



Why Is Sex Fun? The Evolution of Human Sexuality (Science Masters)

Jared Diamond

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Why are humans one of the few species to have sex in private? Why are human females the only mammals to go through menopause? Why is the human penis so unnecessarily large? There is no more knowledgeable authority than the award-winning author of *The Third Chimpanzee* to answer these intriguing questions. Here is a delightfully entertaining and enlightening look at the unique sex lives of humans.

Why Is Sex Fun? The Evolution of Human Sexuality (Science Masters) Details

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Trevor says

I had forgotten just how good this book actually is. I've read most of the popular stuff Diamond has written and enjoyed all of them. My favourite is Guns, Germs and Steel, but this one is also very good.

Although this one has a particularly fine title I have to say that it does make me want to ask another equally important question – why are there so few really good television documentaries that come out of the USA. I mean, there was Cosmos, which was mind-blowing, but there have been few that reach the heights of some of the stuff that comes out of the BBC. Connections, Life of Earth, The Ascent of Man, Civilisation, The Body in Question, The Light Fantastic, The Root of All Evil, and these just to name a few life altering documentaries from the BBC (and also just for the sheer joy of listing them).

It is not as if good pop science books don't come out of the USA. In fact, the best pop science books and pop psychology books all come from the US. This is a discrepancy I find completely puzzling.

The book asks, and mostly answers, a series of intriguing questions about human sexuality. The questions themselves are so interesting that if I was designing the cover I would just list them there. Not just the first question – and if you ever wanted to sell a book, I'd have thought it would be hard to come up with a better title. But the book is bursting with similarly fascinating questions.

Why do we have sex even when there is no chance of pregnancy? This needs answering because most of the other mammals in the world would look at us as incredibly strange for engaging in such odd behaviour.

Why don't men breastfeed? We have most of the equipment and men have been known to produce milk – even without scientific intervention. So, why not?

I'm only going to answer one of his questions – he asks, what are men good for? And his answer? Not a lot. Men come out of this book looking rather pathetic. We don't do nearly as much helping out as women do, we don't do hardly anything at all except some occasional hunting and 'alpha' posing. It is quite unattractive – and that does seem to conform to my understanding of what most men seem to be like.

There are lots of other questions in the book, why menopause? Why are women pretty? Why do women have large breasts? And the most surprising 'answer' in the book is to the question, why do men have such large penises?

The best thing about this book is that it shows that many of these questions have not been completely settled. The questions are clearly important, they are all very easy to ask, but the answers many not be nearly so easy to come by. Diamond presents some of the alternatives here and this makes for a fantastic insight into the scientific method, particularly as it applies to the evolution of various traits and behaviours.

This is either a short book or a long essay, take you're pick, either way, it is a quick read and very interesting.

Partha says

In short, I may describe this book as another diamond from Jared's bag of gems, where he told us a story of human sexuality from the evolutionary perspective. In this book, he described that the attributes of human sexuality e.g. concealed sex, monogamous society, recreational sex, non-existence of male lactation were developed because of specific evolutionary reasons. More interestingly, even the evolution of female menopause is a deceptive game of evolution to make more by making less. He also argued that the role of men and women in society was shaped by the long-term effect of evolution.

The storytelling style, ample interesting facts, and wise evolutionary reasoning make this book exciting.

Nu-Jahat-Jabin says

Sheikh Rajiuddin says

Taras says

It seems that Jared Diamond got better and better with every book he wrote. With practice he got exceptionally good at making comparisons between species, cultures, etc. He also developed a better focus on the subject with every book.

However this book was written before any of that. While it is easy to read, it contains little info and has strange examples. It also alludes too often to the author's sex life in a "Look at me I'm a successfully married man with a sex life...horay!" way. Diamond tries to explain various reasons for various sexual habits & cycles, goes on rants about the analogous examples in the animal world and attempts to draw occasionally weak parallels to humans. Jared also seems side with certain "virginal nerd men" I know in that most men are scumbags and women deserve better. I disagree because women have the option to pick whoever they deserve and I will not accept blanket insults against my sex.

