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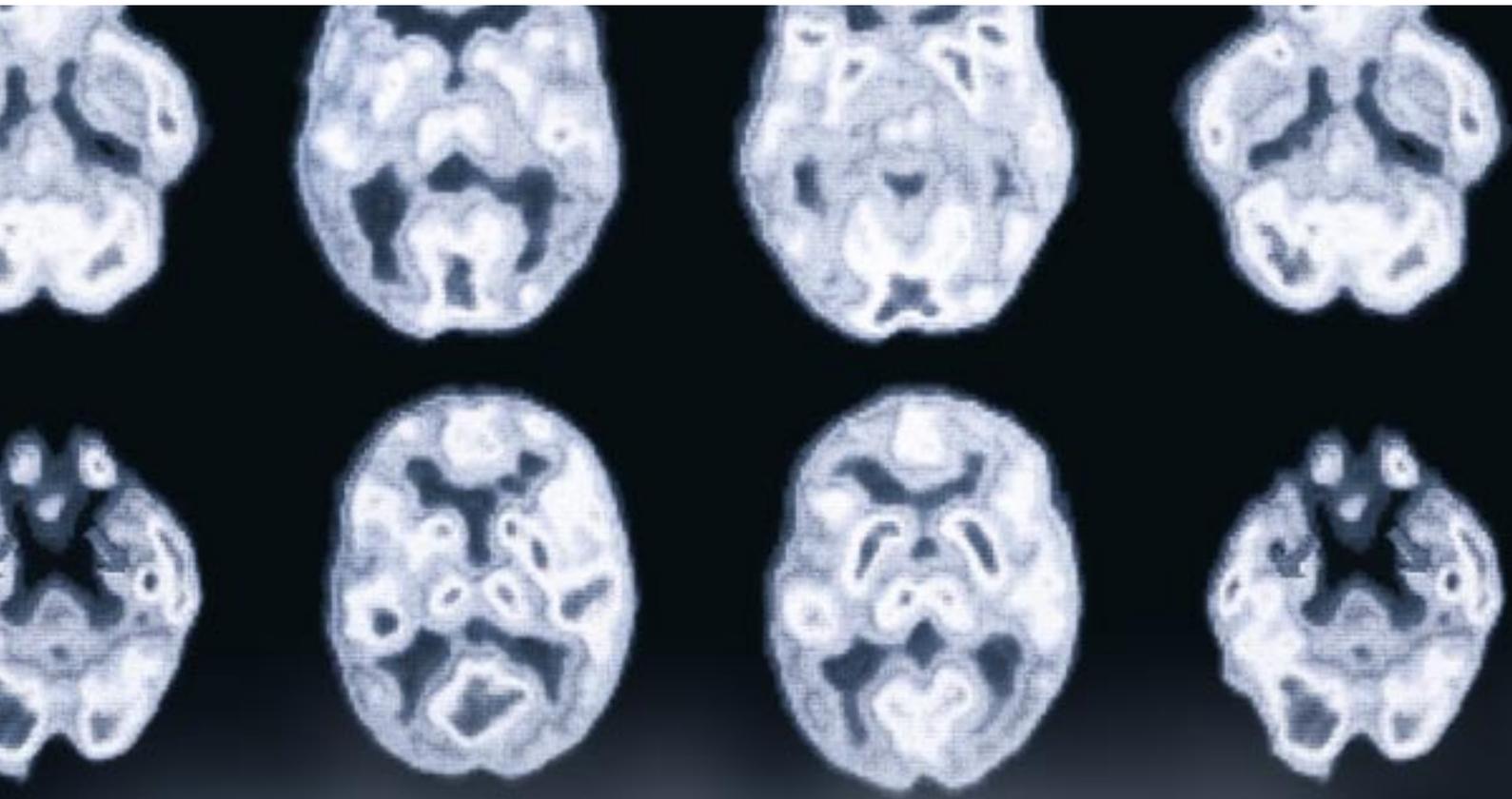
