

HOMO-POSTERUS

One thing which used to attract me quite a bit was a cartoon of 'Dennis the Menace', where he says 'the main difference between them, grownups, and we, kids, is that the grownups take things which are meant for fun, very seriously', unlike kids. I also found, the grownups sometimes take things meant to be of utmost importance, not at all seriously. And there was no predictable pattern. As I was growing up, in each and every stage of my growth to a young man, I experienced many embarrassing moments, due to the delays in appreciating the true meaning that hid the intent behind what the grownups say.

Notwithstanding best efforts, I couldn't find an answer to these questions and so far, all my efforts yielding no results. And I always thought of myself as fairly intelligent. I therefore thought I would travel in time, and ask the other generations, whether anyone did succeed in solving this. I now thought of the great Albert Einstein, my idol since childhood, who theorized that time travel was possible by bending time and space via the means of gravitational forces, and I had implicit faith in that. One way, I know, is to travel back in time, and to meet with all that you are already aware of from various sources, and perhaps discover the source of such a duality, the one between our true intent and what we actually say. Another way, which I found more interesting, is to travel ahead in time to see what others are going to see in due course. What is this duality, leading us to? From which, by induction, deduce the cause? I chose the latter, a journey

to the future. As I haven't come across a device that enables such a journey, I started from scratch, the making of my vessel, the time module.

I succeeded in harnessing the weak force for creating a virtual gravitational field and thereby cause distortion in space-time. This I could achieve after years of experimenting with quarks, leptons, and other sub-atomic particles, when I found certain flavors of quarks acting differently and in a non-intuitive manner, while colliding with neutrinos. While continuing research on quantum particles, I fell upon the possibility of linking Casimir force with quantum particles of gravity, which led to the possibility of balancing a thin plate vessel in a moving field. The ultimate result was that I could perfect a machine that could travel through the dimensions of time and space, utilizing virtual fields and abstract interactions. I was so excited that without even waiting to conduct a public demonstration or to acknowledge the bulk of good wishes from all, I began the ultimate test by sending a guinea pig to the future. And I chose myself as the guinea pig, of course, since I would not allow other beings to risk their life (or enjoy the fruits!).

But what did I find? Since we are a weak species and seek power over those who are of a meek nature, we tend to destroy what we cannot dominate. All I could find in the future, and all I have witnessed, disclosed nothing else, but what horrendous days are there, waiting to witness the end of the human race. But I am getting ahead of myself. I must start at the beginning.

I am a peaceful person. I could never tolerate the human society always at war with itself. A cursory study of our history (this has been my pet hobby for long) made

it quite clear to me that war is never a good answer, and longed to find a way to prevent it. I'd invented my time machine specifically with that idea, since I wanted to give a real taste of the aftermath of war to all who would take a trip with me.

After many years of trial and error I had finally perfected a machine. And I was at the point where I could put it through. The date I chose was January 12th 3117. I'd decided that this was the hour I would like to witness, to get a good idea of our future prospects. I was very excited, but a little anxious about what mankind was going to be surprised with.

I entered the time machine, and had a swift look at all those who came to wish me good luck. I sat down on the seat, taking care to close the door behind me and went through the checklist. I pushed the buttons in the preset pattern, and there continued the operating procedure as designed. The time machine shuddered, but nothing appeared to happen at first, perhaps the conversion of weak force into gravity and its deployment for time compression took place rather imperceptibly. All of a sudden, I saw a blinding, white light that seemed to appear from nowhere. It spun faster and faster. A tremendous pressure built up inside the cabin. I could barely read the dial that measured the years flying past. 2025, 2030, 2040... I finally forced my hand up to the buttons and pushed them. The years slowed and the machine finally stopped. The dial was showing January 12th, 3117. Over two thousand years had elapsed.

With a pounding head, an equally frightened heart and a shivering hand, I grabbed the lever to open the door. And my ears were feeling a deafening thunder. My body

felt even more miserable as though it had just come out from a centrifuge. Weak at the knees, I stumbled out into the open. The lab still stood there, its walls could be made out, though, were hardly recognizable, but for its skeletal frame. Tables were covered in dirt and debris that had fallen from what was left of the false ceiling. The laser machine, though bent and broken, could be recognized as my chosen model. This didn't present a problem as the present machine had been stored with sufficient material to provide a way back to my era many times over.

I walked over to the lab door. Thankfully, my old door was still standing. I unlocked the rusted bolt and stepped out into the hallway. The stairs were in complete disrepair, but I could manage to maneuver. I made my way up to the grand foyer, walked past the secretarial station to the front doors, and shoved against them. What greeted me was a totally new world.

The roads looked as though unused for centuries. There were plenty of cracks filled with sprouted weeds and flowering shrubs. It seemed mankind had stopped using road transportation and taken fully to the air. I could see specks in the distance that I assumed were flying vessels. Many of those were speeding to and fro as if on an invisible highway. Skyscrapers soared little higher into the heavens. I sat down on a curb, to reflect, engage and to take it all in. It was an awesome sight. I reached around to my backpack to grab my notebook and pen. My sensations started to pour down as words.

The thing that was noticeable by its absence in the nearby environment was a human being. Perhaps none of them lived on the surface, but stayed high above it, as

was the practice with us. To find out more, I got up off my haunches, grabbed my diary and started on my journey.

I'd walked for the better part of the day and continued on the outskirts of the city. I crossed many abandoned buildings. After a few hours, I finally reached a new area, a portion of the city that appeared to me as an important area. I walked to one of the buildings. I tried to push against a door. Before I could actually apply pressure, the door opened in a slow and silent move. The huge concourse was fully lit with bright lights. It appeared that electric supply was never short. The hall was huge, and covered the full floor. This of course, occupied the entire length and breadth of the building. I went to the elevator bay, took one at random, climbed in, and punched a button. The doors opened in a jiffy, smooth and without bumps. I entered. There was a keypad, filled with numbers rising to many hundreds. I chose the button for the 200th floor. The doors closed equally smoothly as it opened and the lift moved. It must have been really fast, I reached my destination before I could reflect on what all has happened so far.

The doors opened. I peeked out with great feelings. I could see the descendants of my peers bustling about the courtyard in a hurried state. I came out of the elevator and looked around. One glance came my way, but the work continued with no regard to my presence, with great concentration and deep involvement. I was wondering. "Why he hadn't stopped and asked about my ancient clothing?" For, his was entirely different from mine. No suits, ties or designer dresses; everyone was dressed in the same white jumpsuit from head to toe. No one paid any attention to me as I wandered about.

I stopped and stood behind a woman. She was punching wildly at a keypad and seemed oblivious of my presence. Still, I asked her if there was anyone in charge of this work area, whom I could speak to. She responded without hiding her annoyance, but her eyes were glued to the keyboard. "Haven't you hooked up to the system and recharged yourself this morning?" she asked.

"What system?"

She now looked up. Her brows rose quizzically, when she noticed my attire. She grabbed a phone and spoke some words. I could not hear what was said, I was watching her referring to something like a lookup table on her computer. Not a minute had passed before two guards appeared with a whole chain of attendants, armed with some sort of weapons, grabbed me, and escorted me back to the elevators. The lift rose, stopped, and the doors hissed open. The attendants took me to a desk. "We've got another one from the super-race," one of them said, handing me over to the person seated behind it. The man pushed a button and I could hear hushed discussions. I was finally pushed into a tastefully furnished room and told to wait. The guards exited the room with whatever belongings I had. It seemed I had no choice but to enjoy the hospitality.

There was nothing to occupy my mind other than glancing through the odd collection of magazines, as the minutes ticked by. There was a single chair in the middle of the room. There were many magazines with articles about human races, where the races are mentioned as human-superior and humans. I was at a loss. The superior-humans, as I could make out from a few articles, are far superior to humans in brain power and lives in a

world entirely of his choice. I was lost in thoughts when a tall man walked in, regarded me silently as he circled my chair and asked, “Why didn’t you attach yourself this morning?”

“Attach?”

“Yes. Attach. You know it’s the first job of the day.”

“As I’m not from here, I won’t know what you mean. I’m a visitor to this area and not familiar with the local formalities.”

