

Books & the Arts

SOYINKA IN LONDON

Two writers in London
assess "The Lion and the
Jewel" (picture below)

MAZISI KUNENE

WOLE Soyinka's play LION AND THE JEWEL has had various favourable reviews but one wonders why. This is a bad play. It is neither profound nor skilled technically. Soyinka has fallen into the trap of many present day African writers who dress up poor skill with exotica.

The main theme is the conflict of values between the traditional and the new. The teacher acted by Femi Euba is a type typical of those mentally sterilised intellectuals who think everything British is good, superior and civilized. The civilized behaviour is illustrated more by artefacts and mannerisms than by an ethic. The result is that the teacher is exposed as a blundering, superficial nitwit. The girl, acted by Hannah Bright-Taylor, is also a type, less witty, less humorous but more human. She is muddled but her muddle-headedness has a more earthy quality. She sees through the artificial sentimentality of the teacher who she despises. Her contempt for the teacher is no signal that she better appreciates the situation. One gets the impression that her mindlessness puts her in a better position in relation to the teacher only because she acts more by instincts than the teacher does. The teacher on the other hand is a fool who thinks that the conflict of values is itself not deep enough. Nor is the conflict sharpened later by the intervention of the Village chief acted by Lionel Ngakane. The old fox manages to seduce the village girl turned national beauty queen by using a very simple but effective strategem. He tells the wife he is impotent. The girl decides to taunt him and falls victim in spite of all her pretensions. She later chooses to marry the chief rather than the foolish foreign-educated teacher.

The conflict in the play is superficial. The evaluation of the two systems - old and new - is shallow. As a result we are unable at the end to

decide which of the two systems we approve of; consequently which characters we identify with. This is in itself not a frustrating experience since we do know all the time that the whole thing is a joke.

TECHNICALLY the play is a failure. We are given long soliloquys which are far from enhancing the dramatic quality of the play and these lines bore us with their weak prose-poetry. They lack wit, the only quality which sustains any soliloquy.

The numerous dances are thinly linked with the main action. It is difficult to understand how modern African writers fail to grasp the symbolic meaning of African dances. More often than not they depict them as sensual material, exotic entertainment but devoid of intellectual content. Scarcely do they realise that this "village exotica" contains profound intellectual experience.

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The result is that, Soyinka's play, in one episode there are several different dances, some of them quite irrelevant to the drama. This arises, one would suspect, out of a failure to understand the meaning of communal drama. By its very nature communal drama must use dramatic, symbolic expressions. The symbolic expressions are effected through bodily movement, masks, music and dance. Dance itself in the traditional drama is closely linked with the meaning and development of the story. One can understand of course how writers reared in the European form of "conversational drama" would find it difficult to infuse the techniques used in the communal symbolic drama.

Soyinka's attempt or rather his use of dancing to heighten the effect is unsuccessful precisely because all the dances are illustrative and therefore parallel to the action rather than expressive of it. Indeed they are too many to make a successfully unified image. They start and peter out before any meaning can be adduced from them. Why should dances have any meaning? Because that is the nature of drama in which this play purports to convey.

The play is disappointing since Mr. Soyinka is himself a good writer. The vultures who eat up everything African will eat even a carcass but the African writer must learn to detect these birds. They are bound to be his death in the end.



THE story is quickly told: Lakunle is a teacher in the Nigerian village of Ilunjinle; he is brashly new-fangled; he shall change the rustic bush to modern thinking. He is also in love with Sidi, the village belle, but refuses to pay the traditional bride-price. Sidi's beauty has been photographed and given prominence in a nationally distributed magazine; it has caught the admiring attention of Baroka, the local ruler, and he uses a cunning ploy and his unwitting headwife, Sadiku, to seduce Sidi.

But the play is much more than this outline story. The play has been called reactionary. Is Lakunle really a purveyor or an apostle of progress? We need only hear him spout unrealistic modernity and we need only compare him with another of Soyinka's teachers (Emen in The Strong Breed) to realize that Lakunle's is an advocacy of old-fashioned superficialities, and that the man's head inhabits a world of individualistic romance and heroics. Nor, on the other hand, is the Bale the so-

Quartet

Anne Darnborough

easy-to-be sketched stereotype of reactions. This sly, old fox is also the wise, old lion, that, hardly against progress, wishes to preserve a still centre in a pell-mell world of plunging innovation, and wants to maintain individuality against the onslaught of sameness.

