



Lucy to Language: The Benchmark Papers

J. A. J. Gowlett

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The concept of the social brain has become a popular topic in the last decade and has generated interest within the research community and contributed to a wide public examination of human culture, nature, mind, and instinct, as well as aspects of social and business organisation. At its core, the hypothesis that our social life drove the dramatic enlargement of our brain, bridges the dimensions of our evolutionary history and our contemporary experience. This has been the focus of a seven-year research project funded by the British Academy, the British Academy Centenary Research Project (otherwise known as the Lucy Project).

The main aim of the Lucy Project has been to explore these two axes in an integrated set of studies whose focus was to link archaeology and, in its broadest sense, evolutionary psychology, which offers powerful, new explanatory insights. This approach redresses the past contribution from archaeology towards the study of evolutionary issues and ties evolutionary psychology into the extensive historical data from the past, allowing us to escape the confined timeframe of the comparatively recent human mind.

In this volume of published an unpublished papers, the contributors explore the question of just what it is that makes us so different, and why and when these uniquely human capacities evolved.



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