

# HOMO MULTIFARIUS

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## INTRODUCTION

*Homo multifarius* is a theory which I developed in the mid to late 1970's. Simply stated, the concept is that human beings could develop a single identity which is fused from the intellects of two or more individuals. The concept of beings with common minds was not new. Over the years, there have been several science fiction stories with alien creatures with common minds. Some of these creatures took over human minds and incorporated them into the common mind. Recently, stories of sentient beings with a common mind have proliferated. The "Borg" of **Star Trek: The Next Generation** is an example of current sci-fi visions of the common mind creature.

Homo multifarius theory, however, is distinct from other common mind concepts. It is different in that the common mind develops inherent to humanity; it is not imposed by alien beings. It is also different because the common mind results from a shared perception of identity rather than from central control of thought processes. As a shared perception of identity, Homo multifarius is an enhancement to humanity rather than a limitation upon individual freedom.

I first published the theory of Homo multifarius by presenting the concept at a special session of the World Future Society's Global Conference on the Future held in Toronto in 1980. At this conference I released copies of two papers: "Future Humans- An Hypothesis" and "*Homo multifarius* – A Practical Approach to Achieving Life After Death."

## A NATURAL SOLUTION

*Homo multifarius* theory is the application of **MULTIFARIAN THEORY** to human beings. I originally referred to multifarian creatures as multiple-bodied creatures since they are creatures whose entity is best understood as being a single entity composed of many individual bodies.

I developed multifarian theory as an intellectual response to solving the limitations to individual power and mortality. Life extension and super powers are alternative solutions to these limitations. However, these solutions contain the inherent weakness of individual vulnerability. Even "Superman" could be killed by "Kryptonite." Also, preservation of the individual body is a solution that has seen only limited success in the natural world. Nature has evolved the "species" as the smallest unit of life continuation. Individuals within the species live and die, but the species survives. Individuals grow and learn, but the species evolves. Of course the species is not invulnerable. Many species have died. However, compared to the lifetimes of the individuals within the species, the lifetime of the species is infinite.

We are all part of the human species *Homo sapiens*. However, just being part of the species does not satisfy our individual desire for greater power and avoidance of

death. So what would satisfy our desires? The following discussion will focus on avoidance of mortality; however, if we can avoid death then we will acquire other powers also.

## **AVOIDANCE OF DEATH**

Most of us can find a little satisfaction in knowing that something of us will survive our bodily death in our children, our work products, our good deeds, and our intellectual products. The satisfaction we receive from such knowledge is not sufficient. Therefore, many of us turn to religion. In some religions, we hypothesize that a being exists which possesses the power over life and death and believe that this being will confer life everlasting upon us if we meet certain criteria. In other religions, we believe in reincarnation as a means of overcoming death. Religious beliefs seem to satisfy many of us, especially as a last-resort attempt to overcome eternal death. However, it is abundantly apparent that religion provides only partial satisfaction. As the old joke goes, when the preacher asks who is ready today to jump on the glory train to heaven, usually no one raises his hand. There are a few people who may follow through on their beliefs; we tend to call them fanatics.

What do we seek to preserve by not dying? When we envision living longer or living after death we envision ourselves as being young or at least in good physical condition. If offered a choice of body types, I do not believe that any of us would choose to live forever as a hundred-year old person of today. In fact, we might not even choose our body of any age if we could get a different one. In our currently available lives, our bodies are in a constant state of change. Our childhood body was not the same body we possess today. Some of the physical components are the same, but the nature of the body is very different. This is a very important point to acknowledge in evaluation death avoidance. Avoiding death does not mean that we wish to maintain our same physical bodies. Perhaps what we seek to preserve beyond death is more mental than physical.

## **TWO THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS**

Consider the following thought experiment. Suppose a human reproduction machine is created. This machine is able to exactly reproduce any individual human including the memories, desires, and thought processes. Now suppose a person, let us call him John, is taken by the technicians into the machine and reproduced. Inside the machine and without the knowledge of the reproduced John, the original John is killed and his body shipped to the incinerator. The reproduced John is escorted out of the machine to John's family and friends who have been waiting in an adjoining building. Is John still alive? John's family and friends consider him to still be alive since he is identical to the original John. They can detect no difference in him. The reproduced John, since he has the memories of the original John, thinks he is the original John and, thus, believes John is still alive. We and the technicians, however, know that John is not still alive. Or is he? We know that the original John has been incinerated. But, if we defined John to be the person that was John at the moment of reproduction, we can not distinguish the between the original John and the reproduced John. Therefore, even as far as we are concerned, John is still alive.

So who thinks John is dead? The original John thinks he is dead. Or, at least he would if he could still think. To state this conclusion another way, the original John would not think he would still be alive if, before killing him, the technicians told him that he had been reproduced and that his reproduction would be replacing him. Like any person being told he is about to die, John would think he is going to be dead. He might be consoled by the knowledge that his reproduction would be around to help care for his family, but he would think he is going to die.