“You must need a reset.”

“Reset?”

The man went to the door and signaled for the attendants. “Take him to the resetting bay.”

The men grabbed me. I had to get up from my chair and follow him. With no clue regarding what was going on, I could not resist. We went into the elevator again and the doors slammed shut. In a moment, the doors opened, and a large room filled with chairs that were bolted to the floor, came to our sight. Bundles of wires could be seen connected to an enormous computer. They escorted me over and guided me into a chair, strapping me down. They spoke something to a woman who I assumed was a technician. She walked over to the chair, had an overall look and noticed I wasn’t wearing a jumpsuit. “How can I proceed to download if he’s not wearing his number?” she grumbled. “What is your identity number,” she asked me.

“There seems to be some kind of confusion. I am a visitor---,”

“All right then, she sighed. “I’ll just assign you with a temporary number. Hook him up while I report this to the super,” she instructed an assistant.

The young man came over and tilted my head forward, looking for something. He was having a thick cable with an attached connector. He probed my head, his hands running through the roots of my hair. I felt he was looking for something. He continued his search for some time, but then sighed in extreme frustration. “I can’t find any receptacle.”

“Like always” the woman grinned. She took over the search, continued for some time and exclaimed in surprise, “He has no access!”.

“I’ve been trying to tell everyone that I’m only a visitor, but no one will listen. I assure you that I have no such arrangements on my body and whatever you’re trying to plug will be of no use.”

“This is beyond me,” she stated in reply, “Take him to the Administrator.”

“I am the Administrator,” the confident voice said as I sat strapped to a chair in another room. “They tell me that you could not be attached. Did you have your signal input receptacle surgically removed?”

“I don't have any idea about attachments or receptacles. I have been telling everyone that I do not belong to your city. I'm just a visitor here.”

“Where have you come from?”

“I do not come from here and have never had the need to be plugged in, whatever that is. I come from---,” I stopped.

“Come on, continue, from where?”

“There is no easy explanation. In fact, I can only say that I came from beyond the borders of your city.”

“How did you come here. What transported you?”

“I made a time machine and that transported me here”, I proudly replied.

“Good”, The administrator spoke, “I have seen your machine. You have chosen to use weak force and gravity interactions, Isn't it so” He asked.

“Yes”, I was feeling great, “But, how did you make out?” I asked.

He didn't say anything. He seemed to have lost in thoughts.

And an uncomfortable silence hung in the air. After a few moments the confident voice continued, “You must be a mix between humans and super-humans.”

“And you look more intelligent and smarter than humans.”

I didn't utter a word.

After another bout of uneasy silence, the voice spoke again. "Why are you under the impression that you are a human?"

"That's what I am and that is what I've been trying to tell you."

"Let us see! Guards," the voice was all excitement. "Take this unit to the detention center for experimenting. We need to download his raw data. I think this can give some more insight into the working of the ancient human minds. Nobody to attempt further reprogram or other kinds of repair."

The guards rushed over and took possession of me. I thought of freeing myself, but it would have been pointless. Their grasps on my arms were, though soft, unyielding.

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I was given a cell, a tastefully furnished one, in the detention center. I wondered what kind of world is there for the days to come. Why did this Administrator think I was fit for experimentation? I couldn't for the life of me understand his priorities. "Wait" I thought, "Let us see what turns out of this". I wished I still held on to my backpack. My all purpose gun was hidden deep within and I could have used it to try and escape -if escape becomes a necessity, that is. It didn't seem very likely.

Time seemed to stand still. It seemed a long time before the door was finally opened. Two armed guards hurried in and attached many probes to my hands and

feet and some around my chest. Some more people, who I thought were scientists, along with more sophisticated equipments came in thereafter. They started to connect the paraphernalia with utmost care. I could make out recordings going on at many of the instruments, and in a short while, the scientists' team completed their work, collected the recordings and guards took over. Before I had the chance to see any of the recordings, or make an inquiry, the experimentation team left the place.

Very soon, I was rushed back to the same place, I think. The administrator met me with the results of my experiment. Few of the scientists involved in the experiment were there along with some more experts. One of the experts spoke. "Do you think you belong to human species?"

I couldn't contain myself and shot back, "Yes, of course, I am sure you can make out too"

The administrator had a close look at each scientist's face. He was trying to gauge their expressions, I felt. The scientists were clearly lost in thoughts. I was feeling more and more ill at ease. After some time the administrator spoke, "We will meet tomorrow and formulate a plan. In the meantime, you may do some homework regarding how, this apparition shall affect our ongoing research on 'auto eugenic groups'. Let me now do some questioning".

All scientists left. I was waiting for the next instruction.

"Call me John," he said, "Now that all are left, let us do first things first"

"Very nice to meet you, I am Murray, " I was eager to respond.

"You say you are from the human stock, but aren't you aware that the human race was wiped out in 2200?"

I wanted to act smart, without disclosing my origins which would have made me naturally unaware of this, and I blurted "Or so I heard, have no clear information".

"It went like this" John took a pad from the computer table, kept in front of me and continued, "Human race, towards the middle of the second millennium started showing clear signs of a drift, a highly intelligent stream having a low rate of reproduction and a dull stream of fast multiplying human forms started to appear." As John spoke, the salient points of his speech were also appearing on the pad in front of me. "May be there was instigation, or there was genuine reason, humans of the fast multiplying stream was always at war among themselves and in a few decades managed to get eradicated completely. The highly intelligent ones I think, successfully reinstated their subsequent generations as super-humans. The sub-humans of today perhaps are descended from the left over, of those dull humans. And all these need to be supported with solid evidence."

He turned to me and said with a twinkle in his eye, "You look to be one from that group perhaps of above average stature. You join me as a specimen; I'll permit you to stay here, and enjoy super-human comforts."

My mind worked fast. "Join him, earn his trust, and get help for my return journey?" "Displease him, and jeopardize my future?"

I chose the former. John perhaps read from my eyes. "Welcome to super-earth" He gestured with open hands. "I am doing a project. A journey into the origins of super-humans." He started to explain his plans. "The theories in vogue do not describe this in full, I believe" After a short pause, he continued. "My particular query is about the mechanism of breaking humans into two, the super-humans and the sub-humans", "How exactly that could have happened, especially, what the basic humans

thought, and how early, you were aware of such possibilities.” He turned, and said “This is where you come in, your appreciation of the times, the main concerns that motivated the people of the times, and the events if any, of significance shall be of help to me”.

I looked at him in silent agreement.

“The scientists will visit you every day” He started with the actual plan. “Though I have informed them that you are under close observation, they may conduct their own investigations. Please co-operate, of course, without exposing our research” “And your successful departure rests on that” He took a deep breath.

From what I just heard, my willingness to undergo any experiments only became stronger.

“Whatever you want me to I do” I replied in earnest.

He took a small device which looked like a miniature cell phone and kept it close to the right side of his temple. After a few seconds he spoke. “First, I will update you with the history of super-humans and sub-humans. Thereafter, we will go around this center, meet with people, both humans and sub humans. I will then administer you the automatic memory interface builder, which will take a few days.” He paused. “That is all?” I couldn’t hide my glee. “No, no,” He said “The last and the most interesting part will come now. We will download from your brain, the final interface, superposition of archaic data from your past with, your impressions of the present, which in all probability shall support my theories”.

As he was speaking, I could see that a small team, of scientists I thought, was approaching. Three gentlemen and one lady.

“Meet Joe, Keenan, David and Tanya” John was exuberant, “they will form our team in full”. “And note” he continued, “Each one of them is an expert in one's own field and will feed you with all necessary data.”

John then took out the 'miniature cell phone' and kept on the temples of all four of us, each, for a period two to three seconds. I could feel as though I am attending a project presentation.

"I have updated you with the plan. Think over the proposed actions and come back to me with your queries" John told all of us.

I found myself filled with a swarm of experiments and was trying to figure out my role. And so were others. Each lost in contemplation.

Any questions, gentlemen" John's voice shook all of us.

"None at all," said Joe, Keenan and David.

Tanya didn't say anything, kept her gaze quizzically at John.

