

argument here (though I have elsewhere). But what would Steinberger make of this passage from Max Weber: “Kant’s epistemology . . . proceeded from the assumption that ‘scientific truth exists and it is *valid*’ and then went on to inquire what intellectual assumptions are required for this to be (meaningfully) possible” (Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” *The Vocation Lectures*. David Owen and Tracy Strong, eds. Hackett. Indianapolis, IN, 2004), 28–29). The striking thing is the word “assumption.” Steinberger does not question this assumption.

**Deleuze’s Political Vision.** By Nicholas Tampio. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015. 182p. \$75.00  
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— Char Miller, *George Mason University*

“A method of the rhizome type,” Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari explain in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), “can analyze language only by decentering it onto other dimensions and other registers” (p. 8). Nicholas Tampio’s *Deleuze’s Political Vision* decenters American liberal political theory into dimensions offered by the theoretical work of Deleuze. Liberal concepts such as human nature, social contract, and individual choice get repositioned in the light of Deleuzian terms like “war machine,” “body without organ” (BwO), and “rhizome,” allowing Tampio to introduce the writings of Deleuze to a new set of readers. As he suggests at one point, he means to reduce the entry costs associated with the language and methods of Deleuze, especially for those conversant in liberalism (p. 2). This repositioning highlights similarities and differences and also transforms the concepts under examination by bringing them to bear on new concerns.

Tampio is not the first liberal to turn to Deleuze in order to break some of the deadlocks of liberalism; authors such as William Connolly, Christina Beltrán, and Paul Patton have similarly looked to him for leverage against the legalisms and antipolitics of liberalism. More intently than most, Tampio’s stakes lie in persuading liberals of the value of Deleuze. He does so by engaging significant figures of contemporary liberalism, John Rawls and Hannah Arendt in particular. He also takes on some typical liberal interlocutors, such as Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor. After substantiating the resonance that Deleuze has with liberalism, including showing connections with John Stuart Mill, Tampio further develops his account of Deleuzian ethics in relation to versions of Islamic political thought, positing possible liberal alliances with Sufism.

According to Tampio, Deleuze provides insights into our political moment by expanding the possibilities of liberal pluralism, which makes his writing particularly useful for Tampio, in that the latter’s interests in liberalism are mostly focused on the defense of difference

and the pluralization of identity. “The goal of Deleuzian liberalism is to protect the space of becoming,” Tampio asserts, “that is, to make possible the conditions of generating singular identities that can nourish one another in some ways, contest each other in others, and construct assemblages that promote common policies” (p. 110). Deleuze aids this project by challenging liberalism to go further in the production of difference and in the assemblage of those differences.

State assimilation presents one challenge to the cultivation of difference, a danger addressed, according to Tampio, by Deleuze’s concept of the war machine. The Deleuzian war machine crosses between the state of nature and the social contract, providing the means of transforming the social contract. This concept, more specifically, allows Tampio to address such problems as the assimilation of feminist critiques into the social contract, a problem posed by feminists like Carol Pateman. While generally agreeing with many of Pateman’s claims, in the end Tampio concludes that the social contract remains a viable and progressive concept (pp. 81–83). Deleuzian conceptions facilitate this conclusion by remaking the meaning of the social contract in broader terms, particularly holding out the possibilities of transformed biological distinctions and human natures.

Deleuze directs an eye to the unimagined, the underground, and the liminal in order to reimagine the coalescence of identities and communities. “We are tired of trees,” he famously proclaimed, provoking a shift from historical familial tree-based models of connection to underground rhizomatic connections. Liberalism tends to find and defend difference as preexisting (quasi-genetic) conditions. Deleuze, however, provides resources for cultivating mere hints and possibilities, the differences and perspectives of the future, if properly tended. Forces beyond the field of vision move and act on the world, forming and reforming new concerns and concepts with profound political consequences. Deleuze replaces arboreal language (including family tree, descent, blood, and identity) with the language of mysteriously connected underground nodes, buds, and adventitious roots—less about trees and more about tubers.

Tampio’s adoption of this rhizomatic language does not mean, however, that he has given up on the language of natural connections. For example, he develops what he imagines Deleuze might have conceived of as “human nature,” involving a thoughtful examination of the Deleuzian distinction between abstract machines and concrete assemblages massed on a single immanent plane. Humans, in this case, are conceived with an ontological status more like the rest of the world. Tampio explains: “Deleuze differs from most political scientists by refusing to privilege human rational actors as the main or sole actants in the political realm and by attributing primary motivation to subrepresentational desires rather than self-conscious

interests” (p. 5). These subterranean (yet very material) aspects of Deleuzian thought have provided important resources for scholars attempting to situate humans more materially in the world, decentering humans from history and politics. Scholars like Jane Bennett, inspired in part by the Deleuzian attention to worldly forces, have radically transformed contemporary notions of political action and actors. While sympathetic to these transformations, Tampio treats Deleuze less as the means of problematizing the privileged position of humanity and more as a critique of the assumptions of rationalists, such as Habermas or Rawls.

