
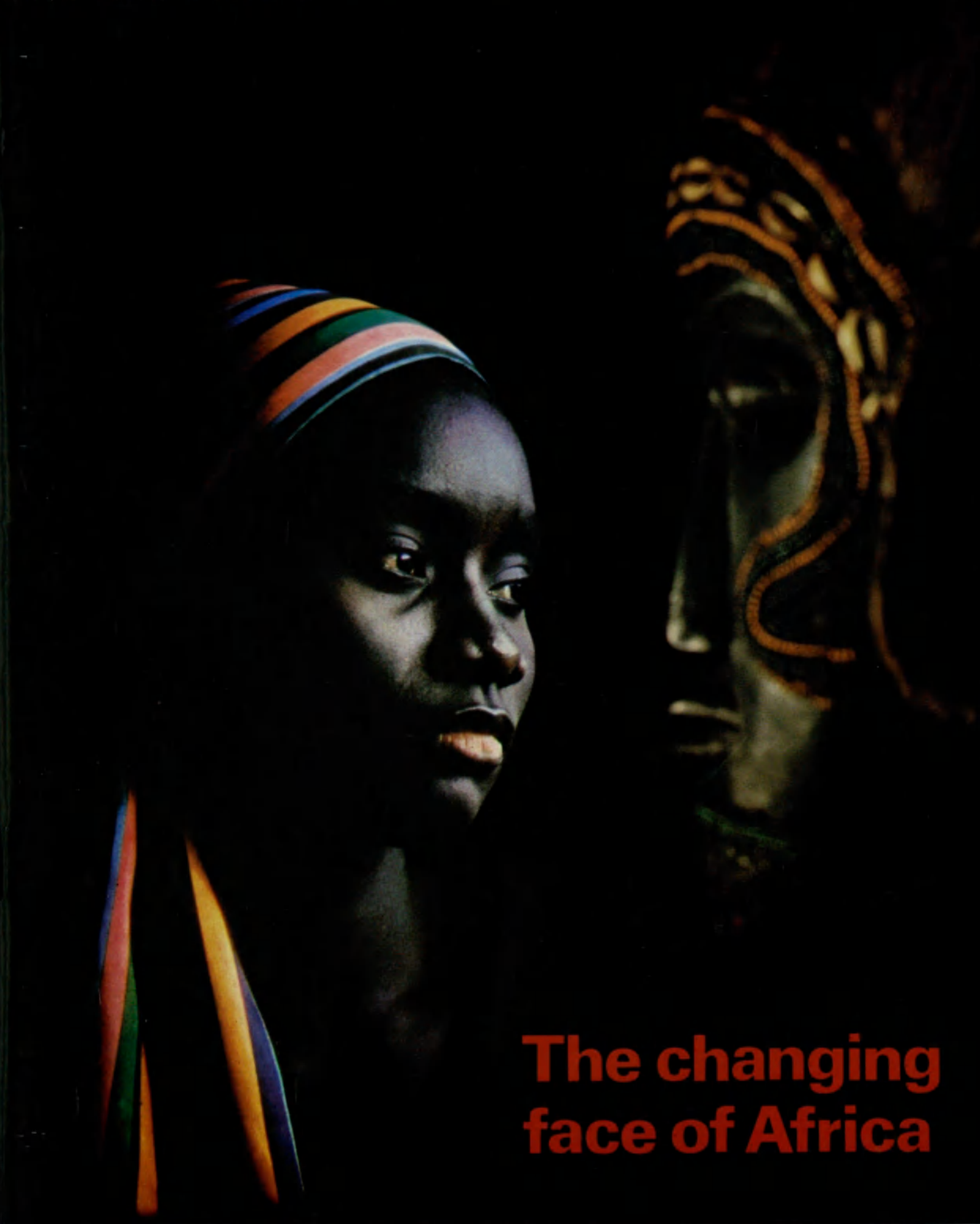


The  **Courier**

A window open on the world

May 1977 (30th year) 2 80 French francs



**The changing
face of Africa**

TREASURES
OF
WORLD ART

120

Canada

The twin with open eyes

Carved in hard greenish stone, this mask from British Columbia (Canada) is an outstanding example of North-west American Indian art. Above the open eyes, the eyebrows are traced in rough stone, while the "skin" of the face has been finely polished. An identical mask (except that its eyes are closed) belongs to Canada's National Museum of Man, Ottawa. This "twin" mask fits ingeniously into the mask shown here, which is today in the Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

Photo © Musée de l'Homme, Paris.



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CANADA: The twin with open eyes



Cover

The peoples of modern Africa are rediscovering an unrivalled source of inspiration and richness in their ancient culture, with all its diversity and originality. For in spite of colonization, African culture was never obliterated. In many parts of the world its vigour and authenticity have exercised a rejuvenating influence in such fields as sculpture, painting, music and dance. This issue of the *Unesco Courier* examines different aspects of the cultural renaissance of Africa today.

Photo Richard Saunders © USIS, U.S.A.
Cover design Augustin Dumage, Paris

In this issue, the *Unesco Courier* looks at some of the most significant aspects of the cultural life of Black Africa and reveals the contribution to current trends of Africa's traditional heritage, with all its richness, diversity and originality. This issue is mainly concerned with tropical Africa. As far as southern Africa is concerned, the *Unesco Courier* plans to examine in a forthcoming issue the obstacles which today obstruct recognition of the most fundamental human rights in this part of the continent, where many peoples are still the victims of racial discrimination and apartheid. Finally, the cultural heritage of northern Africa will be evoked at the end of the year in an issue which will present a broad picture of the great Islamic cultures which have left a profound imprint on a vast region of the world stretching across north Africa to the Middle East.

Africa rediscovers its cultural roots

THE African peoples have formulated, in the course of their long history, their visions of man and the world. They have created their values and assigned an order of importance to these values, in accordance with their own inspiration. There is no African culture, whether sacred or profane, that has not assimilated the highest values of the human species—religious, moral, social, aesthetic, economic, theoretical and technical.

The assertion of cultural identity in Africa is not a reflection of a need to vaunt a sense of individuality. It is neither a mere affirmation of the right to be different, nor a sign of political crisis or economic disarray. Nor, again, is it a pathological reaction to the traumatic experience of colonialism.

It is neither a self-defensive reflex in the face of assaults by technologically-inspired culture, nor an attempt at self-purification through the destruction of the bacteria of ideological

pollution. Lastly, it is in no way the expression of an embittered, chauvinistic nationalism adopting for its own purposes the style and methods of the cultural imperialism of the former colonizers.

If the assertion of cultural identity in Africa were rooted in such considerations, it would forfeit its validity. It would even be reprehensible if it were prompted by hatred or racism and nourished by resentment.

By tracing the most characteristic features of the African personality we shall see that the assertion of cultural identity in Africa has an infinitely more authentic and healthier basis.

There is ample evidence to show that the circulation of ideas and objects between African cultures and between Africa and other parts of the world is an age-old process. Limited at the outset to the coasts and great natural waterways such as the Senegal, the Niger, the Zambesi and the Nile, it subsequently reached out in all directions.

The Sahara itself, reputed to constitute a natural obstacle to exchanges, served in fact as a link between different regions—as the magnificent stone engravings of Tassili and Ténéré reveal.

An immense and virtually unexplored field of research exists here, and investigation would throw light on the reciprocal contributions of those cultures—Arab-Berber and Negro—

This article reflects the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa. It has been adapted from "Problems and Prospects", a Unesco document relating to the Conference. Organized by Unesco with the co-operation of the Ghanaian Government and the Organization of African Unity, the Conference was held in Accra (Ghana) from 27 October to 6 November 1975. It was attended by delegates from 30 African countries and representatives and observers from many parts of the world.





► African—whose union and interpenetration constitute the basis of African identity.

It is among the people living in rural communities whose history stretches back to the earliest times that the distinctive signs of African identity can still be found. The similarities which exist between these signs reflect the richness and creativity of this essential "Africanness".

The fact that these ancient societies, often living in virtual isolation, remained to all intents and purposes outside the reach of colonization has meant that mother tongues are the only languages used. This has resulted in the creation of an oral literature which is as imaginative as it is varied.

The family is the essential framework of these age-old cultures. It is the custodian of tradition, in whose transmission it plays a vital part, owing to the fact that several generations live together.

Since time immemorial, tradition has affected every aspect of human

activity. It provides each person with the necessary rules for personal conduct and for coping with everyday life. Spirituality surrounds and imbues men and women, objects and the world of nature. It constitutes a code whose application is supervised by the very old, whose role it is to serve as a living library, accessible to everyone and at all times.

One of the original features of the African identity is rooted in a complex series of circumstances which date from the beginning of the 19th century and which affected most African societies at the same time and in a similar way. This was the colonial expansionism which subjected them to occupation and exploitation.

African cultures were destined to be geographically fragmented and isolated from each other. A single cultural area might be arbitrarily split up, resulting not only in the rupture of age-old links but in disintegration and in the breakdown of structures.

Certain cultural areas were deliberately favoured at the expense of others, seriously upsetting social, economic and political balances. From then onwards, there was a steadily widening gap between town and country, between the coast and the hinterland, between "pacified" and "unsubdued" regions.

Geographic fragmentation was combined with a break in time. Colonialism sought to sever the African's links with his past, his traditions and his culture. Traditional schools were closed down, places and objects of worship were destroyed, and a campaign was waged against indigenous teachers.

In the cultural vacuum thus created, Africans were to be trained—albeit to a very limited extent—in a new language and according to new patterns of thought. Colonial education was, first and foremost, a means of conquest, submission and alienation.

The safeguarding of values, the restoration of languages, the assertion of identity—these are the causes

in whose name resistance was organized and the struggle for liberation waged. African cultures pointed the way to individual self-rediscovery and national restoration, reconstruction and mobilization.

It is particularly significant that the quest for freedom has coincided, throughout the whole of Africa, with the quest for cultural identity: to assert one's personality is to perform an act of liberation.

The struggle for independence thus reflects not only a political but also a cultural demand. This cultural aspect takes the form of an enthusiastic rediscovery of ancestral culture, a renewed awareness of the past, and a denial of the colonizer's insistence on setting up his own civilization as a universal model.

In challenging the cultural supremacy of the West, the African peoples have rediscovered their own civilization. Africa was not a complete blank before colonial invasion; it had produced knowledge and skills as well as works of great value in such fields as architecture, sculpture, music, dance, poetry and oral literature.

Africans were well aware of the existence of these expressions of their tradition, which they continued to produce themselves and which

formed part of their everyday life. But what has changed is their way of regarding them. These works are now seen as the meaningful products of an authentic cultural creativity.

In rediscovering their own civilization, the African peoples are becoming aware, at the same time, that the values of Western civilization are relative. They now realize that the scientific and technological development of a society does not invest it with any moral or aesthetic superiority.

They are discovering that history is still an unfinished process, that it is not merely the product of the West, and that the African peoples themselves also have a part in making it. They are regaining confidence in their future.

In other words, cultural nationalism is the assertion of a collective personality. It must, however, take care to avoid impoverishing the cultural heritage which it claims to defend, by reducing it to a mere antithesis of cultures that are alien. To do so would be to strip African cultures of their own rich, colourful and complex heritage.

For African traditions, like those of Europe or China, have been handed down from generation to generation

throughout an eventful history which came to an end neither with colonization nor even with decolonization, but is still a continuing and unforeseeable process.

In most African countries, the model of Western development exercises an undeniable fascination. In the economic field, the very existence of some African countries still seems to depend on the former colonial powers.

Large-scale, uncontrolled transfers of manufactured goods and manipulation of all kinds have enslaved the imagination and created artificial needs. This process can only perpetuate the myths and glamour of the consumer society and aggravate the errors that are due to colonial domination.

The imitation of foreign modes of life can only destroy the environment necessary to the resurgence and development of African cultures, by depriving it of its social, religious and economic significance.

The social and cultural history of Africa and of its relations with the West thus reveals the unreliability of the theory of cultural interpenetration—that is, the idea that societies have a fruitful and constructive influence upon each other.