He turned to Tanya. "I am including you specifically to establish the role of performance anxiety in modulating the social, behavioral pattern of the past generations, especially of the archaic period up to the great divide by 2200. And you being an expert in this field, kindly update all of us with our past and enlighten this crowd with the interesting features of human history, "

Tanya took out from her handbag, a device quite similar looking to the miniature cell phone.

"This is an atomic mouse that is also a side-kick" She said, sensing the quizzical look on my face. As before, the 'side-kick' was placed on the temple of each of us for a few seconds, satisfied herself that the update and transfer is over by the iris size, and declared aloud. "Now I will give a brief overview of our past, which will help you in assimilating the full history in the correct perspective."

"Take your side-kick"

Noticing that I do not have one, she turned to John, who, by that time had already signaled for one. One of the guards surfaced with an atomic mouse, which she took,

turned to me, and said “Hold on to this, this is already loaded with required data. If during my lecture, you face any questions or need greater elaboration, just enable this by pressing the button sign. The question will get stored along with the explanation from its memory. If an answer does not exist in memory, this will automatically refer to me and update itself.”

“When will it update me?” I couldn’t contain my excitement.

“The tip end of the side-kick turning green is the indication, that it is ready to update you.” After a brief pause, she asked “Shall I start with a lecture? Ready?”

We all agreed and she began. “About 4.6 billion years back the Sun formed from the gravitational collapse of a region within a large molecular cloud. Most of the matter gathered in the center (Sun), while the rest flattened into an orbiting disk that became the Solar System (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune). Collisions with other planets and meteorites made many changes like bringing water to earth. About 3.6 billion years back were formed, the first simple cells, oxygen producing bacteria, followed by complex cells. About 1 billion years back multi-cellular life started appearing and about 650 million years back started the first known identifiable division of time span, the ice age. In millions of years, the ice age gets over. And with the formation of the ozone layer, more forms of life start to appear. Fish, amphibians, crab, reptile and finally around 200 million years back mammals appeared, and the earliest humans started appearing about 4 million years back. Evolution took a more discernible path hereafter. Tool making humans and the Stone Age began about 2 million years back. About 7000 years back were the bronze age, followed by the Iron Age (5000 years back) and the great

industrial revolution began about 2500 years back. Human progress was at its peak, they attempted to conquer their own and other planets till they almost completely disappeared about 500 years back.” Tanya paused.

“What matters to us more”, Tanya continued, “in this long history is the possibility of identifying various time spans, each with a predominant direction or style of growth. Rightfully termed as ‘ages’, we already can identify the Ice Age, Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age and what used to be known as The Modern Age.” She briefly touched her temple with a side-kick and continued. “Now gentlemen, I come to the more interesting parts of this talk.” Giving a close look at the small audience once again, she went on “What is known to us as Modern Age, in fact, is a mix of two separate intervals, each distinguishable by the interest or the lack of it, in a rational approach. Since its beginning in the fifteenth century till about a century short of its end, rational thought flourished in the Modern Age. The last years of this age, however, is clearly noticeable by the proliferation of the irrational.”

“Our task” John’s voice rose, “is to find a scientific explanation for this phenomenon. Remember, if it could happen to humans, It can happen to us too. And, forewarned is forearmed” John briefed us about his plan. “We will divide ourselves into smaller teams and delve deep into human life in its entirety, to learn about them.”

“I am interested in the environment” Joe said, “the surroundings as well as the living conditions interest me a lot”.

Keenan immediately volunteered, “I will deal with the physiological aspect, which will suit my medical background”.

David turned to me, “What about you, Murray?”

Though I couldn’t catch how, he knew my name, I said “History is my favorite subject and I would like to trace their path across the last few millennia”.

“Everything else, I will look after” David rose.

John began his instructions “There will be a computer user interface in all locations. Whatever information you want, keep your side-kick on the terminal and think about the data. The side-kick will get appropriately updated. You can then download the data to your minds at your convenience. Remember, if you collect unnecessary data, the relevant agencies shall be immediately notified. Action also shall follow immediately, and in many cases, I may not get the time or opportunity to intervene. So be careful. For your safety, I have programmed your side-kicks to ignore all forms of thought other than those about your selected subject area. All the best. Get updates and think of a complete plan of going ahead with our hunt. We shall meet again after 4 hours.”

I thought a cup of coffee will be refreshing and went to a bustling corner that looked like a café. I found the tables and chairs neatly placed with various types of utensils and pretty looking containers filled with some liquid. Each table also housed a collection of snacks, I think, in temperature controlled boxes. I looked around, but couldn’t find someone to serve. I waited, thinking that someone will come. In a few minutes, a couple of people walked in. They sat on chairs and drank from the liquid

container, simultaneously energizing themselves with the side-kick. “The side-kick”, I thought, “is a versatile piece of equipment”, and to check whether what I was thinking was right, I poured a glass, drank the same, touched my temple with my side-kick, and thought about coffee. Voila, the aroma and taste of fine coffee instantly engulfed me with a freshness and energy felt never before. Chaps are great. You have what is good for the body, feel what is pleasant.

As designed, my side-kick reminded me of the meeting. We all assembled at the allocated place and John set the ball rolling with an announcement. “Right gentlemen, I presume you all are sufficiently recharged to go ahead with serious work. Let us begin our discussion with an overview of the environment towards the end of human habitation”.

“I have simulated”, Joe began his talk, “past climatic conditions of earth since the 12th century and up to the end of human habitation, that is, around 22nd century. The prevailing weather on earth was on a slow, but constant change. This, as you know, is expected, since an expanding universe cannot afford to have anything constant.” “Understandable” John remarked.

“To shorten my talk”, said Joe. “Concentrating on areas that have an unnatural air, one thing I observed is that throughout the period from 12th century, all living organisms have been shown ability to adapt to the prevailing environment. However, as we move towards the end there seem to have been efforts to tinker with climate, adaptability, or both.” “As a result, especially the humans would have been less and less at ease with the changing environment, as well as below par, in adapting to the changed environment.” With a flourish he said “One

conclusion we can draw from this is: Humans were highly uncomfortable with the environment, especially towards the last few centuries of their habitation.”

Keenan took this as his turn. “As far as human physiology goes, a marked improvement can be seen in almost all domains, spheres, and regimens during the period. The only exception is related to the sexual functions of the sexual cum reproductive system of the body. Other than this aspect, great progress can be seen everywhere.” He continued after a short pause. “The more progress we see in human physiology, the more determined they seem to have been, to keep the physiological aspects relating to sexual functions devoid of any progress.” Giving reasons for the authenticity of the results achieved, he said, “I have personally reconstructed scores of skeletal remains from the period in question and have been shocked to find signs of advanced cardiac procedures, quite comparable to our levels of sophistication, as well as, signs of female genital mutilation of the bygone eras, on the same body. It seems I am as much in the dark after the study, as I was before.” I thought Keenan showed signs of weariness.

David interjected. “Let Murray give a historical appreciation of our observations. We can have a short discussion thereafter, which will then lead to formation of further plans.”

John’s voice didn’t hide his alarm. “No endless discussions. As you know, the side-kick is meant to look after such needs. Use that as extensively as you can, using your refreshment breaks for this purpose.” He said in a business-like manner.

Without waiting for a reminder, I began. "I won't be able to tell you about the concluding decades of the period in question" I mentioned, not realizing that the information at my disposal is already known completely to all of them, thanks to the ubiquitous side-kick. "One thing I have noticed about life is that in all living forms, the male is generally found wanting, when it comes to sexual performance, however agile, or strong a species, it may belong to. And female of all species express its displeasure by fierce, sometimes very violent reactions, as and when the male's role is over." Casting a glance across their faces, I went on "I think the early humans foresaw a grave danger lurking in this. This could have been the spark; from the very earliest ages, humans had a tendency to belittle things associated with sex, especially male's sexual performance. Also, sex does not get a respectable place as a topic of debate; in fact, all of us feel quite uncomfortable discussing it". "Whereas now," I added, "the discovery of 'Viagra' changes all that." "Noticeable shift is expected to humans' approach to sex, and consequently, in all other areas too." "I would also like to mention here" I added for authenticity, "certain peculiarities like this, pointing to the cardinal position of sex in all aspects of human life had been observed earlier. But had those scientists not taken a view of associating these with sexual gratification, such features would have come to our notice and, we would have been able to find the real reasons long back."