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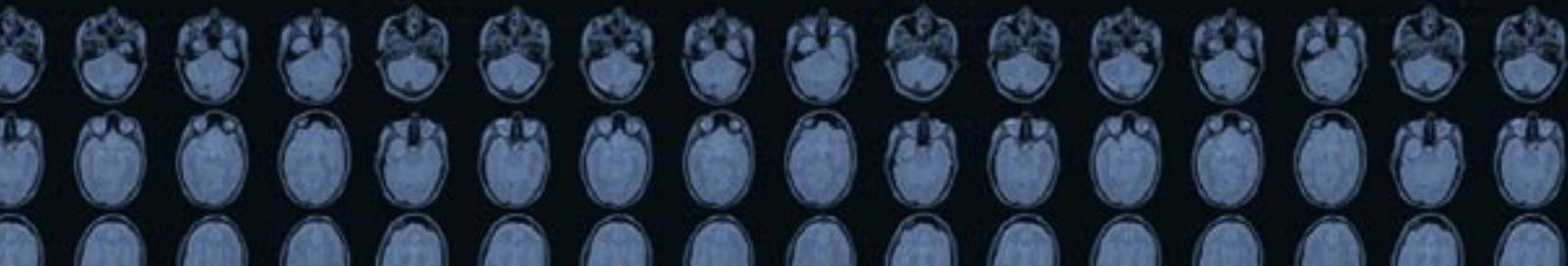
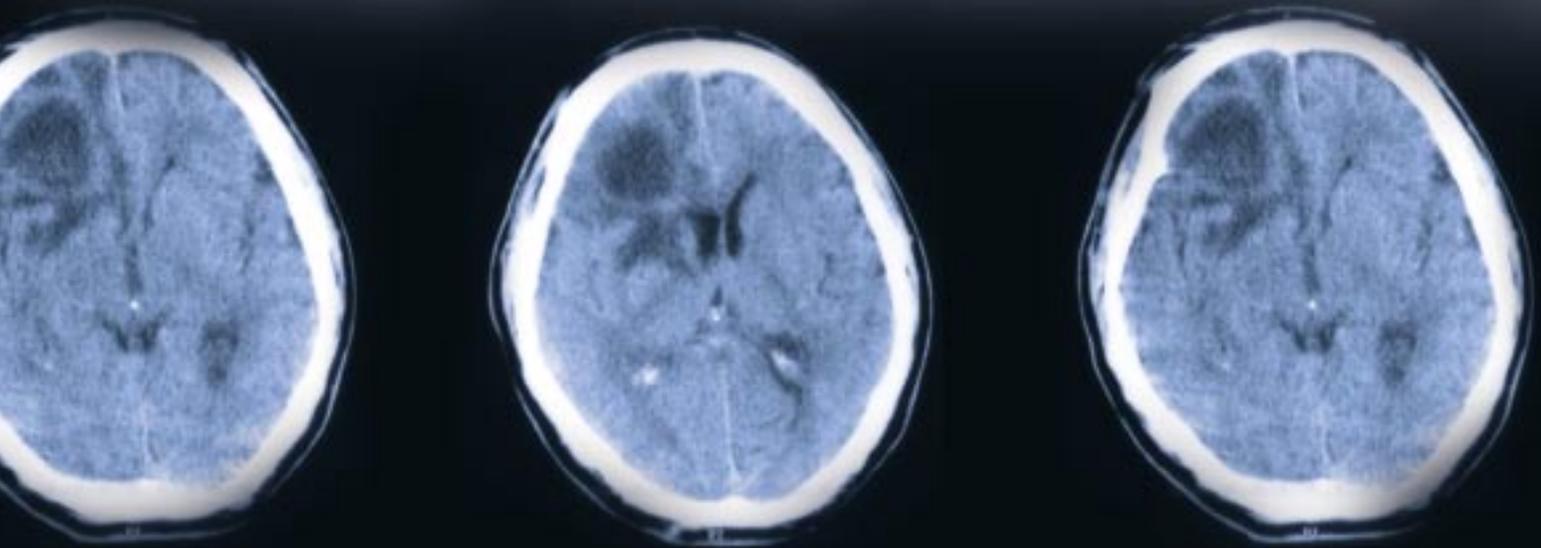


