

Evolving the Mind

On the Nature of Matter and the Origin of Consciousness

Evolving the Mind has two main themes: how ideas about the mind evolved in science; and how the mind itself evolved in nature. The mind came into physical science when it was realised, first, that it is the activity of a physical object, a brain, which makes a mind; and secondly, that our theories of nature are largely mental constructions, artificial extensions of an inner model of the world which we inherited from our distant ancestors. From both of these perspectives, consciousness is the great enigma. If consciousness evolved, however, it is in some sense a material thing whatever else may be said of it. Physics, chemistry, molecular biology, brain function and evolutionary biology - almost the whole of science - is involved, and there can be no expert in all these fields. So the style of the book is simple, almost conversational. The excitement is that we seem to be close to a scientific theory of consciousness.

Our minds must be considered among the wonders of the natural world. It seems hardly credible that an organised assemblage of molecules can generate vivid feelings and sensations, yet the brain is such an assemblage and it does...So, how does our conscious mind arise from our physical brain? Evolving the Mind examines this question by following two main themes: how theories of the mind have evolved in science and how the mind itself evolved in Nature. This book is written in a very accessible way. It is amusing, serious, informative and at times conversational. It starts in history and follows a trail for a physical theory of consciousness inadvertently laid down by twentieth century science.



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