the South during the war from fear of the large Italian population in that part of the country.<sup>3</sup>

Together with party development came the beginnings of self rule. In 1945 and 1946 township committees and town planning boards were set up in several places. In July of 1946 the Protectorate Advisory Council, presided over by Governor Sir Gerald Fisher, was convened for its first meeting in Hargeysa to discuss the progress of the Protectorate.<sup>4</sup>

Not to be omitted from the political development of this period from 1941 to 1955 were the border changes which saw the Horn gradually regain her pre-war political boundaries. With the defeat of Italy in 1941, the British Military Administration had gained control of all the territory inhabited by Somalis, with the exception of French Somaliland. In 1948 the Ogaadeen, the main area of Ethiopia where Somalis live, was turned over to the Ethiopian government. A part of this area (the Hawd and Reserved Area), where the Somali clans under British protection migrated seasonally, was retained by the Protectorate government, now returned to civil authority under the governor Sir Gerald Reece. In 1950 the former Italian

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colony was handed over to Italy as a United Nations Trusteeship. The border change which most affected the political life of the Protectorate, as well as the artistic development there, occurred in 1955 when the Hawd and Reserved Area were given to Ethiopia. This date is a convenient and not at all arbitrary one for marking the beginning of the second period of the heello in Somalia. But this is to jump too far in advance.

By the time the British had turned over its control of the Hawd and Reserved Area to Ethiopia in January of 1955, northern Somalia had changed greatly. Somali nomadic life was much the same as it had been for centuries and remains today; but for the new elite and townspeople of Somalia, things were different. As Touval, 1963, states:<sup>1</sup>

But for the sedentary part of the population, their way of life as well as their social and political concepts [had] changed because of the development of commerce and industry, the growth of government bureaucracy, and the spread of a cash economy. Social dislocations resulting from such change [had] been a stimulant to political activity.

And to this can be added: had been a stimulant to artistic activity. It was upon this new and greatly changed scene in the life of northern Somalia that modern poetry appeared and developed.

#### THE BELWO IS BORN

It may be remembered that one of the characteristics of the miniature poem was its use during periods of stress. The wiglo and dhaanto were revived during the Dervish War; the hirwo, during the Ethio-Italian War. It is not surprising, then, that the belwo appeared in the early 1940's, for as pointed out above, this too was a period of great social stress. Let us now turn to the beginning of the belwo, the immediate predecessor of the heello, and to its inventor.

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Cabdi            The belwo (also called balwo) was the invention of a  
Sinimo           Somali poet named Cabdi Deeqsi.<sup>1</sup> Cabdi was in the  
                 sub-section Reer Nuur of the Gadabuursi branch of  
the Dir Clan Family. This sub-section lives in and around the  
town of Boorame, west of Hargeysa in north-western Somalia.

Cabdi Deeqsi was born in a place in the Boorame area  
named Jaarraa-Horato where he spent most of his youth. Unlike  
the overwhelming majority of Somali poets, he was never a camel  
boy in the Somali bush, living in the traditional manner; Cabdi  
Deeqsi was a town dweller from the beginning. Early in his  
manhood he went to Jabuuti in French Somaliland where he  
learned something about lorry mechanics as a helper-apprentice.  
Returning to Boorame in about 1941, he was employed as a lorry  
driver-mechanic by a wealthy merchant named Hhaaji Hhirsii. By  
now Cabdi had passed his thirtieth birthday and had acquired  
the nickname Sinimo, 'cinema'. Cabdi was a first rate teller  
of stories and jokes and because of his habit of acting out his  
stories, the nickname seemed to fit him very well. His out-  
going personality made him very popular, especially among the  
youth.

The Broken-           Cabdi's trade route took him from Seylac and  
Down Lorry           Jabuuti to Boorame and Hargeysa and sometimes  
                 even as far away as Dirir Dhabe in Ethiopia.  
One day, sometime between 1943 and 1945, his lorry broke down  
in the bush. Somali oral tradition debates the whereabouts of  
this happening. Some say it occurred in a place called Habaas;  
others say in Ban Balcaad; while still others claim the place  
was Selel on the plain of Geryaad, thirty miles south of  
Seylac. Wherever it was, Cabdi was unable to discover what was  
wrong with the lorry and was unable to repair it. Finally  
after much frustrating work, he sat down and, as the Somali  
poet Hhasan Sheekh Muumin states: 'These words escaped from his  
mouth':

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
Wahha i baleeyay mooyaane.

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,<sup>1</sup>  
I am unaware of what caused me to suffer.

The following variation is also sometimes quoted as the first belwo by some Somalis:

Balwooy, hooy balwooy,  
Wahha i balweeyay mooyaane,  
Wahha i balweeyay baabuure.

Balwooy, hooy balwooy,  
I am unaware of what caused me to suffer;  
What caused me to suffer was a lorry.

When Cabdi returned to Boorame after having his lorry towed back to Seylac, he recited his short poem in public. It was an immediate success which, no doubt, inspired him to compose other belwo.<sup>2</sup> Other poets also began to compose in the new genre, and it began to spread rapidly.

Success and Poetic ability is a major device for raising  
Dispersion one's status among Somalis and poems always  
gain prestige for their composers, at least  
from some segment of the population. So it was for Cabdi who,  
like so many poets of past Somali history, quickly became a  
social magnet. People would come to Cabdi's house in the  
evening to sit and listen to him sing his poems to the rhythm  
of a drum made from an empty petrol tin. Very soon a corps of  
supporters was established and people from other towns began to  
come to Boorame to hear Cabdi's poetry. With more and more  
reinforcement and prestige as well as financial support from  
his supporters, Cabdi soon resigned from his work with Hhaaji



Hhirsii in order to devote all his time to the belwo.

As had happened in the past a small company of artistes was formed around Cabdi including a girl named Khadiija Ciya Dharaar who was soon nicknamed Khadiija 'Belwo'. Among Cabdi's supporters, Khadiija and three others are most well remembered, for their names appear in the texts of belwo. They are Hhaaji Ahmed Naalleeye, the interpreter for a Mr. Lawrence, the British district commissioner of the Boorame area during this period; a man called Beergeel who was the agent of Cali Ibraahin Nuur, a merchant in Aden; and a man called Barre who was the D.C.'s driver. Many Somalis remember the following belwo which has become one of the most famous of all Cabdi's poems:

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
Haddii quruhhdaada Layga qarshooy,  
Khadiija Belwooy, qac baan odhan.

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
Oh woman, if your beauty were hidden from me,  
Oh Khadiija Belwo, I [would] break [in two].

Khadiija herself composed the other two belwo in which the names of these supporters appear:

Balwooy, hooy balwooy,  
Wahha i balweeyay mooyaane,  
Barre iyo boyga Loorens iyo,  
Wahha i balweeyay Beergeel.

Balwooy, hooy balwooy,  
I am unaware of what caused me to suffer;  
Barre, the servant of Lawrence, and  
Beergeel are those who caused me to suffer.

And:

Balwooy, hooy balwooy,  
Wuhhuu Ingiriis ka hhoogsaday,  
Iyo hhoolihihi,  
Ma ka saaray Hhaajigii?

Balwooy, hooy balwooy,  
What he earned from the English,  
And [his] wealth:  
Have I [not] taken it [all] from the Hhaaji [Ahhmed]?

By 1946 the members of the company who were least bound to duties in Boorame began to tour other towns in the North.<sup>1</sup> Hargeysa was their first stop. There public performances were held in which Cabdi would sing his belwo, and the troupe, especially the women, would dance.<sup>2</sup> The performances brought prestige and money to the company. In order to entice contributions from the crowd, Khadiija would sing one of her compositions:

Balwooy, hooy balwooy,  
Balwadii barannoo,  
Ku baas-noqonnay e,  
Bakhshiishna ma ka helaynaa?

Balwooy, hooy balwooy,  
We have learned the belwo,  
And we have mastered it:  
Shall we [not] receive a reward for it?

Touring continued and in 1948 the company went to Jigjiga. By 1950, however, it had fallen apart and Cabdi left the Protectorate to live once again in Jabuuti. Except for short visits to Boorame, he remained in Jabuuti until his death in

that city on 19 March, 1967. Khadiija left the Protectorate in 1952 to marry a Saudi Arabian. Until she died in 1962, she lived in and around Mecca.

Even before Cabdi left the Protectorate, his genre had been adopted by artists and poets in Hargeysa. This was to prove very important for its development, for as pointed out earlier, Hargeysa had become the centre of the political and social change which was gradually growing stronger in the Protectorate at this time. The spirit in which this adoption took place can be seen in the following belwo, one of the first to come from a Hargeysa poet::

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
Wahha i baleeyay Boorame eey.

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
What caused me to suffer was Boorame.

True to Somali tradition, this parody was accepted by the poets of Boorame as a poetic challenge.<sup>1</sup> Immediately answers were forthcoming, such as:

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
Wahha i baleeyay beer-geeleey.

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
What caused me to suffer was [the one who eats] the  
liver of camels.<sup>2</sup>

And:

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
Belwadii bahhsatoo bari bay qabatee,  
Baabuur ma ku baadi doonnahayeey?

Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy,  
The belwo escaped and went to the East;<sup>1</sup>  
Shall we search for it in a lorry?<sup>2</sup>

Hargeysa offered an even more important contribution to the dispersion of the belwo: the radio. Belwo were a regular part of radio programming almost from the beginning of broadcasting in Somalia<sup>3</sup> and offered a convenient filler between programmes, because they were short. Although opposed by more religious Somalis, the belwo received a somewhat formal acceptance among the new elite, as one can witness by its use on the wireless station. No doubt this helped the belwo to spread more rapidly and become acceptable faster by the urban populations of the North. But the radio, as we shall see in Chapter VII, played a larger role with the heello.

Unsuccessful      It was pointed out earlier that social changes  
Resistance      during this period, especially in the field of  
education, were not accomplished without some  
difficulty from the more conservative elements in Somali  
society. The opposition, however, was unsuccessful in halting  
the progress of development begun and encouraged by the British  
administration.

Parallel to this resistance to social change was a resistance to the belwo. The miniature poem had been, indeed still is today, opposed by many religious leaders and the more conservative elders of Somali clans. The dhaanto and hirwo had been formally challenged by sheikhs since their creation in earlier times, for they had been linked with public, mixed dancing. A well known Somali proverb illustrates this opposition:

Sacabka haddaan hheeladi ku jirin,  
Mahhaa habeenkii Loo tumaa?

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If there is no trick in dancing and singing,  
Then why do they do it [only] at night?

'They' are Somali youth and the trick referred to in the proverb implies such irreligious practices as illicit sexual behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

At best the belwo was considered only to be composed by the young and frivolous. Older Somalis considered its composition as an unskilled craft.<sup>2</sup> But stronger opposition than verbal is attested in the early days of the belwo. The religious leaders and elders of Boorame at one point refused to allow the fathers of Cabdi Sinimo and Khadiija Belwo to enter the mosque they usually attended for prayer. In so doing these elders hoped to put pressure on the fathers of the young singers so that their 'immoral' poetry could be stopped. Despite such opposition, however, the belwo was not to be halted. It continued to spread and develop.

It might be pointed out that religious opposition to the miniature and modern poems still exists in Somalia today, especially when ambiguous lines with sexual overtones make up part of the poem. Protest letters against modern poetry have been received at the offices of the broadcasting stations of Radio Muqdishu and Radio Hargeysa.

#### THE POETRY OF THE BELWO

Most of the poetry of the belwo has already been covered in the preceding chapter for the belwo is a miniature poem. Topics such as the hidden message, concise language and panegyric naming apply to the belwo as well as the wiglo, dhaanto and hirwo and shall not be repeated here. The imagery and themes of the belwo given below are presented to illustrate the genre. One feature, however, did at first differ from the miniature poem: the introductory formula.

The Introductory  
Formula

The function of the introductory formula of the belwo is the same as for the miniature poem in general (see above, pp. 44-45). The text, however, is different. This formula,

Belwooy, (belwooy), hooy belwooy,

was used only with the belwo, although the general formula was later employed in its stead. Unlike the general formula, the meaning of the term used in the belwo's formula is known. Borrowed from the Arabic balaa<sup>2</sup>, 'affliction/trouble/trial', the word has a meaning in Somali which could be translated 'Woe is me!' Some Somalis I interviewed claimed that the belwo's formula was discarded because of its mournful overtones. 'Woe is me', they said, is not always appropriate to introduce poems about love.

Imagery in  
the Belwo

As the overwhelming majority of belwo are concerned with the theme of love, so the overwhelming number of images in the belwo are traditional. Although the genre was a new work of art from Cabdi Sinimo's experience, 'a work of art is not simply the embodiment of experience but the latest work of art in a series of such works; it is...a poem "determined" so far as it is determined at all, by literary tradition and convention.'<sup>1</sup> Thus the images of the new poem were drawn from the nomadic way of life and from the poetic tradition of the miniature poem. Some, however, were new. Following is a resumé of the images used in the poems in my collection.

It was many a poet indeed who viewed the condition of love negatively. The following poets saw it as a disease:

Cishqigu maaha cuud la dhaqdee,  
Waa cudur ka bilaabma curuqyada.

Love is not incense to be used sparingly;  
'Tis a disease which begins in the joints.

Or an illness:

Anigoo buka baahidaada iyo,  
Ku baal-maray beerku may gozay?

Whilst I was ill with the need of you,  
I passed you by; did [my] liver break?<sup>1</sup>

Some poets saw love as a special sort of insanity, as in this  
belwo:

Maankiyo maddahhaa i kala maqanoo,  
Idinna waygu maadsanaysaan.

My mind and my head are apart,  
And all of you make fun of me!

Somali poets also agreed about what happened to a man when  
this dread disease of love came over him. One common ailment  
was the lack of balance, as in this poem:

Labiyo toban jeer baa Lay lumiyoo,  
Liicliicay luggooyadaan qabo.

Twelve times I have been led astray.<sup>2</sup>  
I stagger [off balance because of] the trouble I  
endure.

And of keeping one's foot firmly on the ground, as in this  
belwo:

Cirkoo igu ciiray, caban maayee,  
Culayska i saaran ciirciirroo,

-75-

Caguu qaban waaye, ciidda dhulkoo,  
Cawo-darnaan baan ku ciirsaday.

If the sky leaned on me, I would not [make] complaint:  
I have swayed side to side from the weight put on me;  
And my feet failed to rest firmly on the sand of the  
earth.  
I have leaned on bad luck.

And in this one:

Sidaan u dhammaaba, Lay dhufayoo,  
Cirkiyo dhulka, meel dhehhdooda ah oon,  
Dhannaba jirin baan dhacdhacayaa.

My whole self has been lifted up  
Somewhere into a place 'twixt sky and earth,  
Which is not of either; I stagger and I sway.

Another common ailment poets of the belwo agreed upon was the sleeplessness of the man in love, as exhibited in this verse:

Ma seehhdoo hurdadaan ka selelaayoo,  
I saaqdayoo way i sidataa.

I [can]not sleep and am awak'd from rest;  
She touched me deep' and carries me [away].

It is not uncommon to find references to various types of plant life in Somali poetry and here the belwo is no exception. The tree, for example, is a common image. In the belwo the tree functions in the same way as with the miniature poem in general (see above, p. 48). The following belwo exhibits the use of the tree in this genre:



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Sidii bahhrasaaf ku yaalla bustaan,  
Ayuun baad hadba ii bidhdhaantaa.

Like a Eucalyptus tree growing in a garden,  
You always appear to me from a distant place.

The contrast between the dry and wet seasons on the Horn of Africa is quite significant. When the rains come, the apparently dead bush comes suddenly to life and clumps of yellow grass turn green. This change in the bush brought about by rain is used to symbolize the beauty of women, as in this verse:

Cagaarka ka bahhay, caleen-weyniyo,  
Cosobaan cidi daaqin baad tahay.

The growing buds and leaves mature,  
The fresh and ungrazed grass are you.

And with the rain come the flowers of the desert, another source of metaphor for beauty among the belwo poets:

Haddaad ubahh tahay, mid aad u urtoo,  
Udgoon badan baad ahaan layd.

Were you a blossom: one that smelled so [sweet],  
You'd be [a bloom] that had abundant scents.

In some belwo one can find images which refer to traditional social practices. The following poem alludes to bride-price which is a payment made by the kinsmen of a man to those of a woman who is to become his bride:

Soorýiyo kama bihhinin geel sidigoo,  
Haddii aan seehhdo Laygu simi maayoo,  
Samirku wahhba iima soo sido.

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I have not paid either brideprice<sup>1</sup> or sidig camels.<sup>2</sup>  
If I sleep, [then her kinsmen] will not pause.<sup>3</sup>  
For me patience will not be rewarding!

One might suspect that, because the imagery in Somali poetry can be so easily classified, variation in this poetry is greatly limited. This, however, is not the case, but in facing the problem of variation, the key lies not in the addition of new imagery but in how the poet uses the imagery available to him. The manipulation of the set stock of images, rather than the addition of new ones, is how variation in this poetry is accomplished. New images were not, however, banned from the belwo. A few made their way into the new genre, as did the tractor in the following poem:

Billaahi cagafyahay caawaan Ku baryayey,  
Cagtaadan ballaadhan e culusiyo,  
Codkaagu mahhay daweeyaan?

Oh tractor [mine], tonight I beg of you, in the name  
of God!  
This wide and heavy tyre of yours,  
And your [chugging] voice: what use are they to me?!

Here the poet expresses impatience with his vehicle which he found too slow to take him to his lover.

And finally, Somalis had been exposed to writing from Arabia as well as from the British and the Italians, so the origin of images dealing with this topic cannot be easily determined. The use of writing as an image can be seen in this verse:

Haddii aan qor is adhi,  
Qaraamka i galay,  
Kitaab Lagu qoro,  
Ma qaadeen.

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If I say to myself: 'Write [about]  
The love which entered me,'  
The book which could be written  
Would not contain it [all].

And in this one:

Baddoo qad ah iyo dhirtoo qalimmo ah,  
Caleenta goyan oo qardaas Laga dhigo,  
Haddii Lagu qoro qaraamka i galay,  
Malaa ways qalliqli lahaayeen.

[If all] the sea be ink, and [all] the trees be pens,  
[If all] the leaves so green be changed to paper  
[thin],  
If thus the love which entered me be writ' with [all  
these things],  
Perhaps there would be [just] enough [to write my  
thoughts of love for thee].

Themes of  
the Belwo

The overwhelmingly predominant theme of the belwo is love,<sup>1</sup> but it is 'mainly physical love, whereas a [traditional] gabei on the theme of love will place value on a woman's wit and thrift as well as her beauty.'<sup>2</sup> Indeed the feelings expressed in the belwo are of individuals. The needs and desires of their clans had no place here. Love in the belwo was treated as it was in the other genres of miniature poetry.

Poets in love used the belwo to praise the girls they fancied as in this poem:

Markaan Ku ag-marro, Ilwaad-Quruhheey,  
Sidii ubahhaad udgoontahayee.

When I pass near to you, oh You-Who-Are-Pleasing-To-  
The-Eyes,  
You smell sweet like a blossom.

To praise their lovers poets often referred to them as the perfect creation of God, as here:

Qudhdhaydu ma jacalayn inaan Ku qasbee,  
Qummaatigan Eebbe Kuu qoray iyo,  
Wahhay qaaday qaararkaa bahhay.

Myself I did not want to make you [love me].  
But the perfect way in which God sculpted you  
And your matured limbs overwhelmed me.

And here:

Wuhhuu qoray ruuhhna Kaama qaado,  
Oo qawadi maayo, qaybta i taal.

What He has shaped, no one will take from you;  
I am not vexed with the share placed [here for] me.<sup>1</sup>

Many belwo, however, are composed as laments over unsuccessful love, like this one:

Cishqigu waa toddoba haddii La tirshoo,  
Mid aan tegin taabka Lay saar.

If counted, there are seven kinds of love,  
And one which will not go away was cast into my hands.

A common complaint of the broken-hearted poet is that no one sympathized with him, as here:

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Dhibtayda dadkaa ka dhuumanayow,  
Dhirtoo maqashaa i dhaafteenoo,  
Dhagahhyaa damqan laa dhibaatada.

Oh you people who hid from my problem:<sup>1</sup>  
While the trees lend an ear, you passed me by;  
[Even] stones would sympathize with my plight.

Sometimes the source of the poet's ill fortune was another man:

Nasiib-darriidaa i nacasaysee,  
Noolaada adigiyo ninkaagu ba!

Bad luck has made a fool of me;  
Long life to you and your husband!

But sometimes the poet struck back when he was rejected.  
Waiting for a girl to return his love was too much for the  
following poet. By the time she fell in love with him, he had  
become bitter:

Markaan buhay waadigii bed-qabee,  
Bagay adiguna bestaa tahay.

While I was ill, your state was good.  
Hurrah! Now you are seriously ill.

It is not difficult to understand the objections some  
religious leaders and more conservative Somalis had for the  
belwo when one examines belwo of the following sort:

Anigu naag ma qabo,  
Oo ma qaadi karo,  
Ee ninkii mid qaba,  
Yaan ka qayb geli!

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I have no wife,  
And cannot take one.  
The man who has one:  
I'll share with him!

And:

Aniyo Qamar,  
Yaa iska qooqayna ee,  
Ninkii qabayow,  
Ha qoonsan!

Qamar and I  
Are merely playing.  
Oh man who is married to her:  
Don't be suspicious!

Some of these illicit remarks were more subtle, as in this poem:

Wahhaanad helaynin,  
Ee aad handataa,  
Hahey! Hagardaamo weeyaan!

What you will not find,  
And [yet] you strive to get:  
Hahey!<sup>1</sup> 'Tis very distressing!

The implication of this poem concerns the enjoyment of a woman, not her love.<sup>2</sup>

The poetic challenge (see above, pp. 40-41) was also employed with the belwo. Two challenges delivered to Cabdi Sinimo by unknown poets and answered by him serve as excellent examples of this theme as employed in the belwo. One poet challenged Cabdi with this:

Wahhaan La helaynin,  
Ha Laga hadho!

What cannot be found:  
Let it be forgot!

And Cabdi replied with this:

Sideen uga hadhaa,  
Anoon helin?

How can I forget  
What I have not found?

What Cabdi had not yet found, of course, was love. Another poet delivered this to Cabdi:

Hohey, hadal Lama dhammayn karo!

Hohey,<sup>1</sup> speech can ne'er be completed!

And Cabdi countered with this:

Hohey, hadal waa dhammaadaa yoo,  
Kolkaad dhimato ba, dhag weeyee!

Hohey, speech will [surely] be completed:  
When you die, 'tis through!

Moslem religious belief worked its way into some belwo, like the following one:<sup>2</sup>

Wihhii Ku helaa,  
Ka hadal ma leh.

There is no cause to talk about  
The things which happen to you.

Here the poet expressed belief in predestination. This poem was accepted as a challenge by another poet and although the Islamic belief was not contradicted, the other poet approached the question with a different attitude:<sup>1</sup>

Wihhii Ku helaa,  
Ka hadal yeeshee,  
Ilaahii Ku halqay,  
Yaad ku hiiftaa!

There's cause to talk about  
The things which happen to you.  
['Twas] God created you—  
You cast the blame on Him.

More modern philosophical themes were also expressed in the belwo, as can be seen in this poem:

Hohey, Lacageey wahh kala haadshaay,  
Ninkii haya way u hadashaa,  
Hub bay noqotaa hannaan wacan.

Hohey, oh Money, oh You-Who-Grade-Men,  
It speaks for the man who has it.  
It becomes a valuable weapon.

As will be seen in the next chapter, the belwo was not originally used with the dance. But when it eventually was, the theme of dancing made its way into the text of the poem, as in this belwo:



Kuwii lugo-qabayba lama loollee,  
Mahhaa Ku luraaya laangadhe?

We never dance with those who have [sound] legs;  
What's both'ring you, oh crippled one?<sup>1</sup>

And in this one:

Waan liitaa is loodin kari waayee,  
Liciifaye sow lug bay jaban.

Ah, I am weak and can turn to no [sided].  
I become tired and my leg is broken.

Although there are a few belwo which do not fall into the above mentioned categories, these are the major themes of the belwo in my collection.

The belwo, unlike her sister genres in the Family of Miniature Genres, began to change in form toward the end of its period of popularity in the late 1940's. How it changed and led to the modern poem belongs to the first period of the heello.

## Chapter IV: The Heello: Period One (circa 1948-Jan., 1955)

### THE METAMORPHOSIS: BELWO TO HEELLO A

The belwo began as a genre very much inside the traditional character of the Family of Miniature Genres. This occurred in a period of stress in which social change played an important role. Associated with this change, the belwo soon began to develop features which were to set it apart from the other miniature genres and make it unique in this family. It evolved into a new form and acquired characteristics from extra-traditional sources, a process which required approximately ten years to accomplish. By the end of this developmental period in 1955, a metamorphosis had occurred and the resulting genre had been firmly established in urban and elite societies.

#### Early Tradition Changes

The most obvious difference between the belwo and its sister genres we have already mentioned. The belwo arose in the society of the town dweller and not in that of the pastoralist. Indeed we have proposed to call it a cultural link between these two groups in Somali society. But the cultural setting was not the only difference. The first change which caused the belwo to deviate from the other short genres in structure, indeed from most genres in northern Somali poetry, was the addition of the (petrol tin) drum.<sup>1</sup> The drum had been used consistently in traditional northern poetics only by women. Rarely had men used any accompaniment aside from hand clapping with the recitation of poetry. This early innovation no doubt assisted the other changes which were to follow including the later addition of more and more musical instruments.

Another practice associated with the early days of the belwo was the type of social gatherings held for its recitation. Social gatherings of young people around miniature poetry was not new in Somalia, and we have seen them used for

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dancing at such occasions as weddings where both men and women participated. Somalis of both sexes did not, however, enter a house in the evening, away from the watchful eyes of members of the older generation, in order to recite and listen to poetry on the subject of love. This restriction was ignored by Cabdi Sinimo and his early followers.

Perhaps the most radical early deviation and example of permissiveness associated with the belwo was its recitation by both sexes. Integration of the sexes had not previously existed on such a large scale in the reciting of poetry. The belwo represented a new relationship between men and women, or more correctly, the beginning of that relationship. This move toward social equality was to be reflected more and more often in modern poetry even working its way into the text of later heello.<sup>1</sup> Khadiija Ciya Dharaar 'Belwo' has already been mentioned. This woman composed belwo herself, an accomplishment yet to be equalled by any woman in the periods of the heello. Other women who participated in the early movement to spread the belwo were Maryan Ciya Dharaar, Khadiija's sister, and two other girls from Boorame, Cawa Shir-Doon and Barako.

Of all women in the early period of modern poetry, perhaps the most important, though not as well known as Khadiija Belwo, was Khadiija Cabdullaahi Dalays. It was Dalays who weathered the widespread criticism of women in modern poetry, and because of her resistance to the pressure of tradition, probably more than any other woman, established the 'right' of women to recite the modern poem. Dalays began to sing at first for political rallies in 1951 and joined Radio Muqdishu in 1952. Many artistes and poets in the radio stations today have a high regard for her and consider her a pioneer in this field.<sup>2</sup>

Radio Hargeysa was not to be outdone by Radio Muqdishu and on 19 August, 1953, a woman named Shamis Abokor and nicknamed 'Guduudo Carwo' sang a heello.<sup>3</sup> Guduudo Carwo weathered the criticism as Dalays before her and became the first female artiste on the radio in the North.

## Musical Instruments and the Radio

As mentioned above, the drum, at first only an improvised petrol tin, was the first musical instrument used with the belwo. By the time the belwo had spread to Hargeysa, other musical instruments found their way into the delivery of the new poem. The tambourine (daf), probably imported from Arabia but used also in Seylac, and the lute (cuud), known to have come from Aden, were early additions. Also an early addition was the flute (biibiile), which was probably contributed by a man named Raw who originally came from the Indian sub-continent. As time passed the violin and guitar came to be used.

In 1955 Radio Muqdishu, then under the direction of Ahhmed Mahammed Allora, acquired a full orchestra from the remnants of a military band. An Italian military musician was loaned to the radio station for six months to instruct the members.<sup>1</sup> By the time the two foreign-ruled Somalilands joined in independence in 1960 and the heello had six years of development behind it, the accompaniment of modern poetry had developed a great deal. The latest addition to the orchestra is an organ. The radio has in fact played a very important role in the development of modern poetry.

The fact that musical accompaniment to modern poetry in Somalia is a foreign influence is easily supportable. Not only was musical accompaniment new, but the saxophone and snare drum are hardly products of the nomadic way of life.

## The Heello, Form A

The first form of the heello developed almost immediately after the belwo spread to Hargeysa and is what we have termed the 'mega-miniature' poem. The new form was still in several ways well within the definition of a miniature poem. The heello A was a 'tacking on' of many belwo to make one long poem. Each stanza, then, was a separate belwo, composed by an individual poet who was not influenced by the other stanzas (belwo) of the poem, for the combining of the stanzas had been done after their composition. For this reason, the heello A was not a unified

composition in its theme, though each belwo usually dealt with the subject of love. Furthermore, the influences of length in miniature poetry were exerted on the imagery of the heello A. In the 'mega-miniature' poem there was a sequence of unconnected images, while in the heello B, soon to develop from the earlier form, there was often a masterly blending of images and symbolism, a super-structure of connected images making up a unifying conceptual framework of imagery behind the lines of the poem (see below, pp. 189-94). Again for the same reasons, the alliteration, though unified in each stanza, was not uniform throughout the entire poem, each stanza alliterating with a different sound. What the new form represented in effect was the structural link between the belwo and the developed heello of later times.

Changing its name to heello because of the use of the general introductory formula for miniature poetry, the lamenting belwo formula was abandoned.<sup>1</sup> At first only the formula changed, as can be seen in the following poem:

Heellooy heelleellooy, heellooy heelleellooy,  
Waddada bariyeey, Ku weheshadayeey,  
Warkiyo hayga gozin waraaqaa.

Heellooy heelleellooy, heellooy heelleellooy,  
Oh road [that travels] to the East, I kept you  
company;  
Do not cut me off from news and letters [from my  
love].

Gradually the heello A increased in length until sometimes as many as fifteen or twenty belwo were employed in the same poem.<sup>2</sup> This practice of stringing belwo together was strengthened by two things. Firstly, the new poetry was used in the dance where a two or three line poem was too short to be practical. Secondly, the belwo had acquired a commercial

value. The radio stations in Somalia began to use the belwo early<sup>1</sup> because it was useful as a filler between programmes and was popular at the time. It was the practice of Radio Hargeysa to pay a fee for the use of a poem on the air; the fee increased with the length (i.e. time on the air) of the poem. Obviously the longer a poem, the more money it would bring.

The payment of fees for poems used on the radio influenced the heello A even more importantly in that it introduced the systematic use of line repeats. As a systematic device, line repeating had not been so common in Somali poetry before except in work songs. In the classical poetry, when line repeating occurred in any one poem, this did not mean that it would recur the next time the same poem was delivered, even by the same man. In the heello, however, line repeating became a systematic device. Example 3 below illustrates this device as well as the joining of belwo to form a heello A. This heello was obtained from a tape from Radio Muqdishu, but stanzas I-IV and IX were also collected separately as belwo. The differing alliteration of each stanza (i.e. belwo) is clearly visible.

Example 3:

- |      |  |       |
|------|--|-------|
| I.   | 1. Aaa, adigaa hudhudyow hawada lalaayee,        | } (2) |
|      | 2. Haweeya hadal mayga gaadhsiine,               |       |
| II.  | 5. Aaa, Maryama Muhhubooy madheedka Wareey,      | } (2) |
|      | 6. Midhihi ka bislaaday baad tahayeey,           |       |
| III. | 9. Aaa, sidii cir ku hooray meel cosobloo,       | } (2) |
|      | 10. Cadceeddii u soo bahhdaad tahayeey,          |       |
| IV.  | 13. Aaa, Gaaroodoo roobleh geedihii ka bahhiyo,  | } (2) |
|      | 14. Guudkeeda maLa mooday gammaan faras,         |       |
| V.   | 17. Aaa, sidii aan godob qabo hurdada ma gamzee, | } (2) |
|      | 18. Mahhaa Layga goohnayaan galayee,             |       |
| VI.  | 21. Aaa, hhabaal nin galaa hhaq weeyaanee,       | } (2) |
|      | 22. Illayn hhubi baan hhagnabaw dhicine,         |       |
| VII. | 25. Aaa, barbaartii horiyo banaad sidiiyeey,     | } (2) |
|      | 26. Ha baadhbaadhin beri samaadkii,              |       |

- VIII. 29. Aaa, magaalada geed ku yaal Muhhubooy, } (2)  
 30. Ayaad midabkiisa leedahayeey,  
 IX. 33. Aaa, sidii doonni dufsata~~y~~ duufaaneey, } (2)  
 34. Cidlaan hadba sii dabayshanayaayee, }

+++++

- I. 1. Ah, hoopoe bird hey! You are flying [around  
 in] the air; } (2)  
 2. Will you carry a message [of love] to  
 Haweeyo<sup>1</sup> for me?  
 II. 5. Ah, oh Beloved Maryan, the berry bush<sup>2</sup> of  
 War:<sup>3</sup> } (2)  
 6. You are its ripened fruit.  
 III. 9. Ah, like the heavens dropping rain in a place  
 where fresh grass [grows], } (2)  
 10. And the sun, which rises on it, are you.  
 IV. 13. Ah, the Gaaroodi Plain<sup>4</sup> [is shel], where rain  
 [abounds] and green grass grows; } (2)  
 14. Does it [not] seem that her [luxuriant]  
 hair<sup>5</sup> is like that of the young horse?<sup>6</sup>  
 V. 17. Ah, like a guilty man, I do not sleep so well; } (2)  
 18. What have I done to be persecuted?  
 VI. 21. Ah, entering the grave is right for man; } (2)  
 22. Indeed love does not fall to any side.  
 VII. 25. Ah, like the young men and girls of olden  
 times, } (2)  
 26. Do not postpone the good times 'till  
 tomorrow!  
 VIII. 29. Ah, oh Beloved, the tree in the village: } (2)  
 30. You possess its [most beautifull] colour.  
 IX. 33. Ah, like a ship carried [off by] a storm  
 34. To a desolate place, every time I am blown } (2)  
 [off my course by her love]. }

Carrying the method of poem lengthening one step further  
 can be observed in Example 4. Here — and only in stanzas II

and III — the use of a refrain at the end of each stanza has developed. Later in many heello the refrain is to be sung by a chorus of male, female, or mixed voices, but again, many refrains are to be sung by the soloist alone. The theme in Example 4, a lament over a lost love, is also much more united. The informant from whom this heello was collected believed stanzas II and III to have been composed by the same poet. Their alliteration ('C' in both stanzas), setting them apart from the other two stanzas, lends possibility to this belief. Certainly the four stanzas (belwo) were more carefully chosen for their content than were those of Example 3.

