

But we can use evolutionary models to show that because the speed of learning matters so much to organism payoffs, imprecise, quick, generalizing strategies do, in fact, evolve (Cailin O'Connor, "Evolving to Generalize: Trading Precision for Speed," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 68, no. 2 [2017]: 389–410). In other words, ignoring cognitive trade-offs led Maynard Smith to incorrectly predict the emergence of rational behavior.

I do not think this sort of case is a serious problem for Okasha. As described, throughout the manuscript he advises caution in using (rational) agent concepts in biology. Furthermore, as noted, he urges theorists to use empirical work, rather than theoretical arguments, in deciding when agential thinking is appropriate. I think there is a more specific takeaway he might have emphasized that seems right given the limitations he focuses on, and the ones he does not, for agential thinking. While we can often treat organisms as rational agents for descriptive purposes, we should not do so when trying to predict behavior. There are too many reasons why evolution may not have led to straightforwardly rational behavior in any novel case, even if in many cases we can observe that it did.

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Joshua Glasgow, Sally Haslanger, Chike Jeffers, and Quayshawn Spencer, *What Is Race? Four Philosophical Views*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2019), 296 pp., \$105.00.

Questions about the nature of race differ from questions about the nature of many other scientific entities such as black holes, mirror neurons, or phonemes. While all of these entities can raise philosophical questions, the latter involve rather uncontroversial scientific expertise. If you want to learn about the nature of black holes, mirror neurons, or phonemes, the starting point is to consult astrophysics, cognitive neuroscience, or phonology. But who do you consult when you want to learn about the nature of race? A geneticist? An evolutionary biologist? A biomedical researcher? A physical anthropologist? A cultural anthropologist? A social psychologist? A sociologist? A political theorist? A historian? A linguist? A philosopher of language? A metaphysician?

Debates about the nature of race confront philosophers of science with complex questions about the nature of contested entities that involve not only heterogeneous scientific disciplines but also controversies far beyond academia. Coauthored by four of the leading philosophers of race (Joshua Glasgow,

Sally Haslanger, Chike Jeffers, and Quayshawn Spencer), *What Is Race?* provides a much-needed synthesis that moves almost effortlessly between empirical evidence from biological to social sciences as well as philosophical reflection from philosophy of language to political theory. The book has an intriguing structure that assigns each of the authors the task of defending a major theory of race and includes a second part in which each of the authors responds to the chapters of their coauthors.

Haslanger opens the debate with a sociopolitical account of races as groups who are “observed or imagined to have certain bodily features,” which are related to geographical ancestry and used as markers for practices of subordination and privilege (25–26). Her somewhat technical definition explicates the more intuitive idea that race is at the core not about physical features that happen to be picked out in racialized practices but rather about the social realities that are built around them. Haslanger defends this sociopolitical account by developing a more general methodology for addressing the nature of contested entities. The methodology starts with semantic constraints, as some answers (e.g., “Race is a piece of furniture” [33]) would clearly miss the meaning of *race*. Reflecting on competing specifications, however, Haslanger acknowledges that semantic constraints underdetermine metaphysical positions and develops a methodology that triangulates semantic considerations with empirical evidence about racialized practices and normative considerations about the utility of race for social activism. This triangulation leads to a strong case for a sociopolitical account that is argued to be (1) semantically permissible, (2) explanatory relevant, and (3) politically useful for challenging racial injustice.

Jeffers follows up on Haslanger’s discussion with a defense of cultural constructionism. Cultural accounts of race have received comparatively little attention in analytic philosophy of race and are sometimes dismissed as conflating ethnicity and race. If we talk about culturally distinct groups such as “Thai,” “Tibetan,” “Turk,” or “Tutsi,” we identify ethnic groups. If we identify racialized groups such as “Asian,” “Black,” or “White,” we talk about heterogeneous populations without unified cultural characteristics. Based on careful reading of Africana and African philosophy from Du Bois to Gyekye, Jeffers demonstrates that such a dismissal is too quick. Cultural identities can be located not only at ethnic (e.g., an Afro-Cuban identifying as Latina) but also at racial (e.g., an Afro-Cuban identifying as Black) levels. As Jeffers spells out in detail, categories such as *black culture* can serve both epistemic and political goals. Recognition of ethnic cultural diversity in Africa, for example, remains compatible with cultural patterns of historically grown interethnic relations and shared experiences of European colonialism. Furthermore, Jeffers appeals to examples such as black-focused education to demonstrate that cultural conceptualizations of race can also mobilize political resources for confronting white cultural supremacy. While the result is not a purely cultural account of

race, Jeffers proposes to acknowledge cultural difference as equally important as power differences in theorizing race (65).