"However", I cautioned, "there are other, more serious, issues facing the mankind now, the topmost of which is terrorism." "This is an issue that defies the most sensible logic, ignores even the best conciliatory move, ignites at the semblance of a confrontation, and hence, deserves our undivided attention." I concluded.

“As far as humans are concerned”, David started his speech, “an uneasy disposition and a restless outlook, as explained by Joe, a body which is at peace with itself only on matters unrelated to sex, as described by Keenan, and the constant churning, the difference between our actions and aspirations mainly on matters related to sex impose on our mind, as told to us by Murray, more or less summarizes their existence.” After a brief pause for collecting his thoughts, he continued “Here comes the striking observation by Tanya, that these, rather unexplainable facets of general conduct could very well be attributable to the continuation of the irrational. The questions posed earlier by John seem to reappear with great force. Is irrational, a part of human life? If so, what need of human life is being met by the irrational?”

John couldn't hide his dismay. “Thank you for telling me we are rightfully placed at where we are”

I interjected. “In fact we humans have done a great deal of studies in this regard, but none of those could take us even a single step forward. Realizing that the reason for this is the way we tackled the issue, that we directed all our efforts for reconfirming what we already knew, I did work a little to perceive this from another angle. I could get promising leads, and results that gave convincing replies to all the questions we face now, including of course, our affinity to the irrational.”

Tanya was the first one to speak. To nobody in particular, she said, “I think we should hear him out. My point is that it should be from the beginning, the very beginning”.

There was silence. Finally the nod I was waiting for, came. John said “Try to be brief; your dissertation has

already been parked in each and every brain, suitably vetted, and logically correlated with ones' existing concepts".

I rose to make the most significant speech I have made so far. "I shall be speaking only about the issues that, I think, need greater attention."

"Excuse me Murray" John stepped in, "Gentlemen, please program your side-kicks for online verification, correction and updating of data, all in autonomous mode".

I resumed where I left, "A little examination can show that none of the theories of evolution are able to explain the peculiarities of male and female, of all species of life. As far as living beings go, mating is an indispensable part of evolution. It actually consists of three separate jobs, pre-union preparation, union proper or the exchange of gametes, and the post union unrest. The male is always reluctant to participate in this pairing, due to the loud and clear anti-male ambience of post union unrest. Therefore nature has to forcibly bring the male to the mating arena, circumventing the reluctance with the help of a time period, dedicated entirely to mating. I think to be doubly sure, nature also offers many endearments through the female. But mating, however, remains a dreadful entertainment for the male." I saw all faces trying to digest in something for the first time, and proceeded with caution. "Animals can escape from the dreadfulness experienced during the post union stage of every instance of mating, if evolved into a new species, which has some opportunities of allaying this dreadfulness. Such opportunities are the ones that amaze us by showing an "increase in complexity, as evolution moves ahead"

"Good deduction" Tanya complemented.

“But when we come to the final species of life, which as of now is, man,”, I continued, “though not overtly dreadful, the post-mating stage is not pleasurable enough. To escape from this, man has found a multi-forked approach. The primary path is to devise an unending set of intangibles, like, a particular relationship, certain occasions, or desirable ambience, all with the ability to delay the requirement itself, or commencement, of ‘performance’. Next is to stretch, whatever may be of interest at that moment, to its limits and immerse in it. Which is the origin of all forms of extremism, including the few that are a grave threat to happy living, and the many that are helpful, enjoyable or life saving. Another one is to keep women always well suppressed such that if at all they express dissatisfaction, it shall not be crossing the minimum threshold of oppressiveness necessary to upset the man.”

There was loud applause and I had to stop for a while. “This is an excellent reason for FGM”, they all were in agreement.

“Now I am coming to the last part, most of which is my imagination”, I told them. “You see discovery of VIAGRA has introduced a major non-linearity into the smooth flow of evolution, by having the potential to bring its primary facilitator, the dread of male female union, under human whims and fancies. This will, in effect, render ‘all forms of extremes’, redundant. And that shall cause many changes. Changes that are capable of easing the desire to evolve, shall rewrite the future of the species. And, changes that are capable of moderating the fear of death, shall rewrite the present. In the interim, more acute reactions can be expected from all societies to events that are not in line with the norm, especially on issues involving women. Primarily because of its long standing

effect, the popularity of the 'irrational' will be at an all time high, anywhere and everywhere."

I concluded.

"We will take a break", an ebullient John said. "Have some refreshments while the side-kicks work in tandem with our brains and the central library to arrive at the last days of human and the earliest information regarding the birth of super-human." "How exactly that happened, what enabled the transition and what all is there in store for the future." We headed to the cafe

"Now that we have a thorough understanding about the transition of humans to super-humans, let us exchange notes to bring us all to a comparable level." Said John, when we reassembled after break.

"I shall give the description" I volunteered, "Which will give me an opportunity to check, whether my understanding is correct, and, when I go back, I can try to introduce necessary changes to make the transition painless."

John nodded. "I am already aware of your intentions, and I was monitoring those along with your preparations." "We will come to that later. Right now, you may please concentrate on our discussions." John was rather matter-of-fact.

"The transition", I began, "of humans to super-humans seems to have begun by the end of the first century of the second millennium, if visually identifiable signs are anything to go by." "The main contributing factor, as we have already seen, is the male's reluctance to perform as a male. But, over many generations of growing up in a

world, which is full of lies and half-truths about all matters that are sexual in nature, humans seem to have been affected by a plethora of abstractions. These, though, were the tenets that could lead to large scale violence and destruction, used to be celebrated as more valuable than life itself, according them prime positions as patriotism, courage, virginity, chastity and other moral values. The world in fact was in a state of equilibrium by the combined effects of i) really severe restrictions and female suppressive techniques including FGM, ii) according very high status for women especially when they are on roles, not likely to involve sexual performance, and iii) belittling sexual performance both by considering sex in either words or deeds as something unbecoming of a decent person, and, by according a disproportionately high status to any act that does not involve sex, either in words or in deeds.”

In a couple of moments, I continued, “But, as the years passed by, later generations of humans seem to have forgotten the real reason behind these suppressive steps. Also, as civilization advanced, such brutal approach started to lose acceptability and, both of these contributed in instilling a sense of liberation among women who started to express their sexual needs. Some part of male population accepted such needs and started to explore ways to improve their ability to perform as a male. The vast majority of others, sensing danger, resorted to even greater tactics of oppression. One thing clearly stands out. The parts of the world where the liberation of women was not suppressed, witnessed smaller and smaller families and the population of such people kept on diminishing. For the remaining parts of the world, family size was on an upward spiral, since they could use

motherhood as a way to effectively suppress the woman, and the population was reaching unmanageable levels.”

I paused to gauge reactions. On finding my talk being received well, I went further. “If we now observe our society closely, a large number of behavioral quirks can be seen, both with the people who constitute the society, and with the abstract strings that keep the people attached. Human societies, especially of nations where suppression of the female, flourish, are tightening their control over the citizens. In such societies, the much celebrated breed of free thinkers, iconoclasts, radicals and other forms of eccentricity that are beyond the limits set by each society, are notable by their absence. In societies where women are rather liberated there always will be a great number of such eccentricities. What can we gather from this? Nothing else, but a silent reconfirmation of the stark reality that all these ‘misfits’ in society are but expressions, of the males’ desire to escape from the duties towards the other sex. For, as we can easily see, in a society where women are suppressed, there is no need for such an escape route for male. In a society where women aren’t, such eccentricities flourish, providing man with many escape routes”.

“As days go by, it is even more ironic” I said, while showing one more aspect. “Especially in the democratic states, there is an urge to lose personal liberties. State control on many areas of ones life, areas that were once thought to be entirely belonging to the private domain of each individual, is being widely welcomed. This riddle can, on closer examination show that, it is not the urge to lose freedom that is behind the eagerness for submitting oneself to tight control, but the possibility of subjecting

women to even tighter control.”

