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## HKIAS Distinguished Lecture Series on Life Sciences

# The Past, Present and Future of the Human Brain

## Professor Sir Colin Blakemore

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*Due to concerns about the coronavirus outbreak, there will be no registration and on-site audience for the event. Video and PowerPoint of the lecture will be posted on the HKIAS website at [www.hkias.cityu.edu.hk](http://www.hkias.cityu.edu.hk) on 8 May 2020 (Friday).*

## Abstract

The human brain is responsible for both the biological success of the human species in dominating the world, and the potential collapse of the entire ecosystem because of over-population, climate change and conflict. The enlargement of the brain that accompanied the genetic speciation of *Homo sapiens* about 250,000 years ago undoubtedly influenced the 'cognitive phenotype' of humans, but that phenotype has continued to change, with remarkable developments (including reading, science and technology) in the past few millennia, which cannot be due to conventional Darwinian evolution. How has this post-Darwinian phase of human evolution occurred and how might the brain continue to change in the future?

## Biography

Colin Blakemore studied medicine at Cambridge and did a PhD at the University of California, Berkeley. He worked at Cambridge and Oxford for more than 40 years, and was also Chief Executive of the UK Medical Research Council, before he moved to a Professorship of Neuroscience & Philosophy in the School of Advanced Study in London in 2012. He joined City University a year ago. His research has focused on vision, development of the brain, and neurodegenerative disease. He was one of the first to emphasize the importance of plasticity in brain function. He has been President of the British Science Association, the British Neuroscience Association, the Physiological Society and the Royal Society of Biology. He is a member of 13 academies, including the Royal Society and the Chinese Academy of Engineering. His many awards include the Ralph Gerard Prize, the highest award of the Society for Neuroscience, and both the Faraday Prize and the Ferrier Prize from the Royal Society. He is a frequent broadcaster on radio and television, and writes about science for the national press. He was knighted in 2014 for "services to scientific research, policy and outreach".



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