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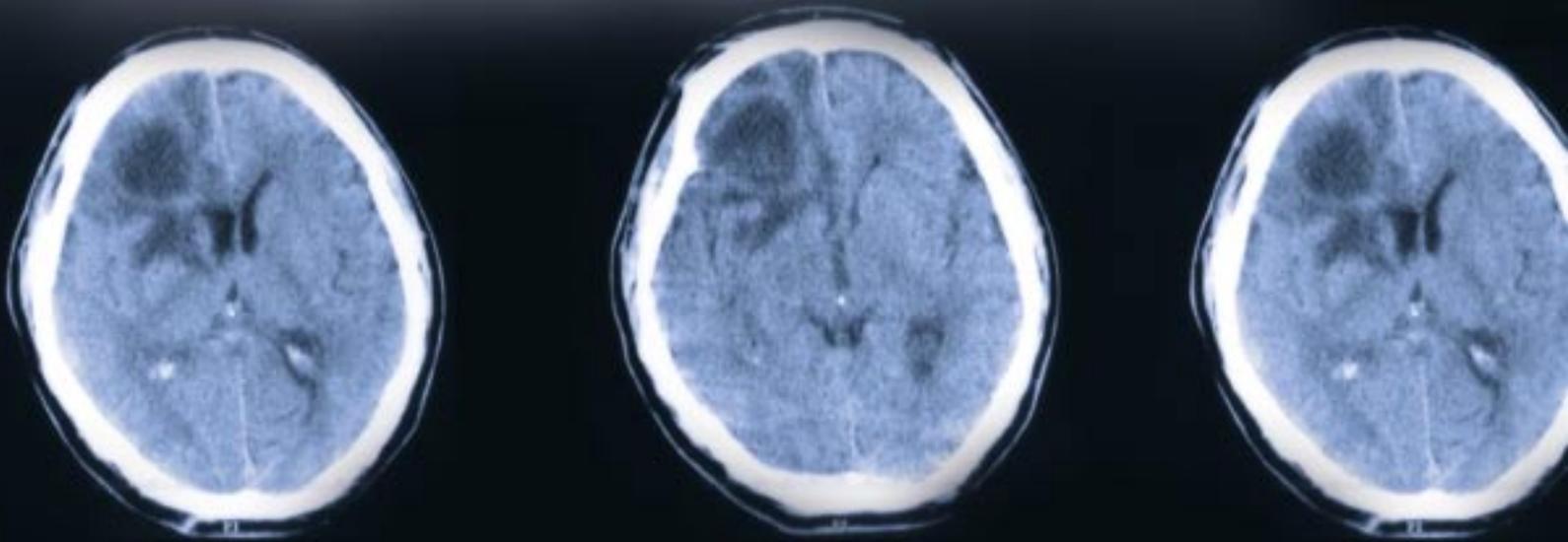