Example 4:

- I.     1. Heellooy heelleellooy, } (4)
- 5. Hir aan ii dhowayn,    } (3)
- 6. Ma halabsadayey,        }
- II.    11. Caqliga wahha gartee,    } (2)
- 12. Culun ma lihiye,        }
- 15. Ceel yaa igu rida,    } (3)
- 16. Cidhiidhiyahay,      }
- III.   21. Ceebooboo nolol,        } (2)
- 22. U caban maayee,        }
- 25. Ceel yaa igu rida,    } (3)
- 26. Cidhiidhiyahay,      }
- IV.    31. Heddaa idin kala,        } (2)
- 32. Kahhayn mooyee,        }
- 35. Ifkaydin isku waayi,   } (3)
- 36. Ku maan wadiney,       }

+++++

- I.     1. Heellooy heelleellooy, } (4)
- 6. Did I grasp at
- 5. A distant horizon, which was not to be close } (3)
- to me?
- II.    11-12. I do not have intelligence, neither the
- knowledge for understanding things. } (2)



15. Who will [then] drop me into a [deep] well? } (3)  
16. Oh misfortune!
- III. 21-22. I have become [so] disgraced and do not complain unto life. } (2)  
25. Who will [then] drop me into a [deep] well? } (3)  
26. Oh misfortune!
- IV. 31-32. Unless death drives you [both far] apart, } (2)  
35-36. I don't think this world will fail to find you two together. } (3)

After some time with the heello A, a new impetus entered the scene. Cabdi Sinimo and Khadiija Belwo had left the Protectorate and the growing genre was known throughout the area. The new push behind the heello came from a group of young Somali poets who added even more variation to the heello that it changed yet again. What it changed into is the subject of the next section.

#### THE MODERN POEM: HEELLO A TO HEELLO B

Because of its name and its difference in size to the belwo, the heello A belongs to the first period of the modern poem. It had not, however, yet evolved into its present shape. This general form which shall be referred to in this chapter as the heello, Form B, was to continue side by side with the A form until the latter eventually disappeared.<sup>1</sup> But what started this new impetus? The answer to this question lies with the new poets who came onto the scene, and the most important new poet was Cabdullaahi Qarshe.

<u>Cabdullaahi</u>	The next most important man after Cabdi Sinimo
<u>Qarshe</u>	in the development of modern poetry in Somalia
	is Cabdullaahi Qarshe. Cabdullaahi is known in
	Somalia as 'The Father of Somali Music' and it is he who

introduced the lute (cuud) to the accompaniment of the heello. Furthermore, he was intimately involved in the early development of the heello B. Cabdullaahi is still popular as a poet in Somalia today, and if we are to fully understand the modern poem, we must first consider Cabdullaahi's background.

Cabdullaahi was born in the Somali expatriate community in Moshi, (then) Tanganyika, in 1924. Like Cabdi Sinimo, Cabdullaahi did not spend his early years in the traditional manner as a camel boy. In 1931 he went to Aden where he was sent to school by his family.

It was in Aden that Cabdullaahi first heard radio broadcasts and went to the cinema. English, Hindi and Arabic music and songs could be heard on the radio but this was not the case for Somali, for there were no Somali songs of this sort at the time. 'I wanted music to be for Somali as for the other languages,' said Cabdullaahi and he made a purchase which was to accomplish this goal, although not until 1948; he bought a lute. Hiding it from his family for fear of condemnation, he was not to learn to play it well until an Arab named Bakri taught him in Berbera some years later.

In 1945 Cabdullaahi went to Hargeysa where he became a clerk for the British Military Administration. It was at this time that the belwo was first spreading in northern Somalia and Cabdullaahi was greatly influenced, this time by an indigenous art form. Three years later he was to compose his first — and one of the first — heello B.

Cabdullaahi has to date continued to play a role in the development of modern poetry. He was part of the Walaalo Hargeysa, 'the Brothers of Hargeysa', an important group of artistes and poets founded in 1955 (see below, pp. 108-10), and has continued to compose poems and melodies until the present time. He is a man of considerable prestige today and is associated with Radio Muqdishu at the time of the writing of this thesis.

The Heello,  
Form B

In 1948 Cabdullaahi Qarshe composed his first heello, 'Ka Kacaay'. The heello A, as we have seen, was a collection of belwo with different composers and had the pressure of its miniature size on its diction. Being composed by one man, Cabdullaahi's poem (see Example 5 below) was much more unified in theme than the heello A. The heello B which were to follow 'Ka Kacaay' were also to be composed by one poet. Where more than one poet was involved they worked together on the composition (Example 6 below was composed like this). Thus, one long unified modern poem had evolved.

To add to the unification of the heello B was its uniform alliteration. Many early heello B had differing alliteration, usually one alliterative phoneme per stanza, but traditional Somali euphony gradually overtook mixed alliterations until such practice disappeared almost completely. But this was not to be fully accomplished until later.

As Cabdullaahi's title of 'the Father of Somali Music' implies, Somalis believe it was he who brought melody to modern poetry though in fact others were involved. Heretofore only the genre could be recognized by the tune to which it was recited. Hearing a Somali whistle a tune, for example, an observer might conclude that he was hearing a belwo or a wiglo. With the heello B this system changed radically. Hearing a Somali whistle the tune of a heello B, the observer could now identify the specific poem. No longer was he to recognize only the genre. Moreover, a heello B now required two creative processes, the composition of the poem and the composition of the melody to which the poem was to be sung. Many times Cabdullaahi was to collaborate with other poets; he would compose the melody to fit the poem. Example 7 is an example of this with the words by Ismaaciil Sheekh Ahhmed and the melody by Cabdullaahi Qarshe.

Cabdullaahi's poem brought about an even more important marriage for the prestige of modern poetry, and this between

the heello and the theme of politics. Although a few belwo had political themes, that genre was principally preoccupied with love. With the composition of 'Ka Kacaay', the subject matter of modern poetry was, within the Somali value system, raised to the level of classical poetry and the heello B became the mouthpiece for the drive toward independence. The ultra-patriotic lines of 'Dhulkayaga' (Example 7) illustrate how politics permeated the new poetry. This poem became so popular and gained so much prestige that a stylized version of its melody has become the signature tune of Radio Muqdishu.

With the lengthening of the heello in its B form and with the addition of politics as a theme, the diction of modern poetry became more sophisticated. Politics brought a host of new images into the heello the great majority of which came from traditional poetry. The hyena, for instance, an animal disliked by Somalis, had been used to represent the enemy in traditional poems. The heello B employed this image for the colonialist. Place names were to be used in the heello B as they had been in traditional poetry (see Example 6 below). We shall see in the next chapter that the diction of modern poetry became more and more sophisticated as time passed; indeed the diction of the heello in the 1960's was to rival traditional poems and raise the prestige of modern poetry to such an extent that the heello would replace the gabay in urban and elite societies.

Example 5:

- |      |                                 |       |
|------|---------------------------------|-------|
| I.   | 1. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  | } (2) |
|      | 3. Kol horaynu jabnee,          |       |
|      | 4. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay,        |       |
| II.  | 9. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  | } (2) |
|      | 11. Kooralay La gubye,          |       |
|      | 12. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay,       |       |
| III. | 17. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2) | } (2) |
|      | 19. Kun faceen La dilyee,       |       |
|      | 20. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay,       |       |

- IV. 25. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  
27. Kufrigu badayee, }  
28. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, }  
V. 33. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  
35. Kiiniisado La dhisyyoo, } (2)  
36. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, }  
VI. 41. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  
43. Kama-Kamaz yimidee, } (2)  
44. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, }  
VII. 49. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  
51. Kiiniyuu gubayee, } (2)  
52. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, }  
VIII. 57. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  
59. Kilaab afaraa, }  
60. Inoo kulantee, } (2)  
61. Illaaha ka weyn, }  
62. Ayaa kicin, }  
67. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  
IX. 69. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, } (2)  
71. Kol uun baa La dhintaayee, } (2)  
72. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay. }

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- I. 1. Wake up! Arise!<sup>1</sup> } (2)  
3. We were destroyed earlier. } (2)  
4. Wake up! Arise!  
II. 9. Wake up! Arise! } (2)  
11. Kooralay<sup>2</sup> was burned. } (2)  
12. Wake up! Arise!  
III. 17. Wake up! Arise! } (2)  
19. A thousand of our generation were killed.<sup>3</sup> } (2)  
20. Wake up! Arise!  
IV. 25. Wake up! Arise! } (2)  
27. The infidels increased [in number]. } (2)  
28. Wake up! Arise! }

- V. 33. Wake up! Arise! } (2)  
 35. Christian churches were built.<sup>1</sup> }  
 36. Wake up! Arise!
- VI. 41. Wake up! Arise! } (2)  
 43. Kama-kamaz<sup>2</sup> came [to govern us]. }  
 44. Wake up! Arise!
- VII. 49. Wake up! Arise! } (2)  
 51. He burned Kenya.<sup>3</sup> }  
 52. Wake up! Arise!
- VIII. 57. Wake up! Arise! } (2)  
 59. The four who are dogs<sup>4</sup> }  
 60. Met [to discuss] our [case].<sup>5</sup> }  
 61. God, who is greater,  
 62. Will cause them to depart!
- IX. 67. Wake up! Arise! } (2)  
 69. Wake up! Arise! }  
 71. One [can] only die once!<sup>6</sup> }  
 72. Wake up! Arise!

Example 6:

- I. 1. Hadhuub nin sitoo hashiisa irmaan,  
 2. Ha maalin la leeyahay baan ahay,  
 3. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay,
- II. 4. Dagaal nimuu haysto meel halisoo,  
 5. Hubkiisu hangool yahay baan ahay,  
 6. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay,
- III. 7. Wihhii ku habboon nin haybsanayoo,  
 8. Bahdii ka hor-joogto baan ahay,  
 9. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay,
- IV. 10. Habaas nin dhehh jiiifta oo ku haftoo,  
 11. Hayaanka ka soo hadhay baan ahay,  
 12. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay,
- V. 13. Nimuu hadalkiisu hadhgoodaalkiyo,  
 14. Haweenkaba dhaafin baan ahay,  
 15. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay,

- VI. 16. Hobyiyo Herer iyo Hawaasta galbeed,  
 17. Hadmay isu hiillin doonaan,  
 18. Ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay, ka kacaay.

+++++

- I. 1-2. I am a man who carries a milk vessel and who is  
 forbidden to milk his own she-camel.<sup>1</sup>  
 3. Wake up! Arise! Wake up! Arise!<sup>2</sup>
- II. 4-5. I am a man who is in battle in a dangerous place,  
 and whose [only] weapon is a hangool.<sup>3</sup>  
 6. Wake up! Arise! Wake up! Arise!
- III. 7-8. I am a man who is considering what is best for  
 himself, and whose [own] brothers<sup>4</sup> reject him.  
 9. Wake up! Arise! Wake up! Arise!
- IV. 10-11. I am a man who sleeps in the middle of dust  
 which is drowning him, and who strayed behind [his  
 companions] on a journey and became lost.  
 12. Wake up! Arise! Wake up! Arise!
- V. 13-14. I am a man whose speech goes no farther than to  
 women or the shade of [his own] house.  
 15. Wake up! Arise! Wake up! Arise!
- VI. 16-17. When shall [the people] of Hobyoy,<sup>5</sup> Harar,<sup>6</sup> and  
 west of Hawaas<sup>7</sup> assist each other [in their  
 struggle for independence]?  
 18. Wake up! Arise! Wake up! Arise!

#### Example 7:

- I. male: 1. Dhulkayaga, dhulkayaga, ɓ (2)  
 3. Wow dhimanaynaa, dhulkayaga,  
 chorus: 4. Dhulkayaga, dhulkayaga, ɓ (2)  
 6. Wow dhimanaynaa, dhulkayaga,
- II. male: 7. Dhallin iyo dhallaan, waayeelka dhur-  
 sugay, ɓ (2)  
 9. Wow wada dhannoo, wow wada dhannoo,  
 10. Wow dhimanaynaa, dhulkayaga,  
 chorus: 11. Dhulkayaga, etc.

III. male: 14. Dhiig inaan ku shubo, aan dhagar ku  
galo, 1- (2)

16. Waan ku dhaarsannaa, waan ku dhaarsannaa,

17. Wow dhimanaynaa, dhulkayaga,

chorus: 18. Dhulkayaga, etc.

IV. male: 21. Wow dhalannayoo, waanu dhiirrannee, 1- (2)

23. Dhibiyo hhumman, dhibiyo hhumman,

24. Waa ka dhowraynaa, dhulkayaga,

chorus: 25. Dhulkayaga, etc.

V. male: 28. Kaan ku dhaadani, wuu dhoo hanyoo, 1- (2)

30. Waa dhega lazyee, waa dhega lazyee,

31. Wow dhimanaynaa, dhulkayaga,

chorus: 32. Dhulkayaga, etc.

+++++

I. male: 1. Our country, our country, 1- (2)

3. We will die for our country.

chorus: 4. Our country, our country, 1- (2)

6. We will die for our country.

II. male: 7. The youth and the children, the elders who  
waited a long time: 1- (2)

9. We are all united for it; we are all united for it.

10. We will die for our country.

chorus: 11. Our country, etc.

III. male: 14. That we [would] spill blood; that we [would]  
kill for it, 1- (2)

16. [This] we swear to; [this] we swear to.

17. We will die for our country.

chorus: 18. Our country, etc.

IV. male: 21. We were born for it; we are brave. 1- (2)

23. Difficulty and hardship, difficulty and hardship:

24. We protect our country against them.

chorus: 25. Our country, etc.

V. male: 28. One who is not proud of it is ignorant. 1- (2)

30. He is deaf; he is deaf.

31. We will die for our country.

chorus: 32. Our country, etc.



As one reads through Example 7 it becomes clear that the belwo had come quite a way since Cabdi Sinimo's truck broke down. The composition of belwo was not to disappear entirely,<sup>1</sup> but poets of the new form were to turn the greater part of their attention to the heello. The belwo alone in the Family of Miniature Genres, had evolved into a form very different from its original state. Further development changed it into the modern poem. A new impetus was to open the second period of the heello. For this we must return to the political scene.

## Chapter V: The Heello: Period Two (Jan., 1955-July, 1960)

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Political events on the Horn of Africa in January, 1955, entered a new chapter in the modern history of Somalia. This was the time when modern political awareness was to mature among many Somali clans. Furthermore, it marked the beginning of a more concerted and serious drive toward independence that was to terminate with the accomplishment of that goal in 1960. And why was a major political crisis to return to Somalia for the third time in the twentieth century? As before, the answer lies with forces which were beyond the control of the Somali people.

More than a catalyst, the border shift agreed to between the British and Ethiopians in November, 1954, disrupted the status quo of fourteen years of peace since the battles of World War II fought in East Africa had terminated. And deeper rumbles of the desire for freedom from colonial administration began to be felt in London. Indeed Somalia now took her place in the independence movement which was sweeping the entire continent of Africa.

To a people for whom poetry is a potent means of political expression (among its other functions), one would expect such a border crisis to be reflected in the oral art. Indeed, this was the case and modern poetry entered the new chapter of Somali history along with the politics.

#### The Ethio-British Agreement of 1954

The events which led to the final border shift in Somalia before its independence undoubtedly lent fire to the already growing political awakening and drive for independence. A large part of Somalia had been united under the Italian fascist government in East Africa. Joined to the Italian Somaliland colony were the Ogaadeen section of Ethiopia and, after August, 1940, the British Somaliland Protectorate. This unity of

administration was maintained by the British when Italian East Africa fell in 1941. From then until November, 1954, the gradual return of the Horn to her pre-Ethio-Italian War and pre-World War II boundaries (see above, pp. 64-65) had caused little unrest.<sup>1</sup> All this changed, however, in January of 1955 when the Ethio-British Agreement was made public. The British and Ethiopians had left the council table in November, 1954, having agreed that a section of the Protectorate called the Hawd and Reserved Area would revert to Ethiopian control.<sup>2</sup>

This area, although occupied by clans nominally under British protection, had been controlled by Ethiopia from 1897 to 1935. With the return of this territory to Ethiopia, however, the political situation reached a boiling point as interest in national political events moved from the urban elite to the nomadic population of the interior.<sup>3</sup>

Why this, the last border change the British were to bring about on the Horn, should be of such paramount importance is probably connected with rights to the rich grazing land of the Hawd. The intellectuals of the elite might well complain of unfair treatment and foul international law but the nomad was rarely affected to such a great extent by colonial activity, even heightened as it was since 1941. With the potential loss of important grazing land, however, the great majority of the Protectorate's population was affected. Even though the government of Ethiopia assured the British that grazing rights would remain in Protectorate Somali hands, those nomads using the Hawd were suspicious lest the border be closed in the heat of a political argument and their herds suffer inevitable famine from the loss of necessary pastures. Modern politics had, as it were, reached grass roots level. I.M. Lewis describes the situation like this:<sup>4</sup>

At the end of 1954, however, an event occurred which changed the whole course of political life and led eventually to full independence. This precipitant was the final liquidation of British

administration in the Hawd and Reserved Areas and the complete surrender of these vital grazing lands to Ethiopian control.

Somali reaction in the Protectorate was swift and bitter.

Somali Reaction to  
the Border Shift

The outcry in the Protectorate when the Ethio-British agreement was made public was 'both immediate and widespread.'<sup>1</sup>

Riots and large demonstrations<sup>2</sup> occurred throughout the Protectorate to protest against this agreement. Somalis had become accustomed to the changes brought about by Italian colonial expansion into Ethiopia and by British rule over the entire Horn. The boundary shift now represented more than a return to a sad condition; it was a new outrage. The complete unity of the various political factions in northern Somalia, in opposition to this territorial transfer, was demonstrated in the formation of the National United Front. Originally an organization composed of representatives of all the political parties of the Protectorate, the N.U.F. organized a delegation, headed by Michael Mariano, to go to London and New York. Their intentions were two-fold.

In London the N.U.F. delegation pleaded for the return of the Hawd and for the independence of the Protectorate. In New York at the United Nations, the delegation opened a complicated debate on international law, especially involving questions relating to the status of a Protector and a Protectorate population.

Although the arguments put forth by the Somali delegation had little effect in convincing the British or the U.N. to return the Hawd to them, the quest for independence was not in vain. If the gravity of the situation could be witnessed by several armed clashes at the new border, the British response could be seen as one of unquestionable diplomatic retreat. Two things support this argument.

Firstly, in the following year a Mr. Dodds-Parker, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, visited Addis Ababa in an attempt to purchase the Hawd and Reserved Area from Ethiopia. He was received with hostility by the Ethiopian officials and the plan failed.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, in May of the same year, the Under-Secretary of State in the Colonial Office, Lord Lloyd, announced before political leaders in Hargeysa the intention of the British Government to grant Somalia a speedy independence.<sup>2</sup> What had begun as a black cloud over Somalia had clearly ended with a silver lining. The irony of the loss of the Hawd was that it led to a more rapid independence for northern Somalia.

Jowhara Luula and  
the Second Period

If the loss of the Hawd is remembered in Somalia as the political event of 1955, then the composition of a particular poem must also be remembered as the artistic event of 1955. Several Somalis with whom I have spoken remember the poem 'Jowhara Luula' as the first heello, though several poems by Cabdullaahi Qarshe and others pre-date it. This claim, although incorrect, does point to an important fact about the development of the heello. 'Jowhara Luula' is remembered as being different somehow from all the poems before it, and as the beginning of a new period of this genre.

'Jowhara Luula' is a Form B heello, and did not have the same alliteration throughout. It did have united alliteration in each stanza, however. There were, as we shall see in the next section of this chapter, many poems like it during this period. Why, then, did it usher in the second period of the heello? The answer lies in its theme rather than in its structure. 'Jowhara Luula' was also not the only poem composed about the loss of the Hawd, as we shall see, but it was the first. Its timing is of major importance in understanding its role as the first poem of period two.

As no form of art occurs independent of the culture which

creates it, so no art form appears independent of the historical period in which it occurs. The importance of 'Jowhara Luula' lies in its being composed during this political crisis and it became a sort of 'La Marseillaise' to the general public. With this poem the heello was no longer to be questioned as an important genre of political expression for the new elite. After its composition many new, serious, political poems were to appear to which the urban population were to react in a manner formerly reserved for classical poetry.

With the loss of the Hawd and Reserved Area, then, and with the composition of this poem, the new genre was firmly established as the voice of the elite. The modern poem as a political device (opposed to the classical genres) became the tongue of those who demanded and began the drive for independence. Following is a transcription and translation of this poem.<sup>1</sup>

Example 8:

- I.     1. Illayn jaahil, jin iyo hhoog ma lahoo,  
       2. Intaan jiifay, wahh ma Lay jarayoo,  
       3. Jabayoo, jilbis jeebka Lay geliyoo,  
       4. Jidhkaygii is galay, jidhiidhicadii,  
       5. Jidboodayoo, dood jid-dheer u maroo,  
       6. Jirdahaan magansaday, ima ay jalinoo,  
       7. Afkay iga soo jufeeyeen,  
          8. Jowhariyo Luulaay,  
          9. Jiidhka igu yaalleey,  
         10. Alla, ma joogee,  
         11. Jeehh dhan bay maqaneey,
- II.    12. Jiidaal ma tawana, naf jeellaniyoo,  
       13. Jeerooy hesho sheyga ay jaceshahay,  
       14. Aroor walba, way jarmaaddaayoo,  
       15. Jidiinkaa i engegay jirkoo dazayoo,  
       16. Anoon jidibkayga, soofayn oon,  
       17. Jahaad gelin, jaalahay ka hadhoo,

18. Jibaadkaygu laabta ma uu jiro,
  19. Jowhariyo Luulaay, etc.
- III.
23. Bankii Fedes, beerihii Jigjigaad,
  24. Beelihii degganaa ka baydaade oo,
  25. Libaahh bulbul laa boqnaha-jarayoo,
  26. Barwaaqadii guuldarraa beddeshoo,
  27. Ku baadshay dhurwaa, biyaha 'kūluloo,
  28. Boorame Layga mari hhaggaa bariyoo,
  29. Bad iyo hheebi baadi ii noqotoo,
  30. Basaase indhihii bilan jiray,
  31. Jowhariyo Luulaay, etc.
- IV.
35. Aaa, kol ay Sawaahhili tahay,
  36. Soodaan iyo kolay Sawaahhili tahay,
  37. Dadkii silci jiray harow socoyoo,
  38. Siday doonayeen La wada siiyee,
  39. Miyaynaan la sinnayn dadkaa sugayoo,
  40. Saagaanku ku ool sideenaayoon,
  41. Sagaal Lagu dhalin Soomaalida eey,
  42. Jowhariyo Luulaay, etc.
- V.
46. Aaa, kii La maydhin dhalaal ma lahoo,
  47. Dharkaba kii La maydhin dhalaal ma lahoo,
  48. Dhagahha burburaa dhismaha ma qabtee,
  49. Dhabbaha La maraa dhulkaw ma ekee,
  50. Dheehii baa iga daatay dhabanada eey,
  51. Jowhariyo Luulaay, etc.

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- I.
1. To be sure, an ignorant man has no strength.
  2. Whilst I slept, was a portion of my flesh [not] sliced from me?
  3. I was shattered; someone put a snake in my pocket, and
  4. My flesh shrank in a shiver, and
  5. I swooned. I travelled a great distance to dispute [my case].<sup>1</sup>
  6. The tree trunks<sup>2</sup> behind which I sought protection

gave me no solace.<sup>1</sup>

7. They struck me on the mouth, [humiliated me] with  
the butt of a spear.<sup>2</sup>

8. Oh Jowhara and Luula,<sup>3</sup>

9. Who are the flesh [of my body]—<sup>4</sup>

10. Oh God, I am not completely here,

11. [For] part of me is missing.<sup>5</sup>

II. 12. The soul which craves for what it lacks<sup>6</sup> is never  
without constant strain

13. Until it finds that which it desires;

14. Each morning it sets out [to search for it].

15. My throat is parched whilst heavy showers fall.

16. So long as I fail to sharpen my axe and

17. Shrink from Holy War, I remain retarded, behind my  
friends, and

18. My shouting is not sincere.<sup>7</sup>

19. Oh Jowhara and Luula, etc.

III. 24. The [people of] the hamlets which were settled  
have fled

23. From the Plains of Fedes and the farms of  
Jigjiga.<sup>8</sup>

25. The maned lion has hamstrung them.<sup>9</sup>

26. Defeat supplanted prosperity

27. And I [had to] chase hyenas away with hot water.<sup>10</sup>

28. Boorame has [now] become the East.<sup>11</sup>

29. And the ocean and shore are lost from me.

30. The eyes which once sparkled have all dried up.

31. Oh Jowhara and Luula, etc.

IV. 35. Ah, the Swahilis—

36. Even the Sudanese and the Swahilis,

37. Who were tormented, have progressed.

38. They were granted all that they wished.

39. Are we not equal to those people who reached  
[their goal]?<sup>12</sup>

40. And who possess full manhood, like us?<sup>13</sup>



41. And have we not been born in nine months, oh ye Somalis?<sup>1</sup>

42. Oh Jowhara and Luula, etc.

V. 46. Ah, that which is unwashed has no shine—

47. Clothes which are unwashed have no shine.

48. A crumbling stone [can]not be used for building;

49. The path upon which one treads, does not resemble other land.

50. [Like an old cup], the enamel has been chipped away from my face.

51. Oh Jowhara and Luula, etc.

Formation of the  
Walaalo Hargeysa

Another important event in the mid 1950's, important both for politics and the development of modern poetry, was the formation of the Walaalo Hargeysa, 'The Brothers of Hargeysa'. It has been pointed out earlier (see above, p. 62) that Hargeysa had become the centre of both art and politics in the Protectorate, and it is not surprising that the Walaalo began there.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the new group was to organize and perform Somali plays. Many of the plays contained poetry and often heello, such as Example 9. This of course meant that political implications and intrigue were to surround the group from the beginning. But one thing must be made clear. The Walaalo Hargeysa are important for their part in popularizing the drive for independence and for composing many varied poems. They are remembered because of their potency of verse and not for acts of terror or violence which they in no way perpetrated.

The play in Somalia at the writing of this thesis has developed a long way from the early ones of the Walaalo Hargeysa. Today the great majority of Somali plays are full of heello and other verse. The theatre in Somalia has indeed been one of the motivating influences upon the composition of modern poetry. The following poem, composed by Hhuseyn Aw Faarahh

(words) and Cabdullaahi Qarshe (music), was the only poem to appear in the Walaalo production of Soomaalidii Hore iyo Soomaalidii Dambe, 'The Somalis of Yesterday and Today' (1955). Its topic, the loss of the Hawd and Reserved Area, again demonstrates the importance of the political crisis and also serves as a good example of the early poetry inspired by the Walaalo Hargeysa.

Example 9:

- I. 1. Inta arligiyo, adiga tahay,  
2. Asaanay laabi, laba ahaanaynin,  
3. Agtayda ha marin, ishayduna ye,  
4. Ayaanay Ku arkine, ha ii iman,
- II. 5. Awaare intaan, ka oodnahay,  
6. Asaanan Afmeer, degayn ambadee,  
7. Agtayda ha marin, etc.
- III. 9. Intay ergedeennu maqantahay,  
10. Asaan abhhinayo Amhhaaradee,  
11. Agtayda ha marin, etc.
- IV. 13. Inta arligiyo adiga tahay,  
14. Asaanay laabi, laba ahaanaynin,  
15. Amaana Alle, ayaad intaa tahay,  
16. Ayaankeennu waa anoo hela.

+++++

- I. 1. While [the dispute] is between you and [our] country,  
2. And when [our] heart [can]not be halved,  
3. Do not pass near me, and my eye  
4. Will not see you; do not come to me.<sup>1</sup>
- II. 5. As long as I am prohibited from entering Awaare,<sup>2</sup>  
6. And [can]not encamp in Afmeer,<sup>3</sup> I am lost, [so]  
7. Do not pass near me, etc.
- III. 9. While our envoys are away,<sup>4</sup> and  
10. I am pleading for peace with the Amharas,  
11. Do not pass near me, etc.

- IV. 13. While [the dispute] is between you and [our]  
country,  
14. And when [our] heart [can]not be halved,  
15. The Peace of God is upon you<sup>1</sup> at that time;  
16. Our fate is to recover [the lost territories]  
for ourselves.

The Walaalo Hargeysa was to prove its importance as an inspiration for the composition of modern poetry, for the second period of the heello is marked by a rapid rise in its prestige, at least among urban populations and the new elite. More and more skilled poets were naturally attracted to modern verse because of this, and many of their poems are still remembered. Let us turn to the poetry of this period and examine some of their works.

#### THE POETRY OF THE SECOND PERIOD

As we mentioned earlier, the addition of politics as a theme in modern poetry raised its prestige and attracted more and more able poets to it. The poem 'Jowhara Luula' firmly established the new genre, beginning its second period. We have reviewed the historical setting. It remains now to describe the poetry of this period.

Structure In the last chapter, the characteristics of the heello B were described. From this point onwards the B form completely eclipsed the A form and the number of B forms increased rapidly as time went by. From now on, therefore, we shall refer to the genre merely as the heello.

The overall structure of the majority of poems during this period is very similar. Stanzas were short and much line repeating was used so that the length of the heello was often taken up by this device. With the addition of politics and various themes which could be classed under it, many new, albeit simple and straightforward, images came to be used.

Although hidden messages in the imagery of many heello were unrecognizable by colonial administrators, they were clear to the general public. When the poet Hhuseyn Aw Faarahh addressed his love as 'Wiilo' in the following poem, Somalis understood that the girl represented the Protectorate. They also understood 'Warsame' to represent the British administration. 'Wiilo' was composed in 1956 and was set to music by Cabdullaahi Qarshe. It was an immediate success and spread throughout the Protectorate.

Example 10:

- I. 1. Wiilooy wahhaan ahay wadaad lugloo,  
2. Wiilooy welinimo ku soo degay,  
3. Wiilooy adna weer cad soo hhidha ey,} (2)
- II. 5. Wiilooy waalidkaa war Kuuma hayee,  
6. Wiilooy wacadkii ha beenayn,  
7. Wiilooy adna weer cad soo hhidha ey,} (2)
- III. 9. Wiilooy Warsamaa Ku weheshanaayee,  
10. Wiilooy ha is cunsiin waraabaha,  
11. Wiilooy adna weer cad soo hhidha ey,} (2)
- IV. 13. Wiilooy fule waran ma qaabilo,  
14. Wiilooy wadnahaagu yuu baqan,  
15. Wiilooy adna weer cad soo hhidha ey,} (2)
- V. 17. Wiilooy wahhaan Kaa wacdiyaayeey,  
18. Wiilooy wadhi inay ku raacdaayeey,  
19. Wiilooy adna weer cad soo hhidha ey,} (2)

+++++

- I. 1. Oh Wiilo,<sup>1</sup> I am a wadaad<sup>2</sup> without [the use of] a leg.<sup>3</sup>  
2. Oh Wiilo, I appeared [in this world] with special powers.<sup>4</sup>  
3. Oh Wiilo, wear a white mourning cloth.<sup>5</sup>} (2)
- II. 5. Oh Wiilo, your father has no news for you,<sup>6</sup> but  
6. Oh Wiilo, do not break the promise.<sup>7</sup>  
7. Oh Wiilo, wear a white mourning cloth.} (2)

- III. 9. Oh Wiilo, Warsame<sup>1</sup> keeps you company.<sup>2</sup>  
 10. Oh Wiilo, do not allow the hyena<sup>3</sup> to eat you.  
 11. Oh Wiilo, wear a white mourning cloth.} (2)
- IV. 13. Oh Wiilo, a coward does not face the spear.  
 14. Oh Wiilo, your heart [must] not be afraid.  
 15. Oh Wiilo, wear a white mourning cloth.} (2)
- V. 17. Oh Wiilo, what I warn you about<sup>4</sup> is  
 18. Oh Wiilo, that shame accompanies you.  
 19. Oh Wiilo, wear a white mourning cloth.} (2)

We have mentioned that rain is an important positive image in Somali poetry because of the nomad's need for water on the semi-desert of the Horn. When the poet Cali Sugulle complains of suffering drought during the rainy season, then, the audience knows that something is wrong. A common image in the heello, the drought in the midst of a rainy season in the following poem signifies that the poet has been rejected by his love. He expects happiness in a certain situation (rainy season) and finds only sorrow (drought). This poem, composed in 1957, also illustrates the new license the poet could take with his verse. No longer restricted to a bound melody, freedom could be taken with the structure of the poem and the melody could be composed to match the lines later. The third and fourth lines of each stanza in Example 11<sup>5</sup> yield the following pattern:

A,    A,  
 A,    B.

where B either completes the phrase grammatically or semantically.

A similar method can be observed in 'Jowhara Luula', where the beginning of the fourth and fifth stanzas yields the following pattern:

B,  
A, B.

Here, A completes the flow of thought involved in the phrase (see above, pp. 107-08). We shall observe this device in a later poem (see below, pp. 129-34).

Example 11:

- I. 1. Ma helin hengeshiina maan furinoo, } (2)  
3. May hoorin, may hoorin, }  
4. May hoorin, weli hogoshii Dayreedey, } (2)
- II. 7. Hohey sow mar qudh ah ma haakah idhoo, } (2)  
9. Hadal aan, hadal aan, }  
10. Hadal aan ku jeclaysto kama helo eey, } (2)
- III. 13. Is hiifay markaan hor-joogsado oo, } (2)  
15. Hawl iyo, hawl iyo, }  
16. Hawl iyo hagar-daamo korodhsadayey, } (2)
- IV. 19. Heddi Alla gooynayaa hoyatee, } (2)  
21. Sow tan, sow tan, }  
22. Sow tan halis ahee Lay helayey, } (2)
- V. 25. Hooggaygii gacantaan ku haystaayoo, } (2)  
27. Hadhkaa, hadhkaa, }  
28. Hadhkaagay naftaydu hoddaayeey, } (2)
- VI. 31. Aduun baa Nabsiga hor-dhaca ku dhamee, } (2)  
33. Ma hiinhiin, ma hiinhiin, }  
34. Ma hiinhiinsaday huubadiisii ey, } (2)

+++++

- I. 1. I did not find her; I have not cast aside my  
mourning. } (2)  
3. It has not [yet] rained! It has not [yet]  
rained! }  
4. Still the cloud has not rained during the  
Dayr.<sup>1</sup> } (2)
- II. 7. Hohey,<sup>2</sup> did I not once say 'Haakah!'?<sup>3</sup> } (2)

- 9. [Kind] words, [kind] words,
- 10. [Kind] words [to encourage] my love [for her], I fail to receive. } (2)
- III. 13. I blamed myself whenever I stood before her. } (2)
- 15. Difficulty, difficulty,
- 16. I increased my difficulty and distress. } (2)
- IV. 19. The soul taken by Allah goes home.<sup>1</sup> } (2)
- 21. Here, here,
- 22. Here I am in danger and something happened to me. } (2)
- V. 25. I hold my <sup>a</sup>clamity in my hand.<sup>2</sup> } (2)
- 27. Your shadow, your shadow, } (2)
- 28. My soul betrays you shadow. } (2)
- VI. 31. At first, only you drank the Nabsi.<sup>3</sup> } (2)
- 33. Did I drink? Did I drink?
- 34. Did I drink the last dregs of it [myself]?<sup>4</sup> } (2)

Also becoming much more common during this period was the style of unifying the alliteration of the poem throughout the whole of the verse following the model of Somali classical poetry. Indeed by the end of this period in 1960, I was able to find only one poem which lacked uniform alliteration. We have seen that in 'Jowhara Luula' the alliteration was still not yet unified. In it, as in Example 12, composed in 1958, each stanza made up an alliterative unit, but unlike the heello A, the theme of the poem was unified.

