The Symbolic Mind
Investigating Religious and Aesthetic Experiences

30th March 2019, 10 am - 6 pm

Workshop with Prof. Terrence Deacon

at FEST - Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, Schmeilweg 5, Heidelberg

Please register in advance via email at: magnus.schlette@fest-heidelberg.de
In this one-day workshop in honor of and with Prof. Terrence Deacon, it is the aim to explore the intertwinement between the emerged symbolic capacities of human beings and their religious and aesthetic experiences. Starting with the question of how symbols are related to objects or events, we focus on the inter-relationship among indices, icons and symbols and their referential characteristics. In the second section, we take up this topic in more detail by analyzing how linguistic conventions as mere arbitrary mapping functions between signifiers and signified might depend on non-arbitrary indexical and iconic signs with regard to (holistic) symbolic relations. In the third section we deal with the question to what extent the emergence of the symbolic mind is a pre-condition to experience objects or entire perceptual scenarios as expressing more fundamental or transcendental forms of religious meaning. Finally, we close the workshop with a section on aesthetic capacities and experiences. What is at stake here, according to Terrence Deacon, is a complex interplay between symbolic meanings and novel forms of emotional experiences that are in need of further exploration.

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