There can, of course, be no question of advocating some sort of economic or cultural isolationism for Africa. But an outward-looking attitude towards the rest of the world should not imply the indiscriminate adoption of a form of modernity which would cut off a people from its past and make it lose its personality; nor should it mean imitating models of growth whose inegalitarian nature is fundamentally opposed to the highest African traditions. For while Africa intends to develop, she also intends to preserve her personality.

It has been claimed that if the developing countries have failed to achieve their economic "take-off", this is essentially because of cultural factors. It would appear that resistance to change stems in particular from the non-competitive nature of traditional societies, from a social organization based on solidarity, and also from certain religious rules.

Competition, as it is defined and valued in the West, probably does not exist in traditional societies. Would it not, however, be more accurate to describe such competition, not as a cause of development or underdevelopment, but as an inherent characteristic of the Western economic system?



Photo Richard Saunders © USIS, U.S.A.

Two scenes of life in Africa today. Above, budding navigators learn how to use a sextant at a training centre for sailors. Opposite page, a fisherman on Lake Rudolph with the traditional cone-shaped basket used for trapping fish. Located in the plains of northern Kenya, Lake Rudolph covers an area of 8,600 sq km.

The motive force of African society is basically the development of the collective personality, rather than individual success or profit. Similarly, African culture is essentially popular and democratic in nature.

Another type of resistance to the frantic desire for development that is exclusively economic can be seen in the relationship these traditional societies have with the land. The overriding importance they attach to nature can indeed sometimes lead to a rejection of certain techniques. However, instead of indicating a kind of irrationality, this attitude reveals a rationality of a kind that differs from Western economic rationality.

In addition, the idea of transferable property hardly exists—hence the refusal to surrender collectively-owned land. This characteristic of African societies and cultures should be seen as a useful factor in any agrarian reforms that may be carried out, rather than as a brake on development.

Traditional economies ensure the subsistence of all the members of a community, whatever the nature of its structure. Contrary to the norms of the consumer society, all these societies work on the principle that only commodities necessary to meet vital needs should be produced.

The lesson these societies can give to the West is a philosophical one—that nature is neither a reservoir from which one can draw indefinitely and with impunity, nor a collection of potential goods of which one has only to become “lord and master”. To destroy the overall equilibrium is to destroy oneself as well.

If development is not to be synonymous with rejection of the past and to lead to new forms of alienation, it must further the full expression of the most authentic African cultural values, and in particular the oral traditions and national languages.

The very quest for authenticity implies its absence: the loss of one's own personality. Thus one may well ask whether this is a problem for those who have never been cut off from the living popular culture of their community. The term “authen-

ticity” does not have the same meaning for the African peasant as for the African intellectual—indeed for the peasant it has perhaps no meaning at all.

If we take oral expression as an example, we must recognize that this social and cultural form, so widespread in Africa, probably does not have the same significance for the literate as for those who have never even seen a transcription of their language. How does this difference arise?

Oral expression, of whose immense riches we are still only dimly aware, is not by any means a sign of social backwardness. The appearance of writing does not necessarily reflect a transition to a “higher” level of culture.

Oral tradition, as the means of expression of a civilization, is always closely bound up with the different aspects of social life. Among its many and varied functions, it acts as the “memory” of society and transmits codes of behaviour and aesthetic expression. Deeply rooted in society, it describes and explains a vast range of phenomena: history, ritual, the natural environment, the organization of society, technical skills, human relations, and relationships with neighbouring ethnic groups.

In other words, oral tradition is a

form of instruction which is handed down from generation to generation. Far from being confined to a single family or village, it is common to an entire ethnic group and often to several such groups.

As a form of instruction about the past, it provides people with a frame of reference concerning their society and the world.

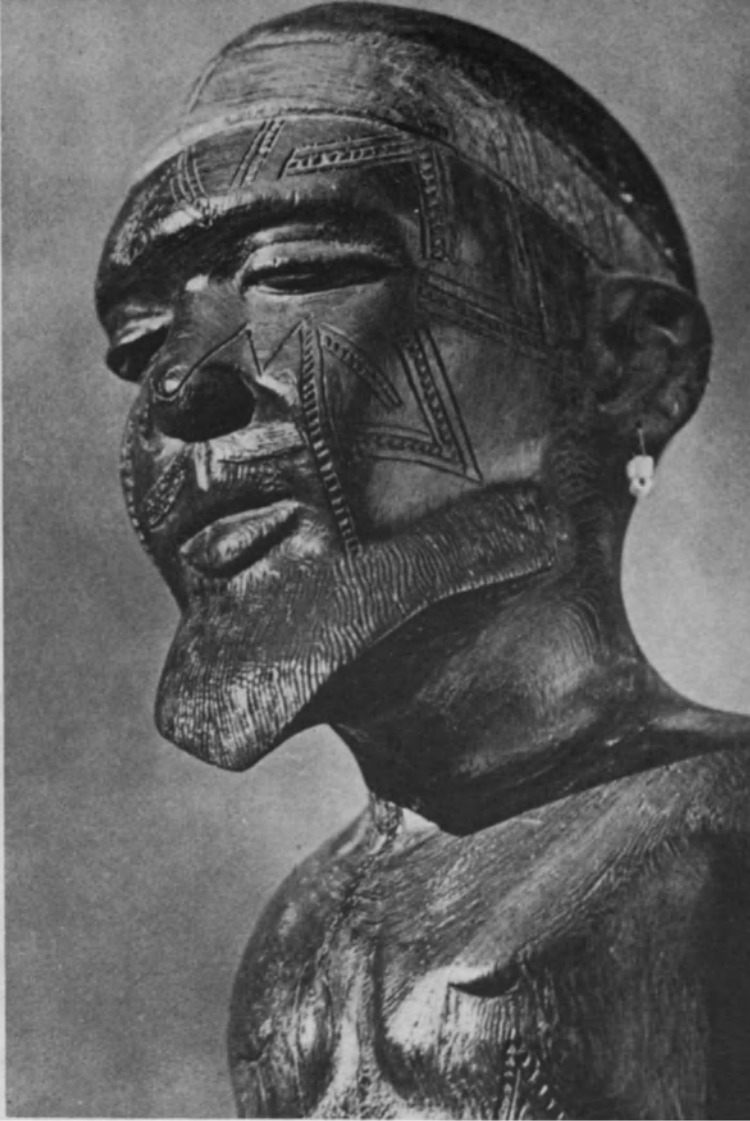
As a form of instruction about the present, it teaches children the behaviour, attitudes and beliefs they will have to adopt, familiarizing them with the rules and standards of conduct which custom demands and encouraging them to develop their personality within the framework of their society.

The particular nature of oral communication has a decisive influence both on the content of a culture and on its transmission. The transmission of language is a direct process carried out among the members of the group, who have no dictionaries or word-lists to refer to. The relationship between the spoken word and what it denotes is direct and straightforward.

The accumulation of references, on which civilizations based on written traditions so much depend, is less important in civilizations which express themselves for the most part orally. In the latter, the meanings of words are understood by refe-



Photo © USIS, U.S.A.



Medicine old and new

Left, pensive and sagacious portrait of a traditional healer fashioned in polychrome ebony by an anonymous Mozambique sculptor. A venerated figure, with a vast knowledge of medicinal plants and acute powers of observation, the healer is sometimes also a priest. Opposite page, two young doctors examine the blood-proteins of tse-tse flies in a biology laboratory at University College, Nairobi (Kenya).

rence to practical situations which members of the group have experienced.

Traditions are "stored" in the memory of society. The memory of the individual acts as a filter for the collective memory, which is enlarged and enriched by successive generations in a constant process of interpretation and assimilation of new experience. Memory is, indeed, knowledge, but knowledge of a constantly changing kind. It has no fixed point, although certain factors confer on it a large measure of permanence.

The first and perhaps the most effective of these factors lies in the particular manner in which human beings relate to their environment. It has been observed that the destruction or loss of this environment deprives the individual of a source of information whose absence leads to a steep decline in his capacities of memory and knowledge. In African history this occurred notably with the transportation of African tribes to America in colonial times.

The second factor making for permanence is the institutionalization of knowledge. In many societies the transmission of the cultural heritage through historical anecdotes or legends is the responsibility of specially selected persons such as the *griots* (story-tellers) or simply of the older

people in the village who are extremely well-versed in genealogy.

The third factor in ensuring permanence is rhythmic utterance, the language of the drum.

Powerful though they are, these factors do not offset the corrosive effect of fading memory. It is as if the social functions of memory formed part of a complex process whose aim is to maintain and reproduce the conditions of social life.

Hence the importance of genealogies, which define the rights and duties of each member of the group, who can thereby claim a place to live, defend himself in litigation, conduct a ceremony or resolve a conflict. Since the political structure is sometimes based on kinship, genealogies also play an essential part in the maintenance of order.

Shifting and changeable, they are reformulated on the occasion of a death, a birth, or migration. This constant rectification is accompanied by what has been termed "structural amnesia".

One of the dangers of written expression is to treat the social order as an abstraction and to present it in the false colours of permanence. The alphabet introduces a form of universality that transcends the clan, the tribe or the nation, though it also implies greater rigour and sometimes even rigidity.

Writing also introduces social stratification, creating a division between two main groups: the literate élite and the illiterate masses. Here, since we are dealing with the safeguarding of cultural authenticity, one is tempted to point out that, however pernicious illiteracy may be elsewhere, in traditional societies it can never have been synonymous with cultural impoverishment; on the other hand, it is through education that the élite has often been cut off from its roots and traditions. All educational systems should bear this in mind.

African oral literature is highly imaginative both in form and in content. Levels of interpretation vary within the group according to the listener's degree of initiation. It is a total art, based on the effective participation of each and everyone. The verbal message is interwoven with messages conveyed by gesture, music and rhythm with a freedom of expression and improvisation which permit its value and meaning to survive the passage of time.

The vast wealth of oral tradition, which embraces legend, history and initiatory rituals, as well as stories of mythical heroes, human beings and animals, poetry and song, proverbs and riddles, offers virtually limitless possibilities for research.

Among the many studies dealing



A living tradition in architecture

Africa has an extraordinary wealth of architectural styles, which, in spite of their many differences, are all highly functional as well as being adapted to climatic conditions, ways of life and work, and economic means. Right, two professors at Ahmadu Bello University (Nigeria) examine the model of a dwelling designed for a family of the Hausa people (farmers and craftsmen). The design incorporates modern amenities with a respect for the traditional character of Hausa architecture. In 1971, students of tropical architecture from the Pratt Institute in New York visited the university to study under Nigerian teachers who were later invited to lecture in New York on traditional African architecture and town-planning. Above, roof of the mosque at Djenné (Mali), a dried-mud structure dating from 1905. Standing on a tributary of the Niger, Djenné was in the 13th century a major trading centre of the Muslim civilization in West Africa. Above right, modern buildings in Abidjan (Ivory Coast), a great modern port serving a rich agricultural hinterland.



Photo © USIS, U.S.A.



with the African continent, Unesco is currently engaged on a ten-year plan for the study of oral tradition and the promotion of African languages as a medium of culture and instrument of life-long education, and in the preparation of a "General History of Africa".

The investigation, preservation and promotion of oral traditions lead quite naturally to recognition of the overriding and irreplaceable role of African languages as a source, medium and vehicle for African thinking and cultures, and as an instrument of social communication for the immense majority of the population. Hence, any cultural renaissance in Africa and the safeguarding of cultural authenticity must depend on the protection and promotion of national languages.

Colonial policy failed to grasp that African languages were "real" languages, that is to say, media for the transmission of knowledge and culture. They were regarded by the colonists as "primitive" languages, representing a stage in evolution that had long been superseded by European languages and thus incapable of expressing scientific thought.

What is required today is a reevaluation of African languages, no longer for ideological purposes, but so that the greatest possible number may—through these languages—accede to knowledge of the most up-to-date kind. National languages must be treated as unrivalled media of communication, whose effectiveness in the African milieu is unmatched.

