

Biocentric universe

This article is about an idea postulated by Robert Lanza. For the politico-ecological concept, see [Biocentrism \(ethics\)](#).

Biocentric universe (from Greek: βίος, *bios*, “life”)—also known as **biocentrism**—is a concept proposed in 2007 by American doctor of medicine Robert Lanza, a scientist in the fields of regenerative medicine and biology,^{[1][2][3]} which sees biology as the central driving science in the universe, and an understanding of the other sciences as reliant on a deeper understanding of biology. Biocentrism states that life and biology are central to being, reality, and the cosmos—consciousness creates the universe rather than the other way around. It asserts that current theories of the physical world do not work, and can never be made to work, until they fully account for life and consciousness. While physics is considered fundamental to the study of the universe, and chemistry fundamental to the study of life, biocentrism claims that scientists will need to place biology before the other sciences to produce a *theory of everything*.^[4]

Critics have questioned whether the theory is falsifiable. Lanza has claimed that future experiments, such as scaled-up quantum superposition, will either support or contradict the theory.^[5]

1 Hypothesis

Biocentrism was first proposed in a 2007 article by Robert Lanza that appeared in *The American Scholar*, where the goal was to show how biology could build upon quantum physics.^[6] Two years later, Lanza published a book with astronomer and author Bob Berman entitled *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness Are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*, which expanded upon the ideas that Lanza wrote about in his essay for the *Scholar*.^[7]

Biocentrism argues that the primacy of consciousness features in the work of Descartes, Kant, Leibniz, Berkeley, Schopenhauer, and Bergson.^[6] He sees this as supporting the central claim that what we call space and time are forms of animal sense perception, rather than external physical objects.^[8] Lanza argues that biocentrism offers insight into several major puzzles of science, including Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, the double-slit experiment, and the fine tuning of the forces, constants, and laws that shape the universe as we per-

ceive it.^[9] According to Lanza and Bob Berman, “biocentrism offers a more promising way to bring together all of physics, as scientists have been trying to do since Einstein’s unsuccessful unified field theories of eight decades ago.”^[10]

Seven principles form the core of biocentrism.^[9] The first principle of biocentrism is based on the premise that what we observe is dependent on the observer, and says that what we perceive as reality is “a process that involves our consciousness.^[11]” The second and third principles state that “our external and internal perceptions are intertwined” and that the behavior of particles “is inextricably linked to the presence of an observer,” respectively.^[12] The fourth principle suggests that consciousness must exist and that without it “matter dwells in an undetermined state of probability.^[13]” The fifth principle points to the structure of the universe itself, and that the laws, forces, and constants of the universe appear to be fine-tuned for life.^[14] Finally, the sixth and seventh principles state that space and time are not objects or things, but rather tools of our animal understanding.^[15] Lanza says that we carry space and time around with us “like turtles with shells.”^[16]

Lanza has said that he intends to publish aspects of biocentrism in peer-reviewed scientific journals.^[17]

1.1 Synopsis of Lanza’s book *Biocentrism*

According to Lanza’s book, *Biocentrism* suggests that life is not an accidental byproduct of physics, but rather is a key part of our understanding of the universe.^[18] Biocentrism states that there is no independent external universe outside of biological existence.^[19] Part of what it sees as evidence of this is that there are over 200 physical parameters within the universe so exact that it is seen as more probable that they are that way in order to allow for existence of life and consciousness, rather than coming about at random.^[14] Biocentrism claims that allowing the observer into the equation opens new approaches to understanding cognition. Through this, biocentrism purports to offer a way to unify the laws of the universe.

2 Reception

The reception to biocentrism has been mixed.^[20] Physician and Nobel laureate E. Donnall Thomas said of biocentrism, “Any short statement does not do justice to such a scholarly work. The work is a scholarly consideration of

