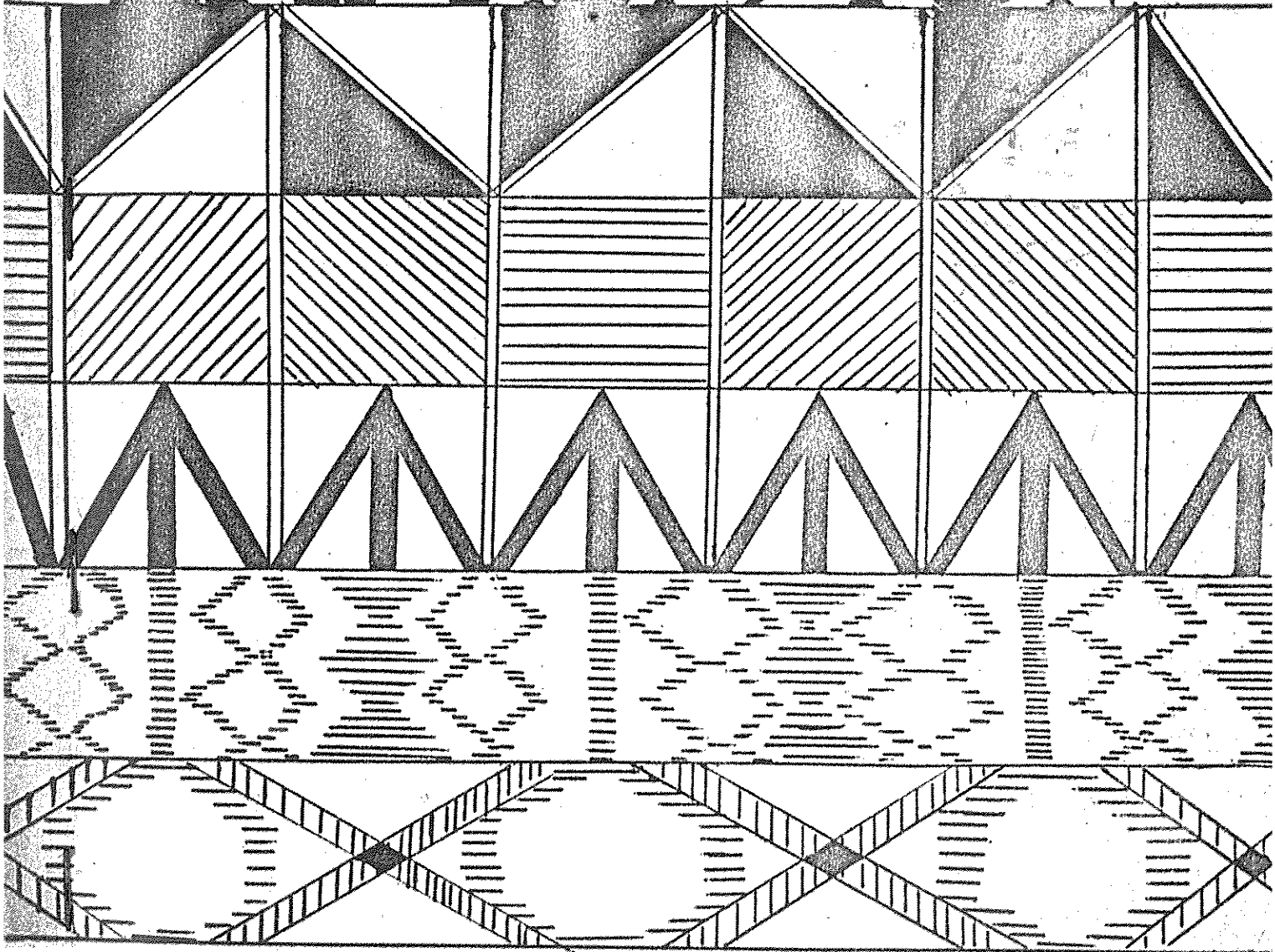


# EXPRESSION



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AND SWAZILAND.

