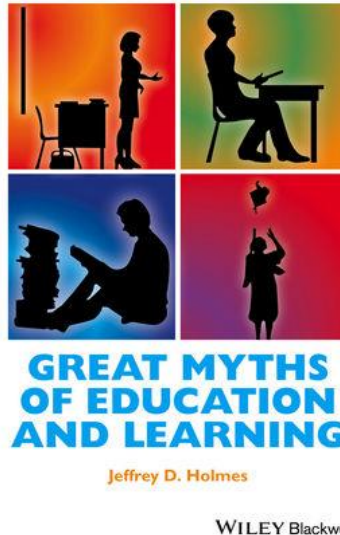


Alfonso E. Lizarzaburu

Paris, 13 August 2016

Great Myths of Education and Learning
Jeffrey D. HOLMES



HOLMES, Jeffrey D., *Great Myths of Education and Learning*, Malden, MA (USA)-Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, May 2016, pp. xii + 212 (The Great Myths of Psychology Series). Cf.:

<http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118709381.html>

https://www.amazon.com/dp/111870939X/ref=rdr_ext_tmb

https://www.amazon.com/Great-Myths-Education-Learning-Psychology/dp/111870939X#reader_111870939X

Description

Can standardized tests predict academic performance? Do PowerPoint presentations improve student learning? Do rewards always undermine student's intrinsic motivation? *Great Myths of Education and Learning* reviews the scientific research on a number of widely-held misconceptions pertaining to learning and education, including misconceptions regarding student characteristics, how students learn, and the validity of various methods of assessment. Using empirical evidence regarding how we learn and how we know if learning has taken place, the book unravels widely-held misconceptions, many of which affect teaching practices and administrative policies.

The author focuses on some of the most important and influential myths in this area, providing an in-depth examination of each one, with a comprehensive review of the evidence contradicting each belief.

To enhance compatibility with textbooks on educational psychology, topics covered include student characteristics related to learning, views of how the learning process works, and issues related to teaching techniques and testing.

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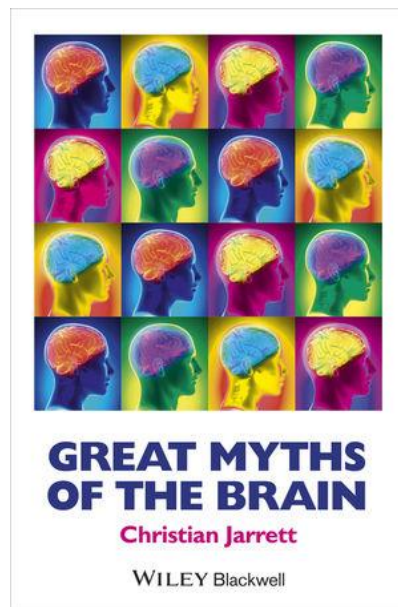
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Author Information

Jeffrey D. Holmes is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. He teaches courses on general psychology, testing and assessment, research methods, and controversial psychological issues. Dr. Holmes has published original research on racial attitudes as well as the teaching of psychology, and has published several book chapters on topics related to the importance of scientific thinking in understanding human behavior. He is the author of *Social Psychology: Student Handbook to Psychology* (2012).

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Great Myths of the Brain
Christian JARRET



JARRET, Christian, *Great Myths of the Brain*, Malden, MA (USA)-Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, pp. xiv + 334 (The Great Myths of Psychology Series). Cf.:

<http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1118312716.html>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/brain-myths>

https://www.amazon.com/dp/1118312716/ref=rdr_ext_tmb

https://www.amazon.com/dp/1118312716/ref=rdr_ext_tmb#reader_1118312716

The brain has never been subject to such intense scrutiny – barely a day passes without a newspaper splashing the results of the latest brain scan study purporting to reveal the neurological location of happiness, love, rage, or any number of human emotions.

Yet, for all of the gains in our understanding of brain function credited to scientific research, there is a growing body of hype and misinformation about how the brain works. *Great Myths of the Brain* presents a comprehensive examination of myths surrounding the function of the human brain.

Cognitive neuroscience expert Christian Jarrett takes on over 50 myths associated with brain function – from those based on falsehoods or partial truths to ones cloaked in scientific language.

Jarrett first explores general myths, such as the idea that we only use 10 percent of our brains, or that adults can't grow new brain cells. He then goes on to address a variety of more contemporary issues, including technological myths (can brain scans really read your mind?); structural myths, including the recent hype around mirror neurons; perceptual myths, including the idea that you perceive the world as it really is; and a variety of contemporary myths swirling around brain disorders – including epilepsy, autism, and dementia. Illuminating and insightful, *Great Myths of the Brain* takes some of the mystery out of the most mysterious and complex organ in the human body.

