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# University Report



AFRICAN SERVICE, LONDON

UNIVERSITY REPORT

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NARRATOR -  
JOHN JONES:

To-day a report on a Seminar that was held in Nigeria at Ahmadu Bello University on the subject of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation, and the whys and wherefores of a course in Swahili Literature at the University College of Dar-es-Salaam.

But first can you guess who and what this is?

SWAHILI VOICE:

READING POETRY.

JOHN JONES:

Well that was the voice of Farouk Topan reading verses from a Swahili poem by Mwana Kupona.

It wasn't so long ago when this programme highlighted a fairly unusual occurrence for a West African University - the teaching of Swahili at the University of Ghana, Legon. This time, though, we go to the home of the Swahili language itself, Tanzania. There, at the University College of Dar-es-Salaam, Swahili Literature is being taught for the first time, and in the Swahili language. This apparently is news although I must say I find it surprising that we should be surprised at all! But this is, in fact, the first time that Swahili Literature is being taught at the University and except for one other subject it is the only course that is being taught in Swahili. Anyway, Mr Topan is a lecturer in the Department of Language and Linguistics there and during the past academic year he has been teaching Swahili Literature to undergraduate students. In this interview he talks to John Carthew about the course and the issues it raises. First John Carthew asked Farouk Topan why the course, and what is the point of doing Swahili Literature at all.

FAROUK TOPAN: Well, in this country, in Tanzania, Swahili is the national language and it is Government policy to see that it is used as widely as possible in all sectors of the community. Here at University College we have started this course in Swahili Literature and it is fitting and proper that we should have such a course and that it should be conducted in Swahili.

JOHN CARTHEW: These are good political reasons for doing Swahili literature, and doing it in Swahili - but some people suggest that there is rather a limited amount of Swahili literature actually available for discussion at the moment. Would you agree?

FAROUK TOPAN: No, not at all. There has been a lot of published material in poetry for instance and there are many many who are not yet published especially at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, and manuscripts at our University College here in Dar.

JOHN CARTHEW: This is just in poetry, though. Is there material not in poetry?

FAROUK TOPAN: Well, not so many, The criticism could be applied that it is limited. And I think the main reason is because these genres are rather new in Swahili literature - like novels and drama.

JOHN CARTHEW: But do you expect them to develop?

FAROUK TOPAN: Oh yes, indeed I do. And especially drama. Students at University College here have started writing their own plays and the local drama festival is encouraging Swahili writers to write for the stage.

JOHN CARTHEW: What about the quality of this work, though? Does the quality of it - the kind of experience that is available to the student of it - is that to be compared with, say, literature in English, written in English or world literature, for example translated into English?

- FAROUK TOPAN: Well this is a very difficult question. Personally, I think one cannot compare two types of literature and I think the quality of any literature lies in the way it is appreciated by its own people. In the final analysis I think it is this appreciation, this subjective appreciation, which forms the criterion of quality.
- JOHN CARTHEW: Are you trying to tell me that as an Englishman I can't get anywhere near it?
- FAROUK TOPAN: Oh no, no. Not at all. I think it's all in the way you tackle, get into the literature itself.
- JOHN CARTHEW: Can I go on now to the course itself and the way you've approached it. The course itself is an optional course for students isn't it?
- FAROUK TOPAN: Yes it is. It is optional for students from three departments here at the College, the departments of Language and Linguistics, of Literature and Theatre Arts.
- JOHN CARTHEW: What kind of students, in fact, has the course attracted into it?
- FAROUK TOPAN: Well, there are both Tanzanian and Kenyan students - their backgrounds are quite different. They come from different regions in Tanzania, their academic backgrounds are different. But there are advantages in this.
- JOHN CARTHEW: Presumably they are all fluent Swahili speakers?
- FAROUK TOPAN: Yes, they are.
- JOHN CARTHEW: But not all of them have Swahili as their first language?
- FAROUK TOPAN: No, not all of them, by any means, no. Only one student, in fact, has Swahili as his first language.

JOHN CARTHEW: Does this create any particular problems? Or does it confer any particular advantages?

