emphasized by how much more chaotic conditions in Nigeria have become since the publication of his book. Both books are welcome additions to the limited opportunities we have to see how Nigerian intellectuals are reacting to contemporary literature, along with some fresh thinking about older "classics" of African literature. The first reaction one must have about critical essay collections coming from Nigeria is simple joy at their being produced in the first place. Such books have never been especially profitable ventures for Nigerian publishers, and with the country's rapidly deteriorating economy in the 1990s, production of literary journals and critical books has nearly been halted altogether. It is also refreshing to note that the editing of both books meets higher standards than readers of Nigerian-produced books have been accustomed to lately.

Nnolim is more the crusader than Emenyonu, promoting his formalist cause through his careful readings. His point is well-taken. Some of Emenyonu's essays exhibit the weaknesses Nnolim wishes to expunge -- plot summary and other such distractions from the critical work at hand -- while others serve as reminders of how valuable the informing work of greater contextualization, and speculation about a realm larger than a particular text or two, can be. The two approaches need not be incompatible, however; critics in Africa and elsewhere are always well-advised to integrate both the external and the internal connections available in the practice of literary analysis.

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*Wole Soyinka Revisited*, as the name suggests, is an attempt by Derek Wright to tackle Soyinka again, more extensively than he had done in his article "The Ritual Context of Two Plays by Soyinka."1 Examining Soyinka is not the easiest thing to do in one volume. The number of works involved is great and it is difficult to do an even-handed analysis of all of them in a book of this size. Also, the author's literary output is diverse, both in type and subject matter.

In spite of these difficulties, however, Wright has been able to impose some order on the mass of material. First of all, Soyinka's work as translator

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1 in: *Theatre Research International* 12.1 (Spring 1987)
and editor is not pursued here, it is only mentioned in passing. This reduces, in a little way, the quantity of work to be done. Arrangement of material is another way in which Wright imposes order. The book begins with a chronology of the life, times and works of Soyinka, moves to a glossary of "Yoruba and other African Terms and Names" and from there into analysis. The ten chapters are titled, respectively, "Soyinka and the Yoruba Worldview"; "Yoruba Theater: Ritual, Tragedy and Dramatic Theory"; "A Natural Idiom: Tragic Realism and Festive Comedy"; "Ritual Theater: A Universal Idiom"; "Ritual Theatre: Esoteric Soyinka"; "Shot-Gun Satires: The Revue Plays"; "Ritual and Reality: The Novels"; "History and Fiction: The Autobiographies"; "Soyinka as Poet" and "Soyinka's Criticism." As a result of this arrangement, the reader gets into the chapters on Soyinka's writing equipped with information about his creative background, the Yoruba worldview, and theatre - things which inform his writings. The analysis, itself, of Soyinka's work, is done by type - theatre, fiction, autobiography, poetry and criticism. This facilitates things by organising issues along generic lines. Within each type analysis is based on shared characteristics of the materials discussed. For example Soyinka's theatre, which would otherwise be nebulous to handle in a single chapter, is dealt with in four, and it is the centrality of ritual in the plays - A Dance of the Forests, The Road and Madmen and Specialists, for instance - that causes Wright to discuss them together under the title "Ritual Theater: Esoteric Soyinka."

In the first chapter it is seen that "Western materialist belief in 'existence'," with its resultant tendency towards compartmentalisation, differs from Yoruba belief in "essence" and a "totalist worldview." In Soyinka's works, however, Yoruba worldview, his western education and the use of poetic licence, combine to produce what Wright refers to as "perhaps two principal and opposing strains." One tendency is towards heterogeneity as in The Lion and the Jewel, the other, towards homogeneity as in his "mythopoetic writings, from The Fourth Stage to Ogun Abibiman" (20-21). Wright illustrates how this latter tendency, "Soyinka's metaphysics" as he calls it, achieves an "atmospheric power and haunting sense of the numinous" but "collapses in total confusion" as in the case of A Dance in the Forests, "when he attempts the physical transposition of the cosmic cycle of infraction and reparation to the stage." (21-22)

In "Yoruba Theater: Ritual, Tragedy and Dramatic Theory," the accent is on Soyinka's debt to Yoruba theatre and his conscious effort at combining "the festival - folk hybrids of Hubert Ogunde and Ladipo with the more technically sophisticated literary drama" (27). Ritual is one of the areas in which Soyinka is most indebted to Yoruba theatre and Wright believes that it is central to his work - its "dramatic power," "excitement" and vision. He