I still somewhat recommend this book because of the random bits of information in it. For example: polygamous Mormon men (especially priests) are the peak of male evolution in that that on average they have the most children(25). Plus it's an amusing book to read in public places.

The most frustrating aspect of this book is that Diamond forgets to answer the most important question of all - the one on the cover. What the hell? Now upon finishing the book every reader has to go out, experiment and answer the question for themselves.

Kevin Cecil says

Jared Diamond does not possess Carl Sagan's gift of enriching all he writes with a grand sense of poetic wonder; he also lacks the verve and wit of a science writer like Phil Plait. Diamond's books, however, are absolutely essential for those seeking to understand our universe and ourselves because he invariably chooses such fascinating topics. From the development of civilizations in his masterpiece GUNS, GERMS, AND STEEL, to their potential decline in COLLAPSE, Diamond leaves one with a deeper understanding of humanity's essential questions. In this case "Why Is Sex Fun?"

Diamond first points out, then speculates the answers to the more rare and suspicious aspects of human sexuality: our tendency towards monogamy; recreational sex in general; concealed ovulation; menopause; men's attraction to big boobs, big butts...and big penises; and the use-ful/less-ness of men in general.

Oh, and male lactation.

THERE IS AN ENTIRE CHAPTER ON MALE LACTATION!!!

Jared Diamond won a Pulitzer Prize. He also wrote the sentence, "Lactation is not an infrequent result of nipple self-stimulation in teenage boys." I don't know which is the greater honor.

"Why Is Sex Fun" lacks the scope and depth of Diamond's other works, and leaves multiple questions untouched (most notably the evolution of homosexuality); however, it is a brief(>150 pages) and fascinating exploration on the how's and why's of fornication.

Abu Hayat Khan says

in case if you frown upon the title, I would like to highlight that the author is a biologist, he is neither a saint nor a sinner.

biology as a science has a sort of philosophical completeness that the physics, the most fundamental of all science doesn't possess. biology can answer both "how" and "why" questions. molecular biology and/or genetics do answer the question of "how", for example, they can tell you the step by step process of "how" a living being dies, but they will definitely fail to answer "why" we die at all? the "why" questions in biology are addressed by the theory of evolution. if you stuck with any riddle in biology, just ask Mr. Darwin, he has the final say.

physics has quantum mechanics, the theory of relativity and they can satisfactorily answer the question like, how does the subatomic particle interact with each other or how a galaxy is formed. but unlike biology, physics has no theory that can answer the "why" questions, why a particle interact in the way it does? or why gravity exists that for the galaxy? etc. put it in another way, there is no theory of evolution in physics. but we can imagine, once such "theory of why" emerges in physics, it will face the same resentment as the evolution did.

as the first word in the title implies, this book is on "why" and not on "how". why the human has so distinctive sexual biology than other primates or mammalian species. so far, I've got the opportunity to read five books by Mr. Diamond. they broadly fall under two categories: about human as a species, this book and the "The Third Chimpanzee" belongs to this group. the second category is about human society, "Guns Germs and Steel", "Collapse" and "World Until Yesterday" goes here.

some of the topic in "The Third Chimpanzee" has been discussed in great detail in this book. here two concepts those I couldn't resist sharing as I never thought them in the way they were presented:

beyond any doubt, the brain and the thumb are the key adaptations those changed the fate of human species. Mr. Diamond argued that biologically female menopause is as revolutionary as the human brain and thumb. unlike males, females of human species got their reproductive system shutdown by the age of fifty, while they live several decades afterward, apparently, without any reproductive advantage. why is so?

the human birth canal was not evolved to deliver an enormous human fetus or twin, as a woman grows older her mortality due to childbirth increases significantly. a human child requires a long time of nursing and caring before becoming independent, and in old days society couldn't sue a father for refusing his childbearing responsibility. hence as more elderly women died during childbirth, their infants used to follow the same fate of their deceased mother, and genes not promoting the menopause were slowly removed from the gene pool. menopause helped the single mothers to live longer and take care of their babies in early hunter-gather and forager society.

the lesson is that the world we see today wouldn't be possible without single mothers.

