

January 23, 2019 – Atlas of Men: An Exploration of Identity, Diversity, Science, and Fiction

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Disclosure

None of the above speakers or planners have any conflicts of interest to report



Atlas of Men: An exploration of identity, diversity, science and fiction

David Sklar MD
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Disclosures



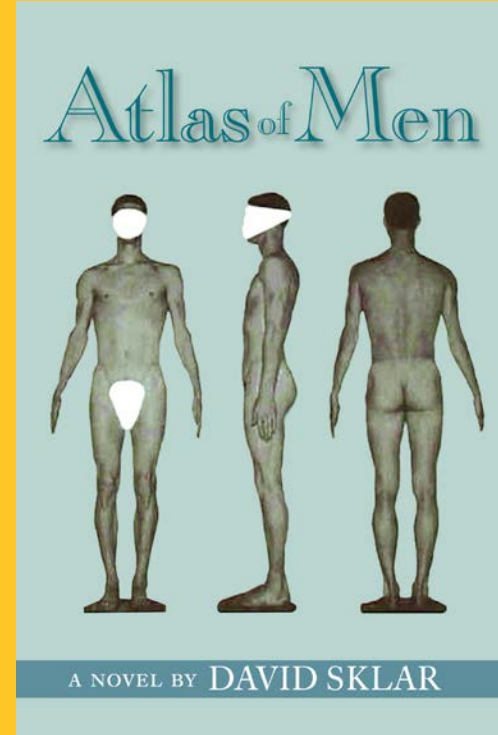
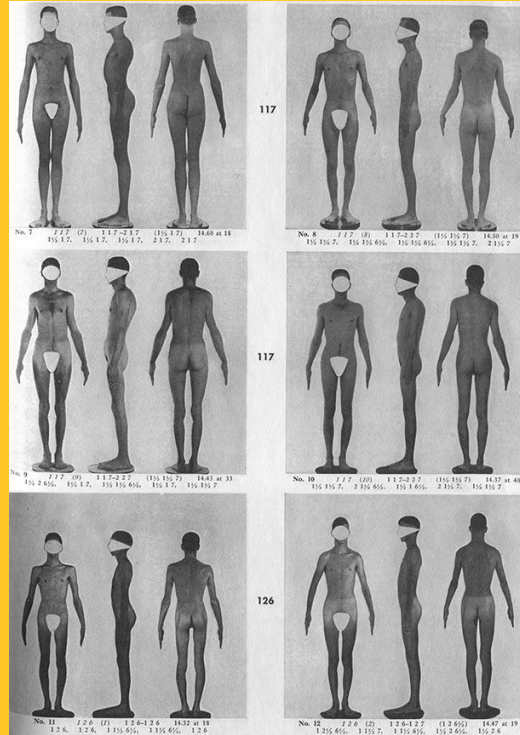
- Author of Atlas of Men
- Editor in Chief, Academic Medicine

Goals

- Explore conceptions of nature, nurture and the role of education in forming identity.
- Discuss historical views of class, race, culture and their effects on selection, leadership, achievement, power and trust in education.
- Describe the contributions and abuses of human subjects research.
- Discuss the use of fiction to explore this topic.

My Story...

Once upon a time...



What is the Book about?

As the story opens, Robert, as a never-married and somewhat lonely adult several decades past his boarding school days, works in a government research job and learns his position is to be cut due to funding issues. Soon after that, he mysteriously receives three boxes of old records pertaining to the unethical research conducted on him and his classmates at the boarding school...

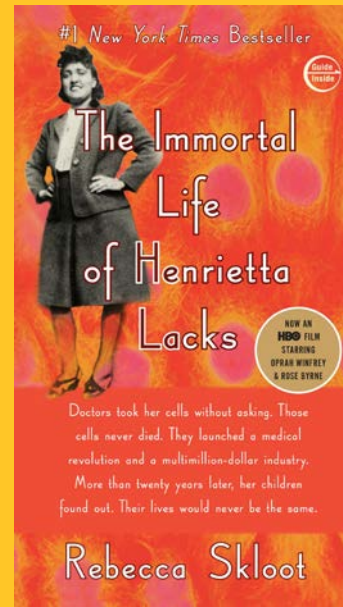
Compulsive Reader Review

In a riveting, often chilling and poignant story of transcendence, physician and author David Sklar draws upon his own experiences in crafting an ambitious new publication, *Atlas of Men*. *Atlas of Men* is a heartfelt fictional version of a true-life scandal involving nude photographs of teens and young adults taken as part of sordid, so-called scientific research — a study Sklar was an unwitting participant in as a teen.

The book is a marvelous genre-blend, defying any easy categorization. While the plot often contains the suspense of a great medical thriller, the slowly unraveled mystery in the heart of the story focuses on boys coming of age in an elite all-male boarding school—but a boarding school with some scandalous secrets above and beyond the nude photographs.

