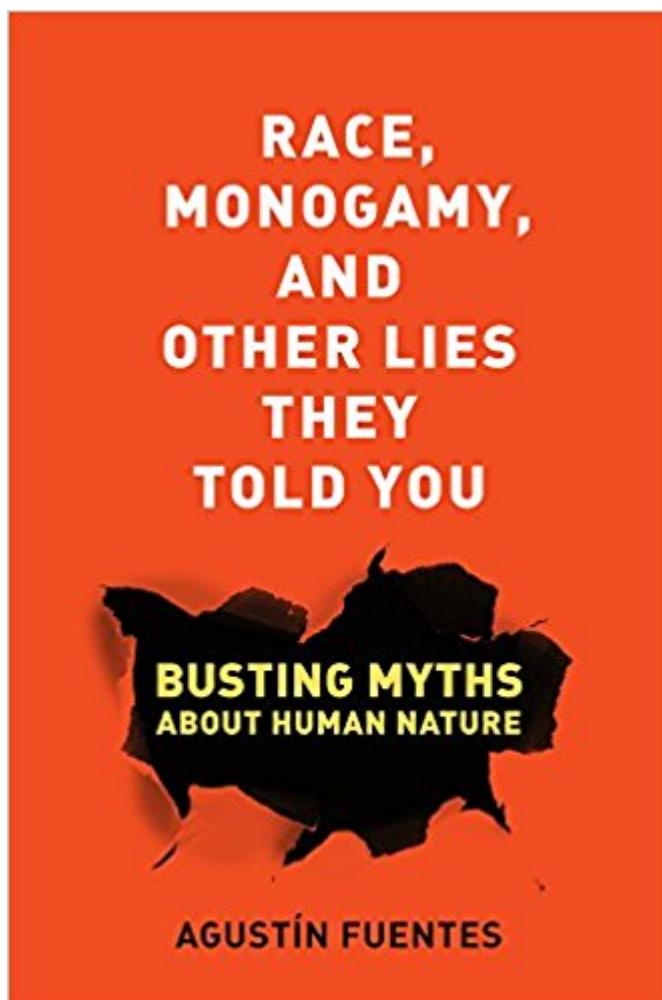


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# Race, Monogamy, And Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths About Human Nature



## **Synopsis**

There are three major myths of human nature: humans are divided into biological races; humans are naturally aggressive; men and women are truly different in behavior, desires, and wiring. In an engaging and wide-ranging narrative AgustÃfÃ-n Fuentes counters these pervasive and pernicious myths about human behavior. Tackling misconceptions about what race, aggression, and sex really mean for humans, Fuentes incorporates an accessible understanding of culture, genetics, and evolution requiring us to dispose of notions of "nature or nurture." Presenting scientific evidence from diverse fields, including anthropology, biology, and psychology, Fuentes devises a myth-busting toolkit to dismantle persistent fallacies about the validity of biological races, the innateness of aggression and violence, and the nature of monogamy and differences between the sexes. A final chapter plus an appendix provide a set of take-home points on how readers can myth-bust on their own. Accessible, compelling, and original, this book is a rich and nuanced account of how nature, culture, experience, and choice interact to influence human behavior.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"If you are willing to enhance your worldview by sleuthing to discover "who we are and why we do what we do," *Race, Monogamy, and Other Lies They Told You* is for you."-Science "This book is a must for anyone looking to explore where the lines of human nature and artificial class structure are, and where Fuentes says they've been artificially created."--Charleston Post & Courier "Fuentes deserves praise for and success with this book. The myth-busting toolkit, which is essentially a pattern of questioning, is a wonderful device. . . . Fuentes is not just informing, he is teaching

readers how to think critically."--Washington Independent Review of Books"Where these myths come from, and how to bust them, is the basis of this lively, thoughtful book. Fuentes declares himself on neither side of the debate...Instead he's firmly on team logic." -The Boston Globe"In this compelling bit of pop science, Fuentes, professor of anthropology at Notre Dame, asks readers to throw out their preconceptions about what it means to be a human."--Publishers Weekly"...a provocative text for both novices to the field of biological anthropology and seasoned professionals....At the core of Fuentes' argument is the relationship between the real world complexities of biocultural systems and the reality of reductionist, often misguided, commonly held understandings of such systems" Adam Van Arsdale American Journal of Physical Anthropology 152(1) "The author masterly conveys his knowledge in an informative way. . . . If you are willing to enhance your worldview by sleuthing to discover who we are and why we do what we do, " Race, Monogamy, and Other Lies They Told You is for you. Whether you agree with Fuentes or not, it will at least engage your critical thinking skills and encourage you to be a more active and discerning consumer of information." (Science (AAAS) 2012-08-03) "This book is a must for anyone looking to explore where the lines of human nature and artificial class structure are, and where Fuentes says they've been artificially created." (Charleston Post & Courier 2012-08-05) "Accessible, compelling, and original, this book is a rich and nuanced account of how nature, culture, experience, and choice interact to influence human behavior." (Ian Paulsen Birdbooker Report/The Guardian 2012-07-15) "Recommended." (J. Stauder, University of Massachusetts) "Dartmouth Choice 2012-11-20" "Fuentes dismantles persistent fallacies about the validity of biological races, innateness of aggression, nature of monogamy and differences between sexes." (Living Anthropologically 2012-10-30) "Useful. . . . [Fuentes] debunks some popular misconceptions about evolutionary change and provides a basic primer on evolutionary theory." (Joan C. Stevenson, Western Washington University American Jnl Of Human Biology 2013-04-11) "Engaging. . . . Fuentes' work goes a long way toward burying some of the most pervasive myths about human beings." (Stefano B. Longo and Nicholas Malone Monthly Review 2013-04-16)

