

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.

368p. \$99.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

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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*

and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts, 1990) calls “hidden transcripts”: oppositional practices that are concealed or disguised. Incarcerated people face enormous penalties for overt defiance or rebellion, and volunteers may be barred from prisons for causing trouble. In this context, a yogic study group led by incarcerated women can be a “revolutionary experiment.” The group, described to prison administrators as “address[ing] personal character defects” (246), over time becomes a space to foster solidarity and discuss yoga as a tool for political transformation. The chapter describing this evolution continues the experiment: it is collectively authored by Godrej, who facilitated the group, and two of the group’s leaders, Reighlen Jordan and Maitra (both pseudonyms).

Freedom Inside? effectively uses storytelling and everyday language to reach out to a general audience. In particular, Godrej hopes to reach “the very individuals and communities that teach and practice yoga or meditation inside prisons” (p. 18). The book urges prison volunteers and organizations to address the injustices of mass incarceration and adapt their pedagogy to the specific environment of the prison. That may mean incorporating social justice issues in meditation instruction or asking consent before touching a student during yoga practice. As one respondent put it, “Your idea [as a volunteer]—that you can bring healing without acknowledging and healing the *political* damage that has been done to [incarcerated] people—is doing more damage. You’re not seeing them. That’s a form of erasure” (p. 125).

Freedom Inside? also contains valuable insights about qualitative research design. Throughout the book, Godrej combines ethnographic research with critical reflections on her observations and methods. She describes the arduous process of gaining approval to attend a prison mindfulness class as a participant-observer, for instance, and critiques IRB protocols as so restrictive and deferential to the rules of the prison system that they limit the dissemination of critical views on incarceration. The book also models creative ways to circumvent the strict limitations on research with incarcerated people.

The book’s appeal to a general audience comes at some cost to its theoretical depth, however. Although Godrej ultimately argues against binary oppositions between compliance and resistance, they frame large sections of the book, such as chapter 5, “‘Rescued by Prison’ or ‘Drinking the Kool-Aid?’: Practicing while Incarcerated,” and chapter 8, “‘Making Them Better Human Beings’ or ‘Stirring the Pot?’ Interviews with Volunteers.” Political theorists may also wish for a deeper theorization of the book’s core concepts. Individual responsibility, for instance, is rightly critiqued as a ploy to justify mass incarceration, but Godrej leaves unexplored what role it might play in nonpunitive responses to harm. Here, the efforts of abolitionist authors such as Mariama Kaba and

Mimi Kim to rethink the meaning of accountability and justice could be illuminating.

But theorists are not the primary audience for *Freedom Inside?* which will be valuable to anyone seeking an empirically grounded, critical account of the contemporary US prison system and the volunteers who are directly involved with it. A powerful example of politically engaged scholarship, *Freedom Inside?* urges us all to think harder about what we can do to dismantle mass incarceration.

Mandeville’s Fable: Pride, Hypocrisy, and Sociability. By

Robin Douglass. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023.

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Robin Douglass’s book is an attempt to take “[Bernard] Mandeville’s philosophical credentials seriously” (p. 220). He does this by carefully examining, reconstructing, and, when necessary, fleshing out the arguments Mandeville developed over the course of his tenure as the *enfant terrible*—the “Man-devil”—of eighteenth-century English letters. It may come as a surprise that such an endeavor is needed, given the burgeoning literature on Mandeville and the long-lived notoriety of the notion of “private vices, public benefits,” the subtitle appended to his masterwork, *The Fable of the Bees*. It is surprising, too, because Mandeville’s contemporaries took him seriously: David Hume listed him among those “who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing” (*Treatise*, 1739, introduction). Yet interpreters tend to examine Mandeville in one of two contexts: as an important if somewhat eccentric figure in the development of modern understandings of commercial society or as an important if somewhat eccentric interlocutor for weightier figures in modern moral and political theory—Hume, Adam Smith, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau chief among them. As Douglass points out, however, Mandeville has comparatively little to say about political economy or things economic more generally (p. 223), and the insights into moral and social arrangements on offer in his mature work—the expanded edition of the first *Fable* (1723), the *Fable’s* second volume (1729), and the *Fable’s* “third” volume, 1732’s *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*—are sufficiently rich to warrant and repay close examination.

In *Mandeville’s Fable*, Douglass offers “a sympathetic interpretation and qualified defence” (p. 3) of Mandeville’s moral and social theory. In so doing, this book joins a modest list of those that successfully treat Mandeville in this way, including Hector Monro’s *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville* (1975) and, of course, the essays and apparatus affixed by F. B. Kaye to the Liberty Fund edition of the *Fable*.

Mandeville’s Fable is divided into two parts. The first, “Moral Psychology,” begins by examining Mandeville’s