THE HUMAN





ENIGMA



The nature and capacities of human beings far exceed the ability of naturalism to explain their origin

Really, I'm not a geek, but each month I can't wait for my new issue of *Wired* magazine to arrive. I love knowing what new technical toys our clipboard-toting friends in the lab are thinking up.

The future holds for us a world of smart houses, where all we need to do is think of an object or command and the impulses will be sent out to our mechanized "smart" house. There is no end to the seamless ways that humans and machines will interact in the future. But I must pause here to share with you an insightful analysis from T. R. Reid's book *The Chip*:

For all the mystique of "electronic brains" and "artificial intelligence" digital devices are actually mindless dullards that rely on computational techniques abandoned in Neanderthal days. Digital problem solving involves simple math—far simpler than the stuff humans learn in grade school. A computer approaches

LOOK! A HUMAN BEING

The first thing that strikes one as odd about *Homo sapiens* is their appearance on the stage of history. Despite the transitional drawings found in textbooks, intelligent, laptop-carrying man seems to have shown up rather abruptly.

Although humanlike bones have been discovered, there is a huge jump from such hominids to our own species. Naturalist Ian Tattersall (curator at the American Museum of Natural History) remarks in his book *The Fossil Trail*: "Something extraordinary, if totally fortuitous, happened with the birth of our species."²

SPEAKING OF SPEAKING...

The ability to speak distinguishes man from all apes and hominids. Although human beings have both the hardware and the software for language, hominids didn't. They didn't even come close.

Scientists are unable to identify an evolutionary basis for human speech. And this failure is significant. Language, in most every way, is synonymous with intelligence, as thoughts are expressed and comprehended by way of the symbols of language. The sudden development of language capacity amounts to the sudden development of intelligence, which is problematic for Darwinian evolution to say the least.

every problem like a child counting on his fingers, but the computer counts as though it had one finger. (The word digit comes from the Latin digitus, meaning "a finger.") The real miracle of the "miracle chip" is that people have devised ways to manipulate this one minimal skill so that machines can carry out complex functions.¹

In case you missed all that, let me put it simply: People are brilliant and therefore found a way to make a bunch of computers do their grunt work. Machines are not intelligent; they are a network of on-off switches.

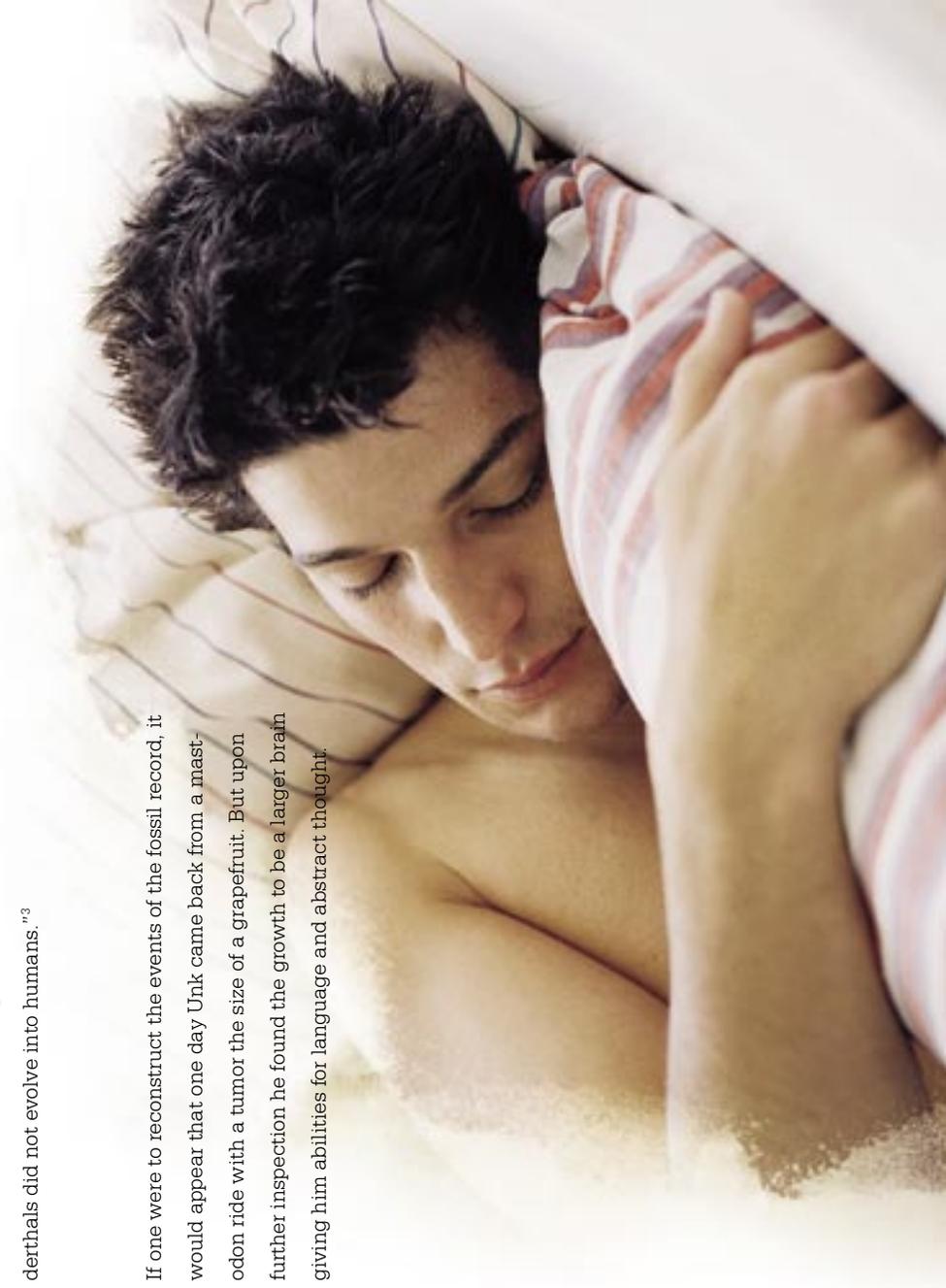
With that as our context, we consider the human "machine" and its phenomena of intelligence and consciousness as a thumbprint of intelligent design.