Between these two a "caned" battle is fought out between the generations and the cultures of Africa today. And the delight of the play lies partly in the contemplative stasis and creative dynamic achieved by the tensions between them: because of Sidi, the Jewel, the prize - who as the object of the rivalry not only combines a charming simplicity with her beauty, but is instinct with spirit, wit and warmly responsive femininity. More so, as she also engages in the battle of the sexes of which the protagonist is the crafty, but deliciously outwitted, Sadiku.

NOW, the battle of the sexes in the harem of the Bale? And Baroka himself, refused by the simple village girl? A Palace Workers' Union in the Bale's well-run household

Or The Teacher goodnaturedly derided by the hoi-polloi. His blandishments repelled by a none-too-coy maiden? Indeed While from their lessons an entire form can truant in celebration of the return visit of the Camera-man?

Yes of course: For what happens is that Soyinka up-dates and back-dates situations, and writes them into the calendar of pleasant mirth that flicks the spectator into present and pressing consideration of spiritual needs in terms of cultural norms, material requirements: physical and social stresses and their expression.

Despite the heavy approach adopted here (and this is by no means a serious enough view of an early light Soyinka) the play is basically a romantic comedy: its feel includes and transcends the "incurable romanticism" of Lakunle. The solution serves to clinch the feeling one has that the play takes off from reality and flies freely into ideal.

A Man of the People by Chinua Achebe; The Concubine by Elechi Amadi; Efuru by Flora Nwapa; No Easy Task by Aubrey Kachingwa Heinemann Education Books, African Writers' Series

IN bringing out Chinua Achebe's latest novel, A Man of the People, in paper back reasonably soon after its hardcover appearance, Heinemann's have done a great service.

For this is a superior work, by any standards. Readers of the New African will remember the review following the book's first appearance which treated it in depth and with sympathy, outlining interestingly Achebe's progression from earlier works still dealing with the rural, traditional world of the West African country, facing the penetration of modern ways, to this very funny satire of the new, urban society, particularly in political places.

In any round-up of novels published in Britain in the past year, I would rate A Man of the People very high. Seen together with the other novels most recently put out in paperback by Heinemann's in their African Writer series, it soars out higher than any of them.

Beside it, the other book of the quartet dealing with modern political life in Africa seems a pedestrian affair. Mr. Kachingwe deals, in a straightforward almost documentary way, with the struggles toward independence of a British colony in Central Africa, and succeeds, despite his stiff characters and their somewhat stilted speech and responses, in

generating an excitement at events and maintaining an interest in the outcome. This is maintained however, by the simple device of personalising those at the political top and purporting to let us know them as people, thus pandering to the taste we all have in some degree for "the inside story" about politicians at the time of great events. In this sense it parallels the work of say, Maurice Edelman, the British M P who writes novels about behind-the-scenes life at Number 10, or "Advice and Consent" by Allen Drury, dealing with American political life-at-the-top, or any one of countless novels, not only dealing with contemporary "history" but also with the famous of centuries past. In common, they let the reader feel he is on the inside of great events.

This is of course a sensation one can titillate infinitely more profitably by reading some of the autobiographies of real people at one time or another in high places.

Novels such as these do little to aid one's real understanding of how men of high position work, how they are influenced, what their actions mean in terms of their effect on the society in which they are set.

Kachingwe merely recounts, in two dimension, black and white, the family life of a leader in stirring times. Achebe on the other hand, examines his man, laughs at him, comments on him, sets him deep in his society and so helps his reader to a much wider understanding of men, and of men in their political environment, than a mere imaginary "inside" reportage.

One concludes that with A Man of the People, Achebe is one of very few novelists indeed to be found writing currently who has added significantly to the tiny body of serious novels concerned, at least in some measure, with politics.

THE other two books of the quartet, Efuru and The Concubine, could also be described as historical novels. But here we are dealing with the pre-colonial history of Nigeria and both books are, I think, more than mere guides to this little known territory. Both chose to make a woman, living in a small village and possessed of singular qualities, their central figure. Both women are unfortunate in love and marriage and blessed with extraordinarily good natures and high standards of personal conduct even by severe village criteria. Both, but particularly Miss Nwapa's Efuru, give

the impression of being bored to death by the whole rigmarole of tribal convention with which they are expected to conform, despite their personally abnormal circumstances. Efurū escapes from dreary reality by becoming a priestess for the local goddess and dreams of her significantly – and enviously. The goddess is not married. She has no children, therefore has not experienced the joy of motherhood, she has riches and beauty. Everything in fact which should make women dislike her. Yet she's a goddess and they worship her. On the other hand Efurū is not and is miserable.

