



Primate Neuroethology

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Primate Neuroethology From Oxford University Press

Why do people find monkeys and apes so compelling to watch? One clear answer is that they seem so similar to us—a window into our own minds and how we have evolved over millennia. As Charles Darwin wrote in his Notebook M, "He who understands baboon would do more toward metaphysics than Locke." Darwin recognized that behavior and cognition, and the neural architecture that support them, evolved to solve specific social and ecological problems. Defining these problems for neurobiological study, and conveying neurobiological results to ethologists and psychologists, is fundamental to an evolutionary understanding of brain and behavior.

The 'neuroethological' approach envisioned by Darwin, pioneered by the European ethologists, and refined by modern neurobiologists and biologists, has provided rich insights into the minds of several nonhuman animals such as bats, electric fish, and songbirds. In stark contrast, studies of the function and structure of primate brains too often focus on more general cognitive processes and neural measures (e.g., brain size), while neglecting species-typical behaviors. A more promising, and biologically plausible, approach to understanding our place in nature would be to move beyond such coarse approaches and investigate the anatomy and physiology of particular brain systems as they relate to species-typical behaviors. That is, we must develop a *neuroethology of primate behavior and cognition*.

The goal of this book is to do just that. It collects, for the first time in a single book, information on primate behavior and cognition, neurobiology, and the emerging discipline of neuroethology. Here leading scientists in several fields review work ranging from primate foraging behavior to the neurophysiology of motor control, from vocal communication to the functions of the auditory cortex. The resulting synthesis of cognitive, ethological and neurobiological approaches to primate behavior yields a richer understanding of our primate cousins that also sheds light on the evolutionary development of human behavior and cognition.



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Editorial Review

Review

"Platt and Ghazanfar have assembled what will undoubtedly become the standard text in primate neuroethology. This is a volume that should provide fresh insight for primatologists, neuroscientists and cognitive scientists as it reveals that rich interdisciplinary threads that bind these areas of scholarship together. This is a must-have book for anyone interested in primate cognition." --Paul Glimcher, Professor of Neural Science, Economics, and Psychology, New York University "Primate Neuroethology is magnificent! Michael Platt and Asif Ghazanfar have brought together the foremost experts in the fields of primate behaviour, cognition and neurobiology to create a comprehensive and accessible work in the emerging field of primate neuroethology. Weaving together the contributions of a remarkable group of scientists, they have bridged the gap between ethology and neurobiology in this authoritative-yet-provocative text." --Alan Kingstone, Distinguished University Professor in Psychology and Neuroscience, University of British Columbia "Overall, this is a comprehensive, diverse, well illustrated, and highly informative collection...without question the large amount of material and the successful approach to presenting the case for primate neuroethology make this volume the kind of resource one will return to repeatedly. So keep it centrally located on your bookshelf..." --PsycCRITIQUES "In aiming to pave over the gaps within and across the fields of ethology and neuroscience, this volume is thought provoking, keeps one focused on the central issues surrounding primate neuroethology, and is indispensable for highlighting the glory of what primate neuroscience has achieved and can yet achieve when combined with ethology. The fields of primate neuroscience and ethology are star-crossed lovers, suggest Michael Platt and Asif Ghazanfar in Primate Neuroethology. But is this just a fleeting courtship, primed to fizzle after"

About the Author

Michael Platt is Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Evolutionary Anthropology at Duke University, and Director of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience. His research focuses on the neuroethology and neuroeconomics of human and nonhuman primate behavior and cognition. Michael received his B.A from Yale and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, both in biological anthropology, and was a postdoctoral fellow in neuroscience at New York University.

Asif A. Ghazanfar is an Assistant Professor in the Neuroscience Institute and Departments of Psychology and Ecology & Evolutionary Biology at Princeton University. His research focuses on the neurobiology and evolution of primate vocal communication and how both aspects are influenced by body morphology and socioecological context. Asif received his B.Sci. in Philosophy from the University of Idaho and his Ph.D. in Neurobiology from Duke University. He was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University and a research scientist at the Max Planck Institute for Biological Cybernetics in Tuebingen, Germany before moving to Princeton.

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