

8 of 42 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Brilliantly written, challenging and kind of creepy**

Challenging assumptions is always excellent mental exercise. In this book Robert Lanza takes on one of the key tenets of modern thinking: that all scientific disciplines ultimately reduce to physics. In its place he offers the provocative thesis that biology is primary, and the Universe literally flows from the conscious perceptions of living creatures.

38 of 42 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Brilliantly written, challenging and kind of creepy**, June 10, 2009

By [Free Thinker](#)
["www.christandplato.blogspot.com"](http://www.christandplato.blogspot.com)

 **Amazon Verified Purchase**([What's this?](#))

Challenging assumptions is always excellent mental exercise. In this book Robert Lanza takes on one of the key tenets of modern thinking: that all scientific disciplines ultimately reduce to physics. In its place he offers the provocative thesis that biology is primary, and the Universe literally flows from the conscious perceptions of living creatures.

On its face this sounds absurd, which demonstrates all the more just how brilliant this man is. He draws on findings from quantum physics and anatomy studies to establish a series of foundational principles for his biocentric theory, which he then elaborates on and defends.

He begins by reminding us of something we all know but rarely think about: that

20 of 23 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Biocentrism: a good start**

Dr Lanza does present some interesting perspectives on the role of life and consciousness in the origin and nature of the Universe. He goes on to ascribe six principles to his Biocentrism hypothesis, where the role of the conscious observer is central to the very existence of the Universe itself; and that time and space, or physical objects themselves do not have an...

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Published 5 months ago by Andres Betts

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Lanza does present some interesting perspectives on the role of life and consciousness in the origin and nature of the

vs.

Universe. He goes on to ascribe six principles to his Biocentrism hypothesis, where the role of the conscious observer is central to the very existence of the Universe itself; and that time and space, or physical objects themselves do not have an independent existence or reality without an observer. In fact, he concludes that life creates the Universe. It is a refreshing review of biology as being more central to the origin and evolution of the Universe over the more typical emphasis of physics and mathematics as the primary language of cosmology. Biology is intuitively more understandable than the application of advanced mathematics to describe the inner workings of the Universe. Dr Lanza provides an excellent biological emphasis for Cosmology to help individuals grasp the role of the observer in the understanding of the Universe, which is the foundation of his

reality is literally "all in our heads." We don't see the sunset, we see the interpretation of it our brain creates. We don't smell the rose, we experience the sensation of a scent created by a neural network.

We believe that these impressions are imposed on us by what Stephen Hawking calls the RWOT (Real World Out There). But our evidence for this belief amounts to subjective internal experiences! In pointing this out Lanza shifts the burden of proof to the physicalists, who assert that the outside world is what is truly real, while our qualia are illusory.

He expands on this thought by citing evidence from quantum physics. The famous two slit experiment, observations of split photons switching spin directions simultaneously, and observations of true backwards causation (the present determining the past) are all cited. Einstein once asked a colleague if he truly believed that the moon wasn't in the sky if no one was looking at it. Lanza would reply "of course it's not!"

In reading this book I was reminded of some of the implications of Relativity. It occurred to me that there are no absolute measurements of length. What my tape measure says is three feet would not be that at all for someone traveling at 99.99% of light speed. Nor would my estimation of the distance from my living room to Disneyland be the same as theirs. And their figures would be just as valid as mine! If space and time are completely dependent on the perspective of the observer, then in what sense are they real?

I have to also comment on Lanza's excellent writing style. He makes esoteric

Biocentrism hypothesis.

The observer's role in the creation of the Universe stems from a "quantum weirdness" that describes how the act of observation effects the outcome of a quantum measurement. Most of this hypothesis is based on the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics that posits the observer as the key element in determining the result of a quantum measurement. The experimental result of any quantum measurement remains undetermined (in a state of superposition) until a conscious observer looks at the quantum system. At the extreme view, no object exists until someone looks at it; not even the sun, moon, stars or the Universe itself. Unfortunately, this is by no means a new hypothesis: the eminent cosmologist John Wheeler had made a similar assertion more than 6 decades ago, that only the presence of a conscious observer brings the Universe into existence. Dr Lanza asserts that it is biology that gives meaning to time and space; indeed that space-time does not exist without the perception by a biological observer. In other words, there is no existence beyond the self, which boils down to the philosophy of Solipsism. However, again, there is nothing novel or new in this position. He offers no clues as to what degree of consciousness an observer must possess to bring spacetime or a quantum measurement into reality. Does a dog, cat, insect, amoeba and quantum physicist equally qualify as an observer? Or, if only human consciousness qualifies, then at what point in time did the Universe come into being? Was Australopithecus sufficiently self aware to bring the Universe

concepts understandable to laypeople like me. He also injects quite a bit of his life story into the text, talking about how he escaped from a less than ideal upbringing to become a medical doctor and a highly regarded research scientist. Being from a very similar background, I was able to identify with his struggles, though my resume is nowhere near as impressive as his.

This book so successfully challenged my current view of reality that it actually left me feeling a little unsettled, "creepy." But it also gave me an abundance of food for thought. Am I convinced he's right? Not yet. But I suspect he may be. So will you. This book gets my highest recommendation.

On...

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Published 6 months ago by Free Thinker

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into creation by possessing tool making capability; or was it Homo Erectus, with the power to control fire, the evolutionary triggering point? None of these issues are discussed, much less even introduced into the argument for Biocentrism. Biocentrism emerges fully formed based on a human conscious observer, without regard to the consideration that human evolution and consciousness is a process that occurred over millions of years.

The Biocentric model, as Dr Lanza describes, hangs solely on human consciousness, but that is pure hubris in a Universe 13.7 Billion years old with trillions of stars with orbiting planets and moons, which may also support other intelligent life who gazed back at the universe as conscious observers long before earthly pre-hominids descended from trees. I was disappointed that these more expansive biological views of a Universe that was presumably designed to be observed was limited to that of only the Earthly human observer.

Consider, for example, in quantum mechanics, a set of entangled photons may be created to produce a diffraction pattern when not observed and a bimodal distribution pattern when observed no matter how far they are separated. If such a pair of entangled photons were produced from across the universe, then theoretically, if no diffraction pattern was measured when they arrive and measured by a conscious earthly observer, then they must have been previously observed by some other conscious entity. Therefore, it should be theoretically possible to detect extraterrestrial life in this manner. Now, that

would have been a novel concept to bring to light in a Biocentric model of the Universe!

Dr Lanza often refers to consciousness as a DVR that contains information but only exists when the DVR is played back. However, a DVR can only play the past it cannot be played into the future and quantum information appears to be non-local such that either information comes from the future or there is supraluminal transmission of information.

As an aside, it is rather self-indulgent to devote several chapters on Dr Lanza's associations with several Nobel Prize winning scientists. As an undergraduate at UC San Diego, Francis Crick was one of my professors, as a medical student at UC San Francisco I performed research on oncogenes under J Michael Bishop (Nobel Prize Medicine 1989); and had dinner with James D Watson in Cold Spring Harbor when I presented at the Human Evolution conference held there in 1998. Therefore, it is certainly not unheard of for physician scientists to have multiple associations with prominent scientists, including Nobel Prize winners.

For readers interested in the origin and evolution of the Universe and the role of observers from a quantum mechanical viewpoint, there are several books that may be placed on the reading list, including John Gribbin's Schrödinger's Kittens or John Barrows Cosmological Anthropological Principle both are a more expansive extension of a Biocentric hypothesis.

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3 of 3 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **The Copenhagen Interpretation Resurrected**, December 17, 2009

By [S. Kozlowski](#)  (Washington DC) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

This is a fascinating book which posits that if we accept the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics on face value, a new understanding of the world is possible.

Lanza marries Physics with Biology to produce a scientifically grounded world-view which he calls Biocentrism. In a nutshell, the theory states that the world doesn't exist in actuality until we observe it AND since all observation takes place inside the human brain, reality is wholly a construct of human consciousness. While this sounds somewhat audacious on the it's face, there is some extremely good science behind Lanza's amazingly understandable argument and the author presents his case in a manner which is accessible to all. Even if you don't have any previous knowledge of quantum weirdness, this book is comprehensible and, if for no other reason, this makes the book useful.

If you ever wanted to understand the basic strangeness of the quantum world but felt daunted by the scope of the task, read this book and it will make sense to you. If you are initiated into such subject matter and you've started to wonder why there's been no fundamental break throughs in our understanding of the world since the first half of the 20th century, read this book. It's possible that science has been speeding down the wrong track for 75 years because scientists refused to accept what physics experiments were telling them at face value.


Whether the theory of Biocentrism is actually right, wrong or somewhere in between, it's a fascinating and thought provoking read.

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5 of 7 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **A paradigm changer**, September 25, 2009

By [Allen "BP"](#)  - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

According to Eric Berger, Science editor at the Houston Chronicle, Biocentrism is "one of the most interesting books to cross my desk. The book is an out-and-out challenge to modern physics." I would add, it succeeds wonderfully at doing this. It may change your life.