The book is rich in tales of village custom, in old sayings and proverbs, in almost excessively detailed description of the mundane business of living in a rural village, untouched by modern ways. But, in the tortuous unfolding of Efurū's unhappiness, as she is seen not to conform though she tries so hard, one suspects Miss Nwapa's great relief at the passing of such rigorous and boring patterns for feminine life in today's Nigeria.

Indeed both these books, while detailing precisely every possible aspect of village life, and thereby appearing at first glance to be loving appraisals of times past when life was dignified and simple, when "the old truths", as the blurb on The Concubine's jacket runs "were undisturbed by white men and

European values", show the writers' sensitivity to the cruelties of that society.

The careful exposing of patterns and customs to be followed, of the rigorous self-discipline needed by someone out of line to maintain appearances of the readiness to give way to fate in the form of the sayings of sages and "wise men", signs and sacrifices, underlines the authors' awareness of the limiting quality of that life on individual development – in both these cases, women of intelligence, unable to live happily within the rules.

Unless the blurb on Mr Amadi's book is meant satirically, I think its writer has the wrong end of the stick. By his lights – "the moving simplicity . . . the old truths, human society is orderly and predictable except when the gods are wronged" – the book would be a mere tourist's guide to the traditional Nigeria. As it is, I think both it, and Efurū, thoughtful and certainly respectful, are nonetheless powerful indictments of the old order.

Legal spread

Absolom Vilakazi

African Law Adaptations and Development
edited by Hilda Kuper and Leo Kuper
(University of California Press, \$7.50)

THE book presents a rich "smorgasbord" fare to suit even the most sophisticated of palates. The main sauces, provided by the editors in the theoretical introduction and by Dr. Smith in his "Sociological Framework of Law" are absolutely superb.

This reviewer would like to hope that this book blazes a trail in the kind of studies which we now need for a proper understanding of African societies. It has become very important to insist with the editors (page 5) that if studies of African societies are "to yield theoretically meaningful results, and not simply essentially unique and discrete items of knowledge, it is necessary that the observations be related within a theoretical system." We suggest that the introduction is a timely reminder that there is very serious relevance for anthropologists and other Africanists of sociological and other theories developed from studies of other than African societies, especially when we study modern Africa.

The contributors, all of them eminent scholars in their fields, have given us in these essays important food for thought. The essays begin properly, as one should in Africa, with wholesome dishes of traditional systems very ably presented by the Mayers, Daryll Forde, Jan Vansina and Max Gluckman.

Part three of the book presents very interesting studies of adaptations and directed changes in African legal systems. Professor Anderson's discussion of the adaptation of Muslim Law in Sub-Saharan Africa presents problems of great complexity for, as Smith observes in his analysis, not only is there the problem of reconciling theory and practice, but the added one of imposing rigid Koranic Concepts on African religions which lie just beneath the Muslim crust.

d'Arboussier's contribution helps again to underline the importance of caution

when people freely talk of the French Assimilationist policy as if it was applied equally in all places. It would seem, in fact, that assimilation was applied only where it was practical and useful to the colonial power.

THE contradictions inherent in the Colonial systems are again very clearly highlighted by Leslie Rubin in his examination of legal adaptations in South Africa. Dr. Elias throws a much wider net and examines the evolution of law and government in Modern Africa; and by drawing attention to British eclecticism as contrasted with French commitment to the Code Napoleon, he raises some interesting implications for the legal scholars and African legislators.

Dr. Allott's summary: "The future of African Law" comes as an appropriate dessert to what is an eminently satisfying meal. Dr. Allott raises very pertinent questions in his essay which scholars and jurists alike should face squarely. One such question which cries aloud for an answer is: Does the mere fact that legal systems in modern Africa happen to be found in the same continent give them anything in common? Is not "African law" now an empty term like "European law"? Questions can also be raised about the relevance and practicality of a Pan-Africanist approach to African Law which is now clearly in political vogue.

