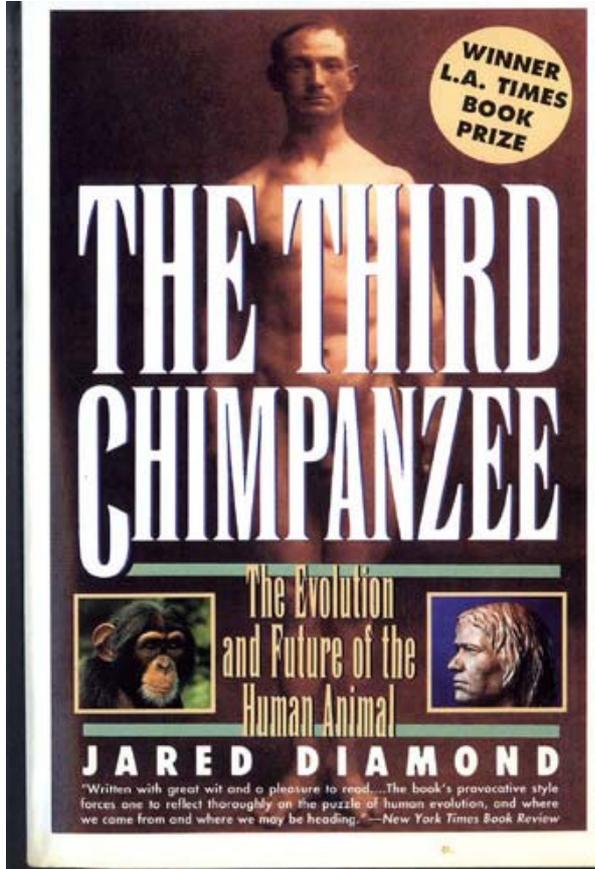


Book of The Century



Jared Diamond (1992). *The Third Chimpanzee. The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal*. Harper Perennial New York. 407 pp

Though we share 98 percent of our genes with the chimpanzee, our species evolved into something quite extraordinary. Jared Diamond explores the fascinating question of what in less than 2 percent of our genes has enabled us to found civilizations and religions, develop intricate languages, create art, learn science--and acquire the capacity to destroy all our achievement overnight. *The Third Chimpanzee* is a tour de force, an iconoclastic, entertaining, sometime alarming book at the unique and marvelous creature that is the human animal.

Additional Commentary

"A sociologist from Outer Space would immediately classify us as just a third species of chimpanzee, along with the pygmy chimp of Zaire and the common chimp of the rest of tropical Africa" (p.2).

"Yet the discoveries of many missing links have only made the problem more fascinating, without fully solving it. The few bits of new baggage we acquired--the 2 percent difference between our genes and those of chimps--must have been responsible for all of our seemingly unique properties" (p.2).

"What were those few key ingredients that made us human? Since our unique properties appeared so recently and involved so few changes, those properties or at least their precursors must already be present in animals. What are those animal precursors of art and language, of genocide and drug abuse?" (p.3)

"But among our unique qualities are two that now jeopardize our existence: our propensities to kill each other and to destroy our environment" (p.3).

"It was only between six and ten million years ago that our ancestors finally became distinct from the ancestors of chimps and gorillas. Hence human history constitutes only an insignificant portion of the history of life." (p.35)

"At the opposite extreme but equally unsurprising, the most similar DNAs are those of common chimpanzees and pygmy chimpanzees which are 99.3 percent identical and differ by only 0.7 percent...Evidently, those few genes (0.7%) differing between pygmy and common chimps have big consequences for sexual physiology and roles: (p.22).

"That is, the human and "other chimp" evolutionary lines diverged around six to eight million years ago....and the pygmy and common chimps diverged around three million years ago." (p.24)

A 1% DNA difference equals about 4.3 million evolutionary years, given that 0.7 difference in DNA equals about 3 million years. Given the 0.7% percent difference of DNA between the common and bonobo chimpanzee, the DNA difference between the bonobo and human is 0.9 percent (1.6-0.7) (Prescott, 2001, p.6: <http://violence.de/prescott/app/ald.pdf>)

"Whatever the main biological function of human copulation, it isn't conception, which is just an occasional by-product."(p.78).

"Yet, it's also clear that extramarital sex is an integral, albeit unofficial, part of the human mating system" (p.86)/

"Throughout human history, adultery has had few rivals as a cause of murder and human misery. (p.87).

"The role of sexual jealousy as one of the commonest causes of homicide emerges from studies in many American cities and in many other countries. (p.96).

"I shall explain why I believe natural selection to have played only a secondary role in our racial origins, and why Darwin's preference for sexual selection seems to me correct. (P.112).

"Whatever caused the leap, it must have involved only a tiny fraction of our genes, because we still differ from chips in only 1.6 percent of our genes, and most of that difference had already developed long before our leap in behavior. The best guess I can make is that the leap was triggered by the perfection of our modern capacity for language" (p. 164).

"There are many grounds for pessimism. Even if every human now alive were to die tomorrow, the damage that we have already inflicted on our environment would ensure that its degradation will continue for decades. Innumerable species already belong to the "living dead," with populations fallen to levels from which they cannot recover, even though not all individuals have died yet. " (P.165)

"All these facts suggest that the juggernaut of destruction has already reached unstoppable momentum, that we too are among the living dead, and that our future is as bleak as that of the other two chimpanzees" (p. 366).

"While I do see us facing serious problems with an uncertain prognosis, I'm cautiously optimistic. (P. 368)

"This is also the spirit in which I dedicated this book to my young sons and their generations. 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." (p.368).

(This author disagrees with the optimistic conclusion of Diamond. First, *homo sapiens* is the only primate species that directs systematic and massive violence against the female of its own species and her children. This behavior is not rooted in language but in the failure of the biology of affectional bonding in the mother-infant relationship and in affectional sexual relationships, as the studies of De Waal & Lanting with the bonobo and Hrdy's observations demonstrate; and the studies presented on this website by this author. Genocides, slavery, sexual trafficking, depression, suicidal and homicidal behaviors will continue until the female of the species is fully equal to the male where the male of the species has no control over the sexual body of the female--jwp)