Tampio’s introduction of Deleuze to readers familiar with liberalism invites them to go beyond his claims and to develop his points in ways that are more disruptive of liberalism, such as the role of evil or the power of capitalism. “In *The One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom*,” Deleuze explains in *Masochism* (1967, which contains his “Coldness and Cruelty,”) “the libertine states that he finds excitement not in ‘what is here,’ but in ‘what is not here,’ the absent Object, ‘the idea of evil’” (p. 28). Tampio’s version of Deleuze, while exciting, also lacks a touch of evil, particularly as that evil might haunt liberalism. Tampio knows that gardens are messy but more than that, gardens contain antagonisms, struggles, and temptations. There is no evil snake lurking in this garden, no perverse enjoyments predicated on the refusal of joy to others. “A Deleuzian garden nurtures diversity, wildness, and hybrids,” Tampio asserts, and it is difficult to disagree, but the garden’s wildness can turn desperate and violent (p. 40). Those wild hybrids must occasionally appear terrifying, perverse, and self-destructive, and particularly frightening when they threaten liberalism.

Deleuze himself might be a (welcome) snake in the garden of liberalism. His dissolution of the autonomous individual (as a version, perhaps, of self-destruction) offers a profound opportunity to engage the individualism endemic to liberalism. “The goal of *A Thousand Plateaus*” may be as Tampio claims, “to envision a political order where individuals, and individuals assembled into groups, have the right to experiment in peace, on the condition that they do not harm others” (p. 72). But Deleuze undermines this claim as well, particularly through the sustained critique of the centering of politics around the individual. *A Thousand Plateaus* opens with Deleuze and Guattari suggesting that their goal in writing is to transform our conceptions of “I”: “To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves” (p. 3). Tampio’s project leaves open the further challenges that Deleuze can offer to key elements of liberalism, particularly in terms of the reliance on the power of “I” to hold forces and reactions together.

There is a modest scale to Tampio’s critical approach, probably inspired by Deleuze’s advocacy of a cautious

micropolitics. This generally serves him well as he attempts to convince liberals that Deleuze resonates with Mill. Such a treatment runs the risk, however, of domesticating Deleuze. The book under review places most of its bets on provoking future engagements. It provides the terms necessary for liberals to work with and against Deleuze. As with Tampio’s prior book, *Kantian Courage* (2012), this book sets up an interesting and counterintuitive remapping of the Enlightenment, one that entices the reader to pursue further its language and concerns.

*Deleuze’s Political Vision* is the eighteenth volume in the Modernity and Political Thought series by Rowman & Littlefield. This series features important contemporary theorists thinking with and writing about a significant predecessor in order to engage current issues and concerns. One aspect of this series has remained constant: a commitment to engaging past authors as a way to imagine and inhabit more livable futures. *Deleuze’s Political Vision* continues this commitment to a future more alive and active with a diverse range of experience.

**Modern Democracy and the Theological-Political Problem in Spinoza, Rousseau, and Jefferson.** By Lee

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— Megan Gallagher, *Whitman College*

Lee Ward’s purpose in *Modern Democracy and the Theological-Political Problem* is to explore the relationship between the increasingly secular character of politics and the success of democracy, long maligned but now broadly posited as the best and most legitimate regime type. In so doing, he offers intriguing close readings of the book’s titular figures on the intersections of democratic thought and the theological-political. Composed of an introduction, three substantive chapters, and a brief conclusion, the author argues that Spinoza, Rousseau, and Jefferson are responsible for setting democratic thought in a rationalist framework, one that specifically denies political authority to revelation, but which nonetheless makes space for a metaphysics based in natural law.

For these thinkers, the decline of clerical rule in political life left a vacuum formerly filled by divine will. Modernity is thus marked by a shift from clerical rule dictated by revelation to a democratic politics increasingly shaped by popular sovereignty. Yet even if one accepts the account of early modernity as subject to the relentless onslaught of secularism, democratic politics in the hands of Spinoza, Rousseau, and Jefferson does not fully reject the premises of faith-based politics. Instead, the three share a “confidence in popular government and a concomitant commitment to subject religious authorities to