the second interesting point was about old people:

before the invention of writing, people used to memorize enormous knowledge about their environment,

plants, animals, etc. as they get older, when they could no longer hunt or bring food to their tribes/family. instead of becoming obsolete, they turned into a library. old people were the living libraries in the ancient society, they were valued and honored by their people. it is the invention of writing that took away the job from old people as the librarian and turned them into a social burden.

if you think carefully, biologically humans are good for nothing. not only in childbirth, the humans were not a good hunter, so they opt for foraging, they were not good at foraging either, so they adopted agriculture. as history tells us, the humans were not good even in agriculture, soon they formed civilization and raged war against each other. apparently, they were so bad in the war that they stop their conquest and focused on science & technology. and guess what, even after two hundred years of advanced science and technology humans were found to be worse enough not to figure out "why" question in physics!

isn't it weird?

Chris says

Shame on Mr. Diamond for luring me in with this clever title. What this book really is is a scholarly tome for the serious anthropology student. It is interesting that, when it comes to sex, humans do a lot of things very differently than even our closest animal cousins. The book looks at why men have nipples, why humans continue to have sex even during pregnancy when there's no chance of additional procreation, and how various species evolved with obvious or hidden signs of ovulation (complete with charts going back to the missing link). The bottom line is, almost all animals have sex solely for passing on their genes. One of the most interesting story is about a species of male bird who sets up one mate in a nest and makes sure the hatchlings are on their way and then goes and sets up another nest with another mate, flying back and forth between both families. Meanwhile, other males may be lying in wait to "spend time" with a female while her mate is away. But other than that, the book can get pretty dry. There's a long discussion of the possible benefits of hidden ovulation. Does it keep the man around because he never knows for sure when the female is fertile? I'm not sure Diamond ever answered this question; I think I may have fallen asleep. Sex is fun; Why Is Sex Fun? is not.

Jenbebookish says

While sort of dating somebody that was very, very ill suited for me...so much that I was absolutely certain that we had no future, he would never be introduced to my family, et cetera et cetera, I really started being interested in the subject of sex. Attraction. The difference between women and men's approaches to it, the difference between pure physical attraction and what people call "chemistry." Pure, simple sexual attraction and then the kind of attraction that develops. While ultimately I didn't place much stock in the relationship, the undercurrent of sexual tension that buzzed between us was undeniable. I would find myself gazing at him in total awe, body abuzz. And then I'd wonder... why? Sure, I'd found him gorgeous at first sight but it was being in each others company that had done it, now my feelings/opinions had multiplied and it seemed like there had never been anybody MORE gorgeous. the first time he reached for my hand I was buzzin. And I couldn't make sense of it, it was totally out of my hands. Whether or not I wished to be attracted to him this way, I was. Of course I am a human being and with my evolved brain am able to grasp the weight of my choices and their consequences so I am not a slave to my body, but it was my body's reaction that piqued my

interest. Like why this person? I'd been around beautiful men plenty, men technically more beautiful than he, why so enamored with this one? And so I've picked up a few books on sex, this one being the 2nd I've read, Bonk by Mary Roach the 1st. So, the fact that I had been looking to learn about something that was kind of specific, this book was a little bit of a let down. But only in the sense that there wasn't enough info on what I wanted to know. Sure, there was a brief mentioning of pheromones and how they are potentially responsible for the "chemistry" thing. I guess I wanted them to be a little more specific, like explain what's happening.. draw me a diagram of the route these pheromones take thru me, the synapses and nerves, the brain waves and activity. Maybe I'm just crazy for wanting an explanation for my attractions! There was a lot of random educational info, stuff I am less inclined to care about like the sex lives of animals and the anomalies and rarities that exist in them. An entire one out of the 6 chapters in the book is devoted to animal sex actually, including gems like listing other animals that enjoy sex, others that partake in same sex sex, others that have sex in private like humans instead of out in the open. There was a chapter on menopause (which according to this book is something that happens only to human females.) A chapter on breast feeding and the supposed non-evolution of male lactation, A chapter on gender roles in sex, yadda yadda. It's all interesting enough to read about, but that's because SEX in general is interesting to read about. I still prefer this book to Mary Roach's Bonk because it reported facts in an interesting and witty way without laying on the lame jokes so heavily and "breaking the fourth wall" constantly the way Roach does. Also Mary Roach isn't a Dr. or professor on the subject, or any subject, which causes me to mistrust a little more. Jared Diamond (who also wrote Guns, Germs, and Steel) is both a Dr. and Professor of human sexuality. That lends him a little more credibility in my eyes, and it shows in his writing which isn't amateurish the way Roach's is.

