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FUTURE SCIENCE
UNEXPLAINED ANOMALIES

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The 1967 Outer Space Treaty (OST) made outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, "not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty." That means no country, not even the U.S., could own the moon or any other part of space, no matter how many flags are planted. In the future, that could change, though, since investors are already working hard to get the kind of legal protection they think they need. Already the U.S. Congress is trying to pass laws intended to help companies get on with the space mining business, but so far the OST is proving hard to get around.

One company, Deep Space Industries, will be sending small satellites known as Fireflies into space next year to prospect for minerals on asteroids. Other companies have similar plans. The idea is that metals which are abundant on Earth could be used on-site to build spacecraft for the return, while platinum and other rarer metals would be worth the cost of hauling back to Earth.

Global Warming alarmists point to the rapid melting of Greenland’s Ice Sheet as an imminent danger and, thus, forecast drastic changes soon in world sea levels. Surprising new studies by scientists from the University of Texas, and elsewhere, are now calling that notion into question.

Over the last 9,000 years, it turns out, the center of the great sheet has actually been getting thicker and shifting. The speed of the shift, however, has been changing, and now there appears to be a stiffening of the process. Currently, on average, the ice sheet seems to be moving more slowly, and scientists are baffled as to why. To illustrate their point, they have created a new map. Melting at the edges, however, is still enough to cause sea levels to rise, but more study is needed to learn just how much we can expect.

These changes, which started thousands of years ago, affect our understanding of the changing Greenland Ice Sheet even today. Scientists now often use GPS and altimeters aboard satellites to measure the elevation of the ice surface and to study how much mass is being lost or gained across the ice sheet. When correcting for other known effects on the surface elevation, any leftover thickening is assumed to be due to increasing snowfall, but this study indicates otherwise.

The paper, "Holocene deceleration of the Greenland Ice Sheet", is published in the Feb. 5 issue of Science. The lead author, Joe MacGregor is from The University of Texas at Austin’s Institute for Geophysics (UTIG).

The Guts of ‘Darwin’s Mistake’

Charles Darwin was fond of suggesting that organisms often contain leftover parts from earlier stages of development—so-called vestigial remains—which are no longer needed. The human colon appendix, a small worm-like extension of the lower intestine, is usually cited as an example. Though often removed when infected, new Australian research suggests that indeed the appendix has many unappreciated functions, and, as in other cases, Darwin was mistaken.

At the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research in Melbourne, Gabrielle Belz and her team have demonstrated that, far from being a throwaway item, the appendix is actually a very important part of the bowel’s immune system, providing major protection against gut infections. Researchers at Duke University came to similar conclusions a few years ago.

Underestimating the full value of natural forms remains common practice, however. In Atlantis Rising #116, science writer Brendan D. Murphy argued that so-called “junk DNA,” readily dismissed at one time by geneticists, actually contains, as demonstrated by research, what may well be some of the molecule’s most vital coding relating to some of the body’s most mysterious functions, such as consciousness.

The willingness of materialist science to do away with some of nature’s most valuable gifts reveals more about the weaknesses of their science than any perceived shortcomings in the structures of life itself.
Balinese Man Makes His Own Bionic Limb

When I Wayan Sumardana, a 31-year-old welder in a small village in Bali, lost feeling in his left arm, the situation looked hopeless, but a few months later, he felt the prompting to use scrap metal and parts scattered around his shop to create a virtual bionic arm, and, to the surprise of everyone, it worked.

Sumardana now says he can control the function of his device with his mind, and though it sounds impossible, who can argue? Journalists, including a correspondent from the BBC and many fascinated bystanders have watched and photographed him at work. Wayan Widiada, a mechanical engineering student at nearby Udayana University, says he has looked closely at the device and cannot understand how it works, but agrees that, indeed, the mechanical hand appears to be moving and that Sumardana can perform his daily chores, but only for a few hours at a time. So far no one has been able to explain it.

There has been talk of mystical forces and, perhaps, possession of some kind. More materialistic theories seem to fall flat.

I Wayan Sumardana and appendage

Solving the Crime Before It’s Done

In the 2002 movie Minority Report, Tom Cruise plays a cop in 2054 Washington, D.C., where police are dispatched proactively to arrest prospective criminals who, have not yet committed at crime, but are about to. Unfortunately for the Cruise character he, himself, is arrested for a murder he had no idea he was going to attempt to commit. It may sound far-fetched, but consider this: in February of 2016 the former Mayor of Edison, New Jersey, told CBS News that new technology will not be waiting for a crime to actually be committed before connecting the dots and cracking the case.

