

the subject, date, production unit, technical characteristics, language used, etc. Four cross-indexes locate the material.

Eighty per cent of the films listed were made in French-speaking countries: the book itself appears only in French and there are no plans to bring out other language editions. The films deal with such subjects as religion, news, technology, and the arts.

A Note on Some Recent Bibliographies of African Literature

THERE have been several recent attempts to compile bibliographies of works of African writers published in Africa and elsewhere. One such attempt, 'Bibliographie africaine et malgache', appeared in 1963 in *Revue de littérature comparée* but lists only the works of French African writers published in French. Others have been produced by the Deutsche Afrika-Gesellschaft in Bonn (*Schöne Schriften aus Afrika*, 1962) and the American Society of African Culture in New York (*Some Modern African Writers*, 1964); both these contain biographical data but are incomplete as attempts to enumerate all the works of African writers.

At the Dakar Conference on African Literature and the University Curriculum in 1963 Janheinz Jahn, the German literary historian, announced that he was preparing a bibliography to include data on all the works of African and American negro writers, and the furthering of this project was among the resolutions passed by the conference. This appeared in 1965 (*Die neoafrikanische Literatur: Gesamtbibliographie von den Anfängen bis zum Gegenwart*. By Janheinz Jahn. Düsseldorf-Köln: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1965. Pp. xxxv, 360. DM 42). It is divided into three parts on a geographical basis and contains valuable bibliographical data and notes on each item. An attempt has been made as far as possible to include works written in European and African languages, translations and new editions.

The first part, which deals with Africa, is unfortunately by no means complete, since the author has relied only on direct information from the literary historians without consulting such sources as the *Nigerian Publications* (Ibadan), the Nigerian national bibliography, or the *South African National Bibliography* (Pretoria). A careful study of these and other sources such as recently published African literary anthologies and personal communications from African writers, has made it possible to augment this first part of Jahn's bibliography by nearly 30 per cent. This additional material includes new works, recent editions and translations. One part of this supplementary bibliography, by Paul Páricsy, is to be issued in *The Journal of New African Literature* (Stanford). Among the most interesting additions are: a novel in Zulu, *UNomalanga kaNdengezi*, by R. R. R. Dhlomo (1964); an English adaptation of *Three Yoruba Plays*, by Duro Ladipo, by Ulli Beier (1964); a Danish translation of the autobiography of A. J. Luthuli, *Let My People Go* (1963); a Pedi play by Silpha Phaladi Ngwako Makwala, *Kgasane* (1962); and *Vhamusanda who-dzegere*, a Venda drama by E. S. Netshilema (1960).

(Communicated by Paul Páricsy, Institute of Hungarian Academy of Sciences,
Vácrátót)

'The Aboakyer of the Effutu: A Critique of Meyerowitz's Account'

WE have received the following comments on the paper by Robert W. Wyllie (*Africa*, xxxvii, 1, 1967, pp. 81-5) from Mrs. Eva L. R. Meyerowitz:

Mr. Robert W. Wyllie claims that there are various inaccuracies in my description of the *Aboakyer*, published in *The Akan of Ghana: Their Ancient Beliefs* (1958, pp. 38-42). I did not witness the festival and got my information, in 1946, from the *Ex-Omanhene* of Winneba, Nana Ayiribi Acquah, in the presence of some elders, but I doubt whether 'inaccuracy' is the right word. Mr. Wyllie makes five points.

The *Asafo*. Here Mr. Wyllie is right; I stated wrongly that the *Dentsifo* is no. 1 company of the *Asafo* and the *Tuafo* no. 2. The mistake was occasioned by my knowledge that in the past the *Dentsifo* was the more important since it was the organization of 'old warriors', the *Tuafo* that of the 'young warriors'. From the *Dentsifo* the Effutu chiefs were elected at the time when the Afutu or Awutu, (now Effutu) said to mean 'mixed'—the people were largely composed of Guan and Mo—were still patrilineally organized.¹

The *wansam*. Following Christaller, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language*, 1933, I described the *wansam*, middle-sized and of a reddish colour with white stripes, as a species of antelope. Mr. Wyllie is of the opinion that the *wansam* is a deer. As far as I know deer do not exist in tropical Africa.

The killing of the *wansam*. According to one of my informants an anaesthetic medicine, made from the bark of certain trees, the juice of plants, and other ingredients, is smeared over the legs of the animal so that it does not suffer when these are broken, going peacefully and unsoiled to death after its throat has been split from ear to ear. Mr. Wyllie says that he has been told that no such medicine was ever used in the whole history of the *Aboakyer* (over 400 years!) and that in addition the animal is clubbed to death, not in the sacred grove, as I was told, but in the house of the priest. I can only say that it is quite uncommon that an animal to be sacrificed is, firstly, clubbed to death, and, secondly, outside the sacred grove. There must have been a change in ritual, denied by Mr. Wyllie, to account for two entirely different customs.² I cannot believe that Nana Ayiribi Acquah and the elders present invented the proceedings.

