sexuality and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, one of the leading health challenges in the region. By means of metaphor and colloquial language, artists address topical issues such as HIV prevention, testing, management, care, and stigma, and they also engage in practical preventive activities such as condom distribution during music shows. A fast-growing component of youth culture, hip hop provides a forum to address issues and express local and global identities.

Ntarangwi's comprehensive work is pioneering, determined, and a timely contribution to scholarship in the area of African emergent cultures. However, the book has several gaps. The author addresses only the music performance aspect of East African hip hop, leaving out graffiti, DJaying, MCing, and fashion. Most performances identified as hip hop are actually popular music, leading to an overuse of the term "hip hop." Although the author acknowledges this omission, arguing that his focus is on social issues and reconstitution of youth agency through music, the criteria for inclusion or exclusion are fuzzy. Furthermore, the discussion of globalization and its influence on the development of the genre demonstrates a U.S. gaze. Despite acknowledging the strong presence of reggae-inclined performances, for instance, there is less discussion of the Jamaican influence, which is undoubtedly enormous. In addition, while the author does a good job translating 143 song lyrics into English, omitting the original texts deprives us of the sounds of the East African languages and a sense of the creative regional slang. Despite these gaps, Ntarangwi has laid the ground for critical engagement of East African hip hop as an increasingly influential genre.

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Bernth Lindfors. *Early Soyinka*. Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2008. vii + 281 pp. Photographs. Notes. Index. $29.95. Paper.

The result of Bernth Lindfors' research on early Soyinka is brought together here as a tribute to the poet, and as a service to scholarship. The thirteen essays in the book are organized chronologically into five categories dealing with (1) the very early Soyinka (four essays); (2) his Rockefeller years at University College Ibadan (three essays); (3) plays published between 1963 and 1973 (two essays); (4) Soyinka's handling of borrowed materials from Euripides, Gay, and Brecht (one essay); and finally (5) essays on how others see Soyinka as theater director and as Nobel laureate (three essays).

The leading essay in group 1, "The Early Writings of Soyinka," highlights Soyinka's activities as campus wit at UCI in the early 1950s and as media activist at radio, television, theater, and newspaper houses at Ibadan

in the early 1960s. There is a sure touch of style, and wit and humor, in the deployment of language in those early writings, Lindfors observes. One other essay in this group, "Alan Paton's Discovery, Soyinka's Invention," reveals an interesting connection between Paton's obscure poem "My Great Discovery" (1957), an ironic work about a South African scientist's invention of a magical elixir aimed at eradicating color differences among races, and Soyinka's early play *The Invention* (written in 1958). Soyinka scholars in particular will welcome the essays on Soyinka's Rockefeller years (1960–61) in the next group, as they provide an account of what actually transpired between Soyinka and the Rockefeller Foundation. Of special interest are the differing understandings of Soyinka's literary temperament on the part of two mentors, Molly Mahood of the English Department at Ibadan and Robert July of the Rockefeller Foundation's Humanities Division. Mahood saw Soyinka as "one of those who should do rather than teach" (97) and wanted him to be given the freedom to write and produce plays while carrying out his research on the development of drama in Nigeria, but July was pushing to prepare him for an academic career with the Rockefeller project. In the end Soyinka did not complete the research, but ironically, he accomplished the dream envisaged for him by both admirers in becoming famous both as creative writer and literary critic, but on his own terms.

The already well-known essay "Soyinka, When Are You Coming Home?" first published in *Yale French Studies* (53:1976), seems to have caught Lindfors in his most acerbic mood as Soyinka exegete. Here is one of the first serious critical interrogations of Soyinka's style, an outcry against the complexity and confusion in his writings. There are echoes of the familiar Chinweizu polemics against Soyinka in what Lindfors calls Soyinka's "inspired gibberish," his "verbal puzzles," his "mystic trances," and "delirious conundrums," referring to both the technique and language of three early plays, *A Dance of the Forests*, *The Road*, and *Madmen and Specialists*. Lindfors implies that writing in a more direct style and toning down his language to the level of his primary audience, his countrymen, would be for Soyinka an act of homecoming. My contention, however, is that Soyinka owes his distinction as a writer to the very source of the grievance here, his technical innovations and the charged and mythopoeic undertones of his language. The essay on Soyinka's borrowing, "Begging Questions in *Opera Wonyosi*," illustrates how Soyinka, in *The Bacchae of Euripedes* and *Opera Wonyosi*, was able to overcome the pitfalls of "slavish" borrowing of the European originals by stamping his own individuality on the borrowed vehicles and spicing them with native strains—an alchemy that lesser writers (witness Camara Laye of *The Radiance of the King*) were less able to accomplish. The leading essay in the last group, "Beating the White Man at His Own Game," evaluates the reaction of Soyinka's countrymen to his winning the Nobel Prize.

As a research source this book has great value in dispelling much of the mystery surrounding Soyinka's undergraduate and postgraduate past. We now know (in full, not just from the snippets that appear in accounts

by James Gibbs and other commentators) why Soyinka left UCI after two years, where he went from there, and what resulted from the gamble with the Rockefeller Foundation. The book is also enhanced with pictures of the Soyinka of those days. What is missing is a footnote on where Lindfors's essays were originally published.

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Leonard Kahan, Donna Page, and Pascal Imperato, eds. *Surfaces: Color, Substances, and Ritual Applications on African Sculpture.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. 536 pp. 122 Color Photographs. Bibliography. Index. $75.00. Cloth.

Surfaces was inspired by an exhibition by the same name that was curated by the authors for the African Art Museum of the SMA Fathers in Tenafly, New Jersey, in 2004. In the book the authors assert that the surfaces of African sculptures, like their forms, are imbued with important cultural meanings and that these surfaces require detailed study. The volume includes seven chapters that investigate a variety of materials and artistic practices used to decorate, embellish, and treat the surfaces of wood sculpture. Each draws our attention to the ways that surfaces may be intentionally or unintentionally altered over the lifetime of an object. As they are altered, the sculptures accrue additional meanings and their alterations often provoke intense aesthetic responses.

The first five chapters constitute the book's argument for a more robust study of surfaces in African art. The first two essays, a historical essay on embellishments written by Kahan, a curator of African art, and an essay on the materials by Page, a museum conservator, establish the framework for the book. These two essays use examples from throughout the continent, drawing from a wide array of published sources from quite different time periods. The three case studies that follow—Imperato on Bamana sculpture, Bordogna on Yoruba *ibeji*, and Campbell on Yoruba *orisa*—narrow the focus as each of these authors investigates the particularities and nuances of the relationship among surface embellishments, aesthetic systems, local belief systems, and meaning in the making and use of objects among the Bamana and Yoruba, respectively. Collectively the five essays argue persuasively that by attending to objects' surfaces, we open ourselves up to thinking about African sculpture in new and more comprehensive ways.

The final two chapters engage larger issues in material science, and along with the two appendixes, they constitute an invaluable reference guide. Kahan's essay, delineating the various surface markings and conditions of wood objects, and Page's essay, listing the various substances

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