

or a “process of terrestrialization” all the way down (p. 20), composed of flows, folds, and fields. What seems like the stable matter of the planet, in other words, is itself fully in motion: the soil of the Earth, for example, is itself the place where other spheres (biosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere) “break down, comingle, mix, and coproduce each other.” These planetary flows affect one another in periodic cycles (p. 41), and in turn, these cycles have periodic stabilities or fields. In short, the first part translates and reframes the core of earth system sciences into the basic building blocks of a process philosophy.

In the second part on history, the book makes a stronger claim: the Earth is itself historical. In other words, long confined to the study of human action, the very geokinetic processes of the planet—whether the compositions of rock strata or the emergence of water, lightning, or atmospheres as phenomena—should be understood as also historical. As a result, Nail argues that deep geological pasts are not just background for the present day: they *are* the present day (p. 62). The part goes on to explore various processes of mineralization, atmospheres, vegetality, and animality—all as part of the historical-kinetic processes of the planet and therefore also a history of the present moment. Humans may have inadvertently stumbled into becoming geological agents, as Dipesh Chakrabarty has recently argued (*The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, 2021), but the planet has long had historical agency. The upshot is that an analysis of climate ethics and politics needs to rethink itself from the (moving) ground upward to understand the ways that human actions contribute or detract from the intersecting elements of this larger planetary history.

In the third, concluding part, Nail leverages the apparatus of thought from the first two sections to think about what this might imply for earth ethics. Provocatively, for example, one of the key arguments is that we should understand fossil fuel capitalism not as wasting too much energy or using too much, but actually as not wasting enough of the right kind or in the right way. By deeply disrupting the Earth’s carbon cycles of energy dissipation, founded in the energy intake/release activities of trees and other biotas, fossil fuel culture (and what Nail calls the “fossil fuel classes”) interrupts what is ultimately a planetary imperative: to participate in the meaningful expenditure of energy in the universe. His suggestion, then, if humanity is to survive, is to find ways to *increase* planetary energy expenditure (in the right ways, of course). This is a useful way to move away from some of the politics and language of conservation that have long been part of the environmentalist lexicon, with a focus on stasis and preservation. Discussion of composting and reciprocity is equally interesting.

The book is full of brilliant reframings from which both political thought and studies of empirical practice concerned with the planetary might well draw. Particularly

useful is its insistence that human life emerges from and continues to be a part of the Earth—without reducing human life to a static, mechanistic “natural” being as has been done for so long, in so many ways, to bootstrap the uniqueness of the human (and the uniqueness of human political action in particular) into being. Nail then asks a difficult question: What would it mean to reconsider human ethics and politics as terrestrial and geological formations?

Indeed as Nail argues, Western thought and practice have for too long treated the Earth as an inert substance lacking in genuine novelty; this has left it unprepared to deal—in both the short and long run—with the pressing challenges of the Anthropocene, whether climate change, biodiversity extinction, or the transformation of land, habitats, and basic earth processes. This resonates with the growing sense that politics arguably needs to be looked at not only in its institutionalized basis in the centers of nation-states and other human social formations but also with respect to techno- and bio-networks of material existence at multiple scales. Nail’s book prompts us to take a wider view of the entities and processes that constitute political community and the relations between them, as indeed many nonwestern traditions have frequently done.

Although the book’s treatment of anthropocentrism is coherently critiqued and re-rendered in kinetic terms, it is nonetheless largely a philosophical anthropocentrism focused on the biological human as a species that is the target of both the critique and the reconstruction—and not a political account of anthropocentrism that intermixes more deeply with complicated histories of colonialism, empire, industrialization and extraction, political bordering, and modernization. The question of the forms of life that are valued, killed for, or protected is not always—indeed, is rarely—addressed at the species level but is embedded in political ideologies and histories. The book touches on these more political issues but does not tend to treat them directly.

*Theory of the Earth* will nonetheless be of wide interest not only to those working in global environmental politics and environmental political theory but also to all those wishing to fully think through what the Earth on which all politics takes place is actually about.

**Democratic Speech in Divided Times.** By Maxime Lepoutre. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. 288p. \$100.00 cloth. doi:10.1017/S1537592722000421

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Deliberative democracy has fallen on hard times. Empiricists continue to document the ignorance and tribal dogmatism of ordinary citizens, exacerbated by social media, which seem to imperil the prospect of reasoned

communication about public affairs. Meanwhile, theorists seem increasingly disenchanted with the lofty aspirations of deliberative theory, turning their attention to more minimalist and less discursive models of politics. Maxime Lepoutre's book arrests this pessimistic trend by vindicating a realistic ideal of public democratic speech, contending that it retains enormous power to help citizens solve pressing social problems.

