

## That warm, fuzzy feeling

adapted from an article by **Paul Bloom**

- 1 **M**ANY scientists who study morality are interested in why people behave badly, but I am more curious to understand why we are so nice. It seems that much of it is part of human nature, not the product of culture or parenting. The economist Adam Smith pointed out long ago that when you see somebody in pain, you feel it — to an extent — as if it were your own, and you are motivated to make it go away. Modern research shows this is true even of babies. When babies hear crying, they cry, and if they see someone suffer, even silently, they become distressed. As soon as they can move, babies will try to help. They'll stroke the person, or hand over a toy or bottle.
- 2 In my own research, I have been studying the development of our capacity to judge the behaviour of others as right or wrong. I created a set of short plays for babies using puppets. In one, a character would struggle to get up a hill. One puppet would help him; another would push him down. I then presented each baby with the two puppets. Even those as young as 6 months old tended to reach for the "good guy", suggesting that this is who they prefer. I also created plays in which one puppet does neither good nor bad, and I found that babies reach for a good guy over a neutral guy, but would rather reach for a neutral than a bad guy. This suggests babies are both drawn towards the good guy and away from the bad.
- 3 More recently, I explored the judgements of 3-month-olds. Although babies that young cannot coordinate their actions well enough to reach for something, I knew from the previous study that babies first tend to look to where they're going to reach. As predicted, they looked at the good guy, and not at the bad guy, suggesting that they, too, favour this character.
- 4 Are these true moral judgements? It's an open question. One might ask, for instance, whether babies are motivated to reward the good character and punish the bad — this is the focus of ongoing work. At minimum, though, we can conclude that babies are 14 third-party interactions of a positive and negative nature, and that this influences how they behave. They have, then, the foundations of morality.
- 5 Can these inborn inclinations explain the scope of human kindness? Probably not. Babies prefer the familiar: they prefer to hear their native language rather than a foreign one; babies raised in white households prefer to look at white faces while those raised in black households prefer black faces and these preferences grow into biases and behaviours. At around 9 months, they'll show stranger anxiety and, later on, sort themselves into groups, dividing the world into us versus them, showing little sign of caring about distant others.

6        None of this is 15. Our brains have evolved through natural selection to favour those who share our genes and those with whom we continually interact. It is entirely predictable that our natural reaction to strangers is at best indifference and more typically fear and disgust.

7        A theory of human kindness needs two parts. The core of our moral sense is explained by our evolved nature, but its extension to strangers is the product of our culture, our intelligence and our imagination.

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## Tekst 5 That warm, fuzzy feeling

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- 1p 11 Where does human kindness originate from according to Adam Smith? (paragraph 1)
- A people's desire to overcome their selfishness
  - B people's identification with the misery of others
  - C people's inborn rules about what is right or wrong
  - D people's innate need to please those around them
- 1p 12 What conclusion can be drawn from the experiment described in paragraph 2?  
The babies were able to
- A evaluate the actions of the puppets.
  - B focus on the actions of just one puppet at a time.
  - C indicate why they preferred one puppet over the other.
  - D separate fiction from reality.
- 1p 13 How does paragraph 3 relate to the claims made in paragraph 2?
- A It contradicts them.
  - B It illustrates them.
  - C It modifies them.
  - D It supports them.
- 1p 14 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 4?
- A pleased with
  - B sensitive to
  - C suspicious of
  - D untroubled by
- 1p 15 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 6?
- A inevitable
  - B surprising
  - C useful
- “our natural reaction to strangers is at best indifference and more typically fear and disgust” (einde alinea 6)
- 1p 16 Citeer de eerste twee woorden van de zin die **als eerste** hiervoor een verklaring geeft.
- 1p 17 Which of the following is in line with the point made in paragraph 7?  
The human race seems to have got kindness built in,
- A but it does not necessarily extend this to strangers.
  - B but our genetic make-up is responsible for extending it to strangers.
  - C but we only extend it to strangers if we are forced to do so.

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### Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.