African cultures are on the threshold of a decisive period during which their custodians will seek, first and foremost, to turn to the Africans themselves, whose personality these cultures will help to affirm. It will no longer be sufficient to study these languages as objects. It is in the languages themselves that such studies must be conducted.

Adult literacy campaigns will be insufficient as long as we fail to go to the root of the matter by basing these techniques on the realities of African life, of which the national languages are an essential aspect.

Only through an awareness of the fundamental role of mother tongues

in the whole range of psychological, cognitive and social processes will it be possible to overcome resistance of every kind to the systematic use of African languages in education and training.

What is required, therefore, is a radical overhaul of the educational systems inherited from the past, which must be transformed to match the practical conditions of African social and cultural life, involving the active participation of the community and meeting the needs and aspirations of the greatest possible number.

This brings us to the heavy responsibility resting on African universities, as keystones of the educational system. To what extent can these universities foresee and pave the way for the necessary transformations, question their own role and structures, and further the development process?

The future of education, science and culture in Africa depends, perhaps more than anything else, on relations which have yet to be established between the public at large and the universities. ■

Decoding the message of African sculpture

by Ola Balogun

OLA BALOGUN is a young Nigerian film director and writer who has been a Unesco consultant on the training of film-makers. He has directed a number of noted feature films and documentaries, including *Vivre* (1975) and *Muzik Man* (1976), and has served on the jury of the Pan-African Film Festival at Carthage (Tunisia). The author of two plays, *Shango* and *Le Roi-Éléphant* (published by P.-J. Oswald, Paris, 1968), he has written several studies for Unesco, including a chapter on Africa in *The Education of the Film-maker, an International View* (co-published with the American Film Institute, Washington, D. C., 1975).

African art, whether sacred or secular, is always the product of refined and meticulous skills. Household utensils and furniture display the same dignity and gracefulness as works of religious art. The elegant neck-rest (right) is supported by a couple facing each other and joined in a chaste and tender embrace. It is the work of a master-craftsman of the Luba people of southern Zaire, like the fertility statuette (opposite page) in which a male and female figure present each other with a baby girl. This sculpture is an invocation of the "life force" which increases the family.

Photo © Willy Kerr, Private Collection, Brussels



ALL cultures are made up of a multiplicity of currents which may sometimes even appear antagonistic. Africa is no exception to this general rule.

But although there is no single art form narrowly identifiable as African to the exclusion of all others, there is a certain broad ensemble of styles and forms, which together constitute African art.

African art forms are seldom practised for their entertainment value alone. In masquerade performances, the essential feature is the ritual function of the performance, although dancing and sometimes the mock pursuit of spectators by the masquerader provide entertaining features.

Dancing itself is practised on the occasion of specific festivities and rituals, and only rarely as pure entertainment.

Perhaps the only major exception to this rule is the art of the storyteller or that of the wandering minstrel, whose purpose is to entertain an audience in exchange for remuneration. Even in this case, the stories or epic recitals often aim primarily to provide moral lessons or useful knowledge of the past.

The art forms commonly encountered in African societies include sculpture (in wood, stone, iron, bronze, terra-cotta, etc.) architecture,

music, dance, rituals incorporating dramatic elements, and oral literature. The range of artistic activity covers a wider spectrum among African peoples than is generally assumed, and is much more complex and diversified than ethnological studies have generally indicated. By looking at two examples—masks and wood carving—it should be possible to throw some light on the nature and meaning of African art.

Carving is one of the mainstays of African art, and is the medium through which African art has best come to be known outside Africa. The most striking category of wood carving is that of carved masks designed for masquerade displays.

There has been much confusion about such carvings, principally because of attempts to define them according to Western European aesthetic criteria.

Such confusion is typified in the belief that African art is "primitive". The corollary to this belief is the equally baseless assumption that mankind has evolved through the stage of "clumsy" art before finally achieving the formal perfection of Graeco-Latin art.

The fallacy of this line of reasoning is obvious. In the first place aesthetic criteria do not necessarily involve a direct imitation of natural forms.

Secondly, there is no justification, other than an ethnocentric view of the world, for assuming that the lack of an aesthetic approach similar to that which has developed in Western Europe signifies an absence of formal perfection. Aesthetic appreciation of African art forms such as mask carvings should be fundamentally linked to an understanding of their purpose. It is therefore necessary to analyse the general background and nature of African masquerades.

Masquerade performances are generally part of ritual ceremonies designed to invoke the gods or to establish the communion of a community with them, as well as to remind members of the community of their relationship with non-human forces in the universe.

The masquerade is therefore considered as a material manifestation of an intangible force, as a temporary incarnation of the non-human. Such a manifestation, however, requires human participation in order to become possible.

A human agent (often the masquerader, the mask-wearer) serves as a vehicle for the manifestation. A sign or a set of signs must be found to distinguish this human agent from other human beings and establish the fact that for the duration of the rites he has ceased to be a human being and has become the embodiment of

the divinity or ancestor whose presence is being invoked.

The most important and easily recognizable signs lie in the realm of costume. The costume *suggests* the presence of the god and points to a reality beyond the physical presence of the human being who has donned it. It is, above all, a *sign*, in the same way as a few branches may be used in theatre scenery to suggest a forest. One of the most important elements in this transformation is the mask.

Once the fundamental role of the mask (and of costume in general) in *suggesting* and *establishing* the presence of the supernatural is properly understood, it becomes possible to grasp the conceptual framework within which the carver works.

The Western European artists who have been influenced by African art apparently saw in the techniques of the mask carvers only an attempt to represent natural shapes in the abstract form, and Cubism and other movements pursued this approach to an extreme degree.

This was, however, a mistaken interpretation, based on ignorance of the conceptual framework which dictated the styles employed by African mask carvers. Even where an external model exists, it is the hidden essence of its form rather than its external appearance that the carver

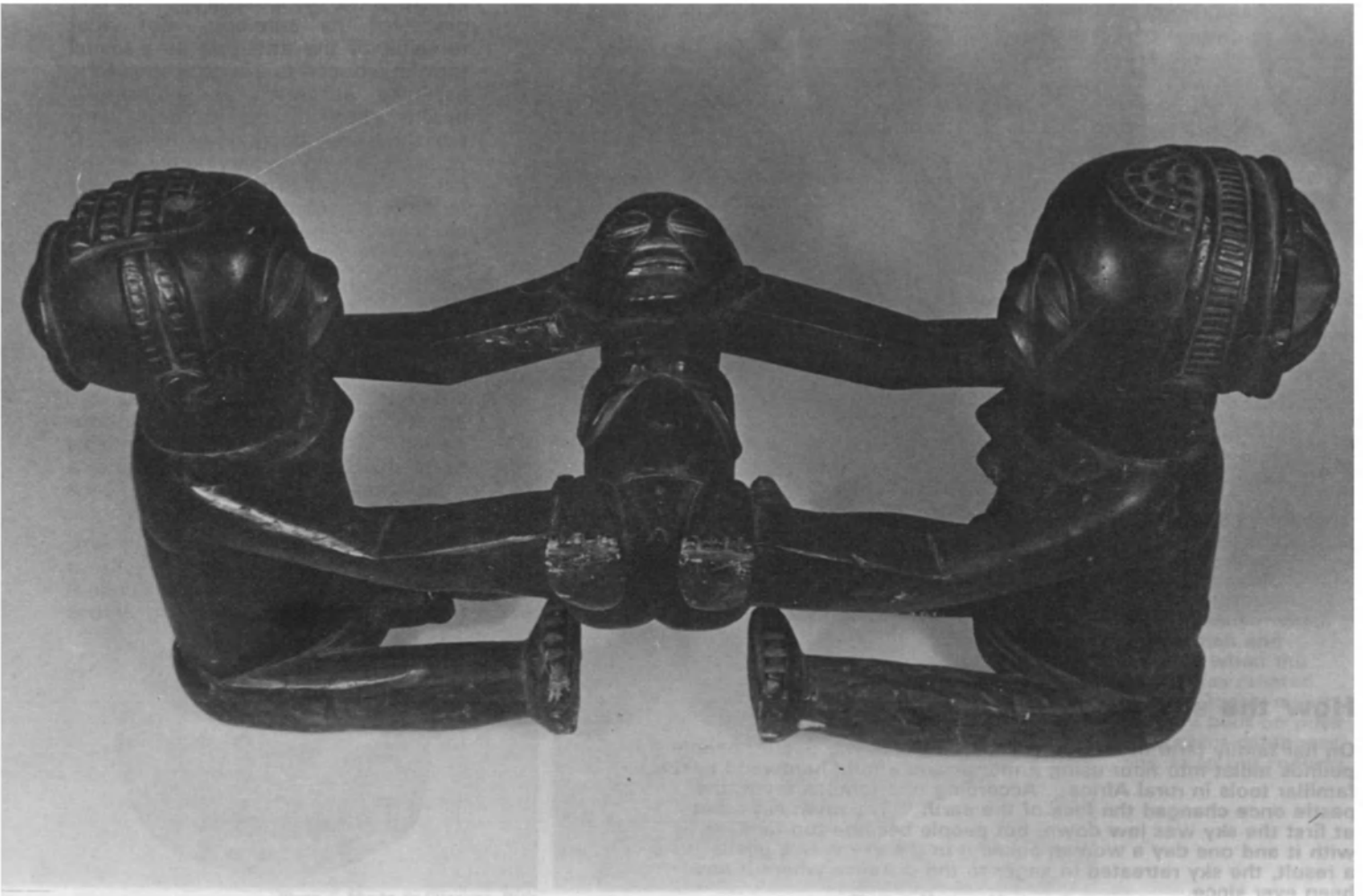


Photo © W. Hugentobler, Museum of Ethnography, Neuchâtel, Switzerland



seeks to capture. The style of the mask carver is an approach imposed by the system of beliefs and the conceptual framework within which he lives and works.

This means that there has always been great scope for artistic freedom and improvisation within the larger framework of communal beliefs and conventions. If the divinity whose presence the mask will help to invoke is a frightening one, the artist is not required to make a faithful copy of previous masks, but to convey the idea of what a frightening presence should look like and to suggest that presence in his work.

Thus, he is often free to execute his own idea of what a frightening presence should look like, within the framework of local artistic canons and conventions.

African mask carvings reflect a careful and studied mastery of creative techniques on many levels. Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects of this creative skill is the ability to achieve astonishing simplification of visual ideas originally derived from natural forms.

In most mask carvings, it is as if the carvers had sought to go beyond the mere outward appearance of natural forms to grasp their essence, going on from there to new creative structures.

The Bambara headpieces from Mali known as *Tyi-wara*, to take one example, are inspired by the form and grace of the antelope. But what remains of the antelope as a visual form is reduced to a suggestion of the essential attributes of the animal, basically its sleek lines and grace, embellished by decorative flourishes. To look at such carvings is to be carried beyond external form into the *being* of a mythical animal whose essence has been symbolized by the form of the antelope.

The simplification of natural motifs often leads the carver to develop a geometric conception of his source of inspiration. Thus eyes become pure circles or squares, or simple slanted lines which are then spatially balanced against other features similarly conceived. The famous Basonge masks from the Congo basin constitute a remarkable example of these geometric forms.

Not only are the features themselves cast on a geometrical pattern of squares (for the eyes), but a collection of curved lines running across

Photo © Fulvio Roiter, Italy

How the sky reached its limit

On her family farm in the Ivory Coast, a girl of the Senufo people pounds millet into flour using a mortar and a long hardwood pestle, familiar tools in rural Africa. According to a famous myth, the pestle once changed the face of the earth. The myth says that at first the sky was low down, but people became too familiar with it and one day a woman poked it in the eye with a pestle. As a result, the sky retreated in anger to the distance where it has been ever since.

the whole surface in relief serves to accentuate the whole.

In many Congolese and Gabonese masks, the repetition of regular curves in the lines of facial features such as eyebrows, eyes and lips creates a pattern of rhythms reminiscent of musical rhythm.

