



# The Lucifer Principle: A Scientific Expedition into the Forces of History

*Howard Bloom , David Sloan Wilson (Foreword)*

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*The Lucifer Principle* is a revolutionary work that explores the intricate relationships among genetics, human behavior, and culture to put forth the thesis that “evil” is a by-product of nature’s strategies for creation and that it is woven into our most basic biological fabric.

## The Lucifer Principle: A Scientific Expedition into the Forces of History Details

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## **From Reader Review The Lucifer Principle: A Scientific Expedition into the Forces of History for online ebook**

### **Carlos Coral says**

A well reasoned attempt to say everything several social theorists, political scientists, ethnographer, and psychologists suspect but are loathe to admit. Bloom's book offers a look at social theory and the intrinsically interconnected nature of sentient psychology, behavior, and physical result. Why is depression linked to creativity? Why do economies boom in short periods of warfare? Why do trends seem to move and spread in ways that seem utterly fantastic?

The answer -- that we are all participants of and influenced by a socio-behavioral group mind called a "superorganism" -- is laid down rationally, passionately and with perfect earnest.

It is a profoundly unsettling book.

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### **Lori says**

I understand more about the forces that drive mankind. Bloom explains his theory of pecking order, memes and superorganisms. He explains why he thinks there are wars and why people want to be on top ( of the pecking order). It is another side of understanding why civilizations are constantly at each others throats.

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### **Lage von Dissen says**

Bloom is a proponent of "group selection theory" (as opposed to "individual selection" theorists such as Dawkins et al), and as such, he sees the social group as the main subject concerning the evolution of the human species. He examines the apparent relationships between genes, behavior, and culture, and proposes that what people call "evil" is nothing more than a by-product of nature's strategies for creation. Violent competition (which we may see implemented through natural selection) is a central mechanism to create what he deems as a "superorganism". Humanity is the superorganism under consideration in this book, and it rises a level above the simplistic genetic evolution of our species. Human cultural development involved the natural selection of particular psychological traits (which support particular cultural characteristics). Through the propagation and replication of memes (a term coined by the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins), we see how the human superorganism has developed, with both the cultural similarities and their differences largely a result of these memes. From an individual's point of view, the selection processes that involve one group competing with another, are deemed "evil" even though the creation of the human species and the human superorganism are a result of these very processes. As a moral relativist, I appreciate the main message in this book, that is, that one man's "God" is another man's "Devil", and if these seemingly "evil" processes are responsible for the eventual evolution of our species, then they are ingrained in the fabric of our biology and being -- and thus appear to have been a necessary evil. Overall, I thought that the book was a good read. From a broader perspective of this book, I think it's important that people examine the evidence for group selection theory and see how they relate to and complement those of individual selection.

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### **Jessica says**

It was an excellent read that is definitely not for the sensitive-minded. It did not dive too much into personal feelings of each individual in the world; it focused more on life with humans as a greater being, or as the author put it, super organism. I was delighted to incorporate this new way of thinking about the human species and what it really says about our origins as well as what it will say about our future. I do not believe a single sentence in this book was sugar-coated so make sure that you are well-prepared to experience something that may stray from your person belief(s).

I would recommend this book as a necessity in grade schools around the country and world. It is excellent and helps bring a bit of the "larger" and "actual" pictures in to play when most of us get caught up in our instinctual behaviors without care as to why. I would not say that this book necessarily says that all religions are wrong but it does bring light to many good points that not all religions have a basis that is moral and is centered on what "followers" believe they are following. It is just interesting and I would suggest that everyone take the time to read it, reflect upon it, and move on with their life with a slightly altered and hopefully much more opened mind.

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### **Sherri says**

Can I give a book 4.5 stars? This book was a really neat read, yet I don't QUITE want to give it five. The basis for "The Lucifer Principle" is how violence has played a role in human history and the evolution of culture(s). I don't actually AGREE with all of it, and I actively disagree in several places. Still, it was well written, well argued and generally made me think. So why don't I want to give it five stars? Well, there are the couple of chapters in the middle where the arguments fail and that entire section turns in to "kill all the Muslims before they get us first." Since the book was written before 911, I can't even blame this illogical ranting on post-WTC hysteria, so I'm not sure what was up here. Its like someone entirely different wrote 2 chapters and stuck them in when the main author wasn't looking. Still, all in all a fun read if you are okay with moral ambiguity.

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### **Russ says**

I usually do not write reviews of books I read, but I decided to make an exception. If I could rate this less than 1 star, I would, because it might be one of the most poorly written non-fiction books I have ever read in my entire life. One more tweak over the edge and it might be a parody of social and historical inquiry.

The entire book reads like a poorly conceived term paper full of pedantic, meandering discussions, unsupported arguments, and misplaced metaphors. It is no groundbreaking insight that people are naturally equipped to do bad things. What the author does not delve into sufficiently is what this means for civilization and society - basically how we can manage our 'evil' impulses.

The author claims not to be properly trained in the discourse, and it shows. I cannot help but wonder how the book got published and what kind of editorial staff signed off on this. Read this book to learn what not to do.

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## Howard says

not fair. i wrote it. but here's one of my favorite reviews from amazon.com:

Reviewer: Adelia Bernini

What are some of these reviewers going on about? Trying to crush a meme perhaps? This book is truly brilliant. It's the new Bible. In fact I would replace those Gideon Bibles that lurk in bedside draws in hotel rooms with this blinding stonker. 'The Lucifer Principal' is the truth. Go buy...

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## Brandon St Mark says

Grant Morrison recommended this to Comicbookgirl19 and it sounds like something that could be interesting to read, so I figured I'd give it a try.