FAROUK TOPAN: Advantages yes - in the sense that one may discuss a poem by a writer from up-country. There are words in the poem which have been put into Swahili and a student who is familiar with the first language of the poet can tell us immediately what that means.

JOHN CARTHEW: How have you taught the course? Has it been mainly a mixture of giving lectures on the body of Swahili Literature as it exists at the moment?

FAROUK TOPAN: No. I have used the seminar method of teaching small groups and this has made it easier for me to establish rapport with my students, and what I have done really is to just guide them in the processes of literary criticism.

JOHN CARTHEW: You say you've guided them into the process of literary criticism. What, in fact, has this involved?

FAROUK TOPAN: Well, letting them read the texts and letting them start criticising it. And, in the seminar, I got them to discuss it themselves - on different questions.

JOHN CARTHEW: Is there any kind of end product likely to come out of this work - are you likely to produce any results?

FAROUK TOPAN: Well, happily, yes. What we did decide to do while the course was going on was to extend what we were doing in the classroom beyond it to the public at large and what we have done is to collect - write and collect essays in one book - and we hope this will be published either late this year or early next year.

JOHN CARTHEW: What kind of thing is going to go into the book?

FAROUK TOPAN: Well, the essays and the poems of Shabaan Robert - his novels, and the poems of Mnyapala and other living poets.

JOHN CARTHEW: Talking of living poets, clearly many of these must be living in Tanzania and, I suppose, a lot of them in Dar-es-Salaam itself. Have you been able to call on these to get actual practising poets in the course?

FAROUK TOPAN: Yes. What we have done so far is to try and invite writers - not just poets - to come and meet the class and answer questions. We've got Mathias Mnyapala in our second term. During our first term we had Katalla Mbula and in the third term Salim Kombo.

JOHN CARTHEW: Of course, speaking as an Englishman as I did just now, one of the difficulties in English literature seems to me to be that in practice far too many of our students of literature see themselves as critics and not as writers. But perhaps, in fact, you're developing students and you're developing critics of Swahili literature. Perhaps they themselves are writers of Swahili too. Is this true and are they, in fact, creative writers?

FAROUK TOPAN: Oh yes, indeed. Two of my students have written plays. One of them is going to be published by East African Publishing House and Oxford University Press.

JOHN CARTHEW: Are they writing poetry?

FAROUK TOPAN: No, I haven't seen any so far.

JOHN CARTHEW: This raises an interesting point, doesn't it. - that in the past, I believe, the great body of Swahili literature has been in poetry, and yet your students are not writing poetry. Does this mean that poetry itself is a dying art in Swahili literature?

FAROUK TOPAN: No, No. You have only to look at the Swahili newspapers to see that that's not true. But I think that probably my students are attracted by the new type of genre - since they are students in other departments - mainly the department of Literature -

and they would probably like to practice it, which they do.

JOHN CARTHEW: Obviously this course, which is in its first year, is a very exciting one. I wonder if you could finally tell us something about what you feel its unique quality really is.

FAROUK TOPAN: Well, I think this is a course given by Swahili speakers for Swahili speakers in a nation that has Swahili as its national language. And, in a way, in this country, Swahili literature is on its own soil, and students are only made aware objectively of what they already know and feel subjectively simply by living in the society that produces this literature. And I think in this it is unique compared to Swahili literature as taught in other countries abroad.

JOHN JONES: John Carthew talking to Farouk Topan who conducts the course in Swahili Literature at the University College of Dar-es-Salaam.

And now over to Nigeria. While the War in Nigeria still continues universities and governments are planning for the time when it finally ends. For instance, Ahmadu Bello University held a Seminar in April last on the subject of National Reconstruction and Rehabilitation. Professor W.J. Kidd of the Faculty of Architecture attended the seminar and sent us this report.

PROFESSOR KIDD: It is obvious that Reconstruction and Rehabilitation must be key words in Nigeria to-day as everyone looks hopefully forward to the end of the Civil War. So reconstruction and rehabilitation was the theme of a two-day seminar held by the Faculty of Architecture. In a sense it followed on from one held in 1968 which was devoted to human settlements and urbanisation, when speakers representing various disciplines presented papers and led discussions upon them.

