



Guns, Germs, and Steel

By Jared Diamond

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Guns, Germs, and Steel By Jared Diamond

Why did Eurasians conquer, displace, or decimate Native Americans, Australians and Africans, instead of the reverse? In this groundbreaking book, evolutionary biologist Jared Diamond stunningly dismantles racially based theories of human history by revealing the environmental factors actually responsible for shaping the modern world. Societies that had a head start in food production advanced beyond the hunter-gatherer stage, and then developed writing, technology and government, and organized religion - as well as nasty germs and potent weapons of war.

"The scope and explanatory power of this book are astounding." (The New Yorker)

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Guns, Germs, and Steel By Jared Diamond Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Explaining what William McNeill called *The Rise of the West* has become the central problem in the study of global history. In *Guns, Germs, and Steel* Jared Diamond presents the biologist's answer: geography, demography, and ecological happenstance. Diamond evenhandedly reviews human history on every continent since the Ice Age at a rate that emphasizes only the broadest movements of peoples and ideas. Yet his survey is binocular: one eye has the rather distant vision of the evolutionary biologist, while the other eye--and his heart--belongs to the people of New Guinea, where he has done field work for more than 30 years.

From Library Journal

Most of this work deals with non-Europeans, but Diamond's thesis sheds light on why Western civilization became hegemonic: "History followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among peoples' environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves." Those who domesticated plants and animals early got a head start on developing writing, government, technology, weapons of war, and immunity to deadly germs. (LJ 2/15/97)

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From Kirkus Reviews

MacArthur fellow and UCLA evolutionary biologist Diamond (*The Third Chimpanzee*, 1992, etc.) takes as his theme no less than the rise of human civilizations. On the whole this is an impressive achievement, with nods to the historians, anthropologists, and others who have laid the groundwork. Diamond tells us that the impetus for the book came from a native New Guinea friend, Yali, who asked him, "Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own?" The long and short of it, says Diamond, is biogeography. It just so happened that 13,000 years ago, with the ending of the last Ice Age, there was an area of the world better endowed with the flora and fauna that would lead to the take-off toward civilization: that valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers we now call the Fertile Crescent. There were found the wild stocks that became domesticated crops of wheat and barley. Flax was available for the development of cloth. There was an abundance of large mammals that could be domesticated: sheep, goats, cattle. Once agriculture is born and animals domesticated, a kind of positive feedback drives the growth toward civilization. People settle down; food surpluses can be stored so population grows. And with it comes a division of labor, the rise of an elite class, the codification of rules, and language. It happened, too, in China, and later in Mesoamerica. But the New World was not nearly as abundant in the good stuff. And like Africa, it is oriented North and South, resulting in different climates, which make the diffusion of agriculture and animals problematic. While you have heard many of these arguments before, Diamond has brought them together convincingly. The prose is not brilliant and there are apologies and redundancies that we could do without. But a fair answer to Yali's question this surely is, and gratifyingly, it makes clear that race has nothing to do with who does or does not develop cargo. (Book-of-the-Month Club/History Book Club/Quality Paperback Book Club selection) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ella Butler:

Do you have favorite book? When you have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to be aware of everything in the world. Each book has different aim or goal; it means that guide has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They can be reading whatever they get because their hobby is actually reading a book. What about the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, person feel need book when they found difficult problem or maybe exercise. Well, probably you should have this Guns, Germs, and Steel.

Bonnie Fernandez:

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Kenneth Harrell:

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