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## EDITORIAL

Our three countries are presently engaged in a massive programme to produce professional people in fields such as teaching, medicine, technology, agriculture, and engineering, but none have made any significant efforts towards sending some students abroad to study music, speech and drama, and art. A few people have been trained for radio, which is still not an effective means for artistic expression. There probably are several reasons for this, one of the most important being the lack of a sufficiently large number of students talented in the arts to warrant any wide scale programme to have them trained. Another possible reason, which is disastrous through and through, is that the development of art is not as important as the building of a bridge. This neglects the fact that meaningful development can be achieved only when every human activity is developed. Uniformity is the word. Again, this attitude should take note of T. S. Eliot's introduction to "The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism":

The people which ceases to care for its literary inheritance becomes barbaric; the people which ceases to produce literature ceases to move in thought and sensibility. The poetry of a people takes its life from the people's speech and in turn gives life to it; and represents its highest point of consciousness, its greatest power and its most delicate sensibility. So where do we begin?

A start can be made from Ezra Pound's poem "Hugh Selwyn Mayberry"; the first poem opens thus

For three years, out of key with his time,  
He strove to resuscitate the dead art  
Of poetry; to maintain "the sublime"  
In the old sense. Wrong from the start—

Pound laments the side of him that stubbornly refused to part with tradition, and steadfastly laboured to adjust novelties to modes of rigid tradition. In his own circumstances, Pound was correct in trying to revolt against the outlandish part of his self, more so because English Literature had such a long and rich tradition behind it that it was only logical for it to desire to explore new ways of expressing artistic values in the new land offered by new standards of living and new moral codes, if we agree to regard art as an evolutionary entity that can be both an historic and aesthetic moment in the time of which it is a product. From these statements, it can be readily seen that any form of art in Africa still cannot afford the luxury of which Pound wanted to avail himself, for African literature has no significant written tradition behind it. The truth of this goes so far as to necessitate the alteration (with due respect) of Pound's last line of the stanza to: RIGHT from the start.

The position of the African artist is a rather difficult one. Not only should he try to resuscitate African artistic values by drawing inspiration and symbolism

from the vast store of African myths, religion, superstitions and moral codes that are being unearthed by the day, but should also not lose sight of his duty to the times in which he lives. This is far from glorifying the past in a desperate bid to escape from the realities of industrialization and, consequently, urbanisation. In simple terms, it means drawing inspiration from the myth of how Doondari created the World from a drop of Milk, instead of from Genesis and the subsequent roming of Adam and Eve; it means using the moon as the Holy Missile of Love, rather than the rose; it means recognising to the fullest extent, the interdependence of man and the earth, the animate and the inanimate in what is termed the "highest consciousness". The far-reaching social and psychological implications of this move are implied in Ulli Beier's introduction to his "The Origin of Life and Death":

There is hardly an African schoolchild today who is not familiar with the biblical creation myths, but how many of them have been taught the creation stories of their own people?

This implies that a people which realises itself in itself, in its own surroundings to the depths of the subconscious level of existence, is healthier and more self-confident by far psychologically, than a people which realises itself in, and identifies itself with foreign cities and foreign moral codes that only serve to disrupt the social balance. This can only be achieved on a very wide scale through literature and music. The important thing to realise is that environment works subconsciously on an individual; he only rationalizes his position when he becomes consciously aware of it. This consciousness is the privilege of the artist and the professional critic. It is this consciousness which the casual reader yields to subconsciously and helps to make him accept himself. EXPRESSION aims, in several ways at increasing this consciousness,

We hope to organise competitions the highest prize of which will be the joy of having produced the best in artistic expression. We hope that one day we shall be instrumental in forming a writer's association for the three countries, so that budding writers may, through regular conferences, derive comfort in the knowledge that they are not isolated. The conferences would channel all efforts into an organised pattern. We need hardly say that this, presently, is a dream; the immediate reality is in striving to unearth the talent that seldom or never finds occasion to express itself.

EXPRESSION has, since its inception, been a pictureless Magazine. In view of this, we invite budding artist to send us good pictures of their paintings and sculptures, and lino-cuts. We believe this would be both to our advantage and to the artist's.

Finally, to alter (with due respect), a quotation from President Kennedy's great Inaugural Speech, we wish, once again, to stress the fact that we in Africa should presently "ask not what art can do for us, but what we can do for art."

P.S. EXPRESSION has been taken over from the Literary Circle by the U.B.L.S. English Society, hence the delay in the publication of this volume. Delay has also been because of a lack of articles and financial difficulties. In view of the latter, EXPRESSION welcomes donations to assist in its continued existence. We wish also to stress that the views of the contributors, are not necessarily those of the Editor.