



Why Only Humans Weep: Unravelling the Mysteries of Tears

Ad Vingerhoets

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Crying has fascinated mankind for millenia. Since ancient times, we have known that emotional tears are a unique human characteristic. Unsurprisingly, over hundreds of years, scholars from different backgrounds have speculated about the origin and functions of human tears. According to Charles Darwin, tears fulfilled no adaptive function. And yet, this seems in sharp contrast to statements in the popular media about the significance of crying. Crying is thought to bring relief and is considered healthy - and withholding tears unhealthy. In addition, tears have been said to inhibit aggression in assaulters and to promote social bonding. Perhaps that could explain why tears have been so important in our evolution.

Ad Vingerhoets is one of the few scientists in the world to have studied crying. He examines in *Why only humans weep* which claims about crying are scientifically tenable - which are fact and which are fiction? Though a psychologist, he doesn't just restrict himself to the current psychological literature, but also explores work in evolutionary biology, neurosciences, theology, art, history, and anthropology to provide an integrated perspective on this complex phenomenon. Written throughout in an academically accessible style, this book is groundbreaking in contributing to a modern scientific understanding of crying. It will have broad appeal to psychologists, psychiatrists, philosophers, biologists, and anthropologists.

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