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Herrn Prof. Dr. Ernst Pöppel
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Lieber Ernst

I would greatly appreciate learning your reaction to the following conjecture concerning the psychology of moral emotions.

POSTULATE All moral emotions (concern for the well-being of others, shame, remorse, envy, etc.) are learned specific functions of cortico-limbic systems.

THEOREM Lesions in certain cortico-limbic sites destroy the ability to feel the corresponding moral emotions.

TEST 1 Check whether patients who have undergone lesions in their limbic systems have changed their moral behavior (e.g. have become more callous, egoistic, etc.).

TEST 2 Take a couple of dogs, or monkeys, who have lived harmoniously together for some time and have shown concern for one another. Make a lesion on the limbic system of one of them. Subject its partner to some suffering, e.g. food deprivation or mild electric shock, and watch whether the operated animal feels any concern for its partner or has become indifferent to its plight.

Best wishes for both of you.



Mario Bunge