Even more striking is the development of architectural patterns in many mask carvings. Even when the mask is made to be worn vertically over the face, its surface is rarely flat.

It is in carving head-masks (worn horizontally on the head) that the fullest possible use is made of three-dimensional space. Examples include the *Tyi-wara* masks of the Bambara people and certain Baoulé, Senufo (Ivory Coast) and Ijaw (southern Nigeria) headmasks. The former represent buffalo spirits, the latter water spirits.

During the dance, the mask-wearer shows the mask to spectators from different angles, creating a different visual impact in each case. In effect, the mask's frontal aspect is entirely different from its "profile", and when the masquerade dancer lowers his head it is seen that the top of the mask is also different.

The muzzle and teeth of the mythical creature may be seen as the most important part of the mask when it is viewed from the front, while the ears and the horns are the most striking features from the side view. In the top view of the mask, the teeth

and open muzzle disappear entirely, so that the spectator sees only a geometrical pattern built around the features of the face.

Generally, once the essential lines of the mask have been carved, it is embellished by various decorative designs, ranging from simple and subtle touches to highly ornate motifs. Some recent versions even comprise representations of cars and aeroplanes!

For sheer plastic audacity, some African masks are hardly to be surpassed. In one Bacham mask from Cameroon, which is based on a highly stylized representation of the human face, the cheek bones have become protruding conical structures with a gently rounded top on which the eyes rest in a horizontal plane. The sockets beneath the eyebrows have become elongated vertical surfaces towering above the eyes, rather like the upper lid of an oyster shell within which each eye reposes.

This remarkably audacious treatment of surfaces (it is styles of this type that directly inspired the Cubist movement) would be inconceivable in the absence of very advanced plastic concepts.

In a sense, the mask becomes a frozen moment in eternity, yet the movements of the masquerade lend it a new life and plunge it into the rhythms of human existence.

As the mask-wearer dances, that frozen moment of eternity grasped by

the carver's art is set in motion to the rhythm of the music, stimulating the emotions of the spectators both by the plastic rhythm of the carving and by the larger rhythm of the dance. All this is added to the emotional impact caused by the social and cultural significance of the dance ritual.

By a strange paradox, it is precisely because the purpose to be served by the mask must take precedence over his private vision that the artist achieves total liberty in his treatment of form. The aim of his work is most often to suggest immaterial forms, rather than to copy nature directly.

Most African sculptures, like the mask carvings, are executed in wood. "Power objects" or symbolical substitutes for ancestors and gods, they are primarily aimed at fulfilling a function.

The sculptor is primarily concerned with adapting the style of the object to its function, while complying with already existing plastic traditions. He hardly ever attempts to reproduce natural traits or to base his sculpture on realism. It is therefore rare to find life-sized statues or even small statues based on real-life proportions.

It is precisely because the African sculptor has not conceived his work exclusively in terms of creation of forms pleasing to the eye that such sculptures achieve startling visual effects.

Statuettes of god-figures or ani-

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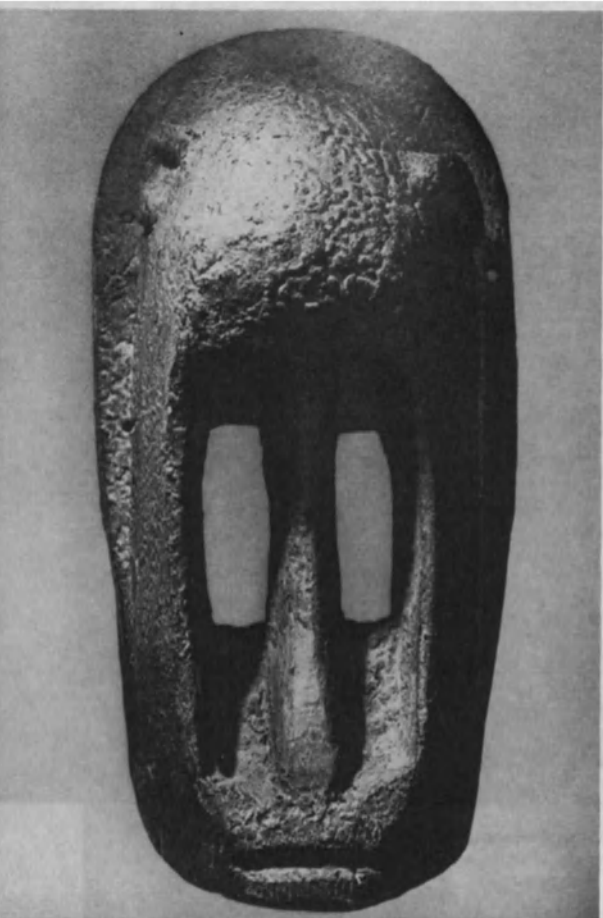


Photo © Musée de l'Homme, Paris



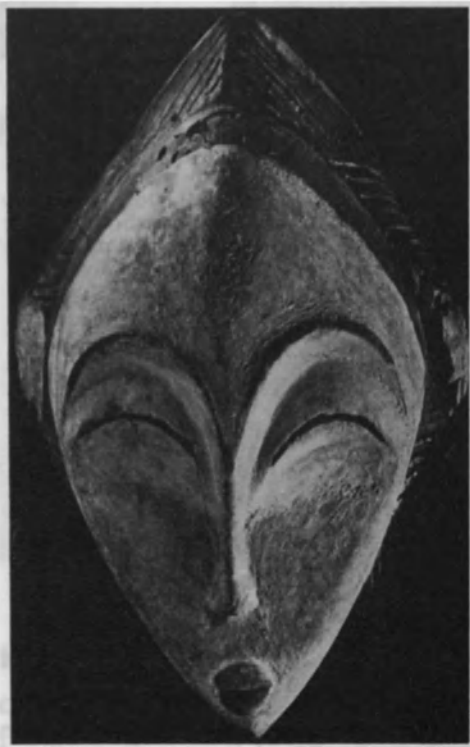
Photo © Monique Maneval, Paris

The heirs of ancient cultural traditions, the Dogon farming people of Mali are renowned for their highly original art which recreates their history and everyday life in symbolic and mythical forms. The Dogon, who live on the almost impregnable Bandiagara escarpment, are particularly noted for their skill as sculptors. A characteristic product of their art, the "black monkey" mask (far left) commemorates the close alliance which linked men and animals when the world was created. Left, a Dogon millet granary built on piles to prevent dampness and keep out rodents.

Masks from



CAMEROON. Bafum helmet mask
Photo © Helen Maetzler-Prohaska, Zürich



GABON. Fang mask evoking a female face
Photo © Claude Sauvageot, Musée de l'Homme, Paris



ZAIRE. Double-faced "Kwamé" mask
Photo © W. Hugentobler, Musée d'Ethnographie,
Neuchâtel, Switzerland

20 countries

We present on these pages twenty masterpieces by African mask-carvers, whose art has played a notable part in African ritual and everyday life and represents a major contribution to the world's cultural heritage.



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO.
Kwélé mask from the Sembé region

Photo © U.D.F. La Photothèque-Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, La Rochelle, France



GHANA. Gold Ashanti mask

Photo © Fine Art Engravers Ltd., by kind permission of the Sir Richard Wallace Collection

SUDAN. Leopard's head mask

Photo © Dominique Darbois, Paris. Museum für Volkenkunde, Berlin



IVORY COAST. Guéré mask decorated with strips of monkey hair

Photo © Bernheim-Rapho, Paris



CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE.
Wooden hunting mask

Photo © Musée de l'Homme Collection, Paris



SIERRA LEONE.
Mende helmet mask

Photo © Hélène and Henri Kamer Archives, New York, Private Collection

Masks from 20 countries



UPPER VOLTA.
Bobo mask
supporting an
ancestor
Photo © Dominique
Darbois, Paris —
National Museum of
Upper Volta



SENEGAL. Headdress of a war mask used
during boys' initiation ceremonies
Photo © Musée de l'Homme Collection, Paris



**PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF
BENIN.** Dance
mask of the
"Gelede" society
of the Yoruba
Photo © Musée de
l'Homme Collection,
Paris



LIBERIA. Dan mask
Photo © Dominique Darbois, Paris — National Museum
of Liberia



TANZANIA. Makondé mask
Photo © Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford



MOZAMBIQUE. Yao mask
Photo © Linden Museum, Stuttgart, German Fed. Rep.



GUINEA. Toma flat mask
Photo © Bernard Mallet, Angoulême Museum, France



NIGERIA. Bini mask painted with kaolin
Photo © David Nidzgoriski, Private Collection



MALI. Marka mask covered with metal
Photo © Bernheim-Rapho, Paris



ANGOLA. Chokwe wig-mask
Photo © Dundo Museum, Angola

ZAMBIA. Barotse mask
Photo © Dominique Darbois,
Paris-British Museum



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

mals are generally not conceived as visual representations of the original object but as substitutes for it or a magic evocation of it. Hence the accent is laid on symbolization of essential traits, rather than on factual representation as such.

In anthropomorphic figures, the head is often on a larger scale in proportion to the rest of the body. A frequent device where two figures of unequal social importance feature in a sculpture is to reflect the difference in social status through a sharp variation in proportion.

There is also scarcely ever an attempt to show a figure in movement or involved in some form of physical activity such as might distract from the balance of the sculpture.

Among the best-known categories of African sculptures are commemorative statuettes of ancestor-figures and ritual statuettes of gods that are placed in religious shrines to represent divinities or devotees of the gods to whom such shrines are dedicated.

Such sculptures are above all "power objects", and their efficacy in the religious sphere is as much dependent on the sculptor's skill as on the rites associated with them. A clumsily executed work or one that falls too far outside the traditional canons of style peculiar to the tribal or regional zone within which it is created would not be acceptable.

The characteristics of African sculpture are therefore closely dependent on the entire social and cultural context in which it is created. For this reason attempts to encourage the production of such works of art on a commercial basis, in an attempt to preserve the mere external characteristics of their style, are inevitably doomed to failure.

It is important to understand that the sculptor does not merely copy the details of traditional patterns of

sculpture but uses the accepted traditional model as an inspirational guide from which his own creative skill blossoms.

Mechanical copies for the purely commercial purpose of satisfying tourist demand remain lifeless and artistically sterile, while work that has its roots in a respect for social and cultural continuity is as vigorous from the point of view of artistic execution as works of art of the past.

Such sculpture is the collective work of a civilization, and the role of the artist is that of a medium charged with expressing collective beliefs and vision in material terms. The form of the man-made object becomes a substitute for the supernatural or human because it captures and imprisons a part of the original through symbolical identity.

Ultimately, art is a prolongation of life because it is imbued with a life of its own.

■ Ola Balogun

Whorls and curves from two continents

- (1) *Three Figures*, a gouache by the American painter and sculptor Alexander Calder (1898-1976).
 (2) A hemispherical Baluba (or Luba) mask. Curves, fluid lines and spheres are typical features of the art of the Baluba peoples of Zaire, whose sculpture is noted for its finely detailed execution, as can be seen in this small wooden hemp mortar
 (3) some 13 cm high.



An art that explains the universe

by Paul Ahyi

NOTHING in the Negro art of the Benin Coast seems designed simply to pander to taste or to provide merely fleeting enjoyment. In this part of the world, the purpose of art is to express the significance of human life. It is an expression of the Negro's need to balance the forces within him with phenomena that are external to his nature as a human being.

To seek the meaning of art in this region of Africa, one must "attempt to enter its warm milieu and to penetrate its most intimate, delicate and secret relationships".

And yet what is often looked for in Negro art is realism, picturesqueness, oddity—a tawdry exoticism rather than creativity in its purest form, originating in man's communion with the universe.

For a work of art shows man face to face with nature. It is the artist's response to the external world. It is also the embodiment of knowledge, prescience, divination and magic. Through the transposition of forms, the serene gravity of movements and attitudes, Negro art has links, transcending time and place, with the evocative power of ancient Egyptian, Assyrian and Pre-Columbian art.