According to George Spadoro, the new technology is the future of law enforcement. He told reporter Maurice DuBois how it would work. A new visualization system made by the Hitachi company will gather massive amounts of information from many unconnected sources, including social media, transit maps, weather reports, crime statistics, camera feeds, and more, and put it all on one pane of glass, not unlike the one Cruise used in the movie. The system, says Spadoro, is already being used in Washington, D.C., and is being tested in several other cities.

Philip K. Dick, author of the story on which the movie was based, intended to present a dystopian world in which technology had gone amuck. The grim future he foresaw, it seems, has arrived 40 years early.
As recently as our March/April issue, 
*Atlantis Rising* reported on new 
claims for the discovery of a long- 
sought ninth planet in the solar sys-
tem (with Pluto now excluded, eight remain, 
officially speaking). The existence of the leg-
endary body, often referred to as "Planet X," 
has long been dismissed as strictly imaginary, 
but detractors, it turns out, may have spoken 
too soon.

In his 1975 best-selling book, *The Twelfth Planet*, 
and its many sequels (as we reported 
in A.R., #116 "Planet X or Not?), the late re-
searcher Zecharia Sitchin claimed he had de-
coded from the ancient cuneiform tablets of 
Sumeria, the story of a mysterious rogue 
planet which periodically (every 3600 years) 
approached the vicinity of Earth. Named 
"Nibiru," the planet was populated, said 
Sitchin, by a powerful, technologically ad-
vanced race of giants known as the Anunnaki, 
which intervened forcefully in the affairs of 
Earth, accounting—Sitchin believed—for many 
of the anomalies of our ancient history. Ever 
since publication of *The Twelfth Planet*, legions 
of Sitchin acolytes have searched in vain for 
scientific evidence for the existence of "Planet X."

Arguments over the possibility of an-
other planet beyond the orbit of Neptune 
have raged since long before Sitchin, but 
nothing conclusive has ever appeared. Then, 
in December, 2015, fresh scientific news on 
the subject emerged with the release of two 
Swedish papers to the website for the *Journal 
of Astronomy of Astrophysics*. The new findings 
soon rekindled the long-simmering debate 
and generated headlines around the world. 
The Swedes claimed to have spotted a new, 
relatively large, body out in the neighborhood 
of Pluto. Astronomer Wouter Vlemmings at 
Chalmers University of Technology, co-au-
thor of both studies, reported observation of 
an object moving against background stars 
which was then dubbed Gna, after a swift 
Nordic deity who delivers messages for Frigg, 
the goddess of wisdom.

Unfortunately, or so it seemed at the 
time for Planet X believers, both papers were 
initially dismissed by the astronomical es-
tablishment. The object reported, it was 
thought, might possibly be a large asteroid. 
Nevertheless, further analysis remained to be 
done, so the file—at least in theory—stayed 
open. The big news came in January, after *At-
lantis Rising*’s March/April issue had already 
gone to press. "The solar system appears to 
have a new ninth planet," trumpeted the pres-
tigious magazine *Science*. A new study from 
two "respected planetary scientists," was mak-
ing the case this time. According to Konstan-
tin Batygin and Mike Brown of the California 
Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena, 
as published in *The Astronomical Journal*, this 
discovery is different from all the previously 
claimed Planet X findings. "We believe it 
ENOUGH," says Brown, "where we’re willing to 
write a paper and stand up and say, ‘Yes. For 
the past century everybody who said there 
was a Planet X is crazy. And they were all 
wrong. But we’re right.’"

Brown got his first clue to his current 
conclusions in 2003, when he led a team that 
found Sedna, an object slightly smaller than 
both Eris and Pluto. Sedna’s odd, far-flung 
orbit made it, then, the most distant known 
object in the solar system. Its perihelion, or 
closest point to the sun, lay at 76 AU (Astro-
nomical Unit—the distance from the Earth to 
the Sun), beyond the Kuiper belt and far out-
side the influence of Neptune’s gravity. The 
implication was clear: Something massive, 
well beyond Neptune, must have pulled 
Sedna into its distant orbit.