Then, of course, there is the troublesome question of: "To what extent is it possible to eliminate local or tribal variations and to evolve a common customary law applicable throughout the land?" He points out that while such unified systems already exist or could easily be devised for LeSotho, Letswana, Swaziland, Somali Republic, it is not a simple matter in most other states.

We commend this book to students of African law, to African sociologists and to administrators alike. It should stimulate much thought and discussion. Hopefully, it will generate further creative research in the field.

Panting

Tony Voss

The Roar of Thunder by Wilbur Smith
(Simon and Schuster; New York, \$5.95)

THIS is less a South African novel than an entry in the race to Hollywood so pantingly led by Mr. Harold Robbins. Only in the cinematic sense can it claim to be vivid, epic and on the grand scale: for the purposes of the screen it has everything -- cast of thousands, exotic setting, battle scenes, tempestuous love and a big, lusty hero, Sean Courtney, who is successively ivory hunter, British scout in the South African war, wattle farmer and member of the first Union parliament. Perhaps it is an attempt to give to the South African English imagination a sense of history and identity.

But in its selective view of history and its requirements that one ignore the consequences of many of the issues which are at the centre of its action, the novel is a victim of South Africa's lack of historical sense. It is a novel of gratuitous violence and imprecision. This is all a pity, because Mr. Smith can write vividly, as in the battle scenes; he shows stamina and persistence and considerable invention. In E.M. Forster's terms he can keep the reader asking 'What next?' without seriously raising the question 'Why?'

The publishers claim for the author an "exciting sense of colonial life". But to my mind the novel shows rather a colonial sense of life: a preparedness to exploit South African history, among other things, for the immediate gratification of less than humane ends.

The art boom

Arnold Segal

African Art in American Collections
by Warren Robbins (Praeger, New York)

AS part of the 'art boom' in America these days, there is a great deal of interest in African art, and exhibitions of major private collections are increasingly frequent. Such exhibitions are usually accompanied by catalogues, more or less lavish, which, taken together, suggest the impressive amount (and quality) of African art presently in American hands. There are, however, a number of smaller collections which ordinarily would not become accessible to the student in this manner, including the holdings of non-specialized museums of art, and museums of non-art (i.e. natural history and ethnography). It is especially as a contribution to remedying this deficiency that the publication of *African Art in American Collections* is timely and welcome.

The book has two objectives: (1) A survey of the strengths (and weaknesses?) of American collections, and (2) Presentation of 'key' monuments as an *entrée* for interested non-specialists. It would seem at the outset that these two intentions are difficult to reconcile, and it is open to question whether either or both have satisfactorily been achieved in the present instance. Be that as it

may, the brief introduction is basically sound, and does in fact constitute a useful discussion of the nature of African art. One would wish, however, for more data as to use and function of the objects depicted, as testimony to the cultural roots and significance of African Art, and as a corrective (or, at least, counterweight) to undiscerning hyper-aestheticism.

WHILE one can freely admit to having been somewhat 'spoiled' by several recent publications in the field, the sculpture photographs used in this book leave a rather disappointing impression. This book makes it abundantly clear that there is currently very little agreement as to how African sculpture should be photographed. Included are examples of every approach, from 'high drama' (murky shadows) to 'drab commonplace' (dead flat lighting). Mercifully, the extremes are rare, and the bulk of the photographs used are good, if disparate in conception. In only two instances is the view of an object badly misleading -- plates 50 and 71 give top views of horizontally-worn masks.

While it is clearly fruitless to argue the relative merits of objects included as compared to those left out, it might be possible to argue several of the attributions, such as that of the carved ivory tusk in plate 168 to the Yoruba; in general, it would be helpful to know the basis for the attributions given.

These comments should be read as minor qualifications of a generally commendable product. The inclusion of a list of important American museums and private collections which include objects from Africa will be useful to the 'tourist', and the story of the beginnings of collection of African art in the U S A is fascinating.

Chisiza's Symposium

Reginald Herbold Green

Economic Development In Africa (Papers of the Nyasaland Economic Symposium of 1962), Edited by E. F. Jackson (Blackwell, 1964).

VOLUMES OF SYMPOSIUM PAPERS are limited both by their inability to convey the life and interaction of the meeting and by the almost inevitable unevenness in quality. Often they irritate by patchy coverage and inadequately developed conflicting statements of viewpoint or "fact." In a conference discussion can overcome gaps and provide a basis for participants to choose between alternative positions, a volume of papers has no such possibilities.