#### Example 12:

- I. 1. Aaa, qod baad tahay, meel qabow ka bahhoo,
- 2. Qajeel ubahhiina wada qariyoo,
- 3. Qacdaan Ku arkaan is qoonsadayoo,
- 4. Bal qabsoo waa baan Kuu qandhanayahay ey, } (4)
- II. 8. Aaa, geedkii ka magoola, meel gebi ya ba,
- 9. Malaggu geela waa ku madhin jiray,
- 10. Mowdkaygii dhunkaal ma muudsaday ey, } (4)

- III. 14. Aaa, hed mooyee, habaar ba Looma dhintee,  
 15. Haaddu na subahhdii hortay ma kacdee,  
 16. Aniyoo hilbahaygii kala hoyannee,  
 17. Labaysu hilowdaa hayga hadhdhee,  
 18. Hammooy beene sow tan Lay helayey, } (4)

- IV. 22. Aaa, haddii aan muusanaabay, aanu i maqlayn,  
 23. Asaanan midigtayda maanta ku hayn,  
 24. Wahh ii mar war roon, anigoo mar sugoo,  
 25. Mowlaha Rabbigay la magansada ey, } (4)

+++++

- I. 1. Ah, you are the branch of a tree,<sup>1</sup> which grows in  
 a cool place,  
 2. Often completely covered with flowers.<sup>2</sup>  
 3. The moment I saw you, I felt something strange  
 [inside] myself;  
 4. Take my word for it,<sup>3</sup> at times I shiver for you. } (4)
- II. 8-9. Ah, the Death Angel used to destroy camels by the  
 tree which sprouted in a place by a precipice.<sup>4</sup>  
 10. Did I [not] suck the poison<sup>5</sup> of my death? } (4)
- III. 14. Unless the appointed time for death [comes], one  
 does not die from a curse;  
 15. No bird of prey wakes before me in the morning;<sup>6</sup>  
 16. My flesh is becoming separated from me;<sup>7</sup>  
 17. Let me abandon the [feeling of] sincerity which  
 two people [can] have for each other.  
 18. Oh false hope, [grief] has found me here. } (4)
- IV. 22. If I cry out for help, [and] he does not listen to  
 me,  
 23. And I do not have him in my right hand today,<sup>8</sup>  
 24. [Then] the best advice<sup>9</sup> for me now is that I  
 [should] wait for a while,  
 25. And seek protection from the Lord, my God. } (4)



Themes We have mentioned the role of the Somali poet in the drive toward independence during the second period of the heello. Anti-colonial themes such as those in 'Jowhara Luula', 'Inta Arligiyo' and 'Wiilo' were common. The theme of love, as we have seen in Examples 11 and 12, though now sharing its place with politics, was no less common. Panegyric naming remained a common device as in Example 13, composed in 1958 by Cali Sugulle.

Example 13:

- |      |  |       |
|------|--|-------|
| I.   | 1. Hibooy amba waan Ku haybinayaayee,    | } (2) |
|      | 2. Inaabti ma ii han-weyntahayee,        |       |
| II.  | 5. Hubaal aawadaa cishqigan i hayaa,     | } (2) |
|      | 6. Heddeeyoo jar baan u halis ahay e,    |       |
| III. | 9. Harraad nin qabo biyaha ma huree,     | } (2) |
|      | 10. Mahhaa soo hor-maray hagaaggiyeey,   |       |
| IV.  | 13. Hilbiyo kala qalan illayn hadal eey, | } (2) |
|      | 14. Haasaawaha waynu wada haynee,        |       |
|      | 15. Heshiinne mahhayna kala helayeey?    |       |

+++++

- |      |  |       |
|------|--|-------|
| I.   | 1. Oh Hibo, <sup>1</sup> I am searching for you; <sup>2</sup>          | } (2) |
|      | 2. Oh cousin, <sup>3</sup> do you love me? <sup>4</sup>                |       |
| II.  | 5. To be sure, I have love for you;                                    | } (2) |
|      | 6. My time is up and I am in danger of falling over a cliff.           |       |
| III. | 9. The man who thirsts [can]not dispense with water;                   | } (2) |
|      | 10. What has come to stand in the way of [our] happiness? <sup>5</sup> |       |
| IV.  | 13. Indeed meat and speech are two different things; <sup>6</sup>      | } (2) |
|      | 14. [Once] we spoke [freely] to each other.                            |       |
|      | 15. We agreed together; what happened between us? <sup>7</sup>         |       |

Another theme becoming more and more common at this time was that of patriotism. Enhancing the ever growing feelings of nationalism, the patriotic poem laid emphasis on praising the country rather than condemning the administration. Although mention was sometimes made of such political subjects as the separated parts of Greater Somalia, the main emphasis in the patriotic poem was to praise the Somalis as a whole. No longer could one discover mention of clans or sub-clans of the Somali nation. So-called 'tribalism' is notable in modern poetry for its absence rather than its presence.

The following patriotic poem, another collaboration between Hhuseyn Aw Faarahh (words) and Cabdullaahi Qarshe (music) was composed in 1955 and revised in 1957. When I left Somalia in 1969, it was still one of the most popular patriotic poems in the country.

Example 14:

- I. male: 1. Qolaba calankeedu waa caynoo, 1 (2)  
           3. Innaga keenu waa cirkoo kale ey,  
           4. Aan caadna lahayne, caashaqa ey,  
 chorus: 5. Qolaba calankeedu waa caynoo,  
           6. Innaga keenu waa cirkoo kale ey,  
           7. Aan caadna lahayne, caashaqa ey,  
 II. male: 8. Hhiddigyahay caddi, waadna ciidamisee, 1 (2)  
           10. Carrada keligaa adow curadee,  
 chorus: 11. Gadceedda sideeda caan noqo ey,  
           12. Qolaba calankeedu, etc.  
 III. male: 15. Cashadaad dhalataa caloosheena, 1 (2)  
           17. Sidii culaygii cidaad marisee,  
 chorus: 18. Allow ha ku celin, cawooy dhaha ey,  
           19. Qolaba calankeedu, etc.  
 IV. male: 22. Shanteenaa cuduudood cadkii ka maqnaa, 1 (2)  
           24. Adow celiyana caawimayey,  
 chorus: 25. Waa calaf cisigaysku keen simayee,  
           26. Qolaba calankeedu, etc.

+++++

- I. male: 1. Every nation has her own flag; } (2)  
3. Ours is like the heavens<sup>1</sup>  
4. Without any clouds;<sup>2</sup> [Somalis] love it!  
chorus: 5. Every nation has her own flag;  
6. Ours is like the heavens  
7. Without any clouds; [Somalis] love it!
- II. male: 8. Oh white star, you give us strength. } (2)  
10. Only you are the first-born of the country.  
chorus: 11. Become famous like the sun.  
12. Every nation, etc.
- III. male: 15. On the day you were born,<sup>3</sup> our stomach<sup>4</sup> } (2)  
17. You cleaned, as with the fire-brand<sup>5</sup> and cleansing  
fibre.<sup>6</sup>  
chorus: 18. Oh God, do not take [the star from us]<sup>7</sup>; [oh  
Somalis], say 'Good Luck' [to it].  
19. Every nation, etc.
- IV. male: 22. The flesh of our five upper arms<sup>8</sup> was  
missing. } (2)  
24. It is You who [can] return it to us and help us;  
chorus: 25. It is destiny that made us all equal in honour.  
26. Every nation, etc.

We will see how the timing of modern poetry, including 'Jowhara Luula,' contributed to its success, indeed is probably a major reason for its success (see below, p. 205-06). Such was also true of the poetry of the third period of the heello, though perhaps not so dramatically. With the coming of independence in 1960, new themes came into being and the structure of the heello gradually changed into a longer, more complicated poem. What happened to it after July, 1960, is the topic of the next chapter.

## Chapter VI: The Heello: Period Three (July, 1960-Present)

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The newly independent state of Somalia saw the beginning of many changes in 1960. These changes were the result of many factors. The new republic had gained control of its own political destiny (as much as any newly independent state could in 1960). And there was the question of integrating the inherited British and Italian systems of education, economics, civil service, police and army, and law. The new elite which was now the ruling class of Somalia began to define its role, especially the female members of that elite. Apart from other changes, what is important for this thesis is that the change extended into and was reflected by the modern poem.

Most of the poetry I was able to collect in Somalia is from the third period, part of the duration of which I spent in the country. It becomes easier, therefore, to relate the (sometimes very topical) heello of this period to the unfolding history of the country. Furthermore, the most mature modern poems were composed during this time. Lewis, 1965, has followed the history of Somalia through 1963, but little has been written about it since then. If this chapter appears longer than the previous ones, then, it is for these reasons.

Because the heello may yet change, one hesitates to say that it fully matured during its third period; suffice it to say that modern poetry became much more refined at this time. Change in it was manifested in two ways. Firstly, new themes became possible (e.g. pro- and anti-government themes), while others became popular, reflecting current social debates (e.g. the role of women). Furthermore, the use of the poem expanded and completely new poems emerged (see the poem concerning football on pp. 159-61). Secondly, the structure of the heello changed yet again and together with the new themes, added to the growing prestige of modern poetry. We shall first consider the new political situation wherein the heello found itself.

Then the poetry of the third period will be examined in detail.

Independence and Unity      On June 26, 1960, the former British Somali-land Protectorate gained her independence.

Four days later on July 1, this part of Somalia joined with the former United Nations Trusteeship Territory of Somalia under Italian administration to form the Somali Republic. The new republic was filled with festive activities and celebrations. One would be very hard-pressed indeed to find a Somali who opposed the coming of independence to any part of his country. The unity of the two territories, however, is another question entirely. This joining of the two former colonies, although unanimously supported by a resolution in the legislative council of the British Protectorate on April 6, 1960, had been previously opposed by Mahammed Hhaaji Ibraahin Cigaal,<sup>1</sup> then leader of the majority party and 'Leader of Government Business.'<sup>2</sup> The relative acceptance of this unity was to be postponed until Cigaal became Prime Minister of the Republic in July of 1967.

The following two poems illustrate these tense feelings about the unity of the two territories quite well. Example 15, composed by Cali Sugulle in 1968, looks back to this 'marriage' and praises it as a time when disaster left the Somali people and victory was gained. The poem, chanted in canticle form by a male and female chorus, is entitled 'Kuwa Libintii Gaadhoo' ('Those Who Reached the Victory').

Example 16, composed in late 1960 or early 1961, was never presented over the radio. For Somalis to compose against the colonial administration and to hide their criticism in metaphor is one thing. When the administration became made up of Somalis themselves, it was no longer so easy to criticize with hidden messages. The poet might well claim that his poem was composed in objection to the traditional system of marriage when one often had little choice in choosing a spouse. The following stanzas, using different images but essentially stating the same thesis, could then be said to support the

first stanza. Government officials, however, saw the poem from a different light. To them all the stanzas supported an unstated thesis: that the 'marriage' of British and Italian Somalilands had been a mistake. The poem was banned so early that no melody for it was remembered by my informant.

Example 15:

- I. females: 1. Kuwa libintii gaadhoo, } (2) }  
                   2. Aan La loodin karayn, } (2)  
 males: 5. Laydhsadaan nahee, }  
                   11. Goormaan ladnaannayey? }  
 females: 12. Lihhdankii, }  
                   males: 13. Luggooyadii na daysayey? } (2)  
 females: 14. Lihhiyo labaatankii Juun, }  
                   males: 15. Aaa, goormaan lulannayey? }  
 females: 16. Lihhdii saac, }  
                   males: 17. Goormaan liibaannayey? }  
 females: 18. Kowdii Luliyo laba midowdayey. }  
 II. 27. Kuwa cadowgii laayoo, } (2) }  
                   28. Isticmaarkii lumiyoon, } (2)  
 males: 31. Liidan baan nahayey, }  
                   37. Goormaan ladnaannayey?, etc. }  
 III. females: 53. Kuwa yeeshay lahaad oo, } (2) }  
                   54. La sinnaaday adduunkoon, } (2)  
 males: 57. Liicin baan nahayey, }  
                   63. Goormaan ladnaannayey?, etc. }  
 IV. females: 79. Kuwa laan sare noqdoo, } (2) }  
                   80. Labadii ka maqanyiin, } (2)  
 males: 83. La sugayaan nahayey, }  
                   89. Goormaan ladnaannaayey?, etc. }  
 ++++++  
 I. females: 1. Those who reached the victory, } (2) }  
                   2. Who cannot be bent, and } (2)  
 males: 5. Who walk in the cool breeze, are we. }

11. When did we recover our health?  
 females: 12. In 1960.<sup>1</sup>  
 males: 13. When did disaster<sup>2</sup> leave us?  
 females: 14. On the twenty-sixth of June.<sup>3</sup>  
 males: 15. Ah, when did we churn [our milk]?<sup>4</sup> (2)  
 females: 16. At twelve midnight.<sup>5</sup>  
 males: 17. When did we gain victory?  
 females: 18. On the first of July when the  
 two united.<sup>6</sup>
- II. 27. Those who killed the enemy,  
 28. Who caused colonialism to become lost, and (2)  
 males: 31. Who are not weak, are we. (2)  
 37. When did we recover, etc.
- III. females: 53. Those who acquired strength, (2)  
 54. Who became equal with the world, and (2)  
 males: 57. Who did not lean off balance, are we.  
 63. When did we recover, etc.
- IV. females: 79. Those who became the top branch, (2)  
 80. From whom the two<sup>7</sup> are missing, and (2)  
 males: 83. For whom people have waited, are we.  
 89. When did we recover, etc.

Example 16:

- I. 1. Haweeyoo geyaanoo, gacal igula taliyaa, 1 (2)  
 3. Garbo ii hillaacdoon, sii daayay gacantee, 1 (2)  
 5. Anigaysu geystoo, galabsaday hhumaantee,  
 6. Wihhii ila garaadow, gobannimo ha tuurina, 1 (3)
- II. 9. Adoo guri barwaaqo ah, geel dhalay ku haysta, 1 (2)  
 11. Geeddi Lama lallaboo, abaar Looma guuree, 1 (2)  
 13. Anigaysu geystoo, etc.
- III. 17. Adigoo golmoonoo, gaajo ay ku hayso, 1 (2)  
 19. Gorofkaaga hhoorka leh, Layskama gembio e, 1 (2)  
 21. Anigaysu geystoo, etc.
- IV. 25. Intaan gudin afaystaan, laabatada is gooyoo, 1 (2)  
 27. Caqligayga guuroo, garab maray wanaaggee, 1 (2)

29. Anigaysu geystoo, etc.

- V. 33. Nabsigaan guntaday baa, goobtaa i joojoo, } (2)  
 35. Ninna garawsan maayoo way goonni hhaajadu, } (2)  
 37. Anigaysu geystoo, etc.

+++++

- I. 1. When [my] kinsmen advised me [to wed] Haweeya,<sup>1</sup>  
 who is marriageable to me, } (2)  
 3. Lightning flashed for me by a precipice and I  
 stretched out [my] hand [towards it]. } (2)  
 5. 'Tis I who brought [this] evil upon myself;  
 6. All ye who think as I do, don't cast aside  
 [your] freedom..<sup>2</sup> } (3)
- II. 9. While you keep camels which have just given birth  
 in a prosperous camp, } (2)  
 11. [You should] not arrange a move<sup>3</sup> and travel into  
 a drought..<sup>4</sup> } (2)  
 13. 'Tis I who brought, etc.
- III. 17. You who are lean<sup>5</sup> and whom hunger grips } (2)  
 19. Should not o'erturn your frothing<sup>6</sup> milk vessel } (2)  
 21. 'Tis I who brought, etc.
- IV. 25. When I sharpened the axe, I cut my own joint; } (2)  
 27. My senses left me— I have missed the good things  
 [of life].. } (2)  
 29. 'Tis I who brought, etc.
- V. 33. The Nabsi<sup>7</sup> which I tied for myself halted me in  
 that place; } (2)  
 35. I will take counsel from no one, for the matter is  
 special to me..<sup>8</sup> } (2)  
 37. 'Tis I who brought, etc.

The uniting of the two territories, as we have stated, led to numerous difficulties because of the different colonial administrative heritages. One of the areas where the difficulty was so great that it appeared almost insurmountable was education. English had been used in northern schools and



Italian in the South. Frustrated students and teachers together with others who had strong nationalistic feelings about rendering Somali to a written form provided the theme of countless debates and poems and has become one of the pillars of the platforms of many political parties. Every government since independence, including the present government, has promised to have the language written, but no government has taken the final step to do so. The following poem, composed in 1960 by Cali Sugulle was popular in Somalia for about six years and could be heard frequently on the radio.<sup>1</sup>

Example 17:

- I. male: 1. Asaaggeen horow maraan arkayaa, } (2)  
 2. Ilays calanyow iftiiminaya,  
 female: 5. Ammankaag iyo yaab, argaggahh,  
 6. Abboowe macaanow hooy,  
 7. Ii sheeg mahhaa Kuu daran,  
 8. Abboowe macaanow hee,  
 male: 9. Waan asqaysanahee,  
 10. Ku aaway, abbaayo macaaneey hooy,  
 female: 11. Ii sheeg mahhaa Kuu daran,  
 12. Abboowe macaanow hee,  
 male: 13. Af qalaad aqoontu, miyaa?  
 female: 14. Maya, maya!  
 male: 15. Ma ahee af qalaad aqoontu, miyaa?  
 female: 16. Maya, maya!  
 17. Ma ahee waa intuu qofba Eebbe geshaa,  
 18. Ayay nala tahay annagee,  
 19. Waa intuu qofba Eebbe geshaa,  
 20. Ayay nala tahay annagee,  
 21. Ma ogtahay, dib Looma abuuro dadkee,  
 male: 22. Ma ogtahay aqoonta ammaah Laysuma siiyee? } (2)  
 female: 23. Ma ogtahay aqoonta abaal Laysuma tartee?  
 male: 26. Ma ogtahay aqoonta miyaa La iibsana karaa?  
 female: 27. Maya, maya!

- male: 28. Ma ogtahay aqoonta miyaa La soo ergistaa?  
female: 29. Maya, maya!  
together: 30. Ma ahee waa intuu qofba Eebbe geshaa,  
31. Ayay nala tahay annagee,  
32. Waa intuu qofba Eebbe geshaa,  
33. Ayay nala tahay annagee,  
34. Ma ogtahay dib Looma abuuro dadkee?  
II. female: 35. Oggoli oo wahh barashadu waa ii egtahay, } (2)  
36. Af shisheeye ayaynu addoon u nahee,  
39. Waan asqaysanahee, }  
40. Ku aaway abboowe macaanow hooy, } (2)  
male: 41. Ii sheeg mahhaa Kuu daran,  
42. Abbaayo macaaney hooy, }  
female: 47. Af qalad aqoontu, miyaa?, etc. (with roles reversed)  
III. male: 69. Itaalkii baa Lays ammaahinayaa, } (2)  
70. Iskeen ma u wada adeegnaayeey, }  
female: 73. Ammankaag iyo yaab, argaggahh, etc. (as stanza I)  
IV. female: 103. Aboor baa dundumo ilkaha ku dhisee, } (2)  
104. Aqbalkana qof kalaa arrinshoo ururshee, }  
107. Waan asqaysanahee, etc. (as stanza II)  
+++++  
I. male: 1. I see our equals [in the world] making progress; } (2)  
2. Oh [my] glowing flag!  
female: 5. Astonishment, surprise and shock!  
6. Oh [my] sweet brother,  
7. Tell me what troubles you;  
8. [Tell me], oh my sweet brother.  
male: 9. I am maddeningly confused [because I am taught too many foreign languages at the same time].  
10. [Now tell me], where are you, [my] sweet sister.<sup>1</sup>  
female: 11. Tell me what troubles you;

12. [Tell me], oh my sweet brother.
- male: 13. Does education mean [learning] a foreign language?
- female: 14. No, no!
- male: 15. It does not! And does education [truly] mean [learning] a foreign language?
- female: 16. No, not at all!
17. It does not! [True education] is what God bestows on [each] person.
18. This is our opinion!
19. It is what God bestows on [each] person.
20. This is our opinion!
21. Do you think that people [can] be created again [and made into what they are not]?
- male: 22. Don't you know that knowledge [can]not be given on loan?
- female: 23. Don't you know that knowledge [can]not be given as a gift?
- male: 26. Do you think that knowledge can be bought?
- female: 27. No, no!
- male: 28. Do you think that knowledge [can] be borrowed?
- female: 29. No, not at all!
- together: 30. It can not! [True education] is what God bestows on [each] person.
31. This is our opinion!
32. It is what God bestows on [each] person.
33. This is our opinion!
34. Do you think that people [can] be created again [and made into what they are not]?
- II. female: 35. Oh how I agree that education is essential for us,
36. But we are slaves to foreign languages.

(2)

(2)

39. I am maddeningly confused [because I am taught too many foreign languages at the same time].
40. Where are you, oh my sweet brother?
- male: 41. Tell me what troubles you;
42. [Tell me], oh my sweet sister.
- female: 47. Does education mean [learning], etc. (with roles reversed)
- III. male: 69. People lend each other strength, but
70. Should we [not also] do something for ourselves?
- female: 73. Astonishment, surprise and shock, etc. (as stanza I)
- IV. female: 103. The [tiny] termite builds the [huge] ant hill with [his own] teeth.
104. This agreement<sup>1</sup> has been engineered by others.<sup>2</sup>
107. I am maddeningly confused, etc. (as stanza II)

Aside from the writing of Somali the other difficulties of integration between the two sections of the Republic quickly led to a feeling of regionalism (North versus South). Coupled with what became known as 'tribalism' at this time, regionalism threatened not only the stability of the new government but the Republic itself.

Tribalism and  
Regionalism

What Somalis came to call 'tribalism' might be better termed 'clanism' in that it was the various clans in the part of the nation within the Republic's boundaries that vied for power in the new state. From a practical standpoint, however, Somali 'clanism' functioned very nearly the same way as tribalism in other, multi-tribal African states. Nepotism has been one of the major manifestations of Somali tribalism and the balance of

clans represented in the Council of Ministers and in the government as a whole was, until the coup in 1969, parallel with the relative size and power of the clans in the Republic. Overt action by the government to reduce the strength of tribalism, such as the law making it illegal for political parties to bear tribal names,<sup>1</sup> had little effect on actually ridding the country of tribal activity. Lewis states the case like this:<sup>2</sup>

However precipitate and incomplete it may have appeared at the time, the union of the former British Somaliland and [Italian] Somalia had at once a profound effect on Somali politics....The marriage of the two territories entailed significant, and in some cases quite drastic changes in the political status of the various clans and lineages within the state....Despite the patriotic fervour which acclaimed the formation of the Republic, the most all pervasive element in politics remained the loyalty of the individual to his kin and clan.

Tribalism was to plague the government until October, 1969, when the successful coup took place.

Regionalism was based upon several factors. The inheritance of different colonial systems of government and languages of learning hindered communication. The shift of relative size — and therefore power — among the clans when the two territories joined was a major element. Furthermore, the 'centre' of politics for northern Somalis moved out of the North entirely as the importance of Muqdishu increased. Hargeysa, once the most important city in British Somaliland, now lost its position and became at most a regional capital. Unrest in the North gradually grew, being constantly reinforced by the problems of integration. Finally in December, 1961, matters came to a head and a coup d'état was executed in Hargeysa when a group of British-trained, junior officers arrested their southern superiors who had assumed command of the army units in the North. Claiming that they were acting

against tribalism and corruption in the army and in the government, the junior officers announced that they had named General Dazuid, commander-in-chief of the army, as head of state. Although documents concerning this coup were never made public — if indeed any documents concerning it exist at all — it is doubtful that General Dazuid knew anything about the coup until it had occurred.

Despite the announcement that the southerner, General Dazuid, was to be made head of state, trouble began on the following day when rumours began to spread that the object of the coup was not to take over the entire government but only that of the North. Faced with the prospect of splitting the Republic, Somali nationalism rose its angry head as private soldiers and non-commissioned officers arrested all the lieutenants long before the government could react.<sup>1</sup>

The actual motive or motives of this aborted coup may never be made public, and the only clear statement about it that can be made is to repeat what each side claimed. The lieutenants claimed that they were reacting against tribalism and corruption and that their intention, as Somali patriots, was to seize the reins of government in the entire country. The government in power at the time, however, claimed that regionalism was the motive and that the lieutenants were splitting the new Republic into its former two colonial divisions. Whatever the motives, Parliament later voted to pardon all the participants. The following poem, wherein the lieutenants are personified as an honourable man (see line 71) and northern Somalia is personified as a weak woman (see lines 13 and 50) first appeared in 1962. The fact that the poem was banned when its implications became known speaks for the skill with which the poet employed the hidden message.

Example 18:

- |                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| I. chorus: 1. Diyooy hiddii, | } (2) |
| 2. Oo hiddidiyooy hiddii,    |       |
| 3. Ahh hiddidiyooy hiddii,   |       |

II. male: 7. Laacay oo hinqaday,

8. Hir bay laacay oo hinqaday,

9. Oo hilaac bay bahhoo handaday,

10. Haddana waayeyoo, hakaday,

chorus: 11. Waayey oo hakaday,

12. Halyey waayey oo hakaday,

13. Oo haween baan ahoo habraday,

14. Hiil iyo midna hoo ma galo,

15. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

III. male: 21. Aawadaa ma ledoo,

22. Hurdada aawadaa ma ledoo,

23. Hummaagaagii bay hor-kacay,

24. Hawshaadii ma soo hadh-galo,

chorus: 25. Kula qaybsadaa,

26. Hawshaan Kula qaybsadaa,

27. Oo harraadkaan Kula qabaa,

28. Oo anigu waan Kula hayaa,

29. Ee adaan i hagaajinayn,

30. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

IV. male: 36. Ya, hal baan lahaa,

37. Way, adduunyo hal baan lahaa,

38. Haaneedkiina wow hayaa,

39. Ee mahhaydin hayee, idin helay?

chorus: 40. Ya, siduu i gozay,

41. Halbowle siduu i gozay,

42. Haabhaabtay wahhaanan hayn,

43. Hoogayoo bazayey, ma hadhay?

44. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

V. male: 50. Ma dhammaa La yidhi,

51. Haween ma dhammaa La yidhi,

52. Hablow anigaydin hanan,

53. Ee hubaal hal ma siisannaa?

chorus: 54. Hubsitow halyey,

55. Hanadow hubsitow halyey,

56. Hawraarsane hadal-gobeed,

57. I hoo adiguna i hano,  
58. Diiyooy haddii, etc.

VI. male: 64. Halkay ahayd,

65. Way, dhadhiini halkay ahayd,  
66. Dhabbadaa dhagahh-dhagahh u maray,  
67. Dhawaaq maad celisidaa?

chorus:: 68. Maylka u diglayn,

69. Wiilka sidaa maylka u diglayn,  
70. Ee magaalada laba u dhihhi,  
71. Miiganow miridh deyni maayo,  
72. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

VII, male: 78. Qawlow qadhqadhay,

79. Roobka soo qawlow qadhqadhay,  
80. Qaawanaantayduu arkaa,  
81. Ee qudhdhayda hhaggee dhigaa?

chorus:: 82. Yane waa Illaah,

83. Kuu dhammeeyena waa Illaah,  
84. Kuu dhisaayena aabbahaa,  
85. Ani Illaahay ii dhammee,  
86. Aabbahay baan ii dhisayn,  
87. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

VIII. male: 93. Ninle baa gudbane,

94. Uustar-dheere ninlaa gudbane,  
95. Oo aroos nin helaa hadh gala,  
96. Ee Aroori anaa ku hadhay,

chorus: 97. Nin sitow gummane,

98. Uustar-dheere nin sitow gummane,  
99. Fiicanow fidhin laan gobeed,  
100. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

IX. 106. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

+++++

I. chorus: 1. Diiyooy hiddii,

2. Oo hiddidiiyooy hiddii,  
3. Ahh hiddidiiyooy hiddii,<sup>1</sup>

} (2)



II, male: 7. [Something] appeared and I peered at it;

8. Distant shapes [of clouds] appeared to me on the horizon and I stared at them.

9. And lightning<sup>1</sup> appeared to me, and I yearned for it.

10. However, I failed to find it and I hesitated.<sup>2</sup>

chorus: 11. I failed to find him and I hesitated;

12. I failed to find a champion and I hesitated.

13. I am a woman who dared not act;

14. I [can]not support anyone, [can]not give aid.

15. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

III. male: 21. For your sake I [can]not sleep;

22. For your sake I [can]not [rest in] sleep,

23. [For] your image rises before me.

24. [Because of] the toil [you caused me], I [can]not rest.<sup>3</sup>

chorus: 25. I share [all] with you;

26. I share all the toil with you;

27. And I share the thirst with you.

28. And I sympathize with you.

29. However, you are not treating me right.

30. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

IV. male: 36. Ya,<sup>4</sup> I owned only one she-camel;<sup>5</sup>

37. Way,<sup>6</sup> of all [worldly] possessions, I owned only one she-camel.

38. I still keep to the left side of the camel.<sup>7</sup>

39. What troubles you, what befell you?<sup>8</sup>

chorus: 40. Ya, as if it were cut;

41. As if an artery of mine were cut,

42. I searched hurriedly for the thing I did not have.<sup>9</sup>

43. Alas! Alas! Was I [not] left out?

44. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

V. male: 50. People say that they are not complete [like men];<sup>10</sup>

51. People say that women are not complete [like men].

52. Oh girls, I will take care of you.

53. But shall we trade certainty for a she-camel?<sup>1</sup>

chorus: 54. Oh [my] champion, who is armed,

55. Oh protector, oh champion, who is armed,

56. All right, [your] speech [is that] of noble men.

57. Take me and cherish me!

58. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

VI. male: 64. To the place where it was,

65. Way, to the place where Dhadhiin<sup>2</sup> was,

66. I walked on the road stone by stone.<sup>3</sup>

67. Why did you not answer my cry?<sup>4</sup>

chorus: 68. Walks tirelessly for miles —

69. The boy who walks tirelessly like that for miles

70. Takes only two [nights] to walk to the town;

71. Oh man of honour, I will not leave him alone [even] for a minute.<sup>5</sup>

72. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

VII. male: 78. Oh thunder; I shivered —

79. Oh thundering rain<sup>6</sup> [coming] towards [me]; I shivered;

80. He sees my nakedness;<sup>7</sup>

81. Where shall I hide myself?

chorus: 82. And it is God —

83. [The one who can] do anything for you is God.

84. [The one who can] arrange a wedding for you is your father.<sup>8</sup>

85. God did everything for me;

86. But my father did not arrange the wedding for me.<sup>9</sup>

87. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

VIII. male: 93. The man who has it preserves it —

94. The man who has the long rifle preserves it.<sup>10</sup>

95. And the man who marries finds rest.<sup>11</sup>

96. And I was left behind in Aroori.<sup>12</sup>

chorus: 97. Oh you man, [who are] right —

98. Oh you who carry the long rifle, [you are] right.<sup>1</sup>

99. Oh you clever man, [you are] a comb [made from]  
the branch of the Gob Tree.<sup>2</sup>

100. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

IX. 106. Diiyooy hiddii, etc.

Regionalism, if it does not still plague the country to some extent, was never a strong force in Somalia. When, as we stated, Cigaal became Prime Minister in 1967, the problem appeared to have been solved, for the North then felt that it had more of a share in the country's politics. Whatever the case Pan-Somalism has always played a stronger role in the country, a role which ironically enough has isolated Somalia from Pan-Africanist feelings of other newly emerging nation-states on the continent.

Pan-Somalism and  
Pan-Africanism

While the cry for independence in other, very often multi-tribal countries in Africa became the basis of a Pan-African movement on the continent, such a cry in Somalia has tended to isolate her from other black African states. The reason for this is based upon the tribal structure of the Horn. Unlike most African states which are made up of several tribes within their (foreign-drawn) boundaries, the independent state of Somalia contains only part of the whole of the Somali nation. The drawing of boundaries by foreign powers in the nineteenth century led to the severing of the Somali nation into five major areas, two of which now make up the country. Faced with nationalist movements based on tribal ties, other nations, unlike Somalia, would be split apart into separate political units. Conversely Somalia's accomplishment of a Greater Somalia would mean the break-up of large tracts of land from her immediate neighbours. Pan-Somalism then, directly clashes with Pan-Africanism and is hard pressed to find support

from any other African nation-state.

Despite this unique state of affairs on the international scene, Somalia has participated in the Pan-Africanist movement to some extent, albeit within her own boundaries. If these two movements clash in her foreign affairs, they certainly seem to go hand-in-hand on the domestic scene. The following pair of poems bears witness to this fact. The first poem (Example 19), composed in 1962 by Ismaaciil Sheekh Ahhmed, is but one of many heello supporting Pan-Somalism; and it should also be pointed out that the desire for unity among the five Somalilands is mentioned in many poems where it is not the major theme.

The second poem (Example 20) was composed shortly after the death of Patrice Lumumba in 1960 by Cabdullaahi Qarshe. The popularity of this poem, and it could still be heard on the radio in 1969, bears witness to strong Pan-Africanist feelings within the Somali Republic.

Example 19:<sup>1</sup>

- |            |                                    |       |
|------------|------------------------------------|-------|
| I. male:   | 1. Inta wiil dhiggeenniiyeey,      | } (2) |
|            | 2. Dhalankeenna necebyahayee,      |       |
|            | 3. Aynnu dhiig qabownahayee,       |       |
| chorus:    | 7. Haddaan dhimashooy Ku diido,    |       |
|            | 8. Haddaan dhalaashooy Ku sheegto, |       |
|            | 9. Haddaan dhaqashooy Ku raadsho,  |       |
|            | 10. Haddaan dherëgow Ku doono,     |       |
| II. male:  | 11. Intaan dhumucda weynahayee,    | } (2) |
|            | 12. Nacab dhidhibbadaydiyeey,      |       |
|            | 13. Gowrac ugu dhakhsanayaanee,    |       |
| chorus:    | 17. Haddaan dhimashooy, etc.       |       |
| III. male: | 21. Intaad ka dhimantahayee,       | } (2) |
|            | 22. Magacaan ku dhaadanayooy,      |       |
|            | 23. Waa noo dheg-hhumo weynee,     |       |
| chorus:    | 27. Haddaan dhimashooy, etc.       |       |

IV. male: 31. Inta uu dhulkaygiyey, }  
32. Qoqobuhu dhehh-yaalanee, } (2)  
33. En kala dhantaalnahayee, }

chorus: 37. Haddaan dhimashooy, etc.

V. male: 41. Inta dayahhu dhicisyahayey, }  
42. Hhidiguna dhammeysyahayey, } (2)  
43. Dhalanteedka ay tahayey, }

chorus: 47. Haddaan dhimashooy, etc.

