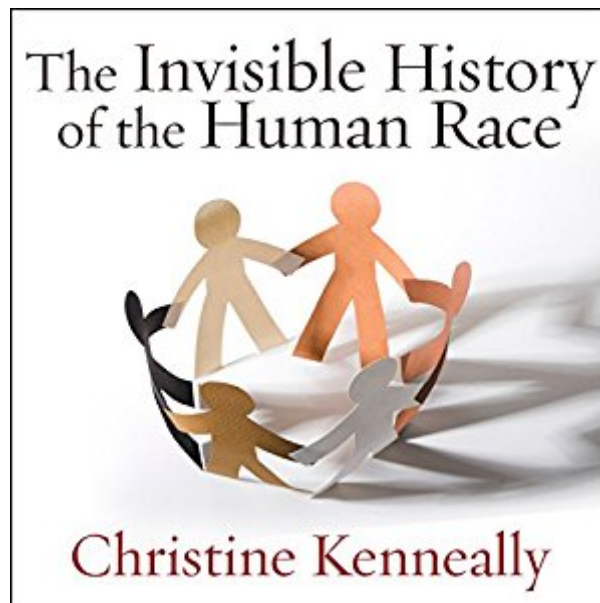




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The Invisible History Of The Human Race: How DNA And History Shape Our Identities And Our Futures



Synopsis

We are doomed to repeat history if we fail to learn from it, but how are we affected by the forces that are invisible to us? In *The Invisible History of the Human Race*, Christine Kenneally draws on cutting-edge research to reveal how both historical artifacts and DNA tell us where we come from and where we may be going. While some books explore our genetic inheritance and some popular television shows celebrate ancestry, this is the first book to explore how everything from DNA to emotions to names and the stories that form our lives are all part of our human legacy. Kenneally shows how trust is inherited in Africa, how silence is passed down in Tasmania, and how the history of nations is written in our DNA. From fateful ancient encounters to modern mass migrations and medical diagnoses, Kenneally explains how the forces that shaped the history of the world ultimately shape each human who inhabits it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Invisible History of the Human Race: How DNA and History Shape Our Identities and Our Futures, by Christine Kenneally is a grand survey work by a writer who understands science well enough to make it clear. Beginning with an unflinching view of genealogy and the desire to improve the human race, Kenneally offers the best argument I have ever read for exploring where we came from and how we are made. There are many things to justly despise about the pride, vanity, racism, and delusion accompanying much genealogical research. Failing to tell the truth about these defects simply adds to the shame. Like any good scientist, Kenneally meticulously

collects and explains the evidence for sound conclusions about the value of understanding personal history as a means of knowing oneself and addressing continuing problems. I especially enjoyed her explanation about the diminishing value of knowing specific ancestors, as they have very little to do with you after about eight generations of diluted genetic input. I also appreciated her review of race as a highly limited and often useless concept through her examples of in-breeding among self-isolating populations and the inevitable mixing of genetic materials everywhere else. This is a grand book for anyone curious about the field of genetic intervention or the value of genealogy, and in understanding the humility we should all possess in attempting to prescribe solutions.

I would say that the title is somewhat misleading. The book is more a collection of articles based on interviews, personal stories, recent discoveries. The author discusses how important to us is to establish connection with our line of ancestors. She is from Australia and several stories are specific to the history on this country. DNA appears only in the second part of the book with the stories of how nowadays the DNA analysis clarifies rumors and family legends. There is a little about the history of human race and the race disputes as well. The book is vivid, you can read it by pieces and enjoy.

Really enjoyed this book. It is somewhat disjointed but that may be the nature of the beast. The author did a really good job of explaining a very complex concept. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in DNA , genetics and genealogy.

Christine Kenneally combines her personal life-experience with well documented research to provide an understanding of human origins. This book was very helpful to my research in adding genetics to archaeology, biological anthropology, and linguistics as a line of evidence in the quest for the answers in peopling of the world. I would recommend it because it is more up to date on recent developments in genetics than Cavalli-Sforza and Spencer Wells books on the subject. Although she is not a geneticist, as they are, her research I believe, is more accurate because it is state of the art. The data base for human genetics is growing so fast, that previous volumes prior to 2010 are obsolete in my opinion.

As a writer and researcher, Christine Kenneally has accomplished something rare and valuable in this book. Each of its highly entertaining and extremely informative chapters combines personal stories and scientific explanations in ways that illuminate the relevance of DNA research to

individual families and communities. Some of the stories are her own, and the historical amnesia of Australians about their convict ancestors makes for an intriguing entry into the reclamation of the lost past made possible by genealogy and genetics. She has fresh and insightful things to say about the marginal status of genealogy and how it has moved increasingly into the mainstream. Her explorations illuminate familiar stories like the Hemings-Jefferson-Woodson tangle of claims and reality, or the huge DNA footprint of Genghis Khan, with clear explanations of complicated details. The tragic dilemmas faced by families in which Huntington's chorea is inherited illustrate the special case of Mendelian diseases. I learned from Kenneally for the first time why as a Johnson my Y-DNA matches include so few people with the same surname; in England the most common surnames are the most genetically diverse, and patronymics are genetically dissimilar in many countries. The cornucopia of fascinating detail also includes historical explanations of the differences between rice and wheat cultivating societies, the impact of plowing vs. hoeing on gender roles, the multigeneration legacy of slavery on African cultures in which it created centuries of distrust of one's neighbors and kin, and many more elements in which the "invisible history" is cultural rather than genetic. Ultimately the book may not be much greater than the sum of its intriguing parts. The field it surveys is too new and ever-changing to be neatly summarized and explained as a whole, perhaps for many years to come. But for today's reader wanting to make sense of the intersection of history and genetics, Kenneally's global journey of discovery is a great adventure well worth sharing.

With no background in genetics other than attending a high school named after Gregor Mendel, I found this book fascinating. Most people love getting mental or social profiles of themselves and the study of genetics gives them one more very important profiling method. We are not necessarily categorized by race but by ancestry is a phrase I will continue to muse over. A tough read at times but very interesting.

Incredibly interesting and educational. Had to read each page twice, however, to understand and digest what I was reading. Did not mind that at all. DNA is complicated. I plan on re-reading this book in the future to gain more insight.

I just finished this excellent book and found it interesting and informative. Kenneally's observations reminded me of two other books I've recently read, James Webb, *Born Fighters* (about the Scots Irish) and Colin Woodard, *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*

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