Inventing Intelligence charts the history of intelligence from its earliest articulations through to postmodern AI.

What is intelligence? What makes humans Homo sapiens — the intelligent species? Inventing Intelligence is a bold deconstruction of the history of intelligence. Uncoupling our understanding of this most familiar concept from its traditional social science moorings, this book trains a cultural studies lens on intelligence to expose it as yet another form of representation.

Individual chapters recount the loving spheres of divine intelligence imagined by Plato, the self-conscious stylings of the Renaissance Man, the politics of intelligence in the Enlightenment, as well as contemporary assessments of digital intelligence and the mysterious adventure of Einstein’s brain. Ambitious in its historical sweep, unflinching in its challenge to conventional wisdom, Inventing Intelligence is for everyone and anyone who used to think that the parameters and the stakes of intelligence—evident in the current controversy over “intelligent” design—had been negotiated and finalized.