

*“As thou knowest not what is the way
of the spirit, nor how the bones do
grow in the womb of her that is with
child: even so thou knoweth not the
works of God who maketh all”
(Ecclesiastes 11:5).*

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CURIOSLY WROUGHT

by Henry M. Morris*

In a recent book, two eminent authors (both evolutionists) give a glowing assessment of the human mind and the brain through which it functions.

The human brain is the most astonishing and mysterious of all known complex systems. Inside this mass of billions of neurons, information flows in ways that we are only starting to understand. The memories of a summer day on the beach when we were kids; imagination; our dreams of impossible worlds. Consciousness. Our surprising capacity for mathematical generalization and understanding of deep, sometimes counter intuitive, questions about the universe. Our brains are capable of this and much more. How? We don't know: the mind is a daunting problem for science.¹

This testimony brings to mind a statement made more than thirty years ago by the atheistic biochemist, Isaac Asimov, arguably the most prolific scientist writer of all time. He said that:

... in man is a three-pound brain which, as far as we know, is the most complex and orderly arrangement of matter in the universe. How could the human brain develop out of the primeval slime?²

Asimov's answer to this key question was that the energy from the sun somehow provided the information necessary to create life and ultimately the human brain. He had no explanation as to *how* this miracle of complexity could have been produced by the sun, and neither does anyone else. The current authors (Sole and Godwin) are frank enough to acknowledge, simply, that “we don't know.”

The mind is, indeed, “a daunting problem for science.” The fact is that science can never provide the answer as long as its practitioners deny the truth of a divine creation. The psalmist, on the other hand, gladly acknowledged God, and said in awe: “*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made*” (Psalm 139:14).

He then continued with remarkable insight: “*My substance was . . . made in secret, and curiously wrought . . .*” (Psalm 139:15). The word so picturesquely translated in the King James Bible as “*curiously wrought*” is the Hebrew *raqam* meaning “*embroidered,*” or “*did needlework,*” and it is so translated in the other passages where it is used.

The idea of highly intricate needlework is most appropriate in trying to describe the amazing network of interconnected neurons in the human brain.

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Human beings have something on the order of 100,000 genes, and human brains have more than 1 *trillion* nerve cells, with about 100–1,000 trillion connections (synapses) between them. That’s at least 1 *billion* synapses per gene, even if each and every gene did nothing but control the production of synapses (and it doesn’t).³

But astoundingly complex as the human brain may be, it still does not explain how all this serves to produce consciousness, let alone how it can generate abstract thought and inventive ingenuity and all the myriad thoughts and reasonings of the human brain, not to mention its imaginations and even its dreams. Anthropologist Matt Cartmill acknowledges this vital gap in our knowledge.

The phenomenon of consciousness is the source of all value in our lives. As such, it should be at the top of the scientific agenda. Yet despite its fundamental importance, consciousness is a subject that most scientists are reluctant to deal with. We know practically nothing about its mechanisms or its evolution.⁴

What a marvelous paradox this is! The gift of consciousness is the basic phenomenon which permits scientists to investigate the processes of nature and develop descriptions thereof, but they have no understanding of consciousness itself.

The machineries of consciousness are an almost perfect mystery.⁵

Not only does the human brain somehow generate consciousness and then complex thought processes, but also the ability to communicate those thoughts to others. The phenomenon of language (real language, not animal barks and grunts) is still another amazing phenomenon for which there is no evolutionary explanation. Languages can rather

quickly “evolve” into different languages, but how did *language* evolve? And was there one original language, or have various languages evolved independently? Evolutionists do not know. If they refuse to consider God’s explanation in the Bible, they will probably never know.

All contemporary modern humans use very complex languages. There are no “primitive” languages: the 5,000 or more spoken today are equally flexible and expressive, and their grammar and syntax are sometimes richer and more precise than that of the more widespread languages like English or Spanish, which have undergone some simplification over the centuries.⁶

There is, therefore, no evidence whatever for any supposed evolutionary origin of human language, though each individual language can “evolve” into some different language in relatively short time (e.g., compare Chaucer’s English to modern English). Yet linguists have been notably unsuccessful in trying to map out an “original” language from which the other language families have come. Neither the origin of language itself nor the origin of the major linguistic families is amenable to an evolutionary explanation. One of the world’s most distinguished linguistic ethnologists admits this.

It is not certain that all languages have a common origin. Most linguists consider both problems insoluble.⁷

Not really! The Biblical account fits all the facts. Language is a special gift of God, imparted to the first man and woman when He created them “in His image,” so that they could communicate with God and other humans. The original language families were also supernaturally imparted by God to thwart the rebellion against Him at the Tower of Babel.