“Now I come to the last part of my appreciation” I said, expecting little more attention. “We can easily see that, wherever choice had been given to people, not only that they are selecting the most orthodox of the available groups, but also are ruling out any possible sashay into moderation by blowing up inherent local inconsistencies. Also, by showing a magnified view of few sporadic incidents of ‘sexual misdemeanor’, they succeed in justifying the need of further restrictions for women. Horrified by the prospect of them realizing and appropriately expressing their sexual needs, females continue being molded without self-assertiveness or liberty, which in some cases may involve the physical removal of appendages necessary to feel this ‘need’. With the population of moderate nations fast declining and that of other nations showing considerable increase, this problem is set to cause grave consequences in not so distant future.”

I expected loud applause. But what greeted me was only silence. It seems my analysis and predictions didn’t make any impact. To emphasize the veracity of my findings, I remarked, “Carefully watch the customs, ceremonies and controls that are rampant in present-day societies. Many social norms, notorious for its rules and sanctions which were once discarded as reprehensible, can be seen to be making a return with a vengeance.”

“One lucid example” I went on, “of this is the re-emergence of ‘Kanun’ in Albania after the fall of communism. The people of Albania have a venerable tradition of vendetta called Kanun: if a man commits a murder, his victim’s family can kill any one of his male

relatives in reprisal. If a boy has the misfortune of being the son or brother of a murderer, he must spend his days and nights in hiding, foregoing, a proper education, adequate health care, and the pleasures of a normal life. Untold numbers of Albanian men and boys live as prisoners of their homes even now”.

“Another example can be seen in the wide and quick welcome, the ‘elimination of swimsuit round’ of popular beauty contests is receiving, from every corner of the world”, I added.

“The recent growth of female-unfriendly societies in many eastern European countries, like Hungary, also can serve as still another example.” *(To elaborate, quota provision for women in parliamentary office, existed under the Socialist government has been discontinued. Also, the US Department of State report on human trafficking, 2013, identifies Hungary as a source, transit, and destination country for women and girls subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor)*

“A law prohibiting women from wearing miniskirts (Called anti-pornography legislation - Uganda), revival of archaic and conservative approaches, to whatever the question in hand, in whichever corner of the world, not to mention the flurry of female repressive laws, already existing in many countries of the world, the recent upsurge in maintenance of discipline in academic institutions, can also be considered as examples.” *(Note: many colleges have recently put a stop, to any communication between male and female students without the permission of authorities. Greater restrictions are being imposed on female students regarding the use of common facilities like library. This, of course, is largely approved by all, in the name of academic discipline!)*

“More than all this is the astonishment we all should feel, at the eagerness with which people are coming forward to be identified with the ‘traditional’ rather than with the ‘progressive’.”

“If I may make an attempt to summarize”, I wanted to make some final remarks. “The stringent rules, especially aimed at introducing gender specific temperance, like, restricting mobility, curtailing freedom of expression and proscribing liberal attire for the female are going to make a fast re-appearance. Notwithstanding the fact that states that are broadminded are also the tolerant ones and, states where women are forced to cover themselves mercilessly are also the intolerant ones, the future is likely to witness harsher control on feminine attire. Undoubtedly, this is one area, where both the opposing sides agree! And clothed as parental concerns, maintenance of decency, preservation of public order, fortification of morality, cultural uniqueness or ethnic individuality, these are being widely welcomed, anyone can observe. And this, I would like to remind you all, is only a harbinger of the highly intolerant and harsh tomorrows to come. Quite uneasy, the times ahead, we all need to note. It is possible that swimming itself might face elimination, if not swimsuit!”

“What is your basis for such a drastic comment?” Tanya inquired.

“An overall global picture” my reply was instantaneous, “can easily show that a considerably violent social atmosphere is rampant in most parts of the world. A lingering discontent that can flare up for the silliest reason could be identified as the distinct feature of all societies. And this discontent is not likely to be recognized as such, having the appearances of societal turbulence like racial

discord, religious hatred, class differences or political instability. (Also, we will be using those opportunities of reflecting on the apparent reasons, to the hilt! The actual cause, the lingering discontent, always taking a back seat) Added to this will be the huge prevalence of crimes against women. These, when compounded by the fear of catastrophic health problems and diseases that are sexually transmitted, is calling for urgent action, we all need to note. It is not at all difficult to comprehend the end result; not only that the oppressive actions are bound to perpetuate, but also those repressive steps have attained a real, urgent and legitimate look.”

“This calls for urgent corrective steps”, Tanya couldn’t hold her feminine intuition.

“Now, gentlemen, ” I did not make any effort to hide my glee. “Having validated all my initial findings, let me try my hand at prophesy”.

“My prediction about the future of our race is this”, I began, “Human race is just passing through the crest of accommodating nature, tolerant behavior and progressive outlook. If we consider the world to have passed through, Archaic period, Middle ages, Machine Age, Atomic Age, Space Age and Information Age to reach the present, the future can undoubtedly be termed as The Age of The Irrational. The future of the human race, notwithstanding the multitude of theories in this regard with imaginative predictions, looks quite bleak. May be, human beings of the coming eras will be better used to the irrational. The future, with the disappearance of moderate societies and the growth of the orthodox ones, beckons us with hard times, unspeakably so, for women.”

“All hopes are not lost, Viagra may prove its mettle, ‘the most serious problem facing the mankind’ shall be nipped in the bud”, I brought my discourse to a conclusion.

And there was loud applause. It even compensated for the rather cold feelings, the ambience of silence had been causing all the while.

Keenan was the first to butt in, “I liked you correlating FGM with reduced sexual capability. It, of course, looks probable, but how come you followed such a non-intuitive line, though it looks quite natural as an answer?”

Joe said, “My question too is on similar lines. Also, what we had been thinking as effects of climate, a dormant uncomfortable feeling among humans, seems to have been successfully attributed to sexual inadequacy. Great indeed.”

I was glad such questions came up. “Since my very young days, I have been observing the prevalence of sexual organs and other sex related depictions in all forms of exhibits, be it painting, sculpture or forms of literature. Then I happened to read a commentary of ‘The Kamsutra of Vatsyayana’, where the author says ‘Description of sexual acts contained in this book is aimed to indicate to people, what should not be done, when temptation strikes’. That did it. It told me how people are looking eagerly for ways to escape from the very mention sex or its gratification. This is being done even from places where sex is a constituent part and, how that did lead to the proliferation of the irrational. If it was not for the penchant for the irrational, how else could we have ever thought of, say, the need to raise an alarm about

climate, when we know that, we humans adapt to weather and attire themselves appropriately.”

“We are coming to the last days of humans and, the appreciation by Murray seems to be quite fitting.” David was all joy in giving his complement. “However”, he said, “A few more, very significant questions remain. Who were the last generations of humans? Who were the early generations of super-humans and sub-humans? How the transition took place?”

“This is rather a hazy area of our history” David continued. “From the beginning of its formation, the earth seems to have undergone many cycles of magnetic pole reversal, each such occasion resulting in unforeseen events. A similar one towards the middle of the second millennium caused much havoc. It brought life to a standstill, in addition to altering the chemical structure of elements and hastening deterioration of a few. What we now see is a totally new earth, inhabited by new species, of all forms of life. All physical entities having disintegrated, and all written records having perished, the only source of previous information is in the atomic and sub-atomic records retrievable through quantum techniques like de-coherence. From what I gather through such sources, the end of the human species was instantaneous.”

David took a small break to update his thoughts and continued. “From the works done by Tanya, Joe, Keenan and Murray, quite a few particularities of the human side of this transition get clarified. By the beginning of the second millennium, humans have started showing signs of irrational behavior, that too of a high degree. In many cases, though this produced great potential for self destruction, the number of humans that followed a rather

sober life style being of considerable degree, destructive nature of events was well contained. But the disparity in the rate of change of population, as brought out by Murray, was to have an effect. By the middle of the second millennium, irrational outbursts reached its zenith and, those following a rather temperate lifestyle, its nadir. One insignificant trespass in some unknown corner was enough to light the final flame. The communication revolution, which brought the world populations a lot closer, did its share of destruction by bringing the end also, in one go.”