SO. For anyone looking for a quick and interesting read, sort of random facts about sex/human sexuality this shouldn't disappoint. It's short, and mostly interesting... and written in a manner that an average person can enjoy it. You don't have to be a dr or a scientist to understand it, is what I mean. Tho, it won't explain to you why you just can't seem to get enough of your new gf/bf, or why the sex with your plain jane neighbor is soo much more amazing than with your smoking hot ex. Or why you aren't attracted to Mr. Perfect with the body like a greek god, and yet you are borderline obsessive about the cute cater waiter from last night's dinner. I have two more books on the subject but something tells me that searching for an explanation of my attraction to a man is like searching for the meaning in life...destined to be fruitless forever... but at least reading about sex is never dull ;)

Indri Juwono says

#2010-27#

baca itu seru!
baca ini saru!

Begitu mungkin yang ada di pikiran orang-orang ketika membaca buku ini, dilihat dari judulnya 'Mengapa Seks itu Asyik'. Sesudah membaca buku ini, aku merasa buku ini bisa dihadiahkan pada anakku nanti dia menginjak masa remaja, dan organ reproduksinya tumbuh sempurna. Namanya juga punya anak perempuan, jadi harus dijaga baik-baik.

Seperti dijelaskan di pengantaranya, buku ini tidak akan mengajari anda posisi-posisi baru dalam menikmati hubungan seks, namun dapat membantu anda untuk mengerti mengapa tubuh anda terasa sebagaimana yang anda rasa, dan mengapa kekasih anda bertingkah laku seperti sekarang.

Perbandingan antara manusia dan mamalia lainnya (beberapa malah dengan serangga!) untuk menjelaskan bahwa mungkin manusialah yang menganggap seks itu sebagai kegiatan rekreatif, sementara yang lain hanyalah sebagai upaya untuk meneruskan keturunan. Maksudnya sebagai rekreatif adalah manusia mampu bercinta di luar masa subur mereka, kapan saja mereka mau, sedangkan hewan-hewan, adalah untuk meneruskan keturunan mereka. Bahkan anehnya (kata anjing) kenapa dilakukan di ruang tertutup dan tersembunyi?

Nah, di buku ini saya mendapatkan pencerahan bahwa kata-kata ‘nafsu binatang’ yang sering dilampiaskan adalah salah kaprah belaka, yang benar adalah murni ‘nafsu manusia’, karena penjelasan-penjelasan di buku ini melihat betapa sopannya binatang yang hanya bercinta pada masa suburnya, karena memang ditunjukkan dengan tanda-tanda tubuh yang jelas, tidak seperti manusia yang bisa terus menerus sebulan penuh, walaupun tanpa suatu pertanda yang kasatmata, bahkan bagi laki-laki, yang organ reproduksinya bisa sampai ia tua, masih bisa melakukan aktivitas seksualnya.

Adalah feromon, (yang sayangnya kurang dijelaskan mendalam dalam buku ini sehingga saya terpaksa buka Wiki untuk menjelaskannya) sesuatu yang mendasari sebelum tingkat hubungan lebih lanjut antara makhluk lain jenis.

Feromon adalah sejenis zat kimia yang berfungsi untuk merangsang dan memiliki daya pikat seks pada hewan jantan maupun betina.

Zat ini berasal dari kelenjar endokrin dan digunakan oleh makhluk hidup untuk mengenali sesama jenis, individu lain, kelompok, dan untuk membantu proses reproduksi. Berbeda dengan hormon, feromon menyebar ke luar tubuh dan hanya dapat mempengaruhi dan dikenali oleh individu lain yang sejenis (satu spesies). , wikipedia.

