



The German Invention of Race (Sunny Series, Philosophy and Race)

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Illuminates the emergence of race as a central concept in philosophy and the social sciences.

In *The German Invention of Race*, historians, philosophers, and scholars in literary, cultural, and religious studies trace the origins of the concept of “race” to Enlightenment Germany and seek to understand the issues at work in creating a definition of race. The work introduces a significant connection to the history of race theory as contributors show that the language of race was deployed in contexts as apparently unrelated as hygiene; aesthetics; comparative linguistics; anthropology; debates over the status of science, theology, and philosophy; and Jewish emancipation.

The concept of race has no single point of origin, and has never operated within the constraints of a single definition. As the essays in this book trace the powerful resonances of the term in diverse contexts, both before and long after the invention of the scientific term around 1775, they help explain how this pseudoconcept could, in a few short decades, have become so powerful in so many fields of thought and practice. In addition, the essays show that the fateful rise of racial thinking in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was made possible not only by the establishment of physical anthropology as a field, but also by other disciplines and agendas linked by the enduring associations of the word “race.”

“This is a fascinating, truly pathbreaking collection that seeks to bring some order into the early history of German anthropology and to clarify how that discipline understood biological difference.” — *Monatshefte*

“In a manner which complements the ... chronological progression, the [chapters] also move from very abstract to much more concrete concerns. The latter shed light on the social, cultural, and political implications of the debates about race and, by adding a historical dimension, clearly demonstrate the broader relevance of the subject-matter under investigation for the formation of collective identities in German-speaking lands, and for the legitimization of political and cultural standpoints well beyond the period discussed in this book.” — *Modern Language Review*

“This volume brings together a diverse set of important essays in an area of scholarship that is only beginning to become well defined and developed in North America. It could eventually become something of a founding document for a very fruitful arena of cross-disciplinary scholarship.” — Jon Mark Mikkelsen, Missouri Western State University

Contributors include Tuska Benes, Robert Bernasconi, Michel Chaouli, Sara Eigen, Peter Fenves, Jonathan M. Hess, Mark Larrimore, Susan M. Shell, Han F. Vermeulen, George S. Williamson, and John Zammito.

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