

What stands out in Menon's account are its organization, nuance, and depth. Especially, Menon's use of interviews is exemplary: she is careful about the meaning of every word, every reference, and even of not-well or fully-articulated thoughts, which makes her findings more grounded and convincing. While *Refashioning Race* is a valuable resource for scholars interested in questions in race, medicine, science, and the body, it will also make an excellent way to start conversations with students, especially in courses on medical sociology, sociology of race, sociology of the body, and/or science and technology studies, and will motivate further research in this area.

### Author biography

Tuğçe Ellialtı-Köse is an Assistant Professor at the University of Guelph. She received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. Her work explores the intersections of law, medicine, and science in state responses to sexual violence, thus bridging sociology of law with socio-legal studies on gender and medicine. Her main research interests focus on relationships between gender, law, and medicine and the ways that the law can help relieve or reinforce identity-based inequalities.

Julia Jorati

*Slavery and Race: Philosophical Debates in the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2023, 338 pp.: ISBN 0197659233, 9780197659236

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### Keywords

Eighteenth century, race, slavery

Jorati's book is an ambitious project that spans a wide range of philosophical debates from the eighteenth century. Thoroughly researched and clearly written, it serves as a valuable resource for anyone interested in exploring these discussions in greater depth.

Jorati opens her book with a helpful introduction, where she delimits the scope of her work and provides preliminary definitions for key terms. I especially appreciate the taxonomy of the licit origins of slavery she offers (p. 12). Jorati divides slavery into three types: circumstantial, natural, and divine. First, circumstantial slavery attempts to justify slavery by appealing to the particular circumstances leading to it. Its subtypes are voluntary slavery, parental sale, war slavery, penal slavery, debt slavery, and hereditary slavery. Secondly, Natural slavery describes the idea that some human beings are born with certain characteristics that make them particularly fit for being slaves. And racial natural slavery is when such characteristics are identified with racial properties. Finally, divine slavery is the idea that slavery is established by God. Depending on the particular source of such explanations, divine slavery is divided into theological natural slavery and biblically sanctioned slavery. Throughout the book, this taxonomy serves as a useful framework for organizing and analyzing eighteenth century's arguments both for and against slavery. Comparatively, Jorati places more emphasis on circumstantial and natural slavery than on divine slavery, providing a detailed examination of arguments belonging to the two categories.

The main text of the book is divided into five chapters based on geographical regions, focusing respectively on the philosophical debates occurring in North America, Scotland, England, the Francophone world, and the Netherland and Germany. Within each chapter, Jorati surveys the major thinkers writing during the eighteenth century on the relevant topics. Notably, the book not only dives into the philosophical views of canonical figures like David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, and Immanuel Kant, but also introduces the readers to less well-known figures like Quoin Ottobah Cugoano, Olaudah Equiano, and Olympe de Gouges. Together, these distinct voices create a philosophical scene much more vibrant and diverse than commonly recognized.

There are several aspects of the book that I want to highlight. First, Jorati's book does justice to the depth and sophistication of anti-slavery criticisms. As the book shows, anti-slavery critics of this age not only identified and rejected various forms of racial biases but also provided diagnoses of such biases. The two common explanations surveyed in the book are the effects-of-slavery strategy and what I call the association strategy (p. 85). The former argues that while slaves may exhibit certain stereotypical characteristics, these are effects rather than causes of slavery. In contrast, the latter strategy denies any truth in racial bias and instead attributes the presence of such bias to the unwarranted association of black people with stereotypes. Beyond these basic ideas, authors from this time period also developed much more sophisticated accounts that I can not survey here. These accounts are still worth considering today, as many of the mechanisms of prejudice the authors explored can still be operative. Second, Jorati's book is not limited to examining texts written in the traditional form of philosophy. Instead, she includes different styles of writing, such as Dorothy Kilner's novel *The Rotchfords* (1786) and Olaudah Equiano's autobiography *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789). By doing so, Jorati challenges the canon of philosophy. It is likely not a coincidence that authors who present their philosophical ideas in such texts also tend to come from marginalized groups. Finally, Jorati's comprehensive survey effectively demonstrates that the legitimacy of slavery was heatedly debated in the eighteenth century across various geographical regions. This intellectual landscape calls into question the noticeable silence of canonical philosophers on this issue. For example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose ideas about social-contract theory had a huge impact on the French Revolution, never discussed issues of transatlantic slavery in detail and even explicitly claimed that his contemporaries no longer owned slaves (p. 220). Given the rich conversations occurring in the background, it becomes questionable whether a charitable reading of Rousseau's overwhelming dismissal of the issue is possible. Jorati herself raises such concerns throughout the book, prompting readers to be critical in their interpretative work in the future.

Jorati's book is a well-researched encyclopedia that would be very helpful for anyone interested in learning about this era's intellectual scene. Given the nature of the book, it also leaves me with some questions that might be worthy of more future research. First of all, I'm interested in learning more about different thinkers' biographical details in relation to their positions on slavery. While Jorati mentions some of the authors' personal histories in order to contextualize their views, I'm curious to hear more. It would be interesting to consider the extent to which someone's views on slavery and race are both influenced by and detached from their real life. This aspect is

worth exploring, especially since, as Jorati points out, anti-slavery critics from this age often accused slavery advocates of hypocrisy. This criticism is further grounded in the Golden Rule, namely, 'the moral principle that we ought to treat others the way we would want to be treated if the positions were reversed' (p. 43). Exposing the slavery proponents' potential violation of the Golden Rule can thus contribute to a more thorough critique of the practice.

Second, I'm particularly interested in the philosophical arguments put forward by authors who are themselves from marginalized groups. For example, in the book, Jorati introduces readers to the works of Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, Olaudah Equiano, and Jacobus Elisa Johannes Capitein. Writing from the perspectives of black people with firsthand experiences of enslavement, these authors' voices establish a unique and invaluable archive. Their works offer insights not only into the harsh realities of slavery but also into the intellectual and philosophical resistance against it from those who suffered most directly under its yoke. Given the scope and length of the book, Jorati distributes her attention relatively equally among all the thinkers she examines. While this is a clearly thoughtful and balanced choice with many benefits, I find myself wanting more spotlight on the voices that have so far received less attention both in history and in contemporary scholarship.

Finally, I'm interested in learning more about how the philosophical debates on slavery and race are historically and intellectually intertwined with debates concerning other forms of oppression. One paradigm case is sexism. Jorati touches upon sexism several times throughout the book. As she points out, on several accounts of natural slavery, both women and black people are considered as inferior by nature, which is supposedly what makes them suitable to be slaves. On the anti-slavery side, we also see that several thinkers opposed sexism alongside their opposition against racism. These intersections highlight the broader struggle for equality and justice that transcends specific forms of oppression. Mary Wollstonecraft's writing, for example, is particularly sensitive to these issues.

To conclude, Jorati's book offers a systematic overview of the philosophical landscape in the eighteenth century. The debates surveyed in the book make up the background of the expansive slave trade of the time period. While it is unclear how much these philosophical theories actually shaped, sustained, or challenged the practice of slavery in reality, it is essential for our understanding of this period to grasp what kinds of arguments are in currency. Jorati's book will be of great value to anyone wishing to learn more about the philosophical background of slavery and race.

### **Author biography**

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