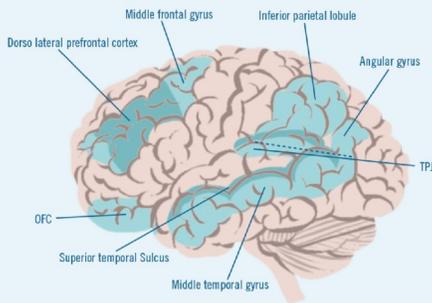


THE REALITY ABOUT MORALITY



Statement 1

Morality is a product of evolution and human experience.

Morality is derived from both the evolved biochemistry of the brain and sociocultural influences. Displayed above are some of the neuroanatomical structures associated with morality. (Pascual et al, 2013)

Statement 2

Morality is not exclusive to human beings; elements of it can be found in other animal relationships.



Empathy, fairness, reciprocity and other moral behaviors preceded the emergence of human religions by thousands of years. (de Waal, 2013)



Statement 3

Because morality is acquired through evolution, it exists in all societies and cultures.

Because they occur universally in all human cultures with no known exceptions, moral universals like the ones displayed here are most likely evolved psychological phenomena. (Brown, 1991)

Statement 4

Infants exhibit signs of morality even before they have experienced much of the world.



Recent infant morality research shows that, starting at 14 months of age, infants help others spontaneously without the expectation of any reward. (Warneken & Tomasello, 2007)

The Infographic

The Brights' *Reality about Morality Infographic* presents – in a format well-suited for sharing on social networking websites, posters and via other print media – simplified versions of the four scientific statements validated by the project's panel of academic reviewers.

Our team of academic reviewers for the project:

Debra Lieberman, Ph.D.

The University of Miami

Donald Brown, Ph.D.

University of California, Santa Barbara

Frans de Waal, Ph.D.

Emory University

Herbert Gintis, Ph.D.

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Jessica Pierce, Ph.D.

The University of Colorado

Joshua D. Greene, Ph.D.

Harvard University

Oliver Scott Curry, Ph.D.

The University of Oxford

Peter DeScioli, Ph.D.

Stony Brook University

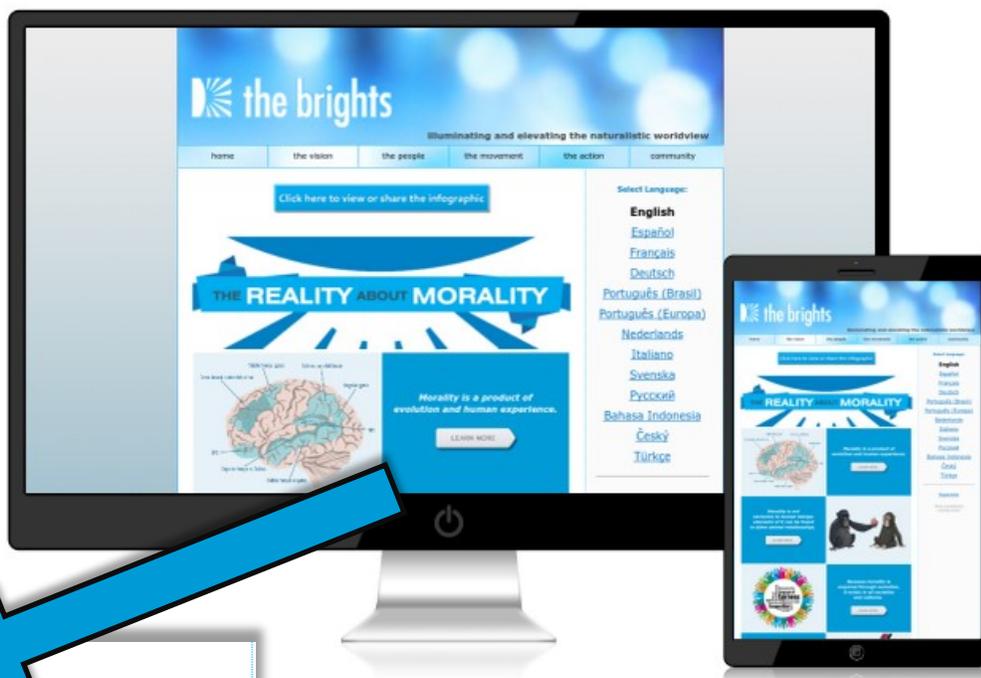
Peter Singer

Princeton University

The Brights' Net has also compiled for the public a list of the academic reviewers' most highly recommended readings on the subject of human morality.

