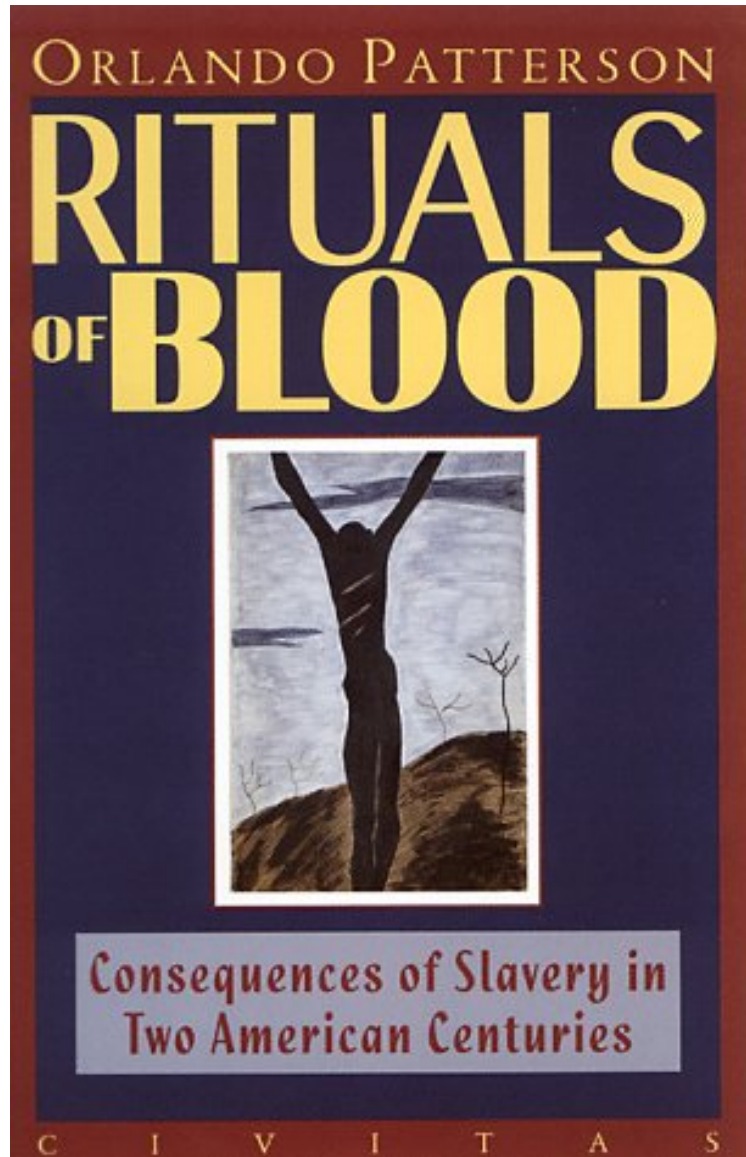


Rituals Of Blood: Consequences Of Slavery In Two American Centuries (Frontiers of science)

Orlando Patterson

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Orlando Patterson : Rituals Of Blood: Consequences Of Slavery In Two American Centuries (Frontiers of science) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rituals Of Blood: Consequences Of Slavery In Two American Centuries (Frontiers of science):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Arrived in good shape By Denee I am happy with this purchase. I