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5 of 10 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Intriguing topic..but no meat.**, September 25, 2009

By [Michael Lurie](#)  (Chicago, USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™


This book started well but then went nowhere. It repeatedly hammered the point that consciousness must be accounted for in order to construct a complete scientific view of the world, but failed to explain how to go about doing this. An example equation or two incorporating consciousness based variables would have been a good start. I also take exception to linking quantum collapse exclusively to "consciousness" rather than just "observation". That said, I do believe that Lanza is on to something that warrants more rigorous investigation.

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3 of 4 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Biocentrism**, September 12, 2009

By [Rosa V. Auge "Bkind"](#)  (Astoria, NY United States) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

Fascinating book! a scientific exploration of consciousness linked to the theory of everything living. Also illustrated with a personal and poetic narrations of Lanza's personal experiences.

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3 of 4 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Maybe, But still a Theory Unrefined... Still... Read the Book**, August 22, 2009

By [Davidicus Marcus "My only friend, The End"](#)  (Virgin Islands) - [See all my reviews](#)

This is really good book. At first, I didn't think so, and I felt Lanza was a bit over-posturing at times... and I felt this again several times while reading it... poor kid makes good (all right already). And I get a little suspicious when the narrative goes from "I... I... I..." to quickly "the authors think..." There really wasn't enough of Berman's recognized input. Nonetheless.... having said that... and that's why four stars instead of five... this is a really good book. Good to read. Good to think about. And he (Lanza? Berman?) does a really good job of presenting the potentialities. It makes you stop in your tracks several times, and wonder about those things we are supposed to wonder about.

I'm not sure I'm convinced, though -- I'd love to hear a discussion group on this... maybe with Robert Wright and Gerald Edelman, for instance. No, our consciousness does not (cannot) CREATE the universe... we've adapted so that we CAN consciously REALIZE (our section of) the universe, but I'll bet there are higher consciousnesses, intelligences, beings, et al, that probably look on us as bugs. Lanza... you're on the right track, I just don't think we're ready to hand you the Nobel Prize (over this one) quite yet. Please keep going though.

[There is probably some disclosure in order here... I own stock in Advanced Cell Technologies, which is Lanza's stem cell research company... that's how I found out about him and his book --

and I saw the notice on MSNBC. I still think it is an up-and-coming enterprise, and there's no doubt Lanza is a smart feller, and they have a good reputation -- as does the good doctor -- I just thought I should mention it.]

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3 of 4 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Sound support for biocentrism**, August 19, 2009

By [Leeann "Lee"](#) (Philadelphia, PA) - [See all my reviews](#)

The idea that consciousness precedes matter is, of course, ancient. However, biocentrism uses science to explore the concept systematically in its particulars, free (as one reviewer posted elsewhere) of the very common unexamined materialist assumptions that most scientists carry into their work. "Consciousness is NOT an artifact of a preexisting universe but is THE essential Being of the Universe, with matter the artifact of consciousness. Along with the realization that all of Being is obviously one event seen from multiple and infinitely diverse viewpoints - combined with a long list of scientific experiments and observations -there is sound and reasonable support for Lanza's Biocentrism.

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13 of 27 people found the following review helpful:

★☆☆☆☆ **Nothing New**, August 19, 2009

By [Richard Pinnell "Engmex"](#) (Monterrey, Mexico) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

The central theme of this book is that life creates the universe and that consciousness lies at the center of existence. This is not a new idea and there is absolutely nothing new in this book. Lanza draws on two main sources to back up this idea. The first is that consciousness appears to cause the wave function to collapse in the famous double slit experiment. The second concerns the anthropic principle and how it seems that universe is uncannily just right for life. Both of these 'proofs' are open to various interpretations including the possibility that consciousness does indeed lie at the center of creation. However, that is only one possible conclusion that can be drawn and Lanza adds absolutely zero to the debate. He uses his book to lambaste physics and physicists for such like as not being able to tell us what came before the big bang, whilst at the same time declaring consciousness to be the be all and end all of everything without actually defining what consciousness is or offering any sort of explanation of how it came into existence or how it creates the physical universe. On top of that much of the book contains sections that have absolutely nothing to do with the subject matter and concern nothing more than Lanza's own life experiences. He uses these chapters to butter his own biscuit, blast his own trumpet and bang his own drum interspersed with a bit of name dropping. The worst book I've read all year!

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14 of 16 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Compelling and Relevant Book**, August 9, 2009

By [Michael Gooch "Author of Wingtips with Spurs:..."](#) (Texas, USA) - [See all my reviews](#)
Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

This is a brave new book. For me, it exhibits the same courage as the 2006 [The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief](#).

In the August '09 issue of Discover Magazine, Roger Penrose participated in an interview in which he states that physics has been looking in the wrong corners. He believes some of the newer theories may not be valid and calls for a new way of thinking. That's how I recall the article anyway.

The same week I read this magazine, Amazon delivers Biocentrism to my doorstep. While Lanza and Berman may not be kindred spirits with Penrose, they most certainly attend the same family reunion. That is, I believe Biocentrism addresses a large part of the problems espoused by Penrose.

This book sets forth a new look at the universe. Lanza and Berman contend that our current theories of the physical world simply don't work. Instead of placing life as an accidental by-product, the authors place life at the apex of universal existence and purpose. It is a very thrilling and disturbing read. And I also could use the adjectives, compelling and relevant as the arena of physics seems to be moving in a direction of silliness (multiverse, string theory, etc.) that can possibly never be proved.

While the proposals made in Biocentrism seem radical and counter-intuitive at first, a bit of reflection will soon make the images clearer and place us on the pathway to a better and more commonsensical mindset.

You may also enjoy [Fingerprints of God: The Search for the Science of Spirituality](#), [The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World](#), [The Goldilocks Enigma: Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life?](#), [Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The Universe](#) and [The Conscious Universe: Parts and Wholes in Physical Reality](#)

I hope you find this review helpful.

Michael L. Gooch

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3 of 9 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Essays with a scientific bend**, July 14, 2009

By [DIANA ELAINA](#) (SEATTLE, WASHINGTON USA) - [See all my reviews](#)
Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

To call this book a science book is a bit of a stretch. However, it does contain some good summaries of pertinent quantum mechanics experiments. It also does a good job of reviewing

how much physics/science does not know, although I think the authors could have emphasized more that the purpose of science is to explain the laws of world we live in, not to explain how it got that way. (See what Newton said about the nature of gravity!) The book contains a lot of personal information, opinions and some wishful thinking that are scattered through the text. I enjoyed reading it but I do not think that it made the case for Biocentrism, other than suggesting some intriguing possibilities.

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18 of 20 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Fascinating proposal for a paradigm change**, July 7, 2009

By [Douglas Kings](#)  (Chicago, IL United States) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

I've just finished reading the book and there is still a lot I need to process. The comments I have read (not so much here but on other sites) have been, not surprisingly, mostly negative. Personally I do think Lanza is on to something important. Reading the many criticisms of his ideas, however, makes me aware that evaluating biocentrism is going to be very difficult because it is a proposal for a paradigm shift. By definition, a new paradigm always appears to be nonsense from within the established paradigm. A proposal to change from one paradigm to another is very different than a proposal to replace one idea with another within a paradigm. Most of biocentrism's critics, it seems to me, are treating it as if it's the latter rather than the former.

It's been a long time since I read Kuhn's Structure of Scientific Revolutions but this is, I think, one of its most profound insights. For example, from the Ptolemaic perspective Copernicus and Galileo were crazy. Their critics and persecutors were not unreasonable. What Copernicus and Galileo were proposing, however, was a change in reason. As Kuhn shows, the shift from one paradigm to another is inevitably messy and chaotic. In the end, a new paradigm is finally adopted for very pragmatic reasons: it works, or at least works better than its predecessor.

For this reason, I think there is a lot of misunderstanding of what Lanza is proposing. He is being critiqued from within the assumptions of the paradigm he is seeking to replace, which is understandable and even inevitable, but nonetheless very confusing. For example, traditional Christianity and modern science have debated whether God created the universe or whether it originated spontaneously in an event like the Big Bang. When Lanza says consciousness creates the universe he is not now offering a third alternative. Rather, he is proposing a model in which origins-in-time questions are meaningless.

For Lanza, the universe is created and re-created in our consciousness every time we interact with it and this is its most important moment of creation. To many/most, such an observation will seem obvious and inconsequential. Lanza's assertion is that in practice this is much more significant a truth than we are aware. Ignoring the universe in our heads, he maintains, is leading scientists and others to numerous misunderstandings and on a whole assortment of fruitless quests (e.g. for a TOE/ "theory of everything or GUI/ "grand unified theory").

In the long run, biocentrism will be judged on its utility. Lanza is certainly right in identifying the many problems that exist with our current model of reality, which are more profound and consequential than probably most people realize. It will take awhile to see if biocentrism is the replacement model that both addresses these problems and opens up new avenues for exploration and problem solving. In any case, I think Lanza has opened up a path that needs to be explored.

