

about the ecological crisis: not the human use of nature per se but instead the complete lack of political constraints on such use, which prepares the ground for exploitation and extractivism.

Chapter 4 takes a first step toward addressing these ills by directing attention to political respect for nature. Once again turning to stalwarts of the Western canon of philosophy—in this case, Immanuel Kant, Emmanuel Levinas, and Jacques Derrida—the author explores what it would mean in practice to treat not only humans but also other Earth dwellers as ends in themselves. In foregrounding experiences of radical alterity in the encounter with others, the chapter prompts a reorientation of our affective frameworks so as to disable the instrumentalizing logic of environmental domination. Importantly, the rejection of pure instrumentalism does not imply that humans would suddenly live in perfect harmony with nature. Conflicts and trade-offs will inevitably endure on an environmentally emancipated planet. But there need to be at least some political constraints on our species' confrontation with more-than-human beings.

Continuing with this line of positive rejoinders, chapter 5 expands on Iris Marion Young's "social connection model" and parses various aspects of responsibility, from culpability to accountability and responsiveness. Paying respect to nature depends on one's ability to effectively respond to environmental domination, which in turn is shaped by relative positions of power. From this diagnosis, a picture of ecological responsibility emerges that is pluralistic and sensitive to different cultural settings. At this point, Krause also celebrates the liberatory impact of social movements, the interventions of which do not rely on the illusion of sovereign human action.

Chapter 6 draws the prior arguments together and restates the book's central objective. The author asserts again that the emancipation of human beings is inextricably intertwined with the emancipation of nonhuman nature, given the dual character of environmental domination. The book ends with some general reflections on how people could be mobilized to participate in emancipatory efforts and on which types of institutions would be best suited to combat domination. An epilogue discusses current initiatives that successfully prefigure the open-ended struggle for politically constraining the use of non-human nature.

There are two respects in which this book could be further interrogated. The first has to do with Krause's method of reworking pivotal terms of political thought—agency, domination, respect, and so on—to render them more helpful for inhabiting a more-than-human world. *Eco-Emancipation* pursues this goal by mining canonical figures, like Kant, Arendt, and many others, for insights into the wider problem she wishes to illuminate. Frequently, this proves a powerful strategy for also bringing out their intrinsic shortcomings, given that, except for Jane

Bennett, almost all the authors whom Krause analyzes in depth start from anthropocentric premises.

But sometimes Krause seems to underplay the analytical and normative depth with which prominent thinkers such as Val Plumwood and Murray Bookchin (whose works are cited but not fully integrated into the argument) have grappled with the very concerns that also animate *Eco-Emancipation*; for example, the urgent need for an intersectional perspective. One may thus express doubts about returning once again to authors whose anthropocentric presuppositions have been so powerfully called into question by numerous environmental philosophers and activists over the past 60 years. To be sure, the voices of these critics are present on these pages, but the book's primary anchoring in the mainstream of political theory sometimes overshadows their perceptive observations.

The second challenge speaks to possible lacunae in the argument. Given Krause's skepticism about ethical approaches and despite considerations of animal rights and the democratic representation of nonhuman nature, it is surprising to find relatively little about the real politics of ecological emancipation in this book. Moreover, related economic questions are largely absent. This is an intriguing omission given the book's consistent stress on domination and emancipation. Not only conversations around post-growth but also discourses on multispecies justice and feminist engagements with care work are fundamentally concerned with the critical notion of freedom that Krause embraces. On hitting the end of this densely argued and beautifully written volume, I thus wished *Eco-Emancipation* had at least 100 pages more to develop the core argument further and connect it more directly to the real politics of ecological emancipation across different conceptual axes.

Notwithstanding these minor limitations, I am convinced that *Eco-Emancipation* will become a reference point for debates not only among students of environmental ethics and politics but also political theorists more generally.

**Montesquieu: Let There Be Enlightenment.** By

Catherine Volpilhac-Auger. Translated by Philip Stewart. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 262p. \$39.99 cloth. doi:10.1017/S1537592723002074

— Alex Haskins , *Wheaton College*  
alex.haskins@wheaton.edu

Catherine Volpilhac-Auger's biography of Montesquieu (originally published in 2017 in French) offers a remarkable account of the life and times of Charles Louis de Secondat Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu as a foundational thinker in the history of ideas. She argues that Montesquieu is, first, a man who through his various works enabled his contemporaries to "think differently" about the world (pp. 2–3). Drawing on her extensive work with (relatively) recently opened archives on

Montesquieu's correspondence and major and minor works, Volpilhac-Auger disabuses the reader of long-standing errant interpretations of his life and ideas that appear insufficiently attentive to the documented evidence. Still, her biography is not a radical departure; rather, readers will "know a little better what [Montesquieu] could not do, or say, or write, especially if we avoid the temptation, which is the easy solution, of projecting today's manners of living and thinking onto someone who lived more than two centuries ago" (p. 7). At once, Volpilhac-Auger's biography is both a revision and a recovery. It paints a picture of Montesquieu as he would have seen himself and advances foundations for new and exciting Montesquieu scholarship.