The Web Portal

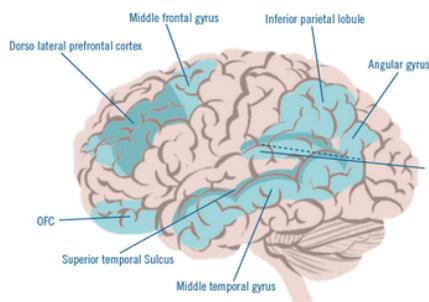
At The Brights' **Reality about Morality Web Portal** visitors can access the actual **validated scientific statements** along with **supplemental explanations** of the concepts presented on the infographic. They can also view the **bibliography of 150 scientific studies** serving as evidence.



Scientific Statement #1

Morality is an evolved repertoire of cognitive and emotional mechanisms with distinct biological underpinnings, as modified by experience acquired throughout the human lifespan.*

Morality is derived from both the evolved biochemistry of the brain and sociocultural influences. Displayed below are the neuroanatomical structures associated with morality (Pascual et al., 2013).



Is human morality a product of nature? Of nurture? There has been a long dispute in the social sciences about which is responsible. The debate has largely been unproductive. It seems that morality results from both nature and nurture.[1][2]

Nature already supplies many elements of

humanity's moral psychology. Research in the evolutionary behavioral sciences has accumulated strong evidence: the hardware of our brains is pre-programmed with propensities for moral judgment. We are ready to feel shame or exhibit cooperation.[3] We are already outfitted for empathy, altruism, and compassion.[4]

So, too, do we come readily equipped for what most people regard as immoral behavior. Because of our brains, humans are capable of violence. We are prepared to sometimes inflict pain.[5][6]

Humans are geared by nature toward learning ethical behavior from their social environments.[7] So, as we live, nurture is also at work. Upbringing by family members counts. Socialization by peers and communities about "right" or "wrong" is critical to shaping conduct.[8][9]

Reconciling these disparate parts of ourselves requires an understanding of humankind's social and cognitive complexity. One thing is clear from the research: religious imperative is not necessary for morality.[10] Research shows that such moral sentiments encourage our caring for and helping others evolved independently of religion.[11][12]

[Click here to show/hide endnotes](#)



Statement #2



A great many of the bibliography entries are directly accessible from the web portal via a simple click on the small PDF icon next to each entry. (See below.)

Welcome to the Web's first one-stop-shop for human morality research!

aslow, L. R., Willer, R., Feinberg, M., Piff, P. K., Clark, K., Keltner, D., & O'Donoghue, S. R. (2012). My brother's keeper? Compassion predicts generosity more among less religious individuals. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4, 31-38. 

Hariri, A.F. & Norenzayan, A. (2007). God is watching you: Priming God concepts increases prosocial behavior in an anonymous economic game. *Psychological Science*, 18, 803-809. 

Wernke, T., Kiebel, S.J., Winston, J.S., Kaube, H., Dolan, R.J., & Frith, C.D. (2004). Brain responses to the acquired moral status of faces. *Neuron*, 41, 653-664. 

Blair, R. J. P., Golan, O., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2002). Selective impairment of reasoning about social exchange in a patient with bilateral amygdala system damage. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 99, 11531-11536. 

Blair, R. J. P., Richeson, J. D., Golan, O., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2002). Reduced frontotemporal perfusion in psychopathic personality. *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging*, 114(2), 81-94. 

Yakahashi, H., Yahata, N., Koeda, M., Matsuda, T., Asai, K., & Okubo, Y.

www.the-brights.net/morality

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