The sacrifice of the *wansam*. We both agree that the animal is killed on a Saturday, but according to my informants portions of its meat are, as usual, sent immediately after to the houses of priests and elders, who have a traditional right to them. The meat is cooked and eaten, part of it is offered to the respective gods and ancestors. Mr. Wyllie states that all these activities take place on the following Sunday afternoon. I may have misunderstood my informants as regards the time of the meal, but would point out that it is most unusual for a sacrificed animal to be left overnight, altogether for twenty-four hours, before it is cut up to be eaten.

The *Ebisatsir*, or foretelling of the future. Our descriptions of what takes place differ, not because I am inaccurate, but because obviously the method used varied. In mine, to put it briefly, a white, red, and black ball is thrown on to a board and the colour of the ball which hits the board in a certain way enables the priest to predict what the future will bring. According to Mr. Wyllie an earthenware pot is placed upside down and radial lines in white, red-ochre, and black are drawn from the pot on the ground. A ball is perched on the top of the pot and prediction is received when the ball falls upon one of the lines.

As to the interpretation of the *Aboakyer*, Mr. Wyllie sees the festival solely from the point of view of the *Asafo*, whereas I was interested in my book in what was left of an ancient ritual—the killing of a clan's totem animal. Mr. Wyllie denies the totemic aspect of the *Aboakyer* and is right in so far as today the *Aboakyer* is no longer the ritual of a clan but a state festival, with the emphasis on the *Asafo* and no longer really on the *wansam*. The reason for this is historical which is not considered by Mr. Wyllie, but important for understanding the festival.

About 1530 the matrilineal Etsi people were conquered by Osim Pam, the chief of the Effutu and founder of the town of Winneba which was built on land of the former. To

¹ Eva L. R. Meyerowitz, *Akan Traditions of Origin*, 1952, pp. 74, 75.

Mr. Wyllie missed a printing error in *The Akan of Ghana*, p. 40, second para. first line. It should be 'the *Dentsifo* use bugles and bull-roarers' and not 'beagles and bull-roarers'.

² Priests are sometimes trained nowadays in Mossi or Dahomey and return with new ideas which they are able to put into practice in places where the knowledge of old customs has gradually deteriorated.

ensure further the fertility of the land the rites of the local god, Sekum Apa, were taken over by the newcomers.¹ As before, they took place in April in the season of sowing and planting, and since this starts a new agricultural cycle the *Aboakyer* is also a New Year festival which is illustrated by the priest's prediction of events for the coming year. Sekum Apa, however, was fused with Penkye Otu, the god of the Effutu,² and the hunt of the *wansam*, formerly in the hands of clansmen, was placed in charge of the *Dentsifo* and *Tuafo* of the *Asafo*.

Mr. Wyllie seems to suggest that the translation of *akyeneboa* or totem animal—'the animal that masks a god' is my own. In *The Akan of Ghana* he will find on p. 25, n. 1, that it is Dr. J. B. Danquah's, an authority on Akan religion. The purpose of killing the animal 'that masks a god' is to renew its divine life-giving *kra* so that the crops can grow. It returns to the Moon to be purified and recharged by Nyame (originally by the clan's female deity, whatever her name) and the animal's body is disposed of so that the renewed *kra* can enter a newborn animal of the same species to be killed at the next *aboakyer*. I described this process as death and resurrection by the Moon Mother goddess. Mr. Wyllie's informants, however, had never heard of a 'Moon Mother goddess' and they also insisted that there was nothing special about the *wansam*.³ They also gave him a rationalized explanation for the charms that the *Asafo* hunters wear—'against accidents'—whereas I was told that the *wansam* ('masking a god') was spiritually dangerous and the charms used were, in the first place, against its supernatural power. Mr. Wyllie also accepted his informants' rationalization for the small rite performed by the *Omanhene* when the animal, bound, is placed beneath his feet. Such explanations did not exist in the past when even the smallest rite had a religious significance.

I am also accused of 'injections of motives', feelings, reactions, expressed by the people in connection with the killing of the *wansam*. Mr. Wyllie is right, I should have made it quite clear that these belong entirely to a minority, still aware of the totem aspect of the festival, and not to the *Asafo* for whom the hunt is no more than a contest between two companies, and to quote Mr. Wyllie, the 'spirit of competition'.

'Africa' October 1967: 'Right and Left in Nyoro Symbolic Classification', by Rodney Needham.

A contribution by the author towards the printing costs of this long paper is gratefully acknowledged.

¹ Information given to me in 1946 by elders at Degho, a village on the coast a few miles from Winneba. Moreover, it was the custom for conquerors to adopt the deity of the land.

² I was told by several people in Winneba that Sekum Apa was the old name of Penkye Otu; but the people at Degho made it clear to me that Sekum Apa was an Etsi god, once worshipped at Apa and Degho.

³ The original totem animal of Sekum Apa was not the *wansam* but the lion, or more likely the

'white tyger', as it is doubtful whether lions lived in the hinterland of the coast. The 'white tyger' is mentioned in the *Atlas Geographicus* of 1714, vol. iv, p. 402, and was a great light-coloured cat which fell upon the cattle and goats of the villagers. I could not get any information about when the *wansam* took its place, presumably when it died out. The only people who would still know something of the origin and original significance of the *Aboakyer* are the Etsi but they seldom give information, for reasons stated in the author's *Akan Traditions of Origin*, 1952, p. 65, n. 3.