Volpilhac-Auger's biography features nine chapters organized around Montesquieu's major life events and works. Her opening chapter foregrounds the formative influences of Montesquieu's education and of his immediate family—his father, mother, siblings, uncle, and an anonymous beggar godfather, Juilly—on his future development. She balances and humanizes Labrède's (Montesquieu's childhood name) developing familial relations and (co)curricular environments and passions, such as poetry, philosophy, and theater, while displaying little patience for previous biographers' "invented," "foundationless," "awkward," and "ignorant" attempts to reconstruct Montesquieu's early life (pp. 9, 15, 17, 18, 24).

In the second chapter, Volpilhac-Auger emphasizes Labrède's turn to an apprenticeship in law, with an eye toward resisting anachronistic imputations (pp. 36, 38, 41). She helpfully details the origins of the *Lettres persanes* (as a byproduct of his boredom with the law) and Labrède's "moment" with Arcadio Wang, while recounting the turbulent political context and burgeoning intellectual pursuits informing (or subverting) the young polymath's legal training in Paris. Yet, her account suffers slightly from its frequent recourse to begging questions about Labrède's motives, options, and encounters (pp. 38, 40, 48, 51).

Chapter 3 offers valuable reflections on the Baron de La Brède's life and work after his father's death and before his rise to fame as the author of the celebrated *Lettres persanes*. Volpilhac-Auger commandingly displays intimate details of the baron's marriage and the early influences of Machiavelli, Cicero, Descartes, Bayle, and others on the *président à mortier's* religious writing. Montesquieu's privileging of intellectual interests—that is, science, math, botany, climate, and literature—over formal legal responsibilities continues both here and in the subsequent chapter, with a detailed analysis of the genesis and publication process of the *Lettres persanes*.

The fourth chapter features a Montesquieu flush with his recent success yet still searching for stimulating intellectual endeavors and passions beyond the "well-marked

path" laid out by his family, early benefactors, and even by France. Volpilhac-Auger's dismissive tone toward earlier biographical blunders and assumptions in chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 58, 75–76, 83), although understandable, seem somewhat uncharitable. Moreover, the continual anticipation of *The Spirit of Law* up to this point (pp. 15, 27, 38, 53, 55, 57, 64, 69, 77, 85, 92, 95, 96, 112), even though appreciated, risks opening the author to the criticism she will levy later against other biographers: namely, that biographies of Montesquieu often risk implying that all roads lead to 1748 (pp. 184–86).

Chapter 5 turns abroad, noting Montesquieu's fraught (but successful) path to the Académie Française on his way to "discover new worlds." As Montesquieu deepens his analysis of agriculture, commerce, slavery, war, and diplomacy abroad, he also develops respect for the aesthetics of Italian visual and performative art (which informed his *Essay on Taste* [1757]), the religious pluralism of Germany and the Netherlands, and the complexity of political institutions in Austria and England. Much of this is known, but Volpilhac-Auger compellingly traces connections across Montesquieu's varied interests that will undoubtedly generate future avenues for research.

The sixth chapter tracks the weight of Montesquieu's travels on his future work. Volpilhac-Auger catalogs Montesquieu's extensive library and classification system (sometimes to a fault) and facilitates a much-needed look into the *Lumière's* reading and writing process, especially as it pertains to China. Moreover, she helpfully weighs the benefits and limits of using Montesquieu's anecdotal writings—namely, *Spicilege* and *My Thoughts*—while providing correctives to the reception history and current interpretations of *Considerations on the Romans* (1734). The brief glosses on *Universal Monarchy* and the lesser known *Histoire véritable* are also worth consideration.

The seventh chapter foregrounds *Esprit de lois* but not at the expense of more intimate biographical details, such as Montesquieu's amorous relations, health challenges, and tensions with salon acquaintances, chateau neighbors, his children, and even the king. Much of the material on the composition, influences, and substance of *Esprit de lois* is well known. Volpilhac-Auger acknowledges this explicitly and through somewhat charitable citations of other Montesquieu biographers and scholars; however, her account shines in noting that, as a project, *Esprit de lois* "came on progressively, with the advance of the extracts, notes, and works through which Montesquieu's 'principles' were taking shape; the work was constructed by feeding on earlier works which it reoriented, recomposed, and rewrote. A progressive emergence then, rather than an act of birth" (p. 185). Here, the reader is (re)oriented to one of Volpilhac-Auger's main contributions: an archivally informed revision of Montesquieu's most well-known work and its place in his *œuvre*. Its development and significance were hardly inevitable; rather, contingency features equally

in its content and production, due both to his intellectual shifts and factors beyond his control, such as the printing process. Conceptual and methodological continuities across his works and preoccupations remain, but scholars would do well to cease filtering all of Montesquieu through *Esprit de lois*—a powerful conclusion indeed.

