

# The anatomy of scientific racism: racist responses to black athletic achievement...

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



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Racism has permeated almost each and every sphere of the western society. This includes politics, economic, academic among other spheres.

Arts and athletics, or the entertainment and sports spheres of the society have not been spared this racialism. It is against this backdrop that Miller B. Patrick, from Northeastern Illinois University's Department of History, writes the article that will be critiqued in this paper.

The article is titled The Anatomy of Scientific Racism: Racist Responses to Black Athletic Achievement, and was published in the Journal of Sport History, Volume 25, Issue Number 1, Spring 1998. The thirty two pages article, which takes the form of an essay, is to be found on pages 119 to 151 of the journal, and it is quite a long article.

In this article, Miller provides the reader with a central and arguable assertion and argument. This forms the thesis of the article, and the rest of the article is dedicated at providing arguments, factual or otherwise, aimed at supporting this thesis.

The article is mainly dedicated to criticizing scholars who creates a distinction between black performers and other racial groups from the white performers. These are writers such as John Martin and his John Martini Book of Dance, Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's The Bell Curve and Dinesh D'Souza's The End of Racism among others.

The thesis of this article is to be found on page 120, where Miller writes " indeed, by underscoring ' a minimum of tension' or ' a rich command of relaxation' among black performers, many white intellectuals like Martin

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surveyed an enormous distance between what has been studied, which those imagemakers exalted for a particular conciseness, cleverness, and formality, and what they believed to inhere and thus could disparage as free of flowing loose". It is a long thesis statement by any standards.

Miller makes several arguments to support his assertion that white scholars make erroneous conclusions when they compare athletics on the basis of their race.

Miller argues that when African American performers and black athletes try to compete within what he calls confines of Western aesthetic and agonistic traditions, they are likely to encounter many challenges. This includes both cultural and customary biases as well as discrimination. He refers to this as politicization of culture, and the white scholars are the ones responsible for this.

Miller is of the view that it is the white scholars that are responsible for impeding the success of black athletes and performers. When the black athletes succeed, this is translated in terms of their culture, where the white culture is always superior. Miller quotes scholars such as Charles Murray and Dinesh D'Souza, who he accuses of defending retrogressive practices such as slavery.

Miller asserts that white scholars regard African American as being inferior to the whites. This is for example when it comes to IQ scores between the two racial groups. The scholars go as far as to manipulate culture and ideologies when responding to success made by blacks. For example, when the black

artists perform exemplary, they are judged against European ideals or normative styles.

The thesis statement, the supporting arguments and the article in general have several weaknesses and arguments. As far as strengths are concerned, Miller refers extensively to other books and works of other scholars. As such, his arguments are grounded in evidence that exists in the field.

His arguments are also clear and concise, and ambiguity is kept at minimum. However, there are several weak points that threaten the credibility of this article. For example, Martin criticizes the works of other writers in the article as lacking scientific basis, while his article lacks the same.

For example, he is just synthesizing the works of other scholars, meaning that he lacks originality. There is no new knowledge created in this article. The article is also long and hard to comprehend. It can be regarded as a long essay. The 32 pages of the article are not broken into sections or subtitles, and this makes it hard for the reader to follow the arguments contained therein. However, when all things are taken into consideration, Miller's remains a significant article when it comes to understanding racialism in arts and sports.