Spencer's chapter moves the debate from social to biological accounts of race. There is a broad consensus that human races do not exist in the sense of biological subspecies or traditional biological essences. However, Spencer develops an elegant argument according to which races may still be biologically real in a more modest sense. His argument brings together claims about the meaning of *race* and about human population structure. First, Spencer argues that US race talk can be understood in terms of Office of Management and Budget distinctions between five racial groups (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White). Second, Spencer argues that these five racial groups can be identified with continental genetic clusters that have been postulated in human population genetics. This identity thesis does not imply that *race* is as deep or explanatory relevant as *subspecies*. However, Spencer concludes that races are real enough to be detected by geneticists and that the rejection of biological racial realism has been based on unreasonably high standards such as independence of human interests or the status of *race* as a fundamental category for human population genetics (94).

After three realist accounts of race, Glasgow is tasked with casting doubt on the very existence of races. His discussion departs from a simple but effective "mismatch strategy." For example, imagine someone arguing for the reality of races by pointing out the reality of furniture. This would be absurd, as there is an obvious mismatch between what we mean with race and furniture (116). According to Glasgow, a milder version of this mismatch affects realist accounts of race. Biologists may successfully distinguish populations on the basis of genealogical or genetic criteria, and sociologists may identify groups on the basis of social stratification or cultural traditions. However, such scientifically credible populations literally look different from races, as the ordinary concept of race requires visually distinct features. For example, population geneticists have distinguished human populations on the basis of historical migration patterns, but such populations simply do not match distinctions of the ordinary concept of race that relies on visible biological traits such as distinct skin colors. Even if this mismatch strategy undermines the identification of races with scientific kinds, Glasgow leaves room for a realism about races as more basic kinds. Ordinary ontologies include many entities that do not feature in scientific ontologies (e.g., "stuff around trees" [138]) but still identify real features in the world. If races are real, they are real only in this basic sense of identifying superficial visible traits that are real even if they lack sufficient depth to be of scientific importance.

The four opening chapters provide an impressively accessible introduction to a highly complex debate by integrating biological, linguistic, and sociological evidence and combining it with careful philosophical analysis. The clarity of the individual chapters and their thoughtful arrangement make

What Is Race? a timely synthesis of current philosophical debates and an ideal introduction for a wider North American audience including philosophy students. The qualifier “North American” is necessary, as the book (with the exception of some of Jeffers’s insightful remarks) largely brackets the rest of the world for the “purposes of our discussion” (16). For example, Haslanger’s discussion introduces a notion of *race_{us}* (with the implication “us = US Americans”), and Spencer’s argument for biological realism is grounded in the categories of the Office of Management and Budget. This limitation is especially concerning when philosophy of race comes with the ambition of “critical theory” (7–8) while excluding the vast majority (and the most marginalized) of the world’s racialized people and most cases of racialized violence from Rohingya refugee camps to Brazilian favelas to Qatari construction sites. That being said, systematic exclusion of the “rest of the world” is not a unique limitation of this book but a more general limitation of current debates about the metaphysics of race. The book provides an outstanding synthesis of these debates and arguably the best book-length introduction.

Furthermore, the second part of the book develops a discussion between the authors that provides rich resources not only for students but also for researchers. By making the case for four competing theories, the book raises thorny methodological questions about the current state and the future of metaphysics of race. The initial setup of metaphysical choices is straightforward enough: Haslanger, race is political; Jeffers, race is cultural; Spencer, race is biological; Glasgow, race is not real. However, the authors of the book are far too reflective to suggest that metaphysics of race reduces to a choice between these four theories. First, there are clearly more than four options. For example, Jeffers proposes to integrate political and cultural constructionism and thereby illustrates the possibility of hybrid theories of race that combine features of the four presented theories. Glasgow actually develops two theories of race by presenting the readers with a choice between anti-realism and basic realism.

Furthermore, difficult questions arise regarding not only the number but also the character of metaphysical choices. Should we assume that only one of the presented theories is correct and that philosophers just have to figure out which one? The discussions in the second half of the book leave doubt that metaphysics of race is about such a simple choice. Haslanger points out that each of the “earlier chapters captures something important” and asks “Do we have to decide between them?” (150). Spencer suggests a negative answer to this question by proposing what he calls “radical pluralism” (211). According to Spencer, there simply is no “single dominant meaning of *race* among (at least) American English speakers” (211), and different metaphysical positions will therefore capture relevant specifications in different contexts.

Pluralism is an attractive and maybe unavoidable response to the complex metaphysical landscape that is presented in the first part of the book. For philosophers of science, it is a familiar response, as it corresponds with established

pluralist accounts of contested categories such as *species*, *mental disorder*, or *sex* in other areas of scientific practice. While some authors (including me previously) have embraced pluralism as a deflationist remedy for metaphysical controversies about the reality of race, the material of the book is too rich to allow a simple deflationist cure. Pluralism may deflate the generic question of the title of the book—*What Is Race?*—but it also creates space for more nuanced debates about the nature of racial phenomena within more specific contexts. For philosophers of science, such debates provide ample opportunities to connect metaphysical debates with the complex details of scientific practice from genomics and biomedicine to cultural anthropology and educational sciences.

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