Joseph Schumpeter made lasting contributions to multiple disciplines, yet has few adherents today who would call themselves Schumpeterians. Part of this no doubt stems from the idiosyncratic nature of Schumpeter's ideas. But part, too, stems from the fact that Schumpeter's influence, even when sizeable, has tended to take the form of appropriations that emphasize a particular and discrete element of his work, rather than embrace a larger, more comprehensive Schumpeterian system. Economists and students of business, for example, know Schumpeter for his definition of capitalism in terms of “creative destruction,” his critique of equilibrium economics, his distinction between the businessman and the entrepreneur, and his prediction that capitalism would ultimately give way to socialism. And virtually all students of democracy relate to Schumpeter's model of “competitive elitism” in some way, usually either in support of Schumpeter for paving the way for a value-free, descriptive account of democracy or in protest of his unduly minimized rendering of democracy’s meaning. While Schumpeter's relevance to economics and political science is clear, John Medearis is surely right when he observes that the tendency of most today is to engage Schumpeter with a “scalpel” (p. 105), taking what one wants and discarding the rest.

It is the virtue of Medearis's book that it moves on both fronts, reviewing with depth and sophistication the principal discrete ideas that have made Schumpeter famous, but also endeavoring to comprehend the entirety of Schumpeter's work as a single organic structure. In this latter regard, the book presents Schumpeter as a conservative thinker, albeit one whose conservatism, as Medearis nicely demonstrates, departs in significant ways from dominant strands of conservative thinking today. For example, even if Schumpeter preferred capitalism to socialist alternatives, he did not profess the market utopianism espoused by many economic libertarians. Unlike Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, Schumpeter “did not believe that free markets and free enterprise were embodiments or expressions of individual liberty for most participants,” since Schumpeter interpreted consumer behavior less as “a free expression of uncoerced, spontaneous desires” than as something “often tradition-bound . . . and manipulated by marketing and advertising” (pp. 138–39). Likewise, while Schumpeter had Catholic sympathies, Medearis persuasively argues that he was not a religious conservative in a way “likely to be serviceable to contemporary conserva-
tives of that description” (p. 140). Further, in contrast to the neoconservative confidence that liberal capitalist democracies should exert military force in defense of their interests, Schumpeter decoupled capitalism from imperialism, arguing in his 1918 essay, “The Sociology of Imperialisms,” that imperialism ought to be understood as the disposition to fight wars without rational basis, that most wars in human history arguably had been waged without sufficient cause, and that the irrational will to expansion was an atavistic remnant from earlier epochs of human history that was likely to die out. In these respects, Schumpeter's account of imperialism seemed to have more in common with Melville's quip that “All wars are boyish, and are fought by boys” (“The March into Virginia,” 1861) than with neoconservative militarism of today.

What conservatism meant for Schumpeter was not preserving some well-established set of values (free markets, religious truth, global dominance) but rather what Medearis calls the “rearguard” project (pp. 13, 94, 130, 141–42) of...
The book’s examination of that part of Schumpeter most known to political scientists—his theory of competitive elitism—is informative and insightful. It traces the influence of this theory on successive social scientists who have worked out a comprehensive social vision and, for this reason, may perhaps deserve the scalpel treatment he might have been treated in more detail), in recent years, there have been attempts (e.g., see Ian Shapiro, The State of Democratic Theory, 2003) to appeal to Schumpeter’s notion of competitive elitism as a critical, moral standard for reforming democratic politics (making parties more competitive and leaders more subject to risk), as opposed to its more usual enlistment in the endorsement of the status quo. Including such perspectives may have disturbed Medearis’s classification of Schumpeter as a conservative, but further validated what must be his larger ambition: to demonstrate the importance of Schumpeter as a political thinker.

Nonetheless, the book provides a very good introduction to Schumpeter’s life, his ideas, and their influence on and relevance to contemporary debates about capitalism and democracy. Together with his previous book on Schumpeter, the work here should establish Medearis as the leading scholar of Schumpeter for political scientists.

Deliberative democrats have won the legitimacy debate. Democratic theorists now must hold that some form of public deliberation is necessary for legitimacy, or explain why not. Accordingly, current democratic theory is focused on the details of deliberativism: Who deliberates? With whom? For how long? About which questions? By means of what kinds of reasons? These discussions are often highly technical, relying on subtle distinctions among, for example, “reasons all could accept,” “reasons acceptable to all,” and “reasons no one could reject.” This precision is required, though sometimes tedious. Still, a concern lurks: Should it turn out that even modest conceptions of deliberative democracy cannot be implemented, the rigorous theorizing will have been for naught.

One approach to implementation focuses on institutions. Deliberativists propose various innovations, ranging from a new national holiday devoted to deliberation and a fourth “deliberative” branch of government to modest interventions involving media regulations. These proposals have met with criticism. Yet even if their practicability and desirability are conceded, we confront the fact that