The papers of the Nyasaland Economic Symposium organised by the late Dunduzu Chisiza suffer from the first two weaknesses. They largely escape the latter pair partly because of the organiser's success in mounting a comprehensive programme and partly because authors have, by and large, spelled out the bases of their conclusions, allowing intelligent evaluation by readers. While the format precludes the presentation of any unified strategy of development and the backgrounds of most authors limit their ability to mount detailed proposals for Malawi, the volume does raise most of the seminal issues in African economic development in a lucid and stimulating manner.

Three pieces are worthy of special notice. D. K. Chisiza's sweeping "Temper, Aspirations, and Problems of Contemporary Africa" is a thoughtful, visionary, and humane statement of Africans' past, present, and goals for the future. A serious — and distinctively African — contribution to the literature of social democracy, it is both fresh and radical on the human relations side but rather cautious on the economic. Chisiza's piece bears comparison with Senghor's *African Socialism* — than which it is more realistic and less concerned with political myth building. Also with Kenya's Sessional Paper 10 — than which it is more searching philosophically but also decidedly less operationally specific.

Chisiza had yet to grapple with the practical difficulty of reconciling individual economic initiative with egalitarianism, social control over the economy, and the creation (or maintenance) of a basically non-economic focus of human relationships. His offhand proposal for civil service-politician leadership in the private economic sector illustrates this dilemma. Such leadership may set an example to others but experience in all too many African states suggests it is more often a highroad to bureaucratic capitalism — typically cum corruption. It tightly links economic and political power in the hands of a small, closed elite divided from the vast majority of the population by a widening gulf of economic inequality and human alienation.

Reconciliation of democratic participation with the one-party state and its charismatic leader already troubled the then Malawi Congress Party Secretary-General. The crushing of the humane, moderate social democratic, African radicalism for which Chisiza and a majority of the then Cabinet stood, by the authoritarian, dogmatic, neo-Victorian conservatism of Dr. Banda underline the reality of the problem. "Hastings' Bandastan" is as clear a demonstration of the dangers inherent in one-party democracy and a dominant, unifying leader as Tanzania (specifically mainland Tanganyika) is of their potential for broad participation and nation building.

"INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY" by Stanford's W. O. Jones is an excellent introduction to a major challenge. It is sweeping and yet definite in its presentation of hopeful lines of action. On the face of it an advocate of free markets, Professor Jones proposes a scale and scope of government action which exceeds that effectively carried on by any African state in research and extension, transport and storage, seed-fertilizer-insecticides-credit provision, and control over marketing. He is a sharp critic of the view — still held, at least implicitly, by a majority of African governments as part of their "colonial heritage" — that the African farmer is insensitive to economic motivation, lazy, and unwilling to employ demonstrably better methods when these are within his technical and financial capacity. (This fallacy of the anti-economic man in rural Africa has, it should be underlined, been disproved in virtually every case in which it has been put to detailed test — including the main pastoral peoples of lacustrine East and Sudanic West Africa who are supposedly its classic examples.) While correct in high-lighting the critical role of massive, intelligible field extension, Jones appears to under-estimate the gaps in present applied and basic research both on tropical production possibilities (especially in forest areas) and on rural economic and institutional patterns — gaps which must be filled before extension can be fully effective.

GERALD MEIER'S "Role of Expert Advisory Groups" is an able and provocative examination of the uses and limitations of economic advisors, economic techniques, and economic planning. If perhaps over-cautious, the paper is hopeful and constructive in thrust and a useful corrective to the grandiose hopes and expectations too often held of economic advisors and economic planning.

Presentation of alternatives and their costs, of possible policies and their implications (non-economic as well as economic), of economic

criteria and their use in evaluating proposals, of gaps in data requiring filling and of means for intelligent interim action until further information is collected — these are, as Meier contends, the limited but highly strategic roles which an expert economic advisor (whether expatriate or national) can fill.

Advisory papers, plans, and policy statements must be the basis for action involving effort, sacrifice, and austerity, not a substitute for it. At least they must be this if they are to be relevant to economic development. This truism needs restating because there are a growing number of instances in which policy statements and plans, in themselves of a high order of economic logic and of sound objective selection, have been used as incantations and smokescreens to cover a lack of effective implementation.

