and even in Ojaide's own poetry; but it is exceedingly difficult to see the value of such an approach when applied to the modernism of Soyinka, whose practice is obviously more in line with that of T.S. Eliot, who said that his poetry should more correctly be viewed as a concerted effort to escape from his own personality. Thus, given that the technical apparatus and techniques (if not the belief-systems) of most of Soyinka's poetry is aligned more toward the tenor of modernism, one might question whether a transcendental theory can account for his modes of poetic composition – whether, in fact, it is relevant to the erudition that appears to be the mode that comes most naturally to a compulsive wordsmith like Soyinka.

The need for a book-length study that responds with critical vigour to the provocative and lively style of argumentation that is the driving force behind Soyinka's poetry continues to remain an acute one.

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Let's be honest: the first thing the prospective user of a new volume of bibliography covering a field he himself works in is going to do is check how well his own publications are covered. Then he will probably consult the entries pertaining to authors he is particularly interested in before moving on to writers who figure in the next university seminar he has to give. And then he might decide with some trepidation, as I did faced with a volume of a mere 654 pages, to make himself comfortable, pour a glass of wine, put on a Soweto String Quartet CD, and read the book, much as if it were a novel, a three-volume one at that!

What you discover in this case is that the compiler has included pieces you'd forgotten you had ever written (how on earth did he ever come across a short piece I'd written on studying the New English Literatures at German universities – in German?). He has unearthed articles about authors one is working on (in my case, Matsemela Manaka) which one had never oneself located – possibly because they were written in Afrikaans! And he has provided 171 new items of interest for the subject of one's next seminar (on Bessie Head) which embrace, as do all the sections on individual authors, Bibliography, Biography and Autobiography, Interviews and Criticism and which are drawn from sources ranging from new publications by American university presses to the Botswana Daily News and the Serowe Library Magazine.

And if you then embark on the enterprise of tackling the whole, what soon emerges is that the scope of the volume far exceeds what the modest title leads one to expect. For this, the fifth volume of the series, is not merely a bibliographical survey of work on Black African Literature in English over the years 1992 to 1996, it is a comprehensive introduction to the subject taking account of
the ongoing history of African cultural and literary studies as a whole, reflecting the current state of research over a much more widely defined field, and providing a truly monumental amount of information.

One soon gains the impression that the compiler has consulted everyone, read everything and been everywhere. The Acknowledgments list innumerable friends, colleagues and institutions in numerous countries who have provided bibliographical information and/or been visited, whose collaboration reveals just how much Lindfors has turned this undertaking into a truly collective effort. The List of Periodicals Cited (all 32 pages of it) reveals how uniquely comprehensive this compilation is, including as it does publications from Roma, Lesotho and Rome, Italy, and ranging from the Herald of Harare to the Glasgow Herald, from the Guardian, Lagos, to the Guardian, London.

As the fifth volume in the series – there is to be one more from Lindfors before he hands on the task of the twenty-first century to someone else (if anyone with enough stamina can be found!) – this one takes up the continuous numbering system adopted for the previous volumes. With its entries numbered from 20735 to 34386, we thus have a grand total of 13,651 contributions pertaining to Black African Literature in English over a five-year period – a figure that represents a substantial increase in publishing activity (but possibly also in the purview of the bibliography itself) over the number (8,771) documented by Lindfors for the previous period 1987–1991. The volume lists publications in a wide range of languages from Afrikaans to Japanese and even Kannada. Work on African writing by German scholars (whether in German or English) is particularly well covered, as is European scholarship as a whole (even such unpublished sources as a Venetian "Tesi di Laurea" on Woza Albert! are to be found here). The volume has four indexes – by author, title, subject, geographical region – the latter of which reveals that South Africa has now overtaken Nigeria in terms of volume of publications concerned with it and that Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe continue to be well represented. Entries are usefully and comprehensively cross-referenced, where appropriate to previous volumes in the series.

As with previous volumes – and Lindfors has of course used such documentation in his own publications – this one both provides a yardstick of ongoing critical interest in the work of African writers and also necessarily takes account of developments affecting the practice of literature over the years 1992–1996. Thus, as expected, Wole Soyinka leads the field of authors whose work enjoys most critical attention (at 642 entries), with Achebe following a good way behind (at 332) and Ngugi standing at 218. The bibliography, of course, also gives one some measure of interest in younger writers, the Zimbabwean Tsitsi Dangarembga coming in at 43 contributions, for example. Events of wider political import which are reflected in this volume include the tragic death of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the worldwide protests before and after it (there are 357 entries on Saro-Wiwa here). The period of political transition in South Africa and two years of post-apartheid transformation are also reflected in many publications listed here – consideration by Tatamkulu Afrika of the function of political poetry after February 1990, debates on threats to funding for the performing arts in the country in journals like Scenaria, discussions on the future of the National Arts Festival with the mayor of Grahamstown, concern with regard to the crisis in indepen-