The first half of the book develops and defends a set of norms for democratic discourse. On Lepoutre's view, we should insist on the strictures of public reason whereby citizens appeal to shared considerations in formal arenas of coercive decision-making (chap. 1). Yet we should simultaneously welcome a far wider set of contributions across informal social discourse. These include angry contributions to public debate, which have far greater epistemic value than the familiar charges of counterproductivity suggest (chap. 2). Welcoming anger risks inviting hateful speech into the public square—but we can and should mitigate the harms of hate speech through robust counter-speech supported by the state, rather than through censorship (chap. 3). Likewise, citizens and officials must also marshal counter-speech to challenge varieties of political misinformation (chap. 4).

Having specified an ideal of democratic discourse, the second half of the book interrogates whether problems of political distrust, ignorance, and fragmentation render it unattainable. Lepoutre argues that these challenges, although real, are less vexing than is initially apparent. Even though distrustful citizens lack the goodwill conducive to direct engagement, they can nevertheless learn from each other's perspectives through intermediaries, as well as tap the overlooked trust-building potential of angry, hypocritical, and even hateful encounters (chap. 5). Even though citizens are often ignorant, relying instead on signals from the group of which they are a member, such "group cognition" is, in fact, often epistemically valuable (chap. 6). And even though partisan segregation is cause for concern, many integrative remedies are not as demanding as commonly suggested (chap. 7). Accordingly, we should recommit to the project of democratic discourse, rather than acquiesce to theories that unconvincingly minimize the role of discourse and democratic participation in public life (chap. 8).

On each of the topics I mention in this brief overview, Lepoutre offers a raft of detailed and nuanced normative arguments—too many to discuss in this short review. The book is very well written, thoroughly researched, and compellingly argued. It offers precisely what normative democratic theory has needed: a spirited but realistic vindication of the role of civic discourse in improving our societies, tailor-made to the challenges of the current moment. Central to the book's payoff is its insistence on doing political theory in a manner that is engaged with a wide range of other literatures across philosophy, the social

sciences, and beyond. For example, Lepoutre's defense of anger engages extensively with the philosophy of emotion, whereas his analysis of political ignorance and group cognition relies greatly on work in empirical social science and epistemology. (It is also worth commending his detailed discussions of historical examples—from Frederick Douglass to Malcolm X—which thoroughly enrich the prose.) Although Lepoutre does not dwell on this methodological point, preferring instead to show the proof in the pudding, to my mind it is the book's signal virtue.

In an especially innovative move, Lepoutre connects the political-philosophical literature on public reason to work in social epistemology. This exposes a fraught dilemma for public reason theorists, who insist that citizens deliberate by appealing to reasons they share. Yet as social epistemologists like Miranda Fricker have argued, people often do not understand or appreciate a wide range of existing injustices; accordingly, the reasoning that explains and illuminates these injustices will often not be shared (even on the least restrictive variant of the constraint). The shared reasons constraint, then, shuts out a huge range of vital discourse, especially from marginalized groups. Lepoutre resolves the dilemma through an artful compromise: we should continue to insist on the constraint in the most formal sites of deliberation, where coercive decisions are made, while allowing nonshared consideration in more informal settings throughout civil society. (Some may find it unpalatable that marginalized groups must suppress their nonshared concerns in the most official settings—perhaps seeing this as grounds to reject the shared reasons constraint entirely.)

Another example of effective cross-disciplinary analysis arises in Lepoutre's exemplary treatment of hate speech and misinformation. Drawing on the philosophy of language, the book explains that explicit repudiations of hateful propositions risk raising the salience of those propositions—counterproductively "maintaining or even exacerbating the dignitarian harm of hate speech" (p. 99). Similarly, cognitive science has shown that misinformation is resistant to correction; explicit repudiations of misinformation can *strengthen* its salience (pp. 115ff). Responding to these findings, Lepoutre fruitfully distinguishes negative counter-speech, which explicitly negates harmful propositions, from positive counter-speech, which advances a positive vision of what is just or true (and thereby counters harmful messages without explicitly engaging and thus reinforcing them). Lepoutre also specifies a novel diachronic approach to counter-speech, in which counter-speakers do not simply react *ex post* to discrete instances of harmful speech but instead participate in broader, ongoing efforts to promote reasonable normative and empirical views. In my view, these distinctions substantially advance the normative theory of counter-speech, helping set the agenda for future work on this topic.