Unlike advocates who promote one-cause-fits-all explanations for human behavior, Fuentes appreciates the array of influences that make us human. This book is guaranteed to give the reader a more nuanced view of who we are, and why we do what we do." (Joel Best, author

of Everyoneâ€”as a Winner and Damned Lies and Statistics; AgustÃn Fuentes has established himself as an original and authoritative voice for the study of human origins. While interrogating the narrative of where we came from, the domain of both science and mythology, he explains scientific subtleties with grace and ease and successfully guides us through a confrontation with our bio-cultural nature.â€”; Jonathan Marks, author of *What it Means to be 98% Chimpanzee*; Fuentes brings together an enormous array of information from diverse fields to counter some of the most pervasive myths about human nature in our society.â€”; Karen B. Strier, author of *Primate Behavioral Ecology*; It is about time that an anthropologist discusses these pervasive myths of human nature and shows them to be just that: myths. Using data from across anthropology and debunking popular writings that do not account for all of the relevant literature, Fuentes does an exceptional job in deconstructing many commonly held beliefs concerning human behavior.â€”; Robert W. Sussman, coauthor of *Man the Hunted*; Fuentes challenges us to undertake the most fundamental of self-help programs and free ourselves of harmful misconceptions about race, aggression, and sex. By approaching the study of human nature through the lens of evolution, he has produced an illuminating, refreshing, and uplifting view of humanity that is both a superb history of our species and a manual for our future.â€”; Nina G. Jablonski, author of *Skin and Living Color*

Had to purchase this for Anthropology but enjoyed reading it. A lot of good information about common myths

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AgustÃn Fuentes offers a take down of conventional thinking on a number of topics. If you like books that challenge conventional "wisdom" then this book is for you. I don't understand sociology to any great extent, and as a bonus Fuentes offers the reader a primer in examining culture â€”from the outsideâ€” as much as is possible. The fact that every human in the planet is raised in a cultureâ€” makes it impossible for any person to be completely unbiased. I thought I would be most interested in the â€”bustingâ€” of monogamy, but Fuentesâ€” take down of our artificial racial divide is the thing that most stuck with me at the end of this book. Humans tend to view race as a very large, real difference between human beings, but this book pokes serious holes in that assessment. Fuentes shows that race is a minor, superficial difference between humans.

This analysis alone is worth the price of the book. I also felt that religion was needled a bit in this book, if often incidentally in several cases. I read this book as part of a Freethinking book club, and it generated a lot of passion and discussion in the membership. Worth the read.

An interesting read for college.

For many years, influential scientists have been stepping outside of academia to remind the public that they do not need college degrees to effectively scrutinize the myths, legends, dogmas, and conspiracy theories perpetuated by pop culture. Published in 1981, *Mismeasure of Man*, by evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould, showed us how a popular misconception about the relationship between race and intelligence was made worse by scientists with a priori knowledge and a defective version of the scientific method. In 1995, astrophysicist Carl Sagan published *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark* in which he gives readers the "Baloney Detection Kit," - now famous in secular humanist communities - and uses it to dismantle claims about UFOs and alien abductions. In 2011, biologist Richard Dawkins published *The Magic of Reality: How We Know What's Really True*, an incredible book for the public that explains how mythological cosmologies are supplanted over time by advances in scientific knowledge. Recently, in this spirit of setting the record straight, Agustín Fuentes has made an anthropological contribution with *Race, Monogamy, and Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths About Human Nature*. And who better to discuss the life-cycle of a myth than an anthropologist? In *Race, Monogamy, and other Lies*, Fuentes takes on what he considers to be the three major myths about humans: biological race, human aggression, and that men and women are wired differently. The first matter of Fuentes' deconstruction revolves around his rejection of the "nature-nurture" dichotomy. Fuentes supposes that humanity is, as he coins, "naturenurtural"

An excellent read. Keep your mind open and remember: A truthful opinion is not always the truth and the truth looks different from every side of the argument.... interesting

This is a great book for introductory anthropology students - it explains sensitive matters clearly and with passion. If I was starting out to build a new introduction to anthropology course, I might build it around this book. Exceptional.

I absolutely love this book, as a therapist it gives me a lot to think about and share with my clients,

this book also represents a shift in perspectives of how we see ourselves and our culture and I am thankful for it!

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