SEVERAL OTHER PAPERS e.g.: David Walker's pair on public finance, Walter Chudson's able exposition of export prospects and problems, Robert Baldwin's highly technical analysis of investment policy criteria, V. K. R. V. Rao's dispassionate analytic summary of the economic development strengths and weaknesses of extant capitalism and communism, are well worth serious attention. Taken as a corrective to the view that *all* state intervention is sound and that *any* co-operative movement benefits farmers, so is P. T. Bauer's on trade and commerce.

One item — P. G. H. Hopkins' on adult education — is, alas, bad enough to require comment. While diffuse, its advocacy of and insights into adult education are of value. However, its basically misleading presentation of the nature of economic analysis of educational costs and benefits (granted much of the analysis has serious flaws) is basically anti-intellectual. It rests on the invalid contention that because education has both economic and non-economic value it is inherently wrong to try to quantify the former or to reduce the costs of providing both.

THE OVERALL TONE of the symposium papers is relatively conservative, partly due to the participants and partly to changes in development thinking since 1962. No economist from a socialist state (indeed no economist normally classified as Marxist) is included while the structuralist school of development strategy (which is perhaps the most important in terms of recent planning in East and Central Africa) is only marginally represented. The absence of the Economic Commission for Africa is an indication of the speed with which it has built up its body of facts, studies, and proposals since mid-1962. The failure to include *any* African economist beyond the organiser himself is rather surprising even for that date. ●

The deep end

Oliver Carruthers

Unscrambling an Empire — A critique of British Colonial Policy 1956-1966 by W. P. Kirkman (Chatto and Windus)

AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED of this book by the London *Times*' former man in Africa, most of what is said is accurate history and some of it is advice. Mr. Kirkman has no quarrel with the British decolonisation in principle, but he often has criticisms of the method: the British were perfidious with Welensky, over-optimistic with their federal attempts, but most topically of all, they did not give their smaller dependencies buoyancy in the hoary old swimming-pool of life. (They threw too many off the deep end.)

The question of small dependencies has not yet been fully answered. Where is the line on independence to be drawn? Mr. Kirkman asks the questions and seems to support the criteria of Sir Hilary Blood — some claim to geographical size, a homogeneous society, no strategic importance, educated administrators, and economic viability. Unfortunately, as he points out, these conditions became extinct sometime between 1954 and today. Nothing has replaced them as practical standards, and indeed it is fanciful to think anything can replace them. Nevertheless the remarks that matter are those of Mr. Anthony Greenwood when he was recently Colonial Secretary: "Those who really want independence get it. The real point is that the pace of political progress is, in the last analysis, a matter for the people themselves."

There is, however, no chance that the smaller fry of nations can be truly independent. They will have to have some form of direct dependence on the former colonial country or on some other power. Hence Malawi, with a grant-in-aid of over £5-million a year for the recurrent budget, is in many ways a pensioner of Britain. Nasty neo-colonialism, but at least it's better than nothing, even if President Nyerere declared in despair after last month's OAU meeting that Britain and France had more votes there than anybody else. What's more those two powers will have three extra votes when Mauritius, Swaziland and Djibouti reach their scheduled independence, although Britain will have to share Swaziland's vote with Mr. Vorster. And the situation will become even odder when Reunion, the Comores, Portuguese Guinea, Ifni and Río Muni take their seats at the table of the comity of nations.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE? Some will argue that the line should have been drawn somewhere the other side of Sierra Leone and Togo; others will say that attempts at federation should have been pursued with more perseverance. At the moment Britain favours "associated status," which is really constitutional neo-colonialism, and if the UN Committee of 24 has developed

any smarter ideas to replace self-determination, then they should be released.

On post-Independence association — the Commonwealth — Mr. Kirkman takes pains to demolish some of the hackneyed and disappearing conceptions of what the Commonwealth is. "The main need in assessing and evaluating the modern Commonwealth is to accept it for what it is, not for what romantics would like it to be." He deplores the paternalist element in CRO diplomacy, but does not say what sort of diplomacy is required for the pensioner states. Obviously if Britain is pushing teachers, doctors, technicians and administrators into a country, the diplomatic relationship with that country will differ from the relationship with, say, the United States, which is pumping investment into Britain (£1,400m. at the last count).

