

# Example of essay on the biological basis for empathy

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



Psychologist Martin L. Hoffman writes that “ Since the Holocaust, cultural relativism is dead” (Hoffman, 2001). Using this emotionally charged allusion, he continues an argument stating that we no longer have the luxuries of thought that led to the belief that one cultures value is as good as another. Since I believe empathy is what makes us human, I am very interested in the biological for empathy within the brain.

A PhD student writing in Neuroscience & Neurology points out in “ I Feel Your Pain” that there is not currently in the field across the board agreement about what are the underlying structures that lead to the empathetic response. (Moya-Albiol, 2010).

The study round a connection between the prefrontal and temporal cortex, the amygdala and parts of the limbic system that included insulin and the cingulated cortex which the researchers said played a “ Fundamental role” in empathy. (Moya-Albiol, 2010).

If these findings are true, then that would mean, as the study points out, that the same cerebral circuits that wire the brain for empathy could be similar to those involved with violence.

It has been widely shown that empathy has the effect of reducing violence behavior, and it could be because when the brain structures are in use by one emotion it may prevent the other. The researchers see this as positive and could lead to educating people to be more empathetic as a way of bringing about peace and reducing conflict in the world.

The Moya-Albiol study is in line with study on empathetic deficits following prefrontal brain damages as studied by researchers from The University of Haifa collaborating with the Rambam Medical Center. Their work found that “

Impaired empathic response [had] been described in patients following brain injury. (S. G. Shamay-Tsoory, R. Tomer, B. D. Berger, and J. Aharon-Peretz, 2003).

These researchers admit more work needs to be done before confident conclusions can be drawn from their work.

## **References**

Hoffman, Martin L.. Empathy and moral development: implications for caring and

justice. Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Print.

Moya-Albiol, L., Herrero, N. y Bernal, M. C. Bases neuronales de la empatía. Revista

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