



Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies

By Jared Diamond

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Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies By Jared Diamond

In this "artful, informative, and delightful" (William H. McNeill, New York Review of Books) book, Jared Diamond convincingly argues that geographical and environmental factors shaped the modern world. Societies that had had a head start in food production advanced beyond the hunter-gatherer stage, and then developed religion --as well as nasty germs and potent weapons of war --and adventured on sea and land to conquer and decimate preliterate cultures. A major advance in our understanding of human societies, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* chronicles the way that the modern world came to be and stunningly dismantles racially based theories of human history. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science, the Rhone-Poulenc Prize, and the Commonwealth club of California's Gold Medal.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

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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:

Raymond Levine:

Do you have favorite book? When you have, what is your favorite's book? Book is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each reserve has different aim or even goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people experience enjoy to spend their time and energy to read a book. They may be reading whatever they consider because their hobby is reading a book. Why not the person who don't like studying a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book whenever they found difficult problem or maybe exercise. Well, probably you will require this Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies.

Rita Campanelli:

This book untitled Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies to be one of several books which best seller in this year, this is because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this particular book in the book store or you can order it by means of online. The publisher of this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quicker to read this book, since you can read this book in your Cell phone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this book from your list.

Manuel Porter:

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David Auman:

Within this era which is the greater particular person or who has ability to do something more are more treasured than other. Do you want to become one among it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you should do is just spending your time little but quite enough to have a look at some books. Among the books in the top list in your reading list is usually Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies. This book which is qualified as The Hungry Hills can get you closer in turning into precious person. By looking right up and review this guide you can get many advantages.

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