+++++

I. male: 1. While boys of our generation<sup>1</sup> }  
2. Hate our children,<sup>2</sup> and } (2)  
3. Our blood runs cold,<sup>3</sup> }

chorus: 7. Oh Death, if I reject you!

8. Oh Clan Ties, if I claim you!

9. Oh Wealth, if I search for you!

10. Oh Prosperity, if I seek you!<sup>4</sup>

[Then I am dishonourable.]<sup>5</sup>

II. male: 11. While I am still strong and }  
12-13. My enemies make haste to slaughter } (2)  
my supporters, }

chorus: 17. Oh Death, etc.

III. male: 21. While you are [still] excluded,<sup>6</sup> and }  
22. I claim the name [of Somalia], and } (2)  
23. It is a great shame to us, }

chorus: 27. Oh Death, etc.

IV. male: 31-32. While there are boundaries<sup>7</sup> between }  
[the parts of] my country, and } (2)  
33. We are [still] divided, }

chorus: 37. Oh Death, etc.

V. male: 41. While the moon [of our national }  
fulfillment] is [as small as] an }  
infant born prematurely, }  
42. Even [though] the [five-pointed] star } (2)  
is complete<sup>8</sup> [on our flag], }  
43. [And while these things] are a mirage, }  
[then],<sup>9</sup> }

chorus: 47. Oh Death, etc.

Example 20:

- I.           1. Lamumba ma noola, mana dhimaney,  
              2. Labadaa midna haw maleynina ey,  
              3. Muuqiisoo La waayay mooyaaney,  
              4. Inuu maqanyahay ha moodina ey,
- II.          5. Madahh buu noo ahaa, mudnaan jirayey,  
              6. Miyey kaalintiisii madhantahayey,  
              7. Lamumba ma noola, etc.
- III.       11. Baddoo maqashaa ka murugootoo,  
            12. Maankiyo maskahhdaana wada roganee,  
            13. Lamumba ma noola, etc.
- IV.       17. Madowgu giddi waa idinla meeloo,  
            18. Ogobey maanta waa mid ka gudhahey,  
            19. Lamumba ma noola, etc.
- V.       23. Maangaabyada meel nagaga dhacay iyo,  
            24. Ma moogin godobta nagaga maqaney,  
            25. Lamumba ma noola, etc.

+++++

- I.           1. Lumumba is neither living nor dead.  
              2. Do not imagine that [he is in] either of the  
                  two [conditions].  
              3. Although people have failed to find his  
                  person,  
              4. Do not imagine that he is absent.
- II.          5. He was a leader to us who was honorable.  
              6. Is his position not empty [now]?  
              7. Lumumba is neither living, etc.
- III.       11. The sea who hears [the news] grieves.  
            12. Our minds and brains are turned upside down.  
            13. Lumumba is neither living, etc.
- IV.       17. All black people are on the same side with you.  
            18. Alas! Today he is the one [whose milk] has been  
                  cut off [from us].

19. Lumumba is neither living, etc.

V. 23-24. He was not ignorant of the unavenged injustice committed against us and of the stupid ones who have offended us.<sup>1</sup>

25. Lumumba is neither living, etc.

Somali Policy  
of Non-Alignment

On the world scene Somalia emerged as a non-aligned country like so many newly independent countries before and after it. From the beginning four countries, the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., Italy and Egypt — and to a lesser degree, Communist China and West Germany — have attempted to spread their influence on the Horn. At one time Somalia was receiving more dollars of foreign aid per capita than any other African state, but this statistic must not be overrated for her population is under five million.

As far as the immediate future of Somalia is concerned, perhaps the most important aid given her was that of equipment and training for the army. Turning down a moderate offer of Western military assistance valued at £6.5 million, (then) Prime Minister Cabdi-Rashiid Cali Shar-Ma-Arke accepted nearly £11 million of aid from the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> This fact of Russian arms in Somalia has sent the Emperor of Ethiopia to Moscow at least twice since 1960 and brought about a mutual assistance treaty between Ethiopia and Kenya.

The following poem, composed in 1967, long before the military coup, bears witness to the growing prestige of the U.S.S.R. because of her military aid. Its poet, Hhuseyn Aw Faarahh, one of the original Walaalo Hargeysa (see above pp. 108-10), is one of the most respected heello poets in the country. The poem is sung by a female chorus.

Example 21:

- I. 1. Saahhiibbadaadu waa dar, }  
 2. Kuu horseedoo, } (2)  
 3. Kuu sahan ahaadiyo, }  
 4. Dar kaloo Ku sirayoo, }  
 5. Sunta Kuu walaaqoo, }  
 6. Adiga uun Ku sababee, }  
 13. Kala sooca labadoo, } (4)  
 14. Kala saaraay, }  
 21. Ayay noo sinnaannin e, } (2)  
 22. Haynoo kala sokeeyaan, }
- II. 25. Sahhiibbadaadu waa dar, }  
 26. Gacan Ku siiyoo, } (2)  
 27. Farhhad Kugu salaamiyo, }  
 28. Dar kaloo suuldaariyo, }  
 29. Kuu dhiga sinsaara oo, }  
 30. Seedaha Ku gooyee, }  
 37. Kala sooca labadoo, etc.
- III. 49. Sahhiibbadaadu waa dar, }  
 50. Kula socdoo, } (2)  
 51. Sama Kuu falaayiyo, }  
 52. Dar kaloo Ku sudhayoo, }  
 53. Seef Kuu afaystoo, }  
 54. Surka Kaaga jaraayee, }  
 61. Kala sooca labadoo, etc.

+++++

- I. 1. Some of your friends }  
 2. Go on reconnaissance for you, }  
 3. Seek out fresh grazing lands for you — } (2)  
 4. Others cheat you, }  
 5. Stir poison for you, }  
 6. And only cause you death. }
13. You must separate the two — } (4)  
 14. Differentiate between them. }  
 21. They must not be made equal to us. } (2)  
 22. Let them be distinguished. }



- II. 25. Some of your friends  
26. Help you,  
27. Greet you with happiness —  
28. Others trip you,  
29. Knock you down with a hip-throw,  
30. Hamstring you. } (2)  
37. You must separate the two, etc.
- III. 49. Some of your friends  
50. Agree<sup>1</sup> with you,  
51. Do good for you —  
52. Others hang you,  
53. Sharpen a sabre for you  
54. In order to cut off your neck. } (2)  
61. You must separate the two, etc.

As the poem implies, Somalia is not as neutral at present as she was in 1960, but this is to jump too far ahead. What preceded this state of affairs, beginning in great optimism and ending in complete defeat, was a unique experiment in domestic politics.

Smooth Change  
of Government

Beginning as uniquely as it proceeded, the second political phase of Somali independence brought many changes to the Horn. On June 10, 1967, Parliament held elections for president. The incumbent, Aadan Cabdulla Cusmaan, was supported by the ruling party and was expected to win. After two ballots without results — and the balloting was being broadcast to the nation over the radio — Parliament recessed. It was during the recess that a programme official at Radio Muqdishu placed a poem on the air which from then on gained a new political significance. Composed earlier in the year by Ahhmed Suleebaan Bidde, 'Leehho' was unique in that it attained its most important implications after its composition (Example 22). On the third ballot Dr. Cabdi-Rashiid Cali Shar-Ma-Arke was elected president and Aadan

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Cabdulla was defeated. It was the fate of the radio official to be arrested, for the new president did not take office until 1 July. Because the poem mentioned no names, however, nothing could be proved against him and the most the government could do to him was to relieve him of his position at the radio station.

Example 22:<sup>1</sup>

- I.     1. Innakoo lammaane ah,  
          2. Iyo laba naf-qaybsile,  
          3. Talo geed ku laashee,  
          4. Adigaa is lumiyo,  
          5. Isu loogay cadowgoo,  
          6. Libintaadii siiyee,  
          7. Waadiganse liitee,                                 ]  
          8. Leehhadu Ku sidatee,                             ] (2)  
          9. Hadba laan cuskanayee,                           ]  
              13. Liibaanteed adduunyada,                     ]  
              14. Ruuhhna laasan maayee,                     ] (2)  
              15. Mahhaa luray naftaadii,                     ]
- II.    19. Waa laac adduunyadu,  
          20. Labadii walaalo ah,  
          21. Midba maalin ladanyoo,  
          22. Ruuhhii u liil-galay,  
          23. La ma loolo dhereggoo,  
          24. Luggooyada ma geystee,  
          25. Waadiganse laabtiyo,                             ]  
          26. Lugaha is la waayaye,                           ] (2)  
          27. Meel sare lalanayee,                           ]  
              31. Liibaanteed adduunyada, etc.
- III.   37. Anigaba lafiyo jiidh,  
          38. Waa kii i laastan,  
          39. Liqi waayay oontee,  
          40. Adigaa lis caanood,  
          41. Iyo laad hhareediyo,

42. Laydhiyo hadh diidee,  
 43. Waadigan sidii liig, }  
 44. Laasimay ugaadhee, } (2)  
 45. Waaclada u leehhdee, }  
 49. Liibaanteed adduunyada, etc.

- IV. 55. Dhaahhaad ladnaan rays,  
 56. Sidaad aar libaahh tay,  
 57. Tallaabada ladhaaysoo,  
 58. Anna lahashadaadii,  
 59. Ledi waayay ciil oo,  
 60. Liidnimo i raacdee,  
 61. Lallabaa habeenkiyo, }  
 62. Ma libdhaan jacayl oo, } (2)  
 63. Waa labalegdoodaan, }  
 67. Liibaanteed adduunyada, etc.

- V. 73. Innakoo lammaane ah, etc. (as stanza I)

+++++

- I. 1. While we were [yet] together,  
 2. Helping each other in every way,  
 3. You cast good counsel away, to the top of a [high] tree;  
 4. You caused yourself distress,  
 5. And slaughtered yourself for your enemy,<sup>1</sup>  
 6. Giving your victory to him.  
 7. Now you are so weakened  
 8. That the light breezes<sup>2</sup> bear you up, } (2)  
 9. And from time to time, you grasp at a branch. }  
 13. For all the pleasures on this earth  
 14. One cannot fully enjoy; } (2)  
 15. [Tell me]: what causes you this distress? }  
 II. 19. The world is [but] a mirage,<sup>3</sup>  
 20-21. And for every two brothers, only one being  
       happy each day,<sup>4</sup>  
 22. The one who is fortunate  
 23. Should not abuse his prosperity —

24. Should not maltreat [his neighbour].
- 25-26. And in your case, however, [your] breast  
and feet were out of accord.<sup>1</sup> } (2)
27. For you are drifting up, up [into the air].
31. For all the pleasures, etc.
- III. 37. [Look at me]: my flesh and [all] my bones  
38. Were completely consumed by him.<sup>2</sup>  
39. I cannot even swallow food!  
40. The abundance<sup>3</sup> of milk,  
41. [Pure] rainwater,  
42. Fresh air and rest in the cool shade, you have  
rejected.  
43. It is you who, like the male garanuug,<sup>4</sup> } (2)  
44. Left the [other] game, and  
45. Turned to a desolate place.  
49. For all the pleasures, etc.
- IV. 55. So often in the prosperity of the rains —  
56. As though you were a [proud] lion —  
57. You walked about majestically,  
58. Whilst I, because of your carousing  
59. Had sleepless nights from impotent anger,  
60. And [sometimes] behaved like a fool.  
61. The [beacon] fire in the [dark] night } (2)  
62. And love, never disappear;  
63. They roll on [after you unrestrained].  
67. For all the pleasures, etc.
- V. 73. While we were [yet] together, etc. (as stanza I)

With the election of a new president came another unique and rare event on the continent of Africa. On 1 July, 1967, in an official ceremony the old president stepped down, relinquishing his power, and the new president assumed office. By the middle of the month Mahammed Hhaaji Ibraahiin Cigaal had been appointed Prime Minister and his cabinet attained a vote of confidence on 12 August.

Cigaal's coming to power was full of optimism for both internal and foreign affairs. Domestically, as we mentioned earlier (see above, p. 134), he appeared to have bridged the gap between North and South and to have rid Somalia of her regionalism problem. On the international scene Cigaal proceeded to try and bridge the gap between the country and her immediate neighbours at the expense of the Pan-Somali Movement.

As we mentioned earlier, the Pan-Somali Movement was in opposition to the Pan-African Movement when both philosophies met on the international scene. Such opposition had been manifested in armed conflicts between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1964<sup>1</sup> and between Somalis who live in the former Northern Frontier District of Kenya and Kenyan government forces between 1963 and 1967.<sup>2</sup> In late August of 1967, Cigaal's government began to face Somalia's neighbours with a different philosophy. Attempting to ease tensions with her neighbours, the new government was given a full mandate by Parliament to continue with its initiatives towards finding a peaceful solution to the problem of the Somali territories under the Ethiopian and Kenyan governments.<sup>3</sup> There followed this mandate several conferences between Somalia and her two independent neighbours, several of which were mediated by representatives from Zambia.

Cigaal's new approach to Somalia's neighbours was not well received by everyone at home. The losses in the Pan-Somali Movement were only one of the growing number of complaints which were being vocalized in the country, as a steady undercurrent of unrest began to mount gradually. Each new conference which inevitably saw no border changes caused Cigaal's popularity to decline sharply. And at first, the Prime Minister seemed capable of redeeming himself with Parliament and public. Finally as the Parliamentary election date neared, the question rose of whether Cigaal would be able to retain his power.

A New Form  
of Government

During the last months of 1968 and the beginning of 1969, Premier Cigaal's popularity, especially in northern Somalia, seemed to be at its lowest ebb. By the time the general Parliamentary elections came in March of 1969, several incidents had occurred to cast serious doubt on Cigaal's leadership. Rumours of corruption at polling stations and political assassinations reached the capital. An apparent feeling of little confidence in the government from the general public was mocked by Parliament's 116 to one vote of confidence for Cigaal's new Council of Ministers on 19 June, 1969. Moreover, rumours contributing to the growing unrest did not cease with the elections.

Matters came to a head on 15 October, 1969 when President Shar-Ma-Arke was assassinated during a tour of the drought-stricken North. Five days later, further rumours were abruptly halted with a new development on the political scene. At 4:00 a.m. on 21 October, the army and police of the Somali Republic seized control of the government, abolished the constitution, and formed a Supreme Revolutionary Council (S.R.C.) to rule the country. All the ministers have since been held under house arrest in the president's villa at Afgooye awaiting their trials which, it is said, will be held in the Parliament building in Muqdishu.

With the coming of the military to power came the revival of the political heello which had been suppressed by skilful censors during Cigaal's term of office. To be sure one reason for the dominance of love as a major theme of heello before the coup was the work of these censors. One poem, originally composed in 1963, was revived and heard on the radio frequently during the first weeks of the coup.

Example 23:

- |          |                        |       |
|----------|------------------------|-------|
| I. male: | 1. Hubka cadowga guba, | } (2) |
|          | 2. Waa kuwa gurtee,    |       |
|          | 3. Gaadiid noqdee,     |       |
|          | 4. Kula garab-socdee,  |       |

chorus: 9. Gobannimadayada,  
 10. Geeshkaa hayee,  
 11. Wahhay Kuu galaan,  
 12. Waa inaad guddaa, } (2)

II. male: 17. Goortaan arkaba,  
 18. Waa geeddiyoo,  
 19. Iyo galab-carrow e,  
 20. Gucla roorayee,

chorus: 25. Gobannimadayada, etc.

III. male: 33. Kii Kaa gardaran,  
 34. Aan gacan Ku siin,  
 35. Gaaliyo Islaan,  
 36. Kuuma oggolee, } (2)

chorus: 41. Gobannimadayada, etc.

IV. male: 49. Hubka cadowga guba, etc. (as stanza I)

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I. male: 1. The weapons that burn the enemy  
 2. Were those collected by them.<sup>1</sup>  
 3. They are mobile and [heavily equipped].  
 4. They march beside you. } (2)

chorus: 9. Our independence:  
 10. The army holds it.  
 11. For what they do for you,  
 12. You must reward them. } (2)

II. male: 17. Whenever I see them,  
 18. They are on the move.  
 19. And whenever they move in the evening  
 20. They trot, swinging their arms.<sup>2</sup>

chorus: 25. Our independence, etc.

III. male: 33. He who treats you unjustly,  
 34. And who will not assist you,  
 35. [Whether he be] infidel or Moslem:  
 36. They do not allow him [to come near] you. } (2)

chorus: 41. Our independence, etc.

IV. male: 49. The weapons that burn, etc. (as stanza I)

## THE POETRY OF THE THIRD PERIOD

As we stated earlier, period three was a time when modern poetry eclipsed traditional poetry among townspeople and the new elite. This was partially due to the growing prestige of the heello which attracted more and better qualified poets. With more qualified and skilful poets, the heello began to become more refined and varied in structure, which in turn assisted in the growth of its prestige. From this cycle of development emerged a greater number of heello than at any other time before. Moreover, the scope of the new poetry expanded.

Structure Like the poetry of period two, the overall structure of the third period was very similar. The universality of a unified system of alliteration was excepted by only one poem in my collection (see above, pp. 129-34). Theme, as in period two, was to remain unified in all the poetry of this period.

One of the most striking changes between the heello of periods two and three occurred in length. The heello of period three became very long indeed but length must not be overrated. It was not due to the composition of more lines of poetry, but to the extensive and more varied use of line repeating, more than at any time before. Elimination of the line repeats from the poem on pp. 124-27, for instance, yields only 27 original lines of the 136 lines in the complete poem.

The systematic use of refrain was also continued with the heello of the third period. The refrain was sometimes sung by the soloist alone, sometimes by a male or female chorus or a combination of both. Together with line repeating, refrain lengthened the poem. Almost all the heello of period three contain a refrain, and the line repeat patterns at this time were expanded. We shall review these patterns in the following chapter, for their development covers the entire period of the heello.



The imagery of the third period became much more sophisticated than it had been before, although it was still overwhelmingly taken from the pastoral nomadic way of life. We shall cover imagery as a whole in the following chapter, for like line repeat patterns, imagery has developed over the whole period of the heello. One form of image — better still, system of imagery — became especially developed in this period and this was the hidden message.

As we stated in the last section, it is more difficult to design a hidden message against members of one's own society than against foreigners. This involves in fact more than poetic ability as we saw with the case of the radio official who played the poem 'Leehho' at the crucial point in the election of the new president of the Republic. (See above, pp. 140-43). At one point during the administration of Prime Minister Cigaal, the officials at Radio Muqdishu were so skilled in deciphering hidden meanings that little political poetry was broadcast at all. A Somali acquaintance of mine remarked at the time that all the poems on the radio were about love only. To him there were no interesting ones, and by 'interesting' he meant 'political' and therefore controversial.

Themes We have covered many of the themes of this period in the last section of this chapter, most of which were concerned topically with the history of Somalia during the last ten years. As we stated earlier, several of the themes which emerged after July, 1960, had been virtually impossible before that date. The anti-government poetry of this period, however, strongly resembles the anti-colonial poetry before it, although poetry of the latter theme did not cease with independence. Example 24, composed in about 1967 by Ciisa Warsama (music by Cabdulla Sigsag) is obviously anti-government, although I was never able to uncover the exact subject of complaint. It is included here because it is undoubtedly the most popular heello to date.<sup>1</sup>

Example 24:

- I.
- |                             |   |     |
|-----------------------------|---|-----|
| 1. Is guhaadshayeey,        | } | (2) |
| 2. Inta aan guntaday,       |   |     |
| 3. Gucla roorayayeey,       |   |     |
| 4. Godobtay nin qaba,       |   |     |
| 5. Garan waayayeey,         |   |     |
| 11. Aniguna garaadkay,      | } | (2) |
| 12. Kaa gaabsan waayayeey,  |   |     |
| 13. Adna garashadaadii,     |   |     |
| 14. Ii garaabi waydaye,     |   |     |
| 19. Dhibtaa aan gelaayona,  | } | (2) |
| 20. I gargaari mayside,     |   |     |
| 21. Gudcurkaan habeenkii,   |   |     |
| 22. Dhahhanta iyo guuraa,   |   |     |
| 23. Aaa, aawadaa gozdoomaa, |   |     |
| 29. Naftan gu iyo jiilaal,  | } | (2) |
| 30. Biyii gaadhi wayday,    |   |     |
| 31. Waa gaal-aroortaa,      |   |     |
| 32. Sida geel horweynaha,   |   |     |
| 37. Gelinna isma taagoo,    | } | (2) |
| 38. Weli maan geyoobine,    |   |     |
| 39. Waa Loo garaabaa,       |   |     |
| 40. Ruuhh gaabinaaya e,     |   |     |
| 41. Aaa, gacalnima eegoo,   |   |     |
- II.
- |                                 |   |     |
|---------------------------------|---|-----|
| 47. Inkastoo nin geesiyi,       | } | (2) |
| 48. Rag u geed-adaygyay,        |   |     |
| 49. Haddaan garabka Lala qaban, |   |     |
| 50. Guri oodi maayo e,          |   |     |
| 55. Gacmo madhan Illaah baa,    | } | (2) |
| 56. Guudkood hhil saaray,       |   |     |
| 57. Sida geyi abaareed,         |   |     |
| 58. Cawl gooni-daaqaan,         |   |     |
| 59. Aaa, aawadaa gozdoomaye,    |   |     |

65. Gufaacale rooboo,  
 66. Guuhhiyo dabaylaa,  
 67. Meeluu i geeyoba,  
 68. Gacankiis i qaadaaye, } (2)
73. Garanna maayo meeshay,  
 74. Godobtu iga raacday,  
 75. Wahhaan haystay mooyiye,  
 76. Ifka dhibi i gaadhdhaye,  
 77. Aaa, hadal wayga gozanyay, } (2)
83. Naftan gu iyo jiilaal, etc.

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- I. 1. Lo I scolded myself,  
 2. And — having prepared myself<sup>1</sup> —  
 3. I began to run.  
 5. I cannot tell  
 4. Who bears the guilt for my distress. } (2)
11. My understanding  
 12. Restrains me from speaking curtly to you.  
 13. But you, according to your understanding,  
 14. Have never shown sympathy for me. } (2)
19. [Behold] the hardship which I bear:  
 20. You never give me assistance.  
 21. On a moonless night,  
 22. Through chill and travelling by night,  
 23. I am isolated because of you. } (2)
29. This soul [of mine] — in Gu<sup>2</sup> and  
 Jiilaal<sup>3</sup> —  
 30. Has never reached [the succour of]  
 water —  
 31. Has [never] got [past] the waiting  
 line at the well.  
 32. Like a herd of strong camels [in  
 distant grazing lands]. } (2)

37. I never rest in night or day,  
 38. Yet I never reach the place [to  
       quench my thirst].  
 39. One should find sympathy  
 40. With a man who is slow.  
 41. Remember [our] bond of brotherhood. } (2)
- II. 47. Though a brave man  
 48. Be the strongest and most enduring of men,<sup>1</sup>  
 49. Unless he is assisted by others,  
 50. He [can]not [even] construct a fence 'round  
       [his] dwelling. } (2)
55. To [a man with] empty hands, God  
 56. Always attaches shame.  
 57-58. Like a gazelle, grazing alone in a drought-  
       stricken place, I } (2)
59. Have been isolated [from others] because of  
       you.  
 65. A heavy rain which has waves of showers,  
 66. [Roaring with] the sound [of thunder] and  
       [strong] winds, } (2)
67. Wherever it takes me:  
 68. A wave [from it] has gripped me.  
 73. And lo, I do not understand what  
 74. I have done for [this] suffering to have  
       followed me. } (2)
75. I do not know [what crimes I] have done.  
 76. But in this world, trouble has reached me.  
 77. And here my words end.  
 83. My soul — in Gu and Jiilaal, etc.

Apart from poetry composed to protest against the government, other poems, such as Example 25, composed in 1963 by Cali Sugulle, and Example 26,<sup>2</sup> composed in (circa) 1965 by Caweys Geeddow, were concerned with domestic politics in general. Mildly warning the government, these poems cannot be said to be

in opposition to anyone and thus had no trouble with the censors.

Example 25:

- I. female: 1. Soomaalideennii, hadday sinnaatay, } (2)  
3. Isu samafalkeeduna, waa dan iyo seetee, } (2)  
5. Nin Lagu seehhdow, ha seehhan,  
chorus: 6. Toos!  
female: 7. Hhil baad siddaa, ha seehhan,  
chorus: 8. Toos!  
female: 9. Nin Lagu seehhdow, ha seehhan,  
10. Ha seehhan, ha seehhan, } (2)  
12. Soo jeedoo, si weyn u feejigow,  
chorus: 13. Soomaalidii midowdoo, } (2)  
14. Sahhalkii ka bahhyoo samaatee, }  
female: 17. Nin Lagu seehhdow, ha seehhan,  
chorus: 18. Toos!  
female: 19. Hhil baad siddaa, ha seehhan,  
chorus: 20. Toos!  
female: 21. Nin Lagu seehhdow, ha seehhan,  
22. Ha seehhan, ha seehhan, } (2)  
24. Soo jeedoo, si weyn u feejigow,  
II, female: 25. Subag weell ku daataa, sina uma hhumaadee, } (2)  
27. Waa subahh wanaagsane, calankana salaama, } (2)  
29. Nin Lagu seehhdow, etc.  
III. female: 49. Waa seermaweydo iyo seben-barwaaqee, } (2)  
51. Saddehhdii maqnaana, way soo socdaane, } (2)  
53. Nin Lagu seehhdow, etc.  
IV. female: 73. Sahanka laabtee, socdaalka dheer le, } (2)  
75. Saacuu arkaa baa, soof Lagu raraaye, } (2)  
77. Nin Lagu seehhdow, etc.  
V. female: 97. Saakana ammaana, way suubbanyiine,  
98. Saakuubna caaya, way sahhalsanyiine,  
99. Waa laba sedleyniyo, sihhir hadalladiinnee, } (2)  
101. Nin Lagu seehhdow, etc.

+++++

- I. female: 1. If we the Somalis have become equals [with the other nations of the world], } (2)
3. [Then] our good deeds to each other are a binding necessity.<sup>1</sup> } (2)
5. Oh man, upon whom others rely,<sup>2</sup> do not sleep.
- chorus: 6. Wake up!
- female: 7. You carry responsibility; do not sleep.
- chorus: 8. Wake up!
- female: 9. Oh man, upon whom others rely, do not sleep.
10. Do not sleep. Do not sleep. } (2)
12. Be awake; be on the alert.
- chorus: 13. The Somalis have become united; }  
14. Misfortune has departed; [all] has } (2)  
become good.
- female: 17. Oh man, upon whom others rely, do not sleep.
- chorus: 18. Wake up!
- female: 19. You carry responsibility; do not sleep.
- chorus: 20. Wake up!
- female: 21. Oh man, upon whom others rely, do not sleep.
22. Do not sleep, do not sleep. } (2)
24. Oh man, be awake; be on the alert.
- II. female: 25. Ghee which is spilt into a vessel does not become bad in any way. } (2)
27. 'Tis a good morning; salute the flag. } (2)
29. Oh man, upon whom others rely, etc.
- III. female: 49. It is the Seermaweydo Season<sup>3</sup> and a prosperous period. } (2)
51. The three that are absent will come to us.<sup>4</sup>
53. Oh man, upon whom others rely, etc.
- IV. female: 73. The camp guide who [makes] long journeys [of exploration] returned; } (2)
75. And the camp and animals are moved to the newly green pasture which he discovered.<sup>5</sup> } (2)
77. Oh man, upon whom others rely, etc.

- V. female: 97. Praise [our leaders] this morning, [for] they are honourable, but  
 98. Insult them tomorrow,<sup>1</sup> [for] they will become troublesome ;  
 99. [They are the ones] who take two shares — [oh leaders], your speeches [are like] sorcery. } (2)  
 101. Oh man, upon whom others rely, etc.

Example 26:<sup>2</sup>

- I.    1. Anilaa ballamee barbaareey,  
       2. Biyo waa La helee,  
       3. Aan bahnnee badarkii abuurree,  
       4. Beerihii aan falllee,  
          9. Aan is barno,  
            [Dong, dong, dong]<sup>3</sup>  
       10. Inaan beer falannoo,  
       11. Aan ku baahi bahnnee, } (2)  
 chorus: 15. Beer nin falaa,  
            [Dong, dong, dong]  
       16. Ma bariyee,  
       17. Weligiisna ma baahoodde, } (2)  
 II.   21. Barkin meel La dhigtoo,  
       22. La buurtoon, La baraarugineey,  
       23. Barqadii La kacoo bilaashlee,  
       24. La cun aan barannee,  
       29. Aan is barno, etc. } (2)  
 III.  41. Inaan baar aan tagnoo bilcantii,  
       42. Aan la baashaalnee,  
       43. Balwa aan tunno baallaa dheelnoo,  
       44. Kuma baanaan karnee,  
       49. Aan is barno, etc. } (2)  
 IV.   61. Badarkoo badahaan Lagu keeno,  
       62. Beledkoo ka bahhee,  
       63. Barbahhiisna waa ayaanee,  
       64. Bil ma gaari karee, } (2)

69. Aan is barno, etc.

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- |         |   |       |
|---------|---|-------|
| I.      | 1. Let me give you some advice, oh ye youths,   | } (2) |
|         | 2. For water has been found.                    |       |
|         | 3. Let us go forth to plant the millet,         |       |
|         | 4. And farm in the fields.                      |       |
|         | 9. Let us teach each other                      | } (2) |
|         | [Dong, dong, dong]                              |       |
|         | 10. So that we may operate our own farms—       |       |
|         | 11. May satisfy our own needs.                  |       |
| chorus: | 15. [For] a man who farms [for himself]         | } (2) |
|         | [Dong, dong, dong]                              |       |
|         | 16. Never begs                                  |       |
|         | 17. And never falls into [acute] hardship.      |       |
| II.     | 24. We have become accustomed to taking our     | } (2) |
|         | meals with others,                              |       |
|         | 21. To lying [idle] on a headrest, <sup>1</sup> |       |
|         | 22. To having plenty to eat, to not waking      |       |
|         | up [early],                                     |       |
|         | 23. And to rising late in the morning.          |       |
|         | 29. Let us teach each other, etc.               |       |
| III.    | 44. We cannot cure [our illls]                  | } (2) |
|         | 41-42. By frequenting the bar and sporting      |       |
|         | with the women—                                 |       |
|         | 43. By singing <u>belwo</u> and dancing.        |       |
|         | 49. Let us teach each other, etc.               |       |
| IV.     | 61. Concerning grain imported from abroad,      | } (2) |
|         | 62. Which grows in other countries—             |       |
|         | 63. Its satisfaction is [only] temporary        |       |
|         | 64. And will not last [even] a month.           |       |
|         | 69. Let us teach each other, etc.               |       |

Other themes of period three emerged either because they matured as a topic for modern poetry or because the time was right for them to appear. The debate over the role of women in



the new society of post-1960 Somalia reached the public in more and more poems during this time. We have already quoted one poem on this subject (see above, pp. 20-24); Example 27 is taken from an entire play concerning this topic, Shabeel Naagood, by Hhasan Sheekh Muumin. The poem was composed in 1968.

Example 27:

- I. male: 1. Hhaajadii galloocan, } (2) } (2)  
 2. Qofkii ku hharragooda, }  
 5. Waa Lagu hhariiraa,  
 11. In Lagu hhantaa, }  
 12. Hhaq, miyaa? } (2)  
 13. Hheer, miyaa? }  
 17. Ma idiin hhalaal baa?  
 18. Idinkaa hhujooboo,  
 19. Hhuduudkii ka tallaabsanaayee,  
 20. Naa hhishhooda,
- II. female: 21. Annagoo hhorownoo, } (2) } (2)  
 22. Hhaqayagii midhaystay, }  
 25. Inaad na hhakamaysaa,  
 31. Aad na hhidhhidhaa, }  
 32. Hhaq, miyaa? } (2)  
 33. Hheer, miyaa? }  
 37. Ma idiin hhalaal baa?  
 38. Idinkaa hhujooboo,  
 39. Hhuduudkii ka tallaabsanaayee,  
 40. Hhubin na siiya,
- III. male: 41. Inaad marada hhayddaa,  
 42. Hhaglahana qaawisaa,  
 43. Inaad marada hhoortaa,  
 44. Hhaglahana qaawisaa,  
 45. Hhuub caarro huwataa,  
 46. Inaad marada hhoortaa, } (2)  
 47. Hhaglahana qaawisaa, }

- 50. Hhuub aad huwataa,
- 51. Hheradii ka bahhdaa, } (2)
- 52. Hhaq, miyaa?
- 53. Hheer, miyaa?

57. Ma idiin hhalaal baa?, etc. (as stanza I)

- IV. female: 61. Hhilagube haddii uu, } (2) } (2)
- 62. Hhaslan waayo kiisa,
- 65. Hhaawalay dhamaanteed,
- 71. In Lagu hhantaa, } (2)
- 72. Hhaq, miyaa?
- 73. Hheer, miyaa?

77. Ma idiin hhalaal baa?, etc. (as stanza II)

- V. male: 81. Daad nimuu hhambaaraa, } (2) } (2)
- 82. Badbaadada hhusuustee,
- 85. Hanadkaad u hhilataa,
- 91. Inaad hheeladisaa, } (2)
- 92. Hhaq, miyaa?
- 93. Hheer, miyaa?

97. Ma idiin hhalaal baa?, etc. (as stanza I)

- VI. female: 101. Marwadaad hhodhhodataa, } (2) } (2)
- 102. Inaad hhagasha gooysaa,
- 105. Oo dhashiina hhortaa,
- 111. Aad hhananin waydaa, } (2)
- 112. Hhaq, miyaa?
- 113. Hheer, miyaa?

117. Ma idiin hhalaal baa?, etc. (as stanza II)

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- I. male: 2. The person who is openly guilty of } (2) } (2)
- 1. Faulty behaviour:
- 5. One must treat him gently.
- 11. To gossip about him secretly:<sup>1</sup> } (2)
- 12. Is that just?
- 13. Is that lawful?

17. Is it allowed [by our religion] for you [to do this]?

18. You made an offence,

19. And you crossed the boundary.<sup>1</sup>

20. Oh women, be ashamed of yourselves!

II. female: 21. As we became independent, } (2)  
22. Our right bore fruit. } (2)  
25. That you bind us strongly,

31. [That] you keep us shut up [in our homes—] } (2)  
32. Is that just?  
33. Is that lawful?

37. Is it allowed [by our religion] for you [to do this]?

38. You made an offence,

39. And you crossed the boundary.

40. Give us [at least] part [of our rights]!<sup>2</sup>

III. male: 41. That you roll up [your] dresses

42. [So that] the back of [your] knee is visible—

43. That you cast aside [traditional] clothes,

44. [So that] you make bare the back of [your] knees,

45. And dress in [cloth as transparent as] a spider's web—

46. That you cast aside [traditional] clothes, } (2)  
47. [So that] the back of [your] knee is visible—

50. And dress in transparent cloth—

51. You leave [the responsibility of your] homes. } (2)  
52. Is that just?  
53. Is that lawful?

57. Is it allowed, etc. (as stanza I)

IV. female: 61. If the man who mistreats his wife, } (2)  
62. Fails to keep her contented, } (2)  
65. [Then this affects] all women [in the world]—

71. To talk about her secretly: } (2)  
72. Is that just?  
73. Is that lawful?

77. Is it allowed, etc. (as stanza II)

V. male: 81. The man taken away by a flood } (2)  
 82. Thinks of rescue. } (2)  
 85. You [always] appreciate an able man.

