



This Is Your Brain on Parasites: How Tiny Creatures Manipulate Our Behavior and Shape Society

Kathleen McAuliffe

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Based on a wildly popular *Atlantic* article: an astonishing investigation into the world of microbes, and the myriad ways they control how other creatures — including humans — act, feel, and think

As we are now discovering, parasites — microbes that cannot thrive and reproduce without another organism as a host — are shockingly sophisticated and extraordinarily powerful. In fact, a plethora of parasites affect our behavior in ways we have barely begun to understand.

In this mind-bending book, McAuliffe reveals the eons-old war between parasites and other creatures that is playing out in our very own bodies. And more surprising still, she uncovers the decisive role that parasites may have played in the rise and demise of entire civilizations. Our obsession with cleanliness and our experience of disgust are both evolutionary tools for avoiding infection, but they evolved differently for different populations. Political, social, and religious differences among societies may be caused, in part, by the different parasites that prey on us. In the tradition of Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and Neil Shubin's *Your Inner Fish*, *This Is Your Brain on Parasites* is both a journey into cutting-edge science and a revelatory examination of what it means to be human.

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