



## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Is the Human Mind Unique? February 2013  
carta.anthropogeny.org



**Terry Deacon** is a biological anthropologist and neuroscientist at UC Berkeley, where he is currently Chair of Anthropology. His research has brought together comparative neuroanatomy, fetal neural transplantation, semiotic theory, and evolutionary theory to try to understand the distinctiveness of human brains and their adaptations for language. His 1997 prize winning book, *The Symbolic Species: The Coevolution of Language and the Brain*, introduced the idea that many distinctive characteristics of human brains and human cognition were consequences of adaptation to the artificial niche created by the use of symbolic communication. His most recent book, *Incomplete Nature*, was published in 2012.



**Daniel Povinelli** is Professor of Biology at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Dr. Povinelli received his doctorate in physical anthropology from Yale University. His primary research interests are in characterizing the evolution of higher-order cognitive functions of the great apes and humans. He is the recipient of a National Science Presidential Young Investigator Award, The American Psychological Association's Distinguished Award for an Early Career Contribution to Psychology, and a James S. McDonnell Foundation Centennial Fellow Award. His latest book is *World Without Weight: Perspectives on an Alien Mind* (2012).



**Steven Mithen** is Professor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of International and External Engagement at the University of Reading, UK. Mithen received a BA (hons) in Archaeology at the University of Sheffield, an MSc in Biological Computation at the University of York, and his PhD is in Archaeology from the University of Cambridge (1987). His research has involved survey and excavation projects in western Scotland and southern Jordan concerning early Mesolithic and Neolithic communities, the evolution of human intelligence, art and music, and the role of water in ancient civilizations. His books include *The Prehistory of the Mind* (1996), *The Singing Neanderthals* (2005) and *Thirst: Water and Power in the Ancient World* (2012).



**Daniel Dennett** is University Professor, the Austin B. Fletcher Professor of Philosophy, and Co-Director of the Center for Cognitive Studies at Tufts University. He is the author of many books, including *Consciousness Explained* (1992), *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* (1995), and *Breaking the Spell* (2006). He is co-author, with Matthew Hurley and Reginald Adams, of *Inside Jokes: Using Humor to Reverse-Engineer the Mind* (2011). He is the 2012 recipient of the Erasmus Prize, presented at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam by Crown Prince William, honoring his work in explaining science to the general public.



**Colin Renfrew** is Emeritus Professor of Archaeology in the University of Cambridge, UK. A prehistorian, he has excavated in Greece and has worked on the origins of complex society, early trading systems, cognitive archaeology, early linguistic diversity, and archaeogenetics. He sits in the House of Lords of the UK parliament as Lord Renfrew of Kaimsthorn. He is a Foreign Associate of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA, and was a recipient of the Balzan Prize in 2004. His books include *Archaeology and Language* (1990), *The Emergence of Civilisation* (1993), and *Prehistory, the Making of the Human Mind* (2009).



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**Nicholas Humphrey** is a theoretical psychologist and senior member at Darwin College, Cambridge, UK. Dr. Humphrey is known for his work on the evolution of human intelligence and consciousness. His interests are wide ranging: he studied mountain gorillas with Dian Fossey in Rwanda, he was the first to demonstrate the existence of "blindsight" after brain damage in monkeys, he proposed the celebrated theory of the "social function of intellect," and he is the only scientist ever to edit the literary journal *Granta*. His most recent book is *Soul Dust: the Magic of Consciousness* (2011).



**Merlin Donald** is Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. A cognitive neuroscientist with a background in philosophy, he is the author of many scientific papers, and two influential books: *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition* (1991), and *A Mind So Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness* (2001). He is a Fellow of the Canadian Psychological Association, the Royal Society of Canada, and the World Academy of Art and Science.



**Patricia Smith Churchland** is Emerita Professor and former chair of Philosophy at UC San Diego, as well as adjunct Professor at the Salk Institute. Her research focuses on the interface between neuroscience and philosophy. She has authored numerous books including *Neurophilosophy* (1986), *The Computational Brain* (1992) co-authored with T. Sejnowski, *Braintrust: What Neuroscience Tells Us About Morality* (2011), and *Touching a Nerve* (in press). She has been president of the American Philosophical Association and the Society for Philosophy and Psychology, and won a MacArthur Prize in 1991 and the Rossi Prize for Neuroscience in 2008.



**V.S. Ramachandran** is Director of the Center for Brain and Cognition, Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Neurosciences at UC San Diego, as well as Adjunct Professor of Biology at the Salk Institute. Initially trained as a doctor from Stanley Medical College, India, Dr. Ramachandran subsequently obtained a Ph.D. from Trinity College at the University of Cambridge. Ramachandran's early work was on visual perception but he is best known for his experiments in behavioral neurology, which have had a profound impact on the way we think about the brain. Ramachandran has published over 180 papers in scientific journals (including five invited review articles in *Scientific American*).