Most hominids had small, apelike brains and no capacity for language. Then, suddenly in the fossil record, man appears with several unique features, including an enlarged brain capacity. Why are their no clear-cut links between hominids without language capacity and Homo sapiens?

For decades Neanderthal man was considered to be one of the main links between apes and humankind. However, hopes for this linkage have been crushed by recent DNA evidence. Biologist Fazale Rana reveals, "The average percent and locations of the differences between Neanderthal and human DNA sequences indicate that Neanderthals did not evolve into humans."³

If one were to reconstruct the events of the fossil record, it would appear that one day Unk came back from a mastodon ride with a tumor the size of a grapefruit. But upon further inspection he found the growth to be a larger brain giving him abilities for language and abstract thought.

As he traces the history of our species, evolutionist Steve Olson spells out the problem. "Of course, language could not have come from nowhere. To speak, early humans needed particular vocal and neural mechanisms. But here a notorious problem arises. Any adaptations produced by evolution are useful only in the present, not in some vaguely defined future."⁴



In *Mapping Human History*, Olson traces the history of humankind through mitochondrial DNA analysis. By analyzing human fossils and DNA samples throughout history, new and stunning insights regarding human ancestry have been forthcoming:

1. *Once human beings appeared on the scene, there is no evidence of evolution.*

Olson writes, “With the appearance of modern humans, the large-scale evolution of our species essentially ceased.”⁵

2. *Human DNA is highly uniform compared with that of other species.* Olson remarks, “What must count as one of the most profound biological insights of all time is the recognition of our remarkable similarity.”⁶

3. *Modern human beings originated and migrated from one area.* Paleoanthropologist at Cambridge University, Marta Lahr, explains, “The bulk of the chronological and genetic data indicate a single origin of all modern humans.”⁷

4. *We have all descended from a single person.* Olson pens, “The first time I heard this statement I thought it highly implausible. All 6 billion people on this planet descended from a single ancestor? Yet this is one of those wonderful scientific conclusions that is not only true but *has* to be true.”⁸

During an interview with the French science monthly *La Recherche*, Marcel Schutzenberger was asked, “The appearance of human beings—is that a miracle?”

The outspoken French mathematician replied,

Naturally. And here it does seem that there are voices among contemporary biologists—I mean voices other than mine—who might cast doubt on the Darwinian paradigm that has dominated discussion for the past twenty years.

Gradualists and saltationists [people who believe in rapid species change] alike are completely incapable of giving a convincing explanation of the quasi-simultaneous emergence of a number of biological systems that distinguish human beings from the higher primates.



Schutzenberger was referring to several physiological differences between humans and primates for which no transitional fossils have been discovered.