Works of art, whose forms and proportions by no means correspond to a "natural" perception of things, provide the Negro with moral and intellectual support. Vehicles for the acquisition of knowledge, they also express the questions posed by the universe and the Negro's answers to these questions at different stages of his history. "They convey ideas, relating the cosmic and social laws that governed the world at the time of their creation. Throughout the hundreds or thousands of years of their existence, these works of art will retain this meaning".

If the Negro artist dissociates and associates natural features according to his own laws, it is because he seeks to perpetuate and accentuate what is permanent rather than incidental in living creatures, the core of their being rather than mere appearances, the enduring rather than the transient. His aim is to impress on the mind the reality of the living being and not its outward image.

In Equatorial Africa, when a Bantu dies, his statue is carved in wood or some other material. This statue is a representation, not a likeness. It is a structure which replaces the body from which life has fled and returned to the earth. In this immortal "counterpart", the spark of life will henceforward reside. And if the sculptor decides to enclose this spark in a form different from that which it originally occupied, it is because he cannot conceive—in his mystical way of thinking—that the spirit would wish to re-inhabit a form which it had abandoned out of weariness or infirmity. Hence, an entirely new creation is called for to harbour the vital spark.

There is a story, which may well be true, that an explorer friend of Picasso once told the great master of modern art that "in Africa, he was curious to see how the Negroes would react to a photograph. And so he showed them a photo of himself, dressed in a naval officer's uniform.

"A Negro took it, looked at it from all angles and finally returned it to him, puzzled. The explorer tried to explain to him

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Photo © Museum of Ife Antiquities, Ife, Nigeria

This bronze head, made in the 13th century A.D. using the "lost wax" casting process, is an outstanding example of the art of Ife (Nigeria). For hundreds of years Ife was an important cultural centre of the Yoruba people. Since the magnificent bronze sculptures of classical Ife art (12th to 15th centuries) were revealed to the world in 1910, the town has become one of the major centres of world art.

that the photo was his image. The Negro laughed disbelievably, and taking a pencil and paper, set about drawing the officer's portrait. He drew in his way the head, body, legs and arms in the style of a Negro idol and handed the drawing to his model. Then, on second thoughts, he took the drawing back—he had forgotten the shiny buttons on the uniform. He began adding the buttons to the drawing. But instead of putting them where they belonged, he set them all around the face".

This anecdote vividly conveys the Negro's attitude towards the "being". It is a striking example of freedom of expression and execution in the creative process. For the Negro what counts is not the outward appearance but the spiritual essence of the human being. The brass buttons added to the drawing as an afterthought denote the frippery, the artifice that has only a remote connexion with man's true worth. They are ornaments added to life, but they are not part of life. ■

by
Tanoé-Aka
Jules Semitiani
Youssef Fofana
Goze Tapa
and **Paul N'Da**

proverbial

TO talk in proverbs is to invoke the established order and the authority of our ancestors.

The expression of a people's inherited wisdom and code of behaviour, proverbs are often used in traditional societies as a means of instruction. A study of such maxims reveals some of the characteristics and underlying principles of traditional education and shows where they coincide and where they conflict with those of modern education.

The proverbs presented here are those of the N'Zema people who live in the south of the Ivory Coast, in the region of Grand Lahou, Dabou, Abidjan and Grand Bassam. Most of them have a strong similarity to the proverbs of two other Ivory Coast peoples, the Agni and the Baoulé, as well as certain affinities with those of the Ashanti people of Ghana.

The main educational guidelines

laid down in the proverbs are addressed on the one hand to adults and parents bringing up their children, and on the other to the children themselves.

First of all, the proverbs impress on parents that their children will reflect themselves. Parents should never forget that "A bird cannot beget a mouse", and "Where the needle goes, the thread follows."

Even when their children are difficult, parents must not shirk their responsibilities. After all, "If you graze your knee, you can't pretend that it's not part of your body."

Fortunately, not all children are rascals. Some of them are favoured by the gods from the moment they are born, and, in the words of the proverb, "A good meal doesn't need onions or tomatoes."

It goes without saying that a youngster isn't an adult and that

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Africa's wit and wisdom

children are neither as crafty nor as quick on the uptake as they sometimes make themselves out to be. "A child knows how to run but he doesn't know how to hide."

Sometimes children try to be too clever by half and get caught out at their own game. They do not realize that "If a child stops his mother from sleeping, then he won't sleep either."

Parents should remember that their children are growing and changing all the time. "You don't take the food off the fire until it's cooked" and "You only pick palm-nuts when they're ripe." But children will grow up in time. "A dry coconut won't stay on the tree forever." (In other words, when the coconut is well and truly ripe, it will drop unaided from the tree.)

Children react to things in different ways and so education should be adapted to suit the character of each child. "You don't put all animals on a leash", says one proverb, while according to another, "The dung beetle says there are many ways of carrying a load." (Some carry it on their head, others on their back. As for the dung beetle, he rolls it along walking backwards.)

Children must be trusted, especially if they really set their minds on doing something: "A child who wants to set his trap on a rock knows where to put the snare."

Never give up hope where a youngster is concerned. "If a cluster of palm nuts drops from the tree and he doesn't pick them up, then he'll pick up the dead leaves."

If parents treat their children with respect, then so will other people: "If you kick your dog, the others will give it a beating."

But still, a firm hand is necessary, since "You don't rear a cock for it to perch on your head and crow." Means must be adapted to ends. "You don't need a knife to eat an

egg", and "When the journey is short, you don't rest on the way." And again, "If you dig the grasshopper's hole with a log, you'll block it up." At the same time, adults should be tolerant, and sometimes even turn a blind eye when their children get up to mischief.

It is best to let a child learn his own lessons, so that he can find out for himself what he needs to know. Nothing can beat practical experience. "Sweetness is enjoyed in the mouth", goes the proverb. Sometimes it may be advisable to let a child do something even if he regrets it later on. "The road doesn't say a word to anyone." In other words it doesn't tell travellers what has happened to those who went before them; everyone must learn his own lessons.

The same idea is found in another proverb: "It's only when you've spilled the oil that you know where you should have stored it."

In some cases children should be given a helping hand when they insist on doing something. One proverb is quite categorical about this: "If

the child cries for the arrow you've snatched from his hands so that he wouldn't prick his finger, then sharpen the point and give it him back." Everyone has the right to find out for himself.

Grown-ups should help a child, but never put themselves in his place. "The child's share of cooked yam has been cleaned and given to him", goes the proverb, "but it's up to him whether he eats it or not. We're certainly not going to eat it for him."

Children must respect society's institutions and the established order. A youngster who remains attached to his mother and his society won't go far wrong. "The chicken that follows its mother is the one that eats the cockroach's paw." Contrariwise, it's risky to keep out of social life. "He who loses his father loses his protection", says one proverb.

Others take up the same theme: "The child who can't stand living with his mother will end his days on the skin of a black monkey" (in other words, abandoned and without a grave). "If your father and mother



Photo C. Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Belgium

Ingeniously carved lids for earthenware pots are used by the Woyo people who live near the mouth of the Congo as a means of illustrating proverbs. On this "proverb lid", a husband is pointing indignantly at a bowl of bananas, "a dish fit only for bachelors", which his wife has served him to show that she is tired of cooking.

Smiling group of girls in a Peul village on the banks of the Niger in Mali. Numbering over 5 million, the Peul or Fulbe people are found scattered in many parts of West Africa from Lake Chad in the east to the Atlantic coast. Originally nomadic herdsmen, some Peuls have become sedentary farmers. It is thought that the famous prehistoric rock-paintings of Tassili in the Sahara may have been the work of the Peuls' distant ancestors.

Wisdom worth its weight in gold

The tiny ornamental figures shown here are metal weights originally used for weighing gold dust and nuggets by the peoples of southern Ghana and of some parts of the Ivory Coast. Most of them were cast in brass by the "lost wax" process, but some are actually made of gold. Corresponding to ancient units of weight based on the seeds of certain plants, they were made in a variety of forms: human figures, animals, musical instruments and weapons. They speak a language full of double meanings, illustrating ironic proverbs or transmitting messages from creditors to debtors. Even when their esoteric significance is not fully understood, they remain small masterpieces of humour and vivacity.



Photo © Musée de l'Homme, Paris

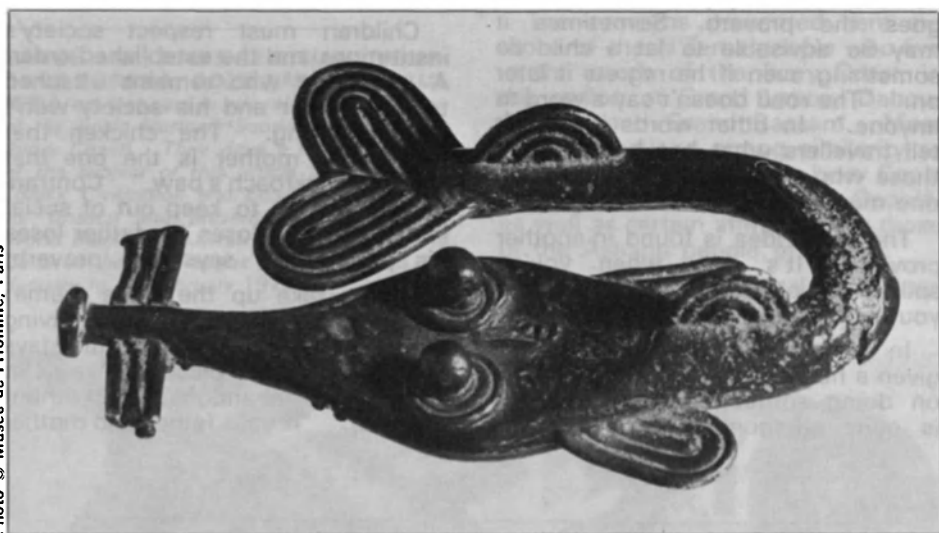


Photo © Musée de l'Homme, Paris

Unhappy landing

Its fins bristling, a caught catfish takes stock of dry land. With round bulbous eyes it gapes at the cooking pot and wonders how it is going to be served up. It has no say in the matter; it has ceased to be master of its fate. Moral: when the game's up, give in gracefully, however much pride you have to swallow.

▶ give you advice and you don't listen, then the tree-stumps on the road will teach you a lesson or two." (In other words, the ups and downs of life will teach you how to live.) Another proverb refers approvingly to the child who accepts his society and is accepted by society in his turn: "The child who knows how to wash his hands eats with the adults."

Society, like a mother, wants nothing but good for its members, even when it imposes restrictions on them. After all, "The mother hen's claw doesn't crush her pullet."

A number of N'Zema proverbs stress the importance of respecting existing institutions, the hierarchy, and the time-honoured order of things. Girls should be told what is expected of their mothers: "The hen knows when it's dawn, but it's the rooster that crows." "As long as you've got a head on your shoulders, your knee doesn't wear a hat" and "The chicken may get fat but he's still a bird." "If a child's got good lungs, he'll blow the trumpet but he can't blow the chaff from the mortar."

He should know the natural order

of things: "The child doesn't break the turtle-shell, he cracks the shell of the snail." (He isn't strong enough to break a turtle-shell and no one expects him to be.)

The members of the community should stick together and help each other out, since "The right hand washes the left hand and the left hand washes the right hand", and "It's the ear that hears the good news about the healing medicine, but it's the hand that takes it." Solidarity and mutual assistance should prevail, not only between children but also between parents and children, between young and old. The proverb declares that "The old man's hand won't go through the narrow neck of the jug, but the child's hand can't reach the top of the food dryer."

At the same time people should always keep a cool head and know when to act on their own initiative when necessary: "The Azié monkey says that we receive life one at a time." (In other words, we are born alone and we die alone, and so we should avoid following the crowd heedlessly.) "If raw meat is taboo for you, then don't make friends with the panther."