91. To deceive him: }  
 92. Is that just? } (2)  
 93. Is that lawful? }

97. Is it allowed, etc. (as stanza I)

VI. female: 101. Sometimes you court [women]. } (2)  
 102. That you hamstringing them— } (2)  
 105. And cast aside your children,

111. And fail to care for them, }  
 112. Is that just? } (2)  
 113. Is that lawful? }

117. Is it allowed, etc. (as stanza II)

Other topics which emerged at this time were due even more than the debate over the role of women to the right timing and maturity of the heello. With the appearance of the following poem in 1968, one might conclude that almost any theme was acceptable for modern poetry. Composed by Abu Hadre, this poem covers the topic of football (soccer) and is noted for the loan words that have come into the Somali language as a result of the adoption of this game by the peoples of the Horn.

Example 28:

I. chorus: 1. Ya! Ya! Ya! } (4)  
 female: 5. Leebiyo gantaalaha, Laysula gabbanayee, } (2)  
 6. Ay labada geesood, isla gaadayaanee,  
 9. Waa gammuunkii gaashaanka jiidhee, } (2)

11. Waa gool! } (2)  
 chorus: 12. Gool! Gool! Gool! Gool! }

female: 15. Waa gool!  
 spoken  
 by female: 16. Waa gool!

II. chorus: 17. Ya! Ya! Ya! } (3)  
 female: 20. Gurhhanka aad maqalaysaan, guubaabo weeyee, } (2)  
 21. Tii gaabis noqotee, lista gaadhi waydaa, }

24. Galabtaynu eegnaa, taa guushu raacdaye, } (2)

26. Waa gool!, etc.

III. chorus: 32. Ya! Ya! Ya! } (3)

female: 35. Gegidii cayaarta, golihii isboodhka, } (2)

36. Markii baa gozaankii, Loo geed fadhiistee, }

39. Guntiga adkayso soo qaad galaaska, } (2)

41. Waa gool!, etc.

IV. chorus: 47. Ya! Ya! Ya! } (3)

female: 50. Gudub ula rooroo, geesta ka laaboo, } (2)

51. Guji yaanay lumine, goolka ku beegoo, }

54. Shebegga ku gooyoo, birtu ha gariirtee, } (2)

56. Waa gool!, etc.

spoken  
by female: 61. Waa gool! Waa gool! Gool!

+++++

I. chorus: 1. Ya! Ya! Ya!<sup>1</sup> } (4)

female: 5. Dodging each other with [their] star players,<sup>2</sup> } (2)

6. Both teams [are] creeping up on each other.

9. There goes the star player<sup>3</sup> crashing through the  
defence.<sup>4</sup> } (2)

11. It's a goal!

chorus: 12. Goal! Goal! Goal! Goal! } (2)

female: 15. It's a goal!

spoken  
by female: 16. It's a goal!

II. chorus: 17. Ya! Ya! Ya! } (3)

female: 20. The roar which you are hearing

is encouragement [from the crowd]. } (2)

21. The team which becomes [too] slow  
will fail to reach success.<sup>5</sup>

24. This evening we shall see which one victory shall  
accompany. } (2)

26. It's a goal!, etc.

III. chorus: 32. Ya! Ya! Ya! } (3)

female: 35. [On to] the playing field! [On to]  
the sports field! } (2)

36. When the score has been decided—<sup>6</sup>

39. Prepare yourself,<sup>1</sup> and go to receive the cup.<sup>2</sup> } (2)

41. It's a goal!, etc.

IV. chorus: 47. Ya! Ya! Ya! } (3)

female: 50. Run across [the field] with [the ball] towards [the goal], and dodge [the opponents] from side to side. } (2)

51. Pass it so that it will not get lost; aim it into the goal.

54. [Kick it so hard that it] will cut through the net; let it shake the [very] goal posts.<sup>3</sup> } (2)

56. It's a goal!, etc.

spoken  
by female: 61. It's a goal! It's a goal! Goal!

We mentioned Pan-Somalism and Pan-Africanism in the last section of this chapter and quoted poems concerned with these concepts. Period Three also saw Somalis looking abroad to other nations and continents, comparing their plights with those of Somalia and Africa. Example 29,<sup>4</sup> composed in 1967 by Cabdullaahi Qarshe, is an example of a poem with international implications.

Example 29:

- I. 1. Dawladii gumaysiga,  
2. E dul-ahaanba Afrika,  
3. Waagii ay damaaciyayeen,  
4. Shirkii ay u dalbadeen,  
5. Magaaladay u soo dirteen,  
6. Kobtii ay ku doodayeen,  
7. Baarliin daya,  
8. Bal daya,  
9. Derbaa dhehh yaal,  
10. Bal daawada,
- II. 11. Durbaday noo soo galeen,  
12. Lugtay raggeennii dabradeen,

13. Sidii dameero ay rarteen,
14. Ay karbaash ugu dareen,
15. Ay darkii buuhhiyeen,
16. Dushafkii daaddaadiyeen,
- III. 17. Markay madowgii damqadeen,
18. Durbaannaday garaacayeen,
19. Dawankii ay yeedhiyeen,
20. Gabayaday ku diirayeen,
21. Ay heesaa isu direen,
22. Waa tay duhur hhusuusteen,
23. Badi wada dareeriyeen,
- IV. 24. Nabsiga aan daahinow,
25. Ee aan dakaaminow,
26. Dawga Loo tilmaaminow,
27. Ee aan cidi diranninow,
28. Degdegga aan oqoonninow,
29. Marmarna aan daahinow,
30. Diinka ka dheerayninow,
31. Dayuuraduhu aanay gaadhinow,
32. Tan iyo waagii dura,
33. Dalkayaga in La maqnaa,
34. Duqiiyow waa sidee,
35. Hhaqayagu ma duudsaa,
- V. 36. Wahhaan ku soo duubayaa,
37. Hadalka aan ku daynayaa,
38. Wahhaan uga danleeyahaan,
39. Idin dareesiinayaa,
40. Shimbirahaa duulayaa,
41. Ee dushaa meerayaa,
42. Marleyba way daalayaan,
43. Daafta way imanayaan.

+++++

- I. 1. The colonialist governments
2. Of the whole of Africa—
3. When they coveted it—

4. The meeting<sup>1</sup> they arranged for this,
5. The city where they sent [delegates],
6. In the exact section [of town] where they debated—
7. Look at Berlin,
8. All of you look!
9. A wall is splitting it—
10. Look and be entertained!
- II. 11. As soon as [the colonialists] invaded us,
12. They shackled our men's legs,
13. And loaded them like donkeys,
14. And whipped them,
15. They filled the trough [with them],
16. And made the camps to overflow.
- III. 17. When the black men felt the pain [and revolted]:
18. The drums which they beat,
19. The bells which they rang,
20. The poems which stirred them,
21. And the songs which they sent to each other:
22. [All] this they remembered one afternoon,
23. And they drove most [colonialists from Africa].
- IV. 24. Oh Nabsi,<sup>2</sup> you who never tarry,
25. And who never get exhausted,
26. And whom no one directs,
27. And whom no one instructs,
28. And who never know haste,
29. And yet who sometimes are not late;
30. Oh you who [can] be as slow as a tortoise,
31. [Yet] whom airplanes [can] never overtake;
32. From time immemorial
33. Our lands<sup>3</sup> have not been our own—
34. Oh Elder,<sup>4</sup> how it is [that you do not act]?
35. Is our right<sup>5</sup> to be forfeited?
- V. 36. The point on which I end [my poem],
37. And on which I would terminate my discourse,
38. And what I mean by it,



- 39. I will reveal to you:
- 40. The birds which are flying
- 41. And gliding about above
- 42. Will some day tire [and need rest]
- 43. And descend to earth.<sup>1</sup>

Since period three is still in process, no definite conclusions can be drawn about it or about the future of the heello as a whole. We have covered the modern poem from an historical point of view, observing characteristics of its development through time. Such an approach, however, cannot cover the total picture of the heello as some of its features cover all this period of time and are not necessarily related to the parallel history of the country. A complete observation of the modern poem must cover some characteristics which emerged during all these periods of development.

## Chapter VII: Characteristics of the Heello: All Periods

### THEMES COMMON TO ALL PERIODS

Many of the themes we have quoted so far have been topical, related to specific happenings in Somali history or social evolution. But others, four of which are very common, have been consistently employed over the entire developmental period of modern poetry. We have quoted these themes in the text earlier but for other reasons. Attention should be given to them, not as unrelated to social or historical developments, but as consistent themes which have inspired poets of the heello since 1948.

Love By far the most common theme in modern poetry is love.

Inherited from the Family of Miniature Genres, this theme has been a favourite from the beginning. More than half the poetry in my collection is concerned with love which is even sometimes used to conceal more subtle messages with political and social overtones. As a topic per se, love is condemned by many traditional and conservative Somalis but its frequent use on the radio bears witness to its popularity especially among Somali youths and the new elite.

As a theme love may be divided into two sub-themes. Lovers are sometimes hopeful, successful in their endeavours, optimistic for the future. They may, as Mahammed Suleebaan Bidde has done in Example 30, praise their love for her features, spiritual and physical. This poem was composed in 1968.

#### Example 30:

- |    |                            |       |
|----|----------------------------|-------|
| I. | 1. Sida geed caleenliyo,   | } (2) |
|    | 2. Ubahh guud ka qariyeen, |       |
|    | 3. Oy gooni laamaha,       |       |
|    | 4. Ay midiba geesteed,     |       |
|    | 5. Hoobaan is gaadhiyo,    |       |
|    | 6. Guntin midha ah leedey, |       |

13. Oo soo gandoodoo, } (2)  
 14. Galka faraqa soo daray, }  
 17. Oo godan barwaaqo ah, }  
 18. Durduraan gudhayniyo, } (2)  
 19. Gacan webi ku yaallaan, }  
 23. Oon Gu iyo Jiilaal, } (2)  
 24. Midab guurin baad too, }  
 27. Gabadhyahay kal-gacal baan, } (2) } (2)  
 28. Goortaan Ku eegaba, }  
 31. Qalbiga iga gelisaa, }  
 37. Wahhse aanan garanayn,  
 38. Ii gunudday caashaqee,  
 39. Halka aad i gaadhsiin,

- II. 40. Sidaad tahay gammaan faras, }  
 41. Sange geesi daaqsaday, } (2)  
 42. Uu gal-duur miray, }  
 43. Soddon biliyo gawdeed, }  
 44. Uu goobay farawgii, }  
 45. Sararta iyo gaaddada, }  
 52. Oo galangalcooboo, } (2)  
 53. Cuduuduhu gammuurmeen, }  
 56. Oo galabba Loo raro, }  
 57. Sida ramag Guyaal dhalay, } (2)  
 58. Hadba kaynta geeda leh, }  
 62. Oon guluf colaadiyo, } (2)  
 63. Weli socoto dheer gelin, }  
 66. Gabadhyahay kal-gacal baan, etc.

- III. 79. Sida Gubanka qaarkii, }  
 80. Uu gorgoor ku simanyay, }  
 81. Ama maadh galbeedoo, } (2)  
 82. Gubatiyo ku taal Hawd, }  
 83. Oo labagardhooboo, }  
 84. Badhba gees u seehhdlay, }  
 91. Dharabka iyo geedaha, } (2)  
 92. Quruhhdooda gaarka ah, }

95. Ama haro gingimanoo, }  
 96. Guud ka hharfanaysoo, } (2)  
 97. Shimbiro ka giigeen, }  
 101. Oon Gu iyo Jiilaal, } (2)  
 102. Midab guurin baad too, }  
 105. Gabadhyahay kal-gacal baan, etc.

+++++

- I. 1-2. [You are] like a tree hidden [from  
 view] by [its] leaves and flowers;  
 3&6. And [each] separate branch has a  
 cluster of fruit, } (2)  
 4. Which, on every side [of the branch],  
 5. Has reached overripeness.  
 13. And [the fruit] leans downwards [in ripeness], }  
 14. And dips [its] sides into a [cool] pool of } (2)  
 water.  
 17. [The tree] is in a prosperous valley, }  
 18. By a stream which does not dry up, } (2)  
 19. And which is situated by a tributary  
 of a river.  
 23-24. And you are [like a tree] which does not lose  
 its colour in Gu<sup>1</sup> or Jiilaal.<sup>2</sup> } (2)  
 27. Oh girl, I love thee [as my own kin]; } (2)  
 28. Whenever I see you, } (2)  
 31. You cause [love] to enter [my] heart.  
 37. But the thing I do not know is  
 39. The place to which you will lead me,  
 38. Because you knotted the love in me.  
 II. 40. As you are like a colt,<sup>3</sup>  
 41. A stallion that has been raised by a brave man:  
 42. He grazed it every night in a thicket, } (2)  
 43. For thirty [days]: a complete month.  
 44. It became covered with fat  
 45. In the ribs and on the breast.

52. And [the horse] became fat and bulky, } (2)  
 53. And [its] upper legs became fat and solid. }  
 56. And [the horse] is moved every evening }  
 58. To the forest which has [good] grass, } (2)  
 57. Like she-camels which give birth during }  
       the rainy season. }
- 62-63. And [the horse] has not yet been used by a  
       party of raiders or on a long march. } (2)
66. Oh girl, I love thee, etc.
- III. 79. [You are either] like the parts of Guban,<sup>1</sup> }  
 80. [Where] the gorgoor<sup>2</sup> grows, }  
 81. Or [like] maadh<sup>3</sup> in the evening,<sup>4</sup> }  
 82. That grows in Gubato<sup>5</sup> and in the Hawd,<sup>6</sup> } (2)  
 83. And which [grows] in rows, }  
 84. Some of it swaying [as though it were] }  
       asleep. }
91. [You are like] the dew and the grass: } (2)  
 92. Their special beauty. }
95. Or [like] the full lake, }  
 96. Which has ripples on [its] surface, } (2)  
 97. [And where] birds quench their thirst. }
- 101-102. And you are [like the tree], which does not  
       lose its colour in Gu or Jiilaal. } (2)
105. Oh girl, I love thee, etc.

On the other hand, poems do not always express successful love. In Example 31, which was composed in 1969, for instance, the poet employs an unsuccessful approach to love. He asks his beloved many questions about love but what he really implies is that all these things have happened to him. We might add a final line to the poem, thus: 'Did love do all these things to you, as it did to me for your sake?' This poem is also unusual in that it has no refrain, but supplements its absence by beginning each stanza with the same line.

Example 31:

- I.     1. Qummaneey jacayl,     } (2)  
       2. Marna jaar ma noqoteen,     }  
       5. Jid ma wada lugayseen,     }  
       6. Ma la cuntay jidiin,     } (2)  
       7. Jahaad ma isku aragteen,     }  
       11. Jiiddaad ka dhalatiyo,     }  
       12. Ma Kaa jaray dadkii,     } (2)  
       13. Gooni-joog ma Kaa dhigay,     }  
II.    17. Qummaneey jacayl,     } (2)  
       18. Weli jiif ma Kugu helay,     }  
       21. Dhudhub ma isku jiidhdheen,     }  
       22. Jiljilada ma Kaa galay,     } (2)  
       23. Hadba jinac ma Kuu riday,     }  
       27. Jiidh durugsanaa iyo,     }  
       28. Qalbi meel fog Kaa jiray,     } (2)  
       29. Iyagii ma jaaddeen,     }  
III.   33. Qummaneey jacayl,     } (2)  
       34. Weli jalaw ma Kuu yidhi,     }  
       37. Jara adag ma Kugu hhidhay,     }  
       38. Reeryo jaan ma Kugu raray,     } (2)  
       39. Jilbahana ma Kuu riday,     }  
       43. Jibaadka iyo taahii,     }  
       44. Jeenfad ma oydo,     } (2)  
       45. Ilmo jabaq ma Kaa tidhi,     }  
IV.    49. Qummaneey jacayl,     } (2)  
       50. Weli jar iyo buur dheer,     }  
       53. Ama jaranjar hoosteed,     }  
       54. Ma Ku geeyay jiiroo,     } (2)  
       55. Guryo jaan ma Kula galay,     }  
       59. Wahhaad jeefad socotaba,     }  
       60. Intuu jalawgii Kula dhacay,     } (2)  
       61. Jilbahaad ku socotiyo,     }  
       62. Ma Kuu laabay jeenyaha,     }

- V. 67. Qummaneey jacayl, } (2)  
 68. Weli jabaq ma Kula yidhi, }  
 71. Jabad ma isku aragteen, }  
 72. Dadka kaad ka jamatiyo, } (2)  
 73. Jaallahaa ma kulanteen, }  
 77. Halkaad uga jid bihhi layd, }  
 78. Juuqba ma iska waydoo, } (2)  
 79. Hadalkii ma Kaa jaray, }

+++++

- I. 1. Oh Qumman,<sup>1</sup> did love } (2)  
 2. And you ever become neighbours? }  
 5. Did you travel together? }  
 6. Did you have a meal with him? } (2)  
 7. Did you meet him in battle?<sup>2</sup> }  
 12. Did [love] isolate you from [your] }  
       people and } (2)  
 11. From the land in which you were born?<sup>3</sup> }  
 13. Did he isolate you? }  
 II. 17. Oh Qumman, did love } (2)  
 18. Find you while you slept? }  
 21. Did you encounter him in a narrow place? }  
 22. Did he enter you through [your] foot?<sup>4</sup> } (2)  
 23. Did he [cause] you to sway sideways? }  
 27. A person in a distant place, and }  
 28. A heart which is far from you: } (2)  
 29. Did you [and love] go to them? }  
 III. 33. Oh Qumman, did love } (2)  
 34. Rush suddenly upon you? }  
 37. Did he bind you with a strong halter? }  
 38. Did he put the burden of jinn upon you? } (2)  
 39. Did he bring you to your knees? }  
 43-44. [After] long clamour, groaning and moaning, }  
       did you weep profusely? } (2)  
 45. Did tears fall from your eyes? }

- IV. 49. Oh Qumman, did love  
50&54. Ever bring you to a steep slope,  
a cliff, a tall mountain, } (2)  
53. Or to the foot of a ladder?<sup>1</sup>  
55. Did he enter the houses of jinn with [you]? }  
59. While you walked tiredly along, }  
60. And while he beat you with a stick, } (2)  
61-62. Did he make you bend your knees, with  
which you walk, and the limbs [of your body]? }
- V. 67. Oh Qumman, did love } (2)  
68. Run with you? }  
71. Did you see him in the bush? }  
73. Did you meet your friend, } (2)  
72. The one you yearn for from among the people? }  
77. While you should have talked with him, }  
78. Did you fail to find even one word? } (2)  
79. Did [love] make you lose your voice? }

But the themes in Somali love poetry must not be taken as necessarily related to real life situations. Many heello are merely compositions by poets of good imagination and ability. Furthermore, it is a well known trick — or so I am told — among Somali professional poets to create an image of themselves as great lovers. We shall quote more love poetry in the next section of this chapter.

Along with love, political themes can be observed in all the periods of development but the political themes can also be sub-divided. Following are examples of the three most common political themes of the heello.

Anti-Colonialism  
Themes

Although not as popular as love, anti-colonialism has been one of the most popular themes of the heello and did not cease as a topic of inspiration when Somalia attained her independence. The following poem pictures Africa as a sleeping woman



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whom the poet, Ahhmed Yuusuf Ducaale (?), is pleading with to awake. It was composed in about 1963.

Example 32:

- I.     1. Hohey Afrikaay huruddooy,     }  
       2. Cadow Ku heeryee huruddooy,     } (2)  
       3. Halyeyadaadii huruddooy,     }  
       4. Haad baa cunaayee huruddooy,     }  
       9. Haamaa La saaraa huruddooy,     }  
      10. Hayin sidiisaa huruddooy,     } (2)  
      11. La hogaaminayaa,     }  
          15. Dulli Lama hullaabtee,     } (2)  
          16. Away hanaddadaadii,     }  
          19. Doqon baa habawsan,     }  
          20. Weligeed hallaysane,     } (2)  
          21. Sida hhoolihihi baa,     }  
          22. Hherada Lagu hooyaa,     }  
  
II.    27. Habeenno badan baan huruddooy,     }  
      28. Hammuun ku seehhdee huruddooy,     } (2)  
      29. Hirtaanyo awgeed huruddooy,     }  
      30. La hadli waayee huruddooy,     }  
      35. Naa caanihihi hashaydaan huruddooy,     }  
      36. Haleeli waayee huruddooy,     } (2)  
      37. La iga hor-joogaa,     }  
          41. Dulli Lama hullaabtee, etc.  
  
III.   53. Horor waraabahaa huruddooy,     }  
      54. Wahhyaha Ku haysta huruddooy,     } (2)  
      55. Oo hantidaadii huruddooy,     }  
      56. Kaa hirqanaayee huruddooy,     }  
      61. Hadina waydee huruddooy,     }  
      62. Hadmaad ogaane huruddooy,     } (2)  
      63. Aad hagaagi doontaa,     }  
          67. Dulli Lama hullaabtee, etc.

+++++

- I. 1. Hohey<sup>1</sup> Africa, you sleeping [woman]—  
 2. Oh Sleeping One, an enemy has put a pack  
     saddle mat [on your back];  
 3. Oh Sleeping One, your champions  
 4. Are being devoured by birds of prey, Oh  
     Sleeping One. } (2)
9. Oh Sleeping One, water vessels are put  
     [on you];  
 10. Oh Sleeping One, like an obedient camel,  
 11. Which is led forth on a lead. } (2)
15. One does not wrap oneself in disgrace;  
 16. Where are your Great Men? } (2)
19. Fools are [always] lost,  
 20. Always in a confused state,  
 21. Like the animals  
 22. Being led into the corral. } (2)
- II. 27. Oh Sleeping One, many nights  
 28. I slept in bitter thought, oh Sleeping One.  
 29. Oh Sleeping One, because of great anger,  
 30. I could not speak, oh Sleeping One. } (2)
35. Oh Sleeping One, the milk of my own  
     she-camel,<sup>2</sup>  
 36. I could not afford [to drink], oh  
     Sleeping One. } (2)
37. They<sup>3</sup> stand against me.  
 41. One does not wrap oneself, etc.
- III. 53. Oh Sleeping One, the bold hyenas,<sup>4</sup>  
 54. Hold your body [in subservience], oh  
     Sleeping One, } (2)
55. And, oh Sleeping One, your possessions  
 56. Have been denied you, oh Sleeping One. }
61. Oh Sleeping One, you failed to understand;  
 62. Oh Sleeping One, when shall you know,  
 63. And proceed in the right path? } (2)
67. One does not wrap oneself, etc.

PatrioticThemes

Like anti-colonialism, patriotism did not cease as a theme in modern poetry when independence was attained. Although the period 1959-61 saw the largest number of poems composed on this theme, such poetry is still composed. Example 33 is another by Cabdullaahi Qarshe composed in 1961. It was so popular that Radio Muqdishu employed it as a signature tune until 'Dhulkayaga' replaced it (see above, pp. 98-99). Example 34 was composed in (circa) 1964 by Cabdullaahi Cabdi Shube.

## Example 33:

I. male: 1. Oqoon lazaani waa iftiin lazaaneey, ♪ (2)

3. Waa aqaliyo ilays lazaaneey, ♪ (2)

chorus: 5. Ogaada, ogaada, dugsiyada ogaada, } (2)  
6. Ogaada, ogaada, walaalayaal ogaada, }

II. male: 9. Waa oommanaan iyo abaarey, ♪ (2)

11. Omosiyo oon biyo lazaaney, ♪ (2)

chorus: 13. Ogaada, ogaada, etc.

III. male: 17. Indhaha oon kala qaadnay, ♪ (2)

19. Ifka ugu ilbahhsanaannee, ♪ (2)

chorus: 21. Ogaada, ogaada, etc.

+++++

I. male: 1. [To be] without knowledge is [to be] without light; ♪ (2)

3. It is a house without illumination; ♪ (2)

chorus: 5. Know it! Become aware of the schools; } (2)  
6. Know it!

6. Know it! Know it! brothers and sisters, }  
know it!

II. male: 9. It is suffering of thirst and drought; ♪ (2)

11. [It is] desert and thirst, [being] without water; ♪ (2)

chorus: 13. Know it, etc.

III, male: 17. [So that] we [may] open [our] eyes, ♪ (2)

19. [In order] to become modern and progressive in this world, ♪ (2)

chorus: 21. Know it, etc.

Example 34:

- I.     1. Dibi geesaliyo,  
       2. Ido gorod madow,  
       3. Waa wahha dhulkeena u gaarehee,  
          4. Laynagu gartaa,  
          5. Maantay galladi,     }  
          6. Noo soo gashee,     } (2)  
          7. Gobannimadayada,  
          8. Guullow adkee,     }  
II.    13. Geed qodhahh leh iyo,  
       14. Gudin iyo hangool,  
       15. Waa wahha dhulkeena u gaarehee,  
          16. Laynagu gartaa, etc.  
III.   25. Wiil geel-jiroon,  
       26. Gaajadu karayn,  
       27. Waa wahha dhulkeena u gaarehee,  
          28. Laynagu gartaa, etc.  
IV.    37. Dhul guduudan,  
       38. Aan gogol doonahayn,  
       39. Waa wahha dhulkeena u gaarehee,  
          40. Laynagu gartaa, etc.  
V.     49. Reer-guuraayiyo,  
       50. Gaashaan hhardhani,  
       51. Waa wahha dhulkeena u gaarehee,  
          52. Laynagu gartaa, etc.

+++++

- I.     1. The bull with horns, and  
       2. The black-headed sheep  
       3. Are animals special to our country:  
          4. We are famous for them.  
          5. Today, happiness  
          6. Has come to us.  
          7-8. Oh God, the Victorious, strengthen  
               our independence!     } (2)

- II. 13. The thorn tree, and  
14. The Gudin<sup>1</sup> and Hangool<sup>2</sup>  
15. Are things special to our country:  
16. We are famous for them, etc.
- III. 25. Boys who herd camels, and whom  
26. Hunger cannot [disable]  
27. Are something special to our country:  
28. We are famous for them, etc.
- IV. 37. The red earth,  
38. Which needs no Gogol<sup>3</sup>  
39. Is something special to our country:  
40. We are famous for it, etc.
- V. 49. Nomadic settlements, and  
50. Decorated shields  
51. Are things special to our country:  
52. We are famous for them, etc.

Pan-Somalism  
Themes

The idea of Greater Somalia is far from dead on the Horn of Africa and has, like the above mentioned themes, served as inspiration to heello poets consistently over the developmental periods of modern poetry. As in Example 35, composed in 1960 by Mahammed Suleebaan Bidde (?), Pan-Somalism is often the main theme of a poem, but references are also made to it in poems composed about other topics.

Example 35:

- I. 1. Wajeerta hoose, 1- (2)  
3. Inay soo wareegtoo, 1- (2)  
5. Warshado u sameeyoo,  
6. Wahh walba u dhammeeyoo, hey!  
7. Ayaan wacad ku qaaday, 1- (2)  
9. Waddaankayga wanaagsan, 1- (2) } (2)
- II. 15. Soomaaloo wanaagsan, 1- (2)  
17. Giddigeed walaal ah, 1- (2)

- 19. Warshado u sameeyoo, etc.
- III. 29. Inaan wiida diido, } (2)
- 31. Obokh soo walwaaloo, } (2)
- 33. Warshado u sameeyoo, etc.
- IV. 43. Inuu cadowgu waashoo, } (2)
- 45. Oo aan Hawd ka weedhoo, } (2)
- 47. Warshado u sameeyoo, etc.

+++++

- I. 1. The lower Wajeer:<sup>1</sup> } (2)
- 3. That it will come to our side, } (2)
- 5. [That I] will build factories [for it],
- 6. [And] complete everything, hey!
- 7. I have a solemn promise } (2)
- 9. Concerning my good country. } (2)
- II. 15. The Somalis who are good, and } (2)
- 17. [Who are now] brothers and sisters, } (2)
- 19. [That we] will build factories [for them], etc.
- III. 29. That I shall reject the Ooi,<sup>2</sup> } (2)
- 31. That I obtain Obokh,<sup>3</sup> } (2)
- 33. [That I] will build factories [for it], etc.
- IV. 43. That the enemy go insane, } (2)
- 45. That I shall drive him from the Hawd,<sup>4</sup> } (2)
- 47. [That I] shall build factories [for it], etc.

Along with continuously recurring themes, some elements of structure are best treated outside the historical approach to the development of the heello. Let us consider these elements in detail.

#### STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND DEVELOPMENT COMMON TO ALL PERIODS

Although not separate from Somali history and social development during this time, some characteristics of structure such as the gradual refinement of poetic language and the addition of more musical instruments, are not bound to any one

period. Furthermore, other features such as imagery and the influence of media on the heello were common to all periods and not the result of any one period. This section is an attempt to describe some of these aspects of structure.

Refinement of Language  
and Musical Accompaniment

The relative ease of translation of the early heello compared to the classical poems of the Somali past is certainly one method of discovering that the language of modern poetry is more simple and closer to spoken Somali of today than that of such genres as the gabay.

Comparing the latest heello with the earliest heello, one finds that the language used has become more refined though the difference is not nearly as profound as between the gabay and the heello. Earlier heello, still close to the tradition of the miniature poem, tend more to use direct concepts in place of metaphoric imagery or symbolism. Some examples are as follows:

Greed, success, distress, difficulty, independence,  
love, poverty, misfortune, disgrace, enemy, hatred,  
foolishness, justice, death, victory, defeat, evil,  
hardship, virtue.

Later heello as we shall shortly see, used more subtle and complex images. When independence was attained and poems against the government were composed, the device of the hidden message (see above, pp. 51-54) had to be employed with more imagination to fool the Somali censor but still be understood by the general public.

We mentioned in the last chapter that line repeating patterns expanded in the third period. But these patterns gradually developed over the entire duration of the heello. We might categorize these patterns as follows, beginning with the poems which have little or no repeating at all:

- 1) Little or no line repeating in the text, followed by a refrain (as in the poems on pp. 129-34, pp. 137-38, pp. 141-43).
- 2) Single lines repeated in the text, followed by a refrain (as in the poems on pp. 122-23, pp. 152-54).
- 3) Couplets repeated in the text, followed by a refrain (as in the poem on pp. 124-27).
- 4) Triplets repeated in the text, followed by a refrain (as in the poem on pp. 135-37).
- 5) Quatrains repeated in the text, followed by a refrain (as in the poem on pp. 145-46).

More complicated systems are found in the following poems:

- 6) A quatrain repeated and a pentastich repeated alternately in the text, followed by a refrain (as in the poem on pp. 149-51).
- 7) A quatrain repeated in the text, with a refrain of two triplets repeated, one sung by the soloist and one sung by the chorus (as in the poem on pp. 154-55).
- 8) A couplet, followed by a single line repeated in the text, followed by a refrain (as in the poem on pp. 159-61).

Still further complicated systems are exhibited in the following patterns:

- 9) A couplet repeated, followed by a single line, followed by a complete repeat of this again in the text, followed eventually by a refrain. This system yields the following pattern: A B A B C A B A B C, or:

$$\begin{array}{c} A \\ B \\ C \end{array} \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{c} A \\ B \\ C \end{array}} \right\} (2) \left. \vphantom{\begin{array}{c} A \\ B \\ C \end{array}} \right\} (2)$$

(as the poems on pp. 121-22, pp. 156-59).

- 10) A sixain repeated in the text, followed by a refrain made up of a couplet repeated three times and a couplet repeated once (as in the poem on pp. 139-40).



The list goes on, but the above catalogue will give an idea of the variety of line repeating patterns found in the modern poem. What is important to remember about these patterns is that, although the heello resemble each other in their patterns, there is no set rule for how the pattern is to be accomplished. It is left to the poet or composer of musical accompaniment to choose which lines to repeat and how to work out the pattern.

But line repeating is not the only innovation of form which developed. We mentioned another form of repetition pattern on pp. 112-13. In Example 36 below, composed by Hhasan Diiriya in 1967, an even more profound example of this type of repetition pattern can be seen. In it, the following pattern occurs:

X  
—————X X  
Y  
—————Y Y  
Z  
—————Z Z  
Z Z Z  
refrain

Example 36:

- I.     1. Gurhhamayey,  
       2. Sidii aar gantaal qaba, gurhhamayey, gurhhamayey,  
       3. Geydhamayey,  
       4. Guuhha iyo reenkii, geydhamayey, geydhamayey,  
       5. Gilgilayey,  
       6. Timaha guudka iga bahhay, gilgilayey, gilgilayey,  
       7. Waan gilgilayey, gilgilayey, gilgilayey,  
          8. Wahhay gubay adoo gobaad ii gargaari  
              waydee, 1- (2)

- II. 10. Guntadayey,  
 11. Sidii geesi raacda ah, guntadayey, guntadayey,  
 12. Gurmadayey,  
 13. Gucla-roorka orodkii, gurmadayey, gurmadayey,  
 14. Dhehh galayey,  
 15. Geeri iyo nolol walaala ah, dhehh galayey, dhehh galayey,  
 16. Waan dhehh galayey, dhehh galayey, dhehh galayey,  
 17. Wahhay gubay, etc.
- III. 19. Gar-naqayey,  
 20. Sidii oday guddoonsheah, gar-naqayey, gar-naqayey,  
 21. Gabbadayey,  
 22. Guhaad iyo colaaddii, gabbadayey, gabbadayey,  
 23. Guud marayey,  
 24. Wihhii ila gudboonaa, guud marayey, guud marayey,  
 25. Waan guud marayey, guud marayey, guud marayey,  
 26. Wahhay gubay, etc.
- IV. 28. U godayey,  
 29. Sidii gaadh ilaala ah, u godayey, u godayey,  
 30. Gaatamayey,  
 31. Sidii goray gabbal u dhacay, gaatamayey, gaatamayey, } (2)  
 34. U gozayey,  
 35. Gaajiyo oon i gowracay, u gozayey, u gozayey,  
 36. Waan u gozayey, u gozayey, u gozayey,  
 37. Wahhay gubay, etc.

+++++

- I. 1. I growled  
 2. Like a male lion with an arrow [in its flesh], I growled, I growled.  
 3. I became wild  
 4. [With] roaring and grunting, I became wild, I became wild.  
 5. I shook  
 6. The hair which grown on my head, I shook, I shook.

7. I shook, shook, shook.

8. What burned me was that you, who are of noble  
birth failed to support me. } (2)

II. 10. I prepared myself<sup>1</sup>

11. Like the brave searcher of lost animals, I  
prepared myself, I prepared myself.

12. I came to the aid of those in distress.

13. Trotting and running, I came to the aid of those  
in distress, I came to the aid of those in dis-  
tress.

14. I came close<sup>2</sup>

15. [To where] life and death are brothers, I came  
close, I came close.