For this year's Reconstruction and Rehabilitation session there were six speakers: a sociologist, an

conomist, an architectural student, a civil engineer, a political scientist and an architect in private practice. Some of these were members of the university staff, some came from outside. It is not surprising that many common points were touched upon - the need for rehousing displaced persons and rebuilding devastated areas, the possible problems of disorder and crime following demobilisation, re-establishing all types of communications, the problems of government - what sort, both at national and at local level etc. etc., and hanging over it all the burning question of where the money necessary for all this was to come from. Oil, of course, provided the obvious answer. Money from oil revenues in the first instance - and already a significant amount is being obtained - then foreign investment and probably direct foreign aid. However, one of the most stimulating arguments came from the practising architect who maintained that there was no such thing as low-cost housing. Although this remark produced gasps of surprise, it became clear that in terms of architect-designed, drawing-board considered building it is virtually impossible to put up a room of minimum size and standards using durable materials for less than about three hundred and fifty pounds - and three hundred and fifty pounds in terms of an average Nigerian income is an astronomical figure. The normal price for village building is probably absolutely nothing. It was advocated therefore that areas should be allocated for self-help erections to be put up by the people themselves, using mud or other indigenous material under the minimum of control and with a strong possibility of gradual improvement. This sort of thing has happened elsewhere, particularly in South America and there's no reason why it shouldn't work in Nigeria.

I've attempted to sum up the seminar under the headings of three problems, three projects and three principles - the problems of time, which is always against us, money and administration - both of which I have already briefly mentioned. The

projects of prime importance to set the country to rights again are agriculture, communications - especially roads - and, of course, housing. The principles behind all this must be national unity, teamwork between all the individuals and organisations dedicated to reconstruction and rehabilitation and, most important of all I think, maintenance of tradition i.e. keeping the fine balance between indigenous and foreign influences, the direction of people by persuasion rather than by force and above all the treatment of human beings as human beings not just as statistics on big coloured charts.

NARRATOR -  
JOHN JONES:

That report on the Seminar on National Reconstruction and Rehabilitation held at Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria was sent to us by Professor W.J. Kidd.

# University Report

**BBC** AFRICAN SERVICE, LONDON

## UNIVERSITY REPORT

In September 1967 the BBC African Service started broadcasting an entirely new programme with the title 'University Report'. The idea was to create an exchange of information between African universities and, where relevant, to link them with work going on in universities in Britain, America and elsewhere. The programme covers all aspects of university life - research projects, administration, student activities, academic conferences and teaching. The vast majority of the interviews and reports in 'University Report' are now recorded on the various university campuses in Africa, and the reporter/interviewer is, in most cases, a member of the university.

As well as the two weekly broadcasts from London, in the Summer of 1969 'University Report' was also made available to national radio stations in Africa. It is now being rebroadcast by Sierra Leone, Ghana, the Gambia, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho. Although the programme is entirely about universities and their work, it is not only for university people. 'University Report' is also a source of information for everyone on what universities are doing. It gives both academics and students an opportunity to explain their work and its relevance and to discuss more general issues.

### Broadcast Times

Sunday	2100 GMT	West Africa
Tuesday	1730 GMT	East and West Africa
Thursday	1530 GMT	East Africa

## UNIVERSITY REPORT

### Special introductory radiotape edition

NARRATOR -  
JOHN BANKOLE  
JONES:

Nearly two years ago when we first started broadcasting University Report from London we said that we were going to look at the life and work of universities in Africa, Britain and elsewhere. We aimed to provide regular up-to-date information on new developments in research, teaching and university life generally.

To-day we're going to present some of the voices of the eminent people who've helped us to do it. But first, let's go right back to the very beginning - to October 1967 - when University Report number one went on the air. In that programme Professor John Lewis of London University, a man known all over the world, and particularly in Africa for his contribution to education, explained why there was a need for University Report - why conferences, academic publications and so on are not enough for the academic world. Professor Lewis explained, in fact, why University Report should be started.