Everyone is responsible for his own actions, and woe betide anyone who tries to wriggle out of responsibility on the grounds that he is a victim of heredity or because he happened to be born on a certain day. "Assuan says he doesn't get on in life because he was born at night." Success comes from hard work: in the words of one proverb, "The salt you beg will never season a meal." If people work hard for themselves, they won't be hamstrung by having to rely on other people. A man who depends on others is like a blind man, and "The blind man doesn't lose his temper in the middle of the forest."

People should always persevere and ignore risks and setbacks, re-

Birds of a feather

A brass weight-proverb from the Ivory Coast. Four identical toucans quench their thirst at the same spring. The motif suggests that we should never think that we are "rare birds" nor underestimate those around us.



Photo © Musée de l'Homme, Paris

The back-stabber

Once upon a time, the scorpion was a symbol of good fortune; today it brings bad luck. It has turned from a faithful friend into a remorseless enemy. The message of the scorpion is a warning to those who would never dream that a childhood friend could betray them: "Beware." (Brass weight from the Ivory Coast)

Symbol of liberty

Brass weight from the Ivory Coast in the form of two crocodile heads emerging from the same mother's body. The fact that each now has an independent identity symbolizes man's right to freedom of speech, belief and thought.

Photo © Georges Niangioran Bouah



membering the proverb that "As long as your pursuer doesn't say he's tired, don't you say that you are."

It is essential to look before you leap, to know your own possibilities and limitations and act accordingly. "When the animals get together before leaving, the tortoise has already gone on ahead."

Though personal experience paves the way to knowledge and success, the wise man knows that some forms of experience are futile and even dangerous. "You don't push an old man to see where he will fall" and "Even if you're tough you don't jump and hurl yourself against a rock."

It is clear that these educational maxims are deeply rooted in the way of life of the societies which formulated them. Social life and the structure of society also seem to influence the theory of knowledge. But what is the purpose of knowledge?

The purpose of knowledge is to understand everything that has any bearing whatever on mankind, whose value is supreme: "Man", says the proverb, "is superior to gold."

The fount of all knowledge is experience, and the best experience is that which is acquired slowly, over the years. Experience is the touchstone which tests the validity of knowledge, and if a child can never know as much as an adult it is precisely because of his lack of experience. ("He knows how to run but not how to hide.") If he claims to know it all, then he should be brought down to earth. "When you were born you didn't see how your mother was decked out in her bridal clothes to be taken to her husband."

It is in real life that we can see how these proverbs are reflected in educational principles. Education comes from coping with situations as they arise; there are no formal lessons in morality or the civic virtues. Misbehaviour is corrected as and when it occurs. Children must prove themselves though contact with their playmates and with adults, picking up what life has to teach them and absorbing the ideals of the community in which they live.

It can be said that some of the principles which modern education proudly claims to have discovered

or rediscovered have always been unobtrusively observed in traditional societies.

For example, when a school encourages a child from a traditional village background to be self-reliant and to use his own initiative, it is teaching him qualities which his parents have already begun to expect of him. When a school teaches a child that co-operation is a virtue, it in no way contradicts values inculcated by traditional education.

Of course, schools provide a systematic education, whereas education in the traditional society is usually less methodical. Theoretically, then, a child who has attended school ought simply to have fuller, more precise and more systematic knowledge than one who has had no schooling.

In practice, however, certain conflicts arise between traditional and modern forms of education. The fundamental divergence lies in the fact that modern education tends to develop a critical approach and to call established values into question. And so problems arise when children pass from one system to another.

When parents in traditional village society discover that their children, in whom they have always inculcated respect for the old, for the natural order of things and for time-honoured beliefs, have learned at school patterns of behaviour which lead them to question and challenge everything, they inevitably feel disappointed. They consider that schooling has corrupted their children.

It also happens that children, seeing their parents still attached to traditional values, feel that they are old-fashioned and find it hard to fall back into step with them.

The conflict facing most schoolchildren stems largely from a contradiction between respect for existing institutions and the established order, which social stability demands, and the critical approach and the questioning of values, which are necessary in a constantly changing society.

■ Tanoé-Aka, J. Semitiani, Y. Fofana, G. Tapa and P. N'Da.

by
Solomon Mbabi-Katana

A song for every season

Music in African life
from the cradle
to the grave

SOLOMON MBABI-KATANA, Ugandan musicologist, is head of music in the department of music, dance and drama at Makerere University, Kampala (Uganda). He is a former member of the Uganda National Commission for Unesco.

The panther dance of the Senoufo people of the Ivory Coast marks the funeral ceremony of a dignitary of the "Poro" society, whose members formerly played a major role in the religious life of the community. The masked dancer gyrates to the sound of drums.



Photo © Fulvio Roiter, Italy

MUSIC to an African is not a luxury but a way of living. It expresses his happiness and jubilation at weddings and festivals, his pride and sophistication on ceremonial occasions, his loneliness and devotion at religious rituals, his intensity in love, his might at work, his simplicity and humility by his fireside and his courage in war.

African folk music is thus a living example of the African cultural heritage. It has matured over thousands of years and is based on beliefs established by ancient customs and practices. Though mostly unexpressed in words, these beliefs are known and understood by every member of the culture to which the artist belongs.

But although music is intricately woven into the fabric of African social and spiritual life, its significance has, unfortunately, so far only been dimly realized.

Western musicians, unlike their African counterparts, inherit a long tradition of musical literacy. They can experience their art with detachment and objectivity. They can remove music from its context and treat it as something that exists of itself.

The Western concept that musical sound creates emotion is due to this long-established musical literacy. Consequently, ideas such as that whereby a minor key is "sad" are established aesthetics of Western musical art.

African music, on the other hand, has a set of social and cultural associations and cannot be abstracted

from its context. It is difficult to dissociate the impact of musical sound from the effects of such associations on the emotions.

I once played a tape of their people's songs and epic recitations to a group of herdsmen living around the lakes of western Uganda. The songs and recitations touched on the life of one of their legendary heroes. Only two listeners were moved to tears. The rest remained unmoved because the music was being played outside its ritual context.

African music uses strictly regulated and stylized sounds to express thoughts and perceptions related to a particular ritual or function, thus transforming it to a new plane of experience and heightening our enjoyment and perception of it.

Through the invocation of ancestral spirits it provides a medium between the living and the dead, but it is also used to accompany oral history, storytelling, speech-making and various forms of poetic recitations. Genealogies, proverbs and legends are also portrayed through music, which is a vehicle for the preservation and dissemination of knowledge and thus for education.

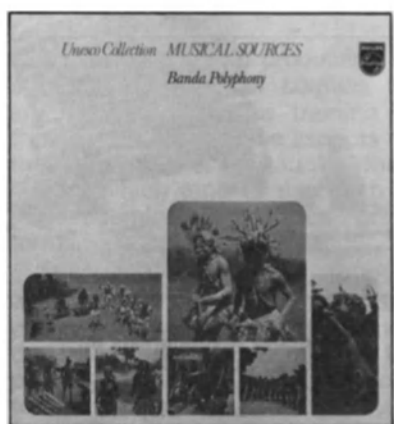
The significance of music in African life is further illustrated by the role it plays in traditional occupations and activities. Music is present at every stage of the farmer's year, from the bush clearing which precedes ploughing and planting to harvest time, threshing and the carrying of the

crops. Work and leisure activities such as fishing, hunting, brewing and cultivating, often take place to the accompaniment of music.

In Africa there is music for every season of a man's life. There is music for birth, for infancy and puberty, for adulthood and weddings, for funerals and for succession after death. The traditions surrounding the birth of a child, which begin before the actual delivery with the seeking of a diviner's message regarding the baby's safe arrival, are communicated through music and dance.

Thus, the Banyoro people of Uganda have a special three-part ritual dedicated to Rubanga, the god of twins, in which the birth is celebrated by singing and dancing in which the parents themselves take part.

African childhood is accompanied by a wealth of dance songs, play songs, story songs and musical games of all kinds. Before the advent



Unesco records of African music

Unesco has for many years encouraged the spread of knowledge about traditional music from all cultures. The Unesco Collections of recorded traditional music from many parts of the world are one aspect of its work in this field. About a hundred records have been published so far. We give below the titles in the African series. The Unesco Collections are edited for the International Music Council by the International Institute for Comparative Music Studies.

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A man of many parts, the "griot" in West African society is troubadour, story-teller and genealogist. He is a repository of his people's traditions, steeped in their history and imbued with their wisdom, moral code and sense of humour. His performances hold listeners spellbound: it is said that when he sings even the sun stops in its course to listen. Above, recording traditional music in the north of Cameroon. The griot is playing a pluriarc, one of the oldest African instruments.

Photo © USIS, U.S.A.

of modern schooling, children were mostly left to themselves, and these musical pastimes had their own inherent educational values and creativeness. Through songs such as the "counting out" song performed by Banyankole children, infants learn not only how to count but also train their ear to listen to the accents of musical beats.

Puberty, among several African ethnic groups, is a momentous occasion marked by circumcision music, dancing and visual art in the form of masques and body painting. It is through the initiation rites performed at puberty that systematic instruction is given to the young, designed to help them to pass from childhood to manhood and to transmit to them the customs and ideals which are considered important for the continued welfare of their community.

Among several ethnic groups of East Africa, wedding ceremonies are rituals which amount to folk operas of immense variety and intense dramatic and musical content.

A typical wedding ceremony of the Bantu-speaking Bahaya people of Tanzania is a highly structured performance which begins with motherly advice to the bride presented in operatic style with recitatives interspersed with arias. The beauty of the bride, her wedding dress and the institution of marriage itself are praised, the performance being punctuated with recitations of her genealogy.

The ceremony ends with a triumphant procession in which men sent by the bridegroom's parents carry her to her new home. Here the celebrations reach their climax in exuberant scenes of music and dancing, while love poems are declaimed inside the bridegroom's house to the accompaniment of soft music played on a zither.

Death in African society is the occasion for music of poignancy and



Photo © Juliet Highet, London

sadness which accompanies the funeral rites. In contrast to this are the joyful musical and dance-rituals with which some African peoples celebrate the succession of an heir. In one such ceremony practised by the Baganda people of Uganda, the sad and contemplative music of a ritual known as the "Okabya Olumbe" (literally, the "destruction of death") is followed by a joyful ceremony of welcome to the heir or successor, against a background of drum beats which identify the clan and symbolize its continuity.

Thus folk music is present in African life from the cradle to the grave, a living part of a culture which transcends and transforms everyday experience.

■ Solomon Mbabi-Katana

Swinging saxophonists in Guinea. Members of an all-female jazz band called the "Amazons" they are swaying to the rhythm of the music as they play.

In search of a new African theatre

by Demas Nwoko

AN accident of history has made us Africans a curious people. Our formal education began with the learning of things foreign to our culture in every branch of professional training—medicine, agriculture, language, history, geography, and even in crafts like pottery, smithery and weaving. The result for the young African artist is a confusion that breeds in him an inferiority complex.

Modern African schools of drama teach theatre history, dramatic literature, speech and movement, dance, design and play production. Drama students are confronted with plays written by authors ranging from the Greeks to modern writers like Ionesco, Pinter or Kafka.

Dance, design and production workshops offer practical courses which are important in the training of a theatre artist, but these aspects of the theatre are mostly taught through books, which tend to deal with them in academic rather than practical terms.

The whole atmosphere is charged with books and much emphasis is placed on written examinations, so that the students lose interest in the practical aspects. They work so hard to understand these text books that frustration and exhaustion take away any incentive to create spontaneously. This is to be expected since creativity is more a matter of intuition than knowledge.

African artists of today seek freedom to create their own art and culture, to borrow from wherever they wish and to do anything they like with what they borrow; above all they seek freedom to be the sole judge of the validity of their living culture.

The training of the young African artist should be based on teaching in the classical art forms of Africa. Once they have matured in their own culture, all artists will pick up whatever influences they choose from any corner of the globe. I see this as the only sane beginning for any African art.

To achieve this, our schools of art and theatre should be practical professional workshops and studio schools, outside the universities.

I would advocate the re-establishment of the old apprenticeship system. Actors as well as all other theatre artists should learn their craft in theatre studios run by theatre directors.