He is correct in emphasising the "intangible realities" of the "common Commonwealth heritage," because it is the heart of the matter. But it is not something which should be publicly exposed. As Burke said, there are some things which should be venerated and left at that. Over-exposure of the essence of the Commonwealth will ruin it, for at heart it is an amalgam of states with a British background. This is its strength and it does not need constitutional expression. I feel at home in Accra not Abidjan: a Ghanaian feels at home in London not Paris. But this is not something to give pride to any self-respecting nationalist. Perhaps the South African author, Dan Jacobson, put it best on a cultural level in an interview in *The New African*, "But language is so much in any literature, the fact that a writer writes in English does create common ground immediately between himself and anyone else writing in English. And while you may say that this should bind him equally to American literature, in fact we know that it simply hasn't done so, that the Commonwealth writers do turn towards England for an audience, for intellectual sustenance of some kind, and for the sense of being involved in some way in a common effort."

MR. KIRKMAN'S HISTORICAL WORK is a good journalistic survey. There can be no revelations contravening the Official Secrets' Act, so it is a survey which is all visible to the naked eye. I only found one factual error, having been determined to unearth at least one in 205 pages: the UFP was represented in the legislature in Northern Rhodesia in 1961, but not in the Government. His only stylistic irritation is to cross-refer in an obvious manner — "I have mentioned earlier . . ." "The pattern, as I say, is . . ." "As I have explained." Nevertheless, for any person wondering what will happen next to Commonwealth or colonies, here is a book to give admirable perspective and challenging opinions. ●

The politics of ethnicity

James O'Connell

National Unity and Regionalism in Eight African States by Gwendolen M. Carter (Cornell University Press, \$10)

THIS BOOK CONTINUES the series in which *African One-Party States* and *Five African States* have appeared. It shares the merits of its predecessors: it offers clear and well-assembled material and good bibliographies; and it puts forward intelligent interpretations of the political scene in each of the countries it deals with. It also shares some of the defects of the other volumes: in particular the contributors seem to have been obliged to work within a repetitive and theoretically unimaginative framework which is far from suitable for interpreting each country. It is not without interest that the contributions — those by Sklar and Whittaker and by Ballard — that most depart from the editorial scheme are the best in the volume.

Sklar and Whittaker provide a panoramic survey of Nigerian political development. Had one any reservations about this excellent contribution it would be to say that though their insistence on the class structure of the country is correct, they do not work out sufficiently how much the "new men" of the modernising sectors of the country have made use of ethnic loyalties to promote their own interests.

Ballard puts us all in his debt for making available for the first time a good deal of first-class data on the Congo (Brazzaville), Chad, Rothschild and Rogin bring us sympathetically through the personal and ethnic maze of Ugandan politics. The only complaint one might make is that they sometimes weigh down heavily the proportions of their interpretation with an excess of trivial detail. Thompson suggests thoughtfully and readably how Niger, which is close to being a non-country, manages to survive. Hess in dealing with Ethiopia spends more time than the other writers on the historical side of his contribution. But though he tries manfully, it is painfully clear that many more field-studies are needed before we can get a clear picture of contemporary Ethiopia.

THE POOREST PART of this book is the conclusion in which Carter and Hess draw together certain interpretative categories. They fail to distinguish sufficiently between nation (a cultural consciousness) and state (a political community) and would have done better to distinguish: in an African context between independence movements and nationalist movements; they do not do justice to the sharpness that competitive modernisation brings to the politics of ethnicity; and generally they might have laid more stress on the role of political decision-making in economic growth. Yet by and large this is a good book and is well worth its price. ●

The Beasts of the Apocalypse

MAMADOU GOLOGO

retold from the French 7.

Mamadou Gologo is a Mali cabinet minister who started his career as a medical practitioner. This passage comes from his only novel, Le Rescapé de l'Ethylos, published by Présence Africaine in 1963. It is the outspoken and frankly didactic presentation of an acute case of alcoholism. The subject is an African doctor finally saved by the intercession of his mother and of a saintly "marabout." After his regeneration he starts a new life on the basis of the Moslem faith of his ancestors. Gologo attacks alcoholism as "the heritage of colonialism." The translation is by Willfried Feuser.

I KEPT CHEWING the cud of self-hatred. I was constantly mad with everybody and everything, even my personal belongings. You'll see in a moment what I'm talking about.

The crank of my gramophone got jammed; I threw it far away . . . or I would complain that my cooker was flouting me since it refused to work like any other cooker . . . or maybe there was a screw which resisted all my attempts to tighten it; I would start scolding it just as I would have done with a human being.