Biocentrism is not overly long or technical and is well written, including several enjoyable and even moving passages from Lanza's own life. It will certainly make you think and see things from a different perspective, which I believe is always a good thing. Strongly recommended.

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20 of 23 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Biocentrism: a good start**, July 2, 2009

By [Andres Betts](#) (san clemente, ca) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

Dr Lanza does present some interesting perspectives on the role of life and consciousness in the origin and nature of the Universe. He goes on to ascribe six principles to his Biocentrism hypothesis, where the role of the conscious observer is central to the very existence of the Universe itself; and that time and space, or physical objects themselves do not have an independent existence or reality without an observer. In fact, he concludes that life creates the Universe. It is a refreshing review of biology as being more central to the origin and evolution of the Universe over the more typical emphasis of physics and mathematics as the primary language of cosmology. Biology is intuitively more understandable than the application of advanced mathematics to describe the inner workings of the Universe. Dr Lanza provides an excellent biological emphasis for Cosmology to help individuals grasp the role of the observer in the understanding of the Universe, which is the foundation of his Biocentrism hypothesis.

The observer's role in the creation of the Universe stems from a "quantum weirdness" that describes how the act of observation effects the outcome of a quantum measurement. Most of this hypothesis is based on the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics that posits the observer as the key element in determining the result of a quantum measurement. The experimental result of any quantum measurement remains undetermined (in a state of superposition) until a conscious observer looks at the quantum system. At the extreme view, no object exists until someone looks at it; not even the sun, moon, stars or the Universe itself. Unfortunately, this is by no means a new hypothesis: the eminent cosmologist John Wheeler had made a similar acertion more than 6 decades ago, that only the presence of a conscious observer brings the Universe into existence.

Dr Lanza asserts that it is biology that gives meaning to time and space; indeed that space-time does not exist without the perception by a biological observer. In other words, there is no existence beyond the self, which boils down to the philosophy of Solipsism. However, again, there is nothing novel or new in this position. He offers no clues as to what degree of

consciousness an observer must possess to bring spacetime or a quantum measurement into reality. Does a dog, cat, insect, amoeba and quantum physicist equally qualify as an observer? Or, if only human consciousness qualifies, then at what point in time did the Universe come into being? Was Australopithecus sufficiently self aware to bring the Universe into creation by possessing tool making capability; or was it Homo Erectus, with the power to control fire, the evolutionary triggering point? None of these issues are discussed, much less even introduced into the argument for Biocentrism. Biocentrism emerges fully formed based on a human conscious observer, without regard to the consideration that human evolution and consciousness is a process that occurred over millions of years.

The Biocentric model, as Dr Lanza describes, hangs solely on human consciousness, but that is pure hubris in a Universe 13.7 Billion years old with trillions of stars with orbiting planets and moons, which may also support other intelligent life who gazed back at the universe as conscious observers long before earthly pre-hominids descended from trees. I was disappointed that these more expansive biological views of a Universe that was presumably designed to be observed was limited to that of only the Earthly human observer.

Consider, for example, in quantum mechanics, a set of entangled photons may be created to produce a diffraction pattern when not observed and a bimodal distribution pattern when observed no matter how far they are separated. If such a pair of entangled photons were produced from across the universe, then theoretically, if no diffraction pattern was measured when they arrive and measured by a conscious earthly observer, then they must have been previously observed by some other conscious entity. Therefore, it should be theoretically possible to detect extraterrestrial life in this manner. Now, that would have been a novel concept to bring to light in a Biocentric model of the Universe!

Dr Lanza often refers to consciousness as a DVR that contains information but only exists when the DVR is played back. However, a DVR can only play the past it cannot be played into the future and quantum information appears to be non-local such that either information comes from the future or there is supraluminal transmission of information.

As an aside, it is rather self-indulgent to devote several chapters on Dr Lanza's associations with several Nobel Prize winning scientists. As an undergraduate at UC San Diego, Francis Crick was one of my professors, as a medical student at UC San Francisco I performed research on oncogenes under J Michael Bishop (Nobel Prize Medicine 1989); and had dinner with James D Watson in Cold Spring Harbor when I presented at the Human Evolution conference held there in 1998. Therefore, it is certainly not unheard of for physician scientists to have multiple associations with prominent scientists, including Nobel Prize winners.

For readers interested in the origin and evolution of the Universe and the role of observers from a quantum mechanical viewpoint, there are several books that may be placed on the reading list, including John Gribbin's Schrödinger's Kittens or John Barrows Cosmological Anthropological Principle both are a more expansive extension of a Biocentric hypothesis.

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9 of 11 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **How far down the rabbit hole do you want to go?**, June 30, 2009

By [Alice](#)  - [See all my reviews](#)

I like the biocentrism idea a lot, although the book still left me with lots of questions. While the idea may seem counter-intuitive at first, it is certainly a lot more logical (and consistent with the scientific facts) than current accepted theories of the universe that add and subtract dimensions like they were candy canes on a Christmas tree. If you haven't already done so, I urge you to read it. But as one book reviewer pointed out, "You must first ask yourself one thing: Just how far down the rabbit hole do you want to go?"

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7 of 8 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **"Wow" but not for those who lack introspection**, June 29, 2009

By [L.L.B "thinking man"](#)  (NYC) - [See all my reviews](#)

I really like what Lanza and Berman say in their book. All I can say is "wow" Since before Einstein, scientists have been searching for the elusive theory that explains all of nature. I think this book goes a long way towards that goal.

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16 of 34 people found the following review helpful:

★☆☆☆☆ **Waste of time and money**, June 29, 2009

By [J. D. Nisson "jdn"](#)  (Northampton, MA) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

This book reminds me of the "What the Bleep..." movie. It promises to explore the mysteries of consciousness and reality from a rational (and maybe even scientific) perspective, but fails to deliver. I forced myself to finish it only because of an undying hope that it might get better and because the principle author, Robert Lanza, has such glowing credentials and apparent reputation.

The basic premise of the book is great, but the attempt to "prove" it through explanations of quantum theory and the like are very weak. The stories of the author's childhood are irrelevant and I got tired of hearing mention of Harvard, MIT and various Nobel names. I started to think the book would be better titled "Egocentrism", given Lanza's fascination with himself. (There is a second author, but the entire book is written in the first person and it is not clear what involvement the other author had.)

I would not recommend this book at all.

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8 of 10 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Persuasive and eloquently intuitive**, June 22, 2009

By [Peter H "Peter"](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

A bit deep, but very refreshing. I really enjoyed reading this book. It was uplifting, and at the same time, helped me on my personal journey to understanding.

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9 of 13 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Beautifully written**, June 18, 2009

By [Physics guy](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

I found some fun comments about the book on MSNBC.com's blog "Cosmic Log." Check them out - the article's called "Universe in Your Head" (there have to be a hundred comments - some of them are hilarious). Science Editor Alan Boyle quotes Richard Conn Henry, a physics and astronomy professor at Johns Hopkins University: "Why does Robert have to say it at all? It is because we, the physicists, do not say it - or if we do say it, we only whisper it, and in private - furiously blushing as we mouth the words. True, yes; politically correct, hell no!"

Some comments:

* I can recall a philosophy professor in college, who was confronted by a student writhing in the unhappy state of Cartesian anxiety over his own existence. The student said, full of emotion and worry, "Professor, do I exist?" The professor responded, "Who's asking?"

*Life is so much stranger than fiction. I'll never understand why people spend so much time watching "housewives of orange county" when the Universe in all of her mystery and beauty is right outside of their window...

* If you are ever before a judge however, it's good to know that your defense can be, "your honor, alcohol only exists in your mind and so I was never over the limit and that machine the officer used only was created in line with laws that we only think exist!"

* If what Lanza proposes is true, perhaps I can learn to use "the Force" after all.

*Magic Mushrooms can show you the same theories, and it's fun!

*The world is like a ride at an amusement park. And when you choose to go on it, you think that it's real because that's how powerful our minds are. And the ride goes up and down and round and round. It has thrills and chills, and it's very brightly coloured, and it's very loud and it's fun, for a while. Some people have been on the ride for a long time, and they begin to question - is this real, or is this just a ride? And other people have remembered, and they come back to us. They say 'Hey! Don't worry, don't be afraid, ever, because, this is just a ride.' And we...kill those people. Ha ha ha. 'Shut him up! We have a lot invested in this ride. SHUT HIM UP! Look at my furrows of worry. Look at my big bank account and family. This just has to be real.' It's just a ride. But we always kill those good guys who try and tell us that, you ever notice that? And let the demons run amok. But it doesn't matter because: it's just a ride. And we can change it anytime we want. It's only a choice. No effort, no work, no job, no savings, and money. A

choice, right now, between fear and love. The eyes of fear want you to put bigger locks on your doors, buy guns, close yourselves off. The eyes of love, instead, see all of us as one. Here's what you can do to change the world, right now, to a better ride. Take all that money that we spend on weapons and defence each year, and instead spend it feeding, clothing and educating the poor of the world, which it would many times over, not one human being excluded, and we could explore space, together, both inner and outer, for ever, in peace.