PROFESSOR LEWIS: There are, in fact, a number of very good reasons for a weekly exchange of information and discussion. When we look at the universities in Africa we find that they are still relatively isolated. It is much more difficult to get from the University College of Sierra Leone to the University College of Makerere than it is to get from either of them to London and for that matter to New York. It is true university scholars have their frequent conferences but the number of scholars from any one university who can attend a conference will be exceedingly limited. And the best

of reportage, whether it comes early - or, as most often happens, many months later - does not carry with it the excitement of direct contact with those who are working on the frontiers of knowledge. The student who is unaware of the excitement of the work going on on the frontiers of knowledge will find his own studies sometimes getting tedious and dull and at times proving disappointing. Another important advantage to be gained out of such a weekly programme is the relief that it will give to the university scholars and administrators in their own problems. The relative isolation of the university means that difficulties tend to get exaggerated and for that matter even success might appear much more important than it is in actual fact. For all these reasons the decision to produce a weekly university report programme is greatly to be welcomed. Not least of importance in the production of this programme will be the possibility of immediate knowledge of new developments.

JOHN BANKOLE  
JONES:

Professor Lewis. Well, in May this year we got a letter from a lecturer in the Department of Animal Science at the University of Ghana, Legon, Mr E.N.W. Oppong who's at present in Ireland. Mr Oppong's letter outlined the results of his research into the skin diseases of cattle in the Ghana Plains - results that are revolutionary. He is only now in the process of writing them up. On June 1st in University Report Mr Oppong explained why his research into skin diseases in cattle is so important.

MR OPPONG:

The main finding is that what we used to think was the main cause of disease actually isn't but that Demodex, a mite, is the main cause. It causes as high a percentage as sixty to seventy-five or even eighty percent of infections in certain kraals whereas Stryptothricosis is up to ten, twelve or, at most, sixteen percent. The significance is that in areas in

Ghana we will now have to think of skin diseases from an entirely different angle altogether. from hitherto and to work towards a cure for Demodex rather than for Stryptothricosis.

JOHN BANKOLE  
JONES:

Eventually, of course, the results of Mr Oppong's research will be published, but not for a long time. And so it is, usually with Conference reports. I've done a quick count on the reports we've broadcast on conferences held as far apart as Los Angeles, Dakar, Paris, Blantyre, London and Zaria - I make it twenty-two. Most of the reports were broadcast, with the voice of some of the delegates, within about a month of the event - conferences that are attended by academics discussing everything under the academic sun that they are doing for the country and people where they work. This, in fact, is another field where it was hoped University Report would help communication - by making it possible for academics to explain their work to the general public. Departments of Extra-Mural Studies, of course, exist to bring some of the facilities of the University to the country as a whole by running courses in adult education and so on. When Lalage Bown, Professor of Extra-Mural Studies at the University of Zambia, talked about her work from Zambia for University Report last year she mentioned one of the more unusual courses her department runs - in Lusaka prison.

PROFESSOR  
LALAGE BOWN:

People are always interested in this because it sounds a bit amusing because extra-mural means outside the walls and then we have classes inside the prison walls. It more or less started by chance. It so happens that the Lusaka prison is just right opposite the old university campus so it was an obvious place to start in. And fortunately again, the superintendent and the warden were very interested, and so we had an experimental class in our first session in which

warders and prisoners sat down together to study, and the result is that during this last session we had classes in five prisons in Zambia, including the long term prison in Kabwe and this session we'll have them in one or two more. There are obvious differences in a prison class. The audience is, in the most literal sense of the word, captive which makes it to some extent easier for the tutor but it does mean that you don't always get quite the free cross-play of discussion that you get in a more open class.

JOHN BANKOLE  
JONES:

Professor Lalage Bown. Well, a much more usual University activity than teaching in prisons is, of course, medical research, but if you just heard someone say "a survey into maternal mortality in Uganda" you might well think it would be just another set of statistics. But it isn't, as Professor Richard Trussle of Makerere University College explained in Kampala.

PROFESSOR  
TRUSSLE:

I think that possibly the most important way in which this could help is to try and define the women who are at special risk - those who've had previous operative deliveries, those who are short in stature, those who've lost babies in previous pregnancies, those who've experienced haemorrhage before. If this group of patients can be isolated and it can be made possible for them to attend hospitals, i.e. to make the best use of the relatively small number of beds that are available I think this would have an immediate effect on maternal mortality.