He then concludes the interview with his view that there is no naturalistic explanation for the sudden development of man: “The reality is that we are confronted with total conceptual bankruptcy.”⁹

Along the same lines, Tattersall remarks on the uniqueness of humanity in the fossil record: “Homo sapiens is as distinctive an entity as exists on the face of the Earth, and should be dignified as such instead of being adulterated with every reasonably large-brained hominid fossil that happened to come along.”¹⁰

THREE POUNDS OF LUMPY GRAY AMAZEMENT

So, what are we to make of the human brain? We generally associate complexity with intelligence. The more complex a building or machine, the more intelligence is required to engineer it. The human brain, for starters, contains 12 billion neuron cells intertwined with 100 trillion connections.

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As we examine our universe, nothing else in it even remotely approaches the complexity of the human brain. Stephen Hawking compares the complexity of the human brain with most present-day computers and reveals the overwhelming superiority of our brains: “In comparison with most computers which have one central processing unit, the brain has millions of processing units ... all working at the same time.”¹³

Even if communication engineers could apply the most sophisticated engineering techniques known to humanity, the assembly of an object remotely resembling the human brain would require an eternity of time. Even then, they still wouldn't know where to begin.¹⁴

To illustrate a number as large as 100 trillion, molecular biologist Michael Denton suggests visualizing a solid forest of trees covering half the United States. If each tree contains one hundred thousand leaves, the connections in a human brain would equal the total number of leaves in the entire forest.

Yet it is not just the hardware of the brain that has scientists baffled. Even the most ardent evolutionists are at a loss to explain its software and the mystery of consciousness.

Yet the brain's connections are not mere intersections like those in a highway system, but rather they are a highly organized network far exceeding the complexity of all the communication networks on planet Earth.¹¹ Our memories (one billion trillion bits of them) are not isolated in one section of the brain but instead are intertwined throughout the network. “Each junction has the potential to be part of a memory. So the memory capacity of a human brain is effectively infinite.”¹² Inside that three pounds of gray matter of yours is enough information to fill 20 million books (19 million if you aren't that bright).

THE
MYSTERY
OF
CONSCIOUSNESS

The cerebral cortex is the area of our brains

where, mysteriously, “matter is transformed into consciousness.”¹⁵ The cerebral cortex distinguishes human beings from all other animals. “Though the difference between the human genome and that of a chimp is estimated to be less than 1 percent, our cerebral cortex has ten times more neurons.”¹⁶

Our awareness, with its manipulation of ideas, actually takes place in the prefrontal cortex.¹⁷ It is in this part of our brains that we reason, ponder, imagine, fantasize, and seek answers to why we are here. This prefrontal cortex area in a human makes up a far larger proportion of the cerebral cortex than in any animal, and it is the most complex arrangement of matter in the universe.¹⁸

If we could shrink in size and become spectators to the incredible activity in the innermost portion of the cerebral cortex, we might see something resembling a kaleidoscope of fireworks networking in all directions. Yet these electrical impulses are billions of organized patterns that result in our thoughts and imaginations. All of these thoughts intersect with our self-awareness.

While consciousness is at rest during sleep, the brain is still in action. “Even in sleep, the brain is pulsing, throbbing and flashing with the complex business of human life—dreaming, remembering, figuring things out. Our thoughts, visions and fantasies have a physical reality.”¹⁹

When chess grand master Gary Kasparov was defeated by the IBM supercomputer Deep Blue, the computer didn't even realize it had won (though some spectators reported they heard it snicker and mumble the word “loser”). Deep Blue lacked this attribute we take for granted—consciousness, a mystery that has baffled scientists for centuries.

Nobody really understands consciousness or how we got it. Sir John Maddox, former editor-in-chief of the journal *Nature*, addresses the puzzle of consciousness: “Nobody understands how decisions are made or how imagination is set free. What consciousness consists of, or how it should be defined, is equally puzzling. . . . We seem as far from understanding cognitive processes as we were a century ago.”²⁰

For years people have tried to reduce humans to nothing more than a series of drives (Freud's life and death drives, for example) and instincts. But analyze for a moment these proposals. Cambridge professor C. S. Lewis proposes the following thought experiment:

Let's say you heard a woman screaming. For a moment you would sense two different instincts, says Lewis. The first is self-preservation: get out of there as fast as you can. The second is a herding instinct—woman in trouble, must save (the herding instinct is primitive and therefore doesn't use pronouns). But what do you choose to do, asks Lewis?