- Explores commonly-held myths of the brain through the lens of scientific research, backing up claims with studies and other evidence from the literature.
- Looks at enduring myths such as “Do we only use 10% of our brain?”, “Pregnant women lose their mind”, “Right-brained people are more creative” and many more.
- Delves into myths relating to specific brain disorders, including epilepsy, autism, dementia, and others.
- Written engagingly and accessibly for students and lay readers alike, providing a unique introduction to the study of the brain.
- Teaches readers how to spot neuro hype and neuro-nonsense claims in the media.

JARRET, Christian, *Grandes mitos del cerebro*, Barcelona: Biblioteca Buridán, Ediciones de Intervención Cultural, 2015, pp. 378. Cf.:

<http://noticiasdelaciencia.com/not/16666/grandes-mitos-del-cerebro-christian-jarrett/> ♦♦♦♦♦

<https://www.amazon.fr/Grandes-mitos-cerebro-Christian-Jarrett/dp/8416288518>

Si hay un órgano en el cuerpo humano, y también en el resto de los animales, que despierta un especial interés, ese es sin duda el cerebro. Las investigaciones neurológicas y psicológicas parecen no tener fin, y raro es el día que no podemos leer algún nuevo resultado científico al respecto. A pesar de todo, estamos también ante uno de los órganos más misteriosos, y que aún estamos muy lejos de comprender en su totalidad. Tanto es así que, con el paso del tiempo, se ha generado a su alrededor una serie de informaciones que distan mucho de ser seguras o correctas.

De hecho, el cerebro protagoniza su propia mitología. Son muchas las afirmaciones sobre él que es necesario desmentir, y que a lo largo de la historia han dado pie a verdaderas barbaridades, como la trepanación del cráneo para dejar escapar a unos supuestos “malos espíritus”. Christian Jarrett, neurocientífico cognitivo, ha reunido en este volumen los 41 mitos más curiosos sobre el cerebro, tanto antiguos como modernos, falsedades obvias y medias verdades, e incluso errores científicos, y los ha expuesto con toda claridad ante el lector.

Su contribución nos ayudará sin duda a discernir lo verdadero de lo falso, en el marco de la actual carrera hacia el conocimiento de cómo funciona el cerebro, contaminada a veces por el sensacionalismo de los medios de comunicación, la desinformación y el desinterés por lo científico. Gracias a Jarrett, podremos abordar de forma mucho más crítica los citados anuncios diarios sobre avances en la investigación neurológica, y entender qué se está haciendo realmente para ampliar ese conocimiento y las herramientas utilizadas para ello.

Hubo una vez que se afirmaba que el corazón era el reducto donde se albergaba la razón, el amor, o el alma. Desechado este mito antiguo, no podemos dejar que sea ahora el cerebro el que sea objeto de una mitología incierta. Así, Jarrett desmonta una a una todas esas creencias, algunas de las cuales se han hecho muy famosas, como que solo utilizamos un diez por ciento de nuestro cerebro, que no crecen nuevas neuronas en el cerebro adulto, que el tamaño cerebral importa, o que los escáneres cerebrales pueden leer la mente.

El texto de Jarrett, extremadamente divulgativo, tira por tierra mitos que parecían eternos y nos proporciona sólidos fundamentos para entender la neurología moderna y el futuro que nos espera. Para el lector, será muy importante abandonar algunos de

esos mitos en particular, que han hecho un daño especial a muchas personas, como aquellos que tienen que ver con los trastornos mentales y que los han convertido en seres rechazados por una parte de la población.

Apto para todo tipo de público interesado en la divulgación científica, “Grandes mitos del cerebro” nos ofrece una más que satisfactoria inmersión en la historia de la concepción humana sobre el cerebro, llena de información e interés.

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El cerebro no ha sido nunca objeto de un escrutinio tan intenso; apenas pasa un día sin que algún periódico o revista anuncie a toda plana los resultados de algún estudio escenográfico del cerebro que afirma haber descubierto la localización neurológica de la felicidad, el amor, el odio o cualquier otra emoción humana. Y sin embargo, pese a los muchos avances en nuestra comprensión de la función cerebral que hemos de agradecer a la investigación científica, sigue habiendo mucha desinformación y un exceso de sensacionalismo acerca de cómo funciona realmente el cerebro.

Grandes mitos del cerebro presenta un examen exhaustivo de los mitos relacionados con el funcionamiento del cerebro humano. Christian Jarrett, experto en neurociencia cognitiva, analiza más de cincuenta mitos asociados con la función cerebral, desde los que se basan en falsedades o medias verdades hasta los que se ocultan bajo el manto del lenguaje científico.