Not everyone is convinced that a new 
planet has been found. In a January edition 
of *Atlantic* magazine, Science writer Thomas 
Levenson says, “There aren’t any obvious er-
rors in Batygin and Brown’s gravitational ar-
gument, but nature has plenty of ways to fool 
astronomers into seeing planets where there 
are none. Any mass exerts (as Newton saw it) 
a pull on everything else, and Newton’s uni-
versal law of gravitation describes how strong 
that tug will be, and what motion would re-

Continued on Page 59
Panspermia is the theory that life spreads through space between worlds, with spores or microorganisms drifting from one planet to another. The theory is very old, but in its modern form it was first proposed in 1903 by Swedish chemist Svante Arrhenius, who suggested that spores or bacteria might be propelled through space by the pressure of sunlight or starlight. He was a bit hazy about how the spores could escape from a planet’s gravity to begin with. More recently, the theory was supported by the late British astronomer Fred Hoyle and his colleague Chandra Wickramasinghe, a Sri Lankan-born astronomer, mathematician, and astrobiologist.

Dr. Wickramasinghe believes that the universe is “biologically constructed” and that life has always been present. He believes that many epidemics, including diseases like SARS, may come from comets or cometary fragments. In 1971 Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of the DNA double helix, and his associate, British chemist Leslie Orgel, suggested that panspermia might be directed by intelligent aliens traveling about the galaxy and seeding planets. Of course, this leaves an unanswered question: who seeded their world and started the process? Recent discoveries have provided more evidence for panspermia and also shed new light on how the process might work.

In 1984 researchers from America’s National Science Foundation discovered meteorite ALH84001,0 on the Antarctic ice cap, where meteors are clearly visible. Since we have landed men on Earth’s Moon and unmanned craft on Mars, we have learned that each planet has a slightly different ratio of isotopes of common elements. The 1984 meteorite’s isotope ratio shows that it originated on Mars; other meteorites are believed to have originated on our Moon. The theory is that asteroid impacts on a planet can sometimes blow fragments of the planet’s crust into space, exceeding escape velocity. Then they drift about, sometimes for millions or billions of years, finally landing on someplace like Earth.

The rock composing the 1984 meteorite is mostly carbonate, apparently formed some 4.5 billion years ago, and it contains very tiny microscopic objects, perhaps 3.6 billion years old, that resemble nano-bacteria fossils. If they are fossils, that raises another question. Could living bacteria sometimes survive the shock and heat of an asteroid impact, the journey through the vacuum of space, the heat of hypersonic flight through Earth’s atmosphere, and the heat and shock of landing on Earth? Some small meteorites have struck buildings, cars, and even people, and have been only moderately hot on the surface and much cooler inside. Since asteroids might also blast Earth rocks into space, a kind of interplanetary “sex” seems possible, with Earth and Mars seeding one another. Then the basic cells and DNA would be the same on both worlds.

Most NASA and JPL researchers believe that Mars was once warmer than today, with a denser atmosphere and even an ocean (there is still plenty of water on Mars, but most of it is frozen in the polar ice caps or in permafrost). Note that the reddish color of the planet is due to iron oxide, but, for substantial quantities of iron to oxidize, there had to have been free oxygen in the atmosphere at some time in the past, and the only

Continued on Page 31
3-D Stone Age Art Discovered at Göbekli Tepe

Powerful New Evidence for the Great Sophistication of Its Builders

BY ANDREW COLLINS

A tiny bone plaque in Sanliurfa museum could hold the key to the orientation of the 11,500-year-old temple complex. It was found during routine excavations at Göbekli Tepe, but no one had recognized exactly what the carved lines on the small bone plaque depicted, until Matthew Smith, a British telecommunications consultant living in Qatar, visited the museum containing a large collection of objects found at the proto-Neolithic site located just eight miles (13 kilometers) away toward the northeast. Smith seems to have recognized something everyone else had missed. The little plaque—just six centimeters long, two-and-a-half wide, and three-quarter millimeter thick—bore on its upper surface two T-shaped features positioned side by side. The context of the discovery at Göbekli Tepe, makes it clear these etchings are pictorial representations of the T-shaped pillars which are found in all the key enclosures investigated so far at the site.

So minute, so contained, are the carved images on the plaque that few would have had eyes sharp enough to correctly identify what it depicted. Certainly, the exact nature of its highly significant art was missed by this present writer, who was beside Smith when the breakthrough was made in our understanding of the unique mindset of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic culture of Göbekli Tepe.

