



# Race, Monogamy, and Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths about Human Nature

By Agustín Fuentes

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**Race, Monogamy, and Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths about Human Nature** By Agustín Fuentes

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 Agustín 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.

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## **Race, Monogamy, and Other Lies They Told You: Busting Myths about Human Nature** By Agustín Fuentes **Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"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’s 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)

#### From the Inside Flap

“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 *Everyone’s a Winner* and *Damned Lies and Statistics*

“Agustín 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.”—Jonathan Marks, author of *What it Means to be 98% Chimpzee*

“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.”—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.”—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.”—Nina G. Jablonski, author of *Skin and Living Color*

#### About the Author

**Agustín Fuentes** is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Notre Dame. He is the author of *Evolution of Human Behavior*, *Biological Anthropology: Concepts and Connections* and *Core Concepts in Biological Anthropology*.

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