

## **CILIPS COVID-19 Book Reviews – Moral Tribes**

**Reviewer name:** Scott Main

**Book title:** Moral Tribes

**Author name:** Joshua Greene

**Genre:** Social Psychology

**Overall Rating:** Excellent

**Brief summary:**

Professor Joshua Greene (<http://www.joshua-greene.net/>) and ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua\\_Greene\\_\(psychologist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joshua_Greene_(psychologist))) is the director of Harvard University's Moral Cognition Lab. He offers a grand synthesis of neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy here. His thesis in this book, 'Moral Tribes', is as follows. Human brains have evolved for tribal life, for getting along with a select group of others ('Us'). Our hominid ancestors had to fight off everyone else ('Them'). Modern life, though, has thrust the world's tribes into shared spaces, creating conflicts of interest and clashes of values, along with unprecedented opportunities. As the world shrinks, the moral lines that divide us become more salient and more puzzling. We fight over everything from tax codes to gay marriage to global warming. We wonder where, if at all, we can find common ground. 'Moral Tribes' reveals the underlying causes of modern conflict and suggests a way forward. Our emotions make us social animals, having concern for those around us. But they also make us tribal animals, turning Us against Them. Our tribal emotions make us fight, sometimes with bombs, sometimes with words, and often with life-and-death stakes. Drawing inspiration from moral philosophy and contemporary science, 'Moral Tribes' shows when we should trust our instincts, when we should use reason. The great challenge is this: How can we get along with Them when what they want feels so wrong? Finally, Greene offers a surprisingly simple set of maxims for navigating the modern moral terrain, a practical road map for solving problems and living better lives. Whether you approve of multi-culturalism or not, this is a thought-provoking read about how, if at all, humans can get along in a globalised world. To decide for yourself, check your local library catalogue or further bibliographic detail here (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Moral-Tribes-Emotion-Reason-Between/dp/1782393390>) Listen to Joshua Greene in a 'philosophy bites' podcast in which he discusses the subject of the construction of thought. Available here (<http://philosophybites.com/2015/10/joshua-d-greene-on-the-construction-of-thought.html>) 432 pages in Atlantic Books First published 2015 ISBN 978-1782393399

**What you liked:** Gets one thinking hard about the nature of moral conflict

**Who should read this book?:** Anyone interested in moral conflict in a globalised world