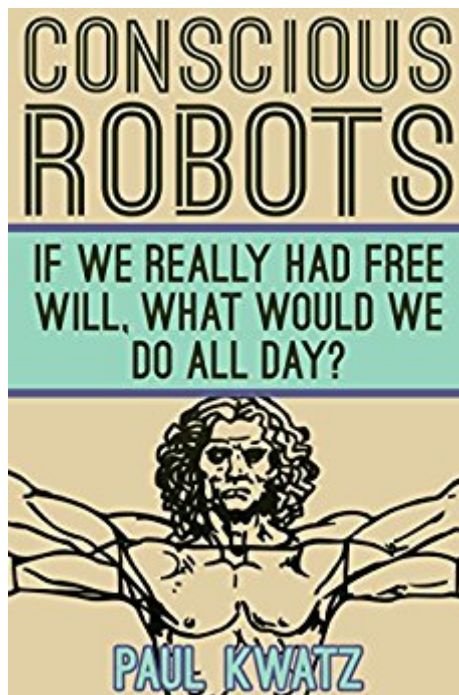




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Conscious Robots: If We Really Had Free Will, What Would We Do All Day?



Synopsis

"Easy to understand and persuasive", "Lives up to all the hype", "An absolutely necessary book", "Should be taught in schools", "Dynamite, this is a brilliant book" 107 minutes to change the way you think about everything. In March 2017, Jeff Bezos announced he'd be spending \$1 billion a year of his \$75 billion fortune on the Blue Origin Space Rocket company. Which suggests he hasn't read *Conscious Robots*. By reading, you will discover: Why we're so convinced that we're in charge when we're really just carrying out evolution's instructions. How "being a robot" explains why life, as Buddha suggested, is "inherently unsatisfactory", despite our luxurious homes, successful careers and loving families. What taking a "happy pill" would feel like - it's more than just a mild sedative. When heroin is a friend, and when it is a foe. How humans will one day take control of their conscious minds, get happy and stay happy (provided someone has spent \$75 billion on neurochemical research). It won't be free will, but it will be what we would do with free will if we really had it. Praise for *Conscious Robots*: "One of the closest-to-the-truth arguments I have read in a while." "Tells it like it is with no punches pulled." "Offers another resolution of the Fermi Paradox that made me smile." "A unique, concise argument." "Bad-Ass."

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Customer Reviews

This book is short and makes its points forcefully. On the surface this book is a presentation of the hard determinist argument for no free will which includes an underlying evolutionary structure. The evolutionary view underneath is essentially Richard Dawkins's classic argument for gene replicators, being the reason for why "survival machines" or robots exist and have evolved. If the book was just this well worn argument it would not be all that special. What makes it interesting is the attempt to link determinism and no free will to an evolutionary need for emotions or as he writes: feelings. Emotions are usually ignored in such discussions or considered irrelevant but the author's argument that feelings of happiness or misery are evolved functions in the human brain and are under determinist control is a compelling one. He advances the concept that pleasure and pain are under genetic control and used to make us do things to get our genes replicated which we may not do otherwise. The idea of emotions being strictly regulated by genes for the end of replication is very interesting. Total happiness or extreme pleasure, induced naturally or as euphoria from drugs, are regulated by the brain because extreme such states do not help reproduction in the long run. It is an interesting argument that both a heroin addict or a person in an endless contented state just don't feel compelled to do all the work of reproducing the species. A little happiness is necessary but not the total deal. Interesting. I feel that the arguments for and against free will and determinism are still in play and not totally settled scientifically or philosophically. Yet having said this, I see this book making a compelling addition to the determinist and no free will perspective in a very entertaining manner. It makes you think.

This is a short and entertainingly written book. It chronicles the beliefs of a person who uses Yak dung (dry I presume) as fuel for his fires. There are numerous beliefs (suppositions) in this book that ring true and others not so much. The suppositions that the universe is scripted (unfolding in a predetermined way) and that sentient life forms are robots (biological machines) are bridges too far, but the suppositions that feelings and genetics are motivators of the first order, and that happiness and unhappiness are unconscious reactions to one's perceptions of circumstances as improving or worsening relative to the past are right on. The concepts of the "pleasure fader" and the "expectation adjuster" should be in everyone's thinking repertoire. This is a book worth reading and thinking about.

I thought this short book was excellent for some very thought provoking ideas. It's an in your face, no fluff type of book which brings the concepts to you without sugar coating. I enjoyed it very much. Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the subject of consciousness and what I find to be probably one of the closest-to-the-truth arguments I have read in a while. I look for to more of books in the future.

Short and to the point. I enjoyed reading this booklet even though the central idea is not completely novel. Offers another resolution of the Fermi Paradox that made me smile.

This concise book consists of a cogent evolutionary argument for determinism that is both easy to understand and persuasive. I have an interest in the determinism vs. freewill debate and have read many books on the subject, but this is the first to make the argument for determinism from an evolutionary standpoint. I also found that the rational that feelings as our prime motivators arising from the need for propagating our genes may be much easier for some to accept than an argument from strict causation or even from physics. We might not understand or accept causation beyond inanimate objects, but we all experience feelings and may be able to relate to this argument much better. Overall, I highly recommend this book as an alternative argument to those usually made for determinism.

While the book attempts to tackle a devilishly fascinating topic (Metaphysics), I find that the argumentation is weak for it is not well-founded and includes quotations from reputable figures such as Stephen Hawking that are out of context and thus contrived to fit the argument. The rhetoric of the book is something to the effect of: Well, the nature of atoms is inherently automatic; our neurons are made up of complex atomic molecules that behave in an automatic way (i.e. not governed by freewill), and thus we, ourselves, do not have freewill. Kwatz seeks to support this claim by exemplifying many emotional responses over which we do not have control, but conveniently fails to address the fact that people can develop coping methods or otherwise change their behavior over a long period of time. While I personally do not agree that freewill doesn't exist, I am still always curious and apt to hear argumentation from the other side. I was disappointed to find no concerted, well thought out argumentation for a basis of rejecting metaphysical freewill. I will concede, however, and say that this book might make for a good practical-joke gift to one of your intellectual friends (on April 1st, etc.).

Take another leap: there is no consciousness. There is awareness: sensory perception and reaction, which is animal. The human brain's ability to create "free standing images" in higher reflective thought allows for language, predicting the future, and creating a past... and allows for "me" to exist. "I" am thought. The "I" is a virtual avatar, probably emerging as a protective/communicating device through evolution. Therefore, there is no "consciousness" that can experience anything! The brain shuts down when we die and the avatar disappears, just like a computer. To think otherwise, like almost everybody does, would be like the avatar jumping out of the shut down computer and saying "what's next?". Nothing!

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