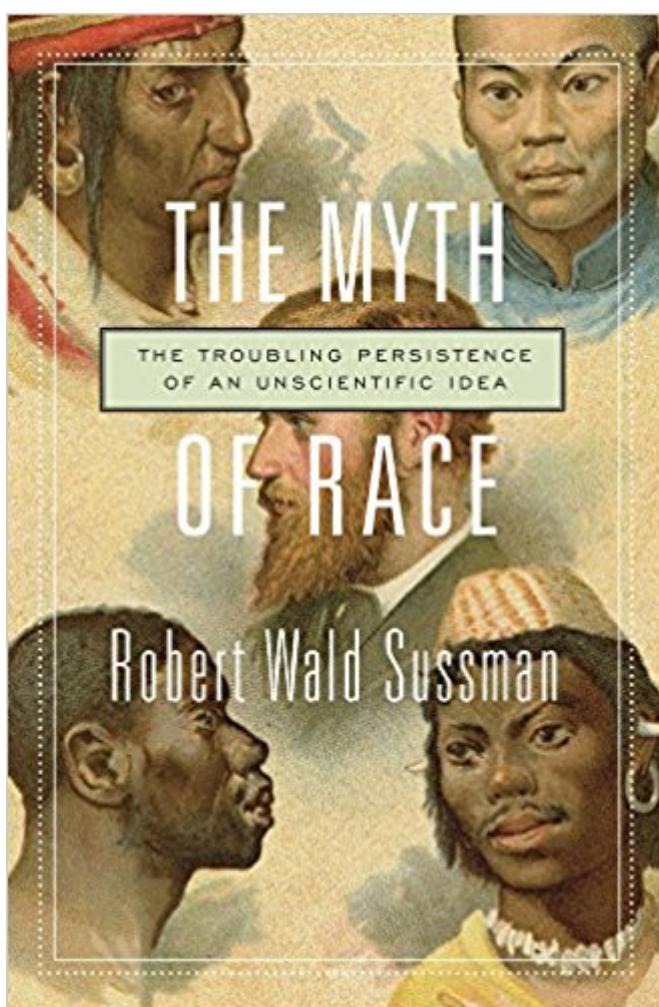


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# The Myth Of Race: The Troubling Persistence Of An Unscientific Idea



## Synopsis

Although eugenics is now widely discredited, some groups and individuals claim a new scientific basis for old racist assumptions. Pondering the continuing influence of racist research and thought, despite all evidence to the contrary, Robert Sussman explains why—when it comes to race—too many people still mistake bigotry for science.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Not only is this book a significant contribution to the view of race and racism in traditional four-field anthropology in the U.S., but it is also important to the understanding of global notions of contemporary racism. The Myth of Race encourages us to understand where stereotypes and misinformation fit in our consideration of whether and how notions of biological race remain pervasive in today's discourse and policy. (Yolanda T. Moses Times Higher Education 2014-12-11) Explores how the faulty concept of race embedded in our culture affects where we live, go to school and work. It influences our choice in friends and our treatment in the healthcare and justice systems. (Jeff Adachi San Francisco Examiner 2016-04-21) Sussman does a masterful job of tracing racist thought in western Europe and the U.S. from 15th-century polygenics through the eugenics of the 20th century to the continued racism and anti-immigration stances of today's radical Right. Although the racists at whom Sussman directs his message are unlikely to read it or to credit it if they do, this book should be in every library, from high school through public to university, in hopes that it will affect some minds before they become

