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## Review of The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race

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Title: Naomi Zack. Ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Race*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xix, 631.

The new anthology on philosophy of race edited by Naomi Zack is broad in scope yet succeeds in offering sufficient depth in numerous areas of current research about race, race theory, and its application to social, political, and legal issues. This weighty book is subdivided in ten sections, each section but one—that concerning race in tandem with issues like education, health, medicine and sports—constituted by five papers; thus, the full volume achieves a total of fifty-one essays. Predictably, then, the number of contributors is large, but by constraining the essays within the bounds of ten categories, the anthology proves to be both flexible and of great utility for research and teaching. The ten main parts of the volume include: (a) race in the history of modern philosophy; (b) pluralistic ideas of race; (c) metaphysics and philosophy of science; (d) American philosophy and race; (e) Continental philosophy and race; (f) racisms and neo-racisms; (g) social construction and racial identity; (h) social issues, namely, education, health, medicine, and sports; (i) public policy, political philosophy, and law; (j) feminism, gender, and race. The list of contributors includes younger scholars as well as established figures in the field, such as Robert Bernasconi, Bernard Boxill, Jorge Gracia, Leonard Harris, Clarence Johnson, Charles Mills, Shannon Sullivan, Cynthia Willett, George Yancy and Naomi Zack, to name a few. To this group, Zack has brought thinkers in related fields, such as Lawrence Blum, Aaron Garrett, Yen Le Espiritu, Laurie Shrage and James Sterba, to produce set of far-reaching essays. Taken together, the papers comprise the most complete anthology to date, taking up topics as varied as the historical ideas of race, US colonialism and racial quotas, the ontological status of race, social constructivist views of racial identity, race and health disparities in the US, racial inequality and reparations, black women’s sexuality and hip-hop, the morality of racial identity. One might distinguish the works generally as falling along one of two axes, one comprising abstract, theoretical analyses of race, such as the metaphysics of race and theories of definition about race, and the other, lived racial experience, its causes and effects.

Given the wide-ranging nature of the anthology and the limited amount of space allotted to a book review, it is necessary to impose some limitations on the number of essays reviewed. For purposes of the review, and not reflecting the comparative value of the papers, this article gives close attention to essays of interest within five of ten sections. This selective method of review is also justified by the fact that Zack provides an excellent, synoptic introduction to the volume (pp. 1-14) as well as short, focused overviews (4-5 pp.) for the ten section headings within the book, each of which concludes with a short bibliography for further reading. In addition, each author prefaces his or her essay with a very short overview, providing another means by which the interested researcher can obtain condensed accounts of the argument.

Part I is devoted to the ideas of race in modern philosophy covering the canonical thinkers of the period whose writing invites critical comment including Locke (Bill Uzgalis), Hume (Aaron Garrett, Silvia Sebastiani), Kant (Bernard Boxill), Nietzsche (Robert Bernasconi) as well as an essay on the racial aspect of social contract theory (Charles Mills). In this group, Bill Uzgalis’ essay entitled “John Locke, Racism, Slavery, and Indian Lands,” provokes interest with its central claim that Locke’s theory of what counts as legitimate slavery does not justify the

Transatlantic slave trade and its institution of colonial slavery (24). Standing against this claim, however, are the facts concerning Locke's involvement in companies trading in slaves and his official government posts as colonial administrator (29). What Uzgalis makes clear is that Locke's stated theory of legitimate slavery, as distinct from his account of illegitimate slavery springing from his critique of Robert Filmer's theory of absolute monarchical power, limits the scope of slavery to the losers in an unjust war, who have, consequently, abrogated their natural right to liberty. In addition, and this should be well-noted, the loss of natural liberty extends only to those who were the real aggressors in the unjust war and lost, not to their descendants, who can be neither inherited nor bought as slaves. Nor, according to Locke, can the just party in war take any or all property from the vanquished, but only as much as required in reparation for damage done during the war, as Uzgalis points out (23). With regard to Africans transported to the Americas, then, it may be inferred that unless any of them were the aggressors in an unjust war to begin with, they were not justly enslaved on Locke's theory, which leads to the charge of his inconsistency. When it comes to the issue of Locke's stand on Native American land possession, his theories of natural liberty and property show that while he held that Native Americans are free, deserving of the fruits of their labor and so, property, he failed to comprehend the Native American practice of communal land ownership, mistaking their seasonal hunting, fishing, and crop-growing over their lands as non-use and so considered their land as "wasteland," justly open to English colonial possession by enclosure and farming. Of these errors, Uzgalis finds Locke guilty of an inconsistency between his philosophical theories and his practice regarding slavery, but not concerning the English dispossession of Native American lands, the consequences of which were, of course, profound and far-reaching.

