



I'm not robot



Continue

The moral animal robert wright

Robert Wright is the bestselling author of three scholars and their gods, *The Moral Animal*, *Nonzero*, and most recently, *The Evolution of God*, which was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. His books have been translated into more than a dozen languages, and his awards include the National Magazine Award for Essay and Critique. A contributing editor for *The New Republic*, Wright has also written for *The Atlantic Monthly*, the *New Yorker*, *Time*, and *Slate.com*. He is a senior research fellow at the New America Foundation and editor-in-chief of the website *Bloggingheads.tv*. He lives in Princeton, New Jersey, with his wife and their two daughters. Every so often the world of ideas is shaken by what the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn famously dubbed a paradigm shift. As Robert Wright shows in this groundbreaking book, such a shift is happening now - one that will change the way people see their lives and the way they choose to live their lives. From the work of evolutionary biologists and scholars across social sciences, a new science called evolutionary psychology is emerging, and with it a radically revised view of human nature and the human mind. In light of, the oldest and most basic questions look different and entirely new questions arise. Are men and women really built for monogamy? What forms of self-deception are favored by evolution, and why? How and why do childhood experiences make a person more or less conscientious? What is the evolutionary logic behind office politics - or politics in general? Why is there a love-hate relationship between siblings? When, if ever, is love really pure? Is the human sense of justice - and just retribution - innate? Does it really serve justice? This clearly written book is set in an appropriate context: the life and work of Charles Darwin. Wright not only shows which of Darwin's ideas about human nature have survived the test of time, he retells - from the seen from evolutionary psychology - the stories of Darwin's marriage, his family life, and his career ascension. All three look like they've never looked before. *The Moral Animal* challenges us to see ourselves, for good and evil, under the clarifying lens of evolutionary psychology. Wright argues strongly that although many of our moral feelings have a deep biological basis, so do our tendency to fool us though our goodness. If we want to live a truly moral life, we must first understand what kind of animals we are. 1994 book by Robert Wright *The Moral Animal* Cover of the first editionAuthorRobert WrightCountryUnited statesLanguageEnglishSubjectsSocial evolution, Evolutionary Psychology, Morality, EthicsPublisherVintage BooksPublication date1994Media typePrint (Hardcover and Paperback)Pages466 pages (paperback)ISBN0-679-76399-6 (1st edition, hardcover)OCLC33496013 *The Moral Animal* is a 1994 book by the journalist Robert Wright, in the author explores many aspects of everyday life through evolutionary biology. Overview This section must be expanded. You can help by adding to it. (April 2020) Wright explores many aspects of everyday life through evolutionary biology. He provides Darwinian explanations of human behavior and psychology, social dynamics and structures, as well as people's relationships with lovers, friends and family. Wright borrows extensively from Charles Darwin's better-known publications, including *On the Origin of Species* (1859), but also from his chronicles and personal writings illustrating behavioral principles with Darwin's own biographical examples. Reception *The New York Times* Book Review chose *The Moral Animal* as one of the 12 best books of 1994; It was a national bestseller and has been published in 12 languages. Paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould criticized the book in *The New York Review of Books*. [1] The anthropologist Melvin Konner called the book lovely. [2] See also Evolutionary Ethics evolutionary psychology John Stuart Mill Kin selection Mutual altruism Richard Dawkins Steven Pinker *The Naked Ape* References ^ Gould, Stephen Jay. *Evolution: The Pleasures of Pluralism*, *The New York Review of Books*. June 26. ^ Konner, Melvin. *The tangled wing: Biological limitations on the human spirit*. Times Books, 2002, p. 498. Bibliographic information Robert Wright (1995-08-29). *The Moral Animal: Why We Are, the Way We Are: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology*. Vintage. ISBN 978-0-679-76399-4. External links Stevin Pinker's *New York Times* Book Review article on *The Moral Animal*. Booknotes interview with Wright on *Moral Animal*, January 8, 1995. This article about an evolution-related book is a stub. You can help Wikipedia by expanding it.vte Downloaded from Flipkart Internet Private Limited, Buildings Alyssa, Begonia & Clove Embassy Tech Village, Outer Ring Road, Devarabeesanahalli Village, Bengaluru, 560103, Karnataka, India CIN : U51109KA2012PTC066107 Phone: 1800 208 9898 First of all: an uncritical read of this book will leave you cynical feeling and a bit cheated. It ranks up there with E.O. Wilson's *Sociobiology* and Richard Dawkins' *The Selfish Gene* (though I'll admit that I know the two mainly by reputation, having read excerpts and not their hellies). It would be very easy to find yourself getting defensive about the material presented in here, especially if you think that humans are a special exception among animals. Meanwhile, with a more critical approach, you'll find that you can't get Robert Wright's text out of your head: it's insightful, intellectually rigorous, impartial, and sometimes palpably funny. Plus, you will find that it informs a wide range (all?) of human discourse (verbal or otherwise) that you encounter daily – how certain traits and behaviors came to be and the functions they serve. Do not ask about their intentions themselves; We must remember that evolution is speechless, after all. Put most succinctly: We are built to be efficient animals, not happy. What Robert Wright is tasked with doing with *The Moral Animal* is taking Darwin's life and oeuvre (primarily *The Origin of Species*), hitting them with two other important modern writings (John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism and Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help*), and using this lens to conduct a thorough analysis and discussion of Darwinism and evolution, how human civilizations evolved as a consequence of mutual altruism And capsizes all of this as the basis for what Wright calls evolutionary psychology. Wright's choice of style is interesting and reminds me vaguely of Hofstadter's Gödel, Escher, Bach: meticulous and technical scientific discussions about biology, genetics and evolution are interspersed with almost whimsical tales describing the life and times of Charles Darwin. For each page quoting Robert Trivers or Richard Dawkins, there is another that cites Darwin's personal correspondence or illustrates the background of the Victorian community. Wright's is an interesting and compelling approach that makes this text very engaging and accommodating. Which does not suggest that the material is easy to follow; Wright didn't shy away from getting closer and heavier as work progressed – there were many cases I found that I needed to double-back over certain passages to get it. Again, for as close and technical as much of Wright's writing is, he throws himself wholeheartedly into the text and makes the material come to life. There is something strangely erotic about his in-depth scientific analysis of mate competition, cockrough, and evolutionary strategizing. There's something perversely amusing about his apples-to-oranges comparisons of Darwin and Freud. There is something aptly voyeuristic about reading letters from Darwin to friends and seeing how they reflect elements of his own theories. In many ways, Wright's eloquent prose is the currency to get us through some very challenging material. As I have already discussed, there is the implicit challenge of reading technical literature (especially as a layman). More so, however, is the explicit challenge that Wright puts out early in the text: that we all carry a great deal of cultural baggage that sets us up to reject the logical conclusions of Darwinism and evolutionary psychology. Wright spends the first half of the text building up to the discussions that give the book its title. By the time we get to part three: *Social Strife*, it's no wonder why Wright keeps circling back on the example of bluegill sunfish and the equilibrium between nest builders and mate poachers. The animal kingdom does not seem to contain a more succinct microcosm of industry versus opportunism, of cost/benefit economies and stability through constant adjustments in strategy. The cornerstone of the second half of *The Moral Animal* is mutual altruism, a theory introduced in the early 1970s by Robert Trivers. Wright gives mutual altruism the thorough treatment: he describes how it can (must?) have evolved, the benefits it bestows on an organism (or more precisely its genes), how mutual altruism gave rise to human societies and civilizations, and feedback loop between society and biology (i.e. meme and gene) as mediated through the extremely complex manifestation of mutual altruism in humans. At first glance, Wright's account may seem cynical and deterministic: even on our best behavior, we are just a product of our genes - even agape presupposes a pay-off in the form of a more loving and stable society for our offspring. Swing such a cynical evaluation around to the other end and you use these postulates for justification for extramarital affairs, for rape and for genocide, or for whatever other Twinkie Defense you may suspect. Wright is very conscious of this and tries to be very delicate and conscious in his treatment of all this; he even goes so far as to describe it as postmodern morality, and he summarily regards these conclusions as harmful and naive. (Perhaps he is so explicit about this because he wants to avoid being condemned in the same way as E.O. Wilson when he published *Sociobiology*.) Wright suggests that if something separates humans from animals, it is self-reflection, the capacity we have to evaluate our actions (and the actions of others) and thus judge those actions. Wright argues that although the content of our judgments (and our abilities to make these judgments) are developed trends that we can at some level make choices about the veracity of a given action; that our memes (though he distances himself from this word) and genes interact, and we express agency in our development. Of course, he also seems to warn us that there is a great deal of cultural transfer going on in human development right now, and that the meme transmission is fragile and weak even in the best of conditions. Hyperbolic though it may sound, Wright seems to suggest that we are a catastrophic event away to be free agents in the game game all this is the claim that mutual altruism is a non-zero-sum game in which each player (i.e. the genes that make an effort through the organism to reproduce) acts as a kind of accountant of favors. Each organism plays life and evolution as a game where sometimes the best move is to take a short-term loss, where sometimes the best move is to take a little more than what you owe, but not as much as you could exploit. In a way, this is a hopelessly romantic view of evolution – that even despite the ubiquitous short half-life of any pleasure, an organism can still choose a small short-term victim of a greater long-term gain. By reading the whole of Wright's argument, however, it is surely reasonable to assume that this is a pragmatic trait, that it is a complexly developed response system for economies of scarcity – that there is actually nothing romantic about charity or sacrifice or romance or the outlaw exploits. Mechanistic, we are all cogs in the eternal motion machine of evolution's equilibrium. And as such, our morality (or lack thereof) is the motions of this machine balancing itself. I could see how some, maybe many may find this thought is disturbing. With his retelling of Darwin's tale, Wright illustrates a Copernican re-enthing of humanity, its origins and even its humanity. As mentioned above, it can be easy to cut out parts of this hypothesis and serve them in cynical isolation. Overall, it is a strongly composed view of humanity's genetic and cultural make-up, the forces that drove us to where we are, and the agency we can express over our destiny. ... More... More