*This is far beyond my ability to "grok" and so frustratingly fascinating I truly want to understand. Can someone explain this to us simple, single-cell creatures? How does it resemble Hinduism, or Native American animist religions? Inquiring (single-cell, simple) Minds want to know (and understand).

*This guy has his s... together. I wonder how much time he has spent with Tibetan Bhuddists, or Hopi, Zuni, and Navajo Indians? ...almost forgot to mention the great American Philosopher, Geraldine (Flip Wilson) "What you see, is wht you get!"

*Robert Lanza justifiably opens the door to a more candid evaluation of how much our inner wiring influences the conclusions we draw. Naturally, this would draw fire from those who lack a certain degree of introspection and reflexion on the limitations of being human and who simply assume that what we perceive is a reliable representation of external reality, and that is understandable.

* Why worry about it anyway? It all goes away when you die.

* Hey guys! The answer is 42.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comments \(2\)](#)

6 of 28 people found the following review helpful:

★☆☆☆☆ **The author doesn't really seem to understand the scope of his arguments,** June 17, 2009

By [Emphyrio](#) (Los Angeles, CA, USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

It is truly amazing how one can write an entire book from misunderstanding one simple principle. When scientists talk about the "observer", all that that really means is that there is a logically consistent viewpoint of the universe. Quantum physics just tells us that we have a choice of viewpoints, for example, the standard example that we can measure either the speed or position of a particle.

An observer can take a pick of viewpoints, but that doesn't mean that any other viewpoint is any less valid. More importantly, no viewpoint needs an observer to be valid. If one insists that a viewpoint needs an observer to be valid, then that means that an observer becomes tied to his or her viewpoint. Tying an observer to one specific viewpoint means that s/he is not able to choose viewpoints at random, which basically means that there's no free will. Everything is already pre-destined. I don't like this, so naturally, I won't like the entire premise of the book. I would much rather believe in an infinite number of viewpoints, which I can choose or discard at will. I don't

want to be responsible for the universe. I just want to watch it.

Furthermore, the author cites a number of unsolved problems in our current understanding of physics. Aside from a lot of flowery language in describing these, there's nothing. The reason why I have a problem with this is that his logic would can apply at any time in history to any level that physics was at. He's not presenting any solution to the particular issues that scientists are working on. If we are to accept his arguments, we can dismiss the entire science of physics. This is rampant nonsense.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comments \(14\)](#)

11 of 29 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Biocentrism**, June 16, 2009

By [Thomas J. Mulhern "tojom30"](#) (nyack,new york) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

This is an odd amalgam of personalized reminices that describe a poor boy's aspiration and achievements and a popularization of a rather extreme version of the anthrpomorphic principle in physics,i.e. the presence of an observer is necessary for the universe to exist as it does.In its former themes,it is mawkish and self indulgent;in its latter it is shallow and unpersuasive.In his science explication the author regularly approaches the reducio ad absurdum of solipcism and ignores its consequence.One wonders for whom he wrote the book since he appears completely persuaded that nobody else exists as anything but his idea of them.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comments \(2\)](#)

32 of 46 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Does life create the universe?**, June 12, 2009

By [Donald G. Davis](#) (CO) - [See all my reviews](#)

A recent article by Robert Lanza and Bob Berman, "The Biocentric Universe--subtitled "A radical new view of reality: Life creates time, space, and the cosmos itself," appeared in the May 2009 Discover magazine. In metaphysical circles, there's nothing new about vapid assertions that "we create our own reality." But this was in a popular science magazine, so I supposed that it must be serious science, and I read their book Biocentrism which expands on the article.

Citing quantum-mechanical experiments showing that subatomic entities can be in indefinite states until measured by observers, and the strange coincidence that the parameters of the physical universe seem to be perfectly tuned to permit life, they propose that these things are consistent with "biocentrism, which holds that the universe is created by life and not the other way around." But to make this inverted causation work on a cosmic scale, they also propose that time and space are illusions.

The book's essence is the set of principles below, derived at the end of corresponding chapters:

First Principle of Biocentrism: What we perceive as reality is a process that involves our

consciousness. An "external" reality, if it existed, would--by definition--have to exist in space. But this is meaningless, because space and time are not absolute realities but rather tools of the human and animal mind.

Second Principle of Biocentrism: Our external and internal perceptions are inextricably intertwined. They are different sides of the same coin and cannot be divorced from one another.

Third Principle of Biocentrism: The behavior of subatomic particles--indeed all particles and objects--is inextricably linked to the presence of an observer. Without the presence of a conscious observer, they at best exist in an undetermined state of probability waves.

Fourth Principle of Biocentrism: Without consciousness, "matter" dwells in an undetermined state of probability. Any universe that could have preceded consciousness only existed in a probability state.

Fifth Principle of Biocentrism: The structure of the universe is explainable only through biocentrism. The universe is fine-tuned for life, which makes perfect sense as life creates the universe, not the other way around. The "universe" is simply the complete spatio-temporal logic of the self.

Sixth Principle of Biocentrism: Time does not have a real existence outside of animal-sense perception. It is the process by which we perceive changes in the universe.

Seventh Principle of Biocentrism: Space, like time, is not an object or a thing. Space is another form of our animal understanding and does not have an independent reality. We carry space and time around with us like turtles with shells. Thus, there is no absolute self-existing matrix in which physical events occur independent of life.

The authors berate "contemporary" or "Western" science for asking us to believe that "the entire universe, exquisitely tailored for our existence, popped into existence out of absolute nothingness. Who in their right mind would accept such a thing?" But that is not the only concept entertained by scientists, and that the universe has always existed in some sense (if a probability state constitutes existence) seems to me no less baffling. And there is no such thing as "contemporary" or "Western" science--there is only real science or pseudoscience. Real science requires that hypotheses should, at least in principle, offer testable predictions. I cannot see this in their Principles.

Lanza and Berman repeatedly stress the need to reinterpret time and space, and say "change is not the same thing as time," but they do not explain how to grasp this. I understand that different conscious beings will subjectively experience the rate and scale of time and space otherwise than we do, but it does not follow that there are no corresponding objective entities that are outside conscious experience, or that sequential process itself is escapable or reversible. Indeed, these authors, like all of us, use language in which flow from past to future, from there to here, is inextricably embedded.

To explain how their biocentric concept might mesh with the detailed evidence of cosmic and biological evolution implicit in astronomical observations and the geologic record, in which organic life appears as a late and sparsely-distributed phenomenon, they liken the cosmos to a phonograph record in which an entire musical performance exists simultaneously. But they do not make clear how we might experience the universe from such a perspective.

There are also many complicated questions implicit in the idea that the universe "collapses" into

a definite state only as a function of living observers. Who or what qualifies as "observers" and "observations"? Can one individual pull off this trick, or is it a collective effect of life in general? How nearly human do the living things have to be? Is it intentional or involuntary? Why are we not aware of our role in cosmic creation?

The authors imply that consciousness, at an animal level of life, is key to the cosmos-defining process. It would therefore seem important to establish what is necessary for developing and maintaining consciousness. They admit that they do not know, but in their chapter "Death and Eternity," they nevertheless declare that "the mathematical possibility of your consciousness ending is zero", and "energy keeps changing forms, but it never diminishes in the least. Similarly, the essence of who you are, which is energy, can neither diminish nor 'go away'..."

This identification of consciousness with energy seems to me too simple. One's life, and the associated consciousness, I view as a patterned process, akin to a candle flame or standing wave, in which energy flow serves to sustain a particular, relatively-stable form. But the pattern, not the energy, is central to identity--and when the energy flow goes outside narrow limits, or veers elsewhere, the living pattern can and does disappear.


Lanza and Berman's attempt to establish biocentrism as the key to the nature of reality is ambitious and provocative, but does not convince me. It is not clear that awareness is necessary to raw existence.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comments \(3\)](#)

23 of 26 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Perhaps Lanza and Hawking converge?**, June 10, 2009

By [Daniel J. Rose](#)  (Shrewsbury, MA USA) - [See all my reviews](#)
REAL NAME™

I must concur with all of the thoughtful reviews so far presented that Robert Lanza and Bob Berman have crafted a beautifully written account of a potentially revolutionary idea. Where as most current cosmological theories represent life and consciousness as emergent, and even accidental, properties of an otherwise lifeless universe. Dr. Lanza proposes, to the contrary, that life and consciousness are actually fundamental properties of the universe and all that it represents, so much so that the universe cannot possibly exist without life to give it reality.

From this simple idea, some might immediately assume that Dr. Lanza is seeking to justify a form of Intelligent Design or Creationism, but that would be a huge mistake. Dr. Lanza is a consummate scientist who fully embraces the latest knowledge that science has brought us, from evolutionary theory to relativity and quantum mechanics. His biocentrism, in fact, proposes to make sense of some of the most perplexing discoveries that quantum mechanics has revealed together with Einsteinian relativity, and he does this in the most engaging, patient (to this layman), and conversational style, with a minimum of mathematics. He even takes the time to explain the little math that he uses for the most innumerate among us to understand.

