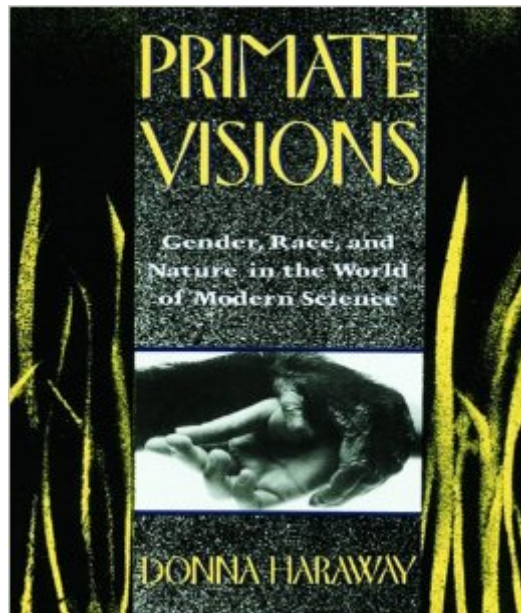


The book was found

Primate Visions: Gender, Race, And Nature In The World Of Modern Science



Synopsis

Haraway's discussions of how scientists have perceived the sexual nature of female primates opens a new chapter in feminist theory, raising unsettling questions about models of the family and of heterosexuality in primate research.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although Haraway is better known for her later Cyborg Manifesto, *Primate Visions* is arguably better and more insightful, and is certainly a clearer and more accessible work. *Primate Visions* takes the reader through the history of primatology, tracing the science's roots in racism, sexism, and colonialism. Haraway begins by outlining the early 20th century American museum exhibits that furthered the racist agenda of social Darwinism, and moves through descriptions of inhumane psychological research done on primates, the implications of young women recruited to do some of the first field work with apes (including Jane Goodall), and feminist sociobiological and anthropological theories. Haraway's intense prose is supplemented by provocative and

heart-wrenching illustrations. All in all, a book that challenges our preconceptions of scientific research as incorruptible and free of bias.

Usually when I have trouble getting through a book, I place some blame on the author for poor writing. But Haraway's writing is brilliant, just so theoretically dense that if I really want to understand, it takes me an hour to read 12-15 pages. This is an incredible work of scholarship, will change the way you think about humanity's relationship with the world.

The first paragraph of Matt Cartmill's review of Donna Haraway's *Primate Visions* book. It appeared in the *International Journal of Primatology* (Vol. 12, No. 1, 1991) This is a book that contradicts itself a hundred times; but that is not a criticism of it, because its author thinks contradictions are a sign of intellectual ferment and vitality. This is a book that systematically distorts and selects historical evidence; but that is not a criticism, because its author thinks that all interpretations are biased, and she regards it as her duty to pick and choose her facts to favor her own brand of politics. This is a book full of vaporous, French-intellectual prose that makes Teilhard de Chardin sound like Ernest Hemingway by comparison; but that is not a criticism, because the author likes that sort of prose and has taken lessons in how to write it, and she thinks that plain, homely speech is part of a conspiracy to oppress the poor. This is a book that clatters around in a dark closet of irrelevancies for 450 pages before it bumps accidentally into its index and stops; but that is not a criticism, either, because its author finds it gratifying and refreshing to bang unrelated facts together as a rebuke to stuffy minds. This book infuriated me; but that is not a defect in it, because it is supposed to infuriate people like me, and the author would have been happier still if I had blown out an artery. In short, this book is flawless, because all its deficiencies are deliberate products of art. Given its assumptions, there is nothing here to criticize. The only course open to a reviewer who dislikes this book as much as I do is to question its author's fundamental assumptions--which are big-ticket items involving the nature and relationships of language, knowledge, and science. This review alone makes me want to read it. Must be a brilliant book to have flummoxed the reviewer so.

A brilliant examination of the thought underlying the understanding of primates in Western culture with a rewarding surprise on every page.

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