“Why did I see my office and surroundings when I came out of the time machine? Is David fully right about the destruction?” I went into thought.

“What, Murray, are you thinking of?” This question by David suddenly woke me up to the realities.

I briefly told him, what my doubt is. “How did human life continue?”, I asked.

“There is hardly any life here, at least, when comparing to the past.” David went on, “Using certain holographic technology, we are able to reconstruct, what each and every atom as well as sub-atomic particles like quarks witnessed. This effectively opens to us the complete history of the universe, including the intervening or transition period after the end of human life.” Winking at me, he added, “Your dissertation about the last days of humans is helping us a lot in correlating the information contained in sub-atomic particles (spin, flavor, etc) with certain unusual features of life. When we analyzed those features with the downloaded contents of your memory, it became clear to us that certain holographic like recording is taking place in all subatomic particles. And with this

result only, we were able to make the above reconstruction regarding the last days of humans.”

I was feeling great that an academic giant like David seemed to need my help. “But what perplex me” David’s voice rose, “is the strange situation, where, only the super-humans have their memory missing some details of their past. In fact, in most cases we even found physical traces of anatomy that could have been of use to earlier species, present in the new species though of no consequence. What could be the reason, for example for you to be having these details regarding humans, which, no super-human is aware of?”

Now I turned the epitome of pride. The future humans are seeking my help? Unbelievably though, I could come with a possible answer after a few hours of thinking and many cups of coffee. “As I mentioned earlier”, I began, what I considered as my most important speech, “towards the end of their existence, humans happened to be always on the edge, for the reason that they became too weary of the opposite sex.” David was all attention, and I went on. “Totally unaware of the real reason for being in such a precarious position, they used every imaginable trick to keep themselves fully occupied. This yielded many good things for the society, and they occupied themselves more in extolling the virtues of their occupation, both in words and in deeds. Wherever the results were inconvenient or destructive, they found fault with the one who did it. The need to keep one always occupied was never in doubt, notwithstanding the nature of results.”

“Now I get it”. David showed excitement. “For you humans, the process of observing, or discussing things, followed by deep reflection, was the standard path.” “Whether you wanted it that way or not, this always

produced some effect, some output. Sometimes due to its intrinsic worth, and on other occasions owing to the value attributed by the society, the output comes to occupy a predominant position in one's thoughts, taking the center stage of life. What should have been in the prime position of one's life, sex and the merrymaking associated with it got relegated to the dark, insignificant corners."

"David, I want your opinion", I thought of taking David into confidence, "I have come here on a trip, the maiden trip of my time machine".. "I know, I know, " David intervened, "That you succeeded in creating a virtual gravitational field, and to cause distortion in space-time. And by utilizing the Casimir force associated with quantum particles of gravity, you have made a machine that could travel through the dimensions of time and space."

I was dumbfounded. Quietly I said, "I want to travel back for a short visit".

David agreed, provided I come back to rejoin them to bring their quest to a logical conclusion. "I will send you in one of our time capsules. These work in a similar manner, but have the capability of faster-than-light travel. We will send you, reach a few days before your departure date, do your work and be back on the same day as you depart."

I was so excited that I didn't notice David leaving. The thought of meeting my friends suddenly brought me to life. Has he passed necessary instructions? Will the time capsule be ready now?

As I was busy with my thoughts, a young girl walked up, "Murray, I am Veta, I will take you home and bring back. Are you ready to go?" She asked. "The Time capsule is ready for launch, you may follow me please."

She has already been briefed, I thought. I followed her to the capsule complex, which in fact consisted of an induction chamber, which always maintained the external environment, a Gravitentric generator capable of generating gravitational fields of choice, and a working chamber where the traveler can remain and experience the dilation and compression of time and space. In addition to this was a control chamber which presumably was the domain of Veta, it also had a recreation area, bars, eateries and games chambers.

“This way please” Veta showed me my seat, and handing over a special suit, which was complete in all respects, instructed me, “Please leave all your existing clothes in this bin, where those will have to vaporize before we start. I did all that was told and settled into my seat. There were no seat-belts or other attachments. Veta came to me and asked, “Are you ready to go?”

“Yes, of course”, my reply was enthusiastic.

She took a side-kick, a little different one, made some gesture, turned to me and said. “Murray, we have already started our trip. Your side-kick is programmed to receive signals on the way and will act or prompt you to act. Please respond as necessary. Just attach it to your temple. Your brain will get updated. I suppose you already aware of things. However, I shall repeat. Our metabolic activities, just like when we are on firm ground, are divided into two, Notional and Imitable. Notional activities are those that do not produce material waste. All others are classified as Imitable.”

“Please continue the explanation. I was all the while living with many questions, and found no time to get those clarified,” I butted in.

“Listen”, she continued, “In super-earth, what we follow is waste free living. You might have already seen the heart of this, the side-kick, which effectively controls all aspects of this way of life.” She paused, thought for a while, and said, “Whatever are the ‘imitable’ actions one needs to do, one has to place the side-kick at the appropriate position, and think. The necessary data indicating fulfillment of the action gets recorded in your brain, giving you a real feeling of having completed that act. When you drank water you might have noticed, we drink the standard liquid, which in fact is an active liquid that changes its composition depending on human needs. This liquid contains all the nourishments necessary at all times, but when we placed the side-kick appropriately and signaled the brain that we just had water, its composition took the form of H₂O. This goes for all our metabolic needs, wants that have the potential to produce material waste.”

She sopped, turned to me and asked, “Are you following me?”

“Of course,” I replied, “So far things seem to be quite understandable”, “Please go on”

“Now”, she began, “Let us talk about the ‘notional’ needs. All intellectual and emotional needs fall in this category. Depending on the emotional build-up of each person, our central processing system computes the desired values for each emotion and other intellectual signals and keeps the respective side-kicks updated. Whenever an individual use ones side-kick, the relevant soft signals (emotional, intellectual, etc.) are also transferred to the brain.”

“Now I know, why I never felt homesick”, I told her.

After finishing her illuminating introduction, Veta went to occupy her station, that of the controller of module, The Module Commander.

Unlike my trip to this part of the time, I did not feel any signs of launch or heavy movements. Everything appeared to be still till the voice of Veta announced “In a few minutes, I’ll be ready to dock this module to gravity”. Murray, time to get ready and go”.

I was quite happy that we have reached our destination and it is time for me to step out. As the exit doors were opening, I was hoping to hear the familiar din of my area followed by delectable smell. But what greeted me was silence. Absolute silence and a deserted look.

“Don’t worry Murray, I shall wait as I have been told by John. You may please go outside, walk around, check and come back. The time module will remain there.” Veta reassured me.

I wanted to change my dress, but as I was getting ready to change, I realized, I was already attired as I used to be before. I stepped out. The roads looked as though prepared for resurfacing. There were plenty of signs of explosions. It seemed mankind had just gone through a major war. I could see specks in the distance that looked like the time capsule in which I came. Many of those were circling the sky as though surveying this area. Many of the skyscrapers were missing, some partially destroyed, giving a forlorn feeling of destruction. I had to take rest somewhere, this was too much to take in. It was the most unexpected sight. I reached around to my backpack to grab my side-kick, found it, and applied to my temple.

Instantly things became clear to me. As my memory told me, what was noticeable by its absence all around,

was a human being. Where did they all go? I thought? Yes, all of them perished in the fifth world war, which took place a few days back. I was looking for survivors. Perhaps, like super-humans, they discontinued living on the surface? And, changed their living style to places high above? To find out more, I got up off my haunches, grabbed my side-kick and started on my journey.

I walked. And walked and walked. I reached the outskirts of the city. I crossed many damaged buildings. After a few hours, I finally reached a new area, a portion of the city that appeared to me as a familiar place. I walked into one of the buildings, which I thought was part of my office and tried to push against a door. Before I could actually apply pressure, the door opened, bringing a huge concourse, but, hardly recognizable in the dark ambience, to view. I knew that that electric supply was totally disrupted due to war. I couldn't find any more signs of life, in its present or past forms, making further stay pointless. I just confirmed what was fed by side-kick, the population of the planet has been wiped out, almost in full. Not even a single speck of life could be observed. Looked like, nobody escaped the action that was initiated by one group, opposed by another group and supported by a third one.