Basically, he contends that any unobserved universe can only exist in a state of probability that

requires living observation and measurement to give it any certain reality. Some have assumed that Lanza refers only to human consciousness and question the idea on this very basis: what gave the universe reality before humans arrived? However, it is clear that he is referring to consciousness as it exists, to one degree or another, in all forms of life, known and unknown. While for an individual, what is not perceived may not exist for them, clearly the larger reality is far more complex than that, and such, at the very least, is the work that remains to be understood.

A previous reviewer draws a distinction between Robert Lanza's biocentrism and Stephen Hawking's sense of the "RWOT (Real World Out There)." However, from a recent article on Dr. Hawking's latest thinking, it appears that Lanza and Hawking may actually be converging on the same point. Hawking is quoted in the July/August 2009 issue of Discover magazine as follows ("Return of the Invisible Man," pp. 50-51):

"Hawking's most recent work explores the implications of the notion that the universe is a giant quantum phenomenon. The problem with conventional attempts to understand the cosmos, he now believes, is that researchers have failed to appreciate the full, bizarre implications of quantum physics. These efforts to create a unique theory that would explain all the properties of the universe are therefore doomed to fail. Hawking refers to such attempts as 'bottom-up' theories because they assume the universe had a unique beginning and that its subsequent history was the only possible one.

"Hawking is now pushing a different strategy, which he calls top-down cosmology. It is not the case, he says, that the past uniquely determines the present. Because the universe has many possible histories and just as many possible beginnings, the present state of the universe selects the past. 'This means that the histories of the Universe depend on what is being measured,' Hawking wrote in a recent paper, 'contrary to the usual idea that the Universe has an objective, observer-independent history.'"

Dr. Lanza insists that future theories of the universe will be biocentric in nature. That Dr. Hawking might agree, in a complete reversal from his past writing about this, certainly raises the most intriguing of possibilities, does it not?

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Was this review helpful to you? Yes No Yes No [Comments \(2\)](#)

8 of 42 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Brilliantly written, challenging and kind of creepy**, June 10, 2009

By [Free Thinker "www.christandplato.blogspot.com"](#) (USA) - [See all my reviews](#)
Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

Challenging assumptions is always excellent mental exercise. In this book Robert Lanza takes on one of the key tenets of modern thinking: that all scientific disciplines ultimately reduce to physics. In its place he offers the provocative thesis that biology is primary, and the Universe

literally flows from the conscious perceptions of living creatures.

On its face this sounds absurd, which demonstrates all the more just how brilliant this man is. He draws on findings from quantum physics and anatomy studies to establish a series of foundational principles for his biocentric theory, which he then elaborates on and defends.

He begins by reminding us of something we all know but rarely think about: that reality is literally "all in our heads." We don't see the sunset, we see the interpretation of it our brain creates. We don't smell the rose, we experience the sensation of a scent created by a neural network.

We believe that these impressions are imposed on us by what Stephen Hawking calls the RWOT (Real World Out There). But our evidence for this belief amounts to subjective internal experiences! In pointing this out Lanza shifts the burden of proof to the physicalists, who assert that the outside world is what is truly real, while our qualia are illusory.

He expands on this thought by citing evidence from quantum physics. The famous two slit experiment, observations of split photons switching spin directions simultaneously, and observations of true backwards causation (the present determining the past) are all cited. Einstein once asked a colleague if he truly believed that the moon wasn't in the sky if no one was looking at it. Lanza would reply "of course it's not!"

In reading this book I was reminded of some of the implications of Relativity. It occurred to me that there are no absolute measurements of length. What my tape measure says is three feet would not be that at all for someone traveling at 99.99% of light speed. Nor would my estimation of the distance from my living room to Disneyland be the same as theirs. And their figures would be just as valid as mine! If space and time are completely dependent on the perspective of the observer, then in what sense are they real?

I have to also comment on Lanza's excellent writing style. He makes esoteric concepts understandable to laypeople like me. He also injects quite a bit of his life story into the text, talking about how he escaped from a less than ideal upbringing to become a medical doctor and a highly regarded research scientist. Being from a very similar background, I was able to identify with his struggles, though my resume is nowhere near as impressive as his.

This book so successfully challenged my current view of reality that it actually left me feeling a little unsettled, "creepy." But it also gave me an abundance of food for thought. Am I convinced he's right? Not yet. But I suspect he may be. So will you. This book gets my highest recommendation.

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Was this review helpful to you?

11 of 15 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Life in the Vast Lane**, June 9, 2009

By [Frank Juszczyk, Ph.D. "Dr. J"](#) (Silver City, NM USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

Lanza follows up implications in the quantum enigma of consciousness debate with some compelling ideas of the "Of course. Why didn't I think of that?" variety. The critically fine margins for conditions favoring life in the universe are their own argument for the creative role of consciousness in bringing form and substance to what is otherwise wave function potential. Lanza has an impressive scientific background, but his book is highly accessible to the average reader, generally free of impenetrable scientific jargon and made relevant to the common world of feelings and sentiment. His quotes from Emerson and Thoreau to illustrate points of biocentric theory are revelatory and startling in their aptness in explaining aspects of current quantum thought. I found Biocentrism to be a rich and hopeful book permeated with the consoling perception of an intimately personal universe that is not "out there" and to be feared, but within ourselves and tailored to our needs.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment](#)

9 of 17 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Say Hello to Solipsism**, June 3, 2009

By [Stephen Hage](#) (Chatsworth California USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

Reviewed By Stephen J. Hage SteveH9697@aol.com

In this book, Lanza deals with some of the ideas presented by Samuel Avery in Transcendence of the Western Mind.

His central thesis is "life creates the universe instead of the other way around." And, while he doesn't use the word what his thesis supports is solipsism.

What makes this book both interesting and worth the effort of reading it; is the unique perspective Lanza brings to the subject matter as a physician. Physicians are, by definition, intellectual chimeras because the discipline of medicine is an amalgam of hard science, healing, philosophy, metaphysics and ethics. Each physician must decide what to take and use from that intellectual palette and the decisions they make, in that regard, to a large extent define who they are, how they practice and what kind(s) of relationships they cultivate with patients and colleagues. I know this because I worked with physicians for most of my adult life in hospitals.

From the way he chooses to present his arguments, it's clear he has a solid grasp of esoteric disciplines like quantum theory, special relativity and particle physics. And what makes his presentation more compelling than other efforts I've encountered is his ability and willingness to weave personal experience into the thoughts and ideas presented.

His style is conversational and warm which tends to pull you along through the exposition gently. And his sense of wonder and befuddlement at shop worn enigmas like the double slit experiment, Bell's theorem, non-locality and Schrödinger's cat is as infectious as it is delightful.

He reveals his bent toward solipsism in this passage where he talks about his friend Barbara in the chapter on consciousness:

"Every morning, she opens her front door to bring in the Boston Globe or to work in her garden. She opens her back porch door to a lawn dotted with whirly-gigs, squeaking as they go round and round in the breeze. She thinks the world churns along whether she happens to open the door or not.

It does not affect her in the least that the kitchen disappears when she's in the bathroom. That the garden and whirly-gigs evaporate when she's sleeping. That the shop and all its tools don't exist while she's at the grocery store."

What he says about Barbara is true and, because it's true, he leads the reader directly to the precipice of the abyss of solipsism.

Like it or not, solipsism is an epistemological nightmare. Its premise is that everyone creates reality, on-the-fly. Everything we see, touch, hear, smell or feel happens only in our head and not "out there" in the real world. That's the reason solipsism is referred to as an abyss because the next logical and inescapable question is whose reality is it? Is it yours or mine or someone else's?

The way out of that quagmire is to understand that solipsism obtains for perceptual consciousness only. And, to truly appreciate what that means I recommend you also read *Transcendence of the Western Mind*.

I very much like what Lanza has to say in *Biocentrism*. My only reservation is his failure to deal with the implications of how firmly his thesis embraces solipsism.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comments \(2\)](#)

16 of 20 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **A Fascinating New View of the Universe; If Only the Book was as Good as the Theory**, May 22, 2009

By [PrimeTruth](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

Biocentrism, by Robert Lanza and Bob Berman, is their attempt to propose a new way of looking at the universe. This view claims that in order for the universe to exist, and everything in it, it requires an observer. They attempt to back up their thesis by explaining the findings of quantum mechanics, in which experiments show all particles and objects are linked to a conscious observer. Without an observer these particles exist in an "undetermined state of probability waves" and only until a conscious agent perceives them do they collapse out of "superposition" and come into existence.

Essentially, what all this means is that, without conscious observers, nothing exists.

I found the book to be absolutely fascinating, though I think that may have something to do with my friend Bob Clapp's philosophy that I've adopted the last few years. He posits the concept of Biocentrism from a philosophical viewpoint in his book, [Every Man and Woman an Island: The Individual Human Being as Prime in the Universe](#), while this book tackles the same view from a scientific standpoint.