Indeed, the plaque’s highly significant etching has probably been overlooked by everyone, since nothing about it has appeared in print so far.

Twin Central Pillars

What are we to make of this tiny bone plaque, on display in a glass cabinet since the new museum’s grand opening in May 2015? What does it actually represent? The fact that two, side-by-side T-shaped pillars—their heads clearly visible—are shown, would seem to imply that they represent pillars like those found at the center of all the major enclosures investigated so far at Göbekli Tepe. Some of these twin monoliths, like those in enclosures C and D, were originally five to six meters in height and weighed as much as 15 to 20 tons each.

Although an entrant approaching from the south (the direction of entry into the main enclosures investigated so far), would see the twin pillars edge-on, it seems plausible that the imagery on the bone represented the pillars face-on, in order to allow an observer to understand exactly what he or she is seeing.

Exactly which enclosure is represented on the plaque may never be known. Although seven major enclosures have been excavated so far at Göbekli Tepe, radar and geophysical surveys indicate that as many as 20 more of a similar size and complexity await discovery beneath the site’s 300- by 200-meter occupational mound, constructed over a period of some 1,500 years before the site’s final abandonment around 8000 BC. Confusing the matter still further is that the plaque may not have been found at its place of manufacture. Earth, rubble, stone chippings, and human debris were constantly moved around during Göbekli Tepe’s heyday in order to serve as infill for enclosures no longer in use. In other words, it could have come from anywhere on the site before its final burial.

Ancient Talisman

Why then was the bone plaque created? Even though it bears no holes that might indicate its use as a pendant, the chances are it was intended as an amulet or talisman. Capturing the likeness of the twin central monoliths in one of the enclosures at Göbekli Tepe might perhaps have been thought to imbue the plaque with some kind of mystical energy or link with the place. Moslems on the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca can buy pendants showing the Kaaba, the square-shaped building at the heart of the religious sanctuary, which are thought to bathe the beholder in “good Continued on Page 37
After a fourteen-year hiatus the X-Files are back for at least a few new episodes. The show was a favorite, in the 1990s, winning many fans and awards including the Golden Globe Award for Best Dramatic Series. The story was about the fictional exploits of FBI agent Fox “Spooky” Mulder assigned to document those strange incidents that could not be explained away. He is accompanied by agent Dana Scully, whose main job was to keep Mulder somewhat grounded. The series was a hit until the events of 9-11 gave Americans something more tangible to fear. Consequently The X-Files was taken off the air in May 2002.

Many, if not most, of the shows fans believe the background narrative or story line is anything but fiction. The questions posed by the original series was just how much the government had chosen to keep from the public and why. A survey taken by the National Geographic Society says that 80% of Americans believe the government hides information from them. Why would the government hide information about flying objects from us? Possibly, it was suggested, for the sake of control. If the population knew unidentified flying objects were occasionally abducting people, a level of fear might produce less than positive effects.

In the original season Mulder and Scully investigated everything from flying saucers to alien abductions and even the Jersey devil. Mulder, whose sister, he believed, was abducted while he looked on, is a believer. Scully was assigned to play devil’s advocate to her partner’s theories, but she quickly opened to the possibility that Mulder was right, and the government, on every level, was concealing the evidence of events which she witnessed.

Ironically, in real life David Duchovny, who played Mulder, was the one who rejected UFO stories and Gillian Anderson, playing Dana Scully, was the believer.

Reports of odd objects in the sky go back as far as the Bible, exist in medieval paintings, and have been part of literature since Jonathan Swift and Jules Verne. When the Exodus took place, Moses led the children of Israel while a pillar of fire in the sky led him (Exodus, Chapter 13). Enoch was lifted up by two men whose faces shone like the sun carried him off to see the seven heavens. The more materialistic would suggest that was an early case of alien abduction. And what about Jacob, who had just made camp one night when he said he had witnessed a ladder come down from heaven, and angels of God descending upon it?

The Modern Era

For the most part, though, the X-Files drew its stories from a number of events...
Where, or what, was Eden? The Garden of Eden—generally equated with Paradise—is the setting for one of the best known Biblical stories, that of the serpent who convinced the first woman, Eve, to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve in turn fed the forbidden fruit to her husband Adam. As a result, Adam and Eve understood their own mortality. God feared that the man and woman, utilizing their newly found knowledge, might eat of the tree of life and live forever, becoming godlike. Thus as punishment for their disobedience, God drove them from the garden and placed a cherubim with a flaming sword “to guard the way to the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24; New Standard Revised Version, Oxford Annotated Bible, 2001).