bought for my husband and he has learned a lot. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Extraordinary and Unique By Mark Levine Patterson has successfully taken on so many "big" issues in his lifetime that to recommend him for his contemporary social analysis might seem like damning him with faint praise. That is hardly my intent, but I would like to suggest to readers unfamiliar with his work and perhaps not up to the challenge of his cosmically-dimensioned books on Freedom, Slavery, and Social Death that he is a one-of-a-kind social commentator and provocateur as well. His singular profession as a historical sociologist (or sociological historian) allow him access to statistics that illuminate America's racial history in a way nobody else I know has ever accomplished. Of course, he CHOSE those statistics, an act of genius in itself, but the questions he asks of them and his analysis of the answers makes him, in my opinion, indispensable reading. He has somewhere in this book or another (I've read nearly all) cited the statistic that, when asked what percentage of the American population is African American, both white and black Americans over-estimate the actuality by a multiple of between 3 and 4. That is an astounding stat, and explains so much about our recent world, much of which Patterson takes on, but the balance of which should give food-for-thought to the rest of us. And that is only one, relatively incidental, issue the man takes on. Bravo to Patterson for ALL his work! 13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A Dazzling Display of Sociological Prowess By Herbert L Calhoun This is sociological analysis of a very high order. However, the best review of these three analytic essays, appear in the introduction to the book. Nothing I, or anyone, could say can improve on that. However it is important to note a few things about the book. Professor Patterson, an ex-Marxist turned Harvard Sociology Professor is nothing if not daring, brave, almost intrepid. He is fearless in choosing as his topic one of sociology's most pressing and most difficult problems: getting at the roots of the problem of race in America. He performs a dangerous high-wire act (without a net) in this three-ring sociological circus and does so with commitment, grace and aplomb. This book is an obvious labor of love for a professional whose job is to advance the frontiers and boundaries of his profession, and in order to do that one must be prepared to take some risks, and in this volume, Dr. Patterson does so in scads. He takes methodological risks, logical risks, political risks, professional risks, and most of all theoretical risks. That he does not always succeed - and indeed at times crashes and burns - is almost beside the point. In the end you know that you have been on an exhilarating ride that is worth far more than the few flaws in the book. In fact it is almost embarrassing to attempt to critique such elegant analyses because they are such good examples of what is needed; because there are just too many sociological trails that need blazing; because the boundaries of sociological analysis needs more of this kind of testing; and because all of the social sciences need more pioneers of Dr. Patterson's caliber. Having said that it must also be said that the author has committed at least one category one error in the first essay. In it he uses as his interpretive database, the anecdotal evidence (mostly hearsay) of Black feminist writers and victims, (almost always one and the same) of alleged black male perfidy as the foundation of his analysis. Then this theme is repeated and propagated throughout the various pieces. Doing this is of course a methodologically elementary "no-no," especially when such data is not balanced or offset by an equal an opposite amount of similar data from the black male side of the equation. Black feminist views are taken as givens and as ground truth, and thus go unexamined and unchallenged. Used in this way they become a great foil in relieving pressures of having to implicate the larger culture of any responsibility for racism. (In this restricted way America's racism reduces to a kind of intramural sport, an intra-black thing.) The problem with relying on such a questionable data source is that all biases remain in complete alignment with those of the larger black male hating American society. When coupled with the hidden and unacknowledged variable of "white normality" which serves, de facto, as the sole context for these analyses, the results are predictable and all but self-fulfilling. For all its virtues, the scent of tautology hangs heavily in the air over the first essay. But all of this should not have been a conundrum for the analysis. It all can be explained simply: It points to a much larger and deeper flaw of most racial analyses conducted in the U.S. The name of the game is not to follow the data and hypotheses wherever they may lead, (because we know where that trail always ends), but one of "who is to be exonerated of responsibility for America's racial problems, first?" Invariably, no matter how complex and sophisticated the rationalization and explanations may appear, the person left holding the bag is always the favorite targets of America's racist society. Put differently, all roads will invariably lead back to the black male as being both the victim and the culprit of American society. And most of all, he will be charged with the responsibility for creating the circumstances for his own failed conditions. From this vantage point, methodologically, the problem of the black male is unconnected to any existing structures. It is completely detached and thus is sui generis. But all this "analytic chasing of ones own tail" does is point to another deeper unexamined level of the problem: the psycho-social and sexual dimensions of racism in American culture. It is only at this level that the leitmotifs of Professor Patterson's analyses -- violence, religion, sex, and myths based almost exclusively on primitive fears - meet and come into focus. Too bad Dr. Patterson's intrepidity did not move him enough to stumble over this fence just once. Unless this level is penetrated, everything else is just so much academic window dressing. One cannot analyze race in America without peeping behind the screen of white normality, any more than one can analyze German hatred of the Jews by blaming Adolph Hitler. Hatred does not just inhere in racist cultures it defines them and they are in turn defined by it. Germans massacred six million Jews not because of a gang of criminals running the government but because the German population by its collective acquiescence, demanded it. Just as American culture is anti-Black, pre war German culture

