



Gorilla (Reaktion Books - Animal)

Ted Gott, Kathryn Weir

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Since coming to international prominence in the mid-nineteenth century when English, French, and American scientists first encountered them, the gorilla's physical resemblance to humans has struck a deep chord. Gorillas quickly came to dominate evolutionary debates and grew prevalent in literature, art, film, and popular culture—they are the focus of movies such as *Congo* and the inspiration for the video game character Donkey Kong and DC Comics super villain Gorilla Grodd. In *Gorilla*, Ted Gott and Kathryn Weir provide a compelling and unsettling account of our relationship with these highly intelligent animals as they fight extinction due to habitat destruction, commercial hunting, and disease.

Gott and Weir describe how early European observations of gorillas in their native Africa were the genesis of literary and artistic representations such as King Kong. At the same time, gorillas became symbolic of sexuality and subconscious, uncontrolled urges, and influenced theories of criminality. It was not until Dian Fossey's research in the 1960s and 1970s that many misconceptions about the gorilla—especially their violence—were dispelled. A notable history of the gorilla's influence on our culture and its plight at the hands of humans, *Gorilla* will appeal to any animal lover wanting to learn more about this noble creature and its uncertain future.

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