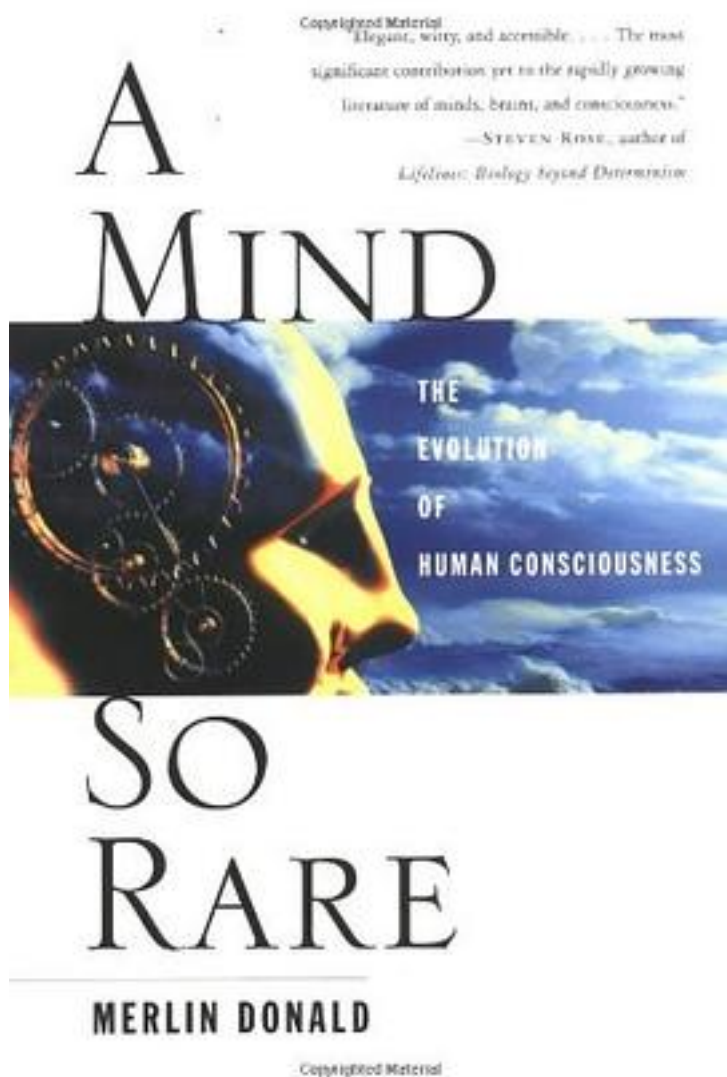


A Mind So Rare



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In this polemical work, Merlin Donald refutes the recent arguments of scientists and philosophers who have dismissed consciousness as a superficial by-product of evolution, or even an entirely irrelevant factor in human cognition. His thesis presents the forces, both cultural and neuronal, that power our distinctly human modes of awareness. Donald proposes that the human mind is a hybrid product of interweaving a super-complex form of matter (the brain) with an invisible symbolic web (culture) to form a "distributed" cognitive network. This hybrid mind allowed humanity as a species to break free of the limitations of the mammalian brain. Marshalling evidence from brain and behavioural studies of humans and animals, Donald explains how an expression of conscious capacity was the key to this revolutionary development and insightfully projects how the human mind might adapt in the future, as we fall increasingly under the spell of symbolic technology.

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