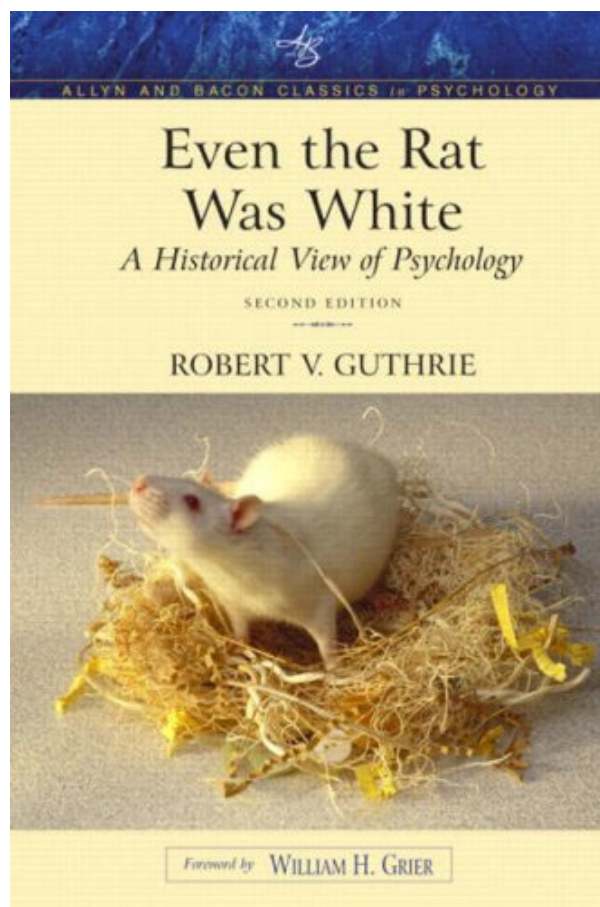
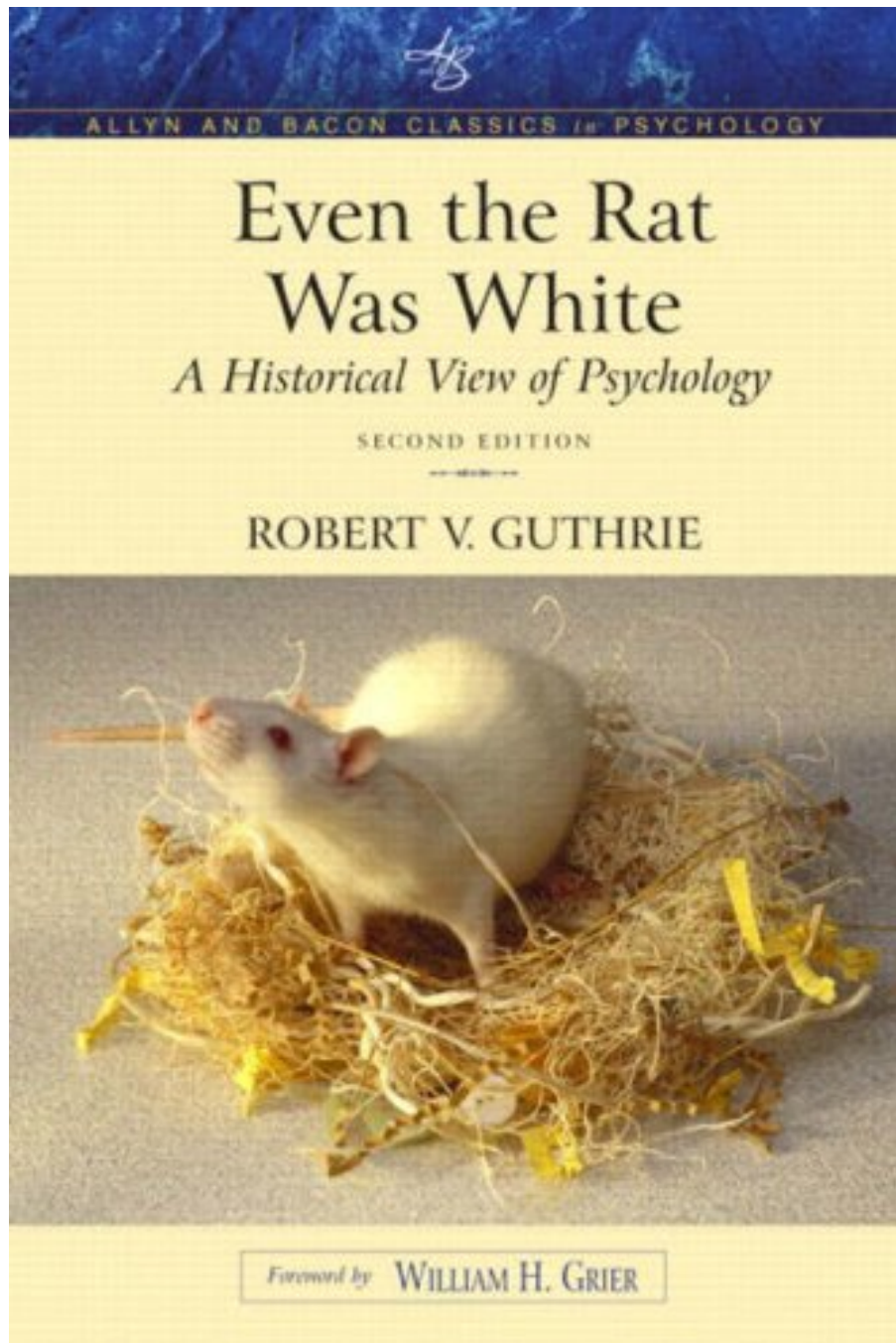