I had a little bitch which was particularly attached to me. It often occurred that I started kicking her for no apparent reason, especially when she came and lay down in front of me to look at me in her humble, docile way. I might discern in that gaze of hers an expression I considered inquisitive. Then I would immediately shout at her, "So you want to start preaching too? You damn little bitch! I don't want any of your fawning either, I just won't have it!"

I would not be satisfied until I saw her running away, her tail tucked between her legs, moaning from the violence of my kick. My pleasure was at its keenest when I saw her scurry off stealing backward glances at me, which betrayed her utter stupefaction. It seemed as if the animal wondered what had got into her master whom she loved so much.

But at other times I felt full of tenderness for the poor little creature. I was even able to make some sacrifices for her.

BY NOW YOU KNOW my case history fairly well. I often caught myself ruminating . . . humanity was neither more nor less than a vulgar arena of cut-throat competition between robots, between grotesque puppets at the mercy of invisible powers pulling their strings. I therefore hated the string-pullers, I hated everybody. I considered the whole lot of them a pile of rotten dung. But dung is, after all, still of some use, I would argue. As for humanity, it amounted to nothing more than the livid, ivory-coloured worms the gardener discovers when digging up a dung-heap — those worms which are the last filth on earth.

I could not accept the interpretations that I myself was the filth, the dung-heap, the livid, ivory-coloured worm, the puppet. I refused to be part and parcel of that rotteness which I so cantankerously repudiated. I was helped in my refusal by the fact that the people around me, out of commiseration, gave up pointing out to me the abject state I was in. Violent variations of temper, rebelliousness, and the bitter sense of self-destruction form the pathognomic triad of alcoholism in its advanced stage, and even though the drunkard tries to cover it up, he is nonetheless in its powerful grip.

I think that anybody who is willing to lead the alcoholic gradually back to health should concentrate on that clinical substratum . . .

I AM IN MY ROOM. My door is locked and bolted the moment my old clock strikes 6.00 p.m. On my bedside table, comfortably within reach, I have a magnificent bottle of "Bitter." My drunkenness has reached that acute stage when the intoxicated person will wake up in the middle of the night because of the imperious need for a drink.

I stagger up and pour myself a stiff dose. I sink down on my bed again waiting impatiently for the next onset of lucidity. I am sure that in the course of my career as a drunkard I have downed more poison than any other famous champion in that abominable marathon, "alcoholophilia."

Among the fervent partisans of alcohol there are people who will take the stuff and drop into a dead stupor as soon as they have absorbed their dose. They fall asleep almost immediately just as if they

had been anaesthetized and their companions have a good laugh at them just listening to the nasopharyngeal rhapsody which graces their sleep.

With me the opposite was the case. Some time after my initiation to alcoholic drink, my reaction got to be exactly the other way round. I had reached a point where I could no longer close an eye. My mind was constantly invaded by dreams of all sorts while my eyes remained open, irresistibly open.

I visualised myself, for example, taking a walk in an enchanted garden reminiscent of 1001 nights, or I found myself suddenly engaged in an epic battle with monsters right out of the Apocalypse. The medical people call that "zooptia," hallucinatory sight of animals.

The next morning I would wake up with a feeling that those nightmares were definitely signs which Heaven had sent me to indicate its disapproval of my conduct.

IT'S STRANGE. Personally I have always believed in these signs of a celestial essence. Too bad for you if you call me superstitious when I tell you this! You're free to laugh but as for me, I've had the opportunity of appreciating the services they rendered me. They were instrumental in bringing about my recovery.

Yes, I've definitely realised that my dreams always have a plausible explanation. And even today, while writing these lines, I still attach a good deal of importance to the dreams I happen to have. Unfortunately, too much separates me from those scholars who specialise in the study of para-psychological phenomena, otherwise I should have proposed to them that they study my case. I am quite capable of interpreting my own dreams, though; I take all things into account, and I'm rarely mistaken. If I happen to dream that Mr. Soandso has died, well, the next day will not go by without my hearing the sad news of his end. Or at any rate, if it's not the same person, it will be somebody close to him, very close indeed.

In the course of my career as a drunkard, I dreamed a great deal. Quite a few of those dreams allowed me to know in advance that my sad adventure would one day come to an end.

I therefore had reason to hope . . . ●