



Evolution of Mind, Brain, and Culture (Penn Museum International Research Conferences)

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Descartes boldly claimed: "I think, therefore I am." But one might well ask: Why do we think? How? When and why did our human ancestors develop language and culture? In other words, what makes the human mind human?

Evolution of Mind, Brain, and Culture offers a comprehensive and scientific investigation of these perennial questions. Fourteen essays bring together the work of archaeologists, cultural and physical anthropologists, psychologists, philosophers, geneticists, a neuroscientist, and an environmental scientist to explore the evolution of the human mind, the brain, and the human capacity for culture. The volume represents and critically engages major theoretical approaches, including Donald's stage theory, Mithen's cathedral model, Tomasello's joint intentionality, and Boyd and Richerson's modeling of the evolution of culture in relation to climate change.

No recent publication combines this breadth of evidential and theoretical perspective. The essays range in topic from the macroscopic (the evolution of social cooperation) to the microscopic (examining genetic data to infer evolutions in brain structure and function), and from the ancient (paleoanthropological reconstructions of hominin cognitive abilities) to the modern (including modern hominin's similarities to our primate cousins). Considered together, these essays constitute a fascinating, detailed look at what makes us human.

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