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# Voracious Science And Vulnerable Animals: A Primate Scientist's Ethical Journey (Animal Lives)



## Synopsis

The National Institute of Health recently announced its plan to retire the fifty remaining chimpanzees held in national research facilities and place them in sanctuaries. This significant decision comes after a lengthy process of examination and debate about the ethics of animal research. For decades, proponents of such research have argued that the discoveries and benefits for humans far outweigh the costs of the traumatic effects on the animals; but today, even the researchers themselves have come to question the practice. John P. Gluck has been one of the scientists at the forefront of the movement to end research on primates, and in *Voracious Science and Vulnerable Animals* he tells a vivid, heart-rending, personal story of how he became a vocal activist for animal protection. Gluck begins by taking us inside the laboratory of Harry F. Harlow at the University of Wisconsin, where Gluck worked as a graduate student in the 1960s. Harlow's primate lab became famous for his behavioral experiments in maternal deprivation and social isolation of rhesus macaques. Though trained as a behavioral scientist, Gluck finds himself unable to overlook the intense psychological and physical damage these experiments wrought on the macaques. Gluck's sobering and moving account reveals how in this and other labs, including his own, he came to grapple with the uncomfortable justifications that many researchers were offering for their work. As his sense of conflict grows, we're right alongside him, developing a deep empathy for the often smart and always vulnerable animals used for these experiments. At a time of unprecedented recognition of the intellectual cognition and emotional intelligence of animals, *Voracious Science and Vulnerable Animals* is a powerful appeal for our respect and compassion for those creatures who have unwillingly dedicated their lives to science. Through the words of someone who has inflicted pain in the name of science and come to abhor it, it's important to know what has led this far to progress and where further inroads in animal research ethics are needed. Á Á

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Voracious Science and Vulnerable Animals is a brave book, because there is something in it that will anger those on different sides of the animal rights debate. . . . Any argument about the use of animals in research has to consider both the harms and the benefits involved. What Gluck gives us is a better understanding of the harms. He tells us that even with the best intentions, we sometimes inflict unnecessary pain; we sometimes start to cut open the skull of a monkey who isn't fully anaesthetised. Even with the protections of the Animal Welfare Act, Gluck argues, the contemporary practice of working with animals fails to guarantee that we respect their interests. To have the frank and open ethical conversation that Gluck thinks we should have, we need to have the curtain fully drawn back, so we can see both the array of harms and the array of benefits. Reasoning fails in the dark.” (Times Higher Education) “His book comes at an opportune time. A constellation of factors—insights into monkey intelligence, the refinement of computational and tissue-culture-based research methods, concerns about how lab-animal stress could potentially skew data—have put primates again in the public eye; questions raised about chimpanzees are being raised about other species, too. It promises to be a difficult discussion, and perhaps a necessary one.” (Chronicle of Higher Education) “This book recounts one scientist's journey from animal researcher to animal ethics activist. Gluck paints a picture of psychology-changing attitudes related to behavior and the lives of research animals and gives readers a clear look at the old-boys' world of science in the second half of the last century. . . . This is a thoughtful and sensitive account of one person's journey from an uncaring user of animal subjects to a quiet advocate who recognizes the debt that he and the entire scientific world owe to these animals. Recommended.” (Choice) “The heart of Gluck's book describes his shift from primate research to bioethics, his emergence from the dark forest where the straight path was lost. Like Dante's, his own story must have been painful to tell. Emotional callouses were not easily chafed away and professional pride not easily surrendered. . . . Gluck's career shift came at a great cost. The respect of his peers, perhaps now lost, had

meant the world to him. They didn't read his scientific papers, or not nearly as closely as he'd once believed, and they might ignore his book. Even so, there's plenty here for the layman. While Gluck remains a scientist at heart and a master of its cold prose, he writes here like a real writer. His preface and epilogue, describing the euthanising of three stump-tailed macaques, and a passage in the book's guts describing the week-long "sacrificing" of about 20 rhesus monkeys, are rendered without a sniff of mawkishness. At his best, his thoughtful style and "patient working of difficult ideas recall the writing of great nature essayist Edward Hoagland." (The Australian) "Voracious Science and Vulnerable Animals is a powerful appeal for human respect and compassion for those creatures who have unwillingly dedicated their lives to science. Gluck tells a vivid, heartrending, personal story of how he became a vocal activist for animal protection." (Publishers Weekly) "Is an animal used in scientific research an 'it' or a 'who'? This is the core theme of this gentle but powerful book. Gluck, a former primate researcher trained by Harry Harlow at the University of Wisconsin in the 1970s, who later transitioned to a career in clinical psychology at the University of New Mexico, offers a brief in favor of a massive reduction in our use of animals in experimental research, especially in psychology (though details on how precisely this is to be done are scant). . . . This brief, however, does not come in the form of a sustained philosophical argument à la Peter Singer or Tom Regan. It is not a work of formal ethics leading to a battery of "shoulds." Instead, the book is a memoir. . . . Artfully crafted insights. . . . An engaging narrative. The memoir format makes an important contribution to the history of psychology, offering firsthand recollections of Harry Harlow and other researchers at the University of Wisconsin. Gluck, like Browne, also has an eye--trained by scholarship in science studies--for how institutions, personalities, facilities, and other "external" factors shape scientific knowledge production. . . . A brilliant, forceful meditation, generous in its self-reflexivity, compassionate toward animals and scientists alike, and profound in its insights." (Psychcritiques) "A gem and a most timely work." (Psychology Today) "Gluck's Voracious Science and Vulnerable Animals is a deeply personal and courageous book about his awakening and transitioning from long-time researcher and "sacrificer" to savior of the sentient nonhuman primates with whom he had the privilege to work. It should be required reading for all people who study nonhumans or who are pondering a research career in which other animals are used and abused "in the name of science," which really translates to "in the name of humans." This book will make everyone think hard about how science is done and the ethical questions that must be discussed. Gluck's frank and principled message

will result not only in better treatment for the animals but also in better science, a win-win for all. (Marc Bekoff, author of *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals*)

