

Carrie Figdor 20/02 h 14:00-16:00

***Is the Human Mind Unique?***

Abstract:

From an evolutionary perspective, the title question is ambiguous: “unique” in what sense? Is it unique to humans in the way that human hands are unique to humans? But that’s trivial. Capuchin monkey hands are unique to capuchin monkeys, bonobo hands are unique to bonobos, and so on. But what is the non-trivial sense in which the human mind may or may not be unique? In this talk I’ll explain these distinct senses in which evolved biological traits, including minds, can be unique to a species; how cognitive researchers are attempting to disambiguate these senses of uniqueness in evolutionary explanations of the human mind; and why this disambiguation marks a profound shift in how we think about human minds.