

# Appraisal of *Homo sapiens* as a 'Super Organism'

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## Abstract

Ants were proffered as a super organism by Wilson who pioneered the field of sociobiology. *Homo sapiens* are submitted as a potential 'super organism' of the solar system because we have higher standards to strive for before claiming that the status has been attained. The concept of 'super organism' is used figuratively, rather than literally. The resilience of the ants, and they're not killing themselves, are two specific qualities that are being epitomized in the article. The 'super organism' status might be extended to an ideal for the purpose of focusing the proper reimagining of the purpose of human beings as a biological species in the order of the Universe. Conflict and the use of fire arms may be viewed as evolutionary consequences in the adaptation of human beings to acting positively as a single unified whole. Tolerance, compromise and even self-sacrifice/restrain are encouraged for the common good. The immediate goal for the individual is contentment and peaceful co-existence with others. The ultimate goal for the whole species could be to aspire to be a true 'super organism' of the planet Earth, then of the solar system. There is a constant threat of hunger or the lack of nutrition, which could become more severe with climate change. Lack of health and diseases remain threats.

**Keywords:** Resilience; Leader; Nations; Religion; Race; Culture; European; American; Asian; Africa; Conflict; Earth; Hunger; Nutrition

## Introduction

Current events around the world inspire new thoughts and interesting solutions. The ants have been studied by biologists as a super organism [1,2]. The leafcutter ants were studied. It is a concept in sociobiology that the ant colony is biologically more advantageous because the ants work in a group. 'Biologically more advantageous' means that the ants as a group have an impact on the environment of larger animals (rather than of small creatures) and create sustainable conditions for themselves and their off-springs for many generations to come despite natural predators and changing environmental conditions. For instance, the ant colony show resilience conceivably better than many fishes which produce a multitude of eggs and only a small percentage survive to adulthood. The ants are also more resilient than swarming insects that form food for the birds and the bats where their existence seems to rely only on being fodder for others.

The objective of this article is to use this inspiration from ants in an attempt to perceive a higher purpose to human life than mere existence, and from a more species approach rather than an individual approach. In this endeavor, it is hoped that an ethical and moral framework for human activity may be innovatively conceived. This is particularly suitable and perhaps necessary for *Homo sapiens* in this unsettled period in time, where many would argue that peace conditions do not exist in many parts of the world, especially among the countries considered leaders of the developed world. In other

words, it is thinking outside the box, in an attempt to view one's creation from the viewpoint of the Creator. The focus of this work is on the apparent dominant species on the planet Earth.

The 'super' in 'super organism' is used figuratively in the current work, like the 'Super' in 'Super Brain' [3] by Chopra and Tanzi of the Harvard Medical School. The way to 'Super Brain' may be via meditation [3-7]. The adjective 'super' is in effect used with its everyday generally accepted meaning of the English word. The 'super organism' in this work is a state that should be aspired to, rather than already achieved. *Homo Sapiens* as a 'super organism' used in the current work is one with all positive characteristics attributed to it, more like the dragon and phoenix of Chinese mythology and culture, rather than literally the characteristics of ants which Wilson struggled to explain to his peers. However, the use of the term 'super organism' is inspired by Wilson's work on ants.

## History

This section is a brief synopsis of the important periods in the civilized world, especially with respect to world/international powers. It is more a listing of major periods of military power in the world's history that are cogent for the concepts presented in this work. The Golden Horde swept across central and west Asia all the way to the plains of Hungary. The Golden Horde overpowered their enemies with firearms and horses. That was the most recent successful conquest by Asians of parts of

the European continent. The rise and fall of the Roman Empire is rather well known, with the subsequent formation of the Byzantine Empire and the Republic of Venice. More recent history saw the colonization of many parts of the world by the British, where 'the sun never sets on the British Empire'. The Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, German and other European powers had varying degrees of success in colonization based on their superior weapons of war and political prowess. The European Union is a continuation of the adaptation of Western and Central Europeans to form a workable union, whereas Russia leads the Eastern Europeans and the former Byzantine Empire (excluding Greece, Turkey and neighbors).

### European/American culture with respect to being the leader

The United States of America (USA) is arguably the only super-power militarily in the world today. The rise of the USA is also well known, and came after being victorious in the Second World War. Here, the word 'super' is also used with its commonly accepted meaning. The fact that the USA is the ultimate target of the terrorists, who use religion to rally their side, affirms this fact. Though Russia and China also have permanent seats in the U.N. Security Council, they have not been freely given their rightful roles in their spheres of influence. If Russia and China were given a freer hand, there is a possibility that the burden on the USA may be lessened in fighting the terrorists.

