



Harvey Whitehouse

# Inheritance

The Evolutionary Origins of the Modern World

*Inheritance* offers a revolutionary new way to make sense of our past, present, and future: revealing how a handful of biologically evolved biases have been shaping human history for thousands of years – from the emergence of the first states and the birth of the world religions to political polarisation and the climate crisis.

‘An insightful and breathtaking exploration of humanity’s evolutionary baggage that explains some of our species’ greatest successes and failures.’

**YUVAL NOAH HARARI**  
author of *Sapiens*

‘A bold and sweeping analysis that ranges widely through time, across geographies and through different kinds of human societies.  
A book of rare ambition and scope.’

**PETER FRANKOPAN**  
author of *The Silk Roads*

‘This fascinating book combines ground-breaking research with compelling storytelling to reveal how humanity’s deepest tendencies towards conforming, believing and belonging have profoundly shaped our many histories and current realities . . . Profoundly thought-provoking.’

**KATE RAWORTH**  
author of *Doughnut Economics*

‘A profoundly important book, of breathtaking scope. Whitehouse shows how evolution sculpted our psychological make-up, how we overcame its limitations over the course of world history, and how we can wield this knowledge to face the challenges of the future. Full of deep insights into human nature, this is a work of compelling conviction by a master in the field.’

**LEWIS DARTNELL**  
author of *Being Human*

‘If you spend a lot of time thinking the world seems to have gone mad, bad and dangerous, this thoughtful and thought-provoking book won’t just help you work out why that might be – it will also help you see a better path forward.’

**KRISHNAN GURU-MURTHY**

*Channel 4 News presenter*

‘A very powerful, provocative and inspiring analysis of the human condition . . . Compelling and highly readable, this book shows why anthropology matters.’

**GILLIAN TETT**

*Provost of King’s College, Cambridge*

‘A brilliant synthesis of insights from psychology, anthropology, and big historical data analytics that throws penetrating light on the evolutionary trajectories of human societies, and on how we collectively can shape a better future for humanity.’

**PETER TURCHIN**

*author of *End Times**

‘A compelling, thoughtful, nuanced and ultimately hopeful new perspective on our history, present crises and future potential . . . A masterpiece – important, thought-provoking and great fun to read.’

**KATE FOX**

*author of *Watching the English**

‘This lucid and original book is important not only as a guide to underlying dynamics in contemporary society but also as an exemplary interweaving of approaches from the natural and social sciences.’

**RICHARD WRANGHAM**

*author of *Catching Fire**

‘Remarkably readable . . . Whitehouse offers a powerful argument that the behaviour change we need is more likely to occur if we make use of our evolved human nature, rather than seek to transcend it.’

**PETER SINGER**

*author of *Animal Liberation**