16. I came close, came close, came close.

17. What burned me, etc.

III. 19. I mediated

20. Like an old arbitrator, I mediated, I mediated.

21. I dodged

22. The scolding and enmity, I dodged, I dodged.

23. I failed<sup>3</sup>

24. [To do] what I was supposed [to do], I failed,  
I failed.

25. I failed, failed, failed.

26. What burned me, etc.

IV. 28. I walked in the night

29. Like an observant guard, I walked in the night,  
I walked in the night.

30. I walked stealthily

31. Like the male ostrich at sunset, I walked } (2)  
stealthily, I walked stealthily.

34. I became weary

35. With hunger and thirst that cut [my] throat, I  
became weary, I became weary.

36. I became weary, became weary, became weary.

37. What burned me, etc.

Together with refinement in language and patterns of repetition came development in musical accompaniment. But to transcribe the text of an oral poem is not as difficult as transcribing its musical accompaniment. Furthermore, the musical part of the heello is outside the scope of this thesis. Suffice it to say that development in music can go a long way from a petrol tin drum to the present orchestra of Radio Muqdishu. And finally, the melodies of the present day heello are as varied and interesting as those in modern Western pop music.

Language and music, then, have become more refined: music through the addition of more and more musical instruments and of more complex melodies; language, through the use of more complex structure and imagery. Direct concepts have been illustrated (see above, p. 178), but what of more complex images?

Imagery in  
the Heello

Many images have one special, metaphoric or allegoric meaning only within one particular poem. Thus gantaal ('arrow') represents a star football player in the poem on pp. 159-61 but not necessarily elsewhere. Many other images, however, can be said to represent one idea only. They occur so frequently in one metaphoric or allegoric sense (e.g. rain and drought) that such usage may be regarded as a set convention of Somali poetic diction. Still other images have a range of meanings although very limited. But the audience is rarely left in doubt as to which meaning to choose. The context of that image usually assists the listener in discerning the right meaning.

Very few images are new to Somali poetry as a whole. For example, the airplane in the poem on pp. 161-64 (line 31) is not a traditional image. The use of different words for arrow (gantaal, leeb, gammuun) to represent star football player in the poem on pp. 159-61 is a novel device as is the use of the Somali shield (gaashaan) to stand for defence in the same poem.

Most images, however, are traditional and have come to modern poetry either from traditional poems or from the traditional way of life. Four main categories cover the majority of conventional images used in the heello.

Positive For a nation which depends upon rain to such a  
Images great extent as Somalia, it is hardly remarkable that one finds so many images related to rain in the poetry.<sup>1</sup> The rainy season brings to the nomad happiness, abundance, prosperity, ease of tensions, marriage, and the birth of new animals to replenish his flocks. All of these things and more are represented by images which are the result of the rainy season. Some poems, like the ones on pp. 165-68 and pp. 190-91 are virtually dripping with wet images. Following is a list of the more common of these images:

- 1) Gu, the primary rainy season,
- 2) Dayr, the secondary rainy season,
- 3) Rain,
- 4) Water,
- 5) Milk,
- 6) Green grass or the greenness of the bush (nimco),
- 7) The Sign of Sagal (see below, pp. 190-91, line 17),
- 8) Cool pool of water, often with a mention of the ripples in the pool,
- 9) Cool, damp sand (rays)
- 10) The new buds,
- 11) The fruit of a tree or bush.

Another important group of images are representative of wisdom, truth, knowledge, and more recently, formal education (see above, pp. 49-50). Various forms of light symbolize these ideas which are highly respected among the Somali. Light itself as well as the sun and the sunrise are often used. Moreover, images such as the moon and the beacon fire are

popular, for they are forms of light which occur during the night. Darkness, conversely, represents ignorance and falsehood.

Beauty is expressed in Somali poetry with several images. The beauty of the landscape is often expressed with the same symbols as those related to rain and some of these, like the flower and the newly emerging buds, represent the beauty of women. A woman's beauty is often compared to that of a horse, an animal even more prized than a camel in Somalia. Horses are less often used to represent wealth but the camel commonly symbolizes this. The ownership of 100 camels denotes great wealth while the possession of only one she-camel is used to show a person's poverty.

Light is not the only product of the sun. Shade from its heat is used as a metaphor for rest and solace in many poems. The daylight sky is moreover used to symbolize the Somali flag because it is blue.

Parts of the body figure prominently as positive images. For example, strength and power are traits prized by the Somalis, and the upper arm and lower leg symbolize them. The lower leg, however, is more often used to symbolize weakness because of the associated mutilation of hamstringing. The right hand, in contrast to the Moslem consideration of the left hand as ritually unclean, adds emphasis to a deed.

<u>Negative</u>	As images relating to rain make up a large number
<u>Images</u>	of positive symbols, images relating to drought
	make up a large number of the negative ones.

Rivers, streams and even camels often dry up in heello, representing a disaster of some sort, poverty and want. Thirst and the two dry seasons, Jiilaal and Hhagaa, are sister images to drought and express the same feeling. Other common images symbolizing disaster are the black hole and the cliff.

When water comes to Somalia it is not always in the form of gentle rain. Torrents of rain often cause flash floods

which in turn bring death and disaster. It is said that in Burco, a large net is strung across its seasonal river (tog) in the rainy season to catch the bodies of unlucky people who are swept away by the floods. In poetry the flood stands for sudden disaster.

Sleep often symbolizes ignorance or neglect of duty but being awake at times when one should be asleep is not an opposite symbol. Sleeplessness is an image to express the negative side of love. As we have seen in several poems, love is seen as an illness, a disease or a state of insanity.<sup>1</sup> Jeesh gudhacya waaweyn, '[Love is] a valley of big thorn trees', cries the poet. The thorn is yet another symbol for disaster; in this case hindrance along a set path to a goal. The poet in love sometimes compares himself to the gazelle who wanders alone, away from his fellow gazelles. This symbol of loneliness is supplemented by the roar of the lion representing grief. The worst disaster of all, death, is sometimes symbolized by the snake or serpent. The colonialist in Somali poetry is represented by the hyena and the buzzard, animals considered unclean because they feed on carrion. Conversely, the colonialized African is sometimes seen as a burden animal, either camel or donkey. This image occurs in the classical poem when referring to a clan reduced to vassalage by another. The mirage, common enough on the plains of the Horn, is an image of trickery and deceit.

Mixed            Parellel with the images which in most circumstances  
Images           have but one meaning are a group of images which  
                     have two or more references. The dual condition of  
these symbols, however, rarely leads to confusion among the  
Somali audience for the context of the poem usually defines the  
image. Clouds, for example, are sometimes a positive symbol  
for they are the bringers of rain. On the other hand, they are  
sometimes negative for they blot out the sun, the light,  
wisdom.

Not all these images are positive-negative mixtures. Some are one-sided but still have two references. Lightning is sometimes the announcer of rain and sometimes the bringer of light, both positive interpretations. Fire is another bringer of light, but it has a negative meaning as well, for it can burn painfully. The audience, however, would rarely be left in doubt as to which way to interpret fire as we can see in these lines:

Mar sidii ilayskii ololkaa,  
Iftiinkaagu i jiidhay.

Once, like the light of the flame,  
Your light hit me.

The tree,<sup>1</sup> like the above mentioned images, falls into the dual interpretation category, at one time symbolizing the beauty of women, at another the law of traditional Somalia. Old and ugly women in Somalia are often bent from many years of toil and labour. If a woman is compared to a tree, the element of beauty emphasized is straightness of limb and therefore youthfulness. What is meant by the second interpretation, law, is derived from when the elders of a clan used to hold their meeting (shir) to discuss traditional law (hheer): in the shade of a tree. When the poet declares:

Gurmagozan La jaraye,  
Guudkii saraan,  
Ku gabboodsadaa.

I am on top of<sup>2</sup>  
The stump of a tree that has been cut down,  
[Where] I am being sheltered.

the listener knows that law, reason, the systematic life, have



collapsed and that the poet is experiencing a state of anarchy.

Two images which are commonly employed in modern poetry remain neutral but their effect on the individual is sometimes positive, sometimes negative. The seat of emotion symbolized by the abdominal region of the body (heart, liver, stomach, diaphragm) sometimes houses happiness, sometimes sadness. Likewise the Somali belief in Nabsi (see p. 114, note 3, found on p. 229) sometimes works in one's favour, sometimes against one.

Along with images usually having only two meanings, we find those which have more than two interpretations. Wind, for example, sometimes dries things out, sometimes cools them off, and sometimes announces the coming of rain. Other images, such as the wound (disaster, death, colonialism, the pain of love) and the arrow (death, star football player, the satellite) are employed for their general characteristics and can symbolize any of a number of things.

Situational Imagery      Apart from images which are relatively tangible are those which make up a situation or condition.<sup>1</sup> A large part of this imagery is taken from the pastoral way of life and has come to modern poetry from traditional sources. The use of such images as the movement of the family group (reer) from one camp site to another (geeddi) is employed in a number of ways (see pp. 122-23, lines 9-11). The scout (sahan) who looks for this new camp site is also used to symbolize preparing the way and announcing prosperity or a better condition (see pp. 152-54, lines 73-76).

To remain on the left side of the camel, an image from the poem on pp. 129-34, line 38, meaning to remain hopeful, is also from the nomad's existence. Yet another image from the traditional way of life is the cleaning of one's emotions (stomach) like the milk vessel is cleaned (see pp. 117-18, lines 15-17). To love one as though she were a kinsman is an image showing how strong clan ties are in traditional society.

The nomad's environment also offers a rich supply of

images for his poetry. The moon and star symbol in the poem on pp. 135-37, lines 41-43 is an example of this.

A common group of images representing disaster, loss of power, or a state of instability is the reference to swaying, flying, being not of this world nor of the next. (See pp. 141-43, lines 8, 9, 27; and pp. 169-71, line 23). Also representing the above conditions is the image of isolation from society and kin. Poets often find themselves having been exiled by their kinsmen because of love or political alliance. It must be stressed, however, that this image is almost always employed as a poetic convention. Actual expulsion from one's clan is rare and is regarded as one of the most dreadful things that can happen to a man. Related to this state of being is another complaint used by many poets: the world, my peers, or my generation has passed me by and I am held back.

Unified Imagery Each image in a Somali poem contributes to the total picture of the poet's message in the minds of the listeners. These images are usually easy to understand for where the listener has not been pre-conditioned, context will usually solve the problem. Taken as a whole, however, the images employed by any one heello often form a system, a unified conceptual framework, a second level of meaning which reinforces the first or linguistic level of the poem. This of course is not always the case as images are many times unconnected by any unifying feature. In the poem on pp. 122-23, however, the same basic statement is made in each stanza, each time using different images. This message might be reduced to the following:

- A. While one is in a good condition,
- B. One does not deliberately push oneself into a bad condition.
- C. Refrain

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In the following poem we see this substructure or unifying framework of imagery operating in a different manner. This poem, composed in 1965 by Mahammed Suleebaan Bidde, uses two sets of positive images extensively. The first set is made up of images relating to rain; the second set relates to light. The poet compares his love to the beauty and prosperity of rain and the wisdom and truth of light. He claims that he sees these characteristics in his environment in such a way that he actually confuses them with the person of his beloved. Furthermore, each stanza represents a different time of day, each stanza progressing to the next period. Thus we have the following system:

Stanza I     =   Sunrise  
 Stanza II    =   Midmorning  
 Stanza III   =   Noon  
 Stanza IV    =   Sunset  
 Stanza V     =   Nighttime

Example 37:

- I.     1. Geediyo ruuhh markaynu kala garanno,  
        2. Qorrahhdoo gees kastaba fallaadho gantay,  
          3. Yaad geddeedii tahoon LaGaa garan, } (3)
- II.    6. Daruur goor barqo ah, Ku guud-timi,  
        7. Oo intay biyo gelisay kala gurataad,  
          8. Yaad geddeedii tahoon LaGaa garan, } (3)
- III.   11. Gugoo dazay, geedahoo bahhay,  
        12. Gelgelimaad hhareedda oo galacloo,  
          13. Garaarole baan LaGaa garan, } (3)
- IV.    16. God-fiiday godkeeda jeehh la gashay,  
        17. Guduudka Sagalkee u gaarka ah,  
          18. Yaad geddeedii tahoon LaGaa garan, } (3)
- V.     21. Dayahhoo goor caweysin soo guday,  
        22. Oo geyigu nuuray gelin dhahhaadkii,  
          23. Yaad geddeedii tahoon LaGaa garan, } (3)

+++++

- I.     1. When [it is light enough] for us to tell a tree  
          from a man—  
       2. When the sun shoots its arrows [of light] in every  
          direction:<sup>1</sup>  
          3. You are [so] similar [to this] that one is  
              confused. } (3)
- II.    6. When a cloud passes over you at midmorning,  
       7. And fills [the air] with water, and [then]  
          disperses:  
          8. You are [so] similar [to this] that one is  
              confused.. } (3)
- III.   11. When Gu<sup>2</sup> [brings] rains, and the green grass  
          grows—  
       12. [When] rain water reflects [light]<sup>3</sup> in the pool<sup>4</sup>  
       13. And [on its] ripples, one is confused. } (3)
- IV.    16. When part of the evening sun entered its hole,<sup>5</sup>  
          and  
       17. [The other half gavel] the redness special to the  
          Sign of Sagal:<sup>6</sup>  
       18. You are [so] similar [to this] that one is  
              confused. } (3)
- V.     21. The moon which came forth<sup>7</sup> in the late evening,  
       22. And the earth reflected [its light] at midnight:  
       23. You are [so] similar [to this] that one is  
              confused. } (3)

In Example 38, composed in 1964 by Hhuseyn Aw Faarahh, we see the unifying framework of imagery operating in yet another way. The poet is praising his love by comparing her to a tree. Many images from the rainy season are employed here and the stanza progression is also unique, exhibiting the following pattern:

Stanza I = The root

Stanza II = The trunk

- Stanza III = The branch  
 Stanza IV = Things on the branch and below the  
 trees: flowers, seeds, leaves, grass  
 Stanza V = Something which comes from the outside  
 and becomes a part of the tree: mistle-  
 toe.

Example 38:

- I. 1. Dhirta hhididka hoosaa, } (2)  
 2. Dhulka Loogu beere, }  
 5. Way dhicilahaayeene,  
 6. Dhismahooda weeyee, } (4)  
 10. Kii dhabah jacaylkuna, } (2)  
 12. Halkii kama dhaqaaqoo, } (2)  
 13. Dhidib baa u aasane, }  
 II. 18. Sida dhumucda weeyaan, } (2)  
 19. Jirridda iyo dhuuhha e, }  
 22. Dhererkiyo lahhaadkana,  
 23. Waa Laysku dhaabee, } (4)  
 27. Kii dhabah jacaylkuna, } (2)  
 29. Lama kala dhantaaloo, } (2)  
 30. Lafuhuu dhammeeyaa, }  
 III. 35. Sida dhudaha weeyaan, } (2)  
 36. Isu dheelli-tiraanoo, }  
 39. Midba dhan u bahhaysee,  
 40. Dhinaca isa saaree, } (4)  
 44. Kii dhabah jacaylkuna, } (2)  
 46. Waa dhaqan wadaagiyo, } (2)  
 47. Isu dhalasho daacada, }  
 IV. 52. Sida dhalanka weeyaan, } (2)  
 53. Dheehaa caleentuye, }  
 56. Ubahh wada dhalaaliyo,  
 57. Dhimbiishaa hadhaysee, } (4)  
 61. Kii dhabah jacaylkuna, } (2)  
 63. Waa dhool hillaaciyo, } (2)  
 64. Dhibic-roob ku haysee, }

- V. 69. Waa sida Dhillowyan, } (2)  
 70. Intuu laan iskaga dhegey, }  
 73. Dhehhda Loogu marayoo,  
 74. Dhakhso uga bahhaayee, } (4)  
 78. Kol hadduu dhab naga yahay, }  
 79. Kala dhuuman maaynnoo, } (2) } (2)  
 81. Waagaa dharaar noqon, }

+++++

- I. 1-2. The trees are planted in the earth so that the  
 roots are below; } (2)  
 5. [Otherwise] they would have fallen,  
 6. [But this] is their structure. } (4)  
 10. And love which is true } (2)  
 12. Does not move from its place;  
 13. And it has a central staff<sup>1</sup> secured in } (2)  
 the ground. }  
 II. 18. [Love] is like the thickness } (2)  
 19. Of the trunk and [its] juices;<sup>2</sup> }  
 22. The height and the strength  
 23. And intertwined in them. } (4)  
 27. And love which is true } (2)  
 29. Cannot be split, } (2)  
 30. [For] it permeates [deep]<sup>3</sup> into the core. }  
 III. 35. [Love] is like the slender trees, } (2)  
 36. [For] they are balanced by each other. }  
 39. Each [branch] grows in one direction,  
 40. Leaning on other [branches] side by side. } (4)  
 44. And love which is true } (2)  
 46. Is sharing ways of life and } (2)  
 47. Being born for each other in honesty. }  
 IV. 52. [Love] is like the new born grass:<sup>4</sup> } (2)  
 53. The colour of the leaves. }  
 56. The glittering of all the flowers,  
 57. And the shading of the seed-pods. } (4)

61. And love which is true } (2)  
 63. Is the rain cloud [with] lightning— } (2)  
 64. The rain drops falling on it.  
 V. 69. [Love] is like the mistletoe<sup>1</sup> } (2)  
 70. After it has fixed itself onto a branch, }  
 73. And wrapped around it,  
 74. Growing quickly upwards. } (4)  
 78. Once love is true for us  
 79. We cannot hide from [one another]. } (2) } (2)  
 81. [Then] the dawn will become the day.<sup>2</sup> }

Imagery plays, perhaps, the major role in the diction of the modern poem but it is not the only device used. Another, panegyric naming, we have seen before in the Family of Miniature Genres.

Panegyric      Inherited mainly from the Family of Miniature  
Naming      Genres, panegyric naming does not have the major  
                  role in modern poetry that it does in the minia-  
 ture poem. The reason for this perhaps lies with the length of  
 the heello. Other devices such as the extensive development of  
 imagery possible in a longer poem have come into play.  
 Panegyric naming, however, must not go unmentioned. Everything  
 said of this device under the miniature poem (see above, pp.  
 55-57) is true of the heello, so we shall not repeat it here,  
 except to give some examples of these names taken from modern  
 poems. Following is a list of panegyric names used in the  
heello of my collection:

1. Raalliya. The One-Who-Pleases,
2. Dawo. The One-Who-Cures-All-Ills,
3. Dul-Mare. The One-Who-Passes-Above-All-Others  
 (i.e. The Best One),
4. Guud-Haldhaaleey. The One-With-Hair-Like-The-  
 Feathers-Of-The-Male-Ostrich,

5. Hibo. The One-Who-Has-Received-Everything,
6. Hhalan. The Clean One,
7. Amarran. The Blessed One,
8. Qumman. The Perfect One.

Other While a discussion of the imagery in the modern poem  
Devices is most important in describing its diction, other  
devices are employed and must not be overlooked.

Personification, for example, is commonly employed where a woman, sometimes the poet's lover, personifies the country or part of the country of Somalia (see pp. 122-23 and pp. 129-34); or sometimes she represents a politician to whom the poet speaks. (See pp. 141-43 and pp. 149-51).

Juxtaposition of images is a popular device and finds many methods of expression in the heello. Compare the following lines from different poems:

1. Dayahhoo goor caweysin soo guday,  
Oo geyigu nuuray gelin dhahhaadkii.

The moon which came forth in the late evening,  
And the earth reflected [its light] at midnight.

2. Ma idlaado, ma abaadoo...

[Love] never wears out, nor lasts for a long  
time...

3. Janno ubahh leh weeyee,  
Marna jahanna naariyo....

[Love is like] a heaven of flowers,  
And at other times, a hell-fire,...



4. Jidiinkaa i engegay jirkoo dazayoo...

My throat is parched whilst heavy rains fall...

5. May hoorin, may hoorin,  
May hoorin, weli hogoshii Dayreedey.

It has not [yet] rained; it has not [yet] rained;  
Still the cloud of Dayr<sup>1</sup> has not [yet] rained.

Another common device used in modern poetry is the use of a proverb or part of a proverb as a situational image (see p. 116, line 13 and pp. 169-71, lines 5-7). Less often the punch line of a folktale will be employed (see pp. 129-34, line 53).

Along with the characteristic themes and structure, another topic common to all periods demands detailed attention in this chapter. The effect of media upon the modern poem is of major importance in understanding its development. The tape recorder, for instance, has exerted some influences on the oral poem in Somalia in a manner similar to the influence of writing on poetry in literate societies. Indeed without the impact of media the heello would have no doubt taken a very different form. This influence permeated many of the features of modern poetry.

#### THE IMPACT OF MEDIA ON MODERN POETRY

Unlike writing which had no apparent effect on the modern poem— and many modern poets can read and write in English or Italian and/or Arabic— the radio and tape recorder have had a considerable impact. At times they play a simultaneous role, as when tapes are played on the radio. At other times they are separated, as when a live performance is broadcast or when tapes are played at a tea shop. In any case they have exerted influence on four features of the heello causing it to deviate

from the usual characteristics of oral art in Somalia. More correctly, these two media have added to the usual features of Somali oral art. The discussion which follows deals with this influence on the structure, performance, transmission and preservation of the modern poem.

Influence on Structure            At least two elements of structure were greatly influenced by the radio and the tape recorder. In the early days of the heello, the policy of the radio station in the British Somaliland Protectorate was to pay for the use of a poem to be used on the air according to its length. Although the means of measuring were not perfectly exact, there was a definite relationship between the length of the poem and the payment: the longer the poem, the more money paid to the poet. As a result poems became longer and longer. The easiest way to lengthen a poem was through line repeating and refrain, and these devices eventually became regular features of the heello.

Another influence which the tape has on modern poetry is oddly related to a similar influence that writing has on literate cultures. When a poem is written down, it can have no variation and an original, 'authentic' version of the poem comes into being. The same situation has occurred with the 'freezing' of oral poetry on tape in Somalia. Variation certainly is less possible with the modern poem. Not only is there an 'authentic' version of each recorded poem, but it is played time and time again over the radio in this one version only. If anyone attempts to memorize the poem-- and many Somalis do just this --one is constantly reinforced by one version of the poem. The same version heard on tapes played in tea shops --important social gathering places-- adds still more reinforcement.

Influence on Performance            The heello is performed in a number of places and in several circumstances. Here again,

media have exerted their influence. With the ability to 'freeze' a poem on tape, the necessity to perform it live ceases to be of ultimate importance. One may, as many Somalis do, listen to poems over the radio in a tea shop or from a tape recorder among friends at a Qat party.<sup>1</sup> One may also listen to this poetry in private. No longer is social intercourse necessary to the enjoyment of oral poetry, to the very performance of it, although private listening must not be overstressed. The ownership of a tape recorder brings social prestige; there must be many of these machines in private ownership now. Social gatherings such as weddings, national holidays, and religious festivals, moreover, make ready use of the heello.

Another major circumstance for the performance of modern poetry was the political party meeting. Not only were tapes used, but live recitations over another type of medium, the loud-speaker, were common before the abolition of political parties by the present government. This recitation was performed sometimes inside a building away from the visible presence of the audience; it could also be done from inside a moving vehicle such as a taxi. Live performances before the audience in the traditional way were also common. Poems extolling the qualities of the candidates were used alongside popular heello presented for their entertainment value only.

Finally the modern theatre in Somalia must not be omitted from this discussion. Inside the newly developed drama of the country, the heello can be found alongside other, traditional poetry. The theatre which had its beginnings at about the same time as the modern poem, has provided an important outlet and impetus for it and continues to do so to an even greater extent today. In the theatre the tape recorder also plays a role. Lacking the facilities of writing (i.e. for the stage, lacking a script), the composer of the play often teaches the poems to be used in the drama to the actors by playing recordings of them over and over until they have been memorized.

Transmission and  
Preservation

The influence of the radio and tape recorder upon the spatial dispersion of the modern poem is almost too obvious to present: the poem stretches as far as radio reception is possible. But the older influences of Somali poetry must not be ignored. Clearly the heello is carried from place to place by individuals in their memories as well as by the media.

When a modern poem loses its space on the air, its dispersal in time, like the traditional poem, depends upon its popularity with the public. One reciter, however, cannot deliver a poem along with the orchestration accompanying it. The preservation of a modern poem in its 'original' form (soloist, orchestra, chorus) is not so much dependent upon its popularity and the influences of traditional oral art but with the condition of the tape on which it is recorded and the place where the tape is stored. The very question of an 'original' form has only come into being with these media.

The text of a modern poem can, however, continue from generation to generation as a traditional poem does. The heello has not been in Somali culture long enough for this to have happened but another aspect of the preservation of particular poems in Somalia is becoming more common. Although there are not many Somali scholars who record poetry in writing, there are a few. Whatever the limitations of transcription which records only one facet of an oral poem (e.g. the text, leaving out the music, melody, circumstance of performance, etc.) it might be argued that the most important part is preserved with the text.

Other Influences  
From Media

The radio and tape recorder have had a heavy influence on modern poetry but one other medium, musical instruments, has also had its effect. Indeed the addition of an entire orchestra is one of the major differences between the modern and traditional poems.

Finally, the media as a whole have succeeded in bringing about new social statuses in Somalia, those of the professional poet and reciter, both of which exist as non-professional statuses in traditional society even today. Moreover, media have also brought about two entirely new statuses, those of the professional composer of musical melody and the professional musician. Note also that any one person may embody one to all of these talents.

Before the advent of radio in Somalia a poet usually participated in the economic pursuits of his area. Now, with an organized and financed outlet for his poetic abilities, the poet can make a living at his art. Indeed the establishment of the Radio Artistes Association in about 1968 bears witness to the professional atmosphere in which the present-day Somali poet finds himself.

Media, then, have played a major role in the making of the modern poem into what it is today. But other things have played their role as well. All this has culminated in the formation, development and function of a new genre in Somali poetry. Let us now turn to a resumé of the principal characteristics of the heello, pointing out from where each feature was inherited and finally why this unprecedented development has occurred.

## Chapter VIII: Conclusion

### THE INHERITANCE OF THE HEELLO

It would be absurd to contend that the present form of the heello is final. Its entire history so far has been one of change. What follows can only be a definition of the heello as it is at the writing of this thesis, for it may yet evolve into new and different forms. To describe the modern poem, it is most useful to summarize its characteristics from their historical origins. Indeed it is for this reason that this thesis has been organized largely from the historical point of view.

#### Inheritance from Classical Poetry

From the classical poetry of the traditional Somali pastoralist the heello inherited its length and unity of theme. Alliteration is a characteristic of all Somali poetry and the unity of it throughout the whole of the modern poem comes also from the classical model. The dialect of Somali used in modern poetry as well as its imagery has been inherited also from the nomad. The prestige of the modern poem is largely a result of its use in the political and social arena, this also having been taken from classical pastoralist poetry.

#### Inheritance from the Miniature Poem

Together with these features from classical poetry, the heello also has an inheritance from the Family of Miniature Genres, especially its last form, the belwo. The very name of the genre, heello, comes from an introductory formula associated with this family. The theme of love, the most common in modern poetry, has its origin here. Some elements of its diction including panegyric naming and images concerning love are from the miniature poem. And finally its use in less formal situations such as at weddings and festivals comes from the miniature family.

Borrowed Features Along with characteristic features inherited from indigenous sources, the heello has borrowed some of its features from abroad. Musical instruments and the musical setting of the poem are from foreign sources. Although the melodies used by the heello are indigenous, the use of one individualized melody for each poem in the genre is a foreign device as is the use of formalized refrain and line repeating in the structure of the poem. And finally its use over the radio, itself a foreign borrowing, is a result of foreign influence.

Intrinsic Development Inheritance from foreign and indigenous sources is not all that has shaped the modern poem. Once the stage is set, there remains the acts of the drama to be performed and several features of the heello were developed from the process of its own evolution. Themes like anti-colonialism and the debate on the role of women in modern society belong only to the heello itself. Its use in political rallies and in the theatre in Somalia are results of its passage through time. Its modern diction, notably lacking in archaic language, is also a characteristic of its own maturation.

We have reviewed the modern poem in its historical setting and attempted to describe its major characteristics of form and content. From the period of 1948 to the present the heello has sprung from traditional origins and gone through a process of evolution resulting in its present form. But why did such a development take place and how did it affect the formation of a new means of poetic expression?

#### FORCES BEHIND THE SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN POETRY

Considering what happened in the developmental period between the belwo and the heello, the belwo itself had a mild

beginning indeed. What happened, then, to cause this unprecedented development? Three main causes are outlined below.

Changes in the  
Social Setting

As pointed out earlier the social scene in urban Somali life began to change a great deal after the British returned to the Horn in 1941. The new administration brought about several basic changes including the successful establishment of formal education. The nomadic way of life was not greatly affected by these new programmes but then the modern poem neither began nor developed among the nomads; it was an urban poem from the beginning.

Along with changes brought about by foreigners came a new attitude to change by Somalis themselves, as witnessed by the success of the education programme. Other areas of development were to have the success of the education programme as well. The names of other Somalis who played important roles in other areas could be given but it is not the purpose of this thesis merely to describe history. The important point is that Somalis began to face change. Change was no longer out of the question. Traditional methods of accomplishing social functions were weakened as more modern programmes such as the township committees and town planning boards (see above, p. 64) were established.

This new attitude of progressiveness was reflected in the artistic endeavours of Somali poets. It was no longer out of the question to have musical accompaniment to miniature poems. Cabdi's petrol tin drum was not only to survive opposition but it was to prepare a way for the tambourine, the flute, the violin and the lute. Later the clarinet, saxophone and organ were to become acceptable as part of modern poetry recitals. Furthermore, it was now considered all right for each poem of the new genre to have its own melody. If the modern poem were faced with traditional poetic rules, we might conclude that each heello is a genre unto itself.



So changes became acceptable and although brought about by foreigners, change was to be, had to be carried out by Somalis themselves. From another source change was to be initiated, as new media came onto the Somali scene.

The Use of  
New Media

New media brought about the possibility of new variation from tradition. If the petrol tin drum could work its way into poetry where accompaniment was rare before, then other changes would become easier. Add the flute to the drum and tambourine, and still more possibilities of change open up. One can only beat rhythm on the former, but on the latter melody becomes possible. With the addition of more and more musical instruments, more and more possibilities of variation and combination arise. The technical aspects of change were prepared. Then came the addition of western music as a model from which the new poem could develop. Eventually the concept of one melody per poem arose in Somali poetry as it is in Arabic, Hindi, Italian and English songs, four types that Somalis had access to.

The radio played an important role in the rapid dissemination of the belwo. Indeed it influenced its very structure. We have seen that a refrain and the use of line repeating developed out of the administration's method of paying for the use of a poem by its length. The belwo and later the heello were very useful to the radio station for they could be used as fillers between programmes. Different lengths of time gaps could be filled by belwo and heello of differing lengths. Programmes centered around their recitation came to occupy a major part of radio time on the air.

The radio also gave the modern poem prestige for the new elite apparently gave it tacit support and obviously approved of its use. It became even more popular when the colonial government let it slip by uncensored of the political implications hidden in its imagery.

And it was the radio which provided the source of the

foreign songs which became part of the model for the heello. As mentioned above, Arabic, Hindi, Italian, and English songs were exposed to Somali poets. Hargeysa, Muqdishu and Aden all had radio stations where this music could be heard.

Adding to the popularity of the heello was also its use in drama. The modern theatre in Somalia which had its beginning during this period uses modern and traditional poetry in much the same way as operetta and musical comedy of the West. Poetry was used with Somali drama from the beginning and this marriage of play and poem added to the dissemination, popularity, and ultimate preservation of the new genre.<sup>1</sup>

Identification  
with Politics

When the heello adopted political themes, the future of modern poetry was secured.

The belwo had been chiefly concerned with private love and thereby lacked the status of classical poetry. With political themes came the prestige needed for the heello to be considered a serious work of art. It rapidly became the voice of patriotism and anti-colonialism. In fact, it later became such a popular device for delivering political viewpoints that the political heello, as we mentioned earlier, was suppressed during the administration of Prime Minister Cigaal. Prior to the coup of October, 1969, though, the heello was consistently important to party politics for if a party was to gain widespread support, it had to secure the services of a good poet. During an election year especially, heello could be heard from the loudspeakers of party headquarters and at political rallies.

Timing of the  
Belwo and Heello

Unlike the other miniature poems the belwo went through a period of metamorphosis and emerged as the heello. This change in traditional poetics was parallel to a new Somali attitude of accepting change in the development of such social activities as education and road building. New media and the adoption of

the theme of politics at the right time in the drive toward independence gave the heello a secure place alongside other genres of Somali poetry.

It was to this historical period that the belwo was added and the heello emerged. At a time when dynamic innovation was beginning on the Horn, the heello became the voice of that innovation. Having begun as a result of change, the heello now will possibly bring about some change in the society from which it emerged. With such poems as the ones on pp. 20-24 and pp. 156-59, for example, the role of women is gradually being redefined by the elite.

The heello in Somalia is a modern phenomenon, something new in Somali culture; it is based on something old and influenced by something from outside Somali culture. But the modern poem is very much a Somali work of art. The metamorphosis of the belwo to the heello was an aesthetic purification and expansion process which took a genre of miniature poetry that had caught the public fancy at a period of stress and change in Somali history and converted it into a structure more closely resembling the classical poem, the ultimate in oral beauty and meaning to the Somali. Today the heello like its classical sisters is a long poem. Its alliteration is unified and its themes deal with ideas and events, social problems and beliefs which were formerly treated by the genres of gabay, jiifto and geeraar alone. Indeed the modern poem appears to have replaced these genres in urban Somali life.

But the heello is also different from classical poetry. The theme of private love, inherited from the Family of Miniature Genres, has not been lost. Each heello has its own particular identifiable melody. It is a blend of old and new, of indigenous and foreign.

## NOTES

### Page 7

1. The belwo received some treatment in Maino, 1953, Laurence, 1954, Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, and Andrzejewski, 1967. The heello received some treatment in Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964.
2. The entire collection is made up of 24 wiglo, 16 dhaanto, 10 hirwo, 3 dheel (baalbaal), 79 belwo, 1 unidentified miniature poem, 85 heello and 3 gabay. The poems for which a tape was available have been recorded in full by the tape library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and by the Archives of Traditional Music, Folklore Institute, Indiana University.

### Page 8

1. Poetry not used in the thesis has also been deposited at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and may be consulted under the same arrangements.

### Page 9

1. For a detailed description of the debate on written Somali, see Andrzejewski, 1962, and Andrzejewski, Strelcyn and Tubiana, 1966.
2. One correction should be made in this publication. On p. 4 where the orthography is explained, under the symbol 'C, c', for 'glottal fricative', one should read 'pharyngeal fricative'.

### Page 11

1. This problem is apparent in other scholarly works in this field. Compare the following quotes from Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, p. 51:

The heello is represented in this book by a sequence of poems under the title Twelve modern love songs.

... It is represented in our collection by the poem Independence Song.

See also the interesting discussions on this subject in Finnegan, 1970, pp. 75-76 and p. 241.