For the reason that the USA is the world leader militarily, some idea of future action may be obtained by examining her culture. The culture in the USA today is more Euro-centric than it is Afro-centric or Asian-centric. Indeed many social scientists would subscribe to the fact that there is hardly any 'Afro-centricity' at all because the Africans were brought in as slaves who had been stripped of all their worldly goods and most of their humanity. The three historical facts listed below are relevant for discussion about the concepts presented in this work.

- a) Some native Indians invited the visiting Latin Europeans in South America. They in turn subjugated them and took over, using fire arms and horses.
- b) Some native Indians invited the visiting Anglo Europeans and French in North America. They in turn subjugated them and took over, using fire arms.
- c) Some Mexicans in the old Texas and old California invited the Americans to live with them. The Americans in turn subjugated them and took over, using superior fire arms (in the Mexican-American War, etc.)

These three examples paint a picture with three snapshots of the USA in terms of acquiring land via superior fire power. On the other extreme end, a question that begs to be asked is as follows: Has Gandhi's non-violence worked or been adopted in the Americas? The response is that the path of non-violence has worked with Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa. The verdict is still out with regards certain

issues in the USA, even though Martin Luther King's efforts have led to affirmative action for African Americans. The concept presented here is that the non-violent method is just one of the adaptations of the evolving human culture. It certainly seems that the violent method will persist for some time to come with respect to international disputes. This deduction is made based on the synopsis of the relevant history presented previously, that the USA has a Euro-centric culture and that the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council are all under attack by the terrorists, as well as many of their allies.

### Perspective from culture and philosophy

All great civilizations have their ugly side. A few examples are as follows:

- a. The ancient Egyptians had slaves;
- b. The ancient Romans had slaves;
- c. The Chinese had slaves.

The USA is the title holder, leader or model of 'maximum personal freedom' in the world today. Any 'title holder' faces constant challenges. This is the case when considering personal possession of fire arms as an extension of the concept of 'maximum personal freedom'. It is also the case when considering the USA as the 'sole super power in the world'.

This thought comes to mind about acts of mass slaughter committed with fire arms by single perpetrators: Are these shooter-criminal persons just one of the bad results of this 'ideal' of 'maximum personal freedom'? If the victims are clearly of a particular religion, it is classified by the authorities as terrorism. If the victims are clearly of a particular race, it is classified by the authorities as hate crime. Otherwise, they are grouped into actions of mentally ill persons or planned mass murders. These categorizations do not answer the question of whether more gun control would succeed in less violent events and less deaths. In other words, more or less gun control may not lead to the solution of this problem in the 'sole super power in the world'. Mass murders performed by terrorists, have been addressed in the previous section about culture in the USA. These acts should be expected to continue as long as the USA remains the ultimate target of the terrorists, or until the terrorists are totally defeated and have given up on their mission.

### Perspective from sociobiology

From just an animal species to a 'super organism', we are now indisputably the top species in the World. Does anyone see another species that is competing with *Homo sapiens* for this top position? There could be argument regarding the meaning of 'top species'. In the current work, we have taken the de facto position. We humans have evolved from a mere animal species in Africa about 200,000 years ago. It has been academically argued that religion and culture are human adaptations to this evolution [8,9]. Religion and culture are essential for keeping life interesting. In addition, religion is adopted by many to complete

the 'Big Bang' theory from science when faced with the logical question of what came before the 'Big Bang'? Similarly, culture is needed for human life to be human.

Conflict is part of this adaptation process, which continues to this day. Fire arms are merely one weapon of conflict, others in this category include knives, swords and other sharp weapons. Verbal assault and visual assault are also recognizable forms produced by weapons nowadays. The Internet and social media have made these two forms of weapons (when used as such) very strong and far reaching. The challenges which face our human species from becoming a 'super organism' in the idealistic sense (as explained above) are many. A large portion of these challenges may be more easily overcome if we love our neighbors like ourselves. Other challenges are more physical, like hunger in the world, leading to poor nutrition and disease. The tenet of love is fundamental in the major religions.

