strength because Barber is able to capture succinctly the broad scope of South Africa's transition; a weakness because at times one is left begging for more. For example, in a mere sixteen pages, the chapter on the domestic–foreign affairs interface attempts to cover a slew of subjects including migration, labor, HIV/AIDS, crime, the drug trade, the environment, tourism, and elections. Added to this is the dearth of theoretical rigor and debate. Barber makes a laudable attempt to employ international relations theoretical approaches such as neorealism and idealism. However, these are discussed all too briefly, and the author does not vigorously mine their analytical import, especially their relevance to the South African situation.

One of the most insightful treatments of the international dimensions of South Africa's transition deals with the country's role as a middle power. Barber argues that in the international arena, South Africa was able to "punch above its weight" (152, 196). In Mandela's time it was able to play a prominent part in international affairs, one that was more influential than its quantifiable resources appeared to warrant. Barber attributes this to four factors: the prestige South Africa gained from its negotiated settlement; its relatively powerful and stable position in a continent beset by troubles; the respect it gained from positive contributions to international organizations; and finally the remarkable personality of Nelson Mandela himself. Although there is no doubt that South Africa has played an important role in the international arena, one wonders if Barber is overstating the country's ability to punch above its weight. What favorable international policies has South Africa won by chairing international conferences? Moreover, Pretoria has either been reluctant or unable to flex its muscle in the most significant matters (e.g., in Zimbabwe).

Although it is a short book, the scope of *Mandela's World* is unquestionably large. It is gracefully written and draws on excellent recent scholarship and primary sources. Readers interested in a broad account of the complexities of South Africa's transition will be well served by this book.

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Tom Young, ed. *Readings in African Politics.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. 254 pp. Figures. Tables. Notes. References. Index. $60.00. Cloth. $24.95. Paper.

The essays in *Readings in African Politics* represent a sampling of some of the most interesting material written about political life in Africa in the past thirty-five years or so. An excerpt from Aristide Zolberg's *Creating Political Order* (1966) kicks off the volume, and it ends with a reprint of one of Adam Ashforth's many explorations of witchcraft in contemporary Soweto, South Africa (1998). In 1966, Zolberg argued that understanding West African

https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2005.0083 Published online by Cambridge University Press

party states required conceptualizing a modern sector distinct from a "residual" sector. The vibrant and extensive residual sector effectively blocked the establishment of a one-party *system*, and thus his insistence on labeling West African governments as one-party states, as they remained systems only in aspiration. In fact, it made more sense to Zolberg to conceive of West African states as akin to premodern European systems that rested on patrimonial authority. Fast forward to just over thirty years later. Ashforth explains the persistence of witchcraft in post-1994 South Africa as something that threatens the very foundation of the postapartheid liberal democratic state because the residents of Soweto believe that the government has a moral duty to address witchcraft, but this function does not fit easily into modern governance. As Tom Young notes in his introduction, the categories of "traditional" and "modern" continue to be deployed to explain African politics, whether in trying to describe the nature of state power or to explain the logic of political conflict. In fact, the traditional–modern dichotomy has returned in new avatars, through a focus on markets and civil society, for example. Young's somewhat desultory introduction itself represents a microcosm of the evolution of theorizing about African politics. He begins his essay by noting the problems with modernization theory and then argues that it has a "rational kernel" (5) and is a dichotomy that cannot be escaped. His somewhat tortured endorsement of certain aspects of qualified modernization theory can be found if you read his dense prose carefully. He does this in the face of what he finds to be an unsavory alternative of postmodern relativism "of endlessly ecstatic bricolage and multiple modernities" (2).

The twenty-six articles in the volume are divided into five categories: appraising the modern African state, dimensions of conflict, political change, the local and the traditional, and new social forces. An introduction to each of the five sections explaining the reasoning behind the selections as well as the threads, tensions, and contradictions that tie them together might have been helpful. On the other hand, these reprints are fine enough to stand alone, and together constitute a remarkably interesting and wide-ranging discussion of everything from women in associational life in Kenya in the 1980s (Bessie House-Midamba) to the role of Limba chiefdoms in Sierra Leone on land settlements and political representation (Richard Fanthorpe). A wide variety of countries is represented, and the collection includes an analysis of women, chiefs, peasants, and state elites. The heavy hitters are included (for example, Goran Hyden's *No Shortcuts to Progress* is excerpted), and there are plenty of smaller case studies alongside them (for example, Remy Bazenguissa-Ganga's analysis of political violence in Congo-Brazzaville) to help sort through the major theoretical debates about African politics.

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https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2005.0083 Published online by Cambridge University Press