Your consciousness chooses between the instincts, and it is as different and separate from them as the pianist is from the keys he chooses to play on the piano. The consciousness sits over and above our instincts, drives, and desires, and it chooses which it will act upon.²¹

Or consider the phenomenon of “the enduring sense of self.” Your cells are dying and replicating all of the time. You no longer possess the same cells you had at birth, yet you have a cohesive sense that you are still you. (You *are* still you, aren’t you?)

Another example of consciousness is the objectivity of the self—you distinguish yourself from your experiences. When you squash a fly, there’s no reason to conclude that its experience is separate from itself. In other words, in its little fly brain, it senses, “I am pain” (if it does feel pain). You, on the other hand, distinctly feel that pain is happening to you and that you are distinct from the experience of pain.

On the metaphysical side of things, when you are thinking about a pink elephant, where in your brain is there an actual image of a pink elephant? Our mind cannot be reduced to physical phenomena, or we could point to some cells and say, “This is the theater where the pink elephant image is being shown.” Or if we were to tear you apart piece by piece, at what point would we be able to point to a clump of cells and say, “Here he is; this is where the inner George resides.”

Furthermore, there is the “aboutness” of the mind; it is always daydreaming, planning, remembering, or envisioning. Your mind is often off somewhere else (it is probably beginning to wander now as I ramble on). It’s as if your mind would wander away if it weren’t chained to your brain. And exactly how would such abstract thought be helpful in the brain’s early development for survival of the species? (Poor Unk. He was thinking about physics and a woolly mammoth sat on him.)

Wilder Penfield, the renowned neurosurgeon, did a series of experiments on epileptic patients. Using electricity, he would stimulate certain regions within the brain, causing the patient to move his or her arm

or leg or head. The patient always knew that he or she was not the one moving the body parts. In other words, the patient clearly had a sense of existence apart from the interactions between the brain and body. Probing the entire cerebral cortex, Penfield concluded that there was no place that could be electrically stimulated to cause a person to believe or decide.²²

In the book *The Case for a Creator*, philosopher J. P. Moreland makes the following observation: “I know that consciousness isn’t a physical phenomenon because there are things that are true of my consciousness that aren’t true of anything physical.”

He goes on to give the following example:

Some of my thoughts have the attribute of being true. Tragically, some of my thoughts have the attribute of being false. However, none of my brain states are true or false. No scientist can look at the state of my brain and say, “Oh, that particular brain state is true and that one is false.” So there is something true of my conscious states that are not true of my brain states, and consequently they can’t be the same thing.²³

THUMBPRINTS OF DESIGN ON THE SOUL

While we can speak of the mind and the soul as distinct entities, we are often talking about the same thing. It is the opposite of what we mean by the brain, or the physical processes of intelligence. The nonmaterial aspect of who we are seems to defy reduction to physical processes. A case could be made that consciousness resides within the soul and that the soul itself is really the “I” or “ego” of what I am. But there is a slight distinction between mind and soul.

MIT-trained scientist Gerald Schroeder writes of this distinction. “Consciousness has all the trappings of another nonreducible element of our universe. The conscious mind is not mystical, but it may be metaphysical—meaning out of the physical.”²⁶

In other words, consciousness is not explainable in natural terms and has the transcendent characteristics of a totally different dimension. Perhaps this is why naturalists such as Dawkins are so baffled by the enigma of consciousness.

While our “mind” seems to refer to all of the mechanisms of consciousness, the “soul” seems to speak of a spiritual

or religious impulse that resides within humanity. This spiritual instinct, perhaps the clearest of all indicators of intelligent design, can be seen in some of the following phenomena.

Innately religious. Since the dawn of recorded time, and in every place on the globe, people have been religious. Belief in God, some say, is something that people are taught to believe, but sociology would tell us otherwise. People are innately religious, with over 90% of the world’s population believing in God. Wherever you go, people instinctively bow to the heavens. It would seem that belief in God is not something people are reasoned into but something they are persuaded out of.

