



## THE HUMAN EVOLUTIONARY TRAJECTORY

**The human evolutionary trajectory:** It is hypothesized that at the point of departure from other primates, humans had achieved a combination of ecological dominance and social complexity that led to cooperation-to-compete against conspecifics becoming the evolutionary function of continued group living. A balance-of-power race was thereby engendered that led to a kind of runaway social competition which accelerated the evolution of psychical complexity. The tripping of this combination of events was presumably aided by cooperative hunting, group territoriality, and group defense of females (all by, at first, related males). The result was an extreme departure of humans from related species, most particularly in the complexity of the psyche. Chimpanzees (alone) are similar to humans in all of these regards, and are also most like humans psychically. It is hypothesized that they have failed to embark on a similar trajectory because of the presence of humans (restricting, directly and indirectly, their ecological dominance). It is also presumed that any species which achieved a position above and beyond that of chimpanzees or the early human ancestor in the diagram (that is, with greater ecological dominance and a more complex sociality and psyche) would also assume a trajectory like that of humans, that such species would be in direct and exceedingly severe competition with one another, and that this effect accounts for the absence of extant species more similar to humans than chimpanzees. Gorillas and orangutans would be located somewhat below and behind chimpanzees in the diagram (that is, with lower ecological dominance and less complex sociality and psyches). Positions shown for other species are merely approximations, primarily to suggest the breadth of the diagram. Presumably, primates became evolutionarily primed for the production of species likely to give rise to trajectories like those of apes and humans because of an arboreal existence, leading to stereoscopic vision, hands, and eventually a relatively complex mentality and social life. Humans and chimpanzees are also included among the few carnivorous primates, a behavioral tendency that aids group cooperativeness when group hunting accompanies it, and probably sharpens mentality in ways that contribute to success in some kinds of social competition. (Note that elephants, the largest animals on the diagram, are also the only terrestrial vegetarians that are ecologically rather dominant and also socially and psychically quite complex.)