With mixed feelings I walked back to where the time capsule was parked. I peeked all around with great feelings. I could neither see signs of life, nor of death. The destruction has been complete and systematic. "You cannot view the descendants of your peers bustling about the courtyard" I told myself. I came to a different part of the courtyard and looked around. With a deep sense of pity and regret I proceeded back to the time capsule.

I think Veta knew, I will be back. The time module was there, exactly as I it was when I got down. Veta was

taking rest and sensing my presence, she immediately came to the entry door. "Welcome Murray, I have been waiting for you. Ready for the trip back, I suppose?"

"Ready", perhaps I didn't sound enthusiastic enough, Veta asked, "Could you see, what you wanted to see?"

"Yes, I have had enough" I just wanted to get away.

"I have put this on autopilot. In a few minutes we shall be bound for home. Any message? You want to contact super-earth?"

I thought. "Yes, can you send this to John?" I thought, simultaneously keeping the side-kick on the computer table.

The message went, briefly explaining my shock at the turn of events and, asking John for further instructions.

John didn't take much time. "It is alright. I am aware of your difficulties. I've instructed Module Commander to plan your return journey at the earliest. See you soon", was his reply.

"Let us start our journey, take your position", Veta was sounding enthusiastic.

After setting course and putting the module to autopilot, she came and sat next to me.

"I have been given some more information for updating you", she needed my attention.

"We super-humans", Veta began without any introduction, "are fully capable in all the dimensions of life except in the knowledge of our past." "And we have learned from our rare interactions with the humans that they are very good on matters regarding their distant past, though they show much less capacity to imbibe the present, let alone the future." With a discernible shift in her voice indicating greater emphasis, she continued, "This is where, you come in. As mentioned by John, your association has been observed to be gainful for us. And now that you have already shown some deep insight on

these things, it will be good to formalize that association, we all think. In short, you have proved yourself to be extremely valuable to this research.”

I was listening attentively. “I agree”, I said as she finished.

“As soon as we reach, John will be there to meet and clear you about the future programs.” Veta went to take over the control to land the module, as they were fast approaching super-earth.

I didn’t realize that we touched down till Veta came and announced, “Super-earth is waiting for you. Welcome back to your adopted world.”

There they were there, Joe, Tanya, David, and Keenan. All with a great deal of excitement and life.

“Hope you had a wonderful trip” Joe set the ball rolling.

“I am sure, from the information with us, Murray had a good time, though it didn’t go as expected” Tanya chipped in.

I couldn’t restrain myself. Without hiding my annoyance, I asked, “If you were so sure of the outcome, why is it that nobody told me before the trip?”

“We knew the fate of the earth. We didn’t think it as so complete an end” Joe said. “But we also wanted you to have first hand knowledge”.

“True, my forlorn feelings overshadowed the well conducted the trip, and that made me forget the productive aspects of this journey, including the highest professional conduct by the Module Commander, Veta.” I managed to tell John, whom I just saw coming in.

“We are all very happy that you are back with us. I have been discussing with them. We will continue our efforts to clear the questions in connection with the transition” John was all serious.

“Of humans to super-humans?” I thought to re-confirm.

“And the lessons to learn about life, if history should not be made to repeat”, John added.

Humbled by his foresight, and feeling that much more elated to be sought by him, I said, “I am ready to start again”.

“Just to refresh memory and to put all of us on the same grid”, John began “We discussed that the theories in vogue do not describe how the actual division of humans into two streams took place, what happened during the transition period, how the basic humans reacted to changes, and how early, they realized that changes are in the offing, etc.” After stopping for an instant, he continued, “Murray gave us a sturdy theory, which beautifully linked the sexual performance of humans, the newly introduced concoction called Viagra, and the possibility of human race dividing into two streams based on how open minded would have been their response to this discovery”.

“In Murray’s absence, we did some investigations into the transition period. That is, the dispersion of the human race into super-human and sub-human. Let us now see where we stand, we will begin with Tanya.” John stopped.

Well, human race”, Tanya began, “from the initial days used to be constituted by people of varying attributes, like different physical qualities like height, weight, color etc., different mental ability, and talents. Though this is true for all living beings, for the reasons covered by Murray

earlier, humans readily used these changes for abstract reflections, in the process giving rise to distinct identities. As a natural consequence, those of similar identity started grouping together as it would have greatly helped the abstract transactions that were dear to them. And as a result later generations would have found human life progressing as distinct 'races' unlike all other forms of life."

"And 'race' took the form of an intrinsic or unqualified fact", I thought, respectful of Tanya.

Keenan took over. "The most notable thing I have been able to observe is an increasing gap in intellectual capacity, between one group of humans who are closely associated with a free, woman friendly society, and all the others who can be easily associated with a temperament, totally unfriendly to women. All of them follow female-repressive measures to some extent. The woman friendly societies could be found to be encouraging women to take active part in all activities where a woman does not have to act as a woman, whereas others practice repressive actions either as physical intervention into female sexuality, like FGM or, as other socio-cultural norms for altruistic intrusion into womanhood. I have found, such measures have been used with greater abandon as they come closer to the transition".

Joe added, "The woman friendly society could be seen to be engaging in social transactions, especially the intellectual ones, of an irrational degree. As a result of this, large scale changes happen to their society and its lifestyle at a fast pace, and they term it as development. As far as those societies that are not so friendly to woman are concerned, the desire to suppress women becomes so high that here, it is the society's collection of repressive measures that go beyond the limits of sanity. The proliferation of the irrational becomes so widespread,

anyone who has been a witness to early centuries where independent outlook and nonconformist views were tolerated and sometimes even respected as signs of progress, would find it impossible now, to believe that this is the same world.”

It was the turn of David to sum up and give a complete and an overall picture of the transition. “Let us see what we were able to learn about the last days of the human race and the first days of the super-human. Murray, before his trip to his future, did explain to us quite a good deal. I think that is a correct description of those days, except for two points. One, large scale attack on those portions of the female anatomy that can be linked to sexual satisfaction. And two, proliferation of the irrational on a large scale.”

After a brief glance around the room and assessing reactions from us all, he continued, “Let us come to the first point, attack on femininity. Later humans seem to have realized the presence of this, and understood the possibility of dangers resulting from it. But rather than accepting it as a part of the male’s desire for supremacy, hardly any effort could be seen in confronting this, a surprising deviation from the inquisitiveness of the human race. I therefore began a fresh study, from where Murray left off, on how humans confronted the whole issue of displeasure, in the matters of sex.”

“It is possible to say”, David was at his eloquent best, “that the earliest of humans, on noticing signs of dissatisfaction in the female sex, would have resorted to deep reflection. They wouldn’t have failed to notice the universal nature of such dissatisfaction, the state, during mating season, of females of each and every species of life, loudly announce. This would have horrified them of the imminent agony, if the human females too, start

expressing their displeasure. A plethora of measures could have emerged.”

David went on with his analysis. “I think religion is the first step in this direction, the oldest and the most significant one among the many clever maneuvers adopted to guard against the possible demonstration of acute frustration and disappointment by women, while ensuring that no man is denied a woman. Significantly, as you can see, all religions approach this issue in a thorough, comprehensive manner, confronting it at all levels, right from the very source of frustration. To begin with, all religions make it more or less mandatory for the woman to be happy and celebrating ever after, once a husband has been found for her. This, along with the merriment and revelry connected with the wedding, in addition to priming oneself in the direction of contentment, discounts the need for any other form of pleasure to be necessarily derived from this union. Having thus absolved the man of any responsibility to bring pleasure to the female member of the union, as the next step, to doubly ensure this, the woman is made to grieve ever after, once she happens to lose her husband. Going one more step further, you may kindly note, the male female union outside marriage is made hell for the woman such that rather than hoping to derive any pleasure from the usual activities expected to be a part of such gatherings, to escape from being caught itself shall become pleasure enough for the woman, absolving the man of any responsibility towards the female member even in such impermissible unions. To top it all, in preparing the ground for the man to achieve success always in the performance of his manly functions, some religions go a step ahead by declaring it a sin for the woman to feel carnal pleasure when cohabiting with her man! This well

thought about move, I am sure, is the smartest one so far.”