Jarrett explora primero mitos generales como la idea de que solamente utilizamos el diez por ciento de nuestros cerebros, o el de que no crecen nuevas neuronas en el cerebro adulto, y pasa luego a examinar una variedad de temas más contemporáneos: mitos tecnológicos (¿pueden los escáneres del cerebro leer realmente nuestras mentes?); mitos estructurales, como las últimas exageraciones acerca de las llamadas neuronas espejo; mitos perceptuales, como la idea de que percibimos el mundo tal como realmente es; y una variedad de mitos que giran en torno a los trastornos cerebrales, incluidos la epilepsia, el autismo y la demencia senil.

Tan informativo y perspicaz como desmitificador, *Grandes mitos del cerebro* separa lo que es un hecho contrastado de lo que es mera ficción, la realidad del mito, y con ello diluye parte del misterio que rodea al órgano más misterioso y complejo del cuerpo humano: el cerebro.

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Author Information

Christian Jarrett has a PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience from the University of Manchester. He is founding editor of the British Psychological Society's *Research Digest*; author of the Brain Watch blog for WIRED; a blogger for *Psychology Today*; and columnist for 99U, the New York-based creativity think tank. Dr. Jarrett is also the author of *The Rough Guide to Psychology* (2011) and editor of *30 Second Psychology* (Icon Books).

Reviews

“THESE days you can't go to a children's birthday party without one of the adults making a knowing comment about the excited scamps being 'high on sugar'. In fact, there's no evidence that sugar makes children hyperactive. But the remark illustrates the way false beliefs about how our brains work permeate most aspects of life – as does the burgeoning of buzzwords like neuromarketing or neuroleadership. Such 'neurobollo', to borrow the title of a [popular science blog](#), is ably and entertainingly demolished by Christian Jarrett in *Great Myths of the Brain*. As a journalist in this field, I thought I would know most of these myths, but there was plenty here that was new and interesting to me.” –*New Scientist*, December 2014

“The book is also very impressive in its scope, covering things like the historical notion that the heart was actually the source of consciousness, to modern-day problems like how fMRI scans are believed to be far more powerful than they actually are. The writing is often very clear but without compromising accuracy or thoroughness, which is an impressive feat in its own right.” –*The Psychologist*, Autumn 2014

“Christian Jarrett's *Great Myths of the Brain* is the sort of book that every amateur brain enthusiast should have on his or her shelf. The book is an effort to assemble all the common

and not-so-common myths about the brain, past and present, and explain why they're all wrong using genuine neuroscience." –*BBC Focus Magazine*, January 2015

"*Great Myths of the Brain* is a kind of primer that teaches neuroscience by debunking neurononsense, beginning with ancient ideas like "Thought Resides in the Heart." You'll learn that much of the neuroscience you hear is trivial or wrong, and also see the useful research threads to follow. The word 'brain' isn't entirely giving us false hope. A neuroscientist-turned-writer, Christian Jarrett is editor of the British Psychological Society's *Research Digest*, a blogger, and the father of baby twins. His elegant, enthusiastic prose doesn't shy from controversy." –*The Weekly Standard*, April 2015

"As you can tell from the length of this review, there is a lot to be learnt from this book. I certainly learnt a few things even if I wasn't always taken in by some of the myths out there. The brain is a remarkable organ and clearing away the myths to see what is really there will show its true strengths and if you use in your fiction, make for better up-to-date stories. Read, digest, learn and dispel those myths." –*SFCrowsnest.org.uk*, 1 November 2014

CHRISTIAN JARRETT'S *GREAT Myths of the Brain* is the sort of book that every amateur brain enthusiast should have on his or her shelf. The book is an effort to assemble all the common and not-so common myths about the brain, past and present, and explain why they're all wrong using genuine neuroscience.

The more we are interested in the brain and how it explains our behaviour, the more important it is that we rid ourselves of untruths and half truths. Myth buster extraordinaire, Christian Jarrett, is an engaging and knowledgeable guide who spring cleans the cobwebs of misinformation that have accumulated over recent years. You will be surprised at some favourite beliefs that turn out to be scare stories or wishful thinking. Yet, Jarrett conveys a strong optimism about fresh approaches that will result in new knowledge. All claims are well substantiated with references. It will be fun to learn from this book. –**Professor Uta Frith, UCL Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience**

Christian Jarrett is the ideal guide to the fascinating, bewildering and often overhyped world of the brain. He writes about the latest discoveries in neuroscience with wonderful clarity, while cleanly puncturing myths and misinformation. –**Ed Yong, award-winning science writer, blogger and journalist**