While I find the idea itself and the scientific evidence they provide for the theory to be fascinating I didn't like the later chapters of the book as well as the first few.

The first few chapters dive right into a lot of the science attempting to prove their theory true and as the book wore on I felt the authors included a little too much filler with personal stories about how he met and studied with all these great scientists and other personal stories. Don't get me wrong, the book was very well written, and very easily understood, even for someone like me who doesn't have much knowledge of physics. I just wished they spent a little more time on the science and not personal stories.

I don't know how well their theory is going to be accepted in the scientific community, but it seems to me that they have quite a bit of scientific data to back up their claims.

Biocentrism is a very good read and I was fascinated by their explanation of various experiments which show that particles seem to react to consciousness. It's a new view of the universe that could revolutionize the view of conscious beings in this universe. Without us, nothing truly exists.

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3 of 18 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Owen Barfield has more to offer**, May 20, 2009

By [Extollager](#) (Mayville, ND United States) - [See all my reviews](#)

Readers of Owen Barfield's SAVING THE APPEARANCES will be reminded of its opening pages. Barfield has much more to offer those who are interested in the correlative relationship between consciousness and nature. Lanza argues that science shows there was never a time when an external, dumb, physical universe existed, or that life sprang from it at a later date; any universe that could have preceded consciousness only existed in a state of probability waves. His arguments usefully challenge our habits of thought, but he's probably afflicted by what Barfield calls a residue of unresolved positivism (shown, e.g., in his use of "brain" and "mind" as interchangeable). I think the best use of this book could be to prepare readers for the challenge of reading SAVING THE APPEARANCES. There, Barfield deals with implications that Lanza doesn't seem to be aware of, e.g. with regard to the "prehistory" of the earth. Barfield explores language as a way to search into the evolution of consciousness in this book and other writings. Dale Nelson's essay "The Troubled Legacy of Owen Barfield," published in TOUCHSTONE magazine, is an introduction to the late British thinker. See Lanza's essay

"Biocentrism" in Discover magazine May 2009, and Tim Folger's article about John Wheeler (anthropic principle) in Discover for June 2002, for introductions to ideas basic to the present book.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment \(1\)](#)

3 of 7 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Ancient Knowledge Come Full Circle**, May 12, 2009

By [D. Ashby "Raven"](#) (USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

This is just one more book within a growing number that connects the latest findings in science with what many ancient philosophers have already told us, reality is not "out there" it's in your head. We are not casualties of a random process, we are active participants of the process that creates 'reality'. Quantum mechanics has been undeniably showing us this for decades now. There's a major worldview shift coming and I believe it's long overdue.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment](#)

9 of 14 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **A very cool book**, May 8, 2009

By [J Stevens](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

My little, tiny brain really, really hurt after reading it. Like Sherlock Holmes' old maxim: "when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth."

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment](#)

25 of 41 people found the following review helpful:

☆☆☆☆☆ **Doesn't live up to the advance press**, May 7, 2009

By [Fnorgby "Fnorgby"](#) (oakland, ca) - [See all my reviews](#)
Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

I'm very interested in the subject matter, and I am fascinated by the underlying question ("Does it make sense to describe a universe as "real" if there is no sentient life in it?"). But this book simply doesn't deliver anything substantial.

The author derides "new-age" idealists who want to claim that "quantum theory" supports their beliefs without explaining *how* in any significant detail -- then proceeds to do exactly that. Over and over, Biocentrism appeals to the same kind of false dichotomy that creationists use -- "Conventional science doesn't answer all the questions so that means that our ideas are better" -- but without making any kind of necessary connection between quantum theory and the author's "principles of biocentrism".

Yes, they are *answers*, but they're not sufficiently defined or tested, so they're no better than the appeal to intelligent design as an explanation for why the universe looks complex. He

describes how the extraction of information from quantum-entangled particles causes the wave function to collapse and the particles to exhibit behavior in strange ways. It's something of a leap in judgment to say that it's "consciousness" that causes this, but there are no ways to formulate the experiments without the involvement of consciousness at some point. Biocentrism goes even a further step beyond and states that consciousness *creates* reality, rather than merely saying that consciousness *constructs* the picture of reality that we carry around in our heads and write books about -- which was a "new" idea in the 18th century (Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason").

There is something here worth investigating, and the author is right in pointing out that consciousness appears to play a role in some pretty astounding ways. Ultimately, he goes way too far without providing anything beyond "heck, it *could* be this way".

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comments \(17\)](#)

19 of 23 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **A Fascinating Book by a Fascinating Mind**, April 28, 2009

By [Science Geek "Jim"](#) (USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

I eagerly awaited Lanza's latest book and was not disappointed. He is one of the few great scientists remaining who is unencumbered by the stilted and boxed in thinking characteristic of current scientific thought. How refreshing it is to know there is at least one, as Time Magazine refers to him, "renegade thinker" in our midst unafraid to express radical, new ideas. All the rest seem to have gone the way of Galileo.

While I can't say I totally agree with Lanza's postulations, I also cannot dispute his logic. I challenge others to provide an alternative rationale to explain the unexplainable two-hole experiment or Heisenberg's 'uncertainty principle'. Bravo to Lanza!

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13 of 18 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **I'm not there.**, April 27, 2009

By [H. Neimark "Q Thrower"](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

A thoroughly engaging, thought provoking, and quite readable work by two great scientific minds. The idea of Universe as an entity brought into being simply by our own observation of it is, to this reader, irrefutable, and underscores the concept behind Occam's Razor: The simplest explanation is usually the correct one.

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16 of 23 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Earthshattering**, April 27, 2009

By [Richard Snell](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

This book is thought-provoking. Nobel laureate Thomas was right- it definitely makes you think. I'm in the process of reading the book again, but think the authors have the tiger by the tail. It's hard to refute the argument, although I'm still struggling with what it all means.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment](#)

16 of 21 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **Some of the Biggest Minds in Science Consider Biocentrism a Valuable Perspective**, April 27, 2009

By [Glenn Yeffeth](#)  (Dallas, TX) - [See all my reviews](#)

"For several days now I have read and reread your article and thought about it. Like `a brief history of time' it is indeed stimulating and brings biology into the whole. Any short statement does not do justice to such a scholarly work. The book will appeal to an audience of many different disciplines because it is a new way of looking at the old problem of our existence. Most importantly, it makes you think."

- E. Donnall Thomas was awarded the 1990 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine.

"It is genuinely an exciting piece of work. I am very familiar with some of the things you say. The idea that consciousness creates reality has quantum support, as you suggest, and also coheres with some of the things biology and neuroscience are telling us about the structures of our being. To put what you are doing in a larger context, it exhibits a dramatic new Copernican reversal. Just as we now know that the sun doesn't really move but we do (we are the active agents), so you are suggesting that we are the entities that give meaning to the particular configuration of all possible outcomes we call reality. I think this is a great project."

- Ronald Green is the Eunice and Julian Cohen Professor for the Study of Ethics and Human Values, and Director of Dartmouth College's Ethics Institute.

"Robert Lanza, a world renowned scientist who has spanned many fields from drug delivery to stem cells to preventing animal extinction, and clearly one of the most brilliant minds of our times, has done it again. "A New Theory of the Universe" takes into account all the knowledge we have gained over the last few centuries, and correlates them to our own beings, placing in perspective our biologic limitations that have impeded our understanding of greater truths surrounding our existence and the universe around us. This new theory is certain to revolutionize our concepts of the laws of nature for centuries to come."

- Anthony Atala is an internationally recognized scientist, and the W.H. Boyce Professor, Chair, and Director of the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

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41 of 62 people found the following review helpful:

mankind. Maps. (Apr. 24)

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This text refers to the [Hardcover](#) edition.

From [Booklist](#)

Genetics has been intruding on human origins research, long the domain of archaeology and paleoanthropology. Veteran science journalist Wade applies the insights of genetics to every intriguing question about the appearance and global dispersal of our species. The result is Wade's recounting of "a new narrative," which also has elements of a turf war between geneticists and their established colleagues. He efficiently explains how an evolutionary event (e.g., hairlessness) is recorded in DNA, and how rates of mutation can set boundary dates for it. For the story, Wade opens with a geneticist's estimate that modern (distinct from "archaic") *Homo sapiens* arose in northeast Africa 59,000 years ago, with a tiny population of only a few thousand, and was homogenous in appearance and language. Tracking the ensuing expansion and evolutionary pressures on humans, Wade covers the genetic evidence bearing on Neanderthals, race, language, social behaviors such as male-female pair bonding, and cultural practices such as religion. Wade presents the science skillfully, with detail and complexity and without compromising clarity. *Gilbert Taylor*

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his review is from: [Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors \(Hardcover\)](#)

"Before the Dawn" is a very well written survey of what genetics can teach us about the origin and evolution of the human species. Starting with the common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees 5 million years ago, Wade explores the latest theories about the development of the "hominid" line and explains why homo sapiens evolved differently from our cousins, the chimpanzees and the bonobos.