In Part II entitled "Pluralistic Ideas of Race," Kyle Powys White offers an essay entitled "Indigeneity and U. S. Settler Colonialism," which provides a critical contrast between the US Federal government standard of being indigenous and tribal notions. The federal standard has two requirements, one based on what is termed "degree of blood," and the second, membership in a federally recognized (BIA listed) tribe, whereas tribal ideas are centered on membership in indigenous social and political groups, not on lines of descent. As Whyte points out, the federal requirement sets too high a standard such that many Native Americans (NA) with NA parentage who do not maintain tribal affiliation cannot be so listed, with a clear negative outcome both with regard to federal census tallies and for federal education waivers (92). Furthermore, while the federal rule applies to US and Alaska tribal identity, it considers Hawaiian tribal identity separately, causing another split in the overall census for indigenous Americans. Whyte argues that the federal standards for indigenous identity can be traced to the 1930's when the federal government pressured Native American tribes to adopt "certain structures and membership criteria...to facilitate leasing indigenous homelands to extractive industries such as oil" (92). So, present-day federal standards for tribal identity are the result of what he terms "industrial settler colonialism" which he identifies as the physical, material practices that justify colonial expansion into new homelands (96). In place of the federal requirement, Whyte proposes indigenous membership based on practices of self-governance, restoration of tribal lands, and participation in shared tribal rituals, such as the seasonal sturgeon-release practiced by Michigan tribes. It may be added that Whyte's view of indigenous identity based on cultural affiliation rather than degree of blood falls in line with what other NA scholars such as Winona La Duke,

Glenn Reynolds and Linda Robyn maintain, finding indigenous identity as dependent on a core set of beliefs and practices called the Native American “land ethic.”

The social components are also considered in Part VII, entitled “Social Construction and Racial Identities,” in which most of the authors begin with a constructivist view of race on the general assumption that the biological view of race has been empirically discredited. While there are, no doubt, various positions within the biological approach, one view, sometimes termed “scientific racism,” holds that racial terms refer to biological properties that determine intellectual and moral, as well as superficial physical differences; this view held sway over much European and American thought on racial difference from 18<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Even if we consider that this biological account of race to have been disproved, the question concerning what to do about the effects of the race and racial inequality remain. The contributors in this section reflect this heterogeneity of views about racial practice. Jason Hill, for example, argues that since American racial categories are expressions of privilege perpetuated by the white ruling class, adopting a racial identity is immoral: it leads to tribalism, supports specific vices, and “turns one into a practicing racist” (402, 405). Hill therefore advocates that we reject a racialized identity, and adopt an attitude of cosmopolitanism, of which he distinguishes a weak and a strong variant. The weak form, akin to what he considers multiculturalism, is not adequate to overcome the problems mentioned, and thus he argues for the strong form of cosmopolitanism which consists in finding intrinsic moral value in individual persons. This form of cosmopolitanism lends itself to moral egalitarianism by depending on the notions of world citizenship and shared, universal human norms rather than on group, or tribal, shared norms of racial identity, which, he thinks, lead us to be “mired in psychic infantilism” (410).