Great Myths of the Brain provides an incredibly thorough and engaging dismantling of neurological myths and misconceptions that abound today. For anyone overwhelmed by copious bogus neuroscience, Christian Jarrett has generously used his own mighty brain to clear this cloud of misinformation, like a lighthouse cutting through the fog. –**Dr. Dean Burnett, Guardian blogger, Cardiff University**

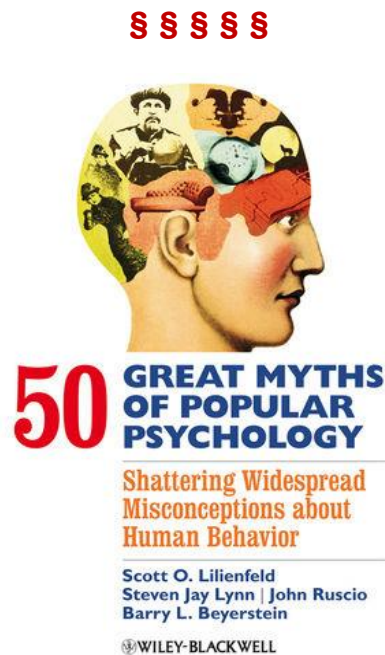
Lots of people cling to misconceptions about the brain that are just plain wrong, and sometimes even dangerous. In this persuasive and forceful book, Christian Jarrett exposes many of these popular and enduring brain myths. Readers who want to embrace proper neuroscience, and arm themselves against neurononsense will enjoy this splendid book, and profit greatly from doing so. –**Elizabeth F. Loftus, Distinguished Professor, University of California, Irvine**

Christian Jarrett, one of the world's great communicators of psychological science, takes us on a neuroscience journey, from ancient times to the present. He exposes things we have believed that just aren't so. And he explores discoveries that surprise and delight us. Thanks to this tour de force of critical thinking, we can become wiser—by being smartly skeptical but not cynical, open but not gullible –**David G. Myers, Hope College, author, Psychology, 11th Edition**

A masterful catalogue of neurobollocks. –**Dr. Ben Goldacre, author of *Bad Science* and *Bad Pharma***

In this era of commercialized neurohype, Christian Jarrett’s engaging book equips us with the skills for spotting the authentic facts lost in a sea of brain myths. With compelling arguments and compassion for the human condition, Jarrett teaches us that the truth about the brain is more complicated, but ultimately more fascinating, than fiction. –**The Neurocritic, neuroscientist and blogger**

Christian Jarrett has written a wonderful book that is as entertaining as it is enlightening. When it comes to brain science, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Jarrett has done us all a great service by peeling back the layers of hype to reveal what we really do know – and don’t know - about how the brain functions. –**Prof Christopher C French, Goldsmiths, University of London**



LILIENFELD, Scott O., Steven Jay LYNN, John RUSCIO, and Barry L. BEYERSTEIN, *50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Behavior*, Malden, MA (USA)-Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, pp. xx + 332 (The Great Myths of Psychology Series). Cf.:

<http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-EHEP002362.html>

https://www.amazon.com/dp/1405131128/ref=rdr_ext_tmb

https://www.amazon.com/dp/1405131128/ref=rdr_ext_tmb#reader_1405131128

http://www.psychologicalscience.org/media/myths/myth_1.cfm [Myth #1: Most People Use Only 10% of Their Brain Power]

<http://www.skeptic.com/eskeptic/10-09-01/> [An excerpt from the book that appeared in *Skeptic magazine volume 15, number 3*, *eSkeptic*, September 1, 2010]

<http://emilkirkegaard.dk/en/wp-content/uploads/50-Great-Myths-of-Popular-Psychology.pdf> [Full text “.html”]

[Scott O. LILIENFELD](#), [Steven Jay LYNN](#), [John RUSCIO](#), [Barry L.](#)

[BEYERSTEIN](#), “Busting Big Myths in Popular Psychology, *Mind*, Vol. 21, n.º 1, March-April, 2010. Cf.:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/store/archive/?magazineFilterID=SA%20Mind>

Pop psych lore is bewildering mix of fact and Fallacy. Here we shatter some widely held misconceptions about the mind and human Behavior”

Scott O. LILIENFELD, *YouTube*. Cf.:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=%22Scott++O.+Lilienfeld%22

“Lecture with Scott O. Lilienfeld. 50 great myths of popular psychology”, *YouTube*, 2014, 1:10:41. Cf.:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7CUTr0tWbc>

Archive, *Scientific American Mind*. Cf.:

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/store/archive/?magazineFilterID=SA%20Mind>

Description

50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology uses popular myths as a vehicle for helping students and laypersons to distinguish science from pseudoscience.