A striking theme of the book is the *systemic* nature of public discourse. Lepoutre astutely observes a misplaced tendency in normative democracy theory to see public discourse as “one immense conversation” (p. 202). Yet public discourse occurs in varied spheres, which together constitute a large and complex system; “what we ultimately care about are the properties of the system as a whole,” such that it is “epistemically effective and accountable to the concerns of the people” (p. 76). Thus, when evaluating the counterproductivity of angry speech, Lepoutre tells us, “We should not ask whether isolated expressions of angry speech have better consequences than isolated expressions of non-angry speech. Instead, the relevant question is whether a system that gives a key role to angry speech (among other kinds of speech) is more productive than a system that does not” (p. 82). I agree that is the relevant question for someone assigning system-level social norms (as political theorists love to imagine ourselves doing). But questions of individual ethics do not, therefore, disappear. Even granting that there should be some spaces in which angry rhetoric is welcome, it does not follow that all speech in those spaces should be angry.

The responsible citizen will still need to weigh the likely epistemic benefits against the potential political costs in any particular case.

Similarly, consider Lepoutre’s provocative suggestion that we should not be too hasty in condemning all dogmatic groupthink, given the epistemic value of a system calibrated such that “dogmatic exploration circulates widely between different groups” (p. 184). Even granting this possibility, how can an individual citizen be sure that the system in which she finds herself is in fact structured such that her dogmatism will be beneficial? Surely she may still reasonably wonder on any given occasion whether she is being unhelpfully dogmatic—granting excessive epistemic weight to certain insights gleaned by her group. “Trust the system” will almost always be cold comfort, not the normative guidance needed by citizens on the ground.

*Democratic Speech in Divided Times* is a terrific book. In tailoring the ideal of democratic deliberation to human beings as they are—rather than as political philosophers might wish them to be—it showcases democratic theory at its very best: philosophically sophisticated, empirically engaged, and driven by a conviction to improve our world.

## AMERICAN POLITICS

**Nowhere to Run: Race, Gender, and Immigration in American Elections.** By Christian Dyogi Phillips. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. 259p. \$99.00 cloth, \$27.95 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592722000639

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With a rapidly diversifying electorate, the United States has the potential to be a truly multiracial democracy. Yet, as the previous decade has made clear, there are a multitude of roadblocks to achieving this ideal. One of those barriers is the systematic underrepresentation of women and people of color, and particularly women of color, in politics. In *Nowhere to Run: Race, Gender, and Immigration in American Elections*, Dr. Christian Dyogi Phillips develops an intersectional framework to dissect differences in political opportunities across racial and gender groups and uses innovative data to empirically test the book’s assertions.

The intersectional model of electoral opportunity presented in the book emphasizes two central factors that simultaneously shape political opportunities and the subsequent potential for descriptive representation. First, about 80% of electoral districts across the country are majority-white, which limits the number of realistic opportunities for people of color to get on the ballot. This is also an important point in understanding the political

overrepresentation of white men. Second, “race and gender simultaneously constrain and facilitate electoral opportunities for Asian American women and men, Latinas, and Latinos” (p. 10). Each group has a unique social position within US society that comes with a unique set of advantages and disadvantages. Thus, the pathway to candidacy will be informed by these race-gender processes.

The model presented in the book moves us away from siloed ways of thinking about identity structures and instead “embraces complexity” by accounting for the power of institutions and context and taking seriously the idea that identities “encompass multiple dimensions” (p. 17). Indeed, the empirical evidence provided in the book makes clear that advantages and constraints based on identity are context specific. This is important both for developing a clear understanding of candidate emergence and for dispelling inaccurate assumptions. For example, the conventional wisdom is that racial minorities are much more likely to get on the ballot and to get elected from districts that have large numbers of co-ethnics. Phillips demonstrates that a relationship between the proportion of co-ethnics in a district and electoral success does exist but is much stronger for men than women across each racial group. Women of color face unique challenges to their candidacy and electoral success, such as political invisibility, lack of resources, and even discouragement from running for office stemming from the development of “male-oriented political networks,” even in districts in which the racial composition should theoretically give them an advantage based on their racial identity.