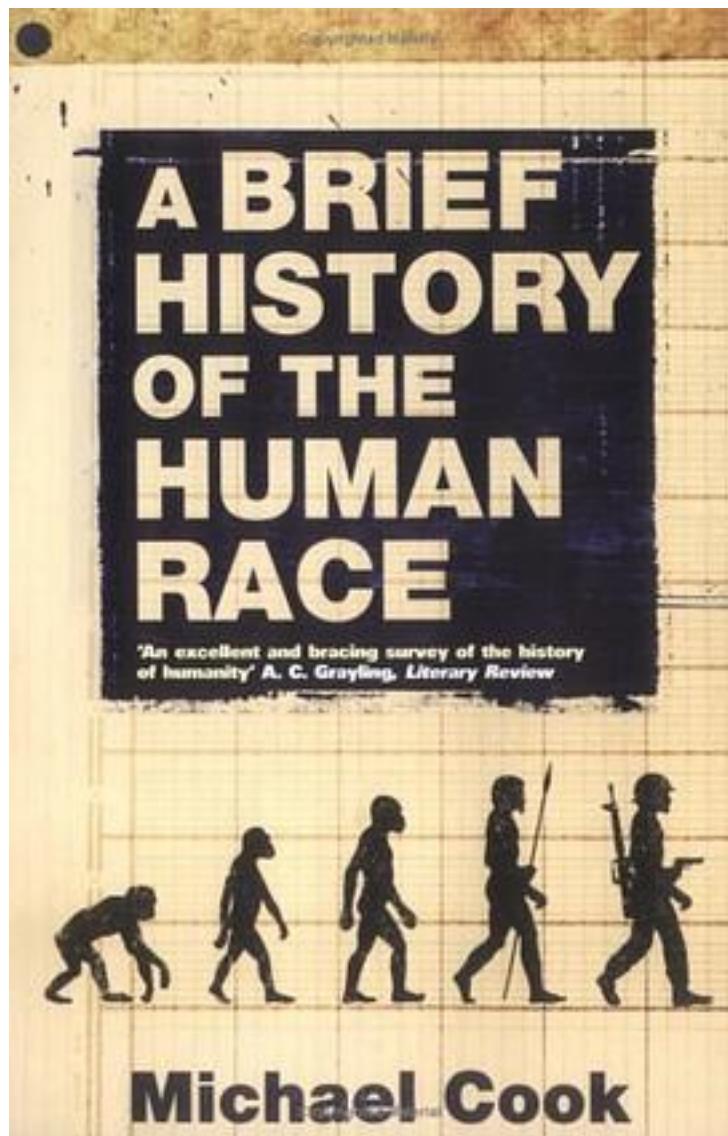


A Brief History of the Human Race



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著者:Michael Cook

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Why has human history been crowded into the last few thousand years? Why has it happened at all? Could it have happened in a radically different way? What should we make of the disproportionate role of the West in shaping the world we currently live in? This witty, intelligent hopscotch through human history addresses these questions and more. Michael Cook sifts the human career on earth for the most telling nuggets and then uses them to elucidate the whole. From the calendars of Mesoamerica and the temple courtesans of medieval India to the intricacies of marriage among an aboriginal Australian tribe, Cook explains the sometimes eccentric variety in human cultural expression. He guides us from the prehistoric origins of human history across the globe through the increasing unification of the world, first by Muslims and then by European Christians in the modern period, illuminating the contingencies that have governed broad historical change.

作者介绍:

Cook is more a provocative questioner of human history than a narrator of it. Intending to point out "to an alert reader" the salient contours of human society today and how they came to be that way, Cook brings commanding erudition to all corners of the world, extending from his expertise in Islamic history to explore China, India, Australia, the Americas, and Europe. As did Geoffrey Blainey in *A Short History of the World* (2002), Cook identifies the melting of the ice sheets as the key environmental event for humanity. But whereas Blainey proceeds in a political direction, Cook emphasizes the material and cultural side of the story, probing why, for example, agriculture, writing, or a social or religious practice arose in one locale rather than another. In this approach, Cook echoes *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond (1997), a surprisingly popular explanation of how the West outdistanced the rest. Cook ought to capitalize on that same interest. Gilbert Taylor

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标签

history

评论

thanks to Holocene in the past 10000 years, human could survive. develop, and make history;; and to be a good hisotorian in nowadays, you have to learn something about natural science, esp. genetics and climatology...

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书评

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