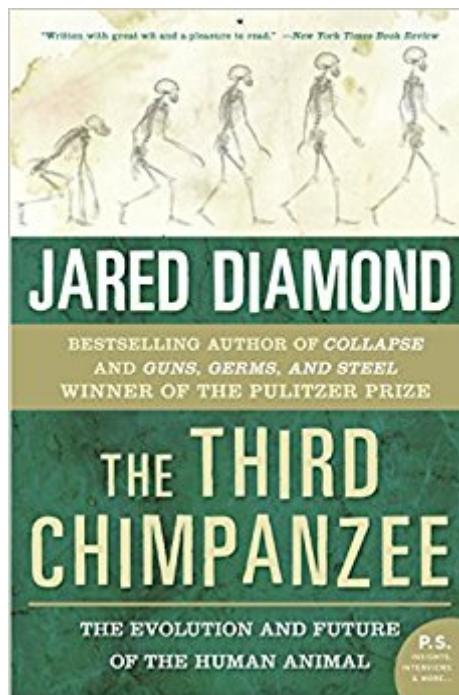




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# The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution And Future Of The Human Animal (P.S.)



## Synopsis

**The Development of an Extraordinary Species** We human beings share 98 percent of our genes with chimpanzees. Yet humans are the dominant species on the planet -- having founded civilizations and religions, developed intricate and diverse forms of communication, learned science, built cities, and created breathtaking works of art -- while chimps remain animals concerned primarily with the basic necessities of survival. What is it about that two percent difference in DNA that has created such a divergence between evolutionary cousins? In this fascinating, provocative, passionate, funny, endlessly entertaining work, renowned Pulitzer Prize-winning author and scientist Jared Diamond explores how the extraordinary human animal, in a remarkably short time, developed the capacity to rule the world . . . and the means to irrevocably destroy it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jared Diamond states the theme of his book up-front: "How the human species changed, within a short time, from just another species of big mammal to a world conqueror; and how we acquired the capacity to reverse all that progress overnight." *The Third Chimpanzee* is, in many ways, a prequel to Diamond's prize-winning *Guns, Germs, and Steel*. While *Guns* examines "the fates of human societies," this work surveys the longer sweep of human evolution, from our origin as just another chimpanzee a few million years ago. Diamond writes: It's obvious that humans are unlike all animals. It's also obvious that we're a species of big mammal down to the minutest details of our anatomy and our molecules. That contradiction is the most fascinating feature of the human

species. The chapters in *The Third Chimpanzee* on the oddities of human reproductive biology were later expanded in *Why Is Sex Fun?* Here, they're linked to Diamond's views of human psychology and history. Diamond is officially a physiologist at UCLA medical school, but he's also one of the best birdwatchers in the world. The current scientific consensus that "primitive" humans created ecological catastrophes in the Pacific islands, Australia, and the New World owes a great deal to his fieldwork and insight. In Diamond's view, the current global ecological crisis isn't due to modern technology per se, but to basic weaknesses in human nature. But, he says, "I'm cautiously optimistic. If we will learn from our past that I have traced, our own future may yet prove brighter than that of the other two chimpanzees." --Mary Ellen Curtin --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Research biologist (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands) Diamond argues that the human being is just a third species of chimpanzee but nevertheless a unique animal essentially due to its capacity for innovation, which caused a great leap forward in hominoid evolution. After stressing the significance of spoken language, along with art and technology, Diamond focuses on the self-destructive propensities of our species to kill each other (genocide and drug abuse) and to destroy the environment (mass extinctions). He also discusses human sexuality, geographic variability, and ramifications of agriculture (metallurgy, cultivated plants, and domesticated animals). Absent from Diamond's work is the role religion plays in causing both war and the population explosion as well as long-range speculations on the future of our species. This informative, most fascinating, and very readable book is highly recommended for all libraries.- H. James Birx, Canisius Coll., Buffalo, N.Y. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This has been such an interesting read-actually going thru it slowly to be sure to inhale and retain events and changes as noted. Great reading at the end of another crazy day. I think I like some of our earlier versions of ourselves than some of the people I bounce off of every day. Terrific researcher who knows how to spin a fascinating tale.

Have read all his books, and this is great, just like all the others!

This is an extremely interesting book and I have absolutely no regrets of buying it as used. The cover is more paper-like than plastic as it is in the new editions, and that for me makes it easier to

manipulate the book as I read it. It arrived in excellent condition and the only thing that gives it away of being used is its smell (it smells a little bit like smoke, but nothing too strong; it is actually pretty suiting for the reading). this is a very interesting book and Diamond's way of writing is simply wonderful. Overall, a great purchase.

a gift for college student

This is scholarship material, as are all of Diamond's books. Maybe not what you read on the beach on a summer afternoon. (But you can, of course!) Learning more about how people develop, how their bodies function, how the climate, vegetation, and such affects the bodies development and the brain - all this is useful in understanding how people behave and why, both individually and aggregately. Hence, the term "humanities." Somebody has to want to learn and become educated to read this book; not just merely entertained and pass the time.

The 3rd Chimp book review. I knew we were big apes, but I didn't really know all the details. Jared Diamond's well developed book puts it into a focused perspective. The problem is... us! Luckily, the solution lies in us as well, and we're definitely full of surprises. With numerous comparisons to other species and detailed explanations of how one evolutionary trait or behavior can lead to another (and sometimes cancel out others too), the reader arrives at answers to how certain societies vanished, why will kill each other, why we grow old and die, and how at this very moment, we're kind of just a blip on the timeline of human history. Or, maybe this is the Golden Age... A must read for anyone interested in evolution and a better understanding of why humans think and act the way they do. Note: I've written this review after reading The 3rd Chimp & Why is sex fun? back to back.

If you want to have your mind blown, read this book. Better yet, read every book this man writes. Diamond's comprehensive approach to living systems raises all sorts of questions, and his explanations give insight into how an amateur sleuth might go about searching for his/her own answers. My only gripe is an awful lot of conclusions he draws, despite having spent hundreds of pages dispelling plenty of erroneous conclusions. In order to best encourage readers to think critically, not accept his personal conclusions, however convincing he may be as an author.

This is a very worthwhile read for anyone interested in how man differs and does not differ from the rest of the animal kingdom (particularly the great apes). Since the book is already over ten years

old, it is a bit weak on new advances in genetics and does not seem to be up-to-date on the Clovis debate about the peopling of the Americas (new genetic data showing that the entrance was probably earlier than the assumed 12,000 years ago). However, the bulk of the book is a very mind-broadening, timeless view of homo sapiens and this species conquest of the entire planet. The history that Diamond portrays does not augur well for mankind: habitual destruction of the environment; mass extinctions of other species; increasingly limited genetic diversity in the human species; the propensity for genocide. In short, Diamond shows that man has a history of selfishly expanding its population to the detriment of the very environment upon which he depends and that this proclivity could someday spell the end of the species as our numbers continue to rise. Some sobering facts are offered here; and open minds should recognize them and heed them. I only give the book four stars for two reasons: 1) As mentioned, the part on genetics is partially out of date and should be made current in a further edition. 2) Diamond has a number of annoying tendencies that are sometimes frustrating: I grew weary of his "Outer Space" perspectives (i.e., the paleontologist from Outer Space, the archaeologist from Outer Space, the biologist from Outer Space), as if the reader were incapable of standing back and gaining perspective on his own species without this trick. Also, he piqued my curiosity on a number of subjects that he promised to cover in detail later. When these subjects finally came, there were often more questions than answers.

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