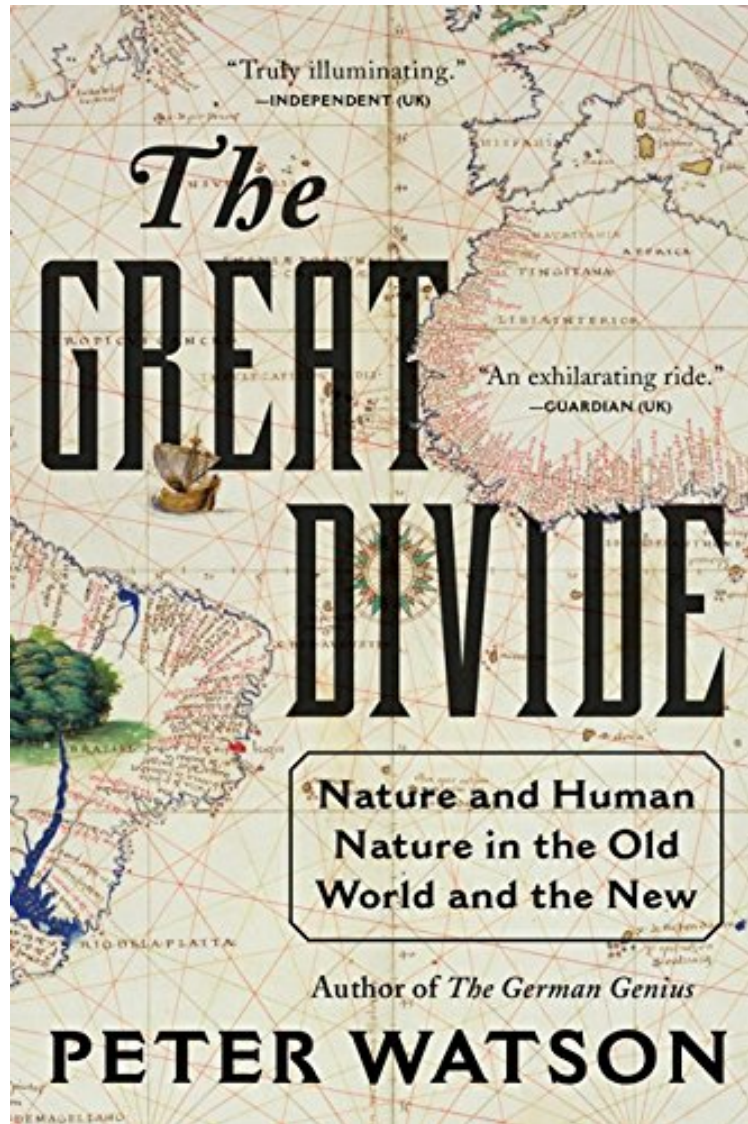


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The Great Divide: Nature and Human Nature in the Old World and the New

Peter Watson

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Peter Watson : The Great Divide: Nature and Human Nature in the Old World and the New before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great Divide: Nature and Human Nature in the Old World and the New:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. CHEW ON THIS By Juliet Waldron The subtitle is: Nature and Human Nature in the Old World and the New which comes close to a summing up, for this is history roughly, from