Now let us consider another hypothetical case. Suppose cryogenic storage has been perfected to the point that all life processes can be stopped; the body chilled and stored for an indefinite period; and then the body reheated and life processes restarted, all without any damage to the physical or mental characteristics of the person. Suppose this is done to John. After the process is John still alive? I expect we all would agree that yes, John is still alive. John thinks he is still alive, too. Other than the absolute conditions assumed in the hypothetical case, this situation is not too different from real-life situations involving heart stoppage, or anesthesia during an operation, or even just going to sleep. If in the hypothetical case, we take the position that John has died and a new John has assumed his place, then we are hard put to argue against death having occurred in the real-life cases. Although such a death-rebirth presumption may have some usefulness, it quickly becomes very cumbersome and certainly does not fit our real-life perception of life and death. I believe the best presumption for this hypothetical case is that the person continues to live.

## **A MATTER OF PERCEPTION**

The two thought experiments above have much in common but yield completely opposite conclusions...one in life and one in death. Therefore, somewhere in the differences between these two experiments lies the essence of what we seek to preserve of ourselves by avoiding death. I believe the answer lies in our conception of what it means to continue life. Without further discussion at this time, I propose to define personal identity as our concept of continued life. A concept is a mental construction which we use to explain portions of reality or the universe. A concept exists only in our minds. We form concepts to organize the perceptions we receive from the real world or reality. It is the relationship between perception and conception which I believe is the key to understanding what we seek in life continuation. (For a more in-depth discussion of the nature of perception and conception, see "[The Nature of Knowledge](#).")

Ultimately, all concepts are based upon perceptions. Perceptions are inputs which our minds receive from the real world. As we have become more intellectually sophisticated, we stretch the links between perceptions and conceptions. This why our more sophisticated concepts seem less real to us. With respect to life and death, we have developed many sophisticated religious conceptions in an attempt to satisfy our desires for avoidance of death. It is precisely because these religious concepts are so far removed from our day to day perceptions of life and death that we find these religious answers only marginally satisfying. In order to find an answer to death avoidance which we find truly satisfying, we must develop a concept which is fundamentally linked to our perceptions of life and death.

What are our fundamental perceptions of continued life, of personal identity? Basically they are our daily perceptions of being alive. We see, feel, taste, or otherwise sense our environment. These perceptions are received in our minds. On a secondary level, we receive knowledge from our perceptions. For example, someone tells us something or we read a book. All these perceptions come to our minds through our senses without conscious thought. We know we are alive because we perceive things. Someone may tell us about something interesting which they saw. We believe ourselves to be alive because we perceived the telling of this experience, not because we gained the knowledge of something that another person perceived.

Understanding the perception-conception connection to identity and life continuation provides us with a means of developing a satisfactory solution to avoidance of death.

## **THE MULTIFARIAN SOLUTION**

The multifarian solution for avoiding death, and achieving many other desired powers, requires that a single identity be applied to a large group of people. How does this solution result in avoiding death? First, it is not the continuation of the body that is sought in avoiding death; rather, we desire a continuation of our identity. Identity is a concept which we maintain in our minds. As long as this concept is continued, we are still alive. If our identity encompasses many individual bodies, the loss of some of these bodies does not result in the loss of identity. We currently recognize the principle of continuation of identity when applied to organizations and institutions. Members join and depart organizations frequently, but the organization continues to exist. The multifarian challenge is to replace the individual identities of its member bodies with a group identity.

This brings us to the second criterion of the multifarian solution. The group identity must be closely based upon the perceptions received by the individual member bodies. This is essential in order to make the group identity more satisfying than any identity associated with the individual body. The route to accomplish this feat is clear and will be discussed in succeeding portions of this document.

At this point I wish to emphasize the difference between the multifarian solution of group identity and the wornout concept of mind control. Mind control implies forced subordination of one identity by another. The multifarian identity is a natural outgrowth of the physical system linking the member bodies. When the physical system is created, the multifarian identity will emerge.

## **MULTIPLE BRAINS / SINGLE IDENTITY**

The *Homo multifarius* concept at its essence is that a single or common identity can exist for a group of brains given adequate communication among the individual brains. Is this concept reasonable? The answer is yes! In fact, a manifestation of multiple brains sharing a common identity already exists. Normal *Homo sapiens* are multiple brained, single identity beings. We accept without question that each of us possesses a single identity. If we have more than one identity (or personality) existing within one person, we consider that person to be abnormal. The characteristic which we usually do not describe ourselves as having is multiple brains. However, this is

exactly the case. The organ which we usually describe in the singular as the human brain is actually a collection of brains located within one skull.

The human brain is composed of several distinct, separable parts or brains. Evolutionary theory describes the human brain as being result of a developmental path from the reptilian brain to the mammalian brain to the human brain. At each stage in this evolution, the older brain was retained and the newer brain added. Thus it is reasonable to describe each human individual as having three brains. Each of these brains is composed of separable parts in themselves; for example, the mammalian brain includes the hypothalamus, hippocampus and amygdala. The human brain stage of development includes the addition of the neocortex. The neocortex is divided into the right and left cerebral hemispheres. Each of these brains communicate with each other through numerous nerve connections. The two cerebral hemispheres communicate with one another through a massive bundle of nerve fibers known as the *Corpus Callosum*.

