

WHO AM I

A Very Short Dissertation by David Rogers

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Siver Arts – Literary Category

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A very short dissertation

Yeh, who am I? At 85 Years old, I have often wondered... what is it all about, life I mean?

I know the pleasure and joy-of-life, is more than most people realize as they endure the journey... as it is often fraught with danger, mystery, pain, sorrow, despair, etcetera, and sometimes leads to the justification of suicide. But for most of us, we have nestled into the cultural expectations developed by our forebears, and can say: I am "relatively" happy. We realize that under the facial skin of identity, different for everyone, is the perfectly identical bone structure and operating systems, along with all the vital organs, and generating and controlling systems to sustain conscious life, which we all have (pretty much equally)!

Including the most precious, our brains, which tells our ("I") (the essence of our consciousness) what is happening around us. It interprets every sound, smile, laugh, inuendo, cold, hot, rage, love and so much more, from the moment we are born. It communicates instantly with every sensor in and on our bodies!

Essentially a miracle, that is similarly duplicated in every species of every animal and form of life. So, do we owe our existence to one entity which has endowed us, and will care for us into eternity? Or are we simply a mass of reactive chemicals and ever-changing biological entities submitting our existence to the forces of nature... without a benefactor?

In our world, this enormous mass of earth, spins eternally, while traveling roundabout a brilliant fiery sun-star, within an immense never-ending universe. The distance of our earth-planet from the heat of our star, and the chemical composition of each, creates the catalyst for basic life to be born. Here then, begins the struggle to maintain Life, to survive the vagaries of environmental conditions, and have the adaptability to transform its species. In our concept of time and space, this transformation is very slow, and has taken an incomprehensible millions of years.

So, here we are, left in the now. We interpret our existence between the histories of ancient and western civilizations (as somewhat recorded), and the unknown future as imagined by our greatest visionaries... and sometimes guided by the likes of Star Trek. Unlike some forms of life that have made huge transformations, as reptiles to birds and others. Man (woman), since walking erect, seems (somewhat) content to be happy with his (her) physique and has conquered the living world with his (her) brain. We know our basic needs (culture) is quite simple: we need to eat, we need to excrete, we need to have shelter, and we need to procreate. And from those needs we developed a greater need, to create: including, Husbandry, Agronomy, Communications, Civics, Arts and Sciences, etcetera, add-infinitum!

Fortunately, the basic culture is always there (no matter how it is gilded). And it should be protected for those who wish to live within it (without becoming a slave). Culture (they would say) is what we do, it defines us... we are comfortable within it, and we do not want to change! Which could be envisioned as, perhaps in a farm community. And may be contrary to the needs and complexities of modern-day cities. Which in-turn becomes fodder for political ends, etcetera, etc.

Where do you want to get off...?

And all this is perfectly logical. It is spawned by desire: the need to know the unknown; to grow on a finite planet, and to solve and control the unending problems of growth.

The genius of man's creations to copy and duplicate the achievements of other life-forms (as flight) is bound only by the imagination. The advent of technology has been raging ever since the discovery of fire and war. Now, with space stations, satellite telescopes, and extraterrestrial exploration... the universe, is contemplated! Will the universe end? Is there really any space for heaven or hell?

And how will all this relate to my ("I")? I know we all have an ("I") and each one, with the same function, is different in thought. And thereby unique - totally impenetrable to any other. We are like, one-of-billions of grains of sand, on a very long beach. Many, put out a microscopical flag to proclaim: "I" am here! I am different, and important. Can you see me? I matter! I matter!

Which leads me to the question, where the hell am I going? I love life and I love to learn. And I want to know more. I do not want the lights to be turned out and dark forever. I do not want to die! Can't you take me with you? "Take you with whom?" GOD!?

What else do I know?! But I have never found solace in the many religions of our world. They all begin with an extraordinary event for a MAN (like you and me) who supposedly conversed with GOD (as do we all) and preached (to the masses) his conception of what God told him we should do. Of course, there will always be people who agree, and believe, and develop a movement culminating in a religion. All based on the belief (figment of man's imagination) that there is a GOD. Trust me, no one knows! Except one, who convinces himself!