Chapter 8 signals an impending curtain call, with its focus on Montesquieu's final six years of life. Volpilhac-Auger devotes ample text to the stress of printing challenges and critical responses to the text but loses nothing of the narrative's personal flavor, emphasizing other stressors in Montesquieu's life, including a construction lawsuit in Bordeaux, the deaths of Madame de Tencin and his brother, and the general fatigue of being misunderstood (*sans être entendu*). The conflicting accounts surrounding Montesquieu's death ("Did he repent of his writings or no?") form the bulk of chapter 9 and make for a nuanced, if not ambiguous, conclusion to a complex life.

Overall, Volpilhac-Auger's biography of Montesquieu reflects a seasoned scholar's work of more than 20 years that cannot be judged by a moment's reading. It should be approved or condemned as a whole, as Montesquieu would have it. To this reviewer, Volpilhac-Auger's biography will be as essential for this generation of Montesquieu scholars and generalists as Robert Shackleton's *Montesquieu: A Critical Biography* (1961) and Louis Desgraves's *Montesquieu* (1986) works were for previous generations. To this end, the chronology and selected bibliography serve as essential *points de départ* for any scholar looking to find (or revisit) the highest-quality French and English materials on Montesquieu.

### **Freedom Inside? Yoga and Meditation in the Carceral**

**State.** By Farah Godrej. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022.

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— Anna Terwiel , Trinity College  
anna.terwiel@trincoll.edu

The United States incarcerates more people than any other country in the world, and prison conditions are often brutal. Overcrowding, solitary confinement, interpersonal violence, and medical neglect all occur regularly in the sprawling system of jails and prisons that confines almost two million people, mostly poor people of color. It may come as a surprise, then, to learn that yoga and meditation classes are sometimes offered behind bars. This puzzling phenomenon is the subject of Farah Godrej's new book, *Freedom Inside? Yoga and Meditation in the Carceral State*, an engaging and accessible ethnographic study based on four years of teaching yoga inside California prisons, participant observation in a prison mindfulness class, and more than 60 interviews with both formerly incarcerated practitioners and volunteer teachers. What does it mean, Godrej asks, to teach practices

of self-transformation to people trapped in an oppressive total institution? What happens to yogic and meditative teachings when they are transposed to carceral settings that justify imprisonment as "rehabilitation" for deviant criminals? Do they diminish the violence of prison life, or do they help obscure it?

*Freedom Inside?* is animated by the worry that, in carceral settings, yoga and meditation classes help legitimize imprisonment and facilitate control. Godrej does not reject these classes: they help people survive the stresses and traumas of prison life. "As long as mass incarceration exists in its current form," she writes, "prisons must continue offering these practices, if only to assist in enduring what is clearly an assault on the self" (p. 128). But Godrej acknowledges that yoga and meditation may do more than assist incarcerated people: they may also make them "more docile and governable" (p. 87). Godrej is especially concerned that yoga and meditation may encourage incarcerated practitioners to accept individual responsibility for their incarceration and locate freedom and liberation exclusively in the self. A strong suspicion of individual responsibility runs through the book, inspired by critiques of the neoliberal worldview "that insists on individual choice and behavior as a catch-all solution, refusing to acknowledge that some structures are so entrenched and systemic that they require collective change and action" (9). For Godrej, the "therapeutic" discourse that prisoners are bad or broken people in need of correction obscures collective responsibility for mass incarceration and the need for political resistance and change. Invoking leading abolitionist thinkers, Godrej attributes mass incarceration not to rampant crime but rather to a neoliberal carceral state that manages racialized poverty and inequality with policing and punishment instead of with investments in social well-being, such as affordable housing, a social safety net, and the redistribution of wealth.

Godrej's ethnographic research confirms her worries about the politics of prison yoga and meditation. In interviews with formerly incarcerated practitioners, most describe yoga and meditation as crucial tools for much-needed self-transformation. These respondents take responsibility for their imprisonment and even frame it as a "blessing." Godrej's interviews with volunteer instructors similarly reveal a widespread desire "to make prisoners better and reduce crime" (209). But her research also reveals a second, minoritarian perspective that values yoga and meditation for strengthening people's ability to resist imprisonment. Yogic and meditative practices can foster "a critical mental distance from the institutions purporting to teach incarcerated persons that they 'deserve' the suffering they endure," Godrej writes (p. 130). Inspired by these accounts, she depicts interiority as an important site of resistance and affirms the significance in prison settings of what James Scott (*Domination*