



# Monkey (Animal)

*Desmond Morris*

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## **Monkey (Animal)** Desmond Morris

Monkey explores our relationship throughout history with this most playful and familiar of creatures. As humans, we tend to see monkeys as trivial or comic creatures; indeed our dictionaries define 'monkeying' as tampering, interfering and playing mischievous, foolish tricks. Yet it is the very playfulness inherent in our ancient monkey ancestors that underlies our success as a species. Over millions of years, we evolved from those scampering, chattering, intelligent, treetop-living creatures. Their inborn urge to explore became the bedrock of our sophisticated innovations; their love of activity became our industrious pursuit of knowledge. We owe a great debt to our monkey ancestors.

Baboons were revered in the Egypt of the Pharaohs; monkey deities feature prominently in the ancient religions of China and Japan; and in India some still afford sacred status to the langur monkey. Since Darwin our relationship with the monkey has changed, and in some sense become uneasy; our identification with their 'primitive' and sometimes destructive behaviours amplified by our knowledge of our own origins.

In *Monkey* Desmond Morris unpicks human attitudes to our mischievous cousins, and sets out to draw a true picture of these fascinating creatures and their continuing popularity in culture.

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