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HISTORICAL VIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY  
(ALLYN & BACON CLASSICS EDITION) (2ND  
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"Even The Rat Was White" views history from all perspectives in the quest for historical accuracy. Histories and other background materials are presented in detail concerning early African-American psychologists and their scientific contributions, as well as their problems, views, and concerns of the field of social psychology. Archival documents that are not often found in mainstream resources are uncovered through the use of journals and magazines, such as the *Journal of Black Psychology*, the *Journal of Negro Education*, and *Crisis*.

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Critique

By Aron D. Gerhart

Robert V. Guthrie's classic novel, *Even the Rat Was White: A Historical View of Psychology*, is an excellent historical document that views psychology from multiple perspectives. Guthrie cites many archival documents that are not found in typical, mainstream resources, which exposes students and educators alike to not only elusive but also informative material. It is an excellent source for informing and intriguing readers and inquiring minds about the impact that African-American psychologists have had on the field of psychology.

The first part, or section, of Guthrie's literary work focuses on the "scientific" measure of race and racial differences. From physical appearance (e.g., Shaxby and Bonnell's photometer) to mental aptitude (e.g., the

Stanford-Binet and Wechsler-Bellevue scales), there existed a myriad of measurement devices and instruments for measuring racial differences. Of course, the majority of these measurements indicated the racial inferiority of American minorities (viz., African-American inferiority). The spurious results were the product of three major factors: (a) experimenter expectancy, which was due, for example, to the previous research of eugenicists such as Francis Galton and Charles Davenport, (b) culturally-biased instruments or measures, and (c) suspicious statistical analyses (e.g., Charles Babbage noted the unethical practices of "trimming" and "cooking" data sets.).

As stated previously, the result of the measure of racial differences led to an assumption of minority inferiority. Even though much research has been conducted to invalidate and repudiate these claims (e.g., M. J. Mayo and Horace Mann Bond have produced literature in support of racial equality.), the segregation of ethnic groups, which was supported by prominent psychologists such as Henry Garrett, has existed in the past, and stereotypes and negative opinions about minorities continue to plague American society today. It is clear that not only the field of psychology but also society held beliefs about racial inferiority and/or superiority. As the title of Guthrie's book, *Even the Rat Was White*, indicates, this belief was even generalized to animals (in this case, rats). Ignoring the fact that characteristics such as intelligence are multifaceted variables that cannot be sufficiently measured with one test or instrument, research supporting the congenital abilities of animals (e.g., Robert Choate Tryon's "maze-bright" and "maze-dull" rats study) was generalized to humans. Just as the majority of researchers and theorists were White, which subsequently produced "White" theories, and measurement instruments were culturally biased in favor of European Americans, experimental rats were also white.