Page 13

1. Note that the term 'coastal merchant' is here used for convenience and does not fully describe the sort of culture the name represents. Both the 'coastal merchant' and the 'town dweller' societies have merchant classes, skilled artisans, and other types of workmen. The difference between these two groups is historical rather than cultural. (See Page 15, note 1 below.)

Page 14

1. Information on Somali dialects can be found in Andrzejewski, 1971, pp. 271-73; Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, pp. 37-38; and Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and Andrzejewski, 1956, p. 1.
2. In private conversation as well as in many speeches.
3. See Lewis, 1957b.

Page 15

1. For the pastoralist, see Lewis, 1955 and 1961, and Lienhardt, 1964; for the agriculturalist, see Lewis, 1955, 1961 and 1969, and Cerulli, 1959; for the town dweller, see Lewis, 1955, 1955/56, 1961 and 1965; for the coastal merchant, see Cerulli, 1959 and Trimmingham, 1952 and 1964.
2. Somalis themselves have used the term Dhallin Yarada ('The Youth') as a term in their own language for the new elite. This term is probably derived from the name Ururka Dhallin Yarada Soomaaliyeed ('Somali Youth League'), the main political party in the country until October, 1969.
3. It must be pointed out that although the heello is an art form which began inside elite society, the elite also enjoys the traditional forms of poetry. Moreover, the

heello has also penetrated traditional society to some degree.

4. Recent reports indicate that some of these idle university graduates have been conscripted by the revolutionary government to teach school in place of the U.S. Peace Corps volunteers who were expelled from the country in December, 1969.

Page 16

1. Gabay. One of the three traditional poems — the jiifto and the geeraar are the other two — considered the best form of serious poetry in traditional pastoralist society. We shall refer to these three forms as 'classical genres' in this thesis. For a description of these and other genres of Somali poetry, see Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, pp. 46-52.
2. This gabay is from the unpublished collection of Muusa Hh.I. Galaal. It was originally translated by him and edited by me and Michael Cushman Walsh. For this thesis it was translated again through the process described in the Preface, pp. 8-9.

Page 18

1. Burn incense for herself. This refers to the practice of females perfuming themselves with incense. Incense is placed into a burner (dab-qaad, literally 'holder of fire') and allowed to permeate her clothing so that she will smell pleasantly in the presence of her husband.
2. Young clansmen often come to a wife who has not been married into a clan for long and put her to severe verbal tests on behalf of their clan. In traditional Somali society, the clan as a whole plays a part in the choice of women for its common good. Choosing a wife is not always left entirely to the individual.
3. Rumayga. 'Tooth brush'. Small stick used in cleaning teeth by vigorously rubbing the teeth and gums.
4. Eye shadow. Somali women use a small silver bottle

- (indha-kuul) which holds eye-shadow (also called indha-kuul). The applicator, with eye shadow on the end, is placed under the eye lid and moved back and forth until the eye shadow has been applied to the entire eye lid.
5. Ante-chamber. The area just outside the entrance of the portable nomadic hut (aqal). Fine mats are laid when guests come to visit. Tea is served and an animal sometimes slain for the guests to eat.
  6. Bed-chamber. A special section for sleeping inside the hut, separated from the rest of the 'rooms' by matting walls.

Page 19

1. Uurka. 'Emotion'; literally 'stomach'. One of the metaphorical seats of emotion in Somali poetry. See p. 188.
2. The exact implication of this line is not understood by me. Presumably it means away from the smell of the animals.
3. Reer Ugaas-Magan. Sub-section of the Daarood Ogaadeen, Reer Cabdille, the clan of the poet.
4. Noble men. Literally 'male camels'. This is a metaphor of great politeness. The awr are the biggest, strongest males in the herd. They are used for breeding because of their fine quality. Awr also means male camel in general.
5. Bah-Hhawaadle. Further sub-section of the poet's clan.

Page 22

1. Nebigii. 'The Prophet [Aadan]', Adam, the first man created by God in Moslem theology. Lines 1 and 2 imply that the best of all women was Hhawo (or Hhawa, or Hhaawa, from Arabic Hawā<sup>2</sup>, 'Eve').
2. Reer. 'Dwelling place'; literally 'family (smallest social unit)/married man/camp', i.e. the Garden of Eden.
3. The version of the traditional account of the fall of Adam and Eve told in Somalia. Satan took Eve to a stream while they were yet in Paradise. Satan told Eve that

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Adam had taken another woman. Eve did not believe him, but he said he would show her the woman. He commanded her to look into the stream which she did. Seeing her own reflection, she thought she had seen the other woman. Eve asked the devil to prove what she had seen. He told her to return to Adam and tell him what she had seen. Then he commanded her to tell him to eat of the Tree of Life. If he would refuse to eat, it would mean that he loved the other woman. If he consented, it would mean that the reflection was false. Eve then went to Adam and did what was commanded of her by Satan. Adam, of course, ate of the fruit and the two were exiled from Paradise forever.

4. Dabka. 'Fire', i.e. conflicts. Somalis believe that because of what Eve did she has cursed womanhood, causing them to remain forever troublesome to men on the earth.

Page 23

1. Shaafici. From Arabic, Shāfīcī, 'Intercessor', a panegyric epithet applied to the Prophet Mahammed and to some major Sufi saints. Here it is applied to the Prophet Mahammed.
2. Sayid Cali. Somali equivalent of the Arabic forms Sayyid <sup>c</sup>Alī bin Abī Tālib, the son-in-law of the Prophet Mahammed. Some Somalis claim that they are direct descendants of this great warrior and poet.
3. Abu Jahal. Somali equivalent of the Arabic forms Abū Jahl, one of the Meccan leaders who opposed the Prophet Mahammed and was killed in the battle of Badr (A.D.623). He was of the same clan as the Prophet. The poet uses the story of Abu Jahal as an allegorical analogy with women. Abu Jahal dragged down his followers by infidelity and they were destroyed. Eve dragged down Adam by her infidelity and they were cast out of Paradise.
4. Note that in the original lines 61-74 are a sequence of dependent clauses which have been amended in translation



for ease of reading.

Page 24

1. Research into the poetry of the other segments of Somali culture is far more limited than that for the pastoralist. Preliminary research by B.W. Andrzejewski has revealed, however, that the poetry of the agriculturalist and coastal merchant does not differ drastically from that of the pastoralist and follows identical rules of alliteration.

Page 25

1. Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, pp. 42-43.
2. Ibid., pp. 43-44.
3. Ibid., pp. 33-38.
4. All the names of the genres in this group are Somali. The term 'miniature', however, is borrowed from Andrzejewski, 1967, and the giving of this name to the group as a whole is my own invention.

Page 26

1. One collection of untranslated Somali stories has been done by Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and is entitled Hhikmad Soomaali (edited by B.W. Andrzejewski — see bibliography), but this work contains no data on the place of the folktale in Somali society. Some of these stories, as well as additional ones, have been translated by B.W. Andrzejewski, 1964, but here again, there is no data given on their function in society.
2. For a discussion on the role of the proverb in Somali society, see Andrzejewski, 1968.
3. The technical distinction between the poetic proverb (maahmaah) and the prosaic proverb (odhaah) is that of the Somali scholar Muusa Hh.I. Galaal. The general public in Somalia use these terms as synonyms.
4. For a plea for peace, see the poem on pp. 128-34 of Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964.
5. Some of the Sayid's poetry can be found in Andrzejewski

and Lewis, 1964, pp. 66-102 and 150-51. Three Somali scholars have collected a vast amount of the Sayid's poetry which they have transcribed, but not translated into English and not published. These scholars are Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, Ahhmed Cali Abokor and Sheekh Jaamac Cumar Ciisa. All of these men can be contacted through Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, Ministry of Education, Mogadishu, Democratic Republic of Somalia.

6. Hess, 1968, especially pp. 104-07.

Page 27

1. It might be mentioned in passing that some Somali scholars, notably Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, have pointed out that the Sayid in fact attempted to transcribe his poetry using the Arabic script. These scholars claim that he abandoned his attempts when he was unable to utilize the vowel system of the script. The Arabic script has only three vowel letters and three diacritical vowel symbols, and the latter are normally left out in letters, newspapers and books except in some theological works and elementary schoolbooks. Such symbolization is completely inadequate for the Somali vowel system, and there is strong resistance in Somalia to the use of any additional symbols which were devised to augment the Arabic script. The Sayid did transcribe some of his poetry, but only that composed in the Arabic language. See Andrzejewski and Lewis, pp. 150-51 and 161.
2. Trimingham, 1952.
3. Although several scripts of Latin and Arabic extraction, as well as some which have been invented especially for for Somali (Cismaaniya, Gadabuursi — see Lewis, 1957a — a script invented by a former Somali District Commissioner of Baydhabo) have been and are presently being used by small groups of Somalis, none of these scripts has ever exerted any influence on the composition of oral poetry.
4. For a detailed discussion on the use of formulae as a

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means of composing oral poetry, see Lord, 1960.

Page 28

1. Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, p. 45.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

Page 30

1. See Lord, 1960, and Finnegan, 1970.
2. Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, p. 46.

Page 33

1. Laurence, 1954, p. 7.
2. The fact that this genre has two names is due to its musical setting. The terms heello (based on the introductory formula for the miniature poem) and hees (based on the musical setting) are used interchangeably. I have chosen to employ the term heello, because this name emphasizes the historical background of the modern poem. Furthermore, the term heello is used more commonly than the term hees by the Somalis themselves.

Page 37

1. The Somali scholar Muusa Hh.I. Galaal includes the baalbaal (or dheel) in this family. Limited research on this genre prevents any further comment on this from me, but one thing is certain. The four genres dealt with in this thesis are the most important ones, and they are recognized by the majority of those I interviewed to be in this family.
2. Conclusions in this part of the thesis were drawn for the most part from interviews with Somali poets and scholars. See Preface, pp. 7-8.

Page 39

1. For the text of a long dhaanto, see Andrzejewski, 1970. It might be pointed out that the religious use of the dhaanto is not common and is marginal to the main trend of the genre. In the source mentioned above, the poem

is composed on the 'string of pearls' principle, i.e. each line (or stanza) is a unit connected by a sequence of alliterations based on the letters of the Arabic alphabet.

Page 40

1. For a general discussion on how genres are differentiated in Somali poetry, see Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, p. 46.
2. It is interesting to note that, although I was not aware of it at the time I carried out my experiment, B.W. Andrzejewski had done the same experiment about fifteen years earlier with another informant and had come to the same conclusions.
3. It should be pointed out that a special genre also exists for the dance. Entitled hees-cayaareed, 'dance-song', it is perhaps more commonly used with the dance than is the miniature poem.
4. See Andrzejewski and Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, 1963.

Page 41

1. In order to save space, and because it is the same each time, the introductory formula has been omitted before the poems in this thesis. See pp. 44-45 for a full description of the introductory formula.
2. It should be pointed out that line division in this thesis is based on the musical delivery of the poem. In the poem on pp. 41-42, for example, lines 2, 4, 6 and 8 share an identical musical delivery, relative to their differing syllable counts. Likewise, lines 3, 5 and 7 are relatively the same. Only the first half of the first line is different when sung by some Somalis. Other Somalis will sing the first line as 3, 5 and 7. With the miniature poem, the problem of line division was easy to solve, for this rule holds with all the miniature poetry, whatever the genre or melody. With the heello, however,

line division, also based on the musical delivery, is more complicated, for each poem has its own melody. In this case, each poem was treated separately, for no overall pattern exists.

Page 42

1. Dabka. 'The weapons'; literally, 'the fire'.
2. The practice of looking after another man's livestock was usually paid with one animal per year's work, plus the daily sustenance of the bachelor.
3. See Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, p. 49.
4. Jidle. Name of a Somali clan.
5. Rain is a Somali symbol for life, prosperity and success. This line implies: 'Oh God, give us the victory'.
6. i.e.[or of a woman]. Men are not permitted to lie with their wives when they are mobilized for battle.

Page 43

1. See Chapter III, pp. 71-72.
2. A short biographical sketch of this Sheikh is given in Andrzejewski, 1970.
3. See Andrzejewski, 1970.
4. See Andrzejewski, 1967, p. 12.

Page 44

1. Leenahay. 'Sing/chant'; literally, 'say/possess'.

Page 45

1. It should be pointed out that Yoonis' nickname need not necessarily mean that he was a thief. He may have got this name from behaviour in his childhood when many nicknames are given.

Page 46

1. See Andrzejewski and Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, 1966.

Page 47

1. See Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, 1968, p. 14.
2. Ibid.

3. Indeed during some parts of the year milk alone makes up the diet of camel herders.
4. Dhudi. Panegyric name, see p. 57, number 5.
5. Badbaado. 'Blessing'; literally 'safety'.
6. Beer Nugul. Panegyric name, see p. 56, number 1.

Page 48

1. U1. 'Dead branch'; literally 'stick'.

Page 49

1. Note that there are two possible translations of this line, the most likely of which appears in the text. The other possible interpretation might read as follows: 'And roars [from the coast of] the ocean.'
2. There are many communities of Somalis, mostly made up of sailors, in several areas of the world. Cardiff in Wales, for example, supports a population of around 3,000 Somali immigrants.

Page 52

1. It should be pointed out that the story which follows is paraphrased and is not the translation of a properly collected folktale. This is because the poems were presented to me by my informant and then translated; after this, the story was related to me. I understand that the usual method of delivery is for the reciter to tell the story as I have done, with the poems inside the story.
2. Panegyric names, see p. 56, numbers 2, 3, and 4.
3. Cawaysiinka. 'The rest period'. The period of time in the evening when the animals have been rounded up, but before they are milked.
4. Dhiin-Gorayo. Panegyric name. Dhiin is the reddish-purple colour of a cow. Gorayo is an ostrich. The feeling for this colour is the same as for the panegyric name Bullo (see p. 56, number 4). The ostrich is prized for its soft feathers which at one time were sought on the world market. The use here refers to the softness of

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the hair of the person to whom the panegyric name is directed.

Page 54

1. See Andrzejewski, 1967, p. 7.

Page 55

1. Most notably in the gabay of Cilmi Bowndheeri (See Mohamed Farah Abdillahi and Andrzejewski, 1967).

Page 56

1. Gal. 'Go behind'; literally 'enter'.

Page 60

1. Laurence, 1954, p. 6.

Page 61

1. Lewis, 1965, pp. 40, 41, 44, 46, 85; Touval, 1963, p. 32.
2. Lewis, 1965, p. 102.
3. Ibid., p. 103.

Page 62

1. Ibid., p. 132.
2. For a detailed account of the development of radio broadcasting in Somalia, see Suleiman Mohamoud Adam, 1968.
3. Touval, 1963, p. 78.

Page 63

1. Lewis, 1965, p. 132.
2. Ibid., pp. 148-49.
3. Related to me in 1968 by Mahhammuud Ahhmed Cali, a pioneer in education in the British Somaliland Protectorate. Somalis call Mahhammuud 'The Father of Somali Education in the North'.
4. Lewis, 1965, p. 133.

Page 64

1. Ibid., p. 114, and Touval, 1963, p. 65.
2. For the background of these riots, see Lewis, 1965, p. 135.
3. Ibid., p. 122.
4. Ibid., p. 134.

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Page 65

1. Touval, 1963, p. 82.

Page 66

1. Conclusions in this part of the thesis were drawn for the most part from interviews with Somali poets and scholars. See Preface, pp. 7-8.

Page 67

1. Belwooy, belwooy, hooy belwooy. Introductory formula, see p. 73 for explanation and meaning.
2. Cabdi had a unique method of gaining inspiration for composing his poetry. He had one long hair in the middle of the rest of his hair. This long hair he protected from the barber when he went to have his hair cut. At the times when he wished to compose, Cabdi would stroke and pull on this hair. (From a conversation with Cabdullaahi Qarshe on 4 June, 1969).

Page 69

1. It should be pointed out here that such semi-professional activity was not common in traditional Somalia. Real professionalism in Somali poetry was to await the coming of the radio. See Chapter VIII.
2. Khadiija 'Belwo' was especially talented in a dance called 'Hharrigaad' or 'Tahhriig' which Somalis say came from South Arabia. During this dance glasses are sometimes balanced on the shoulders or breasts of the dancer.

Page 70

1. For a detailed description of the Somali tradition of poetic challenge, see Andrzejewski and Muusa Hh.I. Galaal, 1963.
2. The population of Boorame are involved in agriculture more than their neighbours and eat less camel meat than their brothers in Hargeysa. Thus the people of Hargeysa have been given the nickname beergeel, '[the ones who eat] the liver of camels', by the people of Boorame.



Because liver is rarely eaten in the bush, this term might also be a panegyric name for the people of Hargeysa meaning 'Those-Who-Are-As-Tough-In-The-Mind-And-Body-As-A-Camel'.

Page 71

1. To the East. i.e. Hargeysa which is to the east of Boorame.
2. Note the sarcasm in this line, the original belwo having been composed as a result of Cabdi Sinima's broken-down lorry.
3. Suleiman, 1968, p. 7.

Page 72

1. For a poetic attack on the miniature poem, see Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, pp. 151-52.
2. Laurence, 1954, p. 7.

Page 73

1. Wellek and Warren, 1949, p. 72.

Page 74

1. i.e. 'Was my heart broken?' The liver is one of the seats of emotion in Somali poetry.
2. i.e. Twelve love affairs, or being rejected by his love twelve times.

Page 77

1. Sooryo. According to the informant from whom this belwo was collected, Mahammed Jaamac Galaal, sooryo is the first payment of brideprice to the girl's clan. The term sooryo is used more often in urban communities, the bush community using the term gabaati. The final payment (and term for brideprice in general) is called yarad by both communities. Sooryo differs from gabaati in that it usually consists of money whereas gabaati usually consists of livestock. Yarad shares a similar difference although Mahammed reported that it is loosing its hold on townspeople.
2. Geel sidig. Part of the brideprice mentioned in the

poem. A geel sidig is highly prized as brideprice. Under this system one calf is shared by two she-camels. When for some reason a she-camel's young dies (note that it is sometimes killed during a drought in order to create the geel sidig situation), the she-camel is coerced into suckling another she-camel's baby. This produces more milk for human consumption and ensures that at least one of the baby camels will survive. There are several ways of persuading a she-camel 'to accept' a baby which is not her own. One of them is to put the skin of her own baby (maqarsaar) on another baby camel. Another method is a 'shock treatment' (tolmo) by partly stopping the she-camel's nostrils and frightening her with suffocation. After a while, the nostrils are freed and the she-camel is so pleased with her liberation that she accepts the strange baby and allows it to suckle her.

3. i.e. If I waste any more time, her clan will take someone else's brideprice and I will lose her altogether.

Page 78

1. Of the 79 belwo collected during my researches, 52 are on the subject of love, while only 27 deal with other topics.
2. Laurence, 1954, p. 8. Note that the word gabay is here spelled 'gabei'.

Page 79

1. Share, i.e. The girl he loves.

Page 80

1. His problem is that he is in love.

Page 81

1. Hahey! Exclamation of excitement.
2. It is somewhat ironic that the composer of these last three belwo, a man called Shey-Waal, eventually became a sufi.

Page 82

1. Hohey! Variation of hahey. See p. 81, note 1, above.

Note that this expression is usually used in sorrow.

2. Note that the lines have been transposed in the English version for ease of translation.

Page 83

1. Note that the first two lines have been transposed in the English version for ease of translation.

Page 84

1. i.e. I will dance with you even if you are crippled.

Page 85

1. Conclusions in this part of the thesis were drawn for the most part from interviews with Somali poets and scholars. See Preface, pp. 7-8.

Page 86

1. The theme of the equality of women was also used as the basis of two complete plays in the modern Somali theatre. The first, Shabeel Naagood, 'The Woman [Stalking] Leopard', by Hhasan Sheekh Muumin, has been transcribed and translated by B.W. Andrzejewski and is hopefully to be published soon. The second, Yahhaas Dhega-Dhuub, 'A Crocodile with Pointed/Elongated Ears', was composed as a reaction to the first. See also the poems on pp. 20-24 and pp. 156-59.
2. Suleiman, 1968, pp. 22-24.
3. As reported in War Somali Sidihi, no. 19, 26 September, 1953.

Page 87

1. Suleiman, pp. 14-15.

Page 88

1. See p. 73.
2. Laurence, 1954, p. 7.

Page 89

1. Suleiman, 1968, pp. 7, 14.

Page 90

1. Haweeyo. Panegyric name. It means 'The Best One of All.'

2. Madheedh. A berry bush either cordia gharaf or cordia ovalis.
3. War. Name of a Somali settlement in the Hawd in Ethiopia.
4. The Gaaroodi Plain. A plain south of Burco in northern Somalia.
5. Guud. 'Hair'; literally 'top'.
6. Somalis value the horse above all animals, even the camel. This line is a compliment to the beauty of the girl's hair. For a poem praising the qualities of a horse, see Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, pp. 66-70.

Page 92

1. It will be remembered that nomenclature was the biggest problem in my research. What I have called 'heello A and B', Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964, call 'heello' and 'modern hees'. I have pointed out that Somalis themselves use two terms for the modern poem, heello and hees (see pp. 11-12). This usage is further complicated in that the term hees is used for several other genres and the term heello is almost always used when the modern poem is under discussion by Somalis. Andrzejewski and Lewis' terminology, then, presents a problem in that it is somewhat oversimplified, for the problem of attaching appropriate names to the different stages in the development of modern poetry is complex. Considering the ambiguity of the Somali nomenclature, I have chosen not to mix the two terms, but to choose the one describing a poetic genre. Thereafter, its stages have been called Form A and Form B. Perhaps the problem can be clarified by the following chart:

Somali	Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964	Johnson, 1971
<u>belwo</u>	<u>belwo</u>	<u>belwo</u>
<u>belwo</u> or <u>heello</u> (early)	<u>heello</u>	<u>heello</u> , Form A

(Somali)

(Andrzejewski and  
Lewis, 1964)

(Johnson, 1971)

heello or hees  
(later)

modern hees

heello, Form B

Page 96

1. Two translations of the Somali phrase Ka kacaay ('stand up/get out of it/arise') have been employed in order to cover the semantic sphere of the phrase.
2. Kooralay. Place name. Probably a fictitious place since no references can be found to it in any gazetteer of Somalia or on any map. Furthermore, the Governor, Sir Gerald Reece, about whom this poem was composed, did not burn any town in Somalia or Kenya. The word was probably chosen for its alliteration.
3. Note that this poetic hyperbole does not refer to any massacre in the history of the British Somaliland Protectorate.

Page 97

1. Sir Gerald Reece never attempted to encourage proselytizing of Christianity in Somalia. This line in the poem is a poetic hyperbole.
2. Kama-kamaz. Somali nickname for Sir Gerald Reece, the first governor of the British Somaliland Protectorate after the British Military Administration returned the area to civilian rule in 1948. The nickname refers to the stammer or stutter characteristic of Sir Gerald's speech. It might also be mentioned that many Somalis have told me that Reece was the most popular governor to serve in the Protectorate. This poem was composed in the year he took office and his popularity grew only after he left Somalia.
3. Sir Gerald Reece had been in charge of the Northern Frontier District of Kenya where Somalis live before he went to Somalia. This line is also a poetic hyperbole.
4. i.e. The four powers which divided up Somalia: France, Italy, England and Ethiopia.

5. i.e. To divide Somalia.
6. i.e. The Somalis are ready to die for their country's independence and unification.

Page 98

1. Milk is a common image in Somali poetry for wealth and prosperity.
2. See p. 96, note 1, found on p. 224.
3. Hangool. A stick about a yard long with a two-teethed, forked end and a hooked end. It is used for uprooting (with the forked end) thorn bushes and carrying them (with the hooked end) to a place where a fence or a corral is to be constructed.
4. Brothers. Literally 'Bah' brothers, i.e. brothers who are from the same father and mother; i.e. one's closest kin. By metaphoric extention, this line could also refer to all the Somalis.
5. Hoby. City on the coast of Somalia in the region of Mudug.
6. Harar or Adari. Town in Ethiopia just south of Dirir-Dhabe.
7. Hawaas. Town in Ethiopia on the train route between Addis Ababa and Jabuuti. This is the last town occupied by Somalis before one enters Galla country.

Page 100

1. The latest belwo I collected were composed in 1963.

Page 102

1. Lewis, 1965, p. 151.
2. For the complete background to this meeting and the territory involved, see Drysdale, 1964, Chapter VII: 'The Haud Fiasco', pp. 74-87; and Lewis, 1965, pp. 129-31. For further background on why this decision was made, see Lewis, 1965, pp. 50-60, for the reasons behind why this territory was ceded to Ethiopia the first time in history.
3. Touval, 1963, p. 103.

4. Lewis, 1965, p. 150.

Page 103

1. Ibid., p. 151.

2. See the photograph facing p. 242 of Lewis, 1961.

Page 104

1. Drysdale, 1964, p. 82.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

Page 105

1. This poem was collected on two different occasions. Because of the text of stanzas IV and V and their differing alliterations, it is possible that they were added after 1955 when the main body of the poem was composed.

Page 106

1. Possibly a reference to the N.U.F. delegation to London and New York.
2. Possibly a reference to the treaties signed between the Somalis and the British. The tree trunks (treaties) gave me no solace (failed to protect me).

Page 107

1. Jal. 'To give solace'; literally, 'to give food (usually sweet) to an ill or dying person.'
2. The Somali spear (waran), like other spears, has a blade (bir) and a staff (samay), but in addition it has a small blade (jufo) at the bottom end of it. To stab a man with the jufo quite literally is to add insult to injury. Again the enemy referred to is the British; the insult is to fail to live up to their treaty obligations while the injury is the giving away of land under their protection.
3. Jowhara and Luula. Panegyric names. Jowhara means 'precious jewelry' while Luula means 'pearls'. These two women to whom the poem is ostensibly addressed represent the Hawd and Reserved Areas.
4. i.e. Who are of the same clan as me. This phrase is often used as a compliment to a lover, because one's own

- clan is the most important group to which one belongs.
5. Obvious reference to the loss of the territories.
  6. The verb jeellan literally means to 'suffer from a deficiency of salt.'
  7. This line reads literally, 'My shouting is not from [my] bosom/chest'.
  8. The Plains of Fedes and the farms of Jigjiga are inside the Hawd and Reserved Area.
  9. The maned lion is a reference to the Lion of Judah, one of the titles of the Emperor of Ethiopia.
  10. The poet was driven away from his prosperous area (lines 23-24) by the maned lion (line 25) into a famine stricken area where the hyenas were so hungry that they would enter homesteads and would have to be chased away with hot water.
  11. This is a reference to the naming of directions and places (with the pivotal point at Boorame, where the poem is being composed). Hargeysa was the first town of the east (bari) and Boorame, Camuud, Jigjiga and other towns west of Hargeysa were in the West (galbeed). With the border shift, however, the poet says that Boorame must now be considered a part of the East.
  12. There are two possible translations of this line, the most likely of which is given in the main body of the poem. The other possible translation reads as follows: 'Are we not equal to those people who waited [patiently for their rights]', etc. The problem arises in the progressive past tense of the weak verb, when the two verbs involved are pronounced exactly alike.
  13. This line reads literally, 'And who possess testicles, like us?'

Page 108

1. i.e. 'Are we not fully human and honourable like them?'
2. A similar group of artists called 'Hay Sheegsheegin', 'Do Not Talk About Me', was formed in the South but



limited research prevents any comment about them. Their purpose undoubtedly paralleled the Walaalo Hargeysa as did their activities.

Page 109

1. The poet is addressing the British.
2. Awaare is a town about 40 miles south of Hargeysa. It was included in the area ceded to Ethiopia.
3. Afmeer. A town in the Hawd between the boundary of the Somali Democratic Republic and Awaare.
4. i.e. To London and New York (?).

Page 110

1. i.e. The Somali people.

Page 111

1. Wiilo. Panegyric name. From the Somali wiil, 'boy', it means 'The-Girl-Who-Is-As-Honourable-Strong-Intelligent-As-A-Man'.
2. Wadaad. Man of God. For a complete definition of a wadaad, see Lewis, 1961, pp. 27f, 199, 213f, and 259f.
3. i.e. Handicapped. The particular handicap is that the poet lives under colonial rule. Also, Cabdullaahi, who sang this poem in public, is himself a cripple in one leg. Although he did not compose the poem himself, it seems likely that Huseyn Aw Faarahh composed it for him. Several Somalis have explained this line to me thus because of Cabdullaahi's handicap.
4. Welinimo. 'Special powers'. From the Somali weli, 'saint'. For a description of welinimo, see Lewis, 1955/56.
5. Somalis wear white as a mourning cloth. The girl is instructed to put on a mourning cloth to mourn for her country which is under foreign rule.
6. The poet perhaps means that no progress has been made toward independence, but line 6 implies that the struggle must go on.
7. The poet perhaps means the promise to struggle for

independence.

Page 112

1. Warsame. Somali male name. i.e. The British administration.
2. i.e. 'Wherever you go, the British are watching you.'
3. Waraabe. 'Hyena', i.e. the British.
4. Ka wacdi. 'To warn about'; literally, 'to preach against something so that the person will avoid or cease from doing that thing.'
5. Note that this poem on the theme of love has vague images implying some hidden political message unknown to my informant.

Page 113

1. Dayr. The secondary rainy season in Somalia which occurs during the autumn.
2. Hohey. See p. 82, note 1, found on p. 221.
3. Haakah. Exclamation word of general satisfaction usually of the senses.

Page 114

1. i.e. To the other world. This line reads literally, 'The soul which God is going to cut goes home.'
2. i.e. I caused my problems myself.
3. Nabsi. A Somali belief related to the Moslem belief in fate. The word has many overtones, but in general it is a great and powerful balancing force. If a man is happy today, he will be sad tomorrow; if there is rain this season, there will be drought during the next; if a man is wealthy as a young man, he will be poor when he grows old. Nabsi is sometimes used with a meaning approximating 'avenging fate' (see line 70 of the poem on pp. 120-29 of Andrzejewski and Lewis, 1964). Nabsi is probably a Cushitic belief and not of Islamic origin though it does not conflict with Moslem theology. Compare the use of this belief in the poems on pp. 122-23, line 33 and pp. 161-64, lines 24-43; and in the story of the Soothsayer

(number 23) on pp. 49-61 of Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and Andrzejewski, 1956, which is also translated into English in Andrzejewski, 1963, pp. 149-63.

4. i.e. Now I am suffering. This line implies that at first the girl loved the poet who rejected her. Now the situation is reversed.

Page 115

1. Qod. 'Straight branch of a tree'. This metaphor implies that the man is handsome and straight of body like a tree branch.
2. Flowers are the result of rain. This image can be classified under rain as a positive symbol. The man is a bringer of prosperity or is living in prosperity.
3. Bal qabso. 'Take my word for it'; literally, 'just take it [for the truth]'. This idiom is fairly new in Somali and is not widely used by older people.
4. One hazard of stock rearing in Somalia is the danger of cliffs. Camels sometimes lean over a cliff in order to reach the tasty leaves of the acacia tree and sometimes lose their balance and fall.
5. Dhunkaal. 'Poison', i.e. the love for the man. Love, often seen as an illness, is here symbolized as poison.
6. i.e. Love keeps her from sleeping properly.
7. i.e. Love keeps her from eating properly and she is becoming thin.
8. To have something in one's right hand. This is an Islamic image meaning to hold something securely. The left hand is considered ritually unclean.
9. War. 'Advice'; literally, 'news/rumours'.

Page 116

1. Hibo. Panegyric name. It means 'the Gifted/Talented One'.
2. Haybi. 'To search'; literally 'to search for one's clan' or 'to search for one's position in the clan'. The poet means here either that he is always keeping track of Hibo

through watching her clan's movements, or that through learning her genealogy, he can determine if she is marriageable to him.

3. Ina abti. 'Cousin'; literally, 'the daughter of one's mother's sister'. This kind of cousin is marriageable to a young man who is rarely refused to be allowed to marry her. Ina abti is also applied to one's father's sister's daughter but marriage through this line is rare.
4. Han-weynyahay. 'To love'; literally, 'to have great pride/regard for something/to mean much to'.
5. Hagaagga. 'Happiness'; literally, 'goodness/virtue'. i.e. The good thing (love) between us.
6. This line is taken from a Somali proverb:

Hadal iyo hilbaha kala qalan.

'Speech and meat are two different things.'

i.e. 'The subject has become clear'.

7. i.e. They have parted against the wishes of the poet.

Page 118

1. A description of the Somali flag will aid the reader in understanding the images in this poem. The Somali flag is a five pointed star (white) on a field (blue). The five points on the star symbolize the five parts of Greater Somalia: the former British Somaliland Protectorate, the former Italian Somaliland, French Somaliland, the Northern Frontier District in Kenya, and the areas in Ethiopia where Somalis live. Only the British and Italian parts are presently independent.
2. i.e. Nothing is blotting out the sun, an image for wisdom.
3. i.e. On independence day, July 1, 1960.
4. Stomach. One of the seats of emotion in Somali poetry. The poet implies here that on independence day, all the unpleasant emotions of living under colonialism were wiped clean.
5. Culayga. 'Fire-brand'. A piece of wood which has been

burned and charred. It is used to coat the inside of a milk vessel (dhiil) in order to sterilize it.

6. Cidaad. 'Cleansing fibre.' A group of bound reeds used to clean (most of) the char out of the milk vessel when the sterilization process is finished. It is also used for wiping the ghee from one's hand after a meal and is believed to be an insect repellent. For this reason it is stored inside the hut (aqal).
7. This line reads literally: 'Oh God, do not make [the Star] return [to where it came from].
8. Five upper arms. The five territories in which the Somalis live (see p. 118, note one above). The upper arm is an image of strength.

Page 120

1. Lewis, 1965, p. 162.
2. Ibid., p. 154.

Page 122

1. Date of Somali independence.
2. Luggooyada. 'Disaster'; literally, 'the cutting of legs.' This image is often used as a curse in Somalia.
3. June 26, 1960. Date of the independence of the former British Somaliland Protectorate.
4. Somalis churn milk for ghee, the fat, which is used as a sauce for meat, rice, etc. This metaphor indicates great prosperity, for ghee is made from milk only during periods of rain and abundance. During drier seasons ghee is made by boiling meat. This line could read: 'When did we gain prosperity?'
5. 12:00 midnight. Literally '6:00 midnight'. This is the Semitic system of counting time where 1:00 = 7:00; 2:00 = 8:00, etc. The independence of British Somaliland came at midnight.
6. i.e. When British and Italian Somalilands became the Somali Republic.
7. The poet means the missing territories of Greater

Somalia, of which there are three, not two. It is probable that the poet needed an 'L' word (e.g. labadii, 'the two') for alliteration purposes.

Page 123

1. Haweeya. Panegyric name. In this case, the woman represents the former British Somaliland Protectorate. This name is probably connected with the Somali word hawo, 'pride/self-esteem'.
2. Cast aside freedom. i.e. By joining the southern regions.
3. Geeddi. 'The move' of a Somali reer (family encampment) from one site to another.
4. Abaar. 'Drought.' This implies that the joining of the northern and southern regions would cause a political drought for the northerners.
5. Golmoon. 'Lean'; literally the state where the abdomen is shrunk in; this is caused by severe hunger.
6. Frothing milk denotes prosperity.
7. Nabsi. See p. 114, note 3, found on p. 229.
8. This line implies that the poet rejects the future advice from his elders who wanted the joining of the northern and southern regions to take place. The poet feels that the problem is one for the younger generation to solve.