JOHN BANKOLE  
JONES:

Professor Richard Trussle. But what about that other, rather larger, section of the academic population - the students. Last year saw an unprecedented wave of student unrest in Europe, America, and, to a much smaller extent, in Africa. One of the first African countries to face student riots was Tanzania back in 1966 when about half the

the student population rebelled over the institution of the compulsory two-year period of national service to the Community for all graduates. It was big news three years ago when President Nyerere expelled the demonstrators. But what's happened to these students since? The Registrar of the University College, Dar-es-Salaam, Chief Patrick Kunambi with John Carthew, our man on the spot, brought us up to date last November.

CHIEF KUNAMBI: They stayed over a year away from the college though initially they were supposed to be out permanently and that, in turn, was reduced to three years, and two years. And then it was decided before the end of the first year that they could come back in July the following year.

JOHN CARTHEW: What effect do you feel the expulsion and the return has had on those particular students?

CHIEF KUNAMBI: For those particular students I would say a little bit too early to assess since I have been here only over a year, but the first impression one gets and from all the information one has because we have been following it up, is that they have grown up much faster than they would have in any other normal sense. I think - it's my personal impression - that they have appreciated the position and even more so it was the first time when they went home and met real life. They came back knowing where they came from and where they are going to.

JOHN BANKOLE  
JONES: Chief Kunambi. During the last two years it's become very obvious on University Report that the vast majority of African students take their responsibilities seriously.

Most universities, of course, have student unions and associations of various kinds to keep in touch with each other, on both a local and national level. But what about the hundreds of students studying in

countries like America when the universities where they're studying can be thousands of miles apart. How do they keep in touch with each other, and home? Well, in America, the Nigerians, for example, have a very efficient organisation, as their Vice-President, Samuel Oyadeji, explained last year.

SAMUEL  
OYADEJI:

The size has made it necessary for us to break the students' union into various chapters and in each chapter there is a president in charge. Very often meetings are held in these various chapters and once in a year we have a general meeting. The Nigerian students' union in the Americas is like students' union organisations all over the world and is concerned with the activities of government and they always try to play their own role. They are watchdogs, if you like, on the activities of government. They like to criticise the government when it becomes necessary and they want to join with them to build Nigeria. In this connection we hold meetings and make resolutions and send such resolutions to Nigeria.

JOHN BANKOLE  
JONES:

But shortly after we talked to Samuel Oyadeji we discussed another aspect of students who study overseas - the problem of the growing numbers who fail to return home after they've qualified. Nigeria, in fact, is one country that's very concerned about this problem and the Vice-Chancellors of the four Nigerian universities are now doing something about it. The Vice-Chancellor of Ibadan, Professor T.A. Lambo, told us about 'operation retrieval' last October.

PROFESSOR  
LAMBO:

We set up a research group to go to the North American continent to stay there for about six months to a year to collect information with regard to motivation, incentive, interview students who are concerned, interview their tutors, see the local conditions and so on, the administrative structure, the academic facilities and so on to get a picture of why some of these people don't want to return and at the

same time to find out if there is any critical period during which a person, if he stays away from his own culture, doesn't really want to come back. Again, we want to do the same thing in Great Britain and then put the whole research findings together to formulate a policy. At the same time we know what we could be doing concurrently so what we are hoping to do is to have this research go on and at the same time set up an office in London and another office in New York to begin to communicate with students everywhere, put some information to them with regard to placement, vacancies, the emphasis on various disciplines, developments within the universities, new trends, new facilities, so that they can have some information at the same time to guide them.

NARRATOR -  
JOHN BANKOLE  
JONES:

And we hope quite a number of them read transcripts of University Report too, because although the programme can only be heard in Africa, every edition is transcribed and is read in many universities in Britain, America, Holland, France, Sweden, Australia and so on.

You know, when producer Gwyneth Henderson and I started work on University Report two years ago we both took it on enthusiastically, but neither of us realised just how exciting it would turn out to be, and what a welcome we'd receive from our audience. Not a week goes by now without one of our friends from an African university ringing us up or turning up on the doorstep. This very excitement of being continually in touch with new ideas, new people, new projects, is something we hope to pass on in our programmes each week.