- Uses common myths as a vehicle for exploring how to distinguish factual from fictional claims in popular psychology
- Explores topics that readers will relate to, but often misunderstand, such as ‘opposites attract’, ‘people use only 10% of their brains’, and ‘handwriting reveals your personality’
- Provides a ‘mythbusting kit’ for evaluating folk psychology claims in everyday life
- Teaches essential critical thinking skills through detailed discussions of each myth
- Includes over 200 additional psychological myths for readers to explore
- Contains an Appendix of useful Web Sites for examining psychological myths
- Features a postscript of remarkable psychological findings that sound like myths but that are true
- Engaging and accessible writing style that appeals to students and lay readers alike

Preface

Psychology is all around us. Youth and old age, forgetting and remembering, sleeping and dreaming, love and hate, happiness and sadness, mental illness and psychotherapy—for good, bad, and often both, this is the stuff of our daily lives. Virtually every day, the news media, television shows and films, and the Internet bombard us with claims regarding a host of psychological topics—brain functioning, psychics, out-of-body experiences, recovered memories, polygraph testing, romantic relationships, parenting, child sexual abuse, mental disorders, real crime, and psychotherapy, to name merely a few. Even a casual stroll through our neighborhood bookstore reveals at least dozens, and often hundreds, of self-help, relationship, recovery, and addiction books that serve up generous portions of advice for steering our path along life’s rocky road. Of course, for those who prefer their psychological advice for free, there’s no end of it on the Web. In countless ways, the popular psychology industry shapes the landscape of the early 21st century world.

Yet to a surprising extent, much of what we believe to be true about psychology isn’t. Although scores of popular psychology sources are readily available in bookstores and at our fingertips online, they’re rife with myths and misconceptions. Indeed, in today’s

fast-paced world of information overload, misinformation about psychology is at least as widespread as accurate information. Unfortunately, precious few books are available to assist us with the challenging task of distinguishing fact from fiction in popular psychology. As a consequence, we often find ourselves at the mercy of self-help gurus, television talk show hosts, and radio self-proclaimed mental health experts, many of whom dispense psychological advice that's a confusing mix of truths, half-truths, and outright falsehoods. Without a dependable tour guide for sorting out psychological myth from reality, we're at risk for becoming lost in a jungle of misconceptions.

Many of the great myths of popular psychology not only mislead us about human nature, but can also lead us to make unwise decisions in our everyday lives. Those of us who believe erroneously that people typically repress the memories of painful experiences (see Myth #13) may spend much of our lives in a fruitless attempt to dredge up memories of childhood traumatic events that never happened; those of us who believe that happiness is determined mostly by our external circumstances (see Myth #24) may focus exclusively outside rather than inside of ourselves to find the perfect "formula" for long-term satisfaction; and those of us who believe erroneously that opposites attract in romantic relationships (see Myth #27) may spend years searching for a soulmate whose personalities and values differ sharply from ours—only to discover too late that such "matches" seldom work well. Myths matter.

As science educator David Hammer (1996) noted, scientific misconceptions possess four major properties. They (1) are stable and often strongly held beliefs about the world, (2) are contradicted by well-established evidence, (3) influence how people understand the world, and (4) must be corrected to achieve accurate knowledge (Stover & Saunders, 2000). For our purposes, the last point is especially crucial. In our view, mythbusting should be an essential component of psychology education, because deeply entrenched beliefs in psychological misconceptions can impede students' understanding of human nature.

There are numerous dictionary definitions of the word "myth," but the ones that best suit our purposes derive from the American Heritage Dictionary (2000): "a popular [but false] belief or story that has become associated with a person, institution, or occurrence" or "a fiction or half-truth, especially one that forms part of an ideology." Most of the myths we present in this book are widely held beliefs that blatantly contradict psychological research. Others are exaggerations or distortions of claims that contain a kernel of truth. Either way, most of the myths we address in this book can seem so compelling because they fit into a broader view of human nature that many people find plausible. For example, the false belief that we use only 10% of our brain power (see Myth #1) dovetails with the belief that many of us haven't fully realized our intellectual potential; and the false belief that low self-esteem is a major cause of maladjustment (see Myth #33) fits with the belief that we can achieve just about anything if we believe in ourselves.

Many psychological myths are also understandable efforts to make sense out of our worlds. As German sociologist and philosopher of science Klaus Manhart (2005) observed, throughout history myths have served a central function: attempting to explain the otherwise inexplicable. Indeed, many of the myths we discuss in this book, like the belief that dreams have been shown to possess symbolic meaning (see Myth #20), are efforts to grapple with some of life's perennial mysteries, in this case the underlying significance of our nighttime mental worlds.