Page 124

1. This poem was translated by Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and edited by me and Michael Cushman Walsh. See Preface, p. 7.

Page 125

1. In his confusion the singer cannot find his fellow singer. The metaphoric implication of this line is: 'Where are you, of students of Somalia? What are your goals in education? What has foreign language to do with Somali education?'

Page 127

1. i.e. Acceptance of the use of foreign languages.
2. i.e. By foreigners.

Page 128

1. Lewis, 1965, p. 156.
2. Ibid., p. 166.

Page 129

1. Ibid., p. 174.

Page 131

1. This formula is borrowed from the traditional Somali genre called guuhh. The guuhh originated, like the belwo, in the area of Boorame west of Hargeysa and was used as a recitation at night to keep the men guarding camels awake.

Page 132

1. Hir and hilaac. 'Distant shapes of clouds' and 'lightning'. These are announcers of rain which is the universal Somali symbol of prosperity. (The opposite symbol can be seen in line 27). Lines 7-9 announce the coming of independence to the Somali Republic.
2. i.e. The freedom that the poet expected to find when independence came did not come.
3. Hadh gal. 'To rest'; literally, 'to enter the shade'. A Somali idiom which means, among other things, 'to break for lunch'.
4. Ya. Exclamation of emotion, here sorrow.
5. i.e. The support I had was weak and of little use.
6. Way. Exclamation of emotion, here sorrow.
7. i.e. There is still hope. The milking of the camel is done on the left side. Milk shares the implications of rain in Somali imagery.
8. i.e. Why are you now idle? I am in jail and can do nothing, but you, oh Northern Somalia, are not.
9. i.e. Support, action.
10. In Somali society women occupy a position inferior to men. Thus the handicapped North is symbolized by a woman.

1. This line is from a Somali folktale, the genre of which always ends in a proverb. There was once a man who had a she-camel. Another man came to him and claimed that the she-camel was really his. The two men went to a traditional Somali court to have their case heard by the elders. (Somali Customary Law is called hheer and is conducted by respected clan elders who know the customary jurisprudence.) Neither man could produce proof of ownership and the elder in charge said to the original owner:

Hubsiiino hal baa La siistaa.

'Certainty is bartered for a she-camel.'

In short: 'It is better to lose a she-camel and be certain, than to keep it and risk hell fire on Judgement Day.' The line in the poem implies: 'It is better to let a guilty one go free than to punish the innocent.'

2. Dhadhiin. Place name. Dhadhiin is located in the Sheekh Pass between Sheekh and Berbera in the North. The implication of this line is obscure. Dhadhiin literally means 'a pool of water.'
3. i.e. I searched for a plan very carefully.
4. i.e. When the coup was taking place, why did you not assist me? Note that the question is phrased in the present tense in the original..
5. Praise directed to the lieutenants.
6. i.e. Forces from the Somali government.
7. i.e. Lack of support and strength.
8. i.e. The man responsible for carrying out the details of God's will is one's father. The father here symbolizes the northern members of Parliament.
9. i.e. The northern M.P.'s failed to support the coup.
10. i.e. The man with power tries to preserve it.
11. Hadh gal. 'To find peace'; literally, 'to enter the shade'. See p. 132, note 3 above. This line implies



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that those in power are well off.

12. Aroori. Place name. A large, treeless and desolate plain south of Burco in northern Somalia. This plain is often referred to in poetry and has come to mean 'desert' or 'a desolate place'. This line implies: 'I was helpless and poor.'

Page 134

1. These lines are delivered with sarcasm. The government is 'right' because it has might.
2. Fidhin laan gobeed. Long, carved, wooden comb made from the branch of the Gob Tree (zizyphus spina christi or zizyphus mauritiana) and used by Somali women. The Somali bow is also made from this tree, and it also bears edible fruit. The Gob is said to have its roots in heaven and if a clan is called 'gob', it means that it is made up of clever and honourable men. (Gun, 'bottom', is the opposite of gob in this context.) This line is also sarcastic in that the government is aligned with intelligence and honour. Stanza VIII, taken as a whole, implies that the lieutenants and their coup have failed. Northern Somalia then says to the government in Muqdishu: 'You are right because you have the power.'

Page 135

1. This poem is from Cali Sugulle's play of 1962 entitled Indha-Sara-Caad, an ambiguous term in Somali which can mean any of the following things: 'That Which Dazzles the Eyes'; 'The Distant Mist/Haze/Dust'; 'That Which Dims the Sun'; 'A Cataract on the Eye'. All these interpretations imply some sort of political deception or confusion. The play was extremely popular and was reported to have run 19 consecutive nights in Muqdishu. It is said that the (then) Prime Minister Shar-Ma-Arke, who attended the play more than once, wept during the performance.

Page 136

1. The reference here is to the young men of the countries

which are enemies of Somalia.

2. i.e. The children of the Somali nation who are under foreign control.
3. i.e. We are cowards.
4. Lines 7-10 imply 'If our own people are maltreated, I cannot reject death; in such circumstances I must not think of the claims of my clan, of wealth and prosperity.'
5. Meaning implied. Note the similar structure in the Somali animal story in Omar Au Nuh, 1970 (number ii, p. 9).
6. 'You' are the parts of Somalia outside the Republic.
7. Qoqobka. '[Political] boundaries'; literally the dividing fence inside a Somali corral to divide the animals. The image is that the corral is Greater Somalia while the fences divide its various parts.
8. Dhammees yahay. 'Is complete/whole'; literally, 'is born on schedule'.
9. The implications of these lines are as follows. The five points of the star on the Somali flag (see p. 118, note 1, found on p. 231) represent all five parts of the Somali nation, but only two of these parts make up the present Democratic Republic of Somalia. The poet is implying that national fulfillment (represented by the moon) was born prematurely, for the five Somalilands are not yet united. Although this is the situation (symbolized by the mirage), then (as the chorus states), the poet is dishonourable if he rejects death, claims clan ties, etc. Note that the word for an astrological star (hhidig-ga: masculine) is used instead of the word for an astronomical star (hhidig-ta: feminine) to describe the star on the flag.

Page 138

1. i.e. Of those Africans who sided with foreigners.
2. Lewis, 1965, p. 201.

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Page 140

1. Soco. 'Agree'; literally, 'to go/procede'.

Page 141

1. This poem was translated by Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and edited by me and Michael Cushman Walsh. See Preface, p. 7.

Page 142

1. U loog. Literally, 'to slaughter an animal for the refreshment of a guest.'
2. Leehho. This Somali morpheme has a broad semantic range. It could mean any of the following: 'swinging/momentum/pendulum force'; anything which causes the above, as in the poem, 'light breezes'. The image is derived from the children's amusement of swinging on the branch of a tree.
3. Laac. An indistinct object or thing on the horizon and not necessarily the typical mirage of the desert, which is dhalanteed in Somali.
4. This is a reference to the Somali belief in Nabsi. See p. 114, note 3, found on p. 229.

Page 143

1. Feet = actions; breast = feelings; i.e. you did not do as your conscience directed.
2. Him. An unknown enemy who had attacked the poet in the past. The same enemy is now attacking the person to whom the poet addresses his verse.
3. Abundance. Literally 'the milking'.
4. Garanuug. Waller's gazelle.

Page 144

1. Lewis, 1965, p. 201.
2. For a collection of articles and essays concerning the Ethiopia-Somali-Kenya Dispute, see Hoskyns, 1969.
3. Somali News, n. 356, 24 November, 1967, p. 1.

Page 146

1. Them. Hhoogga Dalka. The Somali national army.
2. A reference to the style of marching in Somalia. The line also implies that the army is not lazy.

Page 148

1. This poem was translated by Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and edited by me and Michael Cushman Walsh. See Preface, p. 7.

Page 150

1. Gunto. 'To prepare oneself'; literally, 'to tighten one's garment.'
2. Gu. The primary rainy season in Somalia.
3. Jiilaal. The primary dry season in Somalia.

Page 151

1. Geed-adayg. 'Most enduring of men'; literally, 'the hardest wood'.
2. This poem was translated by Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and edited by me and Michael Cushman Walsh. See Preface, p. 7.

Page 153

1. Compare the Somali proverb:  
Dani waa seeto.  
'Necessity is a hobbling rope.'
2. Lagu seehhdo. 'Upon whom others rely'; literally, 'upon whom others sleep'; i.e. 'who is watchful so that others may sleep peacefully'. This expression is often used in nomadic life where night guards are posted during a time of danger, and when old women have to look after the fires (against wild beasts) at night. If a person is a reliable guard, then he is someone 'on whom one can sleep'. The person upon whom others are relying is Aadan Cabdulla Cismaan, the first president of the Somali Republic.
3. Seermaweydo Season. The time in the middle of the primary rainy season when abundance abides. This is the time for marriages and the other festivities of the rainy season.
4. Saddehhdii. 'The Three'. Reference to the three parts of Greater Somalia outside the state of Somalia.
5. This image refers to the independence of the Somali Republic.

Page 154

1. Saakuub. 'Tomorrow'; literally, 'the third day from today'; that is, in the future. i.e. Because they will become corrupted by their power.
2. This poem was composed in the Benaadir Dialect of Somali
3. Three rings of a cow bell, used as a rhythmic interlude.

Page 155

1. Barkin. 'Headrest'. A carved, wooden headrest, used as a pillow by the interior people in Somalia. Similar headrests dating over 5,000 years old can be found in the British Museum, Egyptian section.

Page 157

1. To gossip about someone secretly and to spread malicious rumours about him, even if the rumours are true is considered one of the most offensive acts that can be committed against a person. Moslem ethics requires that the person be approached in private and his offence be discussed in secret with him.

Page 158

1. i.e. Of reason.
2. This line could also mean 'Concede us a point [in this discussion]!'

Page 160

1. Ya. Exclamation of emotion, here excitement.
2. Leebiyo gantaalaha. 'The star players'; literally, 'the arrow and the arrows'. These terms are used as metaphors for the best players of each team. The arrow is considered the most fearful weapon in Somalia, especially because it is often poisoned.
3. Gammuunka. 'Star player'; literally, 'the arrow'. See the note above.
4. Gashaanka. 'The defence'; literally, 'the shield'.
5. Lista. 'Success'; literally, 'list', from Italian lista.
6. Geed fadhiisto. 'To decide'; literally, 'to sit under a tree'. The traditional Somali method of deciding about a

clan's affairs is conducted under a large tree, which then becomes the symbol of hheer, Somali Traditional Law

Page 161

1. Guntiga adkayso. 'To prepare oneself'; literally, 'to tighten one's garment'. See p. 150, note 1, found on p. 239.
2. Galaaska. 'The cup'; literally, 'the glass'. A loan word from English.
3. Birta. 'The goal post'; literally, 'metal/iron', from which the goal posts are constructed.
4. This poem is translated by Muusa Hh.I. Galaal and edited by me and Michael Cushman Walsh. See Preface, p. 7. Because no tape was available for this poem, it was not possible to reproduce the line repeat and refrain pattern.

Page 163

1. The meeting. The Berlin Conference of 1884-85, a turning point in the European scramble for Africa. The powers (Britain, France, Portugal, Germany, and King Leopold of Belgium — who was working to gain a personal empire unrelated to the government of Belgium —) revealed to each other here that a quick partition of Africa was inevitable: the scramble for Africa had officially begun.
2. Nabsi. See p. 114, note 3, found on p. 229.
3. Our lands. The Somalilands outside the Somali state. This image could also refer to the whole of Africa.
4. Elder. i.e. Nabsi, see note 2 above.
5. Right. i.e. Somalia's right to her missing lands.

Page 164

1. i.e. Nabsi will come. The colonialists and what they wrought (the division of Somalia and Africa) cannot last forever.

Page 167

1. Gu. The primary rainy season in Somalia.
2. Jiilaal. The primary dry season in Somalia.
3. To compare a woman's beauty to that of a horse is

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complimentary. The horse is the most valued animal among Somalis, prized even above the camel.

Page 168

1. Guban. The range of mountains south of the branch of the rift valley in northern Somalia.
2. Gorgoor. A type of grass in Somalia, maybe eleusine floccifolia.
3. Maadh. A type of grass from which Somalis make mats for the walls of their portable huts (agal), maybe aristida sp.
4. Maadh in the evening reflects many beautiful colours.
5. Gubato. Place name. Gubato is somewhere near the Hawd in eastern Ethiopia.
6. Hawd. The north-eastern part of the Ogaadeen in Ethiopia.

Page 170

1. Qumman. Panegyric name. See p. 195, number 8.
2. Lines 5-7 are taken from a Somali proverb:

Ninkaad taqaanno, waa inaad jid la martaa,  
jidiinna la cuntaa, jahaadna la gashaa.

'If you are really to know a man, you must first travel with him, eat a meal with him, and enter battle with him.'

What the poet is asking the girl is: 'Do you really understand love?'

3. The reference here may be to a Romeo and Juliet situation.
4. Jiljilada. The area of the foot above the heel (cidhib-ta), behind the ankle (cangawga) and in front of the Achilles' tendon (seedda).

Page 171

1. i.e. Love sometimes throws you up, sometimes down.

Page 173

1. Hohey. See p. 82, note 1, found on p. 221.
2. Milk is a symbol of prosperity and success.
3. & 4. The colonialists.

Page 176

1. Gudin. Somali axe used for cutting thorn bushes which are used for the construction of fences and corrals. The gudin has an iron head and a wooden handle.
2. Hangool. See p. 98, note 3, found on p. 225.
3. Gogol. Sleeping mat or skin. This line means that because the red earth is so soft, one does not need bedding in order to rest on it.

Page 177

1. Wajeer. One of the principal towns in the N.F.D. in Kenya, which is inhabited and claimed by Somalis.
2. Wiida. 'The Oui ("yes")'. Refers to the positive vote on the referendum in Jabuuti (1958, 1967). An affirmative vote is for France to remain in the colony.
3. Obokh. Town in the French Territory of Afars and Issas (French Somaliland).
4. Hawd. See p. 168, note 6, found on p. 242.

Page 182

1. See p. 150, note 1, found on p. 239.
2. I came close. Literally, 'I entered into the centre of.'
3. I failed. Literally, 'I passed over the top of'; i.e. 'I made an attempt but failed/I was never able to get to the bottom of it/I was prevented from fully explaining the matter [because of hostile reception].' A Somali term of debate.

Page 184

1. Compare the use of rain in the heello with that of the miniature poem. See pp. 46-47.

Page 186

1. Compare the use of illness in the heello with that of the miniature poem. See pp. 47-48.

Page 187

1. Compare the use of the tree in the heello with that of the miniature poem. See p. 48.
2. Note that the poem translates easier when the first two



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lines are transposed.

Page 188

1. Compare this discussion with that for the miniature poem on pp. 48-49.

Page 191

1. The sunbeams are caused by moisture in the air. This adds to the overall positiveness of the poem in that one sees sunbeams only in the rainy season.
2. Gu. The primary rainy season in Somalia.
3. i.e. Water is so abundant that one sees its reflection in many pools. This also shows the listener that it is noon, for sunlight which is directly overhead in Somalia is reflected in the pool.
4. Gelgelimaad. 'The place where animals dust themselves'. A place picked out by animals to dust themselves in order to keep the insects off of them. These places have no grass growing in them and are used so often for this purpose that they become lower than the level ground. In the rainy season they fill up with water, forming little pools.
5. Somalis have a traditional belief that the sun enters a hole in the horizon at sunset, passes through the earth, and comes out of the hole at the other end of the horizon at sunrise.
6. Sign of Sagal. A red sunset which is a sign of coming rain in Somali Weather Lore.
7. Gud. 'To come forth'; literally 'to walk at night'.

Page 193

1. Dhidib. A fixed pole used as the central pivot to support the weight of the portable hut (aqal). The line reads literally: 'A staff is buried in the ground for [love].'
2. Dhuuhha. 'Juices', i.e. 'sap'; literally, 'bone marrow.'
3. Dhammee. 'Permeates [deep]'; literally, 'completes.'
4. Dhalan. Minute plants growing under other plants and

eaten by sheep. Glover, 1947, identifies them as danthaniopsis barbata.

Page 194

1. Dhillowyahan. Glover, 1947, identifies this as anything from loranthus Fischer to loranthus curriflorus. See his book, pp. 361-62.
2. i.e. Our lives together (dawn) will mature (become the day).

Page 196

1. Dayr. The secondary rainy season in Somalia.

Page 198

1. Qat. (Catha edulis). A green leaf chewed for its effects as a drug. It is often chewed at social gatherings in the north of Somalia. Poetry is often recited at these 'qat parties', attended mostly by men.

Page 205

1. See Andrzejewski, B.W. Essay on Somali Theatre and translation of Shabeel Naagood. (in preparation).

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## GLOSSARY OF SOMALI PROPER NAMES

In the following glossary, only a selected list of proper Somali names appears. Those names which I have never seen in written form or the popular spelling of which I am unsure, have been omitted from the list. The name 'Bidde', for example, has no doubt appeared in written form, but I have never seen it. On the other hand, the name 'Hibo' is very likely spelled the same in most orthographies. The one obvious exception to the method of spelling all Somali words within the orthographic system used in this thesis is the proper name 'Somali', which would otherwise be spelled 'Soomaali'. Because of the widespread use of this name, it was felt best to employ the popular spelling.

<u>Somali Form</u>	<u>Popular Form</u>	<u>Somali Form</u>	<u>Popular Form</u>
Aadan	Adan or Aden or Adam	Berbera	Berbera or Barbara
Abokor	Abokor or Aboker	Boorame or	Borama
Afgooye or Afgoy	Afgoi	Boorama	
Afmeer	Afmer	Bowndheeri	Bonderi or Bowndheri
Ahhmed	Ahmed	Buraambuur	Burambur
Aroori	Arori	Burco	Burao
Aw	Au	Buur Hakaba	Bur Hacaba
Awaare	Awareh	Caaqib	Aqib
Awdal	Audal	Caasha	Asha
Ban Balcad	Ban Balad	Cabdi	Abdi
Baraawa	Brava	Cabdille or	Abdilla or
Barre	Bare	Cabdulle or	Abdulla c
Baydhabo or Baydhaba	Baidoa	Cabdalle	Abdalla
Beergeel	Bergel	Cabdi-Rashiid	Abdi Rashid or Abd
Benaadir or Banaadir	Benadir		ar-Rashid
		Cabdi-Risaaq	Abdi Rizak Abd ar- Razak

<u>Somali Form</u>	<u>Popular Form</u>	<u>Somali Form</u>	<u>Popular Form</u>
Cabdullaahi or Cabdillaahi	Abdullahi or Abdillahi	Habaas	Habas
Cadale	Adaleh	Hargeysa	Hargeisa or Hargeish
Cali	Ali	Hawd	Haud
Camuud	Amud or Amoud	Hhaaji	Haji or Ha or Hajji or Hadji
Caweys	Aweis	Hhasan	Hassan
Cawo or Cawa	Awo or Awa	Hhawo or Hhawa or Hhaawa	Hawo
Ceerigaabo	Erigavo	Hhirsi	Hirsi
Cigaal	Egal	Hhoogga Dalka	Hoga Dalka
Ciisa or Ciise	Issa	Hhuseyn or Hhuseen	Hussein or Husseyen
Cilmi	Ilmi	Hobyoo	Obbia
Cismaaniya or Cusmaaniya	Ismania or Osmania or Osmaniya	Ibraahiin	Ibrahim
Cumar	Omar	Ismaaciil	Ismail
Cusmaan or Cismaan	Osman or Isman	Jaamac	Jama or Djama or Giama
Daarood	Darod	Jaaraa-Horato	Jara Horato
Dalays	Dalais	Jabuuti	Jibuti or Djibouti
Dazuud or Daazuud	Daud	Jiilaal	Jilal
Dhadhiin	Dadin	Jowhar	Johar
Dharaar	Darar	Jubba or Juuba	Juba or Giuba
Diiriya or Diiriye	Diria	Khadiija or Qadiija	Kadija
Dirir Dhaba or Dirir Dhabe	Dira Dawa or Diredawa	Kismaayo or Kismayo	Chismayo or Kisymayu
Ducaale	Duale	Laas Caanood	Las Anod
Faarahh	Farah	Mahammed	Mohamed or Muhammad Mahammad
Gaaroodi	Garodi		
Gadabuursi	Gadabursi		
Garowe	Garowe		
Geedow	Gedo		
Geelo	Gelo		
Geryaad	Geriad		



<u>Somali Form</u>	<u>Popular Form</u>	<u>Somali Form</u>	<u>Popular Form</u>
Mahhammuud	Mohamud or Mohamoud or Mahamud or Mahamuud	Sugulle	Suguleh or Seguleh
Maryan	Mariam	Suleebaan or Suleemaan	Suleiman o Suleman
Mudug	Mudugh	Taleehh	Tale or Taleh
Muqdishu or Muqdisho	Mogadishu or Mogadiscio	Tog Wajaale	Tug Wajale
Muumin	Mumin	Ugaas	Ughaz
Muusa or Muuse	Musa	Wajeer	Wajer
Naji or Naaji	Naji or Neji	Warsame or Warsama	Warsama
Nuuhh	Nuh	Yuusuf	Yusuf
Nuur	Nur		
Obokh or Oboq	Obock		
Ogaadeen	Ogaden		
Qarshe	Karshe or Kharshe or Gharshe		
Reer	Reer or Rer		
Saahid	Sahid		
Saciid or Siciid	Said or Saeed		
Sayid	Sayyid		
Seylac	Zeila		
Shabeëlle	Shebelle		
Shar-Ma-Arke	Shermarke or Shirmarke		
Sheekh	Sheikh		
Shire or Shira	Shira or Shirreh		
Sigsaag	Zigzag		
Sinimo or Sinima or Sinime	Cinema		
Siyaad	Siad or Syad		

# A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE SOMALI LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

By  
JOHN WILLIAM JOHNSON

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# A Bibliography of the Somali Language and Literature

JOHN WILLIAM JOHNSON

## INTRODUCTION

In compiling this bibliography, I have used several libraries, including the Secretariat Library in Hargeysa, the United Nations Library in Mogadishu, the private library of Mr. Ariberto Forlani in Mogadishu, the Butler Library at Colombia University in New York, the Main Library at the University of Texas in Austin, the British Museum Library in London, and the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

I would like to make acknowledgements to several people who have helped greatly with the preparation of this work. Especial thanks are extended to Dr. B. W. Andrzejewski, Dr. David Dalby, Mr. Felix K. Knauth, Mr. Muuse H. I. Galaal, and Dr. B. G. Martin.

A special note must be given on the spelling used in the bibliography, for Somali has, as yet, no established orthography. Priority has been given to the spelling employed by each author. Where transcription was necessary because of the lack of special characters, I have used the Latin alphabet perfected by Mr. Muuse H. I. Galaal. An outline of this script may be found in his book *The Terminology and Practice of Somali Weather Lore, Astronomy, and Astrology*, Mogadishu, 1968, available from the New Africa Booksellers, P.O. Box 897, Mogadishu, Somali Republic. The alphabet used for transcribing Arabic is the internationally accepted one, while that used for Russian is as employed by the Library of the London School of Slavonic and East European Studies. The alphabetizing of the names of Somali and Arabic authors follows the practice of first name first, second name second, etc.

There are two codes employed in this bibliography. The publishers' and journals' names have all been coded. The subject matter of each entry has likewise been coded and is the last item of each entry. A complete list of codes follows this introduction.

Note that the names Muuse H. I. Galaal, Hhirsi Magan and Shirre Jama Ahmed have alternative spellings: Musa H. I. Galaal, Hirsi Magan and Shire Jaamac Achmed (or Axmed) respectively. The divergence is due to the above stated reasons.

## CODE OF PUBLISHERS AND JOURNALS

<i>Code</i>	<i>Publisher or Journal</i>	<i>Place of Publication</i>
<i>A.</i>	<i>Africa</i>	Rome
<i>A.A.E.</i>	Archivio per l'antropologia e l'etnologia	Italy
<i>A.A.L.</i>	<i>Atti della Accademia dei Lincei</i>	Rome
<i>A.C.E.G.</i>	A. Carcano: edizioni grafiche	Milan
<i>A.F.</i>	<i>Afrika: German Review of Economic, Cultural, and Political Affairs in Africa and Madagascar</i>	Germany
<i>A.F.F.</i>	<i>Afrikanская Filologiya (African Philology)</i>	Moscow
<i>A.F.I.</i>	Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana	Italy
<i>A.H.</i>	Alfred Hoelder	Vienna
<i>A.K.I.</i>	<i>Abhandlung der kd. Institut</i>	Hamburg
<i>A.L.I.</i>	Arab Language Institute of the University of Al-Azhar al-Sharif	Cairo
<i>A.L.R.</i>	<i>African Language Review</i>	London
<i>A.L.S.</i>	<i>African Language Studies</i>	London
<i>A.M.</i>	Andrew Melrose, Ltd.	London
<i>A.R.</i>	<i>Africa Report</i>	Washington, D.C.
<i>A.R.O.</i>	Angus and Robertson, Ltd.	London
<i>AUTH.</i>	Published by the author	—
<i>B.</i>	Bietli	Milan
<i>B.A.</i>	Biblioteca africana	Italy
<i>B.B.C.</i>	British Broadcasting Corporation	London
<i>B.F.B.S.</i>	British and Foreign Bible Society	London
<i>B.S.A.I.</i>	<i>Boll. soc. afr. ital.</i>	Italy
<i>B.S.G.I.</i>	<i>Boll. soc. geogr. ital.</i>	Italy
<i>B.S.L.P.</i>	<i>Bulletin de la société de linguistique de Paris</i>	Paris
<i>B.S.O.A.S.</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>	London
<i>B.W.O.</i>	British War Office	London
<i>C.</i>	<i>Civilisations</i>	France
<i>C.A.</i>	Crown Agents [for the Colonies]	London
<i>C.E.I.</i>	Casa editrice italiana	Rome
<i>C.E.M.</i>	Casa editrice mediterranea	Rome
<i>C.E.S.</i>	Casa editrice Sonzogno	Milan
<i>C.P.</i>	Compass Pub. Co.	New Haven, Conn.
<i>C.R.G.L.</i>	<i>Comptes rendus du groupe linguistique d'études chamito-semitiques (Ecole pratique à la Sorbonne)</i>	Paris

<i>Code</i>	<i>Publisher or Journal</i>	<i>Place of Publication</i>
C.S.	<i>Corriere della Somalia</i>	Mogadishu
C.U.P.	Cambridge University Press	London
D.	<i>Dalka</i>	Mogadishu
D.E.	Delaporte	Paris
D.R.	Dietrich Reimer	Berlin
D.M.	Dār al-Ma‘ārif	Cairo
D.N.	Druzhba Narodov	Moscow
D.N.S.	Donum Natalicium Schrijnen	Nijmegen- Utrecht
D.Q.T.N.	Dār al-Qawmiyya lil-Ṭabā‘a wa al-Nashr	Cairo
D.T.H.	Dār al-Ṭabā‘at al-Ḥadītha	Cairo
E.	<i>L'Esploratore</i>	Naples
E.A.C.	Edizioni arte e cultura	Mogadishu
E.A.I.S.R.	East African Institute of Social Research	Kampala
E.L.	Ernest Leroux	Paris
E.L.E.	Edizioni 'le lingue estere'	Milan
E.P.	Eagle Press	Nairobi
E.S.P.	Education Society's Press, Byculla	Bombay
F.M.	<i>Festschrift Meinhof</i>	Germany
G.I.P.	Gregg International Publishers, Ltd.	Farnborough, Hants.
G.P.	Gregg Press	East Ridgewood, New Jersey
H.	Heffer	Cambridge
H.B.A.K.	<i>Hamburger Beiträge zur Afrika-Kunde:</i> <i>Deutsches Institut für Afrika-</i> <i>Forschung</i>	Hamburg
I.A.	<i>The Indian Antiquary</i>	Bombay
I.A.I.	International African Institute	London
I.P.S.	Istituto poligrafico dello stato	Rome
I.Q.	<i>The Islamic Quarterly</i>	London
I.U.P.	Indiana University Press	Bloomington, Indiana
J.A.L.	<i>Journal of African Languages</i>	East Lansing, Michigan
J.A.S.	<i>Journal of the African Society</i>	London
J.B.R.A.S.	<i>Journal of the Bombay Royal Asiatic Society</i>	Bombay
J.F.I.	<i>Journal of the Folklore Institute</i>	Bloomington, Indiana
J.M.A.S.	<i>The Journal of Modern African Studies</i>	London

<i>Code</i>	<i>Publisher or Journal</i>	<i>Place of Publication</i>
<i>J.R.A.I.</i>	<i>The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland</i>	London
<i>J.S.A.</i>	<i>Journal de la société des africainistes</i>	France
<i>J.S.S.</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>	Manchester
<i>K.A.W.</i>	Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften	Vienna
<i>K.P.T.T.</i>	Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner and Co.	London
<i>L.</i>	<i>Language</i>	Baltimore
<i>L.C.</i>	Library of Congress	Washington, D.C.
<i>L.E.</i>	Larose Editeurs	Paris
<i>L.G.</i>	Longman, Green and Co.	London
<i>L.R.</i>	<i>Linguistic Reporter</i>	Washington, D.C.
<i>M.</i>	Macmillan and Co., Ltd.	London, New York
<i>M.B.H.</i>	Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī	Cairo
<i>M.C.</i>	Mission Catholique	London, Berbera
<i>M.G.M.</i>	Al-Munshī Ghulām Muḥammad	Aden
<i>M.I.</i>	Maṭba‘at al-Imām	Cairo
<i>M.M.H.</i>	Maṭba‘at al-Maṣḥḥad al-Ḥusaynī	Cairo
<i>M.P.</i>	<i>Maître phonétique</i>	Nevilli
<i>MS.(S)</i>	Manuscript(s)	—
<i>M.S.G.I.</i>	<i>Mem. soc. geogr. Ital.</i>	Italy
<i>M.S.O.S.B.</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen zu Berlin</i>	Berlin
<i>N.A.A.</i>	<i>Narody Azii i Afriki (Peoples of Asia and Africa)</i> . The Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.	Moscow
<i>N.M.P.</i>	Nile Mission Press	Cairo
<i>N.P.</i>	The National Printers, Ltd.	Mogadishu
<i>N.R.</i>	<i>The National Review: a Periodical Panorama of Somali Events</i> . Ministry of Information, Somali Government	Mogadishu
<i>N.S.</i>	<i>New Society</i>	London
<i>N.T.E.C.</i>	National Teacher Education Center	Afgoi
<i>O.C.P.</i>	(Oxford) Clarendon Press	London
<i>O.M.</i>	<i>Oriente moderno</i>	Rome
<i>O.U.P.</i>	Oxford University Press	London
<i>P.A.</i>	<i>Présence africaine</i>	Paris

<i>Code</i>	<i>Publisher or Journal</i>	<i>Place of Publication</i>
P.A.Y.	<i>Problemy Afrikanskogo Yazykoznanya: Tipologiya, Komparativistika, Opisanie Yazykov (Problems of African Linguistics: Typology, Comparative Studies and Descriptive Linguistics)</i>	Moscow
P.B.G.S.	<i>Proceedings of the Bombay Geographical Society</i>	Bombay
P.F.C.	P. Fontana et Cie	Algers
P.M.P.	Pall Mall Press	London
P.O.	<i>Przegląd Orientalistyczny</i>	Warsaw
P.P.P.	Peter Pauper Press	Mount Vernon
R.A.L.	<i>Rassegna di Accad. Lincei</i>	Rome
R.A.S.	Royal Asiatic Society	Cambridge
R.G.S.M.A.	<i>Report of the C.C.T.A./C.S.A. Symposium on Multilingualism in Africa</i>	Brazzaville
R.F.F.	<i>Revue de folklore français</i>	France
R.K.P.	Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd.	London
R.M.F.I.	<i>The Reporter: the Magazine of Facts and Ideas</i>	New York
R.S.E.	<i>Rassegna di studi etiopici</i>	Rome
R.S.O.	<i>Rivista degli studi orientali</i>	Rome
S.A.F.I.S.	Stamperia AFIS	Mogadishu
S.A.W.W.	<i>Sitzungsberichte, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, philosophisch-historische Klasse</i>	Vienna
S.C.	Stamperia della colonia	Mogadishu
S.D.O.	<i>Somalia d'oggi</i>	Mogadishu
S.E.	<i>Studi etiopici</i>	Rome
S.G.	Société géographique	Paris
S.I.P.A.	Somali Institute of Public Administration	Mogadishu
S.J.	<i>The Somaliland Journal</i>	Hargeysa
S.N.	<i>The Somali News</i>	Mogadishu
S.O.	Stationery Office	Hargeysa
S.O.A.S.	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London	London
S.S.L.L.	Society for Somali Language and Literature	Mogadishu
S.T.M.C.	Scuola tipografica missione cattolica	Mogadishu
S.U.	Syracuse University	Syracuse, New York

<i>Code</i>	<i>Publisher or Journal</i>	<i>Place of Publication</i>
T.	Thacker	Bombay
T.B.G.S.	<i>Transactions of the Bombay Geographical Society</i>	Bombay
T.C.	Teachers College, Columbia University	New York
T.F.	Theodor Froehlich	Berlin
T.F.M.C.	Tipografia francescana, missione cattolica	Asmara
T.F.O.	Tipografia Ferrari, Occella and Co.	Alessandria
T.R.	Tipografia Raimondi	Asmara
T.R.I.	<i>La tribuna: rivista mensile di attualita politica, economica e sociale</i>	Mogadishu
T.R.U.	Truebner and Co.	London
U.H.	Ulrico Hoepli	Milan
U.L.P.	University of London Press	London
U.S.D.H.E.W.	United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education	Washington, D.C.
U.S.P.C.	United States Peace Corps	—
U.S.R.S.O.	Univ. degli studi di Roma, Scuola Orientale	Rome
V.A.M.	Vicariato apostolico di Mogadiscio	Mogadishu
W.A.R.	<i>War Somali Sidihi</i> (now <i>The Somali News</i> )	Hargeysa
W.Z.K.M.	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>	Vienna
Y.A.	<i>Yazyki Afriki: Voprosy Struktury, Istorii i Tipologii</i> ( <i>Languages of Africa: Problems of Structure, History and Typology</i> ). The Publishing House 'Nauka'	Moscow
Z.A.O.S.	<i>Zeitschrift für afrikanische und ozeanische Sprachen</i> (Seidelsche Zeitschrift)	Berlin
Z.D.M.G.	<i>Zeitschrift Dt. Morgenland. Ges.</i>	Germany
Z.E.S.	<i>Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen</i> (formerly <i>Zeitschrift für Kolonial-sprachen</i> )	Berlin
Z.K.	<i>Zeitschrift für Kolonialsprachen</i> (see: <i>Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen</i> )	Berlin
Z.P.	<i>Zeitschrift für Phonetik</i>	Berlin



## SUBJECT MATTER CODE

<i>Code</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
bibl	Contains bibliography of linguistic and/or literary importance
dict	Dictionary
dict.w	Word lists
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
gmr	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
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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