Human intelligence is believed to be largely located within the two cerebral hemispheres. The two hemispheres do not share equally in the control of our intelligence. For example, in the typical, right-handed person the left hemisphere is the principal seat of analytical thought and speech and the right hemisphere is the seat of intuition and spatial abilities. Aside from the programming differences between the hemispheres there are physical differences in the nerve connections with the rest of the body. Most nerves on the right side of the body are connected to the left hemisphere, while the right hemisphere is connected to the nerves on the left side of the body. This is why a person undergoing an injury or stroke to the left hemisphere usually experiences some degree of loss of motor control and feeling on their right side. Also, persons with left hemisphere strokes often suffer difficulty with speech.

The nerve connections between the eyes and the cerebral hemispheres are more complex. Each eye has nerve connections with both hemispheres. The right side of each eye's retina is connected to the right cerebral hemisphere and, conversely, the left side of each retina is connected to the left hemisphere. This means that the right hemisphere receives or "sees" the left visual field and the left hemisphere sees the right visual field. Further, each hemisphere sees its half of the visual field in stereo since it receives inputs from the retinas of each eye. In actuality, sight is a mental concept formed through combination of the outputs from the four retinal sectors of the two eyes. This complex connection between the eyes and the cerebral hemispheres means that a variety of sight impairments may result from injuries to the cerebral hemispheres or the optic nerves. For example, a person experiencing complete impairment to the optic nerve from the left eye will be blind in that eye. But a person experiencing injury or stroke to the visual portion of the left hemisphere will have impairment to sight in their right visual field.

The specific ways in which nerves are connected to the cerebral hemispheres is important to this discussion because its understanding has allowed ingenious researchers to communicate separately with each cerebral hemisphere. Such communication is most clearly seen in patients who have undergone severing of the major direct nerve connections between the hemispheres (the *Corpus Callosum*). These experiments and others in which persons have lost portions of their brains

demonstrate that major parts of our brains can function independently within a single body. Conversely, our normal experience demonstrates these independent parts can function to form a single identity. Also, it follows that if we could connect additional brains to our brains we would still form common identity. At present, these brains must be connected by nerve tissue. However, given the pace of technology, it is not unreasonable to expect that telepathic connections between brains can be engineered. If these telepathic connections are of sufficient quality (that is, conveying information similar to that conveyed by the *Corpus Callosum*) a common identity will emerge among the connected persons. These persons would compose a **multifarian human**.

## **MULTIFARIAN CREATURES ALREADY IN EXISTENCE**

Multifarian creatures already exist. They are probably the most successful, non-microscopic creatures on Earth. These are the social insects. Ants and termites are the pinnacles of social insect evolution. Most researchers of these insects recognize that it is erroneous to consider colonies of these insects to be collections of individuals. Among myrmecologists the concept of the "superorganism" has been used to describe the collective creature. When applied to ants the concept of the "multifarian creature" is inclusive of the "superorganism."

Within neurons the information is transferred by electro-chemical pulses. However, communication between neurons is accomplished by the transference of chemicals, called neurotransmitters, from one dendrite to another. Neurons also release other chemicals affecting body response, such as neurohormones.

In most animals, special hormones called pheromones can be passed through the air from one individual to another. The transference of pheromones from one individual to another is a form of chemical communication and control. For example, in cattle the bull senses hormones emitted by a cow in estrus which prompts him to mount her and copulate. Insects carry communication through pheromones to far greater achievements. In certain species of moths, the ability of the male to sense receptive females over miles of separation is phenomenal. Insects have antennae as their principal mechanism for receiving pheromonal signals.

Modern studies of ant colonies have shown extensive pheromonal communication. Pheromones are passed from one individual to another by touch and air transference. Pheromonal communication is generally associated with behavior control. For example, different pheromones may induce sexual activity, alarm, aggressive behavior, or feeding. The differentiation between a pheromone and a neurotransmitter is largely semantic when applied to insects. A neurotransmitter is a chemical which acts internally to an individual to stimulate other neurons. A pheromone is a chemical which acts externally to an individual to stimulate neurons in other individuals.

There is a practical reason why we currently discuss communication within an ant colony only in the context of the limited concept of behavior control rather than the broader concept of information transfer. It is very easy to observe changes in the behavior of ants, but difficult to measure the knowledge of ants. Thus our science currently is at the stage of isolating various pheromones and recording the changes in behavior induced by exposure to these pheromones. We are beginning to tackle the

question whether ant colonies can learn from experience. The study of whether information can be transferred from one individual to another is largely overlooked at this time.

There is a compelling example of social insect information transfer that has been well documented. It is known that honey bees communicate the direction of nectar supplies to other bees by performing "dances." These dances, which consist of turning and vibrating, apparently serve to transfer information about distance and direction from the scout bee to other bees. Gaining this information, the other bees can locate the nectar source without having to be lead by the scout bee. (This example of insect information transfer is quite remarkable. To realize just how remarkable, see how many other clear-cut examples of information transfer you can think of that involve animals other than humans.)

**End**

<http://neoperceptions.com/futureperspective/futpers.htm>