science and philosophy that brings biology into the central role in unifying the whole.”^[17] However, some physicists have commented that biocentrism currently does not make testable predictions.^[17] Arizona State University physicist Lawrence Krauss stated, “It may represent interesting philosophy, but it doesn't look, at first glance, as if it will change anything about science.”^[17] Daniel Dennett said that he did not believe that the idea meets the criteria of a theory in philosophy.^[17] In *USA Today Online*, theoretical physicist and science writer David Lindley asserted that Lanza’s concept was a “vague, inarticulate metaphor” and stated that “I certainly don't see how thinking his way would lead you into any new sort of scientific or philosophical insight. That’s all very nice, I would say to Lanza, but now what? I [also] take issue with his views about physics.”^[21] Stephen P. Smith conducted a review of the book, asserting that Lanza is actually describing a form of idealism. Smith found Lanza’s claim that time is an illusion to be unfounded since the premise was that time was not understood fully. He concludes that, while lacking in scientific and philosophical rigor, “Lanza has a colloquial style that is typical of good popular books, and his book can be understood by non-experts”.^[22]

New Age guru Deepak Chopra stated that “Lanza’s insights into the nature of consciousness [are] original and exciting” and that “his theory of biocentrism is consistent with the most ancient wisdom traditions of the world which says that consciousness conceives, governs, and becomes a physical world. It is the ground of our Being in which both subjective and objective reality come into existence.”^[23] Jacquelyn Baas, Director Emeritus of the University of California Berkeley Art Museum, wrote that a major challenge confronting modern times is whether “all questions can be answered by means of the scientific method of objective observation and measurement.” She cites Lanza’s book “Biocentrism,” saying that it casts this perspective into doubt.^[24]

3 See also

- Monistic idealism
- Neurophenomenology
- Solipsism
- Nondualism
- Anthropic principle
- Fine-tuning
- Vitalism

4 References

- [1] Claire Ainsworth (January 29, 2002). ““Functional” kidneys grown from stem cells”. *New Scientist*. Retrieved April 15, 2013.
- [2] Dan Vergano (February 15, 2004). “Don't expect a cloned baby anytime soon”. *USA Today*. Retrieved April 18, 2013.
- [3] Dr. Robert Lanza | Gary Rabin | biotechnology | Senior Executive Officers | Advanced Cell Technology
- [4] Aaron Rowe (2007-03-08). “Will Biology Solve the Universe?”. *Wired*. Retrieved 2009-03-15.
- [5] Eric Berger (2009-08-23). “Book Spotlight: Biocentrism”. *Houston Chronicle Blogs*. Retrieved 2009-12-10.
- [6] “A New Theory of the Universe”, Spring 2007 *The American Scholar*
- [7] Robert Lanza & Deepak Chopra (October 19, 2009). “The illusion of past, present, future”. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved August 30, 2012.
- [8] “Biocentrism: How life creates the universe”, *MSNBC.com*
- [9] Lanza, Robert & Berman, Bob (2009). *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. BenBella. ISBN 978-1-933771-69-4.
- [10] “The Biocentric Universe Theory”, May 2009 “Discover magazine”
- [11] Lanza & Berman. *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. p. 23.
- [12] Lanza & Berman. *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. pp. 39, 59.
- [13] Lanza & Berman. *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. p. 81.
- [14] Lanza & Berman. *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. p. 93.
- [15] Lanza & Berman. *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. pp. 110, 127.
- [16] Lanza & Berman. *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. p. 127.
- [17] “A Biotech Provocateur Takes On Physics”, *Forbes.com*, 9 March 2007
- [18] Lanza & Berman. *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. p. 2.

- [19] Lanza & Berman. *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe*. p. 17.
- [20] “The Universe in Your Head”. MSNBC. 2009-06-16. Retrieved 2015-10-30.
- [21] <“Exclusive: Response to Robert Lanza’s essay”. Usatoday.Com. March 9, 2007. Retrieved October 30, 2015.
- [22] Smith, Stephen (June 2010). “Review of Robert Lanza & Bob Berman’s Book: Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness Are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe”. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research* **1** (4): 468–470.
- [23] “Dr. Robert Lanza is Featured Guest on Deepak Chopra’s SIRIUS XM Stars Radio Show”. Yahoo Finance. Retrieved 2009-12-15.
- [24] Baas, Jacquelyn. “Before Zen: The Nothing of American Dada”. *East–West Interchanges in American Art: A Long and Tumultuous Relationship*. Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press. Retrieved 18 September 2015.

5 External links

- Robert Lanza – Biocentrism Articles, literature, and material on biocentrism
- Biocentricity.net, Videos, FAQ, and news pertaining to biocentrism