Most of the books about human origins tend to focus on paleoanthropology and related disciplines. "Before the Dawn" does a great job of synthesizing the discoveries of paleoanthropologists with the findings of geneticists--in some cases, examination of human DNA has confirmed what paleoanthropologists have long believed, in others it has raised new and sometimes disturbing questions.

Without becoming overly technical, Wade explains how scientists use the study of DNA to determine when significant events occurred in human evolution--for example, when humans began to use fully modern language (about 50,000 years ago), the size of the ancestral population of modern humans (as small as 150 people), or when the ancestral population left the African continent (also around 50,000 years ago).

Some of Wade's observations may surprise and trouble many people. Creationists will not be pleased with the book's basic view that Darwin's theory of natural selection is absolutely correct

and that it applies to people as well as animals. Others will be troubled by the ideas that our DNA contains evidence that our ancestors practiced cannibalism; that homo sapiens wiped out the Neanderthal and Homo ergaster populations in genocidal warfare that spanned millenia; that hunting and gathering societies are much more warlike than modern, settled ones; that our DNA suggests that humans became more sociable and less violent roughly 15,000 years ago, finally enabling human societies to settle down and begin farming; that human evolution did not stop 10,000 or 50,000 years ago as some have argued, but that it continues down to the present day and will continue into the future (either naturally or artificially); that in rare cases, unusual selection pressures have produced populations that, on average, are either more intelligent or more physically capable in certain respects than others. Wade handles each of these delicate propositions with care, but some will be disturbed by the implications of what he is saying. (Perhaps that's why E.O. Wilson, in the blurb on the back of the book, praised Wade's "courage and balance.")

"Before the Dawn" is a superb survey of what scientists know (or think they know) about human origins in 2006. But this is a report from the cutting edge of genetics and paleoanthropology, so stay tuned for further developments. In the meantime, Wade's book is an excellent introduction to a new dawn of knowledge.

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175 of 190 people found the following review helpful:

5.0 out of 5 stars **fascinating, meticulous and wide in scope**, April 20, 2006

By [David Fernandez](#) (Bronx, NY United States) - [See all my reviews](#)
([REAL NAME](#))

This review is from: [Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors \(Hardcover\)](#)

I liked this book a lot. The material is complicated, but familiar at the same time. When I thought about it, I found that I had a number of ingrained notions about ancient human life. I had a picture in my mind of a relatively peaceful caveman, the same one from grade school textbooks and the natural history museum- I had never really thought about ancient human history, or what humanity's predecessors might have been like. This book examines those points in depth- how our ancestors might have walked, made tools, begun to speak, and spread across the world. A main point of this book is that scientists' growing understanding of the information encoded in DNA, along with integrating information from other disciplines, can provide a window into human history we have never had before.

The breadth of disciplines that apply to this topic are amazing, encompassing history, biology, primatology, archaeology, linguistics, paleontology, sociology, behavioral science, and many others- it was enjoyable to learn about different fields of normally esoteric knowledge from someone who can explain it all clearly and interestingly. And delicately- for example, the chapter on race is an artful discussion of the new questions we can ask about race and evolution with DNA, describing with precision what sort of meaningful things can and cannot be said

about race from a biological standpoint, versus a sociological one.

This book is reminiscent in some respects to *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, another book looking at humans from a more biology-focused perspective (in fact, Mr. Wade addresses a couple of claims made in it), and people who liked that book would almost certainly enjoy this one. This book is similarly broad in scope, yet surprisingly concise, which I suppose might be expected from a journalist. Anyway, it is a well-written, fun and interesting book, and I highly recommend it to anyone interested in science in general and human history and biology in particular-

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67 of 71 people found the following review helpful:

4.0 out of 5 stars **Wow, a great read**, April 20, 2006

By [Robert Busko](#) (Waynesville, NC USA) - [See all my reviews](#)
([TOP 500 REVIEWER](#)) ([REAL NAME](#))

This review is from: [Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors \(Hardcover\)](#)

For those of us science junkies *Before the Dawn* by Nicholas Wade is a wonderful fix. Wade does a masterful job at making the science easy to understand and "wows" the reader with terrific examples at how modern genetic research is lifting the curtain on human history.

Wade links together diverse areas in his discussion of modern genetics. Language development is an interesting example, but he also looks at how the scientific evidence is also shedding new light on to areas of human development such as social behavior, and even ideas about the rise of religion, and also includes an interesting discussion of racism.

Organized in a logical manner with interesting chapters, Wade also includes great notes. At 320 pages the book is easily a weekend read and would be a great companion at the beach. Some of his conclusions will raise the ire of some readers, but *Before the Dawn* is a must read for those who want to stay on top of whats happening in human research.

Perhaps most refreshing of all is the application of genetics research to a topic of great interest and importance of all of humankind. Genetics in *Before the Dawn* isn't a punch line in some television show but hard science.

I highly recommend this book.

A must read for anyone interested in human history, December 8, 2009

By [Bill Ballantyne](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

This review is from: [Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors \(Hardcover\)](#)

Nicholas Wade is a writer who makes even the most difficult subjects understandable. I feel this is a must read for anyone interested in learning more about the story of the history of our human ancestors.

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **ONE OF THE BEST OUT THERE**, October 20, 2009

By [LionLady "Pam"](#) (California) - [See all my reviews](#)

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

I've studied a great deal throughout my life on human origins and evolution in general, and I have to say that this is one of the best and most illuminating books I've ever read. Following the genetics/DNA of the human (and not only human) journey is fascinating and absolutely cutting edge in the field. Pairing genetics studies and paleontology/arachaeology further is going to produce a revolution in the area of human evolution; the knowledge gained is nothing short of incredible.

Despite having a background in the area, I found something new and absorbing on almost every page of this book. Although I didn't agree 100% with all Mr. Wade's conclusions (particularly that ancient hunter-gatherer societies were much more aggressive and warlike than settled agricultural groups, the data for and against are really thought-provoking. Mr. Wade is also blessed with a clear and compelling writing style; he makes difficult concepts accessible and every now and then adds some humor to the mix. I might add that if you like animals, you will be charmed by the Mitochondrial Eve of the Dog World.

Another reviewer said that this will be a controversial book because Creationists will be displeased by the affirmation that evolution is a fact for humans as well as for other animals. This, to me, is the same as saying that "People who believe the Earth is flat will be displeased to see the Hubbell photographs..." Ignoring truth is not controversial, it's just silly.

This is an extraordinary book; please do read it!

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3 of 3 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **How DNA analysis is illuminating the prehistory**, October 17, 2009

By [Dennis Littrell](#) (SoCal) - [See all my reviews](#)

TOP 50 REVIEWER REAL NAME™ COMMUNITY FORUM 04 VINE™ VOICE

Amazon Verified Purchase([What's this?](#))

I thought the first part of the book which was actually about the prehistory as newly discovered through DNA analysis was very interesting. I was less thrilled with the chapters on Race, Language and History. The wrap up chapter on Evolution was good, if a bit repetitious.

Wade writes extremely well and does a good job of summarizing the latest (circa 2005) research, much of which has come from analyses of the descent of the Y chromosome (from men) and mitochondrial DNA handed down through the female line. The question of our relationship with the Neanderthal--long a thorny question--is more or less resolved with DNA extracted from Neanderthal fossil bones that has been compared to the sequences of human DNA. The conclusion is that *H. neanderthalensis* came from *H. ergaster* through *H. heidelbergensis* as *H. sapiens* did, and then broke off on its own. Furthermore there is no genetic evidence that human and Neanderthal produced viable offspring. The earlier idea that the Neanderthal was a modification of the very successful *H. erectus* has been discredited.

As to the question of our origins, northeast sub-Saharan Africa is further confirmed as the site. Wade has humans becoming behavioral human around 50,000 years ago after becoming anatomically human as early as perhaps 200,000 years ago. The great leap forward occurring 50,000 years ago is attributed to the acquisition of symbolic, syntactic language. This was also the time when humans made the exodus out of Africa and began to colonize the world. They went east across the Red Sea at the Gate of Grief during a glacial period when the sea level was two hundred feet lower than it is today. They followed the coast line of the present Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea to India and eventually to Australia. I had previously thought humans had gone north along the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and then east and then north to Europe. However, the evidence indicates that it was only later that humans migrated to Europe from India westward to replace the Neanderthal.

I had also always thought that agriculture came before settled communities, but it now appears that sedentism occurred first and was part of a behavioral and psychological change in humans that led to agriculture and eventually to cities and nation states. Just prior to or at about the same time as the first settlements appeared some 15,000 years ago occurred the domestication of the dog. Wade avers that living in settlements near a plentiful food source (wild grains, a bountiful river, etc.) was partially made possible by people using dogs as sentries against the ancient practice of dawn raids by neighboring tribes. Clearly the transition from the hunter-gatherer way of life to the settled way of life was a momentous one.

