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<1044/c>	<p>dead already, the consumption of his or her body is not going to make much difference. During the Middle Ages Christian countries took this idea one step further: drinking the blood of a just-beheaded criminal was widely regarded as an effective cure for epilepsy, and mixtures containing powdered human bones and/or flesh were popularly regarded as aphrodisiacs. That drinking human blood can increase fertility is an old idea. It is related that Annia Galeria Faustina, the wife of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180), was so desperate to become pregnant that she drank the warm blood of a dead gladiator. Her son became the Emperor Commodus, one of the nastiest Roman rulers of all. Clearly it would be unscientific to make any connection between Annia's and Commodus's different versions of bloodthirstiness! The practice of eating dead enemies probably arose from the idea that you could absorb the better qualities of the person who had died through eating their flesh. Conversely, eating the person's body might indicate the ultimate contempt, in that you were degrading them completely: as you ate parts of the body you were mocking the person's erstwhile vigour and simultaneously stealing it for your own use. A couple of examples are worth noting. As recently as 1971 a member of the Black September organization boasted proudly of drinking the blood of the assassinated Wasfi Tal. Later in the 1970s Idi Amin, then dictator of Uganda, was accused of eating parts of the human beings who, indubitably, died in his torture camps. Did any of this happen? The evidence is remarkably elusive. A 1979 article ('The Man-Eating Myth') by Professor W Arens, surveys a wide range of cannibalism stories concerning the Caribbean, South America, New Guinea and West Africa, and finds that every account is based on hearsay rather than eye-witness reports. His conclusion is that tales of cannibalism have yet to be proved - they are travellers' tales rather than anything else. Even if we agree with his general hypothesis, we have to accept that in some instances people will eat the dead bodies of other people - if only in order to stay alive. The conclusion to which we can come is that cannibalism is rare but that, in extremis, it is something to which the human species will resort. LEFT AND RIGHT Two famous figures reputed to have indulged in cannibalism, Annia Gakria Faustina and (pointing) Idi Amin, onetime dictator of Uganda. Why Are Human Beings Monogamous? Humans are not the only animals to display the habit known as pair-bonding - the practice whereby parents stay together throughout the time that their offspring require to attain adulthood. Yet there is</p> <p>something of a <u>mystery</u></p> <p>in this connection. Human males are capable of fertilizing almost as many human females as they would wish; some of our close relations among the higher primates do exactly that. Among the primates it seems that the identity of the mother is important; that of the father is irrelevant. (The role of males in baboon tribes provides an interesting exception to the general rule.) Yet human parents generally stay together until their offspring are fully grown - and may even cohabit until the end of their lives despite the fact that they bear no more offspring together. The</p>
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reasons for this are very far from clear. In part they seem to be societal - you score no points if you ditch your spouse - but largely they seem to concern the very basic matter of pair-bonding. This ignores the fact that some men and some women wish to encounter as many sexual partners as possible, behaviour which may have good biological reasons behind it. It seems unlikely that monogamy is a natural state for the human animal. Mysteris of the universe All mysteries of science are, by definition, mysteries of the Universe, which, for the sake of argument, we can say is the sum total of all matter, all energy, and all events that have taken place throughout past time and will take place throughout future time. In this part of the book we shall consider mysteries on the grand scale - and also on the inconceivably tiny. At one moment we shall be talking in terms of billions of years and billions of light years; at the next we shall focus on events that are of importance for only billionths of a second involving particles so small that it is misleading to think of them as material objects. There is no paradox in this. Those tiny events and particles mould the Universe as a whole. Stars could not shine were it not for particles - called neutrinos - that are so insubstantial that they have no mass at all and can travel right through a solid object like the Earth as if it simply did not exist. And the birth of the Universe, if some current theories are to be believed, depended on particles that did not have any physical existence at all. LEFT Fred Hoyle in 1955, some years before he, Bond i and Gold propounded the Steady State Theory of the Universe. Hoyle, Still active today, has never been scared of iconoclasm. How Did The Universe Come Into Existence? A few decades ago this would have been a much more controversial question than it is today, because one possible answer would have been that the Universe had always existed, and always would. This was because