

into anklets for the king, again with the purpose of strengthening the king's powers.

From West Africa Seligman gives an example of the Wuba in Northern Nigeria (p. 56): two years after the appointment of a new chief it was customary to slay an enemy, whose head was deposited in the skull-hut which stood outside the chief's compound.

To these illustrations the following features from other parts of West Africa may be added: (1) in some of the Ewe tribes the newly elected king is carried about publicly in his royal palanquin, holding his ceremonial sword in his hand and pointing it to the four quarters of the globe, 'thereby expressing the desire that other tribes may also come to serve him'. (2) In the current volume of *Africa* (pp. 218-22) a report by R. W. Macklin on the kings of Niimi in the Gambia has been published. Here it is said that the new king, after his confinement in a hut, had to seize a sword and to chase a slave in an endeavour to cut him down before he could reach a hut and dash through it into safety, for beyond the hut the king might not follow. (3) The king of the Glidi Ewe in Togoland is not allowed to enter the grave-hut of 'Asiogbo Redsnake', the famous warrior ancestor of the tribe, before he has killed an adversary and has his skull deposited in the grave-hut. The skull may also be provided by one of his warriors.¹

In spite of the amazing resemblances of the Egyptian rites with those of Negro Africa, Seligman is of opinion that chronological reasons forbid us to believe that the divine kings of the Sudan and of West Africa are directly due to Egyptian influence, rather must we regard them as examples of an old and widespread belief of the Hamites. The proto-Egyptians belong to the Hamitic stock, and Hamitic groups or their influences have permeated almost the whole of Africa. On the other hand, according to Frobenius (*Erythräa*, pp. 325 ff.) the divine king and his self-sacrifice is an institution which is also found in almost all the Asiatic coastlands of the Indian Ocean and which he thinks has come from there to Africa in connexion with what he calls the Erythrean culture-circle. The two assumptions would not necessarily contradict each other, for it is generally accepted that the Hamites in Africa are Asiatic immigrants, but the term Hamites itself is somewhat vague and has not been clearly defined by anthropologists.

Speech-melody and Primitive Music.

(Abstract of an article in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. xx, No. 4, October 1934.)

In occidental vocal music we take for granted a co-ordination between the rhythm of music and that of speech, which includes both accent and syllabic length. But, despite an influence which in certain periods of our musical

¹ See also the article by M. D. W. Jeffreys in this number which provides valuable new material on the subject from Southern Nigeria.

history has been quite potent, there is no such direct and consistent correspondence between speech-melody and song-melody. We are the less conscious of the disparity since in our languages accent (stress) and length are functional and prescribed, while melody is chiefly a vehicle of 'affective' expression. In so-called 'tone-languages', however, speech-melody is an intrinsic part of vocabulary and grammar, while stress is usually of secondary importance. The question immediately arises: what is the relation here between speech-melody (the 'tones') and musical melody? An examination of materials collected in Africa and among the Navaho Indians in North America yields striking evidence of the interplay between these elements.

The system of signalling employed by the Jabo tribe of West Africa, Eastern Liberia, is not music proper, but a grafting on to musical instruments of the musical elements in speech. Yet this system also furnishes certain borderline forms, half-way between music and a transfer of speech. On most of the signalling instruments a modest degree of musical elaboration sets in. The four tone-registers of the Jabo language are represented on the signalling instruments by distinct tones. It may be noted that although the tone-system of the language is thus imposed on the instrument, the instrument in turn asserts itself by stylizing the language, converting its registers, which are variable in absolute pitch, into a fixed scale.

When it comes to actual songs, the speech-melody is modified by certain musical forces, one of the strongest being the downward trend of melody so common in primitive music. In many Navaho Indian and some Chewa (British East Africa) examples the speech-melody is overridden by this downward trend, especially at the end of phrases, sections, or of the whole song. Two other modifying forces are repetition and balance, often satisfied at the expense of normal speech-melody. When a musical phrase reflecting the speech-tones of its text is repeated for a new line of the text, it is likely to impose upon the second line an alien tone-pattern. Again, a word with ascending tones may be repeated in a place where the downward trend requires a violation of its normal tone-pattern. A musical *motif* or phrase, directly developed from speech-melody, thus takes on a musical life of its own.¹ The distortion of speech-melody makes it difficult for lay native audiences to understand the song, thereby enhancing the esoteric quality it may possess as part of a ritual. This harmonizes especially with features connected with the singing of West African secret societies: foreign or altered dialect, singing-tubes which change the timbre of the singer's voice, and general secrecy.

The songs studied illustrate a constant conflict and accommodation between musical tendencies and the curves traced by the speech-tones of the song text. Even when the speech-tones prevail, the musical impulse is not

¹ Cf. E. M. von Hornbostel's illuminating discussion of these points on pp. 28-32 of his article, 'African Negro Music' (*Africa*, Vol. i, No. 1, 1928).

quelled but merely limited—urged, perhaps, to discovering devices it had not used before. A more general implication of these findings is that the musical element which is functionally strong in a language is the one which intrudes most strongly upon the music associated with it: in our languages the rhythmic element, in tone-languages the melodic.

This intimate connexion between speech and music is not to be regarded as supporting the outworn theory, advocated by Herbert Spencer and others, that music originated from speech. It has, however, a bearing on our prevailing notion that music is an 'abstract', self-contained domain. (*Communicated by PROFESSOR GEORGE HERZOG, Department of Anthropology, Yale University, U.S.A.*)

A Note on the Abua Language.

The Abua language is spoken by about 31,000 people in the district of Ahoada in the Niger Delta. It is one of a number of small languages, investigation into which would be interesting, not so much from a practical point of view, since none of them is likely to be used as a literary medium or to spread in any way, but for the light such investigation might shed on linguistic and cultural relationships. The present writer, while in Nigeria, had the opportunity of noting down certain peculiarities of the sound-system of Abua: a teacher from Ahoada had drawn up an introductory primer of the language and this was used as a basis for the inquiry.

Vowels. A system of nine distinctive vowels was shown in the primer: *i*, *ε*, *a*, *ɔ*, *u* were easy to distinguish, but there were two varieties of 'close' *e* and of 'close' *o*, which were extremely difficult to analyse. After a considerable number of trials of varying closeness or openness, retracted and advanced tongue-positions, none of which satisfied the informant, it was discovered that the difference lay in the kind of voice used. One type of *e* and one of *o* was pronounced with contracted pharynx and another kind of *e* and of *o* with open pharynx (and 'breathy' voice). A similar difference was found in two kinds of *ε* and *a*, but examples of distinctions in the latter were rare. This type of vowel-distinction has not been found by the present investigator in either Ibo or Ibibio, geographically the nearest important languages. A few examples were subsequently discovered in Kalabari. The vowel-systems of Nuer and Dinka, however, languages of the Eastern Sudan, show a similar characteristic. (See Westermann and Ward, *Practical Phonetics for Students of African Languages*, pp. 204 and 210, where, in a summary of the sound-system of these languages contributed by Dr. Tucker, a description of such vowels is given.)

Examples:

Abua: *doy* (*o* with open throat), give a parable.
doy (*o* with contracted throat), be sweet.