Many spirited attempts have been made in the past and are still being made today to evolve an African theatre idiom. Though no formal philosophy has been propounded we all agree that a truly African identity in art is imperative. It is also commonly held that this new art should neither ape European art nor be a mere copy of traditional African art.

When we talk of a modern African theatre, I should like us to think of a culture that belongs to the new African society, concentrated mostly in the cities and towns.

Artistically speaking, traditional African society worked almost always in tribal enclaves and this was obviously due to the poor communications that existed in former times. Over a long period, tribes developed theatrical expressions unique to them, to such an extent that scholars subsequently tended to accept these differences as cultural distinctions between African tribes. Even Africans themselves are generally surprised to see a person of a different tribe perform a dance of their tribe fairly well.

There is almost a belief that tribal artistic expressions have their origins in the customs and philosophy of the tribe and often acquire a religious

colouring in the process. Once this process is completed, the art is seen as theirs alone and any outsider, i.e. anyone immediately outside the clan, is not expected to understand it easily.

Today, however, the new African society is detribalized. It is nationalistic now and will eventually become Pan-Africanistic, as political unity is achieved.

The artistic expression of one tribe cannot fulfil the aesthetic needs of this multi-tribal society. There has to be a marriage of artistic habits, and this is accomplished naturally as the society comes to share the same religions, work and play. The duty of the artists of this new society will be to create an art that will express the life and aspirations of this new "supertribe".

By virtue of its structure, the new African society, which is characterized by basically classless social habits, holds great promise for the growth of a people's theatre. To achieve this most desirable end, dramatists should work with the people in mind at all times.

Any attitude that tends to emphasize distinction in status, or which creates exclusive tastes in theatrical entertainment, should be avoided. In the framework of our present-day society, any expression of the people's soul will be successfully African and can become very popular.

It is always wrongly generalized that an art that is popular is vulgar and that fine art is always exclusive. Traditional African arts have shown that every human being is capable of appreciating and enjoying the fine arts, be he king or slave, master or servant.

To preserve this heritage, any artist who purposely confines his talent to a single section of our society should not be encouraged with public patronage, as there is a possible trace of class patronage in him. Everybody might not be able to buy the most highly-priced seats in a theatre, but all should be able to enjoy a play, deriving a common aesthetic satisfaction based on a common philosophy of life.

The most important thing on the stage should be man, and not the events he is enacting; neither should the objects around nor the technological trappings of the modern stage distract attention from him. We should not seek to achieve mathematical precision and speed to the detriment of the full development and exposition of the art of the living artist on stage.

Realism as it is known in Western theatre appears vulgar to African audiences, which react to it with laughter that is not the laughter of an amused person, but the chuckle of an adult at the ineffectiveness of a childish prank.

CONTINUED PAGE 33

DEMAS NWOKO, Nigerian artist and author, has written a number of studies on the place of modern theatre in African life and culture.

The awakening African cinema

by Francis Bebey

AS far as the general public is concerned, it may well be that the cinema is more highly appreciated than anything else that the West has brought to Africa. From Niger to Botswana, from Angola to Tanzania, people flock to film shows, and every country boasts a great many cinemas, most of them in the towns.

These cinemas undoubtedly play a part in keeping people who for various reasons have moved to the towns from returning to the villages where they were born.

This makes the cinema—challenged as a form of entertainment only by football—an important factor in African society, and one that can in certain circumstances have a major impact on a country's economy. Since most of these economies are predominantly agricultural, the rural exodus which the cinema directly or indirectly encourages is a matter whose importance cannot be ignored.

I have often asked young Africans why they insist on staying in the towns, where they have no useful occupation, instead of returning to their villages where they would be

happier. All too often these young villagers mention the cinema as an urban attraction which they find hard to resist.

At this point it is perhaps worth pausing to define exactly what we mean when we talk about the cinema in Black Africa. Basically, of course, the African cinema is much the same as in the West: a darkened room, a screen, a projector, a film being projected, and an audience watching the film.

Often, though, the darkened room is simply an open-air enclosure with concrete terraces for seats. The screen is open to the weather and not always ideal for a satisfactory projection. The projector is liable to be a noisy old machine and the film a "western" of doubtful taste. As for the audience, its spontaneous involvement in the proceedings may sometimes be a little disconcerting.

To be fair, things are not always thus, and in the big cities such as Dakar, Nairobi, Lagos or Bukavu the cinemas are air-conditioned and every bit as comfortable as those in Europe or America, with the most up-to-date equipment. These cinemas generally cater to a relatively well-off public, offering programmes of perfectly respectable intellectual, cultural and artistic credentials.

Open-air cinemas, which are found in many countries of the African savannah and in some towns of the forest regions, cost little to build and the running expenses are practically nil. They are pretty uncomfortable for the "ordinary" members of the public, but they nearly always have three or four rows of covered seats on a raised dais at the back for the more important Africans in the audience or for Europeans—should they ever venture into these "cinemas for Africans".

For many teenagers and poor adults,

these open-air cinemas are a godsend, especially when there are a few trees nearby. It is an easy matter to climb up onto a stout branch and enjoy an excellent view of the screen.

So cinema audiences in Black Africa are socially stratified and could in themselves provide the subject for an interesting sociological study. Depending on the kind of cinema and the neighbourhood in which it is situated, the price of a ticket may vary between the equivalent of 25 cents and \$ 6.

Most cinemas belong to non-Africans or to chains set up by European or American distributors. For several decades, two French firms owned and ran a network of over 300 cinemas in the French-speaking part of Africa.

The situation is no longer quite the same. A Tunisian journalist, Tahar Cheriaa, writing in the weekly magazine *Algérie-Actualités* in January 1972, reported that 33 of these cinemas had been nationalized by State bodies following independence; that 83 now belonged to private individuals, although their programmes were still provided by non-African companies; and that 200 or so still belonged to the two companies.

But although the situation today is no longer what it was 15 years ago, the changes that have occurred do not seem to have brought about a genuine assumption of control over distribution by African governments. In the English-speaking countries the circuits set up by the British, and the arrival of American companies on the market are a matter of concern to government leaders and officials responsible for African cinema.

The fact is that these companies, which have enjoyed a monopoly over film-distribution in Black Africa ever since the beginning, are at the root of the appalling state of the cinema on the African continent.

FRANCIS BEBEY, musician, novelist and poet of Cameroon, is founder and director of Ozileka, a record publishing house producing records for Africa. Composer and guitarist, he has given recitals of his compositions in many countries, and has made several records, the latest of which, *Condition Masculine*, is published by Ozileka. He is also the author of a book of initiation into the traditional music of Black Africa, *African Music: A People's Art* (Hill, Lawrence and Co., New York, 1975). In 1968 he was awarded the Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Afrique Noire for his novel *Le Fils d'Agatha Moudio* ("Agatha Moudio's Son", Hutchinson, London, 1973). For ten years he was associated with Unesco's programme for the development of broadcasting in Africa.

Right, *Emitai*, the thunder god of the Diola people of Casamance (Senegal). Photo is a still from *Emitai*, made in 1971 by the distinguished Senegalese director Ousmane Sembène. The theme of the film, which won a prize at the Moscow Film Festival in the same year, is the resistance of Diola farmers to the demands of the colonial armed forces.

Photo © M. Renaudeau, Dakar, Senegal



Photo © Présence Africaine, Paris



Left, a scene from Ousmane Sembène's film *La Noire de...* ("Black Girl"), made in 1966. Among the first full-length feature films made by an African, the film shows events in the life of an African girl whose emigration to France ends in tragedy.

They are answerable to no one but themselves when deciding on the sort of film to be shown to the public. As a result, African film-goers are offered a diet of European duds, third-rate American westerns and Egyptian or Indian films so bad they could never hope for a showing in Europe or America.

THIS widespread distribution of poor-quality films has at least two tragic consequences: it develops and nurtures uncritical taste on the part of the public while at the same time leaving scant room for the development of Africa's own potential—or already existing—film-making creativity.

In addition, it misleads many film-goers into thinking that the cinema-fiction served up to them is in fact reality, and into accepting uncritically everything they see on the screen.

The public thronging the cheap cinemas in the poorest districts, in other words the vast majority of African film-goers, is in such thrall to the cinema that the dangers underlying the kind of unscrupulous programming imposed by the existing distributors are all too apparent.

The fact that audience participation does not stem from any profound reflexion means that "lessons" learned from the cinema screen are often put into practice in real life. For example, certain African towns experience periodic outbreaks of lawlessness following a spate of films glorifying outlaws and gangsters.

The trouble is, this kind of film makes up the bulk of Western cinema's contribution to Black Africa; the great films of the international cinema are a rarity. True, in some parts Charlie Chaplin is as familiar a figure as Tarzan. Still, on the whole, and certain improvements in programmes over the past few years notwithstanding, the African cinema-going public continues to be overwhelmed by artistically stultifying and morally reprehensible films.

African film-making as such has expanded over the past 15 years, but it is handicapped not only by a lack of financial resources, not only by obstacles placed in its way by the distributors, but also by the attitude of the public, trained as it is in the school of poor taste rather than that of thoughtful scrutiny.

When someone like Ousmane Sembène suggests a moment's reflection

about some aspect of society, as in his films *Mandabi* or *La Noire de...*, (Black Girl) he is by no means sure of having the African public on his side. "What kind of a film is this, it doesn't feature any of our favourite blood-and-thunder heroes?" think some, while others mutter, "What on earth does he think he's up to, showing us all the most commonplace aspects of our daily lives?"

After all, it is understandable enough that African film-goers, as avid for exoticism as their counterparts the world over, should have little time for scenes of everyday life taken from all around them. But the problem goes deeper still: for all too long the African public has been encouraged to think about anything but its own condition. This encouragement, which was an integral part of colonialism, has not altogether vanished with the advent of independence.

Little has been done to combat the foreign distributors' monopoly, to create new circuits or to bring to a wider public films capable of helping Africans along the road to intellectual, cultural and moral emancipation. One even begins to wonder whether this misuse of cinema is not at least partly responsible for the misfortunes of Black Africa today.

Despite all this, the past 15 years have seen the growth of an African cinema worthy of the name. Some people have seen its output as a new form of modern African literature; at any rate, it has included a number of films condemning colonialism, and others dealing with the struggle against neo-colonialism, with mistakes made in the early days of independence, with the position of women in African society and with what Guy Hennebelle has called the "new black slave trade" in his book *Les cinémas africains* (African cinemas; published by the Société Africaine d'Édition, Dakar, 1972).

The development of an African cinema has had a number of consequences, including the foundation of the Panafrican Cinema Federation, which has fostered African participation in various festivals (such as the Carthage Film Festival), and which is also partly responsible for the founding of the Ouagadougou Festival.

These subjects have already inspired a great many films, but certain names stand out from the crowd. The Senegalese writer and film-maker Ousmane Sembène is undoubtedly the best-known African film-director at the present time. With *La Noire de...*, *Mandabi*, *Taw*, *Emittai* and

Xala, all of which are good films aesthetically, ethically and technically, Ousmane Sembène has brought the Senegalese film industry to the forefront of Black African cinema.

His films draw their inspiration from everyday African—in this case Senegalese—life, revealing its charm and its poetry while at the same time reflecting deeply on the human condition in Africa. This film-maker, who is in many ways a model for contemporary Africa, has already received numerous prizes and awards for his work.

Med Ondo of Mauritania (*Soleil O* in particular); Paulin Soumanou Vieyra, a pioneer of Senegalese cinema; Mahama Traoré, better known as Johnson Traoré (*Diegue-bi* and *Njjanggan*), another Senegalese film-maker, have, along with Babacar Samb-Makharam (*Kodou*) and others, also played an active part in the burgeoning of African cinema.

The Ivory Coast is represented by Désiré Ecaré (*Concerto pour un Exil*) and *A nous deux, France*), Bassori Timité (*La Dune de la Solitude* and *La Femme au Couteau*) and Henri Duparc (*Mouna, ou le rêve d'un Artiste*). However, unlike Senegal, where one really can speak in terms of a "national school" of film-making due to the relatively large number of film-makers at work, in the Ivory Coast, these artists are isolated creators.