completely shuttered by prejudice. (L. L. Johnson Choice 2015-04-01)The idea of race, writes the author, is a cultural rather than biological reality. Tribes always believed that strangers were subhuman, but they could overcome their inferiority by joining the tribeâ€”e.g., converting to Christianity or adopting Roman citizenshipâ€”Today, since racism is politically incorrect, Sussman maintains, supporters have migrated en masse to the anti-immigration movementâ€”Sussman delivers a lucidly written, eye-opening account of a nasty sociological battle that the good guys have been winning for a century without eliminating a very persistent enemy. (Kirkus Reviews 2014-08-15)Sussman, an anthropology professor at Washington University in St. Louis, explores and explodes the concept of race. He contends that, in the face of a longstanding scientific consensus that race possesses no biological basis, many people still mistakenly believe that traits like aggression, intelligence, and generosity can be traced to it. Noting that racial distinctions between humans have no biological basis is not new, Sussman makes his contribution by exposing the ways that academic “science” is invoked to authorize an outmoded concept. He traces the history of ideas about race, moving briskly from the Spanish Inquisition to Linnaeus and Kant, and offering a detailed discussion of eugenics. Lest readers imagine this is all in the distant past, Sussman devotes his last three chapters to the funding mechanisms that keep racist research alive today. He shows that “science” has been used in efforts to overturn civil rights legislation, and he examines the ways racist discourse has become intertwined with immigration policy. This book, which is both provocative and commonsensical, will be useful to scholars, but may also spark a broader conversation. (Publishers Weekly 2014-08-25)Robert Sussman’s penetrating study of the major figures who constructed concepts of race lays bare the personal biases, enmity, and corruption that influenced the intellectuals and politicians who framed modern industrialized societies. It also reveals unexpected heroes whose clear-minded insights into human diversity presaged our modern understanding. The Myth of Race is a suspense-filled and richly scholarly tour de force. (Nina G. Jablonski, Evan Pugh Professor of Anthropology, Pennsylvania State University)What is most remarkable is how Sussman manages to tie in past attitudes toward race with ongoing political developments. He demonstrates a seamless continuity of current attitudes with past ones in a way I have not seen attempted elsewhere, and in my view he succeeds brilliantly: the final chapters, in particular, make chilling reading. This is a book written straight from the heart, and it reads that way. (Ian Tattersall, author of *Race? Debunking a Scientific Myth*) --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Robert Wald Sussman was Professor of Physical Anthropology at Washington University in St.

Louis.

Well researched. He explains the origins of misunderstood terms like 'eugenics and 'polygenic' theories. Reads easily and yet full of good scientific research. Highly recommended especially for those who've been inculcated by the popular media to believe in the evolutionary origins of race.

Excellent read!

Interesting book

Sussman has done an outstanding job of tracing race and racism from the Spanish Inquisition to the 21st century. Having fought the battles against "scientific" racism as an editor of the American Anthropologist, Sussman brings a long career as well as personal knowledge to the dangerous history of racism in America. Very well written and organized.

A thorough, illuminating discussion of a subject which is usually hindered and/or obscured by tribal allegiances based on color. An honest unapologetic appraisal of an idea that has outlived its effectiveness for those who would rely on the religion of race supremacy to negotiate this modern world. It also reaffirms the brotherhood of mankind and does injury to one of the ideas that divide us from one another. I enjoyed and was instructed by this work and recommend it highly.

For those who say "race is obvious. First, the definition of race has changed over time, it is not static. If something is obvious, it will have consistency over time. The definition also varies across cultures. Again, it should be consistent. I do an exercise with my sociology class: Very short version. I wind up dividing them by "obvious" but characteristics hard to see at a distance: earlobe shape (dangly vs straight into jaw line), ring vs forefinger length, ability roll your tongue lengthwise, and some other traits just as equally genetic as skin color, or shape of nose, whatever. Any one of these traits and a host of other traits could be used to define us as a race. The dangly earlobe, tongue-roller, longer ring-finger people could be considered superior to those whose earlobes do not dangle. And of course they should be superior, because I am one of that race. We are superior to everyone else, don't you know? All of what we consider to be racial truth is a crock.

For anyone concerned with how right wing, tea party advocates get their ideas, "The Myth of Race

..." is a must read. This book systematically takes the reader through the ages, specifically from the fifteenth century to today, debunking persons of power emphasizing color as the determinant factor in race and intelligence. Special emphasis is given that human species contain only one race and that only culture and environment determine color and life style.

Every teacher and every student should be exposed to the facts in this book. It is time to give up the myth of race and to start raising a generation of people who know the truth. This isn't about a belief; it's about the truth.

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