On the scale of a single 'super organism' for the planet Earth, 'world citizenship' is a simple, obvious rethinking of one's sense of belonging to society. One's loyalty to a local community or a cultural heritage or a nation needs to be subservient to the grander idea of one's loyalty to one's biological species, *Homo sapiens*. This would be 'world citizenship'. Does nationalism stand in the way of this concept, or is there a way to practice world citizenship with national differences intact in the various nations? It is intuitive that the second way would be more acceptable. There is no necessity to eliminate national and cultural differences for *Homo sapiens* to act together in a positive manner, e.g. for climate change, elimination of hunger, alleviation of poverty.

The United Nations is the world body which by default, is the corporeal form of this 'super organism', if such even exists in its developing stages. That the United Nations is focusing on the 17 Global Goals [10,11], all of them commendable and peaceful, is some evidence. Eliminating hunger is number one on this list. Solving world hunger and income inequality are high as Global Goals of the United Nations. Big Agriculture has led the way in innovating cultivation of grains with higher protein-content and genetically modified (GM) produce which have eradicated famine in the world. These modern foods have varying lengths of shelf-lives and can be transported over large distances with minimal spoilage. However, in so doing, gluten (in wheat, rye and barley) and gluten-like protein (in corn) have been inevitably introduced into the diet of most people around the world. Corn, wheat and rice are the three ranking grains in the world. It has only been recently found by medical researchers [12-16] that gluten has negative effects on the guts of people by making the intestinal walls more permeable. The solutions of many challenges like this one are many and varied, but seemingly doable or at least manageable by the current United Nations.

Income inequality is another one of the United Nations' Global Goals, which deserves mention in this brief treatise. Income inequality in the various corporations, government,

and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, need to be reduced by following the United Nation's guidelines of a maximum ratio of ten between the income of the highest paid executive and the lowest-paid worker in the organization. The United Nations have decided that this ratio would be a workable ratio at the current time, which would probably keep the peace between the executives and the workers so that organizations will survive. These organizations constitute many of the fundamental units of this super organism in the reimagining of *Homo sapiens* as a 'super organism'.

Is conflict unavoidable? It certainly seems so at this time, about 100 years after the First World War and only about 70 years after the Second World War. In 2015, the War in the Middle East, and the War against Terrorism, may be viewed as instances of illnesses during the long adaptation process of humans from mere nations and large international religious groups to a full functioning 'super organism' with defensive as well as fighting parts (against extraterrestrial threats) and parts which can become sick while the rest of the organism function as usual and as normal as can be. Should guns and semi-automatic firearms be as easily obtainable by an average citizen, as in the USA? The answer partly lies on one's view of whether traditional skills like shooting for food, fishing for food, etc. should be the purview of organizations only e.g. police departments, or should they remain the rights of individuals? Either way, it is the perspective of the current author that fire-arms and superior forms of these weapons of conflict need to be on hand for human beings to be a viable 'super organism' in our solar system.

The atmosphere of Mars, for instance, is very much different from that of the Earth. That in itself and radiation, should be a huge hurdle for human survivor on Mars, even though proof of water has been found [17,18]. It is a lot less hospitable in other planets further from us or closer to the Sun. The leap from 'super organism' of the Earth to that of our solar system is not going to be easy. The concept/philosophy that *Homo Sapiens* are evolving to be the 'super organism' of the Earth, might help to verbalize the ultimate objective that would convince the majority to spend public funds to pursue this particular goal of space scientists and engineers.

### Conclusion

We have come a long way since the days when *Homo sapiens* walked out of Africa. Science and technology has certainly helped us accelerate our progress towards being a 'super organism'. Better nutrition has definitely played its part. Human beings are undeniably living longer. 'New' diseases however, continue to threaten our well-being in different parts of the world. A 'super organism' should be imagined as one that is resilient to environmental changes, including climate change and the persistent looming ugly head of hunger. The human 'super organism' should not be complacent that resilience in the planet Earth can be equated to resilience in another planet, let alone the whole solar system. Such a concept is necessary to set up a

skeletal framework of cooperation as leader nations set about to 'inhabit' other parts of our solar system. Rivalry should not stymie progress with conflict and sabotage.

With the 'Big Goal' in mind of becoming a 'super organism', individuals should imagine themselves to be willing and able to live in tolerance, compromise, and even self-sacrifice/restrain for the common good. There it must lie the secret to a peaceful and contented life. It is in the realization that as individuals, we are but an element of a huge number of elements within a 'super organism' in the making. One has to accept one's challenges in one's life to be one's lot and accept completely the responsibility of easing the pain and troubles those challenges might bring. At the very least, make each and every life worth living from one's viewpoint. Proper nutrition and regular physical activity are important.

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