Not only did God provide a means of oral communication, but also a means of communicating in writing. The first book in fact was apparently written by Adam himself (Genesis 5:1). After the Flood and the confusion of tongues at Babel, this ability was lost, except possibly by Noah, Shem, and any others who had not participated in the rebellion.

But the others still retained the basic mental tools to learn *how* to write, this time in their new languages. It was not long, at least in the great civilizations that developed in certain early nations, before practically everyone could read and write. Probably the earliest was in Sumeria, including Assyria and others in the Tigris-Euphrates region.

As many as half a million cuneiform tablets, hand size up to book-page size, are now stored in the museums of the learned, from Baghdad upriver out to Moscow and Berkeley. Surely many more are waiting to be found. These samples are of every quality: once prized accounts and receipts, schoolboys' lessons, litigation profound or droll, literary essays, erotica, mathematics—and entire ancient epics, centuries older than Father Abraham's. A mostly unread treasury, comprising the equivalent of tens of thousands of large printed volumes.⁸

In none of these very ancient archaeological sites, whether in the Middle East or Egypt, China, or India, is there any indication of a gradual evolution of language or writing. The languages just seem to spring into existence fully developed in complex form when they first appear. So-called "primitive" languages are invariably highly complex languages, and the same is true of their written form, with the ability to read and write evidently widespread in each community.

Indeed the human brain and human consciousness, along with the ability to express human thoughts in speaking and writing, are amazing phenomena without any adequate evolutionary explanation. The same is true of the marvelous DNA molecules in which are encoded all the programmed information for the reproduction and growth of every cell of the human body.

As the psalmist implied, our brains have indeed been very "*curiously wrought*" in our mothers' wombs (Psalm 139:15), through the intricately entwined DNA coding extending all the way back to Mother Eve and Father Adam and ultimately to the infinite mind and skillful hands of the great Designer Himself.

As the patriarch Job stressed, contemplating all the wonderful works of God in creation: "*Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?*" (Job 12:9).

References

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4. Matt Cartmill, "Do Horses Gallop in Their Sleep?" *Key Reporter* (Autumn 2000), p. 6.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
6. Luigi Lura Cavalli-Sforza, *Genes, People and Languages* (New York: North Pointe Press, 2000), p. 59.
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HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A CANYON TO FORM?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

ICR has long had a deep interest in magnificent Grand Canyon. This awesome wonder of the natural world, we believe, bears eloquent testimony to the great flood of Noah's day.

Visitors to Grand Canyon as well as eighth grade earth science students have been traditionally taught that the Colorado River, migrating back and forth for 65 million years, coupled with side canyon erosion, has carved out this immense gorge. In recent years, scientists have disproved that idea, leaning now on a great volume of water rushing through the area at a high velocity not very long ago which carved the canyon. (Unfortunately, school students are still being taught the older, long-age model.)

Let me introduce you to Burlingame Canyon near Walla Walla, Washington. It measures 1500 feet long, up to 120 feet deep, and 120 feet wide, winding through a hillside. A small-scale analogy to Grand Canyon it was observed to form in less than six days.

In 1904 the Gardena Farming District constructed a series of irrigation canals to provide water to this normally rather arid high desert area. In March, 1926, winds collected tumbleweeds at a concrete constriction along one of the canals situated on an elevated mesa, choking the flow of water, which at 80 cubic feet per second was unusually high due to spring rains. In order to clean out the obstruction, engineers diverted the flow into a diversion ditch leading to nearby Pine Creek. Prior to this time the ditch was rather small, at no location greater than 10-foot-deep and six-foot-wide, and often with no water in it at all.



Burlingame Canyon—a rapidly formed, miniature "Grand Canyon."

The abnormally high flow crowded into the ditch, and careened along until it cascaded down the mesa in an impressive waterfall. Suddenly, under this extreme pressure and velocity, the underlying stratum gave way and headward erosion began in earnest. What once was an insignificant ditch became a gully. The gully became a gulch. The gulch became a miniature Grand Canyon.

The eroded strata consisted of rather soft sand and clay saturated by the recent rains. The dewatering of the saturated sediments into the now-open ditch enhanced the erosion. The rapidly moving water could both dislodge the particles and carry them down stream, leaving underlying sediments vulnerable to erosion. In total, these six days of run-away ditch erosion removed nearly five million cubic feet of silt, sand, and rock.

Yes, canyons can form rapidly. A good maxim to remember is that, "It either takes a little water and a long time, or a lot of water and a short time." But then, we've never seen a canyon form slowly with just a little water. Whenever scientific observations are made, it's a lot of water and a short time. 



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