David continued. “All religions nurture offices or practices designed to help the man, even further in this regard, either by having full time engagement or through other passive means. One such is to make undemanding positions such as *vestal virgins*, *nuns*, *sadhvi*, *thila-shin*, *bhikkhuni*, *devadasi* etc., greatly respected in society, making such careers a very good alternative for the woman to choose over other activities that may lead the males into ‘performing’. Another one is that no religion is without specifying dates, times, places and other restrictions for stipulating how, when and where male-female union is impermissible. In addition to all this is the possibility of effecting reduction in man’s clientele, by according ‘much sought after’ status to virginity, celibacy, chastity and other male-friendly incarnations of the female form.”

“Not stopping at that” David went on, “Humans in their struggle to bring forth amelioration in the male’s burden of ‘performance’, seems to have had their cup always full, I mean such necessity could arise throughout the year. Hence I think, not leaving matters to chance as any of the above measures may fail to work, higher than all these was the primary dictum they had followed. It was the central theme of each and every religion that sexual relationship, except between man and wife, is a great sin. You may please note here- the most abominable of all practices that were followed by humans of any religion are those associated with these kinds of sins, stoning an errant woman to death, shutting the woman offender in a cage with poisonous snakes, forcing the guilty women to parade through the streets with head shaven, and many other customs of humans, stand as examples”

“The severity with which religions deal with deviants in sexual matters, in comparison with offenders in other walks of life who are dealt with in a rather mild manner, is yet another pointer to the dread of ‘performance’, human ancestors maintained. Also, in all the ancient texts, though there are places where a man is regarded as highly praiseworthy for his talents with the sword or pen, or other aspects of physical or mental ability, there is no mention of a man known for his sexual prowess. In stark contrast, the very same literature is overflowing with rich stories of women taking the roles of courtesans, singers, dancers and others. In fact, stories of women well known for their appropriateness as a companion, especially for physical intimacy, celebration of their fame and renown among women of such disposition and other qualities of comparable acclaim, constitute a good part of the recorded history.”

“Here again, please note how carefully the early humans went about this”, David said. “The above discussion effectively sends a subtle but firm command to all, that the capacity to ‘perform well’ is not at all a matter to be considered when assessing the qualities of a man, though while describing a woman’s quality, such compliments can always be accorded the pride of place. Which perhaps”, David gave his assessment, “was necessary to keep the flame of life alive, in the company of non-performing males.”

“Now I come to an important part played by humans in prolonging their end”. David continued in a more serious tone, “But thing is to be noted is, the human forefathers were considerate enough to concede the possibility (nay, necessity!) of women going astray that too at a greater rate, owing to the realization that no man can offer enduring companionship with good ‘performance’. This,

when further compounded by the woman's need of such a comfort, did have the potential to make man's life, a busy one. Unless something is done, they would have realized, man's future is going to be full of horror", David paused.

"He is talking about the pre-Neanderthal age", I thought.

"Hence," David resumed. "A two pronged strategy seems to have been in force, as can be made out clearly, to impose total control over all matters connected with sex, sexual urge and the boundless vista of its gratification. One: The pleasant (subdued) measure. This mostly consists of indirect steps aimed to alleviate the perils of 'performance'. The most notable and scientific in approach is the solution contained in spreading the idea that the joy one receives by bringing great pleasure to one's mate is the most important aspect to be reckoned with, as far as this activity go. Towards this, all ancient cultures seem to have taken ample efforts to popularize sex related organs. (This approach, nowadays known as the implicit memory technique of priming, is a major topic of psychological research!) The phallic symbol, very well known in India and equally widespread in other parts of the world with its worship spreading across a large portion of the habitable globe, seems to have flourished for many centuries in Egypt, Syria, Persia, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. In Mexico, other bas-reliefs were also found which, like those of India, represented male female union in various ways. And two: The unpleasant (direct) measure. This mainly consists of frontal attack on female sexuality. The institution of a multitude of religious customs, ceremonies and codes, each more occupying than the other, especially on matters related to womanhood, stand apart in this regard. One notable aspect of this approach is that no space is left for independent reflections as far

as the general populace goes, presumably to maintain the scary nature of such observances, unscathed.”

“Let me now come to the answer to John’s queries” David went on to say, “Quite a few of these practices are in addition heavily constraining, with many of those aimed or contrived to neutralize the organs perceived to be responsible for sexual pleasure. In a few cases the measures adopted involved physical removal of such ‘guilty organs’, which perhaps is a loud recognition of the futility of all other methods of suppression, in constraining or liquidating a natural urge. And it was invariably followed by solemn declarations to the effect that the continued observance of these is the most crucial obligation in life, for a desirable and peaceful existence, especially after death and in rebirth. This is the forerunner of FGM, and” After a pause, he said, “the above mentioned pleasant measures, evolved over time into what we observed among humans, as the affinity towards the irrational.”

“Excellent”, John remarked.

“But one question troubles me”. Said David, “Humans could be seen to be entertaining a plethora of interests and have left their footprints in anything and everything, mostly towards betterment. How come such peculiar features as these escaped their attention? It defies logic, certainly when we consider the inimitable contributions of humans in all other matters of life”.

“Yes, you are right” John butted in, “What remarks Murray made about human’s reactions to sex, especially the male’s shortfall in ‘performance’, makes full sense now. For we can easily see that, in all other species, the male approaches the activities of daily living in a manner

conductive to maximizing its work or minimizing its stay with the family. For example, the male always catches a smaller prey, or sometimes lets the prey manage to escape. This necessitates the male to get busy with hunting, more often. In short, taking life cool. When it came to humans, 'taking life cool' took an altruistic turn. Male humans specially so, seem to have used their creative talents to the core, to find new objects, new relationships, new actions and other abstractions capable of delaying or reducing the occasions, when one may be asked to 'perform'. This might have been their primary defense, that one is busy. And the proliferation of human interests and occupations show, it worked well. Out of fear I think, humans did not examine the sexual functions much, except for matters concerning reproduction."

I was feeling great, having won the hearts of my successors.

John continued. "A discernible difference in one's approach to life happened to occur, between the humans who were following, pretty oppressive measures to fight against the males' shortfall, and those who were more aligned with a rather collaborative approach at this issue. As a result, the population of each took divergent paths, those happy with oppressive measures rapidly increasing their numbers, and the population of others decreasing, as years went by. Wars and skirmishes were there, both of small and large scales, and with the destructive potential of weapons, increasing, the end happened without any warning. The sub-humans of today are descended from a few of the former who happened to survive, and we super-humans, followed the collaborative ones who lived on. Between us, super-humans, and the sub-humans, though there are only a few generations of

physical separation, the difference in outlook is of millenniums.”

Casting his glance across the room, John said “The first generations of super-humans successfully took upon themselves the task of de-linking thought from the brain, brain concentrating solely on the metabolic needs. Then they introduced the side-kick as a ubiquitous extension that performed all the remaining activities, that too with elan. With their background in information technology, relieving the brain of much unnecessary data and manipulation was easily achieved, it seems. All the successes we have achieved as well as those to follow, are in fact due to this only. This, I think, clears all the outstanding doubts, I posed”.

All were silent. John continued, “I would not have been able to deduce these things, had it not been for the excellent appreciation provided by Murray. The next task I give myself is to enable Murray to visit his buddies”

“Count me in” Tanya was visibly excited.

“Of course, all of us are in” Joe, Keenan and David shouted in one voice.

“But I am left with one significant question, the answer to which, can untangle a few issues for us too. How come the humans happened to be making a lot of errors prior to doing anything right? Like the long and checkered history behind each and every discovery or invention? In this also, I think Murray could be of immense help.”

And there ended my hope, heralding the beginning of a new hope.