Our book is the first to survey the full landscape of modern popular psychology, and to place common psychological misconceptions under the microscope of scientific evidence. By doing so, we hope to both dispel prevalent but false beliefs and arm readers with accurate knowledge that they can use to make better real world decisions. Our tone is informal, engaging, and at times irreverent. We've made particular efforts to make our book accessible to beginning students and laypersons, and we presume no formal knowledge of psychology. To do so, we've kept nontechnical language to a minimum. As a consequence, this book can be enjoyed equally by specialists and nonspecialists alike.

LILIENFELD, Scott O., Steven Jay LYNN, John RUSCIO y Barry L. BEYERSTEIN, *50 grandes mitos de la psicología popular: las ideas falsas más comunes sobre la conducta humana*, Barcelona: Biblioteca Buridán, Ediciones de Intervención Cultural, 2010, pp. 432. Cf.:

<https://www.amazon.es/50-grandes-mitos-psicolog%C3%ADa-popular/dp/8492616539>

<http://www.taringa.net/posts/offtopic/16291012/Top-10-Mitos-de-la-Psicologia-Popular.html>

En una sociedad en la que el conocimiento psicológico lo conforman tanto, si no más, los suplementos dominicales de los periódicos, la prensa del corazón, los programas de televisión y los autoproclamados gurús de la autoayuda, como los últimos avances científicos, es una necesidad acuciante disponer de materiales que nos ayuden a distinguir los hechos de las ficciones, las verdades de los mitos en el mundo de la psicología. Este libro cubre perfectamente esta necesidad utilizando una serie de mitos populares como vehículo para distinguir entre la ciencia y la seudociencia. Organizado en torno a los principales campos de estudios de la psicología moderna, como el funcionamiento del cerebro, la percepción, el desarrollo, la memoria, la emoción, la inteligencia, el aprendizaje, la personalidad, la salud y la enfermedad mental y la psicoterapia, constituye una ayuda inestimable para que el lector pueda evaluar la información y la desinformación que genera la llamada psicología popular.

Prácticamente cada día, la prensa, la televisión, el cine e Internet nos bombardean con toda clase de afirmaciones respecto al funcionamiento del cerebro, la educación de los hijos, las relaciones afectivas, el abuso sexual infantil, los trastornos mentales, el significado de los sueños, etc. Existen también centenares de libros de autoayuda sobre cómo relacionarse con los demás, sobre las adicciones, sobre la felicidad, que ofrecen consejos pocas veces fundamentados científicamente. La industria de la psicología popular configura de diversas maneras el paisaje social de comienzos del siglo XXI y es una prolífica fuente de mitos, una máquina de producir creencias, cosas que 'todo el mundo sabe que son ciertas' pero que sin embargo son desmentidas por la investigación psicológica.

Este libro es un ejercicio de desmitificación. En él se desmontan una gran cantidad de falsas concepciones acerca del comportamiento humano, se examina el paisaje de la psicología popular moderna y se ponen las falsas ideas psicológicas más comunes bajo el microscopio de la evidencia científica.

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Reviews

“Written in an accessible and entertaining style, the book examines a wide range of myths from all areas of psychology. [...]. Accordingly, the book is a much-needed antidote to the avalanche of misinformation that masquerades as psychology and should be required reading for anyone with a passing interest in psychology or, for that matter, the human condition.”
Department of Psychology, 1 June 2011

“Not only does the book illustrate just how often our intuitions are wrong, it also shows us how – in comparison to the truth – uninteresting they are. Shallow judgments imply overconfidence, assumption and monotony. Assuming that you know something prior to giving any consideration to where that knowledge comes from is a mistake for many reasons but perhaps most of all because such presumption precludes surprise. To be surprised – shocked, provoked, scandalized – is a pleasure. [...]. *50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology* tells us

that we need urgently to deal with our tendency to judge books by their covers. And just maybe, rather than considering any idealistic appeal to our rationalism, we should deal with this problem by considering an inversion similar to Kubrick's: for now at least, when it comes to presenting discoveries about the mind, we ought not to try in vain to change our nature – our tendency towards prejudice – but instead do something simpler: tell better stories, and design better covers.” –The Skeptic, 2011

“As you can tell from my reactions above I found this a very informative book and I'm only touching on particular things with my comments. If you're a writer, this book should be read post-haste so you don't keep repeating things you thought were true and obviously aren't. For everyone else, the revelations should make you sit up and take heed of what not to be taken in by.” –SFCrownsnest.co.uk, 1 May 2011

“This book would suit educators involved in study skills and critical thinking courses who might be looking for some new angles with which to update or spruce up their courses. It should be equally digestible to the A-level student and the first-year undergraduate.” – PLATH, December 2010