Thank you, for separation of church and state!

I remember at an especially difficult time in my life, with a wife and 4 children, no job and raked with despair. It had snowed and was cold and I was walking alone at night about town when I heard people singing and was drawn to its sound and warm glow through windows of a small church (evangelical I think). Upon entering, I was greeted, and offered escort to a front section. I declined, and said I would stand in the back. It was deliciously warm and the music soothing. People were on their feet with upraised arms facing the leader, and the message was to praise and give themselves to God for his protection. It seemed so easy, and tempting, to just give myself up and be done with all the problems. But I could not do it! It was a flight or fight moment. Truth is I simply was not a believer. I had to believe in me (the "I" of me, which tells me I am conscious, and knows right from wrong). I wanted to control me, and be accountable to me, and to be responsible for my family and achievements.

That night, as I lay in bed, I began to focus on just who I was. What, was the essence of ME?

I am Dave Rogers, I thought! But retorted, that is just a name my mother and father gave me. It says nothing about who ("I") am. My name could be anything and I would still be me! It does not matter whether I have arms or legs, or am artificial from the neck down, I am still me! This I/ME (which really does not like to

be told what to do and yearns to be free and know truth) is alone in the universe, for all (my) time, and is the manifestation of my brain, a magnificent electro- bio-chemical computer, that has recorded every perceptive moment of its existence. Everything we have learned, everything we have felt is a history for our recall. And now, perhaps infinitesimally, imbedded (for posterity) into our DNA. Why would it end when the lights go out? Was it all for not? Was it just for procreation? Should we have done things we secretly wanted to? Are we at the beginning, or the end of our enlightenment? Surely it is a cruel joke! I can understand keeping it secret, which keeps us on the treadmill and away from complacency.

But I cannot let it go! Is thought the manifestation of consciousness, or the other way around? There is something there that knows and understands the synergism of life, almost like a misty guide, in your face, but out of reach. A beacon of light that burns 24/7 forever! Let us call it a spirit!

Really?! All this time, and I am back to what the ancients surmised!? It just seems unjust to me! I think, that when the lights do go out, there will be a simultaneous transformation and release of my spirit (with all its faculties) into the brightness and magnificent beauty of the whole universe, brilliant with stars and galaxies visible forever. And ME, a tinny ray of light that can traverse, at-the-moment of thought, to any desired place completely unmolested by environment. To embrace (and incarnate if desired) the incredible myriad of life forms there.

Even if it turns out other-wise, I think it is better to embrace death with a bright future, rather than to die in anxious fear and lament.

And what keeps this menagerie in balance? Gravity, Magnetism... God?

Not that I am without gratitude to have experienced life. I will forever be grateful for all I have learned, felt, and experienced, including the love and sacrifices of my parents, who provided a body in their likeness and nurtured me to the best of their abilities; for my siblings and children and their progeny. And for friendships and loves, none of whom can be with me on my journey, any more than (I) can be with them on theirs... accept in the repose of memory. It seems our orientation is to know the unknown, to live unmolested in harmony, and maintain a sense of freedom on the long journey to... Nothing?? Our creator?? / GOD?

What a magical mystery it all is! No matter which door we open, it expands the narrative into mystery. In terms of scale, space, and time, it is all relative. What we might think about the tiniest insect (which has a brain, can fly, and communicate and has incredible multi-faceted vision) may be similar-to what an advanced larger form-of-life may think about us.

Life is so precious, for every organism, and we need to appreciate their ability to make their way in a difficult environment, to exist, to communicate, to build, to procreate. The journey can be so difficult... I had to "learn" to love me, which is okay. And to understand, it is difficult to love someone else, if you do not love yourself. To believe, I am, by virtue of my existence, as good and important as others of my species. The golden rule: love others as you would have them love you, still has merit. To me, truth and love are the best building blocks.

I guess, for now, I will just keep my name and hope for the best!

Relationships are difficult. Good words are beautiful and can trigger a happy smile, benevolence, and love. Bad words are ugly and can degenerate-one to an unhappy sadness, anger, and hate.

Your face is a mirror of your beliefs and thoughts... and wrinkles are hard to erase.

PEACE!