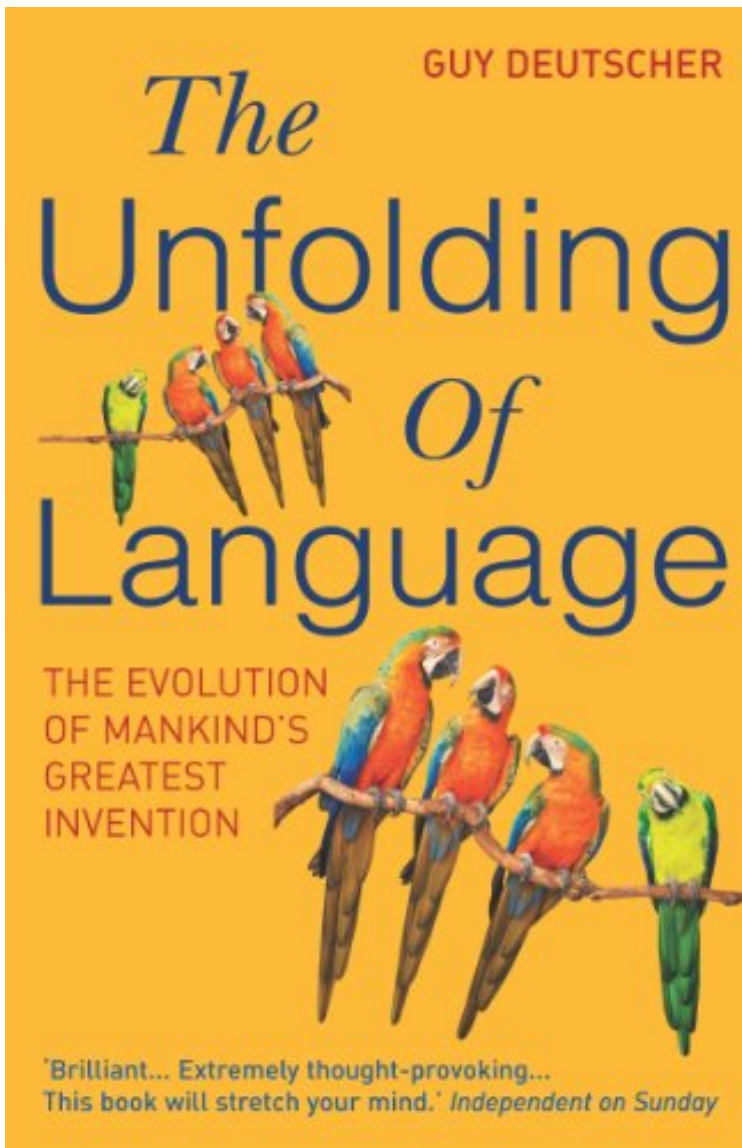


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The Unfolding Of Language



Par Guy Deutscher
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Prsentation de l'diteur'Language is mankind's greatest invention - except of course, that it was never invented.' So begins Guy Deutscher's fascinating investigation into the evolution of language. No one believes that the Roman Senate sat down one day to design the complex system that is Latin grammar, and few believe, these days, in the literal truth of the story of the Tower of Babel. But then how did there come to be so many languages, and of such elaborate design? If we started off with rudimentary utterances on the level of 'man throw spear', how did we end up with sophisticated grammars, enormous vocabularies, and intricately nuanced shades of meaning?Drawing on recent, groundbreaking discoveries in modern linguistics, Deutscher exposes the elusive forces of creation at work in human communication. Along the

way, we learn why German maidens are neuter while German turnips are female, why we have feet not fooms, and how great changes in pronunciation may result from simple laziness...Revue de presse "Highly original... Brilliant... How did...regular and complex languages come to exist? Deutscher's chosen task is to unravel [a] paradox, and he does so brilliantly, withholding the secret with great skill. If I told you how it works, you wouldn't buy the book. Both clever and convincing... this book will stretch your mind' Independent on Sunday""He really ought to be read...by anyone who persists in complaining that the English language is going to the dogs...Interesting and substantial' Sunday Telegraph""Powerful and thrilling' Spectator""I was enthralled by Guy Deutscher's The Unfolding of Language, a history of how words came to take the forms they do, and therefore a history of the forms of the human mind." (A.S. Byatt in the Guardian 'Books of the Year)"Fascinating... Any curious reader...will find something worth knowing in The Unfolding of Language" (Boston Globe)Presentation de l'auteur'Language is mankind's greatest invention - except of course, that it was never invented.' So begins Guy Deutscher's fascinating investigation into the evolution of language. No one believes that the Roman Senate sat down one day to design the complex system that is Latin grammar, and few believe, these days, in the literal truth of the story of the Tower of Babel. But then how did there come to be so many languages, and of such elaborate design? If we started off with rudimentary utterances on the level of 'man throw spear', how did we end up with sophisticated grammars, enormous vocabularies, and intricately nuanced shades of meaning?Drawing on recent, groundbreaking discoveries in modern linguistics, Deutscher exposes the elusive forces of creation at work in human communication. Along the way, we learn why German maidens are neuter while German turnips are female, why we have feet not fooms, and how great changes in pronunciation may result from simple laziness...