“At the end of each sub-section covering an individual myth is a list of anti-factoids about related matters and their factual antidotes. By this means a considerable range of topics is covered.” –*Education Review*, July 2010

“Maybe we should pay more attention to books like *50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Nature*. The four psychology professors who authored this enlightening book are up against the roughly 3,500 self-help titles, a lot of them based on false premises, that are published in the U.S. every year.” –*Poe's Deadly Daughters*, April 2010

“Who should read this book? Anyone interested in psychology and or the scientific method. The book is written in an easy to read fashion, is well referenced and includes a wide array of topics. The book teaches the value of critical thinking, and tells us it's all right to question authority. In conclusion, *50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology* is a must read for psychology majors, therapists and anyone who wishes to gain knowledge about the diverse field of psychology. I wish this book was available when I was studying psychology in college.” –*Basil & Spice (Jamie Hale)*, May 2010

“Popular psychology is a prolific source of myths. A new book does an excellent job of mythbusting: *50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology*. Some myths I had swallowed whole and the book's carefully presented evidence made me change my mind. They cover 50 myths in depth, explaining their origins, why people believe them, and what the published research has to say about the claims. Everything is meticulously documented with sources listed. The authors have done us a great service by compiling all this information in a handy, accessible form, by showing how science trumps common knowledge and common sense, and by teaching us how to question and think about what we hear. I highly recommend it.” –Dr. Harriet Hall for *Skeptic Magazine*, February 2010, and *ScienceBasedMedicine.org*, November 2009

“If you are familiar with other books by the same authors, you know that the writing style is incredibly engaging and easy-to-read, making the book accessible to those with little knowledge of psychology and well as those with considerable education in the field. While we certainly won't stop combating clinical psychology myths here at PBB, it's always exciting to come across like-minded folks also providing valuable material!” –*Psychotherapy Brown Bag*, October 2009

“True knowledge is hard won, and this timely and remarkable book shows us that stamping out falsehoods is no easy task either. The book does it all: it debunks all-too-common beliefs from the pseudoscientific fringe; it presents evidence against a variety of myths that seem like they ought to be true; it explains why people fall prey to such falsehoods; and it ends with some tantalizing facts about mind and behavior that make it clear that the truth can be every bit as amazing as fiction. These 50 myths won’t disappear with the publication of this book, but those who read it will enjoy being able to set others-many others-straight.”
–**Thomas Gilovich**, Cornell University

“We have needed this compendium for some time. These factoids and popular (but fallacious) memes about psychology have been exposed in single publications, but critiques of all of them have never been brought together in one place before. The myths chosen by these authors are indeed popular ones—the very ones that psychology instructors encounter every day. The book is an incredible resource for both student and instructor. The critiques are accurate and well written. I’m sure my copy will be dog-eared within six months.”
–**Keith E. Stanovich**, author of *How To Think Straight About Psychology* and *What Intelligence Tests Miss*

“Because I only use 10% of my brain, I had to play Mozart music while reading this book, and then be hypnotized to recover the memory of it because of early childhood traumas that were repressed but occasionally leaked through out-of-body experiences and ESP. And if you believe any of the above you need to read this book [...] twice if its mythbusting revelations cause you to repress the memory of it.” –**Michael Shermer**, Publisher of *Skeptic* magazine, monthly columnist for *Scientific American*, and author of *Why People Believe Weird Things*

“Is it true that psychology is mostly common sense? For anyone who wonders, this amazing book—which effectively discounts 50 pop psychology myths and briefly dismisses 250 more—provides convincing answers. And it does more: it offers fascinating examples of how science works and supports critical thinking. For teachers, students, writers, and anyone who wants to think smarter, this classic-to-be will be a valuable resource and a great read.”
–**David G. Myers**, Hope College, author, *Intuition: Its Powers and Perils*

“The true path of neuroscience between neurohipe and neurohumbub, is a narrow one, and you won’t find easy answers to it”¹

“El verdadero camino de la neurociencia –entre la neuropropaganda y la neuropatrafia– es realmente muy estrecho y en él no se encuentran respuestas fáciles”

“We need to strike a balance between recognizing progress in this field without overstating what’s been achieved”²

“Necesitamos lograr un equilibrio entre reconocer el progreso en este campo sin exagerar lo que se ha logrado”

¹ JARRET, Christian, *Great Myths of the Brain*, Malden, MA (USA)-Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, pp. xiv + 334 ((The Great Myths of Psychology Series), p. 184.

² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

Three years ago I discovered this Wiley-Blackwell Collection *Great Myths of Psychology*, directed by Scott O. LILIENFELD and Steven Jay LYNN.

