



The Human Age: The World Shaped By Us

Diane Ackerman

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Winner of the 2015 National Outdoor Book Award for Natural History Literature and the 2015 PEN New England Henry David Thoreau Prize.

A dazzling, inspiring tour through the ways that humans are working with nature to try to save the planet.

Ackerman is justly celebrated for her unique insight into the natural world and our place in it. In this landmark book, she confronts the unprecedented reality that one prodigiously intelligent and meddlesome creature, *Homo sapiens*, is now the dominant force shaping the future of planet Earth.

Humans have "subdued 75 percent of the land surface, concocted a wizardry of industrial and medical marvels, strung lights all across the darkness." We tinker with nature at every opportunity; we garden the planet with our preferred species of plants and animals, many of them invasive; and we have even altered the climate, threatening our own extinction. Yet we reckon with our own destructive capabilities in extraordinary acts of hope-filled creativity: we collect the DNA of vanishing species in a "frozen ark," equip orangutans with iPads, and create wearable technologies and synthetic species that might one day outsmart us. With her distinctive gift for making scientific discovery intelligible to the layperson, Ackerman takes us on an exhilarating journey through our new reality, introducing us to many of the people and ideas now creating—perhaps saving—our future and that of our fellow creatures.

A beguiling, optimistic engagement with the changes affecting every part of our lives, *The Human Age* is a wise and beautiful book that will astound, delight, and inform intelligent life for a long time to come.

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