Pada manusia, tidak tampak jelas feromonnya, karena feromon dijelaskan sebagai ‘bau yang dikeluarkan manusia’, namun daya rangsang yang akan mengaktifkan hormon estrogen dan progesteron jelas terasa awalnya di kulit. Tentunya ingat kalian apa yang tahu-tahu dirasa ketika kekasihmu tiba-tiba menggenggam tanganmu, bahkan sentuhan ringan pun bisa membuat dada deg-deg plas tidak karuan, raut muka merah padam, bahkan kadang-kadang ada yang keluar keringat dingin.

Dan tiba-tiba *he can't out of your mind.*

Lalu dijelaskan mengenai kenapa manusia (seharusnya) berdua dengan pasangannya dalam membesarakan anak-anak mereka. Jelas bahwa anak-anak manusia tidak bisa makan sendiri sampai umur tertentu (biasanya sih 6-8 tahun), sementara anak-anak mamalia lain ketika lepas masa menyusuinya, maka mereka akan belajar untuk mencari makan dan mempertahankan hidupnya sendiri, karena itu beberapa anak mamalia hanya dalam pengasuhan betinanya saja, termasuk untuk melindungi dan melatihnya. Peran jantan sebagai pemburu (pencari makan) jelas nampak dalam berbagai sisi kehidupan mamalia, termasuk manusia, namun selain itu pula, betina pun juga harus mencukupi kebutuhan anak-anaknya. Pendapat ini masih diperdebatkan sih di kalangan manusia, terutama yang berkaitan dengan isu-isu sosial dan isu perjuangan hak-hak wanita.

Perempuan lebih menarik dari pria??

Itu benaaar!!!

Salah satu hormon progesteron memang memproduksi lemak di bagian-bagian tertentu perempuan seperti dada dan bokong, yang menyebabkan laki-laki akan terkunci penglihatannya ketika melihat seorang perempuan berbadan indah lewat di depannya, dan tak jarang usil menggoda dengan kata-kata. Sedangkan perempuan, walaupun ada laki-laki keren bodynya lewat paling hanya dilihat saja namun ditelan rasa penasarannya dalam hati.

Kalau saya tanya pada teman perempuan, lo suka nggak sama Cameron Diaz ? Ada kemungkinan perempuan suka memuji kaumnya sendiri, jadi mereka tetap akan bilang, iya, gue suka, matanya itu loh, bikin penasaran, dan senyumannya manis, pasti bikin cowok geregetan. Nah, jelas perempuan itu menarik, sampai perempuan sendiri mau mengakuinya.

Kalau saya bilang ke teman pria, saya suka Tom Cruise, kebanyakan laki-laki akan tertawa dan meledek, masa sih sama Tom Cruise aja suka.. atau komentar-komentar lain yang (sst..) menunjukkan bahwa dia merasa tersaangi (?). Bahkan Ayu Utami, di bukunya Parasit Lajang cerita bahwa dia ditertawakan teman-teman lelakinya karena mengatakan dia suka Van Damme.

Perbedaan lawan jenis membuat kita mengerti apa yang terjadi, banyak lagi yang dijelaskan dalam buku ini secara ilmiah, baik dengan organ organ reproduksi, maupun efeknya ke kehidupan keseharian. Kalau mau lebih lanjut tentang organ-organ yang menimbulkan rangsangan yah, tidak ada dalam buku ini, karena itu materi yang lebih adult, lebih baik mencari info tentang ini di Cosmopolitan atau FHM.

"Nggak ada masalah yang perlu dijelaskan, kecuali mengapa Jared Diamond begitu idiot. Kamu nggak ngerti mengapa kita melakukan seks sepanjang waktu? Ya karena itu asyik!" hal. 89

S.Ach says

...and why is that?

I read this whole book, cover to cover, by Jared Diamond, whose previous book that I'd read features in my top 10 non-fiction books of all time, to find out the answer to "why do we do it?" But, alas, in vain. I learnt about the sexual practices and reproduction methods of baboon, gorilla, chimps, pigeons, frogs, elephants, ants, flies, and million other animals and birds whose name I heard for the first time, but didn't learn why is it fun for us, the humans, to have sex?
Every time someone in my vicinity found me reading this book, probably looked at me with raised eye-brow and took me for a pervert. All for nothing then?
Well, not exactly nothing. But...

