various tangents, collectively aim to show that the Liberians she knew in the early 1980s had indigenous political systems of their own that were certainly not devoid of democracy, and that these systems have remained substantially intact even after a devastating war. In short, Liberians do not need lessons in how to be democratic.

One audience for Moran's exposition seems to be students like one undergraduate she quotes who was "surprised to discover that customs such as polygyny, belief in sorcery, or veneration of ancestors 'still' exist" (15–16). But, while many undergraduates may have led sheltered lives, and while Moran may be right in identifying many journalists and some academics as purveyors of views she rejects, it is not clear that publishing an extended essay with an academic publisher is really the best way of putting things right. Few academics would really subscribe to the New Barbarism Hypothesis as she sketches it (although some may hold views in more refined form that can be assimilated by a polemicist to New Barbarism). If the aim is not so much to dispute with fellow academics as to refute the devil Kaplan for the benefit of American students, then a popular publisher might have been more appropriate. Moreover, the book could have been more focused in its aims; it resembles, at times, a collection of ethnographic essays written for other purposes and brought together to serve a new purpose.

Moran has interesting passages on the social institutions of southeastern Liberia and on understandings of elections, but her general argument is less than fully persuasive. This is so not least because it is based on memories of Liberia as it was more than twenty years ago and on a reading of Glebo political institutions that, while instructive, is predicated on a liberal view of society whose applicability to Liberia is not beyond question.

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Daniel Posner. *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. xv + 337 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $70.00. Cloth. $26.99. Paper.

There is certainly no dearth of studies that examine the nature of ethnicity in colonial and postcolonial Africa. During the last two decades, especially, a number of scholars have produced work that shows the dynamic character of ethnic groups (or "tribes") and ethnic affiliations. Yet, as Daniel Posner points out in this very original study of postcolonial Zambia, the nature of the impact of these groups is still more often assumed than studied. In Posner's words, "most studies of ethnic conflict begin their analyses after the cards have already been played. This book argues for starting the explanation at the time they are dealt" (288).

Posner brings to bear an impressive grasp of the large body of literature on colonial and postcolonial Zambia, relevant archival materials, election and voting data, and his own survey, focus group, and interview findings in an elegant, systematically presented (if occasionally overly schematic) argument that explains why tribe and language are the key components of identity in Zambian politics and, most important, why one and not the other of these has emerged as salient at particular moments since independence. In a concise summary of Zambia's colonial history, Posner shows how the country's tribal map was rigidified while the majority of people came gradually to identify with one of four larger language groupings. The argument that he develops from that foundation is a deceptively simple one: during the periods (in the 1960s and again since the early 1990s) of multiparty competition, both politicians and voters have tended to emphasize the larger language identities, while during the period of one-party rule, more localized tribal affiliations dominated. In a situation marked by increasingly scarce resources (a reality that might have been more carefully explored), people sought benefits for themselves by building the smallest possible coalition that guarantees victory at the polls. The context of party competition has led to the construction of alliances based on language affiliation. And as Posner shows, local sons with all the right ethnic credentials have regularly been defeated by "outsiders" who represent the party that is seen to support the larger ethnic-language community.

Posner does on occasion display some fancy footwork: in particular his argument that during the twentieth century "Zambia's linguistic map was transformed from one containing more than fifty languages to one containing just four major ones" (60) deserves some closer scrutiny. In making this case, Posner notes that, whereas "tribal" affiliations number forty or more (depending on how you count), an overwhelming proportion of Zambians have come to use Bemba, Nyanja, Lozi, or Tonga as their first or *second* language of communication. Thus what his evidence actually suggests is not a simplification of the language map, but its complication, as growing numbers of people speak multiple languages—including English. Examination of the relationships among these languages (and similarly the existence of linking traditions that draw associated "tribes" together) would have added to his arguments relating to the roles of state and missionary policies in building tribes and preeminent languages. Such analysis would also have been helpful in teasing out distinctions between the rubric of tribe and language upon which Posner rests his analysis and the closely related, but conceptually distinct, idea of locality and region.

Deceptively straightforward, this book looks at ethnicity in new ways—both conceptually and methodologically. In the final two chapters, Posner makes a persuasive argument for the relevance of his conclusions first in Africa (and especially in the case of Kenya) and then in other parts of the world. Yet I predict that the broader significance of this book is likely to be

less its specific theoretical conclusions and more the highly original kinds of questions that Posner applies to political behavior and ideas and his rigorous and creative methodological approaches to those questions.

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Donald Rothchild and Edmond J. Keller, eds. *Africa-US Relations: Strategic Encounters.* Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006. vi + 299 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. $55.00. Cloth.

Pity the poor U.S. government. It can't do anything right in Africa. When it increases aid to Africa, it is condemned for not reaching the sacred level of 0.07 percent of GNP. When it concentrates on development and humanitarian issues, it is chided for neglecting threats to American security. When it offers security cooperation to African governments, it is accused of a "Cold War mentality" that allegedly trumps economic development. When it offers more and better debt relief to African countries, it is condemned for leaving middle- and upper-income countries out.

This volume of eleven individual essays tends to fall into this condemnatory mode. The overall theme of the collection is U.S. security interests in Africa. But the term "security" is writ large to include challenges of poverty, environmental degradation, and civil wars as well as terrorism. There are some excellent chapters that are very worthy of selection as reading assignments for university students of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa. Princeton Lyman's "A Strategic Approach to Terrorism" deftly points out the need for the U.S. to bring Africa into our overall approach to the war on terrorism and to stop thinking about the continent solely as a humanitarian object. Don Rothchild and Nikolas Emmanual provide a very interesting discussion of U.S. public opinion with respect to our approach to civil wars in "U.S. Intervention in Africa's Ethnic Conflicts." This domestic dimension of foreign policy is too often neglected. Ruth Iyob and Ed Keller skillfully remind us of the complexities and conundrums we face in dealing with Africa's Nile basin in "Special Case of the Horn of Africa." Tom Callaghy has written the best analysis yet on the issue of "Debt and Debt Relief." This should be a must read for any student of Africa policy.

Missing in this volume is a discussion of surrogate wars in Africa and the U.S. policy toward the perpetrators of such wars. Since U.S. policy is to look the other way, it is not surprising that the academic world is doing the same. Unfortunately, surrogate wars inflicted by neighbors on Liberia, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Côte d'Ivoire have been the most significant source of death and destruction in Africa since 1989, and policymakers have just treated them as inevitable and unstoppable. Also disappointing is Keller's introductory historical essay, "Meeting the