The History of Unethical Human Research as a Case Study for Health Humanities

- **Henrietta Lacks** - HeLa cell line taken without permission
- **Tuskegee** - Research on African American men to study the natural history of syphilis without consent or offers of treatment
- **Atlas of Men** - nude photographs of adolescents to study body type and personality/achievement





Atlas of Men

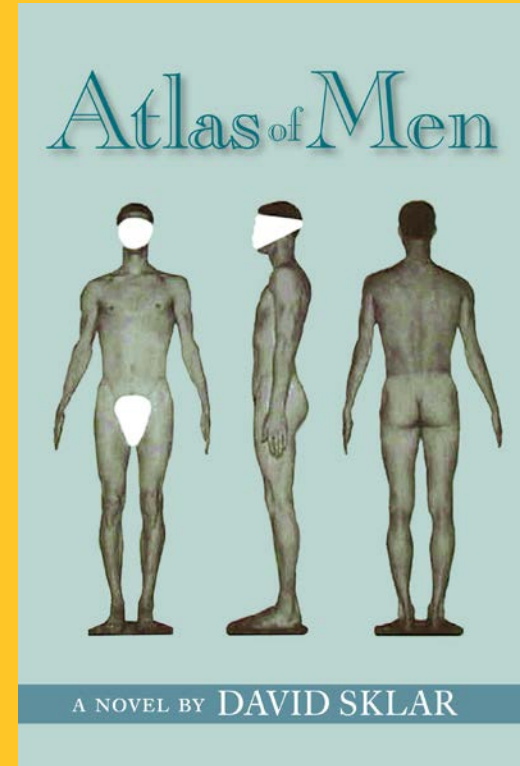
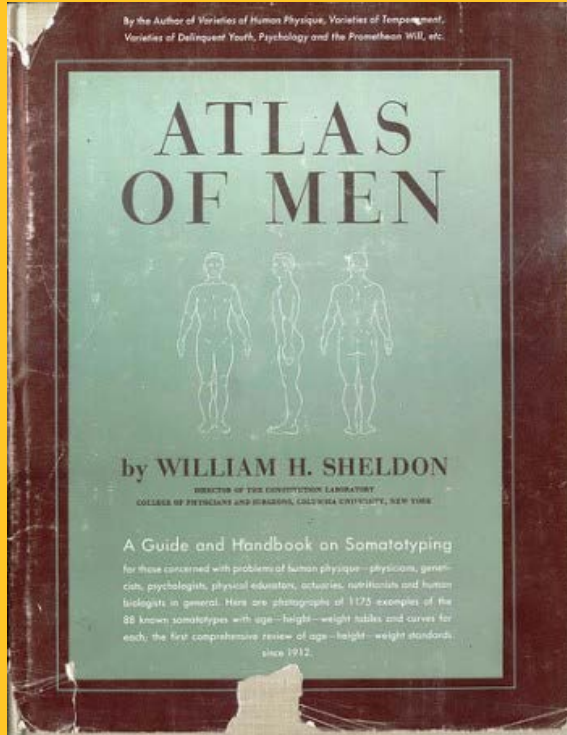
- Assumptions: Body could be measured. There would be characteristics: somatotypes, William Sheldon
- Ectomorph, Mesomorph, Endomorph
- Wasp, Lion, Elephant
- Underlying idea: There is an ideal body and ideal person
- Nude photos of adolescents without permission or explanation, 1950s, 1960s. Atlas of Men published 1954

The Story of the Atlas of Men

- I was one of the boys photographed at age 15 .
- Fiction inspired by actual events to explore identity, class, race, sexuality, ethics, history of science.
- What I know: photographs taken for many years, no consent, school doctor collected data, files disappeared? Burned up?
- What if????
- The story: After 40 years the photos and the files of the boys surface unexpectedly. What happened? Why? Now what?

Atlas of Men by William Sheldon

Atlas of Men by David Sklar



Why write?

- Most of my previous writing (editorials) combined stories with literature review and analysis. The story provided a face and context to the review.
- In this fictional book the actual events provided the scaffolding for an exploration of identity, race, class, love, sexuality, abuse, ethics and history of science.
- In the process of writing I realized that my classmates and I had been abused and I contacted several of them. We began a dialogue with the school.

Themes relevant to academic medicine

- Trust: teacher>< student>< institution
- Human subjects research protection
- Diversity, identity, selection for medical school
- Excellence, competence, measurement, class and race
- Love, friendship, community

Writing and the discussion of painful topics

- Outing ourselves creates permission for others
- Writing creates community



Dialogue & Learning



- Dialogue is about relationships and questioning assumptions
- Humanities provide the medium for dialogue to occur.
- My hope for Atlas of Men is that it will open a dialogue about race, identity, equity, and health.



Healing will take time and work

- Acceptance support and reconciliation

Thank you

- Reactions, discussion, reflection.

