

Ask A Genius 89 – Life and Death (4)
Scott Douglas Jacobsen and Rick Rosner
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This session has been edited for clarity and readability.

Rick: If everybody is given a fair chance under democratic American values, we embrace those values because we consider ourselves everybody. One way that the American system has been glitchy lately is more and more people don't consider themselves anybody or everybody as a group member who needs collective protection, but only as an individual who can survive on their own without government.

So, you have these more selfish politicians being elected. People are looking at themselves and deciding that they don't need support group action because they can survive just fine on their own. Everything is based on evolved human preferences, values, characteristics. Humans are limited.

As we build more sophisticated ways of processing information, of experiencing the world, of being in groups, old school basic unaugmented human existence will – once a significant segment of the population is living under different cultural standards based on being unaugmented or on more powerful ways of processing information and experiencing information – be seen as old school, primitive, clunky, and the world will no longer be primarily catering to them.

The idea of preserving island-like human existence, which is the idea of individual human existence locked into their skulls without augmentation or intimate networking will seem like keeping a Model T running. There will become a certain amount of prejudice against the grainy, clunky type of information processing done in unaugmented human brains.

Everything that is made is made with human interests in mind, but once we become more powerful in processing and experiencing things then the augmented human market will shrink or be neglected. It will be like radio versus TV versus the Internet. Radio used to be the greatest thing. In the 20s and 30s, people would gather around the radio.

There'd be super popular shows. *Jack Armstrong, Super Boy, The Shadow* with production value as great as could be imagined. All of the most talented people were there such as Jack Benny and Milton Berle, not always considered the most talented. The best comedians were on the radio. The best singers were on the radio. All of the best because it was considered a sophisticated medium.

Now, it isn't. Broadcast radio is full of garbage and packed with ads and yammering morons who aren't talented enough to make it in other media. The same thing will happen with information processing. Unaugmented human information processing will no longer be the ultimate in existence. The entities that are more powerful than us will look at our unaugmented human was of being and will think, "I can see how they experience, perceive, and think about things, but

their way of being is not as powerfully existent as my way of existing, my friends, and the people I'm linked to.”

The yardstick, man will never be the measure of all things. The yardstick will be the dominant, most powerful means of experiencing and analyzing the world. It won't be absolute. It won't be like *homo sapiens* driving Neanderthals out of existence. The coming AI plus built-ins, the coming means of existence will be somewhat tolerant of all means of existence.

There'll be a whole bunch of ways of experiencing the world with fungible consciousness, which is consciousness that can traded around, budded around, cut into pieces, and merged. There will have to be some tolerance for all ways of processing information because we'll be in a *Star Wars* cantina of consciousness and of AI.

There will be a zillion different ways of using computing power and consciousness, and information processing. Those different ways will have to not always be at each others' throats because there will still be a lot of cooperation. There will still be the Golden Rule. So, there will be tolerance for old school humans.

But there will also be looking down on old school humans in the way we don't let a giraffe be president. You can't do it! A giraffe can't handle the task. A giraffe can't drive a school bus. If it came down to – there's that ethical dilemma problem – if you're driving a car and the breaks don't work, do you hit the giraffe or hit the kid? You're going to hit the giraffe.

So, even as we acquire the means to make consciousness replicatable, those same means will make human consciousness less precious. Also, the way we group together via social media will become more powerful and probably won't be called social media. The way that we share thoughts, we primarily share thoughts via words.

Eventually, we'll come up with more powerful means of sharing existence with each other. We share video and still pictures with each other. Eventually, we'll be able to share emotional or conscious frameworks that include the information of experience more directly. We'll be able to share experience more directly.

Being able to experience more directly and being able to link consciousnesses, maybe not completely all of the time but, more intimately than now may devalue the need to continue to exist as an individual consciousness.

If this is the year 2130, and you've been alive for 140 years, and you've been sharing your thoughts via whatever the thought sharing social media of the time is, if you've been sharing thoughts since 2060, for half of your life, for 70 years, maybe, there are enough of your thoughts out there in the world and, maybe, you're used to sharing thinking functions with the people you're intimately, and whatever else, linked with.

So, you don't feel a desperation to keep existing in your 70-year-old body. You share experiences and philosophies. They've been out there for 70 years. Maybe, there's enough of

you out there linked with other people that it doesn't matter too much to the one of you that is part of this worldwide net of consciousness.

The net of consciousness may have enough of you via what you've shared for decades, so that not that much of you is lost as your individual human experience ceases. There's the idea that if you're linked up with enough other brains for long enough, then the loss of one brain doesn't matter because what was once confined to one brain is now distributed among a bunch of other information processing systems.

You can imagine, to further confuse things, say, it's 2080. You're born in 1990. You're 90-years-old. Your body is no longer as fun to live in as it used to be, and you're looking at resurrection packages.

Maybe, your brain isn't as functional. You're in some show room, where you're meeting with a salesperson to find out how much existence you want to preserve – as your brain is replaced, as you move into cyberspace.

You're looking at various means of replication and replacement of consciousness. A salesperson says, "Full duplication of every single one of your memories as near as we can do it runs from \$3.8 million. Or, you can go for the economy preservation at \$1.8 million. We will preserve the most important memories."

We replace some of the stuff that you don't access much with generic memories. You're 90-years-old. The salesman says, "How much do you really need to remember about high school back in 2005-2008? We can preserve some high school memories vaguely. The rest, we can fill in with generic high school experiences based on people of your type. How unique was your time in high school? And how much do you really use? How much do you remember in detail? We can give you generic memories for a lot cheaper, rather than having to tease them out of your brain, and just happen to be synthetic."

To save 2 million bucks for a snazzier replacement body, you go with a loss of accuracy of memory, which can be seen as a loss of humanity – but can also be seen as pretty human because we lose the accuracy of memory over time anyway.

But people, and what comes after people – which will still be people, but will be different in a lot of ways from us, will face choices, not that exact choice maybe, about what they want to do with their consciousness. How much they want to preserve and for how long, that means questioning the value of certain things that we would consider part of being human

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