“After years experimenting on monkeys in a research lab, Gluck vowed to develop a thinking heart about the terrible costs he was asking animals to pay in the name of science. In this he has succeeded brilliantly. Gluck’s memoir moved me as no other book about animals has in years. His refusal to hide behind the claim that ethical guidelines today protect primates, dogs, rabbits, and other animals used in biomedical research—they don’t, he’s absolutely right—offers a way forward in bringing about the changes we owe to our fellow sentient creatures.” (Barbara King, author of *How Animals Grieve*)

“In this beautifully written and erudite volume, Gluck tells the story of his career-length journey from a young, mainstream primate researcher to a public advocate for his former research subjects. Written by someone with an unusual command of both the science and the ethics of animal research, the chapters unfurl with several of the virtues possessed by their author: eloquence, intelligence, depth, compassion, and fairness to all concerned.” (David DeGrazia, author of *Taking Animals Seriously*)

“Gluck tells the compelling story of how his thinking about human uses of primates in research evolved. His story is one of a professional psychologist learning to think beyond the value of his scientific research by incorporating thinking about the circumstances and points of view of the animals involved in the research. Gluck assesses how human beliefs about valid and necessary research with animals can easily be incoherent with basic moral standards. This gracefully written book is a beautiful read filled with insights about how we should and should not treat animals in research.” (Tom L. Beauchamp, coeditor, *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*)

John P. Gluck is professor emeritus of psychology and a senior advisor to the president on animal research ethics and welfare at the University of New Mexico. He is also research professor of the Kennedy Institute of Ethics at Georgetown University and coauthor of *The Human Use of Animals*.

John P. Gluck has sinned mightily. But then so have I. So have the majority of human beings, knowingly or unknowingly, in their interactions with the non-human animal world. Dr. Gluck has done much over the last 20 years to atone for his youthful transgressions and by writing this book, redemption is at hand. This is an important book, one that should be required reading for every scientist engaged in animal experimentation, every student contemplating a career in animal

research, every person serving on an IACUC, and more generally by every taxpaying citizen. Because it is the latter who underwrites much of the research activity described in this book and who thereby becomes complicit in what can only be characterized as crimes against nature. The book convincingly describes how a young, impressionable scientist caught up in the pursuit of "data" and a career, nurtured in an environment that studiously avoids if not actively suppresses any ethical reflection about what is being routinely done to other sentient beings, can reach a level of moral ambivalence that allows him to do dreadful things to unwilling captives. So dreadful that most people unfamiliar with the animal laboratory landscape, or most children for that matter, would be repulsed were they not first inculcated into a culture of active insensitivity to the suffering of others. Power corrupts and absolute power, over the lives and destinies of other conscious entities like the primates in the author's lab, corrupts absolutely. The author has a real talent for succinctly stating the intellectual and ethical contradiction at the heart of animal-using research: "As scientists, then, we were Darwinians when it served the purpose of arguing that animal experimentation was relevant to understanding human functioning, but when moral questions derived from that attribute were poised to challenge the justification of animal experimentation, we became staunch noncontinuity theorists. Recognition of this essential hypocrisy was nowhere to be found in either the literature nor, as I would find, in the views of my colleagues. Similarly, there was no effort to engage in a legitimate ethical analysis or grapple with the question hanging invisibly over the whole lab building: what are the morally relevant differences between humans and animals?" My only criticism is that the author is a little too kind, a little too understanding, a little too non-judgmental in his descriptions of scientists like Harry Harlow and Stephen Suomi who built their careers by, quite simply, torturing animals. Even if these individuals were personally supportive and generous to the author, that doesn't excuse the callousness and cruelty exhibited in the design of their experiments and treatment of their laboratory animal charges. Their intellectual attainments and capacity for charitable interactions with colleagues and students do not count as a blanket pass for egregious ethical misconduct. Amon Goth was supportive and considerate of his good "friend" Oskar Schindler, but that hardly counts as exculpatory evidence for moral depravity, especially if you are a Polish Jew!

This book is fascinating and insightful. It makes the reader think about the use of animals in research a new way. I was struck by this: "What would we do if the animal could talk and said it didn't want to participate in the experiment?" This is an even-handed must read for anyone concerned with the issue.

Book arrived quickly and we were quite satisfied with the price. Our patron was very happy that we were able to satisfy her request.

What a brave man for writing about his volte face in his chosen career. Many of us can relate to having been influenced in our younger days by ways of thinking that got reversed in later life. This is a well written account of a journey from one opinion to another with lots of insight into why he had a change of heart. My only gripe was that the author seems unaware that there is a world outside the USA. He didn't mention anything that was happening in other countries- whether good or bad - and that is frustrating for those of us who are not American.

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