15,000 BC to 1500 AD--as seen through a compound eye composed of studies in archeology, anthropology, geology, meteorology, climatology and mythology. Its a massive (and often unwieldy) synthesis, with ideas and theories drawn from many disciplines, used to support a thesis about why the cultures of the New World evolved differently to the cultures of Asia, Africa and Europe, and, further, why the discovery of the 15th Century caused the great western civilizations to so speedily collapse. The wandering, highly speculative subject matter might drive a scientific specialist crazy, but as a writer and an avid reader of popular works by Jared Diamond, Barry Cunliffe, Brian Fagan, Spencer Wells, Bryan Sykes, J.P. Mallory et al, I couldnt stop turning pages. There were points at which I was off the bus, but the No Way! moments didnt, in the end, detract from my overall enjoyment. Copious notes and reference material are provided for further research. There is plenty here to provoke, educate and entertain. (Originally reviewed for the Historical Novel Society.)28 of 30 people found the following review helpful. Beautifully written; a delight for the mainstream readerBy Anne RiceBooks like this have to be beautifully written. If they weren't, I doubt anyone would read them. What the book offers is an interpretative overview of history that is well documented and makes for compelling reading. There is a wealth of material here and great bibliography. A book like this prompts us to put in coherent form what we know about thousands and thousands of years of history. And I think our minds long for this coherence, long to make sense of the tons of data we have accumulated in modern times about our past, and the wilderness of specialized studies published every day that are too numerous for any one reader to ever fully examine. --- I found this highly readable and entertaining, an excellent book for the scholar and a delight for the mainstream reader who loves history and has wondered about many mysterious cultural developments and whether they are at all related. Quite an achievement. Quite a find. Highly recommended.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. OutstandingBy jan wintersIf you are a big picture person, this book is for you. Like Watson's History of Human Thought and Intellectual History of the Twenty Century, this book is meant to provoke you to think through some serious questions. Why would the people of the two hemispheres who share common ancestors develop so differently? I suspect most of us don't take the time to keep up with current research in different fields and most academics would be too cautious to make sweeping generalizations. Mr. Watson has attempted again to connect the dots from new research and to try to identify possible explanations - that have a rational basis - to age old questions. He is excellent at synthesizing and finding patterns.A highly readable, thought provoking and an important contribution.

In *The Great Divide*, acclaimed author and historian Peter Watson explores the development of humankind between the Old World and the New, and offers a groundbreaking new understanding of human history. By 15,000 BC, humans had migrated from northeastern Asia across the frozen Bering land bridge to the Americas. When the last Ice Age came to an end, the Bering Strait refilled with water, dividing America from Eurasia. This division continued until Christopher Columbus voyaged to the New World in the fifteenth century. *The Great Divide* compares the development of humankind in the Old World and the New between 15,000 BC and AD 1,500. Combining the most up-to-date knowledge in archaeology, anthropology, geology, meteorology, cosmology, and mythology, Peter Watson's masterful study offers uniquely revealing insight into what it means to be human.

Watson's fascinating theme compares the two great populations in the Americas and the 'Old World', separated in 15,000 BC, when the ice Age ended and the Bering Strait land bridge became submerged. * THE LADY * This is a fascinating doorstopper of a work * THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST * Watson gathers academic research from numerous disciplines into a comparatively reader-friendly form. * THE HERALD * From the Back Cover Exploring the development of humankind between the Old World and the New from 15,000 BC to AD 1500 the acclaimed author of *Ideas and The German Genius* offers a groundbreaking new understanding of human history. Why did Asia and Europe develop far earlier than the Americas? What were the factors that accelerated or impeded development? How did the experiences of Old World inhabitants differ from their New World counterparts and what factors influenced those differences? In this fascinating and erudite history, Peter Watson ponders these questions central to the human story. By 15,000 BC, humans had migrated from northeastern Asia across the frozen Bering land bridge to the Americas. When the world warmed up and the last Ice Age came to an end, the Bering Strait refilled with water, dividing America from Eurasia. This division with two great populations on Earth, each unaware of the other continued until Christopher Columbus voyaged to the New World in the fifteenth century. *The Great Divide* compares the development of humankind in the Old World and the New between 15,000 BC and AD 1500. Watson identifies three major differences between the two worlds: climate, domesticable mammals, and hallucinogenic plants that combined to produce very different trajectories of civilization in the two hemispheres. Combining the most up-to-date knowledge in archaeology, anthropology, geology, meteorology, cosmology, and mythology, this unprecedented, masterful study offers uniquely revealing insight into what it means to be human. About the Author Peter Watson has been a senior editor at the London Sunday Times, a New York correspondent of the London Times, a columnist for the London Observer, and a contributor to the New York Times. He has published three exposés on the world of art and antiquities, and is the author of several books of cultural and intellectual history. From 1997 to 2007 he was a research associate at

the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research at the University of Cambridge. He lives in London.