Charity says

Why is sex fun? Who the eff cares??? It just *IS*...if you're doing it right, that is. Ha!

I thought the book had a lot of promise, but it failed to deliver on many, many levels. Diamond's lack of footnotes really irked me and I was left questioning a lot of his research. I mean sure, learning about the number of hermaphroditic fashion models really boosted my self-esteem, but hello? Source please! I don't have time to go digging around through his entire bibliography looking for relevance. Ultimately, I learned a lot about animals and very little about humans. C'est la vie.

Arnab Paul says

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Why is Sex Fun?: the evolution of human sexuality; Jared Mason Diamond ?? ??,?????? ??????

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Ana Rînceanu says

I'll admit I cam into this expecting sociology with a little bit of biology, but instead I got the reverse. There are a lot of comparisons drawn between humans and other species, as an evolutionary explanation for our sexual evolution is attempted. I think not including any observations on how lgbtqia people may fit into the picture is an oversight, but overall this was an informative book.

Tevfik says

Jared Diamond'ın her kitabı ufukuma ufuk katıyor... Kitabı'nın adı maalesef bir pazarlama çalı?mas? ürünü. Zira içeri?i "keyif" konusunun çok ötesinde. Hatta alakası bile yok!

Çeviri muazzam?.. ?gilendi?im bir alandaki tercümeleri okurken genelde çok tak?l?r?m. Neredeyse hiç tak?lmad?m diyebilirim.

Favori yazar?m olmaya devam ediyor Diamond. Bu kitabı'nı da ?iddetle tavsiye ederim.

Irene says

3.5 stars

I must admit that I would never have picked this book up if I hadn't come to know of Jared Diamond's brilliant writing in his other book: Guns, Germs and Steel. Although human sexuality *is* an endlessly fascinating topic, books attempting to scrutinize it are all too often filled with nothing more than bumbling rhetorical questions and weird, irrelevant anecdotes. So knowing how amazing Guns, Germs and Steel was, I was fairly confident Jared Diamond would not disappoint in Why Is Sex Fun?

My final thoughts: Why Is Sex Fun? is a worthwhile read that is well-structured and answers questions methodically. Among many other things, this book informs me about many new things on human sexuality (of course) and even poses questions I admittedly never thought of asking before. But unlike in GGS, the explanations put forward in Why is Sex Fun? still overwhelmingly feel like theories. The reason why I loved GGS so much is that the explanation Diamond provided us with were so well-rounded and consistent I could easily accept it as 'truth' (albeit not perfectly complete, but then, what theory actually is). So although the theories in WISF are plausible, they fail to consider so many aspects and fail to explain so many observations

that it doesn't really convince the readers.

For a quick recap, here are the questions the book addressed:

1. Why don't men lactate?
2. What is the purpose of recreational sex?
3. Why did we evolve concealed ovulation?
4. What are the roles of men?
5. Why did we evolve the female menopause?
6. Body signals. (why do men have large penises?)

And here are a few questions and observations that I thought need addressing:

1. It is said that "recreational sex is the glue holding a human couple together while they rear their helpless baby together". Well, I'm sure many of you (like myself) would have raised their eyebrows at this. Is sex really the only reason a male would stay with his mate? And if he is so inclined to leave, would sex really be so important that he decides to stay after all? If deserting his mate is evolutionarily better for the male, then why didn't males evolve behavior that causes them to leave their mates despite the promise of sex?

Besides, it's still evolutionary more advantageous for the male to cheat on his mate, and there's no physical inhibition stopping him from doing so. He could still be monogamous and profit from regular sex with his mate AND occasionally cheat on her but not so much that he would be jeopardizing his child's life by neglect.

2. Why do female mammals tend to be smaller in size than males? As pointed out in the book, most of the time it is the females that have to care for the young. So wouldn't it be more logical if females were bigger than males? They would be better prepared to chase away predators and protect their young, and they would also be more prepared to chase away competing mothers for the best food sources. I get it that males have to be big in order to compete with each other for females, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they have to be bigger than females. So why are females smaller?