The Hebrew Bible gives us but a sparse description of the location of Eden and its garden. “A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.” (Genesis 2:10-14)

The Tigris and Euphrates headwaters originate in northern Mesopotamia. In my assessment, the Biblical description thus places Eden and its garden somewhere north of modern Syria, in modern Turkey. To narrow the location, consider the other two rivers, the Pishon and the Gihon. Unfortunately they do not easily correspond to any modern rivers in northern Mesopotamia. While Genesis was by tradition written by Moses (circa thirteenth century BCE, although this dating is controversial), many modern scholars believe it dates to the late seventh century BCE of Jerusalem (I. Finkelstein and N. A. Silberman, The Bible Unearthed, 2001). To understand the geography of Eden, one must know how the ancient Hebrews conceived the world. Given the lack of direct ancient Hebrew maps, we can turn to Greek sources that reflect the geographical knowledge of the ancients, such as a map based on the writings of Herodotus (fifth century BCE).

Near the center of Herodotus’s map is the Pontus Euxinus (Pontos, the Black Sea). Greeks often placed the Pontos at the center of the world as the source of most rivers and springs, which ultimately flowed into an ocean surrounding the known landmasses and from thence the waters flowed back into the Pontos through a deep abyss, the pit of Tartarus/Tartaros (S. G. Schoppe and C. M. Schoppe, International Atlantis Conference, Milos, Greece, 2005). This would reinforce the notion, based on the locations of the Euphrates and Tigris, that Eden is to be found in Turkey between the southern border of the

Map of the world in 450 BC, based on the writings of Herodotus
Indus River in modern Pakistan which empties into the Arabian Sea, but this is very far indeed from the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates. There is also the mystery of the bdellium associated with Havilah and the Pishon. Bdellium ("bedolah" or "bedolach") may have been a precious stone, pearls, a resinous substance (gum) from a tree, or a type of amber. Until the identity of bdellium is known, it is of limited use in helping us locate Eden.

Ultimately, based on the four rivers, we are not able to pinpoint precisely the location of Eden, although in my opinion the mostly likely region is that near the headwaters of the Euphrates and Tigris in modern southeastern Turkey. We need to look at another line of evidence, one which may not appear to be immediately applicable as it is only circumstantial—the ancestral homeland of the patriarch Abraham.

Abraham (originally Abram) and his family came from "Ur of the Chaldeans" (Genesis 11:28). Of Abraham's descendants, God made a "great nation" (Genesis 12:2), thus the ancient Hebrews might trace their lineage back to Ur which, being Abraham's homeland, they would equate with the primordial origin of their nation. The area of "Ur of the Chaldeans", they could well have believed, was also the area originally known as Eden.

Where was "Ur"? The traditional answer is that it is none other than the ancient city of Ur which, being Abraham's homeland, they would equate with the primordial origin of their nation. The area of "Ur of the Chaldeans", they could well have believed, was also the area originally known as Eden.

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The Gihon Spring in Jerusalem was a major source of water in ancient times, but the Bible states that the river Gihon "flows around the whole land of Cush", so another Gihon may be referred to in the description of Eden. Cush is often considered to be a location in Ethiopia or Arabia (Oxford Annotated Bible, 2001), and the first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus identified the Gihon with the Nile (S. R. Driver, The Book of Genesis, 1948). In the late nineteenth century the Assyriologist Paul Haupt suggested that the Gihon was a river well east of the Euphrates and Tigris that flowed southwards into the Persian Gulf, and was envisioned by the ancients as then flowing west around Ethiopia and thence turning north to become the Nile which flows from south to north, emptying into the Mediterranean (Driver, 1948).

The Pishon flowed through a land named Havilah containing gold, bdellium, and onyx. Havilah is often considered to be in Arabia (Driver, 1948; Oxford Annotated Bible, 2001), but this is not certain; the name as used in different portions of the Bible may refer to different places. Gold and onyx are found in many regions, including Western Anatolia. Possibly the Pishon corresponds to the Büyük Menderes River of Western Anatolia (Schoppe and Schoppe, 2005). In contrast Paul Haupt suggested that the Pishon was another river east of the Euphrates and Tigris that also flowed into the Persian Gulf, and from there it was viewed by the ancients as circling Arabia (Havilah) and flowing into the Red Sea (Sinus Arabicus). Or one might suggest that the Pishon or Gihon is located even further east and today is represented by the

Black Sea and the northern borders of Syria and Iraq. But what modern rivers might correspond to the elusive Pishon and Gihon of the Bible?