Other scholars dispute whether racial identity can be set aside as easily as Hill seems to suggest; as Lucius Outlaw has remarked, “For most of us, that there are different races of people is one of the most obvious features of our social world” (quoted in Mallon, 396). On this line of thinking, Jacqueline Scott argues that we should take the facts of race and racial privilege as analogous to a chronic disease, to employ a Nietzschean metaphor for Western decadence, and attempt to devise a means of best living with our chronic condition. Scott thinks that we should begin our theorizing with the notions that racism is endemic in American culture, that it persists like “an incurable condition,” and we are all “infected” to some degree (414). Therefore, we cannot aim at complete health, but only “racialized health” (414), an admission that depends on acknowledging our infected condition and trying to attain healthy ways of coping with it, such as using one’s self-knowledge to master our own racism in a continual practice—or in Scott’s phrase, an “effortful *agon*” (417)—which consists in an ongoing activity of self-criticism and application of habits of virtue. Scott’s essay thus contributes to an ongoing discussion about racism which centers on what is termed “white confession” as developed by Jose Medina, Shannon Sullivan, and George Yancy, where Scott’s proposals provide practical “remedies” for reaching the goal of racial “health.”

In Part X, entitled “Feminism, Gender, and Race,” the essays include consideration of theories of race and sex in 19<sup>th</sup> century black writing; the intersection of hip-hop culture and black women’s sexuality; rape and social bonds; the effects of racism on black male bodies; and gender in

philosophy of race. The last essay, that by Zack concerning the conceptual intersections of the philosophy of race and of gender provokes interest, showing that critical race theory, like its earlier antecedent in the equal rights movement, presumed it was gender-neutral when in fact it assumed a masculine perspective as its preferred standpoint. As Zack explains, while feminist theory has had a long period of development, becoming more inclusive of various racial as well as gender differences so that it now embraces the notion of *intersectionality*—the notion that someone may experience multiple forms of oppression together (Zack, 601), critical race theory has not similarly yet developed an analogous pluralistic, critical lens. Thus, critical race theorists tend to find a single point of focus, namely, race and racial difference, as essential to achieving their analysis, ignoring differences in class and gender among people of color. According to Zack, the critical race perspective has narrowed its field of vision with regard to the oppression of women by overlooking three main elements contributing to the discipline: (i) taking patriarchy as a primary value; (ii) assuming race as the primary descriptor, (iii) assuming economic relations foundational to racial oppression. Zack argues that a new standpoint is needed to theorize the range of oppression of women of all races, classes, and backgrounds, one that “captures an undertheorized existential condition” that she terms *critical plunder theory* (Zack 606). To this new theoretical angle aimed at capturing current forms of female oppression, one needs to add that it should include all genders, as the expansion to women alone re-commits the error of exclusion.

Other sections, namely Parts III, VIII, and IX, represent fine contributions to the connections of race theory to metaphysics and philosophy of science as well as to topics in law, public policy, and social issues. In the first of these sections, issues related to the definition of race that take account of folk definitions and scientific definitions including by subspecies and population cluster definitions receive attention (Atkin), as does the distinction between minimalist and racialist concepts of race (Hardimon); an essay defending the normal metatheory of race, which shows various critiques of this standard theory of race are groundless (Glasgow) proves salutary. Topics including equal protection, affirmative action, reparations for slavery, and social justice theory are represented in the essays in the public policy section while issues relating to the intersection of race in primary education, health outcomes, profiling, and psychological testing are reflected in the section on social issues.

As is by now evident, this volume provides a wide range of topics about race for researchers and advanced students alike: the essays are uniformly clearly written, succinct, and well-documented. The anthology possesses a general index of names and topics, but not a general Bibliography which would have made searching the volume for authors more efficient. And while the volume clearly attains a degree of inclusivity in the topics on race, its success in the range of contributors and paper topics is uneven: having eighteen of fifty-one essays authored by women (Zack contributes three) is laudable, yet there are only single articles by Native American, Asian-American, and Hispanic authors and subjects, all of which clearly deserve more attention.

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