was anti-Jewish through and through. Everyone knew it but preferred to censor their collective brain and remained in denial about this fact until it was too late. The over-arching theme that remains unstated in these analyses is that the same is occurring in America with respect to blacks. In America, it is okay to call a spade a spade so long as it does not implicate the collective white majority in seeking, at all costs, to maintain their privileges, advantages, and prerogatives of being white. These are the unfortunate "givens" of American society. If there is a great Ku Klux Klan in the sky, it is existential, not historical. It is called the passive-aggressive collective American conscience. What professor Patterson has done here is heroic, magical, and exquisite craftsmanship. This book will shake your soul at its foundation. Buy this book and learn what America needs to do about its race problem. Five stars.

In the first essay, Patterson analyzes the very latest survey data to delineate the different attitudes, behaviors, and circumstances of Afro-American men and women, dissecting both the external and internal causes for the great disparities he finds. In the second essay, Patterson focuses on the lynching of Afro-American boys and men during the decades after Reconstruction, particularly on the substantial number of cases that constituted apparent ritual human sacrifice. As no one has done before, Patterson reveals how the complex interplay between Christian sacrificial symbolism and the deep recesses of post-bellum Southern culture resulted in some of the most shameful, barbaric events in American history. The third essay brings us into the late twentieth century, with an investigation of the various images of Afro-American men portrayed by the media. From the demigod (Michael Jordan) to the demon (Colin Ferguson) to the demigod-turned-demon (O. J. Simpson) and the crossers of racial and gender boundaries (Michael Jackson and Dennis Rodman) all contribute to the cultural complications of our contemporary society. *Rituals of Blood* advances Patterson's new model of ethnic relations that opens American society to a new and freer dialogue.

.com African Americans have triumphed over slavery and continue to fight the good fight against racism and segregation in America, but according to noted Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson, the battles have exacted a heavy price on Afro-American social relations. With pointed, precise, and often painful prose, Patterson outlines several areas of contention in the black community: combustible male-female relations, the destructive media images of African American males, and the horrible legacy of lynching and its parallel of religious sacrifice. His conclusions may be controversial for some, as were those of 1997's *The Ordeal of Integration*, but Patterson takes on the role of a doctor willing to endure the protests of his patient to lead him to good health. --Eugene Holley Jr. From *Kirkus* There are at least 95 good reasons, if there's one, why this is an immensely readable and eye-opening new work by Patterson. A Harvard sociologist, Patterson won the National Book Award in 1991 for *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*. The current volume is his second in a trilogy on race and the legacy of slavery that started with *Ordeal of Integration* (1997). In this work he offers three very different but linked essays on the obstacles still facing Afro-Americans at the end of the 20th century; he examines relations between Afro-American men and women, the cult of lynching as ritual sacrifice, and a portrait of the Afro-American male as a media figure. He succeeds in each essay not least because, whether writing of slavery or of the relatively short life span of the black male (64.9 years), he does not indulge in a kind of woe-is-me hand-wrenching that leaves both reader and writer in a strange state of paralysis. However grim the facts, he states them and moves on. Also he accepts but is unafraid to challenge authorities in other fields, whether it's Ralph Ellison or William Julius Wilson. Then again, he is an unabashed supporter of black radical feminists Michelle Wallace and Ntozake Shange. Indeed, unlike many social scientists, Patterson makes frequent forays into other disciplines if he feels it better explains his point. Finally, he is inclined to disturb and challenge African-American readers. Debunking, for example, the liberal assessment that Afro-Americans who have been lynched were all innocent, Patterson asserts that many of them were heroically guilty, notwithstanding the fact that many mistakes were made by the lynch mobs in sacrificing the wrong person. At another point he concludes that one of the byproducts of slavery is the high infidelity rate among black males (27 percent, as compared with 19 percent for white men). The latter may seem like a stretch. But what is problematic in Patterson is unfailingly provocative. -- Copyright 1999, *Kirkus Associates, LP*. All rights reserved. Orlando Patterson demonstrates that a first-rate scholar can still write for a nonacademic audience. -- *The New York Times Book*, Eric Foner