3. What exactly are the advantages of monogamy? The book often used monogamy as part of an explanation, but it never addressed the reasons why some animal species including humans are monogamous in the first place. From my point of view, monogamy isn't even strictly necessary in traditional hunter-gatherer societies. The child could be taken care of by the whole tribe, as opposed to just the father (as the book points out why monogamy is necessary).

4. Now, I'm almost certain that this particular question had been in most of your minds while reading through the book: What is the advantage of the female orgasm? And additionally, the book didn't really answer its title question: Why exactly *is* sex fun?

The only answers the book provided were a) Recreational sex is important to conserve monogamy b) recreational sex is a by-product of concealed ovulation which is also important to ensure monogamy

Well, okay. But the book didn't go any deeper than that and ask the question why sex is fun in the first place,

or why sex has to feel good.

5. In the book it was mentioned that there are two types of males, the "show off" and the "provider". It was also mentioned that females are better off married to the "provider" but that it's better for the male to be the "show off" because he attracts more females. So, why are females attracted to the "show off" instead of being genetically programmed to be more attracted to the "provider"?

Well, that's that.

Ashley Reid says

This was a mostly tedious book to get through. The only thing that stopped it from being 1 star was a few interesting facts and details that bumped the rating.

Ceyda says

Kitabın ço?unu Amsterdam'da okudum. Yani tam da olması gereken yerde :) Benzer kitaplar okudu?um için beklentim biraz yüksekti. Hele ki yazarı Jared Diamond olunca. Beklentilerimi tam kar??layamad?. Ama alabla ilgili ilginç ve e?lenceli bilgiler ö?renmek isteyenler için ideal.

Tristyn says

I was enjoying it up until he started discussing human lactation which immediately revealed that he knows just about nothing about the subject. "Human lactation is energetically very expensive," and nursing mothers eat like men?

This is hardly the same as eating like an active man: "Studies have shown that most healthy breastfeeding women maintain an abundant milk supply while taking in 1800-2200 (or more) calories per day."
"Breastfeeding your baby, on average, burns 200-500 calories per day" - kellymom.com

He claims lactational amenorrhea lasts for up to several years, so mothers in hunter/gatherer societies would only have children once every few years. What? Moms practicing ecological breastfeeding - breastfeeding on demand, cosleeping and nursing throughout the night, using no artificial nipples (bottles/pacis), i.e. similar to what the hunter/gatherer society model would be - average about 14.4 months of amenorrhea. In my >10 years experience of working with nursing dyads, 18-24 is about the longest I have heard claimed with any regularity, and even those moms are outliers.

He says that hunter/gatherer mothers were able to enjoy such long periods of amenorrhea because they nursed "many times each hour," whereas modern mothers nurse "only every few hours" for convenience. I am honestly not sure if Diamond's own children were only nursed for the first few months of life, or if they followed the Ezzo plan, or what. Even today, newborns nurse all the time, and breastfeeding is not about

what's convenient for the mother, but about when the baby needs to eat. Mothers who refuse to nurse more often than every 3-4 hours are likely to find that their nursing relationships don't last much beyond the switch to autocrine control, between 3-5 months. Yes, there are women who, by biological happenstance, do have higher storage capacities and can get away with less frequent emptying of the breast, but babies are babies; they have growth spurts, they teethe, they don't know how to read clocks.

So anyway, all of that was from the same page, and it annoyed me enough to actually write all this, and it leaves me disinterested in the remainder of the book on the grounds that if Diamond is this poorly informed on his own species, how can I trust what he says about others?

Emily C. says

This book was fascinating and so engaging and easy to read for a book based in biology. In it, Jared Diamond brings up numerous facts about human sexuality that we all take for granted. Humans have sex for fun whether or not they are fertile, at any time of the month or year. Human females experience a distinct decline and then abrupt stop in fertility around middle age. Women usually have little idea of when they might be ovulating (unless they are using some form of modern technology to tell them). These simple facts of life which most of us accept as normal, are actually very, very odd in the rest of the animal kingdom. Diamond discusses how these traits and behaviors evolved and how they make us uniquely human.

I loved this book. Diamond is like a great professor of any subject--he makes you excited to go out and talk about his subject to your friends and to learn more on your own time.

I never thought I would like a non-fiction book about biology so much.
