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Race and Culture: A World View. Thomas Sowell.

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and he has masterfully excavated the assumptions and ideologies which underly their work.

This book is a collection of previously published articles by Lyman dealing with a diverse range of topics. In the book's introduction, the author attempts to explicate a unifying theme for the material by focusing on the ongoing debate between assimilationists and pluralists who view ethnic relations policy from very different perspectives. While much of the material touches on this issue, the individual chapters are self-sufficient and suggest that other themes are equally important in understanding the author's contribution.

One of these is slavery. Indeed, Lyman's analyses of contemporary ethnic issues reveals the extent to which the legacy of slavery still influences popular thinking as well as social policy in the United States. As the author reveals, the legitimation of slavery required the institutionalization of erroneous beliefs about those who were enslaved. These beliefs continue to have a powerful impact on ethnic relations today.

For example, the idea that Africans are by nature slothful is still widespread and permeates popular beliefs about race, work, poverty and welfare. This idea was originally used to justify the enslavement of Africans. In slave society, slavery was not regarded as oppression but as a means of offering salvation from the sin of sloth. By forcing slaves to work, it was believed that slave owners were inculcating their slaves with virtuous qualities and redeeming them from degeneracy. Lyman shows how this belief continues to hold currency today. For example, he notes how the writing of Lawrence Mead on poverty and income support recapitulates this idea. The popularity of Mead's writing with those who believe that coerced labor offers a useful mechanism for welfare reform is directly derived from archaic beliefs about sloth and slavery.

Similarly profound ideas permeate the other chapters of this excellent collection. It should be read not only by academics but by all who work in the field of race relations today.

Thomas Sowell, *Race and Culture: A World View*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. \$24 hardcover.

The declared intention of this book is to demolish what the author describes as the many 'myths' about race and ethnic issues

which have been promulgated by so-called social scientists over the years. Not surprisingly, the author is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. It is also not surprising that his work should reflect current ideological trends in the way ethnic relations are interpreted.

Methodologically, the basis for Sowell's iconoclasm is comparative analysis. Through his global travels, meetings with officials in many countries and extensive reading of historical and other sources, the author claims that widely accepted social science beliefs about race in the United States can be refuted. Indeed, the author suggests that social science wisdom on the subject is normative rather than scientific. Comparative research reveals the falsity of many scientific findings and demonstrates the ideological nature of social science investigation into racial issues.

The book's chapters are wide ranging and cover issues such as migration, slavery, economic behavior, intelligence and political participation. The author claims that the normative consequences of slavery, subjugation and imperialism were not as negative as social scientists suggest. Despite the fact that human history is littered with examples of oppression and brutality, some racial groups have been able to transcend their disadvantage and to prosper and contribute to social progress. They have done so despite the claims of social scientists that slavery, political exclusion and limited opportunities mitigate against advance. Sowell believes that the key to prosperity and progress is not to be found in affirmative action or the special treatment of minorities but in the extent to which minorities have institutionalized industrious attitudes and behaviors. This capacity for industriousness, the author claims, explains the relative success of certain ethnic groups far more effectively than social science explanations that focus on discrimination, racism, educational opportunity and political involvement. The answer to the nation's racial problems lies in inculcating industrious and productive skills among its minorities.

Predictably, this book has been well received by conservatives and the popular media. Indeed, it is in many ways an affirmation of popular attitudes rather than a refutation of social science research. Nevertheless, it deserves to be taken seriously and subjected to rigorous debate.