



The Origin of Mind: Evolution of Brain, Cognition, and General Intelligence

David C. Geary

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Darwin considered an understanding of the evolution of the human mind and brain to be of major importance to the evolutionary sciences. This ground-breaking book sets out a comprehensive, integrated theory of why and how the human mind has developed to function as it does. Geary proposes that human motivational, affective, behavioral, and cognitive systems have evolved to process social and ecological information (e.g., facial expressions) that covaried with survival or reproductive options during human evolution.

Further, he argues that the ultimate focus of all of these systems is to support our attempts to gain access to and control of resources—more specifically, the social (e.g., mates), biological (e.g., food), and physical (e.g., territory) resources that supported successful survival and reproduction over time. In this view, Darwin's conceptualization of natural selection as a "struggle for existence" becomes, for us, a struggle with other human beings for control of the available resources.

This struggle provides a means of integrating modular brain and cognitive systems such as language with those brain and cognitive systems that support general intelligence. To support his arguments, Geary draws upon an impressive array of recent findings in cognitive science and neuroscience, as well as primatology, anthropology, and sociology.

The book also explores a number of issues that are of interest in modern society, including how general intelligence relates to academic achievement, occupational status, and income. Readers will find this book a thought-provoking read and an impetus for new theories of mind.

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