Perhaps the reason I wasn't so thrilled with the latter part of the book is that I read some of the studies Wade considers elsewhere. The experience of Brian Sykes in tracing the ancestry of people named "Sykes" and of Thomas Jefferson's second family with the slave Sally Hemings are examples of DNA derived stories that I had read before. Wade's account of the saga of the Ashkenazi Jews of Europe, although also a familiar story, is most interesting. He cites studies showing that Ashkenazi Jews have an average IQ of 115 while Sephardic and Oriental Jews have the usual average of 100. A couple of arguments are presented to account for this difference. The more plausible one is that because the Jews of Europe were forced by the Christian majority into becoming money lenders from about AD 1100 until around 1700. (Christianity at the time forbade usury.) That sort of intellectually demanding way of life, along with having to make a living amid persecution, selected for intelligence. By way of contrast,

Sephardic and Oriental Jews during the same period "lived mostly under Muslim rulers who often forced them into menial jobs, not the intellect-demanding ones imposed on Ashkenazim." (p. 256)

More than any other book I have read, "Before the Dawn" insists on cultural change leading rapidly to genetic change. With the experience of the Ashkenazi Jews as a case in point, Wade argues more generally that "for social species the most important feature of the environment [which directs evolutionary change] is their own society." He concludes that "to the extent that people have shaped their own society, they have determined the conditions of their own evolution." (p. 267).

This might be termed "evolution by your own boot straps." I wonder however if it isn't a sort of fallacy. Biological evolution shapes human behavior which in turn leads to cultural change which leads to further biological evolution. I think it is better to speak of cultural evolution as a subset of biological evolution and not imply that somehow we have begun to direct the process. But this may be just a quibbling over semantics. Clearly the environment has changed us and we have changed the environment.

In the final chapter Wade speculates on where we are going. I always like such speculations but only really appreciate those that have us becoming post-human in some way. Wade posits one possibility that I have not thought about in years, that of humans splitting into two or more species. He notes: "Our previous reaction to kindred species was to exterminate them, but we have mellowed a lot in the last 50,000 years." (p. 279)

By the way, this idea that we "have mellowed a lot," and become less aggressive since we have domesticated ourselves is one that appears elsewhere in the book and is an idea that, for better or for worse, appears surprisingly to be true. The actually percentage of humans killed during warfare appears to have been much greater during the prehistory than it is today. The wars today are much bigger but the wars in the pre-history, according to the research presented here, were nearly constant.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comments \(3\)](#)

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Human history, a la Jared Diamond**, October 11, 2009

By [D. J. Nardi "TurtleDom"](#) (Washington, DC) - [See all my reviews](#)

TOP 500 REVIEWER REAL NAME™ WINE™ VOICE

[Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors](#) is a sweeping history of humanity using human genetics. It has the same sense of breadth and grandeur as Jared Diamond's [The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal \(P.S.\)](#). One thing I like about [Before the Dawn](#) is that it challenges common assumptions that many people have about human evolution. I am certainly not an evolutionary biologist, but I do read the news in this field and keep up with blogs on evolution. Even so, I was (pleasantly) surprised to find out how much I learned from this book. Nicholas Wade uses recent genetic discoveries to dispute Diamond's thesis in [Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies](#) that the rise

of human civilization depended mostly upon geography. He also debunks the notion (which I had learned in my cognitive psychology classes) that most Eurasian languages came from a common ancestor because of the presence of similar words like "mother" and "digit." I found the discussion of religion fascinating - maybe Karl Marx was onto something when he described religion as an opiate of the masses, but it may also have been a crucial mechanism for allowing human societies to thrive. The book is already a few years old, so I can't claim it is up to date with the latest science, but it certainly does synthesize the research well and forces you to think critically about what we know - and what we still don't.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment](#)

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **The best yet**, September 28, 2009

By [magellan](#) (Santa Clara, CA) - [See all my reviews](#)

TOP 100 REVIEWER COMMUNITY FORUM 04

Over the last five years or so I've read half a dozen of the more recent books on pre-history and paleontology, and I think this is the best I've seen yet. I was particularly struck by how much more can be said about our earliest origins compared with what I encountered, say, in Richard Leakey's 90s book, *The Origin of Humankind*. Although a great book for the time, even then I was struck by how little was actually still known of early human behavior, customs, and society. So with this book one can see how much has actually changed in just the last 10-15 years or so. And the difference is dramatic.

Particularly striking is how many developments can be nailed down chronologically fairly precisely, such as the advent of wearing clothes, the development of the bow, when humans developed more modern social structures different from chimps, when the earliest migrations out of Africa happened, and so on. It's fascinating to see the convergence of so many areas of scientific research--at least seven according to the author--and how dramatically the sequencing and study of the human genome has revolutionized them.

The author also writes well and he brings a palpable sense of drama and excitement to the telling of the story, and for good reason. So much more information is available now that whole areas we were ignorant about just a few years ago can now be fleshed out in some detail, such as changes in eating habits, tribal warfare, the development of language, and social structure and organization. Overall a truly fascinating book on how progress in DNA chronology is revolutionizing the whole field of early human origins.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment](#)

0 of 4 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Stops short in one place**, September 8, 2009

By [A reader](#) (The Triangle) - [See all my reviews](#)

This is a fascinating study of how evolution has shaped and is shaping the human species. The author touches on race, but I found it odd that there is no mention of homosexuality. I would

have like to seen a survey of research in that arena - surely there must be some ongoing.

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1 of 3 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Informative but Flawed**, August 28, 2009

By [Manley Marshton "tenine"](#) (Chattanooga, TN USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

This book is a good read and quite well written. It gives a great deal of accurate information about human evolution that is reasonably up to date for its date of publication. Its story of the movement out of Africa by modern humans is very state of the art in many respects. However the writer relies too much on recent findings that are at best speculative or flawed. These views on the biological importance of the most recent period of human evolution, from 50,000 B.P. on is questionable at best. It is most likely not accurate the full human modernity, language, and the move out of Africa coincided. More likely these events were similar in date but earlier and not necessarily all at the same time. In addition his discussion of the recent "racial" evolution of humans is rather irresponsible and might be considered as encouraging racism. I would prefer not to have purchased this book if I had known of the author's excessive promotion of extreme sociobiological hypotheses or evolutionary psychology.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comments \(5\)](#)

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **The best book I've read on the topic**, August 23, 2009

By [Carl G.](#) (California) - [See all my reviews](#)

I've read about five books on this subject--and maybe I'm an easy mark, because I've liked them all. This one the most, though. It gets right into it from the start, no monkeying around (honestly no pun intended). The author has a clear style of writing that I find appealing and easy to follow. I'm sure some of the more scholastic reviewers will snicker at that, but hey---when the topic is fascinating, and yet still a reach due to because I followed the liberal arts rather than science---well, that scores points with me.

It's really a fascinating topic. It ought to be taught in elementary and middle schools. Nicholas Wade has done a great job here. Anybody can pick a bone here and there (again, and I swear, no pun intended), but Joe Blow can learn a lot from this book. You'll come away from it with a pretty darn good picture of where we went, when, and what happened to make us look that way.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment](#)

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ **A facinating read, Science, Humans, Early man & Society**, July 17, 2009

By [CurlyWolf of Texas "JWH"](#) (Grannys Neck, Texas) - [See all my reviews](#)

VINE™ VOICE

This review is from: [Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors](#)

[\(Hardcover\)](#)

This is one of the best books I have read on a scientific level. The author does not attempt to impress you with his knowledge of Latin names of animals and plants, but writes in an entertaining, enlightening way...easily understood by the layman. I was astounded by the insights this author has into the origins of man, the importance of genetics, and the way our ancestors sought to be the ones whose genes were passed down through the generations (Darwinism). This is a very pleasing read, and can barely be put down once started...you WILL enjoy this book a lot, if you desire to know more about how we got to this place in time as we are.

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Was this review helpful to you? [Comment](#)

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Great book but Audio versions are off-putting**, July 15, 2009

By [P. R. Rustage](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

REAL NAME™

This review is from: [Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors \(Audio CD\)](#)

This is an excellent book and I agree with all of the positive comments offered by other reviewers. My review here is confined to the Audio versions (AudioBook rendition on CD and MP3) which are for me problematic.

The narrator chosen is Alan Sklar who has that kind of warm brown voice commonly heard as a voice-over on American TV and cinema ads. Looking at his other recordings I see he does a lot of Business Management and self-help stuff for which I think this kind of voice might work. But for essentially a scientific work like this it certainly sounds wrong.

For a start, the author, Nicholas Wade is English, educated at Eton College and Cambridge with crisp academic tones similar to Richard Dawkins - so why was an American voice actor used? In those parts where he is supposed to be objectively explaining a theory he sounds like he's trying to sell you Life insurance or promoting next weeks feature at the multiplex. He clearly has difficulty with some of the more technical passages and has the annoying habit of reading decimal fractions such as "1.66" as "One point sixty-six" which is quite simply wrong!

However if you can listen through this annoying distortion then the underlying book is excellent.