The second part of Guthrie's book enlightens the reader of the early trials and tribulations of African-American scholars. The author describes the systematic manner in which black scholars were denied the opportunity to study psychology, publish their work, and receive recognition and financial aid. He also pays tribute to many Black scholars by providing short bibliographies, which includes a list of contributions. Some of these scholars include Francis Cecil Sumner, the first African American to receive a PhD in psychology, and Joseph White, a founder of the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi).

This historical overview of many prominent, African-American psychologists was interesting and insightful. It enables the reader to develop an appreciation for the problems faced by Black scholars and discover important contributions such as Kenneth B. Clark's research on the detrimental effects of racial segregation, which eventually influenced the 1954 Supreme Court decision that required public schools to racially integrate their classrooms. Without this resource, one would encounter much obstacle in acquiring such information.

The final section of Guthrie's book is briefly discusses the implications of previous chapters. The author demonstrates that the "myth of mental measurement" and eugenicist philosophy (as demonstrated by William Schockley) continue to exist and stereotype. This is unfortunate; hopefully, society can learn from Guthrie's writings and subsequently make progress. In conclusion, the author states, "While at present it is difficult to justify the existence of a Black psychology, there is a theoretical basis for it." Hopefully, this book will not only advance the existence of Black psychology but also will serve as evidence of its existence, purpose, and need.

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

*Even the Rat was White: A brief review*

By M. Martin

Robert Guthrie's *Even the Rat was White*, was written from the historical perspective of African Americans and was designed to inform readers of the challenges African Americans faced and contributions African

Americans made against all odds in the psychological sciences. This brief review is aimed for the general reader and will succinctly cover topics discussed in the book.

*Even the Rat was White* is divided into three parts. The first part discusses and analyzes psychology and racial differences. The second part of the book presents influential African American psychologists, their struggles, and their contributions to the fields of psychology. The third and final part of the book is composed of conclusions and future directions. The first part of the book painted a detailed historical picture of the stereotyping of African Americans and how psychology did nothing to dismantle these ideas; it only perpetuated the obviously flawed stereotypes that kept African Americans as inferior individuals for hundreds of years. An example of this is IQ research, IQ tests, and IQ standardization. These tests are not culturally sensitive, are designed by middle-class whites for middle-class whites to excel on. The second part of the book provides biographies of several prominent African American psychologists giving detailed background on their upbringings and the adversities they had to overcome to receive their education and have their work taken seriously. Their contributions are also noted at the end of each biography. The final chapter summarizes the first two parts and draws the conclusion that although African Americans have fought and made immense progress in the plight for higher education and respect in the field of psychology, there are still several areas of psychology that fail to recognize that research conducted almost a century ago that guides psychological practice today has been refuted and still serves no other purpose but to enable an inequality between races.

Overall this book was an interesting read that provided an alternate history of psychology that is not normally discussed in most textbooks or most undergraduate psychology courses. *Even the Rat was White* brings to light the issues that are still being covered up today in psychological research and practice. As a graduate student in psychology, I would recommend that every psychology professional read this book. It will make you think twice about commonly employed practices in the professional setting such as IQ testing and research ethics.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Brief review of Guthrie's *Even the Rat was White*

By M. Jablonski

Robert V. Guthrie's *Even the Rat Was White* does a wonderful job of illuminating the often untold history of racism in psychology. It is integral for those entering this field to become well acquainted with the potential ramifications of allowing science to be utilized as a tool for discrimination. Guthrie provides numerous examples of this, including the misuse of intelligence testing as "proof" of racial inferiority. Under the guise of research, numerous anthropomorphic measurements were obtained and used to support what was viewed as the inherent inferiority of certain races.

Part II of the book focuses on psychology's increasingly important role in historically Black colleges, and provides information about the backgrounds and contributions of numerous notable African American psychologists. Overall, this work provides a frank discussion of some of the most egregious ethical missteps in the history of psychology. This is a valuable perspective that unfortunately is rarely mentioned in most textbooks, and serves as an important reminder of the importance of conducting ethical research as well as questioning the societal norms that are taken for granted.

In order to progress beyond the problems highlighted by Guthrie, I think this is a must read for those in any social science field. However, although this book does seem to be geared mainly towards those entering the field of psychology, it is detailed and well-written, making it an interesting read for anyone with a general interest in the history of racism.

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