



# Ape (Animal)

*John Sorenson*

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Apes – to look at them is to see ourselves in a mirror. Our close genetic relatives fascinate and unnerve us with their similar behaviour and social personalities. In Ape, John Sorenson delves into our contradictory relationship with the ape, which often reveals as much about us as humans as it does about the apes themselves.

From bonobos and chimpanzees to gibbons, gorillas and orangutans, Ape examines the many ways these remarkable animals are often made to serve as models for humans. Anthropologists use their behaviour to help explain human nature; scientists use them as subjects of biomedical research; and behavioural researchers experiment with the ways apes emulate us. Sorenson explores the challenges to the division between apes and humans, describing ape language experiments and efforts to cross-foster apes by raising them as human children, as well as the ethical questions and challenges presented by animal experimentation and exploitation and by the Great Ape Project, which seeks to extend human rights to these animals.

Ape also examines representations of apes in popular culture, discussing films, advertising and zoos, and considers how apes have been portrayed as caricatures of humans, demonic monsters and clowns. It also looks at the precarious future of apes, many of whom are on the brink of extinction, focusing on the bushmeat crisis in Africa, the loss of habitats and the illegal pet trade, and includes a discussion of the sanctuaries that may offer some hope for their survival.

With many appealing illustrations, Ape is an enlightening read that will challenge our perceptions of both our closest animal relations and ourselves.

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