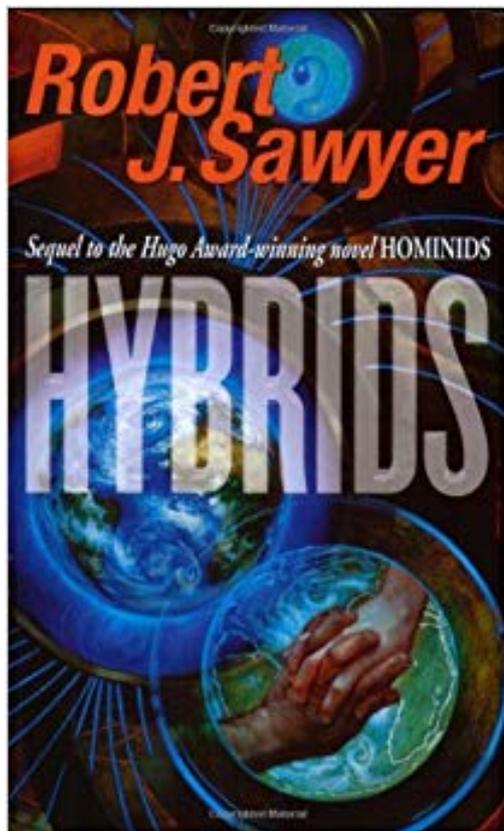


## Hybrids (Neanderthal Parallax) by Robert J. Sawyer



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In the Hugo-Award winning *Hominids*, Robert J. Sawyer introduced a character readers will never forget: Ponter Boddit, a Neanderthal physicist from a parallel Earth who was whisked from his reality into ours by a quantum-computing experiment gone awry - making him the ultimate stranger in a strange land.

In that book and in its sequel, *Humans*, Sawyer showed us the Neanderthal version of Earth in loving detail - a tour de force of world-building; a masterpiece of alternate history.

Now, in *Hybrids*, Ponter Boddit and his Homo sapiens lover, geneticist Mary Vaughan, are torn between two worlds, struggling to find a way to make their star-crossed relationship work. Aided by banned Neanderthal technology, they plan to conceive the first hybrid child, a symbol of hope for the joining of their two versions of reality.

But after an experiment shows that Mary's religious faith - something completely absent in Neanderthals - is a quirk of the neurological wiring of Homo sapiens brains, Ponter and Mary must decide whether their child should be predisposed to atheism or belief. Meanwhile, as Mary's Earth is dealing with a collapse of its planetary magnetic field, her boss, the enigmatic Jock Krieger, has turned envious eyes on the unspoiled Eden that is the Neanderthal world . . . *Hybrids* is filled to bursting with Sawyer's signature speculations about alternative ways of being human, exploding our preconceptions of morality and gender, of faith and love. His Neanderthal Parallax trilogy is a classic in the making, and here he brings it to a stunning, thought-provoking conclusion that's sure to make *Hybrids* one of the most controversial books of the year.



## Reviews of the **Hybrids (Neanderthal Parallax)** by Robert J. Sawyer

Anayanis

I bought all 3 books on recommendation by some people here on Amazon (or on IO9.com, I forget which one exactly). As I read the first book and progressed onto the 2nd, I was thinking there'd be some awesome deep sci-fi action and science stuff, but it was slow going. Very slow. It took almost FOREVER to get to the dimensional breach. There's a lot of "filler" and "BS" in these novels... I think it's called "padding". In the hands of a more skilled (or less greedy) author, the entire story could have been condensed into ONE solid, hard-hitting book. Still, despite the boredom, I kept forging ahead. Despite the flashes of brilliance here and there, they were sooooooo boring. Usually, fun and engaging books of this size take me about a week to finish (tops)... but these 3 books took me about 6 months. SIX gosh-darn MONTHS.

And in the end, it ends in a wedding. A FREAKIN' WEDDING, folks.

I was sold on some dimensional-hopping, xeno-biologist sci-fi action, but the extremely slow and "padded" story basically devolved into a woman-oriented Lifetime Movie Network flick.

Overall, I felt cheated, out of both my time AND money.

If you like cool spaceships, gadgets, aliens, and good ol' hard-hitting SCIENCE FICTION, avoid these books. But if you like vaguely man-hating, boring, slow, Lifetime Movie Network stories, Humans, Hominids, and Hybrids series is for you. Knock yourself out.

Robert J. Sawyer... I am disappoint.

Hulore

Hybrids is the least likeable of the Neanderthal Parallax trilogy. The implications for Man of a doorway to another alternate Earth is put aside as a subplot in favor of Mary's transformation.

Mary has fallen in love with Ponder, one of the Neanderthal scientists. The "Barasts" have their own code of ethics and Mary struggles with it as it interferes with her Catholic faith.

Much is made of Mary's beliefs and her struggles, much more than she deserves. She's a flighty character, who discovers that Man's religious beliefs, thanks to a pseudo-scientific experiment, creates religious fervor. But the atheistic Barasts don't have this "fault."

Much is also made of the genetic device, banned on the Neanderthal world, that can rewrite any DNA and makes it possible to have a human/barast child, thus the Hybrid part of the tale.

Do we get a cure for AIDS or cancer? Do we finally handle birth defects? Nope. Let's create a bio weapon!

Sawyer rushes the end and I'm really disappointed to see that. Most of the time Sawyer's writing is pretty good, pace is good and not a lot of characters are cardboard.

But as Mary goes from being concerned about her husband's divorce ("I don't want us to be excommunicated!") to not giving a whit that her kid will not have the "religion gene", it was just too much to sort out.

Bottom Line: Not a lot of story regarding the scientists, athletes and so on, as they improve Man's lot. Instead we get a woman who wants all men to die (at least the ones with a special Y chromosome, since that's why some men are evil) and develops a bio weapon to handle that. Oh, and the New Year's scene and the final wedding scene are highly disappointing.

Not recommended, except for Sawyer purists.

Dobpota

Let me be clear I really truly enjoyed the first book in this trilogy. I loved the concept and I was excited to read all about how the world would change with the introduction of a new peaceful race. I was especially interested in how this introduction would affect religion, world relations etc etc. However, despite encouraging signs in the first and second book this trilogy devolved into a needless love story, like soo many books before it. Just once I'd like to see a book where a female character can be strong and independent as opposed to having to cling to any male presence to survive. Overall, the concept in the first novel is interesting and I recommend reading it but maybe just stop there.

thrust

This is an incredible series, with fascinating characters, great science, and incredible imagination. It's good for many readings. I've never been disappointed by this author.

Zeks Horde

I saw from skimming the reviews of this trilogy that the consensus view was the first was best, the second so-so and the third not good at all. I was expecting a real stinker but wanted to know what happened to Mary and Ponter and others. I was pleasantly surprised in part because I liked the twists and the concepts he explored such as the parietal lobe. Also, I liked seeing more of the consequences of earlier decisions and how they played out. The characters were mostly one-dimensional and much of the other criticism in neighboring reviews is valid, but I am still quite glad I read this book.

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