Mustapha Alassane (*Le Retour d'un Aventurier, Le Téléphoniste*, etc.) and Oumarou Ganda (*Cabascabo*) from Niger, Daniel Kamwa (*Pousse-Pousse* and *Boubou-Cravate*) and Dikongué Pipa (*Moun'a Moto*), both from Cameroon, round up this brief, but by no means exhaustive list of the better-known French-speaking African film-makers.

Turning now to the English-speaking countries, it is too early to speak of the birth of a genuinely African cinema, although Bernard Odidja of Ghana (*Doing Their Thing*), Egbert Adjesu, another Ghanaian (*I Told You So*) and particularly the Nigerian Ola Balogun (*Alpha, Ajani Ogun*, etc.) all deserve mention.

Ola Balogun is both film-maker and theoretician. Speaking of African cinema's development possibilities he points out that in many countries cinema audiences are too small for receipts to be able to finance a "conventional" cinema industry. "However, we may regard the economic problem as more apparent than real, since a reorganization of structures

In search of a new African theatre

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coupled with judicious planning ought to make it possible to resolve it." (See article page 12.)

He believes that one solution that might permit the development of film production in Black Africa might lie in cooperation between the African States themselves, especially through the pooling of technical and financial resources, and through the adoption by African film-makers of new types of equipment—especially lightweight material. Traditional 35 mm cameras could be replaced by 16 mm ones, and production crews could be pared down to a minimum, all of which would naturally help to cut film-production costs.

This view, expressed by a film-maker thoroughly familiar with the problems of his craft, which he practises in Africa itself at the present time, deserves to be borne in mind by all concerned with the growth of African cinema: film producers themselves, but also cinema managers and operators, Ministries of Culture and the Arts, the teaching profession as well as other bodies concerned with education.

ONE thing is certain, namely that at a time when the rich nations are dropping methods and techniques that have come to be regarded as outmoded; at a time when Hollywood is abandoning its studios in favour of shooting on location with increasingly compact production crews, African film-makers would be well-advised to reassess their art and to adopt a more realistic approach to production than they have done in the past.

In my opinion, the only kind of equipment which is really suited to economic conditions in Africa is neither 35 mm nor 16 mm, but the cheapest of them all, Super 8 mm. For the moment, most "self-respecting" professionals will have nothing to do with this format; and yet it alone is capable of making films serve the cause of development education in Black Africa.

■ Francis Bobey

They might well be asking "Why cry on stage when we know you are not grieved or hurt? Why stab someone to death when we know his life is in no danger of death? Why kiss and caress on stage when you are not lovers?" They cannot help laughing when a "dead" man rises at curtain call to take a bow.

While the European is prepared to suspend his disbelief, and to consider that what is happening on stage is "reality", the African prefers to see a performance as an artistic display. In order to achieve the desired purity in art, aesthetically ugly manifestations like quarrels, which create abusive language and physical confrontations in fights, cruelty which results in killing, and other types of death, are enacted in a highly stylized manner.

What is true of the acting holds also for design. The African does not expect to see a house on stage, nor does he expect to see a real car, a king's crown or even a real policeman's uniform. A theatrical *representation* of these things is all he expects, and this is how it should be in the theatre.

The theatre is first and foremost a visual expression using sound in music, song or speech; movement, walked or danced; designs, colour, shapes in two or three dimensions, static or in motion; and a text to build up associations with the world of nature. Valid theatre can exist without a text, while a text without visual expression can only become literature and never theatre.

In the new African theatre, therefore, the director should be a good dancer and choreographer and, along with these accomplishments, he should have developed an ear for music. He should have become so conversant with shape and the use of space that he can decide the shapes of costumes and props that will ensure their practicality.

While he should not necessarily write the text of his scripts, he should choose only poems or writings that fit into his style of production since, in this theatre, the visual form comes before the text in importance. The true African dramatist will grow with the African theatre, working directly for a director or a style when one has been successfully established.

As regards the ever-present question of the synthesis of African and Western cultures as they are found in our lives, we must accept that a lot of Western values have come to stay.

We will always have much more of the European in us (especially with the mass education programme in hand) than the European will ever have of our culture.

A few of us might appear quite at ease in both cultures; but do not be deceived—we are merely very good actors and mimics, and it works well for surface fun. Under this apparent easy adaptability lies only one personality, that of the African who must be saved from his cultural ordeal.

Whereas the African religion failed in the face of the Christian Church and Islam, art is more fortunate and has become Africa's pride in the world today. So it seems that it is the artist whose duty it is to restore the new African into a wholesome personality, by making his culture dominate his material life.

African culture is not incompatible with the material, purely technical and economic aspects of Western civilization. African culture can effectively make use of modern technology for its realization and dissemination on the scale demanded by the world today, without dehumanizing its values.

Western art today is not only completely dehumanized, but it is fashioned for the glorification of man-made things, indicating man's sell-out to his machines. We have as yet no machines to sell our souls to and I think it would a little undignified of the African to enslave himself to another man's machines. Let us build our own modern, human civilization first, and then decay in our own good time.

■ Demas Nwoko

BOOKSHELF

RECENT UNESCO BOOKS ON AFRICA

■ **Mucheke: Race, Status and Politics in a Rhodesian Community**, by A. K. H. Weinrich. Co-published with Holmes and Meier Inc., New York. 1976, 278 pp. (42 F) See opposite page.

■ **Cultural Policy in the United Republic of Cameroon**, by J. C. Bahoken and Engelbert Atangana. 1976, 91 pp. (12 F); **Cultural Policy in the Republic of Zaire**, prepared under the direction of Dr. Bokonga Ekanga Botombele. 1976, 119 pp. (14 F); **Some Aspects of Cultural Policy in Togo**, by K. M. Aithnard. 1976, 101 pp. (12 F). (All published in Unesco's "Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies" series).

■ **Racism and Apartheid in southern Africa: Rhodesia**. Based on material prepared by the anti-apartheid movement. 1975, 124 pp. (10 F).

■ **Racism and Apartheid in southern Africa: South Africa and Namibia**. 1974, 156 pp. (15 F).

■ **Mother Tongue Education: The West African Experience**, edited by Ayo Bamgbose. Co-published with Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1976, 153 pp. Available through Unesco (39 F), except in U.K. where co-publisher has sales rights.

■ **Higher Education and the Labour Market in Zambia: Expectations and Performance**, by Bikas C. Sanyal, John H. Case, Philip S. Dow and Mary E. Jackson. Co-published with the University of Zambia, 1976, 373 pp. (Exclusive distribution in Africa: the University of Zambia) (40 F).

■ **Post-graduate Teacher Training: a Nigerian Alternative**, by H. W. R. Hawes and A. O. Ozigi. 1975, 53 pp. (Unesco: International Bureau of Education) (6 F).

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■ **Radio Study Group Campaigns in the United Republic of Tanzania**, by Lennart H. Grenholm. 1975, 51 pp. (Unesco: International Institute for Educational Planning) (6 F).

■ **African Geography for Schools: a handbook for teachers**. Co-publication with Longman Group, London. 1974, 309 pp. (Paperback: 32 F; Cloth: 75 F) Distribution in U.K.: Longman; paperback edition for sale only in Africa and Asia.

■ **Science and Technology in African Development**. 1974, 156 pp. (28 F).

UNESCO NEWSROOM

Unesco meeting in Florence on world information problems

About a hundred journalists (including newspaper editors, directors of news agencies, and radio and TV broadcasters) and representatives of information services met in Florence from 18 to 20 April 1977, at Unesco's invitation, to discuss problems relating to the international flow of information. The participants noted the existence of an imbalance in the exchange of information between developing and industrialized countries and agreed on the need for considerable efforts to remedy this imbalance. In spite of the diversity of views expressed, there was agreement on the importance of the problem and on the need for a free and balanced flow of information with a view to international understanding, justice, peace and the intellectual enrichment of mankind.

The participants expressed the wish that Unesco should continue its efforts and studies in order to achieve concrete results, taking into consideration all that had been said at the meeting. In an opening address, Mr. Jacques Rigaud, Assistant Director-General of Unesco, pointed out that Unesco's sole aim in initiating the meeting was to enrich and diversify a process of reflection—in which it was Unesco's duty to involve world opinion—on a problem on which peace and development ultimately depend. Mr. Rigaud added, "It is for each country... to define its own communication policy in the light of its own options, situation and needs."

New language edition of *Unesco Courier*



We are happy to announce the launching of an Urdu language edition of the *Unesco Courier* (see photo). Entitled "Payami" (the Urdu word for "Courier"), the Urdu edition is published by the Hamdard National Foundation, Nazimbad, Karachi, Pakistan. The publication of the Urdu edition, which began in February, brings the total number of language editions of the *Unesco Courier* to 16: English, French, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabic, Japanese, Italian, Hindi, Tamil, Hebrew, Persian, Dutch, Portuguese, Turkish and Urdu.

U.S. \$ 1 million donation to save Philae

The United States has decided to donate a further \$1 million to the Unesco-sponsored international campaign to save the monuments of the island of Philae in the Nile Valley. The temples on the island, which is now permanently submerged in the waters of the lake created by the Aswan High Dam, have been dismantled and transported to the nearby island of Agilkia where they are now being re-erected. Total contributions paid or pledged by the international community to save the Philae monuments now stand at \$12,375,000.

Bulgaria's gift to 'Save Acropolis' fund

Following the appeal made in January by Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco, for support for an international campaign to safeguard the Acropolis, the People's Republic of Bulgaria has paid the equivalent of \$25,000 into the campaign's international fund. A Bulgarian committee of specialists has been set up to give financial and technical support to the campaign.

Bilingual development lexicon

An English-French International Development Lexicon has recently been published in Canada. It contains the names of national, international and non-governmental organizations active in the field of development, together with their acronyms and a list of specialized development terms and activities. Copies can be obtained from the Canadian International Development Agency, Ottawa, K1A 0G4, Canada.

Flashes...

■ *The Republic of the Comoros became Unesco's 142nd Member State on 22 March 1977.*

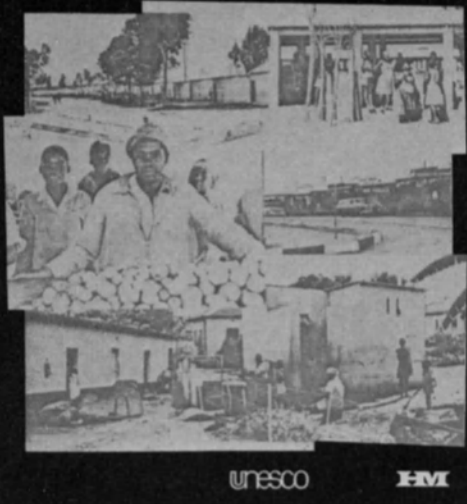
■ *According to world book production figures in Unesco's Statistical Yearbook, a total of 571,000 titles were published in 1974. This output was very unevenly distributed: 48.3% were published in Europe, 16.8% in North America, 14.5% in Asia, 14% in U.S.S.R., 3.5% in South America, 1.9% in Africa, and 0.9% in Oceania.*

■ *A Unesco survey of water resources in 800,000 km² of northern Algeria and Tunisia has shown that the area has enough water to guarantee the agricultural development of an additional 50,000 to 100,000 hectares.*

■ *Total agricultural production in 1976 showed a rise of more than 3 per cent over 1975, according to preliminary estimates by FAO.*

Mucheke: race, status and politics in a Rhodesian community

by A. K. H. Weinrich



1976

278 pages

42 French francs

Mucheke: race, status and politics in a Rhodesian community

by A. K. H. Weinrich

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MASKS THAT BRING MYTHS TO LIFE



In many African cultures, the mask is not a form of disguise but serves to suggest a supernatural presence during rituals in which myths and beliefs are ceremoniously expressed. Photo shows two masks from the Ivory Coast.

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