Having finished reading the third volume, I was so enriched that I considered convenient to share with you the presentation of three books of the collection. Why? The best answer to this question is the excerpts I transcribe from the “Preface” to the 1st edition of LILIENFELD, Scott O., Steven Jay LYNN, John RUSCIO, and Barry L. BEYERSTEIN, *50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology: Shattering Widespread Misconceptions about Human Behavior*:

Virtually every day, the news media, television shows and films, and the Internet bombard us with claims regarding a host of psychological topics—brain functioning, psychics, out-of-body experiences, recovered memories, polygraph testing, romantic relationships, parenting, child sexual abuse, mental disorders, real crime, and psychotherapy, to name merely a few. Even a casual stroll through our neighborhood bookstore reveals at least dozens, and often hundreds, of self-help, relationship, recovery, and addiction books that serve up generous portions of advice for steering our path along life’s rocky road. Of course, for those who prefer their psychological advice for free, there’s no end of it on the Web. In countless ways, the popular psychology industry shapes the landscape of the early 21st century world.

Yet to a surprising extent, much of what we believe to be true about psychology isn’t. Although scores of popular psychology sources are readily available in bookstores and at our fingertips online, they’re rife with myths and misconceptions. Indeed, in today’s fast-paced world of information overload, misinformation about psychology is at least as widespread as accurate information. Unfortunately, precious few books are available to assist us with the challenging task of distinguishing fact from fiction in popular psychology. As a consequence, we often find ourselves at the mercy of self-help gurus, television talk show hosts, and radio self-proclaimed mental health experts, many of whom dispense psychological advice that’s a confusing mix of truths, half-truths, and outright falsehoods. Without a dependable tour guide for sorting out psychological myth from reality, we’re at risk for becoming lost in a jungle of misconceptions.

Many of the great myths of popular psychology not only mislead us about human nature, but can also lead us to make unwise decisions in our everyday lives. [...]

Hace tres años descubrí esta colección denominada *Grandes mitos de la psicología* de la editorial Wiley-Blackwell, dirigida por Scott O. LILIENFELD and Steven Jay LYNN.

Habiendo terminado de leer el tercer volumen me sentía tan enriquecido que consideré conveniente compartir con ustedes la presentación de los tres libros de la colección. ¿Por qué? La mejor respuesta a esta pregunta es una cita del “Prefacio” a la 1ª edición en inglés del libro de LILIENFELD, Scott O., Steven Jay LYNN, John RUSCIO y Barry L. BEYERSTEIN, *50 grandes mitos de la psicología popular: las ideas falsas más comunes sobre la conducta humana*:

Prácticamente todos los días, los medios de comunicación, los programas de televisión, las películas y la Internet nos bombardean con afirmaciones respecto a un sinnúmero de temas psicológicos: funcionamiento del cerebro, psíquicos, experiencias extracorporales, recuperación de recuerdos, detección de mentira, relaciones románticas, paternidad, abuso sexual infantil, crímenes verdaderos y psicoterapia, desórdenes mentales, por nombrar algunos. Incluso un paseo fortuito a la librería de nuestro vecindario revela por lo menos docenas –y frecuentemente cientos– de libros de auto-ayuda, relaciones, recuperación, y de adicción, que sirven generosas porciones de consejo para dirigirnos a lo largo del pedregoso camino de la vida. Por supuesto, para quienes prefieren consejo psicológico gratuito, la web se lo ofrece *ad infinitum*. La industria de la psicología popular configura el paisaje del mundo de comienzos del siglo XXI.

Sin embargo, en una medida realmente sorprendente, mucho de lo que se cree ser verdadero acerca de la psicología no lo es. Si bien los puntajes de las fuentes de la psicología popular ya están disponibles en librerías y en la yema de nuestros dedos para acceder en línea, están plagadas de mitos y e ideas falsas. De hecho, en el acelerado mundo actual de la sobrecarga de información, la desinformación acerca de la psicología es al menos tan amplia como la información precisa. Desgraciadamente, pocos libros valiosos están disponibles para ayudarnos con la desafiante tarea de distinguir el hecho de la ficción en la psicología popular. Por consiguiente, a menudo nos encontramos a nosotros mismos a merced de los gurús de autoayuda, los presentadores de espectáculos televisivos, y los autoproclamados expertos en salud mental, muchos de los cuales ofrecen asesoría psicológica que es una mezcla desconcertante de verdades, medias verdades y falsedades totales. Sin un guía fiable para diferenciar el mito de la realidad, estamos en riesgo de perdernos en una jungla de “psicomitología”.

Muchos de los grandes mitos de la psicología popular no solo nos despistan acerca de nuestra naturaleza humana, sino que también pueden conducirnos a tomar decisiones insensatas en nuestra vida diaria. [...]