Oughtness. Have you ever seen a cow that seems disillusioned with life and who thinks she was made for something better? (OK, besides the Chick-fil-A cows.) Most humans have a sense that things are not as they should be. A longing for heaven, it has been called. We struggle with circumstances, resent death, complain of evil, and have a general sense that we were made for something better, that things “ought” to be different. Why do we have

these thoughts? Why shouldn’t we simply accept life on its own terms?

Morality. When someone commits a terrible crime, doesn’t something inside us scream for justice? Think of the Holocaust or September 11. We all share a common sense of horrible injustice and desire for retribution

Some have suggested that morals come from society. If so, then where does a moral reformer like Martin Luther King Jr. come from? The moral reformer looks at society and judges it by a standard not embraced by the society. To what standard of right and wrong is such a person appealing if not to the society’s? I think most people would say that what the Nazis did was wrong, even if the German culture at that time believed in its rightness. We intuit that moral law is not just a product of culture.

These phenomena are pointers beyond our physical bodies to a mind, a soul, and to an intelligent Designer whose thumbprint is best seen in the creature called Homo sapiens.

SMART PEOPLE

So difficult is the problem posed by our consciousness that Laurence C. Wood said, “Many brain scientists have been compelled to postulate the existence of an immaterial mind, even though they might not embrace a belief in life after death.”²⁴

What process in natural selection could have led to human consciousness? Oxford zoologist Richard Dawkins admits that nothing in naturalistic evolution accounts for it. “Why this should have happened is to me, the most profound mystery facing modern biology.”²⁵

While some naturalists like Dawkins remain atheists, others are reconsidering their positions in light of new discoveries. An Associated Press article dated December 9, 2004, relates how one of the world’s leading atheists was so struck by the evidence for design that he renounced the atheism he had taught for over half a century.

At age 81, after decades of insisting belief is a mistake, Oxford professor Antony Flew has concluded that some sort of intelligence or first cause must have created the universe. A super-intelligence is the only good explanation for the origin of life and the complexity of nature, Flew said in a telephone interview from England.

The evidence that the mind—and the rest of a human being—requires an intelligent Designer for their explanation is strong. There is nothing else like humanity in the universe, and mechanisms of evolution, such as adaptation and natural selection, don’t seem adequate to account for their existence on the Earth. Yet here we are.

But despite all of this, I still long for one of those “smart” houses. I’d like one because they are a testimony, not to the brilliance of machines, but to the capacities of the human brain and mind. Most of all, though, I want one because they’re cool, and because I desire nothing more than to stay at my computer right now and think up a ham sandwich from the kitchen.

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2. Ian Tattersall, *The Fossil Trail: How We Know What We Think We Know about Human Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 246.
3. Fazale R. Rana, “Neanderthal-Human Link Severed,” *Connections*, Qtr 2, 2003, 8–9.
4. Steve Olson, *Mapping Human History* (New York: Mariner, 2003), 87–88.

5. *Ibid.*, 29.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, 25.
9. Marcel-Paul Schutzenberger, “The Miracles of Darwinism,” *La Recherche*, January 1996.
10. Tattersall, 219.
11. Denton, 330-331.
12. Rita Carter, *Mapping the Mind* (London: Phoenix, 2002), 289.
13. Stephen Hawking, *The Universe in a Nutshell* (London: Bantam, 2001), 169.
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15. Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Ballantine, 1985), 229.
16. Gerald L. Schroeder, *The Hidden Face of God* (New York: Touchstone, 2001), 112.
17. Carter, 312.
18. *Ibid.*, 298.
19. Sagan, 229.
20. Sir John Maddox, “The Genesis Code by Numbers,” *Scientific American*, December 1999, 62–67.
21. C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 45–49.
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23. Quoted in Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 258
24. Laurence W. Wood, *Asbury Theological Journal* 41, no.1 (1986).
25. Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 59.
26. Schroeder, 159.