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Humans have a desire to know the nature of our reality. For millennia, we have created myths to explain the universe and our place in it. For the last several hundred years, the nature of this great story has shifted. Mainstream science, which carries a belief of the primacy of matter and the lack of meaning, has taken the place of older meaning-centered stories where humans have a purposeful place. So we have found ourselves with a great understanding of our physical universe, with less of a meaningful connection to it. Yet today, the cutting edges of science are approaching territories where meaning may again play a more important role. The anthropic principle arises out of quantum physics and cosmology in an attempt to explain how precariously and beautifully we are poised in this physical universe as human beings, able to perceive this world that we live in. The beauty, the wonder and the improbability of the universe that we live in is inspiring scientists to reconsider our place.

For example, if the energy released in the Big Bang, the formative event in our universe, differed in strength by as little as 1 part in $10^{40}$, the universe would have either collapsed back on itself or expanded too quickly for stars to form. This improbable $10^{40}$ could be compared to firing a gun and hitting a one-inch target across the twenty billion light years of the observable universe. Similarly, the formation of heavier elements in our universe depended on the very precarious balance of the so-called strong and weak forces. If the strong force were slightly weaker or stronger by as little as 1% there would be no carbon or heavier elements in the universe. These elements are essential for carbon-based life forms like us. Also, consider the ratio of proton to electron mass. The mass of a proton is roughly 1836.1526 times the mass of an electron. Were this ratio different by any significant degree, many essential compounds for life, such as DNA, would not exist. If any of these variables were changed, we wouldn’t have life as we know it.

The idea of a universe fine-tuned for life is not new. In 1913, Lawrence Joseph Henderson discussed in The Fitness of the Environment the importance of water in our natural environment with respect to life. Water has unique properties that are essential in the functioning of our minds and bodies. This water pervades the surface of our planet in the narrow range of temperatures where it is a liquid. Later in the 1960’s, physicist Robert Dicke recognized that certain forces like gravity and electromagnetism must be perfectly fine-tuned for life to exist anywhere in the universe. In 1984, Fred Hoyle compared the chance of obtaining even a single functioning protein by chance combination of amino acids to a star system full of blind men solving Rubik’s cube simultaneously.

Today we see a whole range of phenomena that support the human presence. As it turns out, we’re in a fairly stable place within the Milky Way galaxy. If we were in too dense a spiral arm of the galaxy, or were in its center, an excess of radiation and disruptions from supernovae would have prevented our evolution. We orbit around the right kind of star, which provides the right kind of light and radiation to sustain us. We are in a safe zone in relation to our sun, where it’s not too hot or too cold. And we have enough atmosphere to filter out most of the dangerous radiation coming from the sun. Earth is in a solar system with large planets that shield our own planet from too many comet impacts. Earth also has a moon that stabilizes the tilt of its axis. Our planet has a balance of water and landmass and has plate tectonic activity. Earth is also warm enough to circulate its iron core and generate a magnetic field. All of these factors constitute the “Goldilocks zone,” that sweet spot where the conditions are just right for human life to evolve. Whether you believe it’s chance or not, take a moment and acknowledge the wonder of this fine-tuning. We exist within this massive interconnection of forces, energies, and synchronicities. A similar recognition of this interconnection drove human myth for millennia.

Some cosmologists have concluded that with such a slim probability of our universe occurring in this way, it is impossible to see it as a chance event. We’ve come full circle in recognizing these amazing interstellar and submolecular improbabilities, and we feel a need for meaning. The anthropic principle was first articulated by the theoretical astrophysicist Brandon Carter in reaction to the Copernican principle, which stated that humans do not occupy a privileged position in the Universe. Carter recognized that it does appear we are privileged to some extent. Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards have taken this one step further in their book and movie The Privileged Planet as evidence for intelligent design, which proposes that the universe was created by an intelligence. Gonzalez and Richards argue that not only are humans poised in the optimal place for life, but that...
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