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## David Gross says

A semi-heretical look at our curious species using sociobiology, meme theory, and facts that don't fit well into consensus reality (did you know that tuberculosis cases declined by 97% between 1800 and 1945 — *before* antibiotics came into the picture?). Bloom believes that like ants, bees, and slime molds, human beings join as individuals into assemblages of distributed pseudo-tissue in a larger "superorganism" — and that the traits of this superorganism are the understudied key to our history and destiny.

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## Jim Grammond says

Bloom has been declared by several people to be one of the great geniuses of the last 50 years. I don't understand that declaration. Sure, he's smarter than me, but I'm also not suffering from insanity like he is.

The Lucifer Principle is basically a study in the genetic roots of good and evil in nature. Of course, nature does not know 'good' and 'evil', and therefore most of this book is useless. Despite his extensive citing of works, Bloom borders on using almost supernatural and ambiguous explanations for his theories, which I don't like. Also, it's full of bile and rage which are the products of someone who has major issues with Muslims, Germans, and basically everyone outside of his apartment.

It took me several months of picking it up and putting it down to finish this book because of how strongly I disagreed with much of what he said. BUT, I do like a challenge and different points of view so on that basis, it was worth reading.

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## Nerine Dorman says

Every once in a while there's a book that keeps cropping up in conversations that I have with friends, and The Lucifer Principle by Howard Bloom is one of them. And I'm glad I picked it up. If Lyall Watson's

Supernature made an impact on you, then there's a good chance you're going to gobble up Bloom. In essence, the author offers a broad-sweeping yet thought-provoking Theory of Everything, with a vast collection of ideas and factoids that have been doing the rounds for ages.

Except, let's take not at \*what\* Bloom's saying but \*how\* he's saying it and \*why\* he's saying it in this glorious mash-up of history, psychology and biology. At the heart of it, Bloom looks at mankind's innate propensity toward violence. He identifies in our behaviour similarities between other mammals. He discusses how a relatively "new" concept – the meme – goes about arranging individuals into groupings labelled as superorganisms. But if you look at the bigger picture, we ourselves, as beings are superorganisms consisting of many billions of cells.

Just as individuals will compete for resources and mates, so do superorganisms, such nations or religions. Bloom investigates what allows these to wax and wane, and discusses the motivations for conflict. Nothing he puts forward here is groundbreaking, but what makes this book important is \*why\* he's stating the obvious.

Bloom spends considerable time discussing US vs. Islamic conflict and, considering \*when\* the book was first published (1995) this is quite ironic considering the occurrences a mere five years after publication. He highlights the dangers of a complacent West sticking its head in the sand, and stresses the danger of nations under the sway of militant religious fundamentalists.

According to Bloom, "evil" is inherent in our natures, very much encoded in our genetic make-up and, while I appreciate the exhaustive illustrations of the problem, I do feel he could have offered more by the way of solutions. That being said, this book is definitely one that needs to be read if we are to make others understand the importance of rational solutions to age-old problems. Yes, the author writes with a highly opinionated tone, and he's full of rage, but he's one of the few so far as I can see who isn't afraid to call us out on what's wrong with society today – and has been wrong since we first climbed down from the trees.

You \*don't\* need to agree with this man, but I do believe his voice needs to be heard, especially in the light of so many people screaming ignorance in the media today.

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### **Dave Watson says**

I started out very excited by this book. The ideas about humans behaving as superorganisms were quite interesting and seemingly apt. But as I read on I started to realize I didn't fully trust Bloom's research and presentation. He started to come across as a Bill Mahr skeptic, that is, critical of things such as religion, but willing to take things such as alternative medicine on faith. Bloom's insistence that medical doctors are merely dealers in the illusion of control and simply deny that anything outside of their control exists made me suspicious. His brief chapter on homeopathy as "a set of cures that could heal us" that has "almost disappeared" because we are "in the hands of the winners" made me downgrade this book a star. It doesn't take much research to realize what a farce homeopathy is, and if Bloom will swallow it that uncritically, can the rest of his research be trusted?

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### **Matthew says**

This is really two different books that have been smashed together. The first one proposes a framework for history that views human societies as "superorganisms" subject to the same evolutionary pressures that guide

biology. The second one is a long jeremiad about the decline and fall of American civilization. This part is hugely disappointing, and consists largely of a smattering of polemics (against multiculturalism and the Islamic world, as two random examples) buttressed by history that has been so horrendously oversimplified, or outright distorted, that I want to slap him in the face for being a retard.

This is a shame, because the first half of the book is really pretty brilliant. Bloom sees human social collectives as biological entities dedicated to replicating their memes. As such, they display behaviors that can be found in many other organisms as well--particularly in terms of dominance hierarchies and the nature of conflict. There are some serious problems with this (for example, the unprovability of memes), Bloom has the unfortunate tendency to use anecdotes to prove sweepingly general rules, and the very idea can at times be breathtakingly reductive. It is far from an airtight case, but even the schematic that Bloom produces--love it or hate it--will stimulate you to think about these issues from angles you never thought of before.

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### **James M. Madsen, M.D. says**

This is an excellent example of a book that is worth reading not because it proves an audacious thesis but because it proposes it in the first place. Howard Bloom takes five concepts (1: self-organizing replicators; 2: the superorganism; 3: the meme [a self-replicating cluster of ideas]; 4: the neural net; and 5: the pecking order) and uses them as the basis of a naturalistic, biological theory of evil. Whatever you end up thinking about his theory, it's instructive to *\*think\** about it! A provocative book!

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### **Robert says**

This book contains God's Own Truth about memetic evolution and its role in the development of modern society. Religions, governments, social groups as social superorganism. You